

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Mark Shelford, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 31st March 2018 (for single Member decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E3060
TITLE:	Chew Valley Recreational Trail	
WARD:	Chew Valley North, Chew Valley South, Mendip	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: N/a		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Approval of £50,000 capital funding identified in the B&NES Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the development of this project, to enable the Council to submit an application for a 100% grant from the Rural Development programme for England (RDPE), Rural Growth Programme's Rural Tourism Infrastructure fund, for the construction of the Chew Valley Recreational Trail.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Members are asked to;

- 2.1 Approve £50,000 for the development of this project to enable the Council to submit a funding application to the RDPE Rural Tourism Infrastructure fund.
- 2.2 Approve £50,000 of the £180,000 provisional capital programme entry for 'Highways Schemes (CIL)', for use on the Chew Valley Recreational Trail scheme in the 2018/19 capital programme.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 An Expression of Interest to the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Rural Growth Programme was submitted 02.02.18. This has been successful and the Council have now been invited to submit a full application for the £1,031,451. 100% grant from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure fund.
- 3.2 The funding for that approval is sought for is identified in the B&NES Infrastructure Delivery Plan. As CIL is for 'funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of the infrastructure' it can include use for landowner agreements and legal costs associated.

- 3.3 Responsibility for future maintenance of the route also needs to be agreed before submitting the funding application. Bath and North East Somerset Council would not be responsible for the maintenance. It is currently proposed to set up a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for this purpose. Business Case for this will be required.
- 3.4 In the event that either the funding application is unsuccessful, or the land negotiations are unsuccessful, there is a risk that the project cannot progress and would revert to revenue. (See 5.3 & 5.4 below).

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Planning permission is a requirement of the RDPE application process and so consideration of equalities, sustainability, and natural environment will be carried out through this process.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 An Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Rural Growth Programme was submitted 02.02.18. This has been successful and the Council have now been invited to submit a full application for £1,031,451.00 100% grant from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure fund.
- 5.2 This project will create a recreational off-road circular walking and cycling route of regional significance around the Chew Valley Lake and open up this natural amenity for all whilst providing significant benefit to the rural economy and local communities.
- 5.3 The £50,000 funding identified in the B&NES Infrastructure Delivery Plan for this project is for the development phase, including landowner agreements and legal costs, engineering drawings and ecological and other surveys. These are required as part of the planning application and landowner agreements that are requirements of the RDPE application. It is recognised that the landowner negotiation cost can only be repaid out of CIL if they are successful and lead to securing the necessary rights over land. Sustrans have agreed to progress the land negotiation on behalf of the Council at their risk.
- 5.4 In the event that the land negotiations are not successful, it will not be possible for the scheme to go ahead in its current form. There is also the risk that the funding bid will not be successful. In both of these cases there is a revenue reversion risk.
- 5.5 A pre-planning application has been submitted.
- 5.6 The Council have worked in partnership with Bristol Water, Sustrans, West of England Rural Network and the Mendip Hills AONB in preparation for the EOI and will continue to do this during the funding application submission process.
- 5.7 Prior to the EOI being submitted a feasibility study was carried out by Sustrans which summarises the preferred and alternative routes section by section, describing the existing conditions, itemising issues with risk, priorities and indicative cost ranges.
- 5.8 The primary market for the circular route (approximately 7 miles of gentle gradients) would be for family groups & less experienced leisure cyclists who would be prepared to break their journeys at specific destination/points of interest or at local businesses.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 Through providing an accessible, well-constructed and all-weather route, in addition to providing a recreational route for the local community, tourists will come to the area and

will increase usage of local facilities such as pubs, restaurants and shops in addition to creating demand for new businesses such as cycle hire facilities. Due to its proximity to major urban settlements the diverse audience that this route will attract, these rural businesses will be able to increase and maintain their activity throughout the year.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Council have worked in partnership with Bristol Water, Sustrans, West of England Rural Network and the Mendip Hills AONB in preparation for the EOI and will continue to do this during the funding application submission process.

8.2 The Chew Valley Transport Strategy includes an action to progress the Chew Valley Lake route. The Parish Councils surrounding the lake have completed & adopted Neighbourhood Plans all of which note the importance to the local area of a circular route around the lake. These plans have all been created by consultation & then adopted by the local community through referenda.

8.3 The local Councillors have received regular updates from the Green Infrastructure Coordinator in Environment.

8.4 The Council Section 151 Officer has been consulted on this report.

8.5 The Council Monitoring Officer has been consulted on this report.

8.6 Cllr Mark Shelford, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport has been consulted on this report.

8.7 Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency has been consulted on this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	<i>Alison Sherwin 01225 394406</i>
Background papers	<i>N/a</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	