

MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL - CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP - 26TH FEBRUARY 2008

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. LOTTERY - LIVING LANDMARKS STAGE 2 SUBMISSION

- 1.1 On 19th October 2007 Members were notified that Big Lottery had advised Torfaen County Borough Council that the Regional Canal Partnership's "Living Links" canal project had failed to reach the final shortlist of Big Lottery's Living Landmarks programme.
- 1.2 Big Lottery indicated that Living Landmarks had received funding requests from the 23 Stage 1 applications totalling in excess of £525M and that the available Big Lottery funding pot was circa £70 million.
- 1.3 During November 2007 Big Lottery issued details of the three successful projects, these are Cornwall's Heartland (awarded £22.2 million), the Falkirk Helix in Scotland (awarded £25 million) and the Greater East Belfast Partnership's Community Greenway in Northern Ireland (£23.5 million). An outline of the aims of the three projects is included in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.4 On 17th December 2007 the Big Lottery's report of the findings and conclusions arising from the July 2007 Stage Two Project Review Assessment was circulated to the Regional Canal Partnership.
- 1.5 The report provided an independent assessment of the key project risks identified during the July 2007 review. The key risks were allocated a red, amber or green status and the assessment was provided to the Living Landmarks Committee for consideration as part of the overall approval process. In making their decision on award of implementation grants the Living Landmarks Committee also considered how well each project addressed the priorities of the Living Landmarks programme.
- 1.6 Whilst the Big Lottery review highlighted the Living Landmarks project's potential to deliver best practice in the areas of:-

Proposed stakeholder management and community engagement.

Bringing together the three Councils to deliver the one project, which is a good example of the policy requirements for the Welsh spatial plan.

The proposed community fund part of the project.

The overall assessment of the project risks considered the overall status as RED due to:

The potential for unclear scope (removal of elements to contain cost over-run without full understanding of consequences to benefits).

The potential for cost and programme over-runs (although the individual Councils have stated that they are prepared to underwrite their part of the project). There appears no agreement on cross-subsidy that is assumed allowable on the grant funds, if not on individual match

funding.

The degree of clarity and size of the contingency.

The procurement strategy and proposed leadership arrangements for the overall management and delivery of the project.

The uncertainties associated with inadequate site investigation and service diversion estimates.

- 1.7 A more detailed summary of the output of Big Lottery's review of the Regional Canal's Partnerships Living Links project is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

2. WAG DET ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT

- 2.1 The WAG grant of 80% match funding to the regional Canal Partnership has allowed CCBC Countryside Services to progress delivery of the Crumlin Arm Interpretation Strategy.
- 2.2 The grant has been utilised to supply and install eight additional diamond interpretation signs to provide coverage at key locations between Cwmcarn and Harry Roberts Bridge, Pontymister. It is intended to provide fourteen interpretive signs over the entire length of canal within the County Borough.
- 2.3 It is intended to provide further interpretation and artwork through the fixing of bespoke 'interpretive' backrests to the three existing seats in rural areas along the canal and by replacing the damaged timber fence near Crosskeys Deeps Overflow with bespoke sculptural fencing similar to that used in completing the landscape works at Halls Road Terrace, Crosskeys.

3. GROUNDWORK'S CANAL LANDSCAPE PROJECT

- 3.1 Works on the Canal Landscape Project at Halls Road, Crosskeys administered by Groundwork Caerphilly achieved practical completion on 4th October 2007. Trees and shrubs have been planted and a litterbin provided to complement the hard landscape improvements.
- 3.2 Groundwork have confirmed that under the terms of the contract that the hard landscape works are subject to 12 months maintenance and the trees, shrubs and grass subject to 36 months maintenance. Groundwork have undertaken post-completion inspections for "snagging" and the correction of identified defects by the contractor is ongoing.
- 3.3 Pre-start and post works photographs of the area subject to the landscape works are included as Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.4 Following consultation with Groundwork and the Islwyn Canal Association the ICA's scheduled Canal Awareness Day to celebrate completion of the Canal Landscape Project was cancelled due to a combination of ongoing site operations, outstanding works and the resulting health and safety implications to those who would be attending the event.

4. CANAL WORKS CURRENT STATUS

- 4.1 Over the winter months planned and reactive maintenance works have been undertaken to:-

Progress tree management within the priority one area between Navigation Road and Manor Road that was identified in the LTC Landscape Report. The works involved removal of tree branches that were either decayed or represented a potential danger by overhanging the

towpath or canal channel.

Address high water levels by revision of and reactive maintenance to the temporary bunds at Manor Road, pumping out of enclosed section of canal channel and removing excessive water via the Strathaven overflow near Thistleway, Risca.

Repair of a leak within the canal channel at Temperance Hill, Risca.

Remove litter and other debris that has accumulated within the canal channel.

5. CAPITAL WORKS FOR 2008/2009

5.1 Works estimated at £650,000 are programmed to reline 600m of the canal channel south of Manor Road. The works comprise installation of a synthetic liner that will be protected with puddle clay, 600m of towpath resurfacing together with vegetation management and minor landscape improvements in the vicinity of Masala Junction takeaway. Tenders for the works will be issued during week commencing 18th February 2008 and works are programmed to commence on site during week commencing 31st March.

5.2 Advance vegetation clearance and dewatering of 600m of the channel to mitigate potential ecological constraints on the implementation of the relining works are due to commence during week commencing 3rd March.

5.3 In addition to the major works and subject to availability of funding it is also intended to progress:-

Limited re-lining works in the vicinity of the Pontywaun Overflow to address a leak identified within the eastern canal embankment.

Improvement of the Strathaven overflow to provide increased control of water levels during extreme weather.

Provision of water level monitoring gauges at strategic locations along the canal.

Investigation into the provision of stank boards at strategic locations to allow for the compartmentalisation of the canal to gain greater control over water levels.

6. WAG AGGREGATES LEVY SUSTAINABILITY FUND FOR WALES

6.1 In response to the Council's unsuccessful application to the Sustainability Fund for the 2005 Canal Corridor Study WAG invited the Council to "submit a further application to the Sustainability Fund relating to the works to be undertaken once these have been determined by the feasibility study". Accordingly it is now considered opportune to seek WAG funding support for appropriate canal improvement and enhancement works.

6.2 Council and WAG officers met in January to establish the potential for the Manor Road channel relining works to seek a funding contribution of £150,000 to £200,000 maximum from the Sustainability Fund. WAG's initial advice was positive and it has been agreed that the Council would prepare and submit a retrospective funding application for WAG's consideration by the 11th April 2008.

7. LICENSING & CONTROL – USE OF THE CANAL BY WHYSOM'S WHARF LTD.

7.1 The Head of Legal Services has issued a draft Agreement between the Council and Mr. Wysom to allow Whysom's Wharf to operate up to six rowing boats on the canal for

business use between Darren Road Bridge and Pontywaun Slipway. The Agreement proposes dates for use of the canal between 21st March and 5th November to reflect the inclusion of Easter and autumn half-term school holiday periods. In addition the Agreement incorporates appropriate clauses that confirm the Council is unable to guarantee continuity, quantity and quality of water within the Canal and a termination clause that the Council may initiate at any time with an appropriate period of notice.

2. Mr Whysom's confirmation of the terms set out in the Agreement is awaited as is submission of the required £5 million third party liability insurance and appropriate current boat safety certificates for the craft.

8. LICENSING & CONTROL – USE OF THE CANAL FOR PRIVATE BOAT USE

- 8.1 The "Seaquest", "Rhayader" and the "Jemima Morris" have been granted consent for individual private boat use of the length of the Crumlin Arm in the Council's ownership for the period of 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008 following receipt and confirmation of £3 million third party liability insurance for each of the craft. It is noted that the Boat Safety Certificates for these craft expire on 24th October 2009.
- 8.2 Members should be aware that the insurance cover for the "Wendy E" expired on 3rd January 2008. Despite several reminders and a final warning letter issued by the Head of Legal Services on 14th January the owner of this craft has failed to confirm that the craft is insured or advise of his intention to remove the craft from the canal. Accordingly it is appropriate that procedures be instigated to remove the "Wendy E" from the canal and dispose of the craft.

9. FOURTEEN LOCKS VISITOR CENTRE

- 9.1. Members are advised that the prolonged adverse weather during January has delayed the construction of the extension to the Visitor Centre by approximately 4 weeks. It is now anticipated that the official opening of the enhanced facility will take place towards the end of April or in early May 2008.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

- 10.1 None received to date

BIG LOTTERY FUND LIVING LANDMARKS SUCCESSFUL PROJECT SUMMARY

1. **Kerrier District Council's Cornwall's Heartlands - awarded £22.3million**
Heartland is a community-led vision to transform Cornwall's most derelict urban area into a truly inspirational cultural landscape. The Heartlands project intends to transform 7.5 hectares of former mining land into a World Heritage Site and beautiful new parkland. The site will include formal gardens, exciting play-space, performance space for events for over 4,000 people and new cycle links to local trails. Heartlands will include stunning new public art with a range of water features, sculpture and contemporary architecture directly complementing the Grade 2* Listed Robinson's Shaft mine complex.

2. **The Greater East Belfast Partnership's Connswater Community Greenway - awarded £23.5million**
Greater East Belfast Partnership intend to connect 379 acres of public open space, build 43 bridges and create 19kms of cycle and walkways. The project will benefit more than 40,800 people living in the area, improving the living environment and providing opportunities for leisure, exercise, recreation and supporting healthier lifestyles.
The £23.5 million grant will also be used to develop a 9km linear park through east Belfast, following the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop rivers, connecting people and places from Castlereagh Hills to Belfast Lough.

3. **Falkirk Council's The Helix - awarded £25million**
The Helix project intends to transform over 300 hectares of unused urban scrub into an environmental resource for the thousands of people living in Falkirk and across Central Scotland. The finished project will see:
 - Over a quarter of a million new trees on the site.
 - 34 kilometres of paths and cycle tracks.
 - A new section of canal linking and extending the Forth and Clyde Canal into the Forth Estuary.
 - The creation of the outstanding 30 metre high sculpture, 'Kelpie'.

Videos of the successful projects can be found here

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/llvideos.htm?regioncode=-uk&progStatus=closed®ioncode=-uk>

**SUMMARY OF BIG LOTTERY'S STAGE TWO PROJECT REVIEW ASSESSMENT FOR THE
REGIONAL CANAL PARTNERSHIP'S LIVING LANDMARKS PROJECT**

		Risk Rating	
		Item Rating	Overall Section Rating
1.0	Governance and Management		
1.1	Has the governance and management performed effectively and operated within clearly defined roles and responsibilities?	Amber	
1.2	Is the governance and management appropriate for the next stage of the project and has the organisation taken account of the changing needs of the project?	Amber	
1.3	Does the organisation have the skills and capacity and commitment to deliver the next stage of the project?	Amber	
1.4	Has the organisation taken account of lessons learned, including similar projects?	Amber	
1.5	Proposed Management Arrangements	Red	

2.0 Technical Feasibility

2.1	Have the technical implications been assessed such as 'buildability', health and safety and sustainability issues?	Red	
2.2	Are there additional factors that might impact on the technical feasibility of the project, for example site conditions?	Amber	
2.3	Have the financial implications been taken into account when considering the whole life costs of the project?	Amber	

3.0 Design

3.1	Will the design brief/specification deliver the required project outcomes? Are the organisations requirements accurately reflected? Has the design brief taken account of all stakeholder requirements?	Amber	
3.2	Is there a clear definition of the total project scope?	Amber	

		Risk Rating	
		Item Rating	Overall Section Rating
4.0	Assessment of Ownership and Management of Risks		
4.1	What risk management plans are in place and are they understood by the organisations, its project team and key stakeholders?	Amber	
4.2	Are major risks identified, understood, financially evaluated and considered in determining the procurement strategy?	Amber	
4.3	Have all the issues raised in previous reviews been satisfactorily resolved?	Amber	

5.0 Planning Considerations and Site Ownership

5.1	Has planning approval been secured?	Amber	
5.2	Has appropriate ownership of the site been secured (land and buildings)?	Green	
5.3	If the cost of the assets is included in the calculation of the total capital costs is the valuation reasonable and acceptable?	Green	

6.0 Business Case

6.1	Does the business case continue to demonstrate need?	Green	
6.2	Is the organisation still realistic about its ability to achieve a successful outcome?	Amber	
6.3	Is the preferred way forward still appropriate?	Amber	
6.4	Are the project benefits to be delivered understood and agreed with stakeholders? Are the dates for benefits delivery realistic and in line with the relevant project deliverables? Are the actual benefits delivered comparable to the projected benefits?	Green	

		Risk Rating	
		Item Rating	Overall Section Rating
7.0	Financial Sustainability		
7.1	Does the business plan demonstrate that the project is financially viable and sustainable in the longer term?	Green	
7.2	Has consideration been given to demand/user analysis and market testing?	Green	
7.3	Has consideration been given to the whole life costs?	Green	

8.0 Procurement Strategy

8.1	Have options for the method of procurement been evaluated, including sources of supply?	Amber	
8.2	Has the proposed procurement procedure been evaluated?	Amber	
8.3	Has the organisation's project team complied with Distributor procurement requirements including public procurement legislation and EU procurement rules in drafting the OJEU notice if required?	Amber	
8.4	Is the selected procurement strategy defined and endorsed?	Amber	
8.5	Is there adequate knowledge of existing and potential suppliers? Who are the suppliers most likely to succeed?	Amber	
8.6	Is the contract management strategy robust?	Red	

9.0 Strategic Fit and Stakeholders

9.1	Do the stakeholders support the project and the preferred option as the best way forward? Are the organisations and its stakeholders fully committed?	Green	
9.2	Are external issues being addressed? For example statutory processes, communications, public relations and environmental issues.	Green	

Risk Rating	
Item Rating	Overall Section Rating

10.0 Project Costs and Funding

		Item Rating	Overall Section Rating
10.1	Has a detailed cost plan been completed and are the assumptions that have been made clearly understood?	Red	
10.2	Has the organisation taken account of the wider social costs and benefits of the proposals, and the need to ensure proper use of public resources?	Amber	
10.3	Has value management been applied to the project and do stakeholders support it?	Amber	
10.4	Are the costs within current budgets and do stakeholders support them?	Green	
10.5	Is funding available for the whole project and is the impact of the funding arrangements understood?	Amber	

11.0 Lessons Learned and Best Practice

		Item Rating	Overall Section Rating
11.1	Have lessons learned been captured and applied? Has best practice been applied where it is appropriate?	Amber	

12.0 Readiness for Next Phase – Investment Decision

		Item Rating	Overall Section Rating
12.1	Is the project plan for the remaining phases realistic? What are the arrangements for the next stage of the project? Have activities been defined and resourced?	Red	
12.2	Are the projects timescales reasonable?	Red	
12.3	Does the project have the required resources with appropriate skills and experience?	Amber	
12.4	What lessons have been learnt that can be applied to other phases?	Amber	
12.5	Actions to be taken to prevent future deviations from plan recurring in other phases?	Amber	
12.6	Have any assumptions at Milestone 1 not been verified?	Amber	

Groundwork's Canal Landscape Project

