

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2017

Title of report	ASHBY CANAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Interim Director of Resources 01530 454833 andrew.hunkin@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Economic Development 01530 454773 kay.greenbank@nwleicestershire.gov.uk
Purpose of report	To request Cabinet approval for investment in Ashby Canal and the reconstruction of the aqueduct over the Gilwiskaw Brook at Snarestone.
Reason for Decision	Cabinet approval needed to allocate funding.
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities Green Footprints Business and Jobs
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	As set out in the report.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	All risks will be managed as part of the development plan
Equalities Impact Screening	Not applicable.
Human Rights	There are no Human Rights implications.
Transformational Government	None
Comments of Deputy Chief Executive	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Section 151 Officer	Report is satisfactory

Comments of Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	None
Recommendations	<p>IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT CABINET:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF £20,000 FROM THE 2016/17 BUDGET SURPLUS TOWARDS THE TOTAL FUNDING REQUIRED TO ENABLE THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE AQUEDUCT OVER THE GILWISKAW BROOK AT SNARESTONE. 2. DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO COMMIT THIS AMOUNT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER, VIA A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH ASHBY CANAL TRUST, PAYABLE ONCE THE TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING IS SECURED.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Ashby Canal was built just over 200 years ago. The length of the canal was progressively shortened after the war and the last eight miles of canal were filled in. The last part to be filled in included the section to Measham (the only significant centre of population directly on the canal). This happened in 1966 and the immediate cause was subsidence from the mines under the canal bed. As part of the final closure the aqueduct at the Gilwiskaw Brook was knocked down. At this stage there were 22 miles of canal remaining in water.
- 1.2 By 2017 there have been 30 years of active restoration by Ashby Canal Trust (ACT), Ashby Canal Association (ACA) and Measham Canal Restoration Group (MCRG). The reconstruction of the aqueduct at the Gilwiskaw Brook is now a priority and a major fundraising initiative for ACT, due to its position and focal importance along the canal route
- 1.3 Leicestershire County Council (LCC) with ACA and Measham Development Trust (MDT) piloted a Transport Works Act Order which was granted in 2005. As a result of the Order, there is planning permission for the canal to Measham, the land required has been purchased and accesses are in place.
- 1.4 In 2010 ACA brokered a deal with LCC and UK Coal (UKC) which provided for a S106 agreement giving LCC £1.26m for canal restoration. Over the past three years 500m of canal, a substantial accommodation bridge and a modest winding hole have been achieved using this funding.
- 1.5 Further agreements have been established in relation to the 450 canal-side houses development in Measham by the developer Measham Land Company (MLC) which will build 1,100m of canal in Measham (subject to the final route of HS2 avoiding this area).

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The next restoration priority is the reconstruction of the aqueduct over the Gilwiskaw Brook at Snarestone.

2.2 The benefits of developing this part of the Ashby Canal are as follows:

- Once the aqueduct is complete there are no further major obstacles until reaching the site of the final aqueduct in the centre of Measham.
- The proposed aqueduct will be an iconic structure which, unlike all the canal restored so far, will be directly visible to the public because of its prominent position alongside Bosworth Road. Such a visible achievement will act as a boost for further fund-raising.
- A major funding application is underway to secure funding for the restoration of the remaining section of canal to Measham.

2.3 A study has been commissioned by Ashby Canal Trust 'Ashby Canal Restoration – Measham to Moira Economic Benefits Report' and was published on 31 March 2017 (Appendix 1). The purpose of the report is to inform interested parties and stakeholders of the benefits and opportunities that will arise for restoring the Ashby Canal between its current terminus near Snarestone and the centre of Measham. The report was prepared by Moss Naylor Young, regeneration consultants who specialise in canal and river navigation proposals.

2.4 Pages 24 to 35 of the report specifically refer to the economic and social benefits of canal restoration, with an extract as follows:

“The Benefit of canals

Canals are an important part of national the cultural and built heritage, as symbols of a rich industrial past they are an important part of local identity and pride. Canals can contribute to many National and local Government policy agendas aimed at creating more sustainable places and communities because they can offer opportunities for informal recreation, education, regeneration and alternative non-motorised transport routes. Canal restoration can help facilitate a wide variety of benefits to their local areas including:

- Facilitating housing growth and renewal (by unlocking land due to increased property values associated with waterfronts)
- Providing options for sustainable transport (towpaths, well designed or suitable adapted, provide excellent off road walking and cycle routes)
- Place-making, place-shaping and becoming a catalyst for urban renaissance (canals can add to local character and distinctiveness and instigate investment)
- Stimulating the visitor economy, sustainable tourism and recreation (by improving the attractiveness of an area, be in a draw in themselves and helping to link attractions)
- Improving health and well-being (by providing attractive locations for exercise and an environment that is conducive to reducing stress)
- Mitigating the impact of climate change (through carbon reduction/sink, drainage and flood management and improving biodiversity and environmental sustainability).”

2.5 The latest proposed route for HS2 is east of Measham. This route was lowered to have less impact on the village compared with the prior proposed (2013). The implication for the canal is serious: the height of HS2 is insufficient for the canal to go under the railway line on the proposed route. However since the Ashby Canal has had planning precedence due to the triggering of the Transport and Works Act Order in 2005, HS2 Ltd will be obliged to pay for any mitigation required if and when they build phase 2b and use the proposed Eastern route.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 It is estimated that the aqueduct will cost £450,000. Through a local fund raising initiative over £110,000 has been raised in two years. A successful preliminary bid for a Landfill Grant

from Veolia PLC for £60,000 is now being progressed to the next stage and the remaining £50,000 of S106 funding has been allocated to this initiative. Further funding applications are being progressed to make up the shortfall.

- 3.2 An application to Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership has been prepared and submitted for consideration as a LLEP Project Pipeline application. This application is an ambitious proposal and is seeking approximately £12 million which would enable the complete restoration of the Ashby Canal.
- 3.3 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the allocation of £20,000 from the 2016/17 budget surplus towards the total funding required to enable the reconstruction of the aqueduct over the Gilwiskaw Brook at Snarestone. This amount would be awarded via a grant agreement between North West Leicestershire District Council and Ashby Canal Trust, payable once the Trust has secured funding for the total cost of the project.
- 3.4 The forecast budget surplus for 2016/17 is currently £1,606,306. Cabinet has previously allocated expenditure of £1,058,616 leaving a balance of £547,690.
- 3.5 The projected budget surplus for 2017/18 is £934,465.
- 3.6 The financial impact of the proposals is shown below:

	£
Balance of 2016/17 surplus	547,690
Projected 2017/18 surplus	934,465
TOTAL SURPLUS	1,482,155
Marlborough Square *	(577,000)
Memorial Square *	(25,000)
Ashby Road – traffic calming *	(175,000)
Ashby Canal Infrastructure Investment	(20,000)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(797,000)
REMAINING SURPLUS	685,155

* Items considered on separate report 'Building Confidence in Coalville'