

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES****PROPOSED SHERWOOD LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on progress to develop a Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) for Sherwood.
2. To seek approval for the County Council to provide the lead body role for the Sherwood LPS.

Information and Advice

3. The Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnerships programme is for schemes led by partnerships which "aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character...". Grants of between £100,000 and £3 million are available for schemes that will deliver the following outcomes:
 - Heritage that is better managed, in better condition and has been identified/ recorded.
 - People who have developed skills, learnt about heritage and volunteered their time.
 - Communities that are better places to live, work and visit, with reduced environmental impacts and more people having engaged with heritage.

The area covered by an LPS should be between 20 and 200km² and must have a distinctive character that is special to people.

4. A broad group of partners with interests in the natural and historic environment and community involvement, has come together to draw up a bid for Stage 1 development funding for a Sherwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme. Co-ordination of this effort has been carried out under the umbrella of Sherwood Forest Regional Park and it is intended that a successful bid would help to demonstrate progress towards some of the aims of the Regional Park concept.
5. A Sherwood LPS should deliver significant community outcomes; benefits to the local economy, particularly through an enhanced tourism offer; and improvements to some of the County's most important conservation and heritage assets. The Scheme, if successful at Stage 2 (full application), would run for 5 years.
6. The partnership has been able to make good progress to gain broad agreement about a number of elements for the proposed bid, including:

- Outline proposals for governance arrangements
 - Landscape mapping work to provide recommended boundary for bid
 - Further mapping work to inform potential priorities for projects
 - Outline proposals for project ideas
 - Initial community meetings to outline potential for involvement
 - Meetings with HLF to outline ideas and to gain feedback, which has been positive
7. There is only one opportunity each year to make an LPS application and the partnership is aiming to submit a bid for this year's deadline of 31 May.
8. Experience from other Landscape Partnership Schemes, including the successful Trent Vale LPS, has demonstrated that in order to function effectively the proposed Sherwood LPS would need a project team to co-ordinate delivery, funded through the scheme. The partnership currently proposes that Sherwood Forest Trust should take on this co-ordinating project team role and this has the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). An organisation would also be required to take on the role of lead body, undertaking the day-to-day management of the project team on behalf of the partners and acting as accountable body for financial management of the scheme. HLF grant claims are paid in arrears and for a project of this size, the potential impact on the cash flow of most partner organisations would be significant.
9. Approval is, therefore, sought for the County Council to provide the lead body role for the proposed Sherwood LPS. This would be managed through the Conservation Team within the Planning Group, as the lead role for the Authority with the Sherwood Forest Regional Park already rests with the Planning Group. If the bid is successful, a new post would be required to manage the funding. This post would be employed by the County Council as lead body but would work alongside the co-ordinating team and will be the subject of a future report to Committee. Match funding for the LPS proposals will also need to be secured going forward. When the requirement for match funding is clearer, this will also be the subject of a future report to Committee.

Other Options Considered

10. The County Council could choose not to support the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Sherwood Landscape Partnership Scheme. It could also choose to support the application but not to take on the role of lead body. The County Council is, however, one of the leading partners in the current work arising from the Sherwood Forest Regional Park. If the County Council does not support an application, this is likely to cause difficulties for the remaining partners in demonstrating sufficient partner support and addressing financial management issues. Partners did initially explore the potential for Sherwood Forest Trust to take on the lead role but HLF has advised that financial risks may be difficult for smaller organisations and that, in most cases, it is the local authority that takes on the lead role.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. The County Council supports the aims and objectives of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park and is a lead partner in developing projects to fulfil those objectives. The proposed Landscape Partnership Scheme for Sherwood would facilitate delivery of a number of strategic priorities for the natural and historic environment, tourism and land management. It would also help to deliver some of the aspirations of local communities and would bring up to £3million of funding into this part of the County.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

If the bid is successful at Stage 1, partners will be asked to identify any potential match funding, including cash contributions. As soon as the match funding requirements have been identified, a further report will be brought to Committee. Funding for any additional staff required to manage a successful LPS project will be included in the project funding.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) To note progress to develop the proposed Sherwood Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- 2) To approve County Council support for the submission of the Sherwood LPS application and for the County Council to take on the role of lead body if required.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact: Heather Stokes, Conservation Team Manager (0115 969 6508)

Constitutional Comments

Financial Comments

Background Papers

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All