

1. **Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF) Active Travel Enhancements Site Allocations 2023/24** (Pages 2 - 6)

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY OFFICERS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

This is a record of a decision taken by an officers under delegated powers and where necessary taken in consultation with members and officers.

REPORT TITLE:	Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF) Active Travel Enhancements Site Allocations 2023/24
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open
LEAD OFFICER	Nicola Cooper
IS DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL IN?:	Yes
DATE DECISION ADVERTISED:	14th November 2023
DATE OF DECISION:	21st November 2023
DEADLINE FOR CALL IN:	28th November 2023
PRE-SCREENING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED:	YES/ NO

Delegated Power

Cabinet Report 7th February 2023 'Shared Prosperity Fund WEST NORFOLK INVESTMENT PLAN (UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND) AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDING – PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

'5. Approve the third party delivery options for the REPF as set out in section 6, 7 and 8 in this report with delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing & Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Culture and Heritage to agree any changes.'

Decision Taken

Within the February cabinet report referenced above it was explained that one of the three Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Rural Communities intervention priorities identified for West Norfolk is 'active travel enhancements in the local rural area e.g. creation of new footpaths and cycleways/ upgrading of existing footpaths and cycleways, particularly in areas of health need.'

At the time of the February 23 report this priority area was still under development with the Lead Programme Manager for active travel at Norfolk County Council to identify projects which will specifically benefit West Norfolk from the Norfolk wide Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Projects were prioritised to upgrade key footpaths in tourism areas.. It was agreed within the report that capital funding of £75,000 for 2023/24 and £225,000 for 2024/25 would be allocated to active travel projects aligning with priorities areas for West Norfolk LCWIP.

Work has progressed on the potential schemes to confirm the programme for REPF active travel investment to add value and facilitate delivery of the following two strategic improvement projects which have been selected on the basis that they meet West Norfolk REPF objectives and also lever in match funding. Each of these projects will be delivered by Norfolk County Council during 2023/24.

Project 1. Design, produce and install interpretation for Stretch Four of the Norfolk Coast Path between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge (part of the King Charles III England Coast Path).

In 2009, the Government announced its intention to create a new continuous National Trail known as the England Coast Path. On 1 May 2023 it was announced that the England Coast Path will be known as the 'King Charles III England Coast Path' to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

Once in place, it will create a 4,500 km walking route around the English coast. Within Norfolk, the route is branded as the Norfolk Coast Path and currently extends 135 km (84 miles) from Hunstanton to Hopton-on-Sea. Work on the final stretch of the Norfolk Coast Path (Stretch Four), between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge is underway and due to finish in December 2023, extending the route a further 53 km (33 miles).

The route passes through the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and alongside the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network. The route is maintained and promoted by the Protected Landscapes team at Norfolk County Council.

REPF is proposed for investment towards the commissioning of three bespoke interpretation designs to be installed at seven locations along Stretch Four of the Norfolk Coast Path (between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge), as well as an iconic and sculptural design to celebrate the Coast Path, which will serve as an engaging installation and photo opportunity.

Some pieces of interpretation will host mapping and text, with content provided by the National Trails Officers, in collaboration with stakeholders such as Natural England, RSPB and Wild Ken Hill and the project will also work to creatively increase engagement by inclusion of broader visual interest and/or interactive, tactile or other sensory features within the design. Work will be undertaken to ensure national accessibility standards are met and/or exceeded as far as possible.

REPF funding must only be invested within eligible rural areas and the seven identified locations will adhere to this requirement. The originally identified Location 7 in the attached proposal document will be amended on this basis.

Funding Package	Project Costs	Funding Sources
NCC staff time (contract management and input to design and content process)	£12,000	
Design of 4x high quality interpretation pieces	£18,000	
Production (7x interpretation pieces)	£35,000	
Installation and project wrap-up (including site visits and contractor/staff time)	£8,000	
FUNDING		
Staff time: (NCC)		£3,000
Natural England Establishment Grant Production (7x interpretation pieces)		£10,000
Ramblers (Improving Access for All Fund) (pending)		£10,000
Rural England Prosperity Funding		£50,000
TOTALS	£73,000	£73,000

Project 2. Rural cycle path way-marker improvements audit

It is proposed to invest in a review of cyclepath way-marker signage across the rural borough. This audit will complement the mapped routes which have been developed as part of the emerging West Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan. The review will particularly focus on cycling routes within and around the Rural Hub Towns of Downham Market and Hunstanton. The project has an overall intention of consolidating and improving way-marker provision to enhance cycle route access across our rural areas. The implementation of capital improvements recommended by this audit will form part of the West Norfolk REPF 2024/25 capital programme.

It is proposed that this audit could be undertaken by Sustrans as part of its National Cycling Network priorities. Sustrans are an approved supplier for Norfolk County Council and the project can be appointed by NCC in partnership with the BCKLWN. Detailed discussions regarding delivery of this work are planned mid November. Approval is sought for progression towards delivery of these works as outlined and for application of the remaining REPF 2023/24 budget of £25,000 capital to this work.

The budget for this work is currently unconfirmed and match funding from Norfolk County Council is being sought. It is proposed that any uncommitted 2023/24 budget would be reallocated for implementation of recommended improvement works in 2024/25.

Reasons for the Decision

REPF investment will facilitate delivery of two strategic improvement projects which meet West Norfolk REPF objectives, provide additionality to the local offer, lever in match funding and improve local active travel networks. Given tight timeframes of rural funding these are projects that have had detailed feasibility undertaken by NCC so are deliverable within the funding window and have been included within their 2023/24 work schedule.

Details of alternative options, if any, considered and rejected.

As the approval of REPF funding was not received until 6th April 23 discussions with NCC have been based around adding value and deliverability to projects which have indicatively been included in the NCC pipeline of projects for 2023/24 and align with the West Norfolk REPF priorities. Options outside of this would be undeliverable for 2023/24 due to tight timescales for capital infrastructure works.

Any declarations of interest and details of any dispensations granted in respect of interests (in relation to officers and any Members consulted).

List of Background papers

Norfolk County Council: Rural England Prosperity Fund: Project Proposal Design, produce and install interpretation for Stretch Four of the Norfolk Coast Path between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge (part of the King Charles III England Coast Path).

Authorisation

Post Held

DUNHAM HALL AD - Regeneration, Housing & Place.

Signature



Date

14th November 2023.

Consultation with members/officers

If the decision is taken following consultation with the members/officers, please give details:

Name of Members/officers consulted:

Signed by Member/officer as consulted:

Date

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
King's Lynn & West Norfolk



Name of policy/service/function	Regeneration & Economic Development
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	New / Existing (delete as appropriate)
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	2 strategic projects to be funded through REPF to support the enhancement of active travel in the rural areas of West Norfolk

Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure	
	Age			X	
	Disability	X			
	Gender			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	
	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
	Other (eg low income)			X	

Question	Answer	Comments
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	Yes / No	
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	Yes / No	By improving wayfinding, access and interpretation to walking and cycling routes in rural west Norfolk.
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes / No	
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	Yes / No	Actions:
		Actions agreed by EWG member: Name

Assessment completed by: Name	Jemma Curtis
Job title Regeneration Programmes Manager	Date 02/11/2023

Please Note: If there are any positive or negative impacts identified in question 1, or there any 'yes' responses to questions 2 – 4 a full impact assessment will be required.