

Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

AGENDA ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: UPDATE REPORT

MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

DATE: 10 JULY 2019

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To update the Local Access Forum on various grants projects and programmes.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 For the forum's information;

2.2 To agree to receive a presentation on the Lower Wye Catchments Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management Project at the next meeting.

3. BACKGROUND:

3.1 A number of grant aided countryside access projects and related partnerships are newly funded or ongoing into 19/20:

Coastal Access Improvement Programme:

Grant, administered by NRW, confirmed for delivery of maintenance programme (75% grant = £8,974) and delivery of amended improvement scheme at Sudbrook Fort SAM subject to consent and an additional grant application to Cadw (75% grant = £6,150). Addressing coastal erosion to path line at Blackrock agreed in principle for future funding subject to engineering study and SSSI report. Now requires scheme design and approval.

Offa's Dyke Path National Trail:

Grant from NRW confirmed for delivery of agreed programme – maintenance & new fingerpost (75% grant = £5,475)

ROW Capital Programme:

Delivery of capital works programme – £38,000 & slippage

Wye Valley Walk:

The Wye Valley AONB has secured Welsh Government funding for the Wye Valley Walk Partnership to revamp the website, gap-up way-marking, making the official route guide useable in both directions and re-production & publication of the Wye Valley Walk Easy Access trails.

Improvements to the Wye Valley walk at Monmouth are also under development.

Clydach Ironworks:

Redeveloping of the MCC countryside site that remains (some, including caravan site lost to heads of the valleys road improvements) including acquisition of the land MCC did not own between the car park & ironworks. Refresh car park, landscaping in this strategic location. Target to complete Spring 2020.

Living Levels Landscape Partnership:

As part of the overall £4M Living Levels Landscape Programme progressing with partners (10 partners, RSPB Cymru leading. Includes NRW, GWT, Newport, Cardiff & Monmouthshire councils) approximately £1.2m of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and RCDF grant for destination improvement:

- This project aims to improve visitor experience across whole area of the Gwent Levels
- Will do that by new visitor orientation, information and interpretation at priority “hub” locations (e.g. Chepstow, Magor Marsh, Caldicot Castle), sculptures / interpretation along major routes and improving walking and cycling route access, signage and promotion across the levels including links to and from the Wales Coast Path.
- See <https://www.livinglevels.org.uk/>

Lower Wye Catchments Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management Project:

NRW Collaboration Funding has enabled the delivery of the Lower Wye Valley Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) project, funded until December 2019. Funded by NRW and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, this project takes a catchment approach in 54km² of the Wye Valley AONB, focussing on 4 Wye tributaries between Penallt and St Arvans. The project aims to develop practical sustainable solutions addressing land management, water run-off, access and invasive weeds through an Integrated NFM & GI Strategy.

A key focus is on resolving where surface water run-off and flooding impact on people’s ability to access and enjoy the countryside. The project is supported by a steering group including Monmouthshire County Council, National Farmers Union Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Monmouthshire Meadows, Woodland Trust and the Wye Valley AONB.

One outcome of the Lower Wye Valley Catchments NFM & GI project, is to investigate complex, specific and long standing access issues in relation to surface water run-off and land management, with a view to seeking further specific funding to address issues.

The current project update (June 2019) is appended and it is recommended that the project officer Chris Radford be invited to give a presentation on progress to the next LAF meeting.

Gwent Green Grid Partnership (ENRaW):

Welsh Government, through the Enabling Natural Resource and Wellbeing (ENRaW) Grant has provided “proceed at risk” approval in respect of a large collaborative bid. The Gwent Green Grid Partnership has a total value of £2.2M, with grant aid of £1.8M (with 20% in kind match funding) over 3 years to support the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP) to deliver a collaborative framework for Green Infrastructure management across Gwent. The core partners are Monmouthshire (lead partner), Torfaen, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Newport Councils, NRW and Aneurin Bevan Health Board. The programme will fund a number of new posts to deliver the 3-year programme.

Access outputs (led by Torfaen CBC) include a Gwent Strategic Access Plan - a plan identifying missing links in the countryside access network regionally and locally, development of a ranger training scheme and implementation and delivery of access projects in the region.

Monmouthshire Destination Partnership:

A successful first meeting of Monmouthshire’s new Destination Management Partnership took place last month, with Aine Morris, CEO, Abergavenny Food Festival, as chair. The Partnership has been set up to champion the visitor economy of Monmouthshire and drive forward greater investment in the destination through improved engagement with the industry and all others involved in developing and promoting tourism in the County. The new Partnership reports to Monmouthshire’s Public Service Programme Board, to reflect tourism’s contribution to the Board’s well-being objectives. Key destination tourism associations and chambers of trade attended the meeting, along with town council and other stakeholder organisation representatives. Key purposes of the Partnership are to: oversee progress against Monmouthshire’s Destination Management Plan 2017-2020 (including walking and cycling product development) share and compare destination forward plans with impact in the County, identify action areas of common interest, and agree future priorities.

4. AUTHOR:

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