

Report

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Report to:	Enterprise Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 September 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Enterprise Resources) Executive Director (Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership - Update
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Advise on progress made by the Partnership on the stage two application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF); and
- ◆ Seek approval for a Landscape Conservation Action Plan for the area and the extension of employee contracts for those supporting the project until the end of March 2012.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Council reaffirms its commitment to act as lead partner to the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership into its implementation phase
- (2) that the content of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan for the Clyde and Avon Valley be endorsed; and
- (3) that the extension of employee contracts to the end of March 2012 be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership Fund is a grants programme that awards grants of between £250,000 and £2million to partnerships of local, regional or national interest which seek to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK.
- 3.2. A bid was submitted by the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership led by the Council and comprised a raft of projects linked to the area's key landscape assets, such as the Clyde Valley Tourist Route, Chatelherault, New Lanark Heritage Site, Avon Valley, Falls of Clyde and the Clyde Valley National Nature Reserve.
- 3.3. The £2 million bid, entitled "Our People, Our Land, Our History: Shaping the Future", was approved by the HLF in April 2010. At its meeting in June 2010 the Committee noted the successful outcome of the bid and agreed the employee requirements associated with it.
- 3.4. As part of a two stage award process, £100,000 was initially released by HLF matched by a similar contribution from the Council to allow the development of a Landscape Conservation Action Plan. The submission deadline was the 22 August

2011 and a response from HLF is expected by the end of December 2011 allowing the Partnership to move to the implementation phase in April 2012. Subject to approval by HLF, the balance of £1.9million will be committed to deliver projects in years 2 to 5.

- 3.5. The total value of the initiative is approximately £5 million and the requirement to match the HLF contribution is being progressed through bids to a variety of funding sources and from partners. To date the Council has agreed to commit £100,000 to support the development year costs in 2010/2011, £150,000 for 2011/2012 and £125,000 in each of years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.

4. The Landscape Conservation Action Plan and Partnership Management Arrangements

- 4.1. The Landscape Conservation Action Plan was pulled together by the project team and submitted by the Council as the formal stage 2 applicant within the deadline set by HLF with the support of consultants, Land Use Consultants (LUC). The Committee is invited to endorse the content of the Action Plan which is summarised at Appendix 1. A full copy of the LCAP will be made available in the Members Group rooms. It has four operational programmes with the following themes:

- Natural nature reserves, private woodlands, orchards, built heritage and creating destinations
- Development of volunteer and community engagement programmes, including the promotion of arts and culture
- Physical access – improving linkages, accessing destinations and restoring historic routes : Intellectual access – supporting formal learning, providing information for wider audiences
- Training in conservation skills to address employability and support stewardship of key features of our landscape

- 4.2. With regard to Partnership management and administration arrangements, it is proposed that the Council continues to be Lead Partner and that the Rural Development Trust (RDT) provides the delivery service on its behalf including the employment of project staff. This has a number of benefits, most importantly the ability to claim HLF grant against administrative costs and attract other funds due to its charitable status.
- 4.3. It is proposed that the decision-making process and structure will be as operated throughout the development year, with the Board taking key strategic decisions on advice from both a Steering Group of partner officers and the Project Manager. The Council currently chairs the Board and the Steering Group has officer representation.
- 4.4. If it is agreed that the Council should continue to lead the Partnership, it will be responsible for the overall strategic management of the Clyde & Avon Valley Landscape Partnership Programme in terms of compliance and financial responsibility. The key roles for the Council as **Lead Partner** will include:
- Overseeing the management of the project finances; ensuring financial propriety, collation of funds from external sources including other partners in line with approved audit processes and HLF requirements, and acting as banker for the Partnership.
 - Ensuring appropriate and effective budgeting and accounting systems are in place for the management of the funds within the project through allocation of unique cost centres, codes etc.

- Internal audit and audit support for project funds including provision of annual audit certificate if required.
- Access to procurement, tender preparation advice and contract management support where appropriate.
- The submission of claims to HLF for funds awarded to the project.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. The employees supporting the project, two clerical assistants Grade 1 Level 4 working on a job share basis 17.5 hrs a week, are currently on fixed-term contracts with the Council until September 2011. Approval is sought to extend the contracts to 31 March 2012 to complete the development phase of the project. Thereafter, and subject to the approval of HLF funding, new management arrangements proposed (as detailed in section 4 above) will be adopted. Any personnel required for the implementation phase will be employed by RDT. One of the employees has the right to revert to a permanent post within the Council, while the other is employed on a temporary contract which will come to an end in March 2012

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications for the Council other than those already committed and set out at para. 3.4. The cost of extending the clerical post contracts until 31 March 2012 is £10,888.60, including on costs, and there are sufficient resources within the Partnership budget to accommodate this.
- 6.2. The task of seeking and securing match funding for the LCAP as a whole and for individual projects will be ongoing throughout the life of the Partnership due to the ever-changing funding environment. The proposal is to identify both strategic funding that will match fund specific project activity included in the stage two submission over a number of years, and to approach funding for other additional projects on an individual and/or year-by-year basis. This should provide a balance of longer-term secured funding whilst offering flexibility to target new funding sources as they become available. This would also allow the ability to develop projects that may have lengthy lead-in times before they can be implemented.

7. Other implications

- 7.1. It is anticipated that HLF will approve the stage 2 bid in December and that staffing required to assist in the implementation phase will be appointed thereafter. The risk is that staff with sufficient skills and expertise cannot be recruited. To mitigate against this, the posts will be advertised widely in national and local press and appropriate journals tailored towards landscape and heritage activity.
- 7.2. There is a risk that the required level of match funding is not secured. To overcome this risk a funding strategy is being developed to identify and maximise the resources and opportunities available to the Partnership. There is also the potential for a smaller project to be delivered should the full match funding not be secured which would result in a proportionally reduced award from HLF. In the unlikely event that no match funding is secured and the phase two funding from HLF withheld, staff recruited for the development year activity will have their temporary contracts terminated at that stage.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 8.2. Consultation has taken place with all Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape partners as appropriate and within local communities. Consultation has taken place with Trade Union representatives and affected employees.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director
(Enterprise Resources)

Robert McIlwain
Executive Director
(Corporate Resources)

18 August 2011

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

- Improve the quality of the physical environment
- Raise educational attainment for all
- Improve health and increase physical activity
- Increase participation in arts and culture
- Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for growth, improving skills and employability
- Efficient and effective use of resources
- Sustainable development

Previous references

- Report on the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership – Staffing Requirements Enterprise Resources Committee 2nd June 2010

Background papers

- Landscape Conservation Action Plan, August 2011

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Martin McManus, Rural Development Team, Regeneration Services

Ext: 3834 (Tel: 3848)

E-mail: martin.mcmanus@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Programme and Project Activity

Programme A: Natural Nature Reserves, private woodlands, orchards, built heritage, and creating destinations

Project activity will concentrate on physical works related to woodland management predominantly within designated sites, in particular Chatelherault, and work to support the development of orchards. Outreach work to engage with private landowners with a view to preparing a number of physical projects for implementation on the ground from year 2 onwards will also be developed.

Programme B: development of volunteer and community engagement programmes, including the promotion of Arts and Culture

Project activity will concentrate on a range of community engagement events in the development year. Project activity will also have an emphasis on developing a volunteer programme and creating a bank of volunteers for a range of activities over the Scheme period that will help deliver projects and provide volunteers with a range of learning and development opportunities.

Programme C: Physical Access - improving linkages, accessing destinations and restoring historic routes; Intellectual Access – supporting formal learning, providing information for wider audiences

Project activity will provide woodland paths related to, and complementing, the woodland management works within designated sites. This will also include project activity linking a historic route joining North and South Lanarkshire Council. Community involvement and participation is integral to all of this activity. Intellectual access will be provided through the development of a formal education programme developed by teachers seconded to the partnership.

Programme D: training in conservation skills to address employability and support stewardship of key features of our landscape.

Project activity will deliver key skills in horticulture and fruit tree management for orchard owners and the wider community, including community growing organisations. Training for special needs groups will be delivered by Clydesdale Community Initiative. Accredited training course in relevant skills (related to the physical projects identified) are being developed as a key element of this programme.

Programme E Running Costs, Overheads and Staffing.

Project activity to ensure that the office / team is established and equipped to develop, implement, manage and maintain the programme.