

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	9.
Date:	12 th December 2011	Status	Open
Subject:	Limestone Journeys Partnership Agreement		
Report by:	Head of Leisure		
Other Officers Involved	Outdoor Recreation Officer Special Projects Officer Arts Development Officer Head of Planning Principle Solicitor		
Director	Director of Health and Wellbeing		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor A. Syrett Portfolio holder for Social Inclusion		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities

Contribute to improving the health of the District. Develop vibrant town centres. Develop flourishing rural communities.

SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning

Ensure all our services are provided in a fair and equitable manner. Promote the development of skills and learning within communities.

ENVIRONMENT – Promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment

Protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way.

TARGETS

To assist a project which hopes to make Bolsover area's landscape heritage become more relevant, inclusive, accessible and enjoyable for the local and wider communities and to drive economic and social regeneration in an area with high levels of deprivation.

VALUE FOR MONEY

This is a £1.9m Heritage Lottery Fund Partnership Scheme running from 2011 to 2016. There is very little actual cash match from BDC towards the projects detailed within the action plan.

THE REPORT

Background

The Limestone Journeys Scheme is a £1.9m Heritage Lottery Fund Partnership Scheme running from 2011 to 2016. The accountable body of the

Limestone Journeys Scheme is Creswell Heritage Trust, who have entered into the initial Grant Agreement pursuant to which, funding has been provided to the Creswell Heritage Trust by the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

The Partnership, which is led by Creswell Heritage Trust and made up of, Bolsover Countryside Partnership, Bolsover District Council, Community & Voluntary Partners, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, The Forestry Commission, FWAG, Groundwork Creswell, Junction Arts, National Trust and Natural England has previously been successful in gaining funding from HLF for a year of development work. This grant has covered the production and development of a document called, the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP). The LCAP has been developed in conjunction with the Partnership, through their representatives on the Steering Group and in conjunction with the local community through a long term programme of consultation and engagement. Now that the Limestone Journeys bid has been successful, this document represents the 'operating manual' for the Heritage Lottery funded Scheme from January 2011 to December 2016.

Limestone Journeys' strategic aims are to:

- Conserve the natural and heritage features of the Derbyshire magnesian limestone landscape for future generations and to act as drivers for tourism and regeneration
- Enhance engagement between the local community and their natural and cultural surroundings
- Enable people of all abilities to access the natural landscape and the cultural heritage of their local area
- Empower people to have a positive influence on the landscape by developing new skills which will facilitate positive activity post scheme

Limestone Journeys' objectives are to:

- Deliver projects which will conserve and enhance key species, habitats and heritage features
- Involve, educate and attract the local community with activities celebrating their landscape and heritage
- Create and improve facilities and access routes between the local community, visitors and heritage sites
- Provide training opportunities, courses and placements in relevant traditional and conservation skills

BDC Involvement to Date

Limestone Journeys as a potential project has grown out of the Bolsover Countryside Partnership. The Head of Leisure Services attended the early Limestone Journeys meetings of approx 2/3 years ago at which time focus was placed on countryside and public footpath network projects. Considerable cash funding was being sought from BDC and DCC towards the overall Heritage Lottery Fund bid. It was explained at that time that this would not be possible and neither Authority were able to give this commitment of the considerable cash match.

After this initial work, Creswell Heritage Trust became the lead organisation and with the guidance of the Heritage Lottery Fund work began on refocusing the scheme on landscape and interpretation projects. The Trust again approached BDC and DCC for partnership funding, with more emphasis being placed on in kind match funding rather than cash from partners.

Following the success of the Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative and the Trust's involvement in the THI partnership, a report was taken to the Initiative Committee in October 2009 on the proposed Limestone Journeys scheme. At this stage, it was reported that the first stage Landscape Partnership bid had been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund in April 2009 and that the development stage was underway and Landscape Conservation Action Plan would be published in June / July 2010. At this meeting, it was noted that Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative projects, such as the repair and restoration of the former Station Building and improving the public realm around it, would complement the work of the Landscape Partnership. The Committee resolved that the positive linkages between the Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative and Limestone Journeys and the shared core objectives between both schemes should be recognised. As a result some of the projects within the Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative which encompassed the Creswell Station Hub where offered up to the Limestone Journeys scheme as match funding, this was specified as £91,000 of Public Realm Improvements funding along with some Planning Services staffing time as match. In addition and amongst others, a number of Pleasley Vale outdoor activity centre projects helped build the match funding that was required for the bid to be successful.

In view of this ongoing partnership working, staff from both the Leisure and Planning Departments attended the meetings during the development stage in an advisory role only and provided updates on progress and funding situation for a number of the Council's ongoing projects

This agreement is being put into place in order formalise the working and funding arrangements between The Accountable Body and the Delivery Agents.

The Creswell Heritage Trust received approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Limestone Journeys in September 2010. Following approval, the Trust

has advertised and recruited a number of staff earlier this year and from March 2011 work has begun on Year 1 projects.

Our Authority were approached in August this year to sign up and commit to a formal Joint Working Agreement relating to the Limestone Journeys Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP). It was at this time that it became apparent that staff resources within our Planning Department had recently been reprioritised to enable the production of the Core Strategy. In addition, it was recognised that the Creswell Station project has been frustrated by the difficulties in reaching an acceptable resolution to the land ownership issues and the loss of funding from the LEADER Programme following the change of government. It was communicated to the Trust that at this stage, the Council has pulled out of negotiations until the landowner adopts a more realistic value for their site. Therefore the best that could be hoped for with regard to the £91,000 match funding attached to the project, was that this may possibly be re-profiled later in the Limestone Journeys 5 year programme.

The agreement and associated documentation and information were circulated to our legal team for their opinion and advice at the time which resulted in the following questions being raised;

In addition to the obligation to contribute to the aims of the scheme, there are certain provisions which give rise to potential financial obligations.

- ***Para 9.2.6** provides that the Council and other parties will provide funding at a specified level, presumably to be agreed separately. Has this been agreed already? If so, have we determined what amount, if any, we may have to contribute for the duration of the scheme or could this be subject to review?*
- ***Para 9.2.11** also places a limit on liability of 125% of the specified funding. Has this potential additional cost been factored in (if any), and insurance provision made accordingly?*
- *Also, **para 10.6** makes each party delivering a project liable to account for any overspend. Has this possibility been taken into account? If we deliver a project and there is an overspend we must have the necessary means to bear that overspend.*
- *The potential financial implications (of **9.2.6** and **10.6** in particular) have a significant bearing on the relevant route for approval for this agreement. If these possible financial costs are already incorporated into the budget and policy framework the decision can be taken by Executive. If these possible costs have not been included in the framework it will be necessary to get formal approval from Council.*

Due to the amount of match funding that we had previously hoped to add to the bid/programme in conjunction with questions raised by our legal team –

this has unfortunately resulted in delays in getting a report before SAMT and Executive.

Current situation

Working with the Limestone Journeys Manager and team we have successfully identified a number of other opportunities for match funding which has enabled us to withdraw the £91,000 Creswell Station Hub match funding from the Limestone Journeys project completely.

With regard to questions raised by legal which were fed back along with similar questions raised by other organisations including DCC, some work has since been undertaken to make sign up less onerous for the partner organisations.

It is proposed to change the project proforma (which partners complete) to be relevant to each year of the plan only - limiting the liability to that year's business plan and that project.

Now that the vast majority of our contribution/match to the programme has been removed (£91,000 Creswell Station Hub) the risk associated with signing this agreement has been dramatically reduced.

The involvement from BDC officers and services now centre around the delivery of projects commissioned by the Limestone Journeys Scheme to help achieve the scheme objectives - conserving, enhancing and promoting the distinctive landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity of the Magnesian Limestone landscape. The contribution that is made by our organisation to the projects are made up of project management and in kind match funding.

Below are the proposed projects which BDC officers are being commissioned to deliver during the first years of the scheme;

Project title	Our contribution	LJ funding
Extreme wheels	£1700 in kind	£5523 HLF
Naturally Positive	£500 in kind	£2585 HLF
Naturally Active	£500 in kind	£4113 HLF
Limestone warriors	£500 in kind	£2585 HLF
Bushcraft	£500 in kind	£2700 HLF

Bolsover Choir competition	Project management and income generated via the Brass contest (previously paid for whole event)	This funding brings additionality to an existing event which allows us to do more £5000 HLF
Bolsover Brass Summer School	Project management and income generated via sales	This funding brings additionality to an existing event which allows us to do more £4950 HLF
Cultural Festival	Matched against the month long festival which contains many events/ shows/ celebrations/ performances etc.	This funding brings additionality to an existing event which allows us to do more £5000 HLF

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- This is a £1.9m Heritage Lottery Fund Partnership Scheme running from 2011 to 2016, the aim of the Scheme is to deliver projects which will conserve, enhance and promote the distinctive landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity of the Magnesian Limestone landscape of the northern part of Bolsover District.
- This is a wide Partnership, which includes Creswell Heritage Trust , Bolsover Countryside Partnership, Community & Voluntary Partners, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, The Forestry Commission, Groundwork Creswell, Junction Arts, National Trust and Natural England.
- The withdrawal of the £91,000 Creswell Station Hub match funding from the Limestone Journeys project has drastically reduced the Authority's risk associated with the signing of this agreement when considering the legal queries detailed earlier in the report.
- Project proformas now only relate to each single year of the plan, therefore limiting the liability detailed in the earlier section (9.2.6, 9.2.11, 10.6 of the Joint Working Agreement) to that year's projects.
- There is very little actual cash match from BDC towards the projects and delivery of the projects - sessions/activities/events, will only be delivered if the HLF funding is provided.
- The majority of the projects detailed have been priced/costed at commercial rates, therefore there will be an income stream to the Authority as a result of the profit margin that has been built in.
- Project management income for our Authority will also be generated from some of the programmes.

- Now that the Limestone Journeys bid has been successful and formal partnership arrangements are being sought, the Council needs to consider whether to sign up to the partnership agreement and also agree its representation on the committee or group that oversee the running of the project.

RECOMMENDATION

The Head of Leisure recommends that the Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of the Council, signs up to the agreement to help ensure the aims and objectives of the Partnership and scheme are realised for the benefit of the communities within the Bolsover District.

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

To help improve the access to the District's landscape heritage in an inclusive, relevant and enjoyable way which will assist with the economic and social regeneration in an area with high levels of multiple deprivation.

ATTACHMENTS: None
FILE REFERENCE: None
SOURCE DOCUMENT: Background papers held by the Head of Leisure.