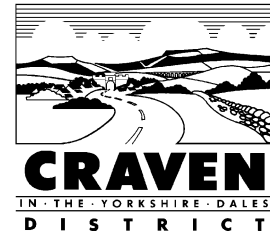


## Policy Committee – 18 July 2017

# LEEDS LIVERPOOL CANAL - IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY IN THE SOUTHERN DALES



Report of the Strategic Manager (Planning and Regeneration)

Lead Member: Enterprising Craven – Councillor Myers

Ward(s) affected: Aire Valley with Lothersdale, Skipton Wards, Gargrave & Malhamdale

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of an application to the Rural Development Programme for England led by the Canal & River Trust to improve infrastructure along the Leeds Liverpool Canal and request that part of the monies previously allocated by the Council at Minute POL.685/15-16 are used as match funding.

### 2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Endorse the submission of the funding bid by the Canal & River Trust to the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme to deliver the Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales project.
- 2.2 Subject to a successful award of funding from the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme confirm a contribution of up to £200,000 from the monies previously allocated by the Council at Minute POL.685/15-16 as matched funding to the project.
- 2.3 Subject to approval of recommendation 2.2 give delegated authority to the Director of Services in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Strategic Manager (Financial Services) to agree terms and enter into a written agreement with the Canal & River Trust.
- 2.4 Subject to the successful award of funding from the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme confirm £25,000 of the monies previously allocated by the Council at POL.685/15-16 are used to deliver business and marketing support for the Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales project.
- 2.5 Subject to approval of recommendations 2.2 and 2.4, approve that the contributions, funded from the New Homes Bonus Reserve, are included in the Council's 2018/19 budget.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 In July 2015 Policy Committee was provided with an update on the production of the Leeds Liverpool Canal Access Development Plan, a Plan led by the District Council that defines a coherent strategy for the improvement of sustainable access in the Leeds & Liverpool Canal corridor. In addition as at Minute POL.685/15-16 Members agreed to allocate up to £300,000 from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support future funding applications submitted by the Council and partner organisations to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath corridor between Gargrave, Skipton and the Aire Valley.
- 3.2 In the report Members were also provided with an update on the successful award of £450,000 by the Department for Transport to fund improvements for the first phase between Skipton and Bradley that was completed in summer 2016.
- 3.3 Following completion of this work the District Council and Canal & River Trust have continued to work together to identify funding opportunities to deliver additional phases of the Access Development Plan including connectivity between Bradley and the border with Bradford and the stretch from Skipton north to Gargrave.
- 4. Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme**
- 4.1 The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme, which is managed by Defra, provides European funding for projects in England which create jobs and growth in the rural economy.
- 4.2 In January 2017 the Government issued a call for projects that will improve tourism infrastructure to encourage more tourists to come, to stay longer and to spend more money in rural areas.
- 4.3 Within the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYER LEP) area a total of £3,235,867 has been allocated for projects that will:
- Create and improve infrastructure for outdoor activities;
  - Create and develop infrastructure to enable visitors to move around the area such as cycle paths and footpaths;
  - Improve facilities to encourage visitors to stay longer and make return visits.
- 4.4 The call for projects operates on a first come first served basis for allocating investment with a final deadline for submission of expressions of interest of January 2018.
- 4.5 Following the announcement of the call for projects, officers from the District Council and Canal and River Trust met to consider the scope and scale of a potential submission to the Growth Programme that delivers the priorities of the Access Development Plan.
- 4.6 Following identification of a project the Canal & River Trust, with the support of the District Council, submitted an Expression of Interest (EoI) on 24 May 2017 to the

Rural Payments Agency (RPA) for a project titled 'Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales'.

- 4.7 Following submission the RPA evaluated the EoI against national priorities and value for money criteria as well as seeking the support of the local European Structural and Investment Fund Committee at the YNYER LEP.
- 4.8 On the 23 June 2017 the Canal & River Trust received a response that the Rural Payments Agency had endorsed the project and were invited to complete a full application with a deadline for its submission of 1 September 2017.

**5. Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales**

- 5.1 The purpose of the proposed project is to deliver a series of capital interventions between the Bradford border and Bradley and Skipton (Gawflatt Bridge) and Gargrave, building on the first phase of works, that will enable an increased number of visitors and businesses to benefit from the historic Leeds Liverpool Canal as it meanders through North Yorkshire.
- 5.2 Benefiting from improved pedestrian and cycle accessibility, new and improved visitor facilities for boaters and canoeists the project will encourage people to stay longer and spend more whilst businesses benefit from an improved visitor offer.
- 5.3 Specifically this project aims to deliver:
- Upgrading of up to 13.5km (8 miles) of towpath;
  - Improved signage and way marking for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - Improved facilities for narrow boaters;
  - New infrastructure to support use of the Desmond Canoe Trail;
  - Business support activity to benefit 40 businesses;
  - Five marketing initiatives.
- 5.4 Although the project predominantly focuses on improvements to accessibility along the Canal towpath, in isolation this would have limited impact on the visitor economy. It is therefore proposed to integrate a programme of business and marketing support within the project to encourage visitors to the area; including those less visited areas of the District. The project will also ensure local businesses have the skills and knowledge to maximise the benefit from narrow boaters, cyclists and walkers visiting the area.
- 5.5 The project will be jointly delivered by the District Council and Canal & River Trust to maximise the impact for the area. As the owner of the canal and associated towpath the Canal & River Trust will be the lead organisation for the RDPE application, be responsible for delivery of all capital works and future ongoing maintenance of the scheme. The District Council will support this capital investment by leading on business support activities and marketing initiatives and providing local knowledge, feedback and information to the delivery of the capital infrastructure works.

- 5.6 To deliver the above activities the outline expenditure profile in Table 1. was submitted to the Rural Payments Agency.

**Table 1.** Outline Expenditure Profile

No	Item	Amount
1	Upgrading Towpath Works	£1,640,000
2	Signage and Way Marking	£30,000
3	Desmond Canoe Trail Infrastructure	£30,000
4	Improved Boater Facilities	£50,000
5	Marketing Support	£15,000
6	Business Support and Engagement	£10,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,775,000</b>

## 6. Project Funding Profile

- 6.1 To deliver the proposed activity as detailed in Table 1. an outline funding profile was submitted to the Rural Payments Agency as shown in Table 2. As part of the full application the project is required to confirm the final funding profile, including seeking agreement of complementary funding from partners.
- 6.2 The guidance document for the Growth Programme notes that, where possible, a partnership approach and the incorporation of additional funding will make a project more attractive through the project appraisal process.
- 6.3 As at POL.685/15-16 Members agreed to allocate up to £300,000 from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath corridor between Gargrave, Skipton and the Aire Valley.
- 6.4 To strengthen the quality of the project, and ultimately the chances of the full application being approved an 'in principle' contribution of £200,000 from the monies allocated by the District Council was included in the bid. Further to this the RPA was informed that this complementary funding was subject to formal confirmation by the District Council.
- 6.5 As the purpose of the funds previously allocated by the Council is to support future funding applications for the canal corridor it is recommended that, subject to the approval of the full application by the Rural Payments Agency, Members confirm a contribution of up to £200,000 from the New Homes Bonus to deliver the capital elements, including towpath works and signage, and this contribution is included in the Council's budget setting process for the financial year 2018/19.
- 6.6 It is also recommended that Members provide delegated authority to the Director of Services in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and Strategic Manager (Financial Services) to enter into a written agreement with the Canal & River Trust.
- 6.7 To ensure the District's businesses can maximise the opportunities afforded by the proposed capital investment it is recommended that a sum of £25,000 is confirmed

from the funds previously allocated in the New Homes Bonus to deliver business and marketing support as detailed in paragraph 5.4 and this is included in the Council's budget setting process for the financial year 2018/19.

- 6.8 In addition as at \$POL.807/16-17 Members agreed that the bid to the YNYER LEP Growth Deal should aim to improve connectivity between Broughton Road, the Railway Station and the town centre. Investment from this bid has been included as complementary funding.
- 6.9 As a result the outline income profile as shown in Table 2. was submitted to the Rural Payments Agency to deliver the proposed activity.

**Table 2.** Outline Income Profile

No	Source	Amount	Percentage of Total Project Cost	Notes
1	Rural Development Programme for England	£1,410,000	79.4%	CRT Bid
2	Craven District Council	£225,000	12.7%	New Homes Bonus POL.685/15-16
3	York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Growth Deal	£140,000	7.9%	Skipton Employment and Housing Project \$POL.807/16-17
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,775,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	

- 6.10 Although not identified in the above table additional in kind investment will be provided by Canal & River Trust through preparing funding bids, budget management and future maintenance of the improved infrastructure on their assets.

## 7. Outputs and Outcomes

- 7.1 Within the EoI the project was required to indicate the outputs that would be realised. As a visitor economy project the type of output required focused on visitor numbers, increased spend and new visitor infrastructure. In summary it was estimated that the project would achieve the following outputs which will be refined during the full application process:

- 13,500 linear metres of towpath improved;
- 15,000 annual visits to the canal;
- 40 businesses assisted;
- 5 marketing exercises undertaken;
- £350,000 economic benefit to the local economy.

**8. Project Consultation**

- 8.1 Through the development of the Access Development Plan consultation took place with a number of relevant organisations along the Canal Corridor.
- 8.2 Due to the scale of the activity proposed through this project and the range of users on the Canal network the District Council and Canal & River Trust will incorporate a series of consultation exercises into the project development process to ensure the needs of all users are considered in the final scheme.

**9. Timescales**

- 9.1 Following approval of the expression of interest the Canal & River Trust, with the support of the District Council, are required to submit a full application to the Rural Payments Agency by 1 September 2017 that includes the scope of works, need and demand, obtaining firm quotations and activities that will deliver the business support and marketing outputs.
- 9.2 Following submission of the full application the Rural Payments Agency then have up to 3 months to appraise and make a decision on the bid.
- 9.3 If the full application is approved it is proposed that project activity will be delivered between April 2018 and March 2019.

**10. Implications****10.1 Financial Implications**

- 10.2 As at POL.685/15-16 Policy Committee agreed to allocate a sum of up to £300,000 from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support future funding applications submitted by the Council and partner organisations to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath corridor between Gargrave, Skipton and the Aire Valley.
- 10.3 This report recommends confirming a contribution of up to £200,000 to the project from the Councils' New Homes Bonus. If, during project development process the scope of the project changes the Council's contribution would be adjusted to reflect the minimum amount of investment required for the project to go ahead.
- 10.4 In addition it is recommended that a further £25,000 is confirmed to deliver business and marketing support. Managed directly by the District Council this activity would be delivered through a procured arrangement to engage specialists as identified during the project development phase.
- 10.5 If Members were minded to approve the recommendations of this report officers would formalise the inclusion of the contribution in the 2018/19 budget through the completion of a growth bid as part of the annual budget setting process.

## 11. Legal Implications

- 11.1 Upon confirmation of the Canal & River Trust being awarded a grant from the RDPE Growth Programme the Council will enter into a written agreement with the Canal & River Trust for the payment of a financial contribution towards the capital works.
- 11.2 The agreement will detail the terms and conditions under which the Council's financial contribution is made with specific reference to work to be delivered, the maximum contribution available from the Council, that this financial contribution will not be increased and that the Council will not accept responsibility for any on-going maintenance on infrastructure not located on its assets.
- 11.3 The Council has power to enter into this agreement under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

## 12. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

- 12.1 The proposal in this report contributes to the delivery of the Council Plan (2017 – 2020) through the Enterprising Craven priority to improve the economic vitality of Craven's market towns and villages by improving access to and enjoyment of Craven's great heritage and culture.

## 13. Risk Management

- 13.1 There are no significant risks to the Council as a result of approving the recommendations in this report.
- 13.2 The Council's exposure to risk in this project is minimised through its role as a funding partner. As the applicant for the majority funding, the Canal & River Trust will be required to manage the project and associated funding in line with the terms, conditions and level of funding identified in the RDPE Growth Programme grant offer.

## 14. Equality Impact Assessment

- 14.1 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 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,

As a requirement of the RDPE application process equality impacts will be considered and assessed as the scheme is developed.

## 15. Consultations with Others

Financial Services, Legal Services

**16. Access to Information : Background Documents**

Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales RDPE  
Tourism Infrastructure Expression of Interest

**17. 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.

**17. Appendices**

None