

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET MEMBER MEETING – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

1 October 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**OFFER OF CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT SCHEME
GRANT FOR THE CROMFORD CANAL**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval to accept an offer of Grant Aid from Natural England towards the costs of managing the Cromford Canal.

(2) **Information and Analysis** As a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Cromford Canal is eligible to be considered for grant aid from Natural England towards the general management costs of the canal. Following discussions with Natural England, it has made a grant offer to the Authority. The offer covers a number of elements of canal management and is for 50% of the total cost of carrying out the work. The offer is for a period of five years, however, because of the uncertainty of public funding beyond 2013/14 for future years, Natural England can only make the offer in principle and will have to confirm the availability of funding each year.

The grant offer can be split into three elements:

The first is for vegetation management, for example, reed clearance, bankside vegetation cutting and reinforcement and control of Himalayan Balsam. This is work already carried out by Countryside Staff and the offer is for an annual contribution of £7,750 per annum for five years.

The second is for tree management. The Canal Management Plan has identified a need to reduce shading of the canal to encourage aquatic vegetation and this requires a rolling programme of tree management. Natural England has made an offer of £5,200 per annum. This work is also currently carried out by countryside staff, however, the contribution will allow us to use contractors in some areas, next to the railway for example, where specialist contractors are required.

The final element is for one-off items of work. The current offer includes:

- 1) Preparation of a Woodland Plan to guide the process of tree management and simplify the process of obtaining the necessary approvals - £1,500 in 2013/14.
- 2) Restoration of sluice mechanism in the mill yard - £7,688.27 in 2013/14.
- 3) Vegetation control at Gregory's tunnel - £2,500 spread across 2013/14/15.

Match funding for these items can be found within the approved revenue budget.

Natural England has also indicated that it would be prepared to offer grant aid to works to resolve a long standing leak at Simms Bridge. However, this project is still to be detailed and will be the subject of a future report.

(3) Financial Considerations The offer from Natural England is:

Item	Total Cost over 5 years (£)	Natural England Contribution (£)				
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Vegetation Control	77,500	7,750	7,750	7,750	7,750	7,750
Tree thinning	52,000	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200
Work on mill sluices	15,376.54	7,688.27				
Woodland report	3,000		1,500			
vegetation control Gregorys tunnel	5,000	1,250	1,250			
Totals		21,888.27	15,700	12,950	12,950	12,950
Total Grant Offer						76,438.27

The offer of grant would be added to the revenue budget for the canal and the contribution towards the work on the sluices (£7,688.27) will be transferred to the capital programme for the work as a Revenue Contribution to Capital Expenditure (RCCE).

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity,

human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(4) **Key Decision** No.

(5) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(6) **Background Papers** None. Officer contact details – Chris Coombs, extension 39821.

(7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That:

7.1 The total offer of grant aid from Natural England of £76,438.27 over a five year period, subject to Natural England contributing annually be accepted and added to the revenue budget.

7.2 The £7,688.27 contribution to the work on the mill sluices be transferred to the capital programme 2013/14 as a revenue contribution to Capital.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services