

Agenda Item No. 7(n)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

24 March 2015

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

CHESTERFIELD CANAL – STAVELEY TOWN BASIN – STAVELEY TOWN LOCK (PHASE 3) (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

(1) **Purpose of Report** To advise Cabinet of an offer of grant from Veolia Environmental Trust in the sum of £37,500 as contribution toward Staveley Town Lock (Phase 3) and to seek approval for the re-allocation to the project of £50,000 from Reclamation Capital budget and for a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Chesterfield Canal Trust (CCT).

(2) **Information and Analysis** The Chesterfield Canal extends for 46 miles from Chesterfield in Derbyshire to West Stockwith in Nottinghamshire, passing through South Rotherham and linking the East Midlands with South Yorkshire. Of its total length, 37 miles of canal is restored, navigable and open to public use. However, 9 miles from Staveley to Kiverton Park remains derelict. This missing link in the waterway prevents opening up of the entire canal corridor. Such restoration would assist the creation of long term sustainable employment directly linked to the canal, through the restoration and subsequent operation, and within the wider economy through promotion of tourism and the provision of opportunity for commercial, office and residential development uses.

An economic assessment study by Gibb Ltd in 2001 concluded that up to 1200 jobs could be created and supported in association with the canal, once restoration is complete. Restoration of the canal would provide a catalyst for the sustainable economic and social regeneration of the canal corridor, would protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage within north east Derbyshire and would improve the quality of life in surrounding communities, through provision of both jobs and recreational opportunity.

Over the past 20 years, the Council has achieved full restoration of over 5 continuous miles of the canal linking Chesterfield to Staveley. The towpath on this length is now designated as part of the local, national and European trails networks. All this has been achieved by working closely with both neighbouring authorities and volunteers from the Chesterfield Canal Trust.

A Memorandum of Understanding ('MOU') was completed between CCT and the Council in February 2012, permitting CCT 'free' navigational use of the canal in exchange for their assistance in the practical management of the restored navigable length of waterway. However, this MOU is not sufficiently expansive to cover the ongoing or future extensive construction work.

At the Staveley Basin site, the CCT has been engaged in significant restoration activity. The vast majority of new lock and downstream wash walling within the basin site has been constructed by trust volunteers. The Council has contributed approximately 50% toward material and equipment cost incurred by the CCT. Further extensive construction work is planned throughout 2015 and it is now considered that a new MOU is required to clearly define the relationship between the Council and CCT with respect to finances and clearance, restoration and construction works.

The Staveley Basin site was acquired as part of the land portfolio assembled for the Markham Employment Growth Zone (Markham Vale) project. Staveley Northern Loop Road was completed to the north of the basin site in 2010, with Staveley Basin itself being constructed within the curve of the loop road in 2011-12. Since early 2013, the lock site has been the hub of ongoing construction work, principally by CCT volunteers who have now completed a substantial portion of the lock walling, together with much (40%) of the downstream wharf walling. Volunteers have accrued some 7,600 volunteer hours at the basin site since March 2013. The Council contracted construction of two bridge abutment walls in early summer 2014.

During 2015, it is intended that the core elements of lock and downstream wharf walling be completed by CCT volunteers and that tenders be invited and a contract subsequently awarded by the Council for the design, fabrication and installation of new lock gates, paddles and associated lock 'furniture'. All works are planned to complete the lock and bring it into use by December 2015.

A budget allocation of £25,000 was approved in the 2014-15 Economy, Transport and Environment Service Plan to support development of the Chesterfield Canal at Staveley Town Basin. This has, in part, been spent on design and supervisory input for works associated with Phase 2 and 4 of the canal lock construction. There remains much work to be done to complete Phases 2 and 4 of the lock construction, and further expenditure is anticipated from this budget allocation to complete the work.

A separate £50,000 budget allocation was approved in the same 2014/15 Service Plan to support "other" miscellaneous projects within the Council's Derelict Land Reclamation Programme. This sum presently remains uncommitted and it is recommended that this is allocated towards this Canal project.

An application was submitted to Veolia Environmental Trust in June 2014 seeking financial support towards the costs of new lock gates, paddles, sluices and associated lock furniture at Staveley Town Lock. This specialist work was identified as Phase 3 of the Canal Lock construction.

Veolia confirmed its full grant offer in the sum of £37,500 and the grant offer was accepted in 2014. Tenders will be invited for the Phase 3 work and the Council will be required to enter into a formal funding agreement with Veolia following tender review and confirmation of the preferred contractor within four months of the offer date.

There is a requirement that the lock is brought into use within 18 months of the Veolia offer date, so there is a need to press ahead with Phases 2 and 4 of construction work at the lock site too, in order to comply with the terms of the grant offer. It is recommended that the existing budget allocation be directed towards this work.

Much of this work will be carried out by CCT volunteers, under supervision of the Council. Approval is sought to enter into a further MOU with CCT to recognise the ongoing partnership working for the joint undertaking of work associated with the restoration of Chesterfield Canal and through provision of financial support towards material and equipment costs incurred by the Trust in the undertaking of construction of new Council asset from the Reclamation Capital budget.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Approval is sought to the re-allocation of £50,000 of uncommitted Reclamation Capital, currently allocated to the support of 'other' projects within the Economy, Transport and Environment 2014-15 Service Plan, to support the grant offer.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The Director of Legal Services will advise in relation to the MOU between the Council and CCT.

(5) **Property Considerations** Staveley Basin site has been in the freehold ownership of the County Council since June 2006 and planning permission for construction of the basin and associated lock and bridge structures was granted in 2010.

On completion of lock and downstream wharf construction at Staveley Town Basin, the Countryside Service will have management responsibility for the extended 'in water' section of canal. This will be managed within existing Countryside resources, subject to reprioritisation from other sites and activities.

Other Considerations

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

(6) **Key Decision** No.

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

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Chris Beech, extension 35418.

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

- 9.1 Acknowledges the offer of grant of £37,500 from Veolia Environmental Trust and approves the re-allocation of £50,000 of uncommitted Reclamation Capital, currently allocated to the support of 'other' projects within the 2014-15 Service Plan, to support the grant offer.
- 9.2 Authorises the Director of Legal Services to negotiate, prepare and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the County Council and the Chesterfield Canal Trust for the joint undertaking of work associated with the restoration of Chesterfield Canal, and through provision of financial support, towards material and equipment costs incurred by the Trust in the undertaking of construction of the new Council asset from the Reclamation Capital budget.
- 9.3 Notes that responsibility for ongoing maintenance will rest with the Derbyshire Countryside Service.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment