

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Moorlands Partnership Board
21 June 2017**

TITLE:	Approval of Projects
OFFICER:	Executive Director

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member's approval to allocate grant funding from the Moorlands Partnership Board (MPB). In addition to considering a deferred application from the last Board meeting, it is proposed to focus on directing grant aid towards a group of projects that aim to achieve key strategic objectives. By doing this, it is hoped to optimise the use of grant funding available and maximise its impact for the communities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That members note and approve the proposed 'one off' change to the approach in grant funding allocation as outlined in para 3.1 to 3.5.
- 2.2 That Members approve a grant of £22,000 (exc VAT) towards the reinstatement of the heritage rail line from Leekbrook to Leek.
- 2.3 That Members approve a grant of £7,300 (inc of VAT) towards the cost of reinstating Leekbrook Station estimated to be in the region of £25,000.
- 2.4 That Members approve a grant of £4,000 (inc VAT) towards the cost of repairs to Cheddleton Station building estimated to be in the region of £25,000.
- 2.5 That Members approve a deferred grant of £4,000 (inc of VAT) towards the eligible costs of repairing St Edward's Summer Houses estimated to be in the region of £15,000.

3. Summary

- 3.1 This report allows Members to consider applications for Environmental Enhancement Grants for funding toward strategic projects within the district.
- 3.2 This year it is proposed to focus on the reinstatement of a heritage railway line and stations in the district. The Council is currently working with the Churnet Valley Railway (CVR) to reinstate the heritage rail line from Leekbrook to Leek. CVR is also working on refurbishing the two historic station buildings on this line at Cheddleton and Leekbrook.
- 3.3 If the grant money is targeted toward these three projects, it will deliver a comprehensive scheme, with high impact that meets the objectives of the grant scheme. In addition, this will contribute towards addressing the employment, tourism and leisure needs of the area (as identified in the Churnet Valley Masterplan). The masterplan specifically included the 're-opening of the rail line' between Leekbrook and Leek (Cornhill) as a development strategy action.
- 3.4 Subject to the Board approving the recommendations set out in this report, the principle of the reinstatement of the heritage railway from Leekbrook to Leek and the potential for utilising MPB monies to secure this will be the subject of a report being presented to the Cabinet on the 1st August.
- 3.5 It is suggested to target the remaining funds of £12,700 towards strategic projects in Biddulph, working in partnership with Biddulph Grange County Park, National Trust and Biddulph Town Council. Detailed proposals for this will be developed following the steer from the Board and brought back to the Board for approval at appropriate time.

4. Report

4.1 Reinstatement of heritage railway from Leekbrook to Leek (Cornhill)

The Churnet Valley Masterplan (adopted 2014) identified the potential for the extension of the canal and railway as an opportunity to address the employment, tourism and leisure needs of the area. The masterplan specifically included the reinstatement of the heritage rail link between Leekbrook and Leek (Cornhill) as a key development strategy action.

The key elements of the delivery are:

- Reinstatement of track-bed from Leekbrook to Cornhill.

- Reinstatement of station at Leekbrook as an exact replica of 19th century building formerly attached to Leekbrook Signal Box, a Grade II listed building.
- Refurbishment of the existing (listed) station building at Cheddleton.

Whilst this line will be operated as a heritage line, it has the potential to be adopted and used as a branch line (subject to funding in the future) to establish the rail connection between Leek and Stoke on Trent. The Leekbrook to Leek rail line extension is a strategic first step of delivering Corporate Objective Aim 3: to reinstate rail connection to Stoke and mainline rail.

The CVR will lead on implementation, fundraising and construction of the track bed. SMDC will be responsible for securing planning permission for the track.

Prior to submitting the planning application a number of studies will need to be prepared as follows:

- Habitat Survey
- Bat and reptile survey
- Full tree survey
- Noise and vibration survey
- Flood Risk

An estimated cost for the above studies and planning fee is expected to be around £22,000.

4.2 **Leekbrook Station**

An application from the North Staffordshire Railway Company has been received for the reinstatement of the waiting room at Leekbrook Station. The building will be constructed adjacent to the grade II listed signal box and will be a replica wooden building to replace the original building demolished in the 1940's.

The new building would be constructed from wood, on a brick plinth built on a concrete pad as per the original and would incorporate an accessible toilet. The waiting area and storage area would replicate the original Ladies and Gents Waiting Rooms. The proposed new station would allow passengers to alight closer to Leek and the Peak District National Park and link into the existing network of footpaths (prior to the construction of the rail extension to Leek itself). After the rail extension is complete, the station building would serve as a historic station stop.

A rough cost of the works has been estimated at £25,000 (inc VAT on some items). A Peak Leader application has been submitted for

£14,700 to cover approximately 70% of the costs and a further £3,000 is anticipated to be raised from the North Staffordshire Railways Company's annual raffle. This leaves a shortfall of approximately £7,300.

The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions and the following technical conditions:

- That the relevant consents are obtained prior to executing works on site.
- Detailed estimates are obtained and are priced against an agreed specification.

4.3 Cheddleton Station

An application from the North Staffordshire Railway Company has been received for the repair and refurbishment of the Grade II listed station building and platform at Cheddleton. The building has been recently purchased from Staffordshire County Council by Churnet Valley Railway. The building was designed by William Sugden and was one of his first projects after moving to the Staffordshire Moorlands from Keighley.

The repair works include, major roof repairs; high level woodwork repairs; rainwater goods, rewiring and localised cleaning. The platform will require reinstatement, in places, of Staffordshire blue bricks and the building will require an upgrade of the heating system.

A rough cost of the works has been estimated at £25,000 with some of the low level work being completed by volunteers. It is hoped that additional funding will be secured through an application to Awards for All and the Arts Council.

The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions and the following technical conditions:

- That the exact scope and details of the schedule of repairs is agreed with officers.
- Detailed estimates for the works are obtained and are priced against an agreed specification.

4.4 St Edwards Summer Houses

The former St Edward's Hospital is Grade II listed and has been converted into flats. The hospital was the former North Staffordshire Asylum built circa 1895. There are 5 summer houses within the grounds. These are not listed individually, but deemed listed as curtilage structures. The management company which owns the site, has prepared a detailed specification of works for the repair of each summerhouse. Overall the scope of works consist of the following:

- Timber and leadwork repairs to roofs including the reinstatement of missing finials.
- Window and timber frame repairs including the replacement of missing and broken glazing.
- Renew cast iron rainwater goods
- Redecoration

They have been unable to obtain detailed estimates for the works in time for the committee deadline, but they anticipate the costs to be in the region of £15,000.

This application was considered by members at the last meeting of the MPB but, was deferred until issues regarding public access and owner contributions were investigated.

Officers have liaised with the applicant and they have confirmed the following:

- Members of the public have full access to the grounds and summer houses. In addition, there is a published leaflet that is available detailing 4 or 5 different walks around the parkland, which incorporate access to the summer houses.
- The cost of the repairs to the summer houses will be met from the estate budget, which all residents contribute to in their service charge.

The work is subject to the standard grant scheme conditions and the following technical conditions:

- That the scope of works and detailed repairs are carried out in accordance with the specification of works dated Oct 2016 and any variations agreed with the conservation officer.
- Colour schemes to be agreed with the conservation officer.
- A minimum of two detailed estimates are obtained for the works and the grant offer revised accordingly, should the works fall below £8,000.

5 Implications

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| 5.1 | Community Safety: | Nil |
| 5.2 | Workforce: | Nil |
| 5.3 | Equality and Diversity | This report has been compiled in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies. |

- 5.4 Financial: Any funding approvals will be financed from the Partnership's existing allocated budget.
- 5.5 Legal: Nil
- 5.6 Sustainability: The repair and reuse of historic buildings contributes significantly to sustainability.

Dai Larner

Executive Director

Background Papers

Project Applications
File 6366

Location

Regeneration Services.

Contact

Jo Brooks
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Decision:

Reason:

Interests Declared: