

**ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC PROTECTION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12TH FEBRUARY 2018**

TOWY VALLEY PATH - EXPENDITURE

Purpose:

To provide the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee with information in order to scrutinise the expenditure for the Tywi Valley Path project.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

The expenditure in relation to the Tywi Valley Path project.

Reasons:

On the 6th December 2017, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee resolved that 'the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee be requested to scrutinise expenditure on the Towy Valley Path.

At its Committee meeting on the 15th January 2018, the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee requested that a more detailed report be provided in order for the Committee to scrutinise the expenditure accordingly.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Councillor H.A.L Evans – Environment,

Directorate		
Name of Head of Service:	Designations:	Tel Nos.
S. Pilliner	Head of Transportation & Highways	01267 228150
Report Author:		E Mail Addresses:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12th FEBRUARY 2018

TYWI VALLEY PATH - EXPENDITURE

1.0 Introduction and Background

The Tywi Valley Path scheme aims to create a world class active travel facility in the Towy Valley linking Carmarthen to Llandeilo. The creation of the shared use path will link communities, create tourism opportunities, and encourage safe sustainable and healthy travel. The total length of the scheme is approximately 20 kilometres, and due to its size the scheme has been broken down into different sections for implementation. The Western section extends from Abergwili to Nantgaredig and the Eastern section stretches from Nantgaredig to Ffairfach. The majority of the proposed route travels through privately owned land with small sections traversing county roads and County Council owned farmland. Significant lengths follow the route of the disused former railway line from Carmarthen to Llandeilo. Implementation of the scheme will be dependent on land availability and funding.

Early studies were undertaken in 2002 and development has continued since 2015 following completion of a feasibility study. The project has now progressed to where construction on the Western section has begun and land negotiations are being undertaken. Works on the Planning application for the Eastern section continue to progress.

The feasibility study provided a high level cost estimate for the path of between £5 and £7 million. The study also included an assessment of the employment potential and economic benefits that could be generated by the project. The studies set measureable targets for increasing leisure cycling within the lower Towy Valley with the aim of encouraging 15,000 additional day visits per year and 5,000 overnight stays in the region. These estimates have been based on the actual measured visitor numbers for the Afan Green Family Trail in Neath Port Talbot. These economic benefits are estimated to be between £860k and £2 million per annum.

Further work is currently being undertaken to review the economic benefits and the expectation is that the estimate of the visitor numbers is conservative leading to increased benefit.

Funding for the project is currently provided and subject to further bidding, projected from a number of sources that includes :-

1. Carmarthenshire CC Capital funds – allocations are included in the Capital programme up to 2021/22.
2. WG Local Transport Fund Grants – awarded as part of a wider Active Travel package of schemes for the last 3 financial years (15/16 to 17/18) to fund initial scheme development.
3. EU Rural Communities Development Fund (RCDF) – two separate applications for discrete elements have been successful.

2.0 Expenditure to date

Expenditure to date has been focussed on the development of the project. Works undertaken to date include:

- Initial project feasibility studies
- WelTag Planning reports
- Biosecurity reports
- Ecological impact studies and habitat surveys
- Consultation exercises
- Planning fees
- Design fees
- Construction costs – initial section of ‘on highway’ route adjacent to Abergwili Concrete Works undertaken in 2016/17 (value - £40,000)
- Legal costs and fees in relation to land purchase and Legal advice
- Project management fees

Works packages have been tendered for the following sections and works are due to commence imminently with completion during the 2017/18 financial year:

- W1 from Abergwili to connect to W2 along the county road. Cost £243,000
- W3 - Anglers Car Park, Whitemill. Cost £70,000
- W4a – Nantgaredig RFC to Station Road, Nantgaredig. Cost £122,000 (to be completed during late Summer 2018)

The scheme income and expenditure profile projected to March 2018 are set out in Table One below:-

3.0 Expenditure profile – Table One

	Totals	Breakdown of Expenditure to Date						
	Total amount spent to date (since 2015/16)	Internal design costs	Internal project management costs	Other internal costs	Specialist Study & Consultants costs	Construction Costs	Legal/ Land * costs	Other costs
West	£653,652.61	£213,809.49	£58,511.31	£855.00	£173,367.93	£189,151.35	£5,822.30	£12,135.23
East	£178,960.20	£144,388.25	£0.00	£0.00	£29,093.00	£0.00	£3,461.55	£2,017.40
Total	£832,612.81	£358,197.74	£58,511.31	£855.00	£202,460.93	£189,151.35	£9,283.85	£14,152.63

Funding breakdown to date

	Grant income received to date	CCC Capital to date	Grand Total
West	£379,300.74	£274,351.87	£653,652.61
East	£103,532.78	£75,427.42	£178,960.20
Total	£482,833.52	£349,779.29	£832,612.81

*Land negotiations are ongoing.

Additional costs will be incurred during 2018.19 financial year for example Section W4a will be constructed during the summer.

4.0 Future Funding Profile

	Funding Breakdown					Totals	Comments
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22		
CCC		£625,000.00	£550,000.00	£500,000.00	£500,000.00	£2,175,000.00	
WG LTF	£1,065,000.00	£878,000.00 ***	£750,000.00 ***	£750,000.00 ***	£750,000.00 ***	£4,193,000.00	Additional grant secured in 2017/18
WG RCDF	£224,800.00					£224,800.00	
	£1,289,800.00	£1,503,000.00	£1,300,000.00	£1,250,000.00	£1,250,000.00	£6,592,800.00	

*** Funding subject to bids made to Welsh Government on annual basis. The Local Transport Fund grant may be subject to change in future years.

5.0 Future Benefits

The initial high level feasibility report concluded that the economic appraisal of the proposals with broad economic return relating to direct and indirect tourism benefits equate to an economic contribution of between £860k to £2m per annum and 17-41 Full time employment opportunities created. These figures are based on the conservative visitor numbers set out above and clearly with the potential that the Towy Valley has this could be significantly higher.

Other benefits derived from the project will include:

Social and economic benefits:

- Better health and human well-being for all
- Creation of jobs locally
- Diversification of local economy
- Greener transport corridor
- Enhanced tourism and recreation opportunities adding value to local distinctiveness of the areas' rich heritage and culture

Environmental benefits:

- measures which promote a positive contribution to improving air quality and reducing the adverse impact of transport on health and climate change, including reducing carbon emissions;

Biodiversity and climate change benefits:

- Creation and improvement of existing habitats
- The development of ecological corridors) to enhance the 'green infrastructure' corridors or wildlife corridors within the locality, making the local environment more permeable to wildlife;
- Landscape permeability through use of sustainable materials as the base for the access route
- measures which help to reduce the negative impact of transport across the region on the natural and built environment including biodiversity;
- Strengthening ecosystems resilience through new areas of planting which contain locally sourced native species rich compositions which will be of benefit to local fauna;

Further research is being undertaken to fully enhance the final cost benefit ratio for the scheme to support future funding bids for the project.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

NO

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: S.G. Pillner Head of Transportation and Highways

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Road safety is one of the seven key priorities of the Carmarthenshire Community Safety Partnership.

Improving walking and cycling links is highlighted as a policy in the Joint Local Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015/2020).

The project is included in the Executive Board Carmarthenshire County Council Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire: the Next 5 Years

Legal

The Council has a statutory responsibility to promote walking and cycling and other sustainable modes of transport as outlined in the Active Travel (Wales) Act.

Purchase of land required to deliver the scheme will be subject to the necessary legal process

Finance

The funding sources for the Tywi Valley Path project are set out in the report.

Grant funding has been secured from the Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund (LTF) and Rural Communities Development Fund (RCDF).

Risk Management Issues

External funding is secured primarily from Welsh Government LTF grant with an annual bid which is a competitive process with an inherent risk that any particular funding bid may not be successful in part or in full. Works for the delivery of the scheme will be adjusted to reflect the level of funding secured.

Physical Assets

Land will be acquired to deliver the scheme increasing the portfolio of land maintainable at the Authority's expense.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed S.G. Pillner Head of Transportation and Highways

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

There are none