



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH MAY 2015

SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL ACTION PLAN

REPORT BY: GROUP MANAGER (STRATEGY & FUNDING)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 During the summer of 2014, members asked for an action plan to be drafted, so they could consider the future direction of investment and activities relating to the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The Plan has now been drafted and was considered and endorsed by members at their Canal Working Group meeting on 26th February 2015. It was also considered and endorsed by CMT on 19th March. The document is now submitted for consideration and, hopefully, endorsement by Scrutiny.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Action Plan sets out the history of investment, maintenance and development of the Canal as a local asset. It also describes a list of potential actions and activities that could develop it further over the years ahead. The actions are not prioritised, but can be used flexibly depending on the availability of funding.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Canal-based activities could contribute directly to the priorities and activities set out in “People, Business, Places”, Caerphilly’s Regeneration Framework and Action Plan and also links directly to the priorities set out in “Caerphilly Delivers”, the Single Integrated Plan.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The drafting of the Action Plan for the Crumlin Arm of the Mon and Brecon Canal (attached as appendix 1) was requested by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development and the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering, both of whom sit on the Crumlin Arm Working Group.
- 4.2 The document summarises the views of officers from across CCBC, including Tourism, Urban Renewal, Engineering, Community Regeneration, Countryside, Education and Leisure Services, all of whom have an interest in the Canal. As such it now represents a strategic and operational overview for the Council. Although not a partnership document at this time, the views of partners involved in the Working Group have been sought.
- 4.3 Scrutiny members are invited to read through the draft Action Plan and endorse the content. It should be noted that the actions identified are not intended to be an exclusive list, but represent the collective thoughts of officers at this time. Funding priorities could influence which of the actions are progressed as and when opportunities emerge. For example, the Canal forms part of ongoing work to develop a regional ERDF proposal based on tourism and urban priorities.

- 4.4 Furthermore, the actions include a number of longer term aspirations and funding has not yet been identified and secured to take these forward. A realistic estimate of the total timescale could be in the region of 10 to 20 years.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Equalities is a key consideration for any funding proposals. As this report is to endorse an action plan, the Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied (although the views of the Equalities and Welsh Language Officer have been sought). That said, any proposals emerging or actions undertaken will benefit a wide range of users and should, therefore be equalities assessed as and when relevant.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The ongoing cost of maintenance of the Canal is identified in Engineering budgets for the foreseeable future. However, each action set out in the Action Plan has a financial cost, so funding needs to be identified in each case, mostly from external sources. This may also have a match funding requirement for the Council to consider. Whilst it may be possible to utilise the existing maintenance budget as match in some instances, officers will need to ensure that the financial obligations for all proposals for external funding are properly considered and agreed with senior management and CCBC Finance before submission.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Action Plan has been the subject of a wide consultation across all Directorates.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That the Members endorse the attached Action Plan as the strategic and operational document for the Canal in Caerphilly County Borough.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 This strategic document can then become the driver for any subsequent canal-based activities and funding proposals.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 of 1: Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Crumlin Arm Action Plan 2015