CABINET SPOKESPERSON FOR PLACE

Record of a decision taken on 01.04.2020

Subject – Little Don Project Acceptance of Grant Funding

In 2013 Barnsley Council committed to creating a bridleway route from the Sheffield Border near Underbank Reservoir to Langsett and beyond to Dunford Bridge as part of a Department of Transport Funding project called Pedal Peak (in conjunction with Peak District National Park Authority). Phase 1 was completed with that funding in 2015 but there was insufficient funding to complete the rest of the project. The PROW team have been searching for alternative funding to complete Phase 2 along the dismantled railway line westwards from Underbank Reservoir parallel with the A616. This is currently a permissive footpath and part of the Barnsley Boundary Walk. We have received a grant offer of £476,734.00 from the Rural Development Programme for England (2014-2020).

This project will help to provide off road sustainable and active travel options for residents and visitors on foot, horse, bicycle and mobility scooter to go between Stocksbridge and Sheffield to Langsett and beyond. This will help to reduce parking issues, pollution and congestion along the A616 and particularly through the clean air zone at Langsett.
It will form a circular route for leisure users including the Trans Pennine Trail which will aid tourism, benefit the rural economy and farm diversification projects in the south west of the borough.

It improves road safety because it connects a network of footpaths and bridleways that currently end on the A616 where users have no alternative but to use the road or narrow grass verges.

The signed grant agreement must be returned to the Rural Payments Agency by 10th April 2020 and deadline for project completion and payments is 30 September 2021. The project will be overseen by the Senior Public Rights of Way officer with a steering group. The Council will need to absorb the expenditure then reclaim on up to 3 dates. There were 3 elements on the original grant bid that RPA deemed to be ineligible for the grant totalling £90,000 and this shortfall has been found within the Highways Capital Programme.

The estimated cost of the scheme totals £757k which is proposed to be funded by the £477k grant (this report) coupled with a further £280k of match funding, being utilised from other respective funding streams which has already approved as appropriate.

Key Risks Associated with the Proposed Action

Failure to meet spend timeframe – addressed with strong project management, support from Highways Structures (bridge work) steering group and partner organisations. The preparatory bridge works are likely to start in late June after the Barnsley Boundary charity run. With works on the remaining bridges and surfacing the rest of the route starting after the end of nesting season in September 2020. There will be around 9 months between expected completion date and funding deadline, giving plenty of time for poor weather and other issues.

Risk of overspend – The tender had to be issued prior to the grant application being made in 2019, and the officers are working with the successful contractor on those details within the tender documents to reduce risk. Risk will also be reduced with strong continuous project management and oversight to bring the project in on budget.

Risk of underspend – this risk will be managed with strong continuous project management and oversight. Any grant underspend will need to be returned to RPA or have written approval to change the use. Any match funding/shortfall monies will be returned to the relevant internal budget.

The route is currently a permissive footpath and part of the Barnsley Boundary Walk During construction, the route will be unavailable for use and with no safe alternative to divert the users onto advance site notices, social media and other communication efforts will be essential to managing public awareness and safety.

Recommendation

Approval given for the Council to accept the £476,734.00 grant from Rural Development Programme for England (2014-2020) and the grant offer is signed as appropriate, authorisation to formally accept the winning tender and implement works.

Certification by Executive Director Place

Report cleared for consideration by Cabinet Spokesperson

01/04/2020

…….. ……
Signed Date

Decision/Comments of the Cabinet Spokesperson

Recommendation Approved by Cabinet Spokesperson

……..
(Signed) Cabinet Spokesperson

THE REPORT WHICH THE CABINET SPOKESPERSON CONSIDERED MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS DOCUMENT.

Appendix A – Map of Phase 2 of the Little Don Trail
Appendix B – Formal Grant Offer
Appendix C – Grant Offer Terms and Conditions