

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 15ST SEPTEMBER 2008

ERDF PROGRAMME EXPANSION

REPORT OF ERDF, PACKAGE MANAGER

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide an update on the proposed expansion of the existing Telford Strategy ERDF Package and seek capital approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **It is recommended that Cabinet approves a capital approval and estimate for £4,042,195 in respect of the ERDF Package.**

3.0 SUMMARY

3.1 The ERDF Package Manager was informed in June by Government Office that there were funds available for additional projects. As a result a package of projects has been identified with the majority of the additional funds forming an extension of the RTH project to deliver additional sub-projects, together with an extension to the Railfreight project and the creation of the new project, Enterprise HQ.

3.2 There is no requirement for additional funds from the Council and any new projects will add to the significant benefits delivered to the Borough through the Package.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Not applicable.

5.0 INFORMATION

5.1 Background

5.1.1 The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been working to encourage economic development in less prosperous areas in Europe since 1975. The Telford Strategic Regeneration Package has operated between 2000- 2008 with total costs of £49,204,166 which includes £17.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund.

All projects within the Telford Strategic Regeneration Package have contributed to the Council's priorities:

- Transforming Telford & Wrekin
- Giving Children & Young People the Best Possible Start in their Lives
- Maintaining a High Quality, Attractive and Sustainable Environment
- Creating a Safe, Strong and Cohesive Community
 - Promoting Healthy Communities and Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable and Older People

The table below sets out existing and expanded Package costs with Projects details attached at Appendix A.

5.2 Details

5.2.1 Expanded Projects

Project	Existing Project Cost	Including Existing ERDF	Additional ERDF Grant	Existing Match funding	Expanded Project Cost
RTH	£6,399,537	£1,476,931	£1,593,980	£215,000	£8,209,717
Lloyds Phase 2	£8,100,000	£4,000,000	£145,000	-	£8,245,000
Telford Town Centre	£3,597,147	£1,400,115	£200,000	-	£3,797,147
Railfreight	£8,902,000	£2,238,000	1,201,000	-	£10,103,000
Total	£26,998,684	£9,115,046	£3,139,980	£215,000	£30,354,864

5.2.2 New Projects

Project	ERDF Grant	Existing Match Funding	Project Cost
Enterprise HQ	£502,215	-	£736,287

TSLEC
Total

upto £400,000	£1,081,000	£1,481,000
£902,215	£1,081,000	£2,217,287

5.3 **Equality & Diversity**

5.3.1 An important element of EU funded programme is the focus on delivering the Horizontal Themes; Environmental Sustainability, Equality of opportunity and Innovation. All European funded projects are required to demonstrate the delivery of these themes.

A number of projects within this Package help to address physical barriers. One of the project partners; Severn Gorge Countryside Trust has improved public access to woodland areas. The Coalbrookdale Watercourses also addresses physical access.

Interpretation materials including leaflets and information boards positively address the principle of Equal Opportunities.

Case studies on individual projects within the Package demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities.

5.4 **Environmental Impact**

5.4.1 The ERDF Package has delivered significant positive environmental impacts in particular the Regeneration through Heritage project:

- Restoring and improving historic structures to enhance their appearance in the local community
- Sustainable improvement and management of woodland areas
- Improved footpaths and accessibility within the WHS; encouraging walking and cycling rather than travelling by car
- Significant environmental benefits have been achieved by addressing the problem of land instability within the WHS. These include; reducing the risk of major and irreparable damage to the WHS; removing the need for vehicles to make long detours to avoid roads made impassable or dangerous because of land movement; and visual improvements to the area
- Improving untidy and derelict sites e.g. Coalbrookdale Watercourses

5.5 Legal Comment

5.5.1 There is no legal comment to add to this report. Legal advice will be provided as required in respect of the projects mentioned in Appendix A.”

5.6 Financial Implications

5.6.1 As highlighted earlier in the report there is no requirement for any additional funding from the Council. The package expansion has been structured so as to make use of existing expenditure to lever in additional ERDF Grant of £4,042,195.

5.6.2 The current ERDF Programme comes to an end on 31st December 2008. It is therefore imperative that all expenditure is completed by this date. Should this not be achieved, GOWM will reduce the grant payable accordingly, with the Council having to pick up the resulting shortfall.

5.6.3 As with the existing ERDF Package there is a potential risk of clawback associated with external funding due to contractual non compliance. However the comprehensive and robust monitoring and audit systems and process operated by the Package Management Team reduce this risk.

6.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no district wide implications.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Individual Project Applications
Single programming Document
West Midlands Objective 2 2000-2006 Programme-Management
Report May 2008

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PROJECT DETAILS

Extension to Regeneration through Heritage

1. Re-instatement of Footpath 97 (by Chapel Road) in the Gorge (£96,500)

A 5 metre long section of the wall has collapsed undermining the public footpath. The route is an important access facility for residents to walk to Ironbridge, and for visitors to access the museum and heritage sites, including the Iron Bridge itself.

The project will provide a structure that will stabilize the land holding the path in the long-term allowing for an improved surface to be installed, and also help to stabilize the land above the level of the path.

2. Gorge Connect (£60,000)

The maintenance of Gorge Connect bus service, procured from Arriva by the Council, operating at weekends and on Bank Holiday Mondays from the weekend before Easter until the end of October.

The Gorge Connect serves the following locations:

- Coalbrookdale, Museum of Iron/Enginuity
- Ironbridge
- Madeley High Street
- Legges Way car park
- Blists Hill Victorian Town
- Coalport China Museum
- Telford Town Centre bus station
- Museum of the Gorge

3. Proposal for an overarching Interpretation Strategy and Branding within the WHS (£157,500)

All partners agreed in 2006 that there was an urgent need for an overarching Interpretation Strategy, a striking WHS brand accepted and used by all partner organisations, combined with a 'family' of interlocking interpretation from leaflets, on site interpretation (for example, interpretation boards, finger posts, pod casts, historic guided trails) to web based material.

Despite success in the partnership raising funds to provide coherent road signage, this overarching strategy combined with relevant action 'on the ground' has not moved forward in the last 2 years due to lack of resources.

This Project will enable the development of an Interpretation Strategy and branding for the WHS.

4. Enhancing signage and new Fingerposts (£30,250)

Improvements to the signage and finger posts as key way markers into the WHS

5. Sustainable Access Strategy in Ironbridge (£100,000)

A feasibility study to look at overall sustainable access within Ironbridge and the possibility of rail and will include feasibility of footbridge at Dale End Park.

6. Rights of Way improvements (£140,000)

There are approximately 200 km of public rights of way in the ERDF Phase 2 area. The network provides an important access and leisure facility for both local people and visitors. Traditionally where these routes cross fences and hedges access has been facilitated by the provision of stiles. Additionally many of the routes are un-surfaced.

The project will improve accessibility to services, education centres, work places and leisure facilities by upgrading the furniture on the routes and the standard of surface material.

7. Celebrating our World Heritage (£11,000)

The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage weekend is a celebration of the area's unique, world-class heritage and is an opportunity to raise the local and regional profile of the World Heritage Site and also to increase the local community's awareness and appreciation of the area's historic significance.

The celebration programme will include attractions and entertainment (Victorian Funfair, music and dance, art exhibition and workshops, craft and country market) and also opportunities to find out more about the area's heritage (displays, talks and guided walks) and the significant investment that has been made in the area over recent years through European, national and regional funding programmes.#

The celebration coincides with the regional launch in Ironbridge of the Cultural Olympiad which will include a spectacular light and sound show. This will bring to life some of the area's most significant historic monuments, including the iconic Iron Bridge.

8. Autumn Marketing Campaign (£135,000)

This will include:

- Ironbridge & Telford Visitor Guide
- Ironbridge & Telford Mini Guide
- Weekend Break Package for Ironbridge & Telford

- Website module for visitironbridge.co.uk to enable bookability
- Updating of 5 key information boards within the Gorge
- Filling vacant shop windows in Ironbridge with information boards such as advertisements of forthcoming events in the Gorge and the map of the World Heritage Site
- Production of a nomadic (type) exhibition stand for the Ironbridge Gorge which can be used by partners as a promotional tool exhibitions, events and meetings

9. Cycle Access Ramp at Haybridge Roundabout (£117,000)

Through the 2008/09 LTP capital works programme, Haybridge Roundabout has been identified for enhancements to improve the flow of traffic on the northbound A5223 Whitchurch Drive.

The purpose is to undertake road widening at Haybridge Roundabout to provide a three lane approach northbound, creating additional capacity for traffic travelling from Ketley Brook Island. The enhanced scheme will provide a new footway/cycleway linking local cycle routes in the Haybridge area with the Perry Way, a strategic cycle route. The new 'missing' link will be circa 50m long but overcome what would be (if the alternative existed) a detour of circa 150-200m.

The scheme will contribute towards the ongoing Borough route strategy enabling more efficient management and control of traffic and will serve to support the long term growth of traffic using the route. The enhanced scheme will also improve pedestrian/cycle accessibility, including to/from the nearby Telford College of Arts and Technology.

10. Route 45 – Coalport Road, Ironbridge Gorge, Cycle Scheme (£50,930)

National Cycle Network Route 45 currently starts/finishes at Coalport Road in Jackfield. Shropshire County Council is negotiating an extension of the route between Jackfield and Bridgnorth, which is likely to be agreed in 2008. This will mean the route will cross Coalport Road where currently there is no safe crossing point for pedestrians/cyclists.

This project will therefore deliver a safe crossing point of Coalport Road on NCN R45, improving access to the museums, other attractions, other employment centres in the Ironbridge gorge and NCN R55 which accesses Telford Town Centre and beyond.

11. Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site - Pedestrian / Cycle Signing (£150,000)

This project will deliver comprehensive improvements to the cycling and walking environment in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, in order to improve sustainable access to the museum sites, the Ironbridge, Mawes Craft Centre, pubs and hotels and other attractions and employment centres in the gorge. The new measures will include new signs, markings, dropped kerbs and additional lengths of footway/cycleway as appropriate.

12. Wynd Landslip (£200,000)

Heavy rainfall in the summer of 2007 led to a landslip at the top of a wooded valley slope within the Gorge. The landslip extends into the rear garden of a private property located immediately above the slope. The landslip measures approximately 30m wide, involves approximately 1200 tonnes of materials and obstructs a footpath that traverses the wooded slope. This project will stabilise the area through a combination of regrading and retaining structures.

13. New Road (£75,000)

New Road is a very narrow adopted single lane carriageway traversing the steeply inclining residential area on the northern side of the Ironbridge Gorge. The carriageway is bordered by a small stone and mortar retaining wall upslope and with a partially propped stone and mortar retaining wall down slope. The tarmac surface to New Road shows a series of lateral cracks across a distance of ~20 metres running parallel to the road. This project will stabilise the area in order to maintain the vehicular route through this section of Ironbridge. This route is in jeopardy of being lost if the cracking leads to a local landslip which would undermine the carriageway.

14. Geomorphological mapping (£100,000)

The existing 'Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale Ground Behaviour Study' addresses the western section of the Ironbridge Gorge. It provides general guidance and information on ground stability conditions along the valley slopes and presents a series of geomorphological, ground behaviour and planning guidance maps. The proposed project looks to build on this earlier work and to extend the study area to include the remaining parts of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. It would also look to include a review of the ongoing remedial schemes including the results of the ongoing ground monitoring results.

15. Ironbridge ground investigation (£100,000)

The historic Iron Bridge shows considerable evidence of distortion as a consequence of the active landsliding affecting the Ironbridge Gorge. The proposed project looks to carry out intrusive ground investigation works to determine the ground conditions at each end of the Iron Bridge and to install instrumentation to determine the nature, depth and speed of ongoing movements in order to assist in development of protection/remedial works.

16. Greenwood Trust (£70,800)

The Centre is open to the public at no charge, and visitors can watch courses on the site, (from coracle building to green oak timber framing) enjoy tea and cakes in the vegetarian free trade café, or take one of the self guided walks that start from the site. The Centre attracts around 10,000 visitors per year, including regular events, courses, café and the Woodland Hall hiring's. This

could be increased to around 15,000/yr with minimal input, but the organisation does not currently have the resources to make this investment. Continuing investment in the site is required to ensure the health and safety of those visiting the site, and to keep the site attractive and welcoming.

The project will deliver refurbishment and upgrading including:

- The upgrade and extension of accommodation huts
- two further wooden huts for accommodation in the woods (for visitors, course participants or for groups of young people)
- Interpretation and marketing
- In addition the centre will work with a qualified marketing officer to offer familiarisation visits, feed through pr stories, offer meeting space, network with other members, make links with accommodation providers, create links with other complementary websites, visit other attractions/members to see how they promote themselves, use networks to find more sales for products
- Purchase of some media equipment to assist with more professional offer for seminars and business meetings

Extension to the Lloyds Land Stability Project

17. Lloyd's Cottage (£40,000)

It is proposed to open the Lloyds Cottage as a visitor centre/museum addressing the geological aspects of the "very young" Ironbridge Gorge. It would build on the opportunity the ongoing investigation and remedial works present to explain the geological structure of the gorge, the natural land instability issues, the development of industry as a consequence of local geology, the ground related legacies resulting from mining and other industrial activities and the planning and development control procedures. This facility, supported by technical and professional staff, will benefit the local and tourist communities alike and would act as a drop in centre during the ongoing and future proposed remediation schemes.

18. Jiggers Bank (£85,000)

A rock face remedial scheme which includes the construction of a reinforced toe buttress against lower rock face and application of rock face netting to upper face.

19. Jackfield Connect (£20,000)

A bus service to run during the road closure at Lloyds Head due to land stabilisation works

Extension to the Telford Town Centre Project

20. Telford Rail Station to Central Park Cycle Track (£70,000)

Silkin Way is a strategic north-south walking/cycle route through Telford. This project will introduce lighting, widened surface and signing to the section linking the NCN55 close to Telford Central rail station and the A442 over-bridge that links to Central Park employment area. The works will therefore improve access to employment and other sustainable modes of transport.

21. Town centre pedestrian footbridge (£100,000)

The purpose of the application is to fund a full assessment and appraisal of the proposal to provide a new pedestrian link between Telford Town Centre, the Railway Station and Central Park. There are two parts to the commission:

- a robust technical appraisal
- a robust business case

The appraisal and business case will be carried forward and provide the basis of an application to fund the design and construct two new footbridges and all associated works.

22. Telford Rail Station to Stafford Park Cycle Track Lighting (£30,000)

An informal pedestrian/cycle route linking Central Telford rail station and Stafford Park, a principal employment estate, avoid the busy Hollinswood Interchange. This project will deliver lighting to this new footway/cycleway to improve the security of the route.

23. Extension to Railfreight Project (£1,201,000)

Since the commencement of on site works the project team have had continued dialogue with GOWM regarding the potential for additional ERDF of £1.201m grant, above and beyond the £2.238m secured previously. The intention being that this could be spent on increasing the quantum of infrastructure installed within the terminal, thereby boosting its capacity to handle trains from 2-3 per day, to the anticipated maximum of 4 trains per day

For the Council this means the Terminal can more easily achieve the objectives set out in Section 4.0 of the April 2008 Cabinet Report. It also means that there is greater potential to secure higher levels of turnover rent, which is directly linked to terminal through-put.

By installing this additional infrastructure now, the Council can take advantage of current capital costs (construction costs continue to rise) and economies of scale derived from having a contractor already on site. The Operator avoids potential future disruption to operations resulting from the installation of this infrastructure during the operational phase.

There are no outputs linked to the ERDF grant, above and beyond that connected to the original grant.

The grant must be spent this year in accordance with ERDF timescales. This is considered to be the only new risk attributable to the funding. However, the

contractor has confirmed that all additional works can be accommodated within these timescales.

New Projects

24. Enterprise Headquarters (£502,215)

Create a showpiece Enterprise HQ, a world class venue bringing together 21st century businesses within the global birthplace of industry. A full circle of 'Enterprise' from the cottage industry that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution to the 21st century home-based enterprise economy bringing wealth and revived neighbourhoods in its wake. Note the recent figures for Shropshire from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor ranking the county as top of the region in levels of SME enterprise – acknowledged to be aided by the high levels of home enterprise in the county.

25. Telford Sports Leisure and Enterprise Community (TSLEC) (up to £400,000 tbc)

An opportunity has arisen to purchase the West Stand at Telford AFC, which include conference facilities, restaurant, health club and bar, the latter of which is likely to be converted into retail premises. This will add to the existing Council holding of the remaining stand and Learning Centre and forms an integral part of the wider Sports England pathfinder partnership project.