



Finance & Performance Sub-Committee 25 June 2018

East Northamptonshire Greenway

Purpose of report

This report asks Members to consider and approve the release of funding for various developments on phases 5, 7 and 8 of the East Northamptonshire Greenway.

Attachments

Appendix 1 – Phase 5 bridge reinstatement proposals

Appendix 2 – Higham Ferrers Phase 5 footpath upgrade proposals (to follow)

Appendix 3 – Feasibility proposals: phases 7 and 8

Appendix 4 – Privacy Impact Assessment (Initial Screening Form)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The East Northamptonshire Greenway (the Greenway) is a programme to develop a series of safer walking and cycling routes across the district. The overall aspiration is to create a linear or 'spinal' route through the Nene Valley; linking Peterborough and Northampton railway stations and connecting with villages and sites of importance.
- 1.2 The Greenway is being implemented through a series of phases. The Greenway Forward Plan (the plan) sets out each phase in detail, with maps, land ownership details, indicative costs for construction and future maintenance requirements. The plan is available on the ENC website, (link provided at the end of this report).
- 1.3 Strategic direction for the Greenway is through a Board led by ourselves and supported by: Northamptonshire County Council, The Wildlife Trust, Sustrans and Natural England and has close working links with Destination Nene Valley (DNV). Councillor Sarah Peacock chairs the Greenway Board and Councillor Phil Stearn is also a member.
- 1.4 Funding for the phases comes from a range of sources, including: Section 106 monies, government-led and European funding bodies, environmental and landfill trusts and New Homes Bonus (NHB). The funding is held by us, with approval for its release given by Policy and Resources Committee or this sub-committee, when phases are ready to go ahead.
- 1.5 This report concerns three specific projects, each requiring this committee to approve the release of funding to support their delivery.

2.0 Greenway Phase 5

- 2.1 Phase 5 is an extensive phase which includes a number of sub-phases covering the route from Ditchford Bridge to Stanwick Lakes. The main spinal route (phases 5a and b) has been upgraded by the Wildlife Trust along with linear routes around Skew Bridge Lake, all of which increases connectivity to and around the Rushden Lakes Retail Park.
- 2.2 The Wildlife Trust was given financial support from LxB and Heritage Lottery to undertake the above works. Part of the programme of works was to reinstate the second bailey bridge to ensure a continuous link from the retail park to the main Greenway spinal route. The footpath and cycle ways are all now in place and fully utilised. Unfortunately various adjustments and reconsiderations around the lottery

funding led to insufficient funds being available to complete the bridge works.

- 2.3 The Wildlife Trust recognised that without a suitable structure across the river, connectivity between the Greenway and the retail park would be heavily compromised. The Trust erected a temporary bridge to a specification provided by a qualified engineer. This is serving the intended purpose well but it looks unsightly and to ensure longevity a permanent structure is required.
- 2.4 The temporary structure (and eventually the replacement permanent structure) makes use of the existing iron girder structure in situ from the dismantled railway line. This is of sound repair and provides a solid base to erect a bridge structure on.
- 2.5 The Wildlife Trust has obtained costs for constructing the new bridge structure and this is £51,000. The Trust has £26K available to support this; however, it needs to find £25K in order to complete the works. It is preparing a bid to LEADER for the additional funding following a successful Expression of Interest. However, if the full application is unsuccessful it will need to find alternative sources. The bridge location is within phase 5 of the Greenway and planning services has confirmed it is eligible for support from the Section 106 monies provided under development: Sunseeker Site, Finedon Road, Irthlingborough (EN/08/02282/FUL). The Trust has obtained approval from the Environment Agency for the works to proceed. On the basis of this, it is recommended that a maximum of £30K is made available from the 106 monies we hold for this development, which allows £5K for any contingencies.
- 2.6 The Wildlife Trust's proposals for the bridge construction are set out in Appendix 1. They will procure and oversee the works associated with the construction of the bridge and retain responsibility for its future repair and safety. The terms and conditions associated with this will form part of a funding agreement between us and the Wildlife Trust.
- 2.7 If the LEADER bid is successful and the Trust does not need the £30K from us then it is recommended that the £30K is directed towards supporting footpath improvements around the Higham Ferrers routes to Rushden Lakes, as indicated in Appendix 2.

3.0 Phase 5 – Higham to Irthlingborough: signage and interpretation

- 3.1 A fundamental part of developing the Greenway is providing suitable interpretation and directional signage. This is particularly important for more extensive phases such as phase 5, where multiple routes need to be defined.
- 3.2 It is proposed to install relevant signage along the phase 5 route between Higham and Irthlingborough along with up-to-date interpretation boards. All of the signs and boards will follow the design and layout previously used on other sections so as to maintain consistency and uniformity. The cost for supply and installation is: £15K
- 3.3 As this relates to Greenway phase 5, the s106 monies provided under development: EN/08/02282/FUL can be used to fund it.

4.0 Greenway phases 7 and 8

- 4.1 These two phases will connect Woodford Locks and Thrapston and effectively provide the critical link between the northern and southern parts of the Greenway network. Once in place the much-improved surface will increase opportunities for connectivity to and from Stanwick Lakes and Rushden Lakes, as well as key destinations to the north.
- 4.2 Finance Sub-Committee considered a report at its meeting 26 June 2017 (minute 13.0 refers), for phases 7 and 8. That report asked Members to approve a financial sum from our New Homes Bonus (NHB) reserve to provide match funding for an application to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The

Sub-committee approved an allocation up to £130K.

- 4.3 Officers have considered options for delivering the works with advice from Welland Procurement Unit. It was originally decided to pursue a contract framework approach for the project, using the Scape model available under the East Midlands Procurement Association. The appointed principal contractor under the relevant threshold for Scape submitted proposals for the works and co-ordinated the quotations from select list contractors for the works.
- 4.4 The EAFRD application was prepared and submitted, which requested a 75% grant of the total costs of £450K under the Scape-based proposals, which equated to: £337.5K. We were advised after submission that our bid wasn't eligible for a grant intervention of 75% due to our match funding being from a non-private source and the project not generating any income directly; the EAFRD was primarily set up to support income-generating projects. However the advice from the scheme's co-ordinators was they could support footpaths if they encourage tourism and therefore increased spend with local businesses and we emphasised these aspects in our original application.
- 4.5 It transpired that our only chance of funding under the scheme was for 100% grant set at the EU De Minimis level, that being €200K or £170K. Consequently our original application was rejected but we were invited to submit an amended bid in-line with the De Minimis factor.
- 4.6 Officers looked at ways to reduce the costs overall and prioritised phase 8 in attempt to get a scheme around £170K, bearing in mind that to qualify our project could not be expanded by adding our match funding. Timescales to do this additional work were restricted and after deliberation it was deemed unviable to pursue the funding bid further. Since then the Greenway Programme Board has benefited from the voluntary services of a retired civil engineer. He has supported officers in reviewing our approach to constructing these two phases and has advised of the benefits of running the contract ourselves with the right type of professional support.
- 4.7 With the benefit of this advice and that of the Welland Procurement Unit, officers have produced feasibility proposals for phases 7 and 8 and these are set out in Appendix 3. Within these proposals is a budget estimate for the works, prepared by the retired civil engineer. This estimate clearly shows that a reduction in costs is achievable with the actual construction works by running a tender process and appointing a contractor ourselves. In terms of supervising the works and satisfying our responsibilities under key requirements such as: Construction, Design and Management (CDM), it is recommended that specialist support is brought in.
- 4.8 The advice of the retired civil engineer is to make a budget available of £300K, which would cover the construction works and allow provision for the specialist support resources as outlined above. As referred to in para 3.1 above, the sub-committee has already approved up to £130K from the NHB reserve for this project. It is recommended that this be increased by £170K so that construction of phases 7 and 8 can go ahead and resources are available to manage the specialist aspects of the works, referred to above. Welland procurement Unit will advise and support us with all of the tendering processes.
- 4.9 Similar to previous Greenway construction projects, the timeframe for completing the works will take into account nesting bird species and other seasonal issues around fauna and flora. As phases 7 and 8 are seen as integral links between the north and south Greenway networks, the additional funding will enable delivery of these links within the lifespan of ENC.

5.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has identified some positive impacts for all of the projects covered by this report. The positive impacts are: increased opportunities

for people with disabilities to access the Greenway and for those experiencing rural isolation. All groups will have increased access to the countryside and positive health benefits. The Equality Impact Assessment is available as a background document.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 A formal agreement between ENC and The Wildlife Trust will set out the terms and conditions for the funding for the bridge project on phase 5. This agreement will cover all aspects of the construction work and the project management requirements and future maintenance liabilities. It will also include default and clawback arrangements. Release of the funding will only happen if the agreement is in place.
- 6.2 The procurement of the works for phases 7 and 8 will align with our procurement rules and the Welland Procurement Unit will advise on and support the tender process including the selection of the standard form of contract for the works.

7.0 Risk Management

- 7.1 The Wildlife Trust will oversee and manage the construction works for the bridge on phase 5. Specific risks associated with the project will be identified and the mitigation and controls for those risks will be included in the agreement referred to in 5.1 above.
- 7.2 The feasibility proposals (Appendix 3 refers) contain a draft risk register associated with the delivery of phases 7 and 8. When finalised it will form part of the contract entered into with the appointed contractor.

8.0 Resource and Financial Implications

- 8.1 A total of: **£76,563.50** was allocated for supported Greenway developments in the section 106 agreement for development EN/08/02282/FUL. Policy and Resources Committee approved the allocation of £31K for developing phase 5e at its meeting 4 September 2017 (minute 154 refers), leaving £45,563.50 available to support the phase 5 projects detailed above.
- 8.2 An additional £170,000 is required for the full development of phases 7 and 8, as outlined above. There is sufficient funding currently in the NHB Stream 3 pool for this.

9.0 Constitutional Implications

- 9.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

10.0 Implications for our Customers

- 10.1 A range of information about the Greenway is available on our website and as mentioned above, adequate signage and interpretation boards along the routes are very important. These help people navigate their way around the network and show information about the surrounding areas. A separate Greenway project is looking at ways to introduce QR codes on interpretation boards, so people can get up-to-date information on their mobile devices.

11.0 Privacy implications

- 11.1 A Privacy Impact Assessment – Initial Screen has identified that none of the developments set out in this report will require the collection, use and or control of personal data. The Initial Screen form is attached at Appendix 4.

12.0 Corporate Outcomes

- 12.1 Delivery of the Greenway contributes to our corporate outcomes as follows:

Good Quality of Life

- Local people will have opportunities to lead healthy and active lifestyles, through improved, safer and increased cycling and walking to facilities, schools, place of work and other attractions.
- Increased tourism and visitor numbers by putting East Northamptonshire and the Greenway on the map, this also contributes to job creation, business growth and helps attract investors.
- Enhanced visitor and resident experience and increased spend in the local area e.g. events such as the Women's Tour taking place.

13.0 Recommendation

13.1 The Sub-Committee is recommended to

- (1) Note the equality and diversity implications as set out in the report.
- (2) Approve the allocation of a maximum of £30K from the Section 106 monies from development: EN/08/02282/FUL, to either support the construction of the new bridge on phase 5 or improve footpaths on phase 5 as set out in section 2 above and in Appendices 1 and 2.
- (3) Approve the release of £15K from the section 106 monies from development: EN/08/02282/FUL, to support the supply and installation of signage and interpretation boards on phase 5 Higham to Irthlingborough as set out in section 3 above.
- (4) Approve the release of a further £170K from the New Homes Bonus reserve, making a funding stream of up to £300K available to deliver phases 7 and 8 as set out in section 4 above and in Appendix 3.
- (5) Note the Privacy Impact Assessment at Appendix 4.

Reason - To support the delivery of a green corridor for cycling and walking through East Northamptonshire that provides opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles.

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| Legal | Power: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 | | | | |
| | Other considerations: None | | | | |
| Background Papers: | East Northamptonshire Greenway Forward Plan: https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7666/the_greenway_forward_plan_2016-20 Equality Impact Assessment (Initial Screen) – held with Democratic Services team | | | | |
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| Date: 5 June 2018 | | | | | |
| CFO | | MO | | CX | |

