

Agenda Item No: 4 **Report No:** 34/15
Report Title: Proposed Undergrounding of Power Lines
Report To: Trustees of the Stanley Turner Recreation Ground Trust **Date:** 25 February 2015
Cabinet Member: Councillor Ron Maskell
Ward(s) Affected: Lewes Bridge, Castle, Priory.
Report By: Gillian Marston – Director of Service Delivery
Contact Officer(s)-
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Purpose of Report:

To seek approval from the Trustees to progress a project to bury overhead power cables at The Stanley Turner Recreation Ground.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To authorise officers to progress the undergrounding of power lines project with the South Downs National Park Authority and Network Power.
- 2 To authorise officers to seek approval for the project from the Charity Commission.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 To progress the project with the aim of reducing the visual impact of power lines on the landscape.
- 2 **Information**
 - 2.1 The SDNPA (South Downs National Park Authority) have approached Lewes District Council to inform us of a project to bury electricity cables, currently running over ground on pylons in the vicinity of the Lewes Brooks SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), to the south west of Lewes.

- 2.2** The rationale of the project is to improve the visual amenity of the landscape, by removing pylons and electricity cables from the large tracts of the South Downs National park. The latest phase of the project involves the location south of Lewes, to take in the Lewes Brooks SSSI. The project is being managed by UK Power Networks, with the South Downs National Park performing consultations and facilitation.
- 2.3** The proposals affect a section of the Stanley Turner Ground, taking in the south west corner of the fields closest to the C7, and the land to the south of the Cockshut stream. See Appendix 1: Site Plan.
- 2.4** At this stage, plans are just proposals, and permissions are being sought from land owners / statutory bodies to progress the project. However it is hoped to carry out works during 2015.
- 2.5** It is proposed to establish a new electricity substation close to the C7; the exact location will be subject to further consultation. The cable is then proposed to be buried in a trench, along the south side of the Cockshut Stream.
- 2.6** Prior to any work taking place, there will be full consultation with stake holders, including sports clubs, RSPB (adjacent land owner) adjacent leaseholders and users of the Stanley Turner Ground.
- 2.7** Should the project be approved, then ecological issues will be fully taken into account and consultation will take place with Natural England.
- 2.8** Prior to any works taking place, approval will be sought from The Charity Commission.
- 2.9** A report of the proposals has been taken to the Stanley Turner Advisory Group where the proposal was “agreed in principle subject to further consultation”.

3 Financial Appraisal

- 3.1** The project is being fully funded by UK Power Networks.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1** If it is agreed that the project should progress, then work will commence on looking at what form the legal agreement should take to ensure that the council is covered for any resultant liability and reinstatement works.

5 Sustainability Implications

- 5.1** I have completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire and found the following significant effects which I propose to mitigate/enhance in the following ways:

There is a risk that damage will be caused to the landscape due to the cables being laid in the ground. However, Power Networks UK will work closely with LDC and Natural England to ensure that damage is

minimal. This will also be mitigated by additional planting and grass seeding to renovate any damaged areas to their original condition.

The overall environmental impact will be a positive one, with the over ground pylons being removed to improve the landscape.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 I have completed a risk assessment

No new risks will arise if the recommendations are not implemented.

The following risks will arise if the recommendations are implemented, and I propose to mitigate these risks in the following ways:

There is a risk of liability and that reinstatement works are not carried out to a required standard. We will ensure that this is mitigated by a legal agreement being drawn up by our Legal Department prior to any works commencing.

7 Equality Screening

7.1 I have completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire and found no significant equality implications.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1: Site / Location Plan.

