

Policy Committee – 18th July 2017

YORK AND NORTH YORKSHIRE ESIF PROGRAMME – GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE IN SKIPTON



Report of the Strategic Head (Planning and Regeneration)

Lead Member for Enterprising Craven

Ward(s) affected: Skipton West and Skipton North

1. **Purpose of Report** –

To seek Member approval for the Council to submit a full application in response to a call from the York and North Yorkshire European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programme for proposals relating to the creation of water and green habitats linked to employment sites.

2. **Recommendations** –

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the scope of the proposed project, named South Skipton Employment Zone – Green and Blue Infrastructure, and the activities to be undertaken as part of the project;
- 2.2 Agree for the Council to submit a full application for grant funding of £620,000 from the York and North Yorkshire European Structural and Investment Funds programme to deliver the above-mentioned project;
- 2.3 Subject to a successful award of funding, give delegated authority to the Director of Services in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Strategic Director (Financial Services) to agree terms and enter into an agreement with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and any other appropriate organisations for the delivery of the project.

3. **Background** -

- 3.1 In January 2014, the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYER LEP) published its European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) programme setting out how it proposed to use an allocation of £33.38million of European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) to deliver projects across nine thematic objectives. These objectives are based around the local priorities outlined

in the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Strategic Economic Plan, and includes support for growing small businesses; innovation in agritech and biorenewables; developing a productive workforce; investment in green and blue infrastructure; investment in transport that underpins growth and low carbon goals.

- 3.2 The programme for York and North Yorkshire forms part of an England-wide ERDF programme; delivery of which is being managed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The role of DCLG as managing authority includes responsibility for:
- Inviting applications for ERDF support, by competitive bidding or otherwise;
 - Determining whether project applications meet core selection criteria;
 - Making the final decision on which projects will receive funding.
- 3.3 In December 2016, DCLG issued a call for projects in York and North Yorkshire that were required to improve the environment on which businesses depend and increase the provision of water, grass and woodland habitats to support sustainable economic growth. The call was for projects that could be delivered within three-years, with a minimum total value of £1million requiring a minimum ERDF grant of £500,000.
- 3.4 An outline application was submitted to DCLG at the end of April 2017, for a project with a total value of £1.24million, requiring 50% funding from ERDF (£650,000) matched with Section 106 monies and Local Growth Deal funding awarded by the YNYER LEP for identified infrastructure improvements in Skipton (reported to Policy Committee on 17th January 2017 (Minute \$POL.807/16-17)). Notification that the the outline application has been successful is expected in July 2017. The Council will then have three-months in which to submit a detailed and complete full application. Projects which fail to meet this deadline may be deselected.
4. **The Project** -
- 4.1 The project involves the delivery of green and blue infrastructure linked to the development of Wyvern Park and the Engine Shed Lane/Ings Lane employment area – referred to as the South Skipton Employment Zone for the purpose of the application. Whilst the project and the development of the employment zone are exclusive of each other, the two are mutually beneficial.
- 4.2 The focus of the project is land that is predominantly within the catchment area of Ings Beck and Gallow Syke, from their source to the north of Aireville Park to their confluence with the River Aire. A plan showing the project area is attached at Appendix A. Activities to be delivered include:
- Woodland planting in the riparian buffer and catchment areas to slow run-off, improve water quality and enable the creation of new habitats;
 - Creation of sustainable drainage measures, including holding ponds which will create new wetland habitats and improve water management;

- Creation of native wildflower margins and grassland strips alongside woodland to enhance bio-diversity;
- Creation of cycling and walking routes to link the employment zone with Aireville Park and adjoining areas including the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.

The activities will establish natural processes to slow the passage of water and reduce the risk of flooding from Ings Beck; create a network of natural habitats and improve the provision of green infrastructure.

- 4.3 The project will provide funding for the provision of green and blue infrastructure that is beyond statutory planning requirements. The project is an opportunity for the Council to use the development of the employment zone to deliver a range of environmental and quality of life benefits which add to the natural capital of Skipton.
- 4.4 Projects coming forward under this call are required to deliver outputs in respect to the surface area of habitat supported. Measuring the area that will benefit from improvements to existing habitats and where public access will be improved, it is estimated that the project deliver 14 hectares of surface area supported by 2020.

5. **Implications** -

5.1 **Financial Implications** –

The project does not require the Council to provide a financial contribution. The funding profile for the project has been developed on the basis of using ERDF funding to add value to activity to be carried out as part of the Council's Local Growth Deal project – Skipton Employment and Housing Growth. The proposed funding profile for the project is showed in the table below:

Funding Source	Amount	Activity
ERDF	£620,000	Creation of sustainable drainage measures and new habitats – activity that will be predominantly carried out on Council owned land, in particular Aireville Park
Local Growth Deal	£590,650	Upgrade of the canal towpath from Broughton Road to the town centre; improved culverting of watercourses along Ings Lane
Section 106	£29,350	Planning gain from the following developments (i) conversion of the east wing of Belle Vue Mills to apartments (£16,000), and (ii) Mallory Court, Brewery Lane by McCarthy and Stone (£13,350)
Total	£1,240,000	

This project has been designed to dovetail with the project (Leeds-Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales) being developed in partnership with the Canal & River Trust. This project will help to strengthen the application to the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) by showing that there is other, complementary investment being made into enhancing the environment within the Leeds Liverpool Canal corridor.

The application for ERDF grant aid will enable the Council to invest into enhancing the natural environment of Aireville Park for the benefit of businesses and the community as a whole.

5.2 Legal Implications –

As the applicant, the Council will be required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with DCLG. The Council will therefore carry the liability for ensuring that the terms and conditions of the funding agreement are met, and that the project is operating compliantly.

The funding agreement will set out the purpose for which the ERDF funding can be used; requirements with regard to record keeping, procurement of goods and services; mechanism for reporting progress and claiming payment of the grant monies; publicity and document retention. The Council already has the systems in place to comply with these requirements.

5.3 Contribution to Council Priorities –

The proposal in this report directly contributes to the delivery of the Council Plan (2017 -2020) through the Enterprising Craven priority, in particular the actions to stimulate business growth. The proposal also contributes to the Resilient Communities priority by providing benefits that the whole community can enjoy, including opportunities to improve mental and physical health.

The proposal also makes a significant contribution towards the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan for the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership area, in particular Priority 4: Successful and Distinctive Places. In line with this priority, the proposal ensures that the development of the South Skipton employment zone goes hand-in-hand with protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment for the benefit of businesses, their employees and the community as a whole. The project will enable Skipton and the wider geographical area to offer a quality of life that is consistent with the requirements for attracting business investment, skilled people and entrepreneurs.

5.4 Risk Management –

If the full application to the ESIF programme is unsuccessful the proposed activity with regard to water management and provision of new habitats will not go ahead. This is additional activity that is outside the scope of the Local Growth Deal project, and which otherwise would not happen.

Operating the project in accordance with the funding agreement with DCLG will minimise any risk to the Council of being asked to repay part of the ERDF grant. If the application is successful, the Council will receive a Project Inception Visit by the DCLG to check that the authority has the required systems and processes in place to deliver a compliant project. On-going checks by the DCLG will be carried out during the lifetime of the project.

5.5 **Equality Analysis –**

The Council's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure **has been** followed. An Equality Impact Assessment **has not** been completed on the proposals as completion of **Stage 1- Initial Screening** of the Procedure when first taken to Members in 2016-17 identified that the proposed policy, strategy, procedure or function **does not have** the potential to cause negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community based on •age • disability •gender • race/ethnicity • religion or religious belief (faith) •sexual orientation, or • rural isolation,

6. **Consultations with Others –**

Legal Service
Financial Service

7. **Access to Information : Background Documents –**

ESIF Outline Application Form: South Skipton Employment Zone – Green and Blue Infrastructure

8. **Author of the Report –**

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Note : Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

9. **Appendices –**

Appendix A – Plan showing the project area