

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member Leisure and Tourism
Cabinet Member Environmental
Cabinet

DATE: 6th January 2010
13th January 2010
14th January 2010

SUBJECT: Pathfinder Fund

WARDS AFFECTED: Harington, Ravenmeols.

REPORT OF: Mike McSorley, Head of Regeneration and
Technical Services

CONTACT OFFICER: Graham Bayliss, Director of Leisure and Tourism
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Defence
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EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL: No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To seek approval to accept the DEFRA grant offer and include part of the project expenditure in the Capital Programme.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

Following a report brought to the Cabinet Member Environmental on the 19th of August 2009 it was agreed that a further report would be brought in the event that the Pathfinder bid was successful.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Cabinet Member Leisure & Tourism :

- 1) approve acceptance of the DEFRA grant offer amounting to £337,000.

That the Cabinet Member Environmental :

- 1) approve acceptance of the DEFRA grant offer amounting to £337,000.

That Cabinet :

- 2) be requested to include the Capital elements of the project in the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A totalling £145,000 to be fully funded from DEFRA grant.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: Not applicable

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None

Budget/Policy Framework: None

Financial: Total grant of £337,000 has been awarded for spending by 31st March 2011. This is split between Capital and Revenue as shown below.

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure	30,000	115,000		
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources	30,000	115,000		
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure	26,000	166,000		
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources	26,000	166,000		
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Yes	31/03/11			
How will the service be funded post expiry?	Project ceases 31/3/11			

Legal: None

Risk Assessment: The 2nd year allocation of grant (Capital £115,000 and Revenue £166,000) is ‘indicative’ only. Although highly unlikely, the 2010/11 grant could be withdrawn which would require the Council to fund any commitments from it’s own resources.

Other specific risk areas are detailed in the report.

Asset Management: None

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

FD 265 - The Finance Director has been consulted and his comments have been incorporated into this report

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		√	
8	Children and Young People		√	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 DEFRA launched a consultation on their Coastal Change Policy (June 2009) which considers issues around how communities can adapt to a changing coastline in the context of future climate change. Included within this is a fund to establish a number of Pathfinder Authorities that are at the forefront of this type of work and can test new approaches and subsequently share the lessons learnt. The overall fund is £11 million to be spent within this and next financial year. Applications were required to be submitted by the 11th of September 2009. The grant rate is 100%.
- 1.2 The Coastal Defence Team have developed an application in partnership with the Leisure Services Coast and Countryside Service that will focus on capturing our experience to date and undertaking a number of actions in the Formby area including community engagement, plan development and access works. The grant offer from DEFRA is non ring-fenced and is for £337,000. It is anticipated that Pathfinder status would benefit the Council in future applications if this funding source is continued in later years.
- 1.3 The grant does not commit any additional Council resources now or in the future and does not require match funding. Analysis of anticipated spend relating to the award is shown in Appendix A of this report.

2.0 Project Description

2.1 Community Engagement

- 2.1.1. The aim is for the community to have a better understanding of coastal change and the problems arising from it so that they can participate in deciding on an appropriate way forward and be prepared to both make and accept some of the 'hard' decisions.
- 2.1.2. This would be delivered via three mechanisms that complement and build upon existing work; a community outreach officer, a project with schools and parents and a project engaging with the residents of the caravan site that is under threat.
- 2.1.3 A Community Outreach Officer would focus on the Formby area but will also encourage wider participation from residents across Sefton. This element of the project has two key remits; the first is to promote understanding through talks, walks, newspaper articles and such like focussed specifically on the issues facing the community of Formby. The second is to engage the community through volunteering, this not only provides an opportunity for education of the community but also for them to develop a much greater ownership of their environment and this hopefully will encourage wider

participation. There would be additional benefits in relation to the health agenda but these are peripheral to our aims.

- 2.1.4 The Schools and Parents Project would seek to work with not only children but adults via their children. Working with primary schools in Formby through the North Sefton City Learning Centre we would work with the children to develop their understanding of coastal change and climate change and then extend the work to involve their parents; a key element of this would be discussion of possible options and their relative benefits. This would be designed to obtain a baseline of current understanding of climate change (which can be compared to the NW of England response for the same questions) and of coastal change. Subsequent surveys would then evaluate any change in attitudes over time within the target groups and enable the team to explore changing attitudes to coastal and climate change in space and time. This project would be delivered in partnership with the North Sefton City Learning Centre and the National Trust.
- 2.1.5 The Caravan Site Residents Engagement would seek to promote an understanding of their predicament through documentation of residents' long standing experience with the site. This is a very intimate approach suitable for a small and discrete community such as that found at the caravan site. There would also be an opportunity for the residents to undertake some sand dune management work. It is anticipated that this would help with the understanding of the problem and offer ownership of the problem. This project would be delivered in partnership with the National Trust.
- 2.1.6 The community engagement would be further supported through material developed using visualisation science. This work would be undertaken by Dr Andy Heath, a Visualisation Scientist who has 20 years scientific visualisation and programming experience including web development, he is also the Photographer in Residence for Liverpool University. A summary of Heath's work and interests can be found at <http://pcwww.liv.ac.uk/~aeh>. The work would focus on showing past and future coastal change at Formby Point using modern approaches to the manipulation of visual data.

2.2 Planning for Adaptation

- 2.2.1 The aim would be to set out key decisions in a timely and sustainable manner so as to optimise the timing and design of any investment. A substantial amount of work is already underway to support the development of the Adaptation Strategy for the coast but two specific areas that would benefit from additional funding are plans looking at dune slacks and at car park provision.
- 2.2.2 The Dune Slack Study would supplement some work already undertaken to identify the potential for dune slack creation (see later) but this was only done for areas that had previously experienced sand extraction, not in a

comprehensive manner across Formby Point, and set in the context of the wider sand dune system. Dune slacks are a valuable habitat and Sefton currently contains approximately 40% of the dune slacks in England but the roll-back of the coast will destroy a number of them and also lead to fragmentation of this habitat both in terms of distance and the nature of habitat between slacks. This study would build upon current work looking at potential future extents of habitats to establish where and when dune slacks should be located and what associated works would be required to avoid habitat fragmentation. It would also consider the work being undertaken on dune hydrology when designing new slacks given that climate change is predicted to lead to lower water tables on average. The work would be delivered in Partnership with the National Trust and would make use of the wide range of expertise found within the Sefton Coast Partnership.

- 2.2.3 The work on the Car Park Study would build on initial consultation already undertaken in relation to the car park at Victoria Road which is currently being inundated by sand dunes with its foundations being exposed by erosion of the frontal dunes. Key areas to be addressed in such a study would be the design of the sand dune restoration following removal of the car park, an outline design of the replacement car park and a consideration of the balance of car parking provision between the two principle sites on this area of coast. All this is required in order to progress discussions with the public, to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and to identify costs for inclusion in future budget applications. This work would be delivered in Partnership with the National Trust.
- 2.2.4 The two actions above represent the extremes of adaptation, planning for future dune slacks can be considered to be proactive in that it is identifying actions prior to the optimum implementation point passing; the work on the car park is reactive, responding to a problem caused by past decisions when the optimum time for intervention has long past and it is a case of trying to limit the damage.

2.3 Adaptation Actions

- 2.3.1 The aim will be to undertake actions that improve our understanding of designing and implementing adaptation actions in a sustainable and timely manner so as to inform future approaches. There are two key areas that can be addressed through actions within the time period available for this funding, the first relates to access and the second to dune slacks.
- 2.3.2 Whilst there is an acceptance that access in a natural environment can be challenging and that it is not possible to provide easier access all the time there is a general expectation that in a limited number of locations there should be improved access provision such as boardwalks. The problem with

boardwalks in a dynamic environment is that as the sand dunes erode not only is the support for the structure undermined or lost but the loading conditions are increased as more of the structure is exposed to tidal energy. This action would design and construct a boardwalk in such a way as to be both able to withstand short term changes without having to be closed and to be able to be adapted in a planned manner to match in with the changes in the future position of the coastline. Based on the knowledge gained from this it will be possible to assess the relative merits of a more robust but expensive structure compared to cheaper but more vulnerable alternatives.

- 2.3.3 Whilst there is a requirement for a broader study considering dune slacks a previous study considering areas of past sand extraction has already identified a number of locations where new slacks can be created in anticipation of the loss of old slacks to coastal change. This would be of clear value in habitat terms and would be a valuable activity for volunteers to participate in and thus gain a broader appreciation of the coastal environment and coastal change.

2.4 Dissemination

- 2.4.1 As a Pathfinder dissemination is a key element of the work to be undertaken and this would be achieved via two mechanisms. The first would be through having an academic Partner who can provide scientific rigour to our approaches in a research context and would also provide support in the evaluation, documentation and collation of the lessons learnt through the various adaptation activities being undertaken on the Sefton Coast. This would ensure that the process is well documented and presented and that it can be presented to both an academic and practitioner audience.
- 2.4.2 The second would be through offering to host a conference towards the end of the funding period where the results from the various Pathfinders can be presented and collated in to conference proceedings. This could be structured under the three themes of community engagement, planning for adaptation and adaptation actions along with a fieldtrip to Formby to see adaptation in action and participate in some marram planting. The conference would be facilitated through the North West Coastal Forum who have significant experience of organising and promoting such events. This would provide a significant opportunity to collate and disseminate the results of the initial Pathfinder funding and potentially consider further funding opportunities.

3.0 Delivery and Programme

- 3.1 The project will be delivered with key Partners within the Council including Coastal Defence, Coast and Countryside Service and North Sefton City Learning Centre and also Edge Hill University, Liverpool University and the

National Trust. The programme is set out below and Partners will lead on different elements as set out in Appendix A.

Key milestones	Estimated start date	Estimated end date
Community Outreach Officer	To be appointed by December 2009	March 2011
Schools and Parents Project	Planning work to commence in April 2010	Completion by December 2010
Caravan Site Residents Engagement	Planning work to commence in April 2010	Completion by December 2010
Formby Point Visualisation	To commence November 2009	Completion by December 2010
Dune Slack Study	To commence in April 2010	Completion by December 2010
Car Park Study	To commence in January 2010	Completion by December 2010
Boardwalk construction	Planning and design to commence November 2009	Completion by November 2010
Dune Slack Creation	Work to commence May 2010	Completion by March 2011
Dissemination outputs	Work to commence April 2010	Completion by January 2011
Conference	Preparation to commence in June 2010	Conference held in February 2011

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The activities along with budget allocations are set out in Appendix A.
- 4.2 The grant is non ring-fenced and is approved over the years 2009/10 and 2010/11 as shown in Appendix A.
- 4.3 A key element of the bid was to demonstrate Partnership working and as such we will draw down funding for the key Partners but release of this money will be on a staged basis based on activities undertaken to ensure that the funds are properly administered. As this is a research project the only criteria is to provide outputs to inform the development of good practice guides and to participate in some of the workshops developing these.
- 4.4 The Community Outreach Officer will be a new appointment for a fixed period to March 2011, and any redundancy costs have been budgeted for.

5.0 Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member Leisure & Tourism :

- 1) approve acceptance of the DEFRA grant offer amounting to £337,000.

That the Cabinet Member Environmental :

- 1) approve acceptance of the DEFRA grant offer amounting to £337,000.

That Cabinet :

- 2) be requested to include the Capital elements of the project in the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A totalling £145,000 to be fully funded from DEFRA grant.

APPENDIX A

Activity	Delivery lead	Expected outcome	2009-10	2010-11
Community Outreach Officer REVENUE	Sefton MBC	Better educated and engaged communities able to participate in decision making.	£15,000	£35,000
Schools and Parents Project REVENUE	North Sefton City Learning Centre	Better educated and engaged communities able to participate in decision making.	0	£15,000
Caravan Site Residents Engagement REVENUE	National Trust	Better educated and engaged communities able to participate in decision making.	0	£20,000
Formby Point Visualisation REVENUE	Liverpool University	Better educated and engaged communities able to participate in decision making.	£2,000	£3,000
Dune Slack Study REVENUE	Sefton MBC	Key decisions planned out in a timely and sustainable manner so as to optimise the timing and design of any investment.	0	£25,000
Car Park Study REVENUE	National Trust	Detailed approaches set out to inform the next stage of community engagement.	£5,000	£20,000
Boardwalk construction CAPITAL	Sefton MBC	Improved understanding of design and implementation of adaptation actions in a sustainable and timely manner.	£30,000	£75,000
Dune Slack Creation CAPITAL	Sefton MBC	Improved understanding of design and implementation of adaptation actions in a sustainable and timely manner.	0	£40,000
Dissemination outputs REVENUE	Edge Hill	Documentation of lessons learnt in an appropriate manner and format to share with other users.	0	£20,000
Conference REVENUE	North West Coastal Forum	Sharing of lessons learnt between Pathfinders at the Conference and to a wider audience via the proceedings.	0	£12,000
Project Management	Sefton	Project run to time and	£4,000	£8,000

REVENUE	MBC	budget.		
Contingencies	Sefton	To cover unforeseen		£8000
REVENUE	MBC	variations in costs.		
Total			£56,000	£281,000