



East Northamptonshire Council

Policy and Resources Committee - 9 December 2009

East Northamptonshire Greenway

Summary

This report updates Members on the most recent developments in relation to the Greenway project and seeks early release of part of the Council's agreed contribution in order for the project to continue.

Attachment(s)

Appendix A: Report to Policy and Resources Committee 12 October 2009

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Members were last updated in relation to the project at the October meeting of the Committee (Minute 179 refers; see Appendix A). The progress on the project was noted and agreement was given to proceeding with the delivery of the construction element through Links to Schools funding.
- 1.2 Officers have been continuing to work with Sustrans in relation to the Links to Schools bid and were expecting by now to have received agreement to the full £750,000 contribution.

2.0 The Current Position

- 2.1 An issue has now been raised over the width of the proposed path and in particular the element along John Clarke Way. Officers have been advised that it is a requirement that a 3 metre wide path be provided throughout the route's length whereas up until this point the project team had been working on the basis of a 2.5 metre path width. The implication is that if the full 3 metre width cannot be provided then we may well lose the whole of the anticipated Links to Schools funding.
- 2.2 This is a significant issue which puts the delivery of the overall project in jeopardy.
- 2.3 As Members will be aware the funding of the initial work on the project (£250,000) was being financed through growth area funding (GAF). A requirement was that this money be spent by the end of September and this was completed. Subsequent project management costs have been covered from section 106 monies specifically secured to support the project. It was anticipated that the Links to Schools monies would have been secured by now and that the project could then continue to be funded from this contribution as other monies were secured.
- 2.4 The increased path width requirement causes less of an issue on the less urban sections of the route although costs will increase. However as noted the section along John Clarke way is more of an issue. Our project managers are seeking to resolve this matter but in order for this to be progressed additional spend will now need to be incurred.
- 2.5 If the width issues for the whole of the route can be satisfactorily resolved then we are still anticipating the full £750,000 contribution. Conversely if the John Clarke Way element cannot be resolved but the remainder of the route can, officers are advised that £450,000 of the original £750,000 can still be secured to support the delivery of the remaining elements.

2.6 A memorandum of understanding in respect of the £450,000 element had been dispatched to the Council at the time of the preparation of this report and subject to officers being satisfied with the terms of this agreement we will be in a position to secure the initial £450,000.

2.7 Until this funding is secured, there are no further monies currently available to support the project at the present time. Our project managers are already working on the John Clarke Way issue and in order for this to be resolved, further expenditure will have to be incurred.

3.0 The Way Forward

3.1 As part of the Council's commitment to this project a contribution of £100,000 was originally agreed by Members. This was to be released upon the receipt of all other necessary funding and was not anticipated to be used at this stage.

3.2 In order to secure the full £750,000, further work needs to be done. Unless this funding can be secured, the project will not be deliverable and will fail. In order to continue to pay for our project managers and their consultants' time and costs in particular with a view to resolving the John Clarke Way issues, additional spend is required.

3.3 Having regard to the Council's commitment to the project and the agreed contribution, agreement is sought for the required additional expenditure to be incurred until the Links to School's money is secured, and that this be funded from the Councils agreed contribution. It is anticipated that a maximum expenditure of £20,000 will be required. It is understood by officers that this spend may be able to be offset against the Links to Schools' funding when this is received.

4.0 Concluding Comments

4.1 The Greenway project has corporate commitment; there has already been a considerable amount of time and effort spent on getting the project to the current stage. If the Links to Schools monies cannot be secured then the project will fail. Additional expenditure is required at this stage to bridge the current funding gap.

5.0 Recommendations

1) That up to £20,000 of the Council's contribution be released to fund the continued work/ to resolve the footpath width issue affecting John Clarke Way in order to secure the full Links to Schools contribution.

2) That subject to agreement, the contribution subsequently be recouped from the Links to Schools funding and only re-released when all other project funding has been secured.

Implications:		
Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy		
Good Quality of Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good Reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Good Value for Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	High Quality Service Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Community Leadership <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of our Customers and Communities <input type="checkbox"/>
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial	There are no financial implications at this stage <input type="checkbox"/>	

	There will be financial implications – see paragraph	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There is provision within existing budget	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may have potential for income generation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Management	An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference – 369 -379 inherent risk score - Primary residual risk score - Contingency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff	There are no additional staffing implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equalities and Human Rights	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	Power: S 19 Local Govt (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Local Govt Act 1972, s144	
	Other considerations:	
Background Papers: None		
Person Originating Report: Trevor G Watson Head of Planning Services 01832 742218 tgwatson@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk		
Date: 25 November 2009		
CFO		MO
		CX

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 19)



East Northamptonshire Council

Policy and Resources Committee - 12 October 2009

East Northamptonshire Greenway Project.

Summary

This report updates Members on recent developments in relation to the Greenway Project.

Attachment(s)

Appendix A: Report to Policy and Resources Committee 19 January 2009

Appendix B: Phase 1 Plan. **FIRST DOCUMENT NOT INCLUDED**

1. Background

1.1 The Greenway Project aims to utilise stretches of dismantled railway route and other public rights of way, supplemented by land purchase, or permissions for use from landowners to fill the gaps where needed, to make linkages to and within the 'Green Wedge' between Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough. It aims to improve access between the three town centres, as well as join with the existing route through Stanwick Lakes, and enhance links to Raunds. The project will add value by:

- improving surfaces to allow for bicycle/wheelchair access
- making the most of attractions along the route, developing art, historical and environmental trails
- providing an infrastructure for the development of linked, circular routes
- improving 'safer routes to schools'.

1.2 The total cost of delivering the entire project is estimated to be £5 million. The first phase (linking the more urban elements of the route around Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough) will cost approximately £2.1 million.

1.3 The project is managed by Rockingham Forest Trust with support from ENC staff. The Project Board, which meets quarterly includes Councillor Sarah Peacock, Councillor Phillip Stearn, County Councillor Andrew Langley, Patrick Davis (Sustrans), Rockingham Forest Trust and ENC officers. Separate project team and design meetings take place on a monthly basis between the project manager, ENC and NCC officers. A Steering Group representing local interested bodies meets quarterly.

1.4 Members were last updated in relation to the project at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 19 January 2009 (copy report attached at Appendix A). At that meeting agreement was given for the project to proceed on a phased approach, with a revised funding plan.

2.0 Progress January – September 2009

2.1 Part of the funding for the project has already been secured through Growth Area Funding; £250k was allocated in 2008/09 to be spent by September 2009. This funding has enabled the project to proceed with civil engineering design work, clearance and mitigation works associated with the floodplain at Irthlingborough, and ecological and visitor surveys.

- 2.2 Members may recall that the Greenway project was put forward as one of the schemes to be supported as part of the Sustrans bid for Big Lottery funding (Connect2). Although the bid was successful our access to funding was suspended when the project was placed on Sustrans reserve list in 2008 because Sustrans remained unconvinced that the Council would be able to deliver a link across the A45 at Skew Bridge. However the Council was advised to bid for monies under a separate funding scheme run by Sustrans on behalf of Cycling England known as “Links to Schools” for the more urban elements of the scheme. This application was duly made.
- 2.3 Subject to satisfying Sustrans on a number of points related to the bid submitted to “Links to Schools”, Officers have now been informed that the Council has been successful in securing £750k for that part of the Greenway project which links Higham Ferrers and Rushden. Once the Council has received an acceptance letter for the Links to Schools funding with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that has to be signed and returned, the construction element of the project can proceed.
- 2.4 In addition, as requested in January, a number of meetings have now taken place between the Rushden Historical Transport Society (RHTS), Sustrans and officers to ensure that the objectives of the Greenway project and RHTS can both be achieved. and members of the society are being kept informed as the design phase of the project is progressed.
- 2.5 NCC also remain committed in its support for the scheme and a letter has now been received from the County Council stating that upon completion of the agreed construction works, the route will automatically become highway, maintainable at public expense, to serve as a walking and cycling route.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 The project is now at the stage where a main contractor will need to be engaged in order to deliver the construction part of phase one. This will be done via the County Council Highways Contract.
- 3.2 Funding for the Irthlingborough section will be sought through other funding streams, along with the additional funding required to deliver the remaining Rushden/Higham link elements. An expression of interest has been submitted to Rural Development Programme England for £300k. Officers will continue to write funding bids and secure additional 106 contributions, as highlighted in the funding table overleaf.
- 3.3 Officers are liaising with Sustrans in relation to the Connect2 wider scheme and its potential deliverability. Members will be updated on any future funding successes.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The estimated cost for phase one is £2.1 million. The project managers are working on a detailed schedule which will be available mid October and Members will be updated at the next Project Board meeting. The sources of potential match funding have been updated since the last Committee report in January and are included in the table.

4.2 As noted, there is still a need for additional funding to deliver the overall project.

September 09 Year	Status	Project Funding (£ 000)				
		08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	TOTAL
NNDC	committed	100	150			250
ENC	committed			100		100
NCC (toucan)	committed		60			60
Section 106	committed		35			35
Section 106	committed		51.1			51.1
Links to Schools (L2S)	offer pending		400	350		750
Section 106	pending		35.7			35.7
Section 106	pending		87			87
Section 106	pending		96			96
Total						£1,464,800
Rural Development Programme England	stage one bid submitted		200	100		300 <i>(400 max for all tourism projects)</i>
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	On waiting list					not yet known (350 max)
Cycling England	Sustrans have applied					410
Landfill – Biffa, Sita, Cory	to be explored					not yet known
Natural England	to be explored					not yet known
Big Lottery	suspended				400	400

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- 1) note the progress made in relation to the project.
- 2) Agree to proceeding with the delivery of the construction element of the project through Links to Schools funding.

Implications:	
Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy	
Good Quality of Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Good Value for Money	<input type="checkbox"/> High Quality Service Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong Community Leadership <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of our Customers and Communities <input type="checkbox"/>
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference – 369-379 inherent risk score - Primary residual risk score - Contingency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Equalities and Human Rights	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	Power: S19 Local Govt (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; Local Govt Act 1972, s144.	
	Other considerations:	
Background Papers: None		
Person Originating Report: Karen Williams, Economic and Tourism Development Officer 01832 742064 kwilliams@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk		
Date: 22 September 2009		
CFO		MO
		CX

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 19)

