

Economy & Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 18 April 2012

13. UPDATE ON RIVER BANK RESTORATION WORKS

The Panel received an update from the Parks Development Manager on proposed river bank restoration works. This followed on from a preliminary options and feasibility report which the Panel had received in July 2011. This report had also been considered by the Environment & Transport O&S Panel in October 2011. The Chairman confirmed that any further updates on the river bank restoration works would be reported to the Environment & Transport Panel in the first instance.

The Parks Development Manager explained that a combined Gateway One bid for feasibility funding for five river bank restoration schemes had been prepared. These were detailed and costed schemes for the Stour Valley, Iford Meadows and Playing Fields, Hengistbury Head, Tuckton, and the Bourne Stream in Central Gardens. The bid would be submitted to the Executive Gateway Board in May 2012. Much of the work had been undertaken on behalf of Parks by Paul Ambrose and Geoff Turnbull from the Council's Planning and Transport Service. Subject to Gateway approval the priority work for this year was to develop the schemes for the Stour Valley and Hengistbury Head, whilst undertaking ground testing at Iford.

Councillor Ron Whittaker referred to the decision of the Environment & Transport Panel on 11 October 2011 to endorse the proposed programme of works, 'with the addition of the comments made by the Ward Member regarding the consideration of urgent remedial works and the possibility of using rock rolls on the section of the riverbank in Muscliff (as identified by the Ward Councillor)'. He circulated photographs which showed how this stretch of riverbank had eroded further over the last year, and asked for these or similar visuals to be presented with the Gateway One bid.

Councillor Whittaker also highlighted the ongoing delay in any decision being made about proposed gravel extraction at Parley Court Farm. If agreed these proposals would require the building of bunds, which would have serious implications for the floodplain, particularly for those residential areas on the Bournemouth side of the river. This was a concern shared by the Environment Agency. The Service Director for Planning and Transport confirmed that any proposals for gravel extraction would need to demonstrate how these problems could be addressed as part of the assessment process.

The Service Director for Housing Landlord and Parks reported that in addition to the Gateway One bid Councillor Mark Anderson, Chair of the Environment & Transport Panel, had been working with the Council's Senior Planning Policy Officer, to prepare and submit a bid for Heathland Mitigation funding for the schemes at Muscliff, Hengistbury and Iford. If successful this would speed up the process and alleviate the pressure on Gateway One funding.

DECISION MADE -

- a. The Panel notes the update on the river bank restoration works and the submission of bids to the Council's Executive Gateway Board and the Heathlands Mitigation Fund.
- b. The Panel requests that the outcome of these bids and any further reporting on the river bank restoration works be presented to the Environment & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel.