

Report



Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing Cabinet Member for Streetscene

Part 1

Date: 2 February 2018

Subject Living Levels Landscape Partnership Heritage Lottery Fund offer – Partnership Agreement

Purpose To seek approval to sign the partner agreement and the underwriting implications, in order to maximise the benefits to Newport of £2.5 million HLF Landscape Fund offered for the Living Levels programme.

Reason for Urgency : The Heritage Lottery Fund , through Big Lottery have a deadline of the 5 th February 2018 in order to announce the award of £2.54 million to the Living Levels Scheme for which Newport City Council will be the major beneficiary . This will not be awarded unless they have a signed partnership agreement document from the Council on that day.

Author Tourism Officer

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Summary The Living Levels Landscape Partnership is a consortium of 12 stakeholders across The Gwent Levels. A report in 2015 was approved to progress the development phase of this project, fully funded by HLF. NCC are currently represented on the Board. The second round Bid for HLF funding was submitted by RSPB on behalf of the partners. This was successful in attracting £2.5 million of grant towards a programme total of £3.7 million.

The potential external match funding £1.19 million has been identified. £680,686 has already been secured, and over £400,000 is in the pipeline. Whilst the outlook is very favourable to secure all of this or even more, there is still a low financial risk involved of not securing enough.

We are now being asked to sign the final partner agreements to be able to move ahead. As a security RSPB are requesting potential underwriting from all partners, and are providing this themselves too. There was a Board decision to share risk equally. Whilst the total underwriting is £480,000, Newport City Council is being asked for potential underwriting £30,000 per annum for three years. This is only in the event of an unsuccessful target income being generated, or a cash flow issue. Any grant coming in afterwards will be paid back in.

It is intended that this is managed within the service areas of Streetscene and Marketing and Communications using some ring fenced tourism budget and other funding such as PROW funds. Funding probably being secured through the Newport CC Landfill tax will also help reduce any risk.

Proposal As NCC is the main beneficiary of the £2.5 million grant offered, and is providing no actual match funding, it is proposed that we proceed with the partnership agreement including the low risk underwriting requested of a maximum of £30,000 per annum over three years to 2021.

Action by Head of Law and Regulation

Timetable Immediate.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Law and Regulation
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change
- Green Services Manager
- Head of Street scene

Signed

1. Background

1.1 In 2015 a report to Cabinet Member Regeneration outlined the broad concepts of the Living Levels programme. See appendix 1. The development phase of the HLF scheme was approved and has been completed. This references almost 26 projects working with the partners and the local communities, and farmers. The Partners are:

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT)
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Newport City Council (NCC)
- Monmouthshire County Council (MCC)
- Cardiff City Council (CC)
- National Trust
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust
- Buglife
- Sustrans Cymru
- Cardiff Story Museum
- Gwent archives

2. Programme Background Summary

2.1 NCC has led on the Visitor Economy and Destination management aspect of this project, and will also be significantly involved in maximising the benefits for the community and especially Green Services. Addressing Fly Tipping, improving physical Activity in the environment and improving the gateway area at St Brides are just some of the projects. The broad aim of the scheme is to improve access to and understanding of these internationally important Levels for visitors and residents alike. To promote the Newport Wetlands as a Gateway to the Levels, increase visitor numbers along the Wales Coast Path and to support and create jobs. There is also a key agenda to work with landowners to better manage the land to prevent flooding, including training options to take on the skills which are dying out. All this whilst protecting the very rare flora and fauna. This will significantly improve Newport's image as a place in which to live, work, invest and visit.

3. Legal aspects:

3.1 Appendix 3 –Partner Agreement

By signing the Partner Agreement we are agreeing to lead on three specific projects:

- 1) Lighthouse Inn , Eastern Gateway Project
- 2) Destination Marketing
- 3) Ambassadors and Tool Kits - stakeholder capacity building, sustainability and legacy

3.2 We are also agreeing to be involved as sub partners on ten other projects. Fly tipping, Orchards and Community Enterprise, Learning programme, Highways and Welcome signage, Loops and Links (Walks /cycleways), Levels Festival, 'Hubs' interpretation and way marking, Sculptures and Tide Markers.

3.3 RSPB will be programme managing and acting as lead project partner of the ten projects above, as well as contracting and managing the Digital Communications Manager.

4. Staffing

- 4.1 Staffing resources for those projects that NCC is leading on will be from Green Services in Streetscene to contract out and manage for the Eastern Gateway project.
- 4.2 The Destination Marketing project will be done using some in house staff, but with the joint resources at Monmouthshire CC, as well as a contracted Digital Communications Manager who will be employed by RSPB and placed within the Living Levels team.
- 4.3 The Ambassadors and Tool kits projects will be using in house NCC and Monmouthshire CC officers as project managers, but mainly contracted professional services.
- 4.4 The programme will not commence until March/April 2018, and each project will have its own time slot. Whilst the scheme will operate from 2018 to 2020/21, there are maintenance aspects through to 2031.

5. Financial Summary

	Year 1 (Current) £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Potential Costs		30,000	30,000	30,000	Potential underwriting costs. No match from NCC.
(Income) Net Costs					Other funding might be from PROW funds - Green Services.
(Savings) Net Impact on Budget					Income £2.54 million grant towards the whole scheme.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The financial risk on underwriting been called down is fairly low, as much of the match funding for the HLF grant has already been found. Most of the rest is in the pipeline. A cash flow issue might arise in that the timing on match funding draw down could be out of sync with the project itself. If this is the case then a call down on under writing which will be from' all partners, not just NCC, to bring forward a project could happen, and then it will be paid back when the grant is released.
- 6.2 There will be a 10% retainer aspect of the grant. It has been decided that this will be done equally over projects but towards the end of the programme. Those delivered finally in 2020/21 will only receive 90% of payment until HLF are satisfied that all is satisfactory.

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Not fully drawing down proposed match funding sources.	M	L	NCC has identified several sources of funding such as Land fill tax and other in order reduce risk and amount of underwriting NCC is applying to external funding sources as are other partners.	RSPB Programme Manger Tourism Officer Green Services Manager

Cash flow need causes draw down of underwriting but paid back later	L	M	Try to align match funding to project delivery	RSPB Programme Manger Tourism Officer Green Service manager
10 % retainer of £ 2.7 million is left with NCC only projects	L	L	The St Brides Gateway Project is suggested to be delivered as an early project so the retainer impact is unlikely to occur . The other two projects that NCC lead on are spread over several years, so the full amount will not accrue.	RSPB programme Manager Tourism Officer Green Service manager

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

7. Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 7.1 Rural issues are noted within the Single Integrate Plan. The programme contributes to a number of Single Integrated Plans themes.
- 7.2 Economic Opportunity / Emerging Economies - Take forward opportunities for funding to support the development of the rural economy in Newport.
- 7.3 Newport City Council Economic Growth Strategy 2015 – 2025 supporting tourism growth , green infrastructure and heritage .
- 7.4 The Newport Destination Management Action Plan outcomes which sites improving the visitor experience along the Wales Coast Path and to maximise its benefits for residents to support improvements to our key attractions including the Newport Wetlands and the Transporter Bridge.
- 7.6 This project directly supports a **Greener and Healthier City** through development of physical activity in the environment where people lead healthier lives, the attractiveness of the city is improved, and environmental sustainability is addressed through management of the land.
- 7.7 This also supports a **Learning and Working City** in that it opens up training projects for people engaged via Communities First, and supports vital jobs in farming and tourism industries. The project addressing Fly Tipping called from ‘ Black Spots to Bright Spots ‘ supports the **A Safer City** agenda, and a more **Sustainable Newport** in line with the Newport City Council **corporate plan 2017 – 2022** .
- 7.8 The programme itself is about sustainable development, conservation, and understanding of heritage and pride in the locality, encouraging physical activity in the environment. This therefore fits well with the Well Being of the Future Generations Act moving forward for the Councils’ plan. NRW are one of the partners on the Board, and one of the projects is to work with Coleg Gwent to align to the Public Service Board membership.

8. Options Considered/Available

- 8.1 To sign the partner agreement and commit to the underwriting in order to maximise the benefits of the £2.5 million Heritage Lottery Partnership Fund. Newport will be the major beneficiary.

8.2 To not sign the partner agreement, not commit to any underwriting and forgo the benefits of the Heritage Lottery funding.

9. Preferred Option and Why

9.1 The preferred option is number one in order to be able to draw down the benefits of delivering the Living Levels programme. The programme is very much aligned to the Well Being of the Future Generations Act across a large geographic area of Newport.

10. Comments of Chief Financial Officer

10.1 “The report details an underwriting of £30,000 per annum for three years, which will enable grant funding of £2.54m. This is potentially a risk, however this is deemed by the service area to be low, therefore if all match funding is achieved, the £30,000 per year would not be required. If the underwriting cost is required, this would need to be funded from within the service areas in year budgets.”

11. Comments of Monitoring Officer

11.1 *The proposed action is in accordance with the Council’s discretionary powers to promote tourism and encourage visitors to the area, under Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972, and the environmental benefits of the Living Levels Landscapes Project are consistent with the Council’s well-being objectives and sustainability principle. The Council has previously agreed to participate in this scheme and the RSPB are the lead organisation for the purposes of the Heritage Lottery grant bid and the delivery of the programme. Until now, there have been no financial implications for the Council as our unsecured match-funding contribution will be in the form of officer time. Council officers will lead on certain environmental and destination management projects within the programme. In terms of governance arrangements, the Council is represented on the Project Board by the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Housing and Streetscene. Therefore, the Cabinet Members taking this decision will have a personal interest as a result of their membership of the Board but, as they are simply representing the Council on this body, this is not a prejudicial interest and it does not preclude them from jointly taking this decision. In order to proceed with HLF bid, all the partner organisations are required to commit to and sign the form of Partnership Agreement on or before 5th February. In the event of any shortfall between the grant awarded and the costs of the schemes, each of the partners is being asked to underwrite an apportioned share of the deficit. In the Council’s case, the maximum risk would be £30k over a three year period. Although there is no specific funding in service areas to cover this, the risk is highly unlikely to arise in practice and the benefits far exceed the risk, given that it levers in £2.5m of grant funding for these projects within the Newport area. In the unlikely event that the Council was called on to meet all or part of these underwriting costs, then the risks could be mitigated through the use of PROW and landfill tax funding or, failing this, absorbed as a budget pressure within the service areas.*

12. Comments of Head of People and Business Change

12.1 *As required this proposal has fully considered all five aspects of the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 in section 17 of this report. The Living Levels Landscape Partnership will support the council’s Well-being Objective of promoting economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment*

From an HR perspective this proposal may generate some staffing implications in terms of demand on existing resources; however these would need to be considered via a separate detailed HR business case.

13. Comments of Cabinet Members

13.1 The Cabinet Members are supportive of the scheme and look to secure this funding for the Council . This especially as it crosses over several service areas including Streetscene and Regeneration , supporting the Well Being for the Future Generations Act and Corporate Plan outcomes .

13.2 Scrutiny Committees

14.1 No scrutiny reports or committees regarding this.

14. Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

15.1 The audience development of the programme sites wider inclusion of local stakeholders and those that are hard to reach .This audience development had to be explicit to achieve the funding offer from the Heritage Lottery.

15. Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Children and the broader community have been a key part of the development of the projects. This is evidenced through work of the community engagement officer that has worked on this project for over a year . The work has aimed to be inclusive .

16.1 Although no targeted consultation takes place specifically aimed at children and young people, consultation on planning applications and appeals is open to all of our citizens regardless of their age. Depending on the scale of the proposed development, applications are publicised via letters to neighbouring occupiers, site notices, press notices and/or social media. People replying to consultations are not required to provide their age or any other personal data, and therefore this data is not held or recorded in any way, and responses are not separated out by age.

17. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

17.1 This partnership has been developed with the entire Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act in mind. It is an integrated programme of projects looking at sustainable development of land management, Biodiversity, and capacity building for long term gains. Encouragement of physical activity in the environment, fostering local pride and sense of place as well as engaging with the local community are all inherent in the scheme.

The scope is addressed not only by the partners involved such as Natural Resource Wales , Local Authorities , RSPB and Gwent Wildlife , but by the extensive community consultation during its development .

- Long term: the importance of balancing short- term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long – term needs :

The Project is about long term sustainability of land management , biodiversity , local pride and understanding of the heritage importance , and access for physical activity in the environment .

- Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help us meet our objectives.

The projects aim to prevent the land being flooded owing top poor land management , reduce fly tipping and Invasion of Non-Native species(INNS) .

- Integration: Consider how the proposals will impact on our wellbeing objectives, our wellbeing goals, other objectives or those of other public bodies

Partners in the scheme include other public sector bodies and larger organisations that cover health , education , environment , active travel .

- Collaboration: have you considered how acting in collaboration with any other person or any other part of our organisation could help meet our wellbeing objectives

This is already a cross service area scheme that works across Streetscene, but especially Green and Highways services . The Visitor Economy and Destination Management services within Law and Regulation have coordinated NCC's involvement with the other partner organisations during the initial development phase, considering the long term image implications and added value for

investments in the Wales Coast path, Newport Wetlands, Transporter Bridge and Tredegar House , amongst other assets .

- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the City we serve. A year has been spent accessing as many different and representative groups and stakeholders that live on, visit or work on the Gwent Levels as possible.

16. Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- 17.1 The programme includes funding to support actions to deter fly tipping, raising awareness of duty of care amongst tradesmen and DIYers, as well as support to prosecution activity.

17. Consultation

17.1 Comments received are included in the relevant section .

17.2

18. Background Papers

- 19.1 Summary of Second Round HLF application.(known to the Cabinet Members)
Partnership Agreement.

Dated: 2 February 2018