

Individual Cabinet Member Decision

Our Future Coast Project – Business Case for acceptance of DEFRA grant funding July 2024

Report of Chief Officer Sustainable Growth

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To seek the required approvals for £500,000 DEFRA Grant funding to complete the Our Future Coast project			
Key Decision	✓	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	16 July 2024		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS Approval to accept £500,000 DEFRA grant funding to deliver the Our Future Coast Project and bring the project into the main Capital programme.

- (1) Our Future Coast Project is a collaborative project that will deliver Lancaster City objectives in line with our Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 and regulatory responsibilities.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This funding will deliver innovative solution that promote the regeneration of saltmarsh at Hest Bank and Jenny Brown's Point and provide increased resilience against coastal erosion and tidal flooding as part of the Our Future Coast Project.
- 1.2 Our Future Coast is a wider programme of projects that includes 14 sites along the Northwest coast from Great Ormes Head in north Wales to the Scottish border and is being led by Wyre Council.
- 1.3 Our sites specifically include the delivery of community co-designed interventions that promote the regeneration of saltmarsh. This will provide increased resilience to coastal change as well as promoting collaboration, support to our communities and enhancing the environment.
- 1.4 We are working in partnership with Wyre Council, Lancaster University, local communities and other stakeholders to successfully deliver the Our Future Coast Project.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Proposal to draw down funding that has been secured by Wyre Council to

deliver the projects at our sites (Hest Bank and Jenny Brown's Point).

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 All necessary consultation has taken place as part of the wider project (led by Wyre Council. Lancaster City Council have engaged with local communities and other relevant stakeholders during the concept and design phase and will continue with this approach through delivery.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Outcomes and options were defined within the conditions of the grant funding. The outcomes identified align with our service delivery requirements to manage coastal risk. Wyre Council led the bid process on behalf of the partnership for Our Future Coast Project and this process was supported by Lancaster City Council.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The preferred options have been identified as deliverables of the project in line with the funding conditions and fulfil the objectives within Lancaster City Council Plan 2024 – 2027

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The project enables Lancaster City Council to provide early consideration of the increased risk in our coastal environment and trial various measures to mitigate impact of coastal change and sea level rise. The project delivers on many key objectives in our corporate plan and supports our statutory responsibilities. This funding will enable us to go forward and start to deliver interventions over the summer.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

A Sustainable District:

Delivery of sustainable interventions that promote natural processes and deliver increased resilience and enhanced environmental benefits.

An increase in saltmarsh will significantly contribute to our climate change objectives as they are highly effective at storing carbon.

An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy:

Increased resilience to coastal erosion and tidal flood risk.

Healthy and Happy Communities:

Relationship building with communities and increased awareness of risk and processes through engagement with local communities, schools and universities.

Enhanced environment, contributing to increased habitat and improved ecology and biodiversity. In turn this provides/produces an attractive recreational area for the community and visitors to enjoy, improving people's health and well-being.

A Co-operative and Responsible Council:

This project enables us to consider more sustainable options for addressing coastal change over traditional methods, so that in the future we can provide mitigation that has less impact on our environment.

All interventions are co-designed with local communities and will be made from sustainable materials.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

These will be duly considered through delivery of the Our Future Coast project. Initial consideration has been included through the project process so far and will be developed where necessary for the individual project sites.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No specific legal implications. Legal Services have been involved with the legal agreement that we have entered into in respect of this grant funding.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The approved General Fund capital programme includes £210,000 for this project financed by external grant funding which currently sits in the development pool.

A full business case was presented to Capital Assurance Group on 19th June 2024 which received support from the group to progress.

Should the funding for £500,000 be accepted, the amounts and profile of the works would need to be updated and the project moved into the main capital programme for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.

This funding enables us to consider methods of addressing increased risk along our coastline due to climate change at an early stage. Without this funding, we would have to make arrangements for funding for this purpose in the future.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

Delivery will be managed through the Engineering team. No implications envisaged.

Information Services:

No Implications envisaged

Property:

Relevant landowners have already been approached and there are no implications.

Open Spaces:

The proposals will improve the open space in the coastal environment for both habitat and communities.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Chief Officers have authority to accept funding bids approved by Cabinet and/or Full Council subject to due diligence being completed and with the written consent of the Chief Finance Officer. As the project currently sits with the Council's Budget & Policy Framework approval has been provided by Cabinet and Council. On that basis these comments provide the s151 Officers written consent.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules acceptance of external funding of this value is an executive decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

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