

Agenda Item No.6(e)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

17 May 2018

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

CLOWNE BRANCH LINE ERDF FUNDING AWARD (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION)

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To seek Cabinet approval:
- (i) to authorise the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment to accept a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant funding award, on receipt of a formal Funding Agreement contract and to add this to the Capital Programme.
 - (ii) to undertake a procurement exercise for the delivery of the project.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The Cabinet Member – Council Services, on 18 June 2013, considered a joint report of the Director of Property and the Director of Environmental Services (Minute No.7/13 refers), and permission was granted to acquire 7.4km of the former Clowne Branch Line between Seymour Junction and Creswell and to seek funding to develop the route as a multi-user Greenway.

The land transfer from Network Rail to Derbyshire County Council was completed on 29 May 2014.

This project will remove dereliction on 16.4ha of former mineral railway and associated land and improve 13.7ha of mixed habitat (exceeding Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2) target by 2ha) in line with the Council's ambition to protect and enhance the biodiversity and wildlife interests of the County.

Over the last 40 years, the Council has developed a network of traffic free green corridors to support Green Infrastructure and easy access across the County. The development of the Clowne Branch Line as a Greenway will fill a significant gap in this network between the Archaeological Way and the Trans Pennine Trail, providing a direct route for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooters between the communities of Creswell, Clowne and Woodthorpe, as well as the Markham Vale Employment Growth Zone (MEGZ) at Seymour. Furthermore, it will provide the missing connectivity to the

Creswell Crags candidate World Heritage Site, Welbeck Estate and Clumber Park and, as such, is integral to the aims and ambitions outlined in the emerging Destination Plan for North East Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire - Visit, Sleep, Cycle Repeat, which also gained recent external funding from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and Local Transport Plan (LTP) support.

This project, together with the Archaeological Way, will also provide a major part of the emerging Bolsover Loop, a 51km cycle route around the district of Bolsover, intended to be marketed to attract greater visitor numbers, overnight stays and tourism based revenue for the regeneration of the immediate area. A plan of the route is set out in Appendix A. The Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment will accept the grant on the behalf of the Council.

The proposal is aligned with the strategic developments and key principles identified within the Council's Plan, the Derbyshire LTP, the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the East Derbyshire Greenway Strategy and the Derbyshire Cycling Plan 2016-2030. The route will form a significant addition to the emerging Derbyshire Key Cycle Network.

Approval is subject to undertake a procurement exercise for the delivery of the Clowne Greenway Project by 31 March 2020, in line with the European funding award.

(3) Financial Considerations

ERDF

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government has approved, in principle, an award of £584,730 (in principle/subject to contract) from a Priority Axis 6 ERDF Bid through the European Single Investment Fund Programme. Approved by the D2N2 Infrastructure & Investment Board and the ERDF Managing Authority Investment Decision Group, the Council was notified by letter, dated 1 February 2018. The award is subject to the Council signing a funding Agreement Contract. This ERDF grant requires match funding on a 1:1 basis.

LTP

An allocation for the Clowne Branch Line of £250,000 per year for three years was approved by Cabinet on 14 March 2017 in the 2017-18 Service Plan (Minute No. 90/17 refers), from which match funding for the ERDF grant can be met. The Council, on 4 April 2017, wrote to the Department for Communities and Local Government (now Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) confirming that the Council has approved the match funding required against this award.

This investment by the County Council warrants support and commitment from the local planning authorities to seek Section 106 funds through new development within the area. It is intended to seek such funding contributions towards new infrastructure provision and associated maintenance requirements via the allocated housing growth areas within Bolsover District and Chesterfield Borough.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The Director of Legal Services will advise on the funding Agreement. The procurement for the delivery of the Clowne Greenway Project will be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contract Procurement Regulations 2015 and the Council's Financial Regulations.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** The project is to be managed through existing staffing resources within Derbyshire County Council's Highways Division and Countryside Service.

(6) **Social Value Considerations** The Clowne Branch was primarily constructed to serve the coal field and opened in 1875 and ran passenger services from 1888, with the last on 18 August 1962. This track has severed the town of Clowne with an unused physical barrier for the last 56 years. Anti-social activity has flourished along the corridor making it an unsafe, unsightly and unusable resource for members of the public. Since the Council acquired the site, the Community has become widely involved in the transformational opportunity this development brings the town.

The development of the Clowne Branch Line will deliver a significant section of the Derbyshire Key Cycle Network, to improve the sustainable transport offer and promote recreation and tourism within some of the most deprived electoral wards in the County. The path shall be constructed to provide a high quality, free draining all weather surface, constructed from onsite material and a recycled wearing course. Access for all design and easy access barriers shall allow for the use of mobility scooters.

The scheme is designed to promote car free journeys, reduce inactivity, promote healthy living and contribute towards the visitor offer to support the regeneration of the area. The project will remove dereliction and recreate a public open site with improved natural capita and a diverse mosaic of wildlife habitat.

Other Considerations

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

(7) **Key Decision** Yes.

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

(9) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details - Anna Chapman, extension 39653.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet:

- 10.1 Authorises the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment to accept the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant of £584,730 on receipt of a formal funding contract.
- 10.2 Approves the addition of £584,730 European Regional Development Fund grant funding to the Capital Programme 2017-18.
- 10.3 Approves the virement of up to a total of £584,730 of match funding from the relevant Local Transport Plans to a dedicated project for the administration of ERDF eligible expenditure.
- 10.4 Approves that a procurement exercise be undertaken for the delivery of the Clowne Greenway Project which is identified as a named project within the approved 2017-18 Service Plan.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

