

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

3 December 2013

Report of the Acting Director - Environmental Services

**REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROGRESSING
RESTORATION OF THE CHESTERFIELD CANAL**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To update the Cabinet Member on revised arrangements for progressing the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal, working with the Chesterfield Canal Partnership, and to propose restoration priorities to be pursued with Partners as part of the County Council's overall approach to Waterway development in the County.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

The Chesterfield Canal Partnership (CCP) is a cross-regional advisory partnership. It consists of a membership drawn from the statutory, non-statutory and voluntary bodies that have an interest in the restoration and development of the Chesterfield Canal.

Current Local Authority partners include Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, with further representation from the Canal and Rivers Trust, Chesterfield Canal Trust, Inland Waterways Association and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

The Partnership's aims include:

- To restore the Chesterfield Canal to full navigation using, wherever possible, the historic route.
- To promote the sustainable economic and social regeneration of the Chesterfield Canal corridor in order to improve the quality of life in the surrounding communities.

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A CCP Development Manager, jointly funded by Partners, was hosted for a number of years by Derbyshire County Council. On 1 June 2012, hosting arrangements were transferred to Chesterfield Borough Council. At the same time, a Countryside Project Officer (Waterways) was recruited to Derbyshire County Council to work on waterways priorities across the County and to develop a County Waterway's Strategy. This Strategy will be presented to the Cabinet Member shortly as a draft for consultation. This will then provide the overall strategic context and focus for future work on the County Council's waterway assets.

On 31 August 2013, the CCP Development Manager resigned his position at the Borough Council and, in light of insufficient on-going funding, the Partnership agreed at its meeting on 8 October 2013 to continue from this date on an unstaffed basis. In this context, previous assistance provided by the Development Manager to drive forward project priorities and coordinate between Partners will now rest with constituent Partners.

Since July 2011, and in relation to the Chesterfield Canal, the County Council's Countryside Project Officer (Waterways) has been prioritised to work on:

- Project development specification/ brief/ and budget control for specified projects.
- Project Management with Derbyshire County Council's Reclamation team.
- Identifying and developing funding streams.
- Liaison with partners/ stakeholders on practical project implementation.

With regard to the specific priorities for the Chesterfield Canal, the scope of future project development to restore and reconnect the Canal to the national network is now clearly defined through design work carried out by the County Council's Highways Management – Design team in conjunction with the former Partnership Development Manager. The publication of 'Next Navigation' documents by the Partnership now defines the practical details for project delivery.

With these two documents in place, any future bids for external funding will be supported by clearly defined policy and plans.

To facilitate delivery, it is important that Partners continue to work together towards the same objectives. It is also apparent that to realise the full potential of restoration to benefit wider economic regeneration, the project would benefit from increased cross functional working within the County Council itself. In particular drawing together the wide expertise of Reclamation

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engineers, Regeneration specialists and Countryside project officers would better support the opportunities that canal restoration can bring.

A 'Project Delivery Group' for the Chesterfield Canal in Derbyshire has therefore been established comprising these teams, led by the County Council's Assistant Director – Planning and Environment.

Four initial priorities are identified:

- Securing land ownership and planning permissions for the whole of the Derbyshire length of canal.
- Development of Staveley Town Basin to realise the economic and regeneration potential of this site, provide a development node for further investment and return financial benefits to the management of the existing waterway.
- Extension of the waterway north and south from Renishaw to maximise the economic benefit of the unfinished restoration of that stretch of water and to minimise current limitations of that site.
- Seeking funding opportunities to support delivery of the above.

Progressing work on these priorities will be subject to further reports.

To maintain coordination with other Partners and stakeholders, existing communication forums will continue (involving, in particular, the Chesterfield Canal Trust). Involvement of Partners would also be sought in the Project Delivery Group as necessary. Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council have agreed to support this.

The Project Delivery Group will also provide feedback on progress to each meeting of the CCP Executive Steering Group (ESG), which will meet twice per year.

It is expected that progress in Rotherham and Nottinghamshire will similarly be brought to the CCP ESG in order that learning can be shared across Authority boundaries and progress towards the wider 'Vision' of the CCP maintained.

By reinforcing project delivery structures in this way it is hoped that the foreseen shift of the CCP from strategic priorities to more practical delivery can be facilitated.

(3) **Financial Considerations** There are no direct financial implications for the above. It is noted, however, that the opportunity to negotiate funding opportunities with other Partners may exist. This will be subject to further reports as appropriate.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** There are no direct human resource implications from the above. It is noted, however, that the Countryside Project Officer (Waterways) remains on a temporary contract until July 2014. Should it not be possible to secure further funding for this post, then dedicated Project Officer time to progress delivery priorities, will no longer be available.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

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

(7) **Background Papers** None. Officer contact details – Martin Dowson, extension 39826.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

- 8.1 Notes and welcomes the changes to the context of the Chesterfield Canal Partnership.
- 8.2 Welcomes the strengthened role for Derbyshire in leading the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal from Chesterfield to Killamarsh, through a geographically-focused project delivery working group, seeking support from partners, including Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, as appropriate.
- 8.3 Supports the priorities identified to support the above which will form part of the emerging Derbyshire Waterways Strategy.
- 8.4 Supports the ongoing input of the County Council to the Chesterfield Canal Partnership Executive Steering Group to steer priorities and identify further opportunities working with partners.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services