

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE  
8 November 2023**

**Officer:** Stuart Farmer – Acting Operations Manager

**Beaver Project – Construction Progress**

## **Purpose**

To report on how the Beaver Compound Construction is progressing and to update members on any issues that the contractor has made officers aware of since starting construction.

## **Introduction**

The Old Riverbed is situated along side Hubert in the Bagley ward and borders Harlescott ward, this site was identified as potential release site for Eurasian Beavers. Following a competitive tender process, a preferred contractor was identified and working in partnership with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust licences were granted for works to begin at the end of September 2023. It had been hoped to have started this work during the summer months when the weather would have been more favourable, however due to issues with getting the licences and agreements with Natural England this was not possible.

### **September 2023**

Works began on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with the commencement of the fencing installation towards the Ellesmere Roadside of the Old Riverbed. The exact style and design of the fencing was identified with the tender specification and included ‘anti pedestrian climb designs’ as well as a buried or pinned skirt of approx. 1 meter inside the compound to prevent burrowing under the fencing.

On the eastern side of the site a new path has been installed along the new fencing to aid pedestrian access along side the compound this has been completed with gravel and timber boarding again this fencing has the ‘anti climb’ and skirt attachments.

### **Boardwalk**

A boardwalk will connect the eastern side back to Hubert Way, initially due the time of arrival of the contractors, they thought it would be best to come back during the spring and install this board walk, however they have since discovered that the water levels do not alter a great deal during wetter or drier conditions. Since they have made this discovery, they have decided to install the boardwalk as part of the main works. This boardwalk will be approximately 1.5-meter width to allow for DDA compliance. Along side this boardwalk will be the continuation of the beaver fencing as well a trash screen situated in the standing water section nearest the eastern side.

### **Hubert Way Fencing**

The fencing that runs along Hubert way has proved a challenge, as approximately halfway along the site the fencing is required to be situated at the top of the ORB boundary due to unfavourable conditions along the ORB itself. This has posed a problem due to the location a gas main running along the area, initially it was thought that the fencing could incorporate the gas main inside of it, however following talks with Cadent the contractor has identified a solution that prevents the main being enclosed but will require hand digging and will need to be completed under Cadent supervision.

**Weather Conditions**

During the construction period the weather has been extremely wet, this has caused a loss of several days of construction. This has also caused significant water pooling in areas that have been worked. The contractor has found solutions to this and will ensure areas of pooling are rectified on completion of the project.

**Progress Meetings**

Several progress meetings have taken place during construction with officers and the contractors. These have proved valuable from both parties and have ensured delays are kept to a minimum. The Shropshire Wildlife trust have also been in attendance at these meetings to ensure the terms of the licences are adhered to.

**Completion date**

Currently the contractor has indicated that they intend to have completed the programmed works by mid-November however this was prior to the recent heavy rains and flooding this will most likely have caused the completion date to slip slightly.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) The reported be noted.