

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – Teignbridge District Council**

**Leader: Cllr Gordon Hook**

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Andrew MacGregor /  
Cllr Jackie Hook**

**DATE:** 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**REPORT OF:** Estelle Skinner, Green Infrastructure Officer

**SUBJECT:** Completing the Wray Valley Trail multi-user route

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) Approve funding of a £100,000 contribution to Devon County Council towards delivery of the final stages of the Wray Valley Trail multi-user route.**
- 2) Delegate Authority to the Business Manager Strategic Place and the Solicitor to the Council to complete an associated funding agreement with Devon County Council.**

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1. To agree a contribution to Devon County Council towards the costs of delivery of the final two stages of the Wray Valley Trail cycle and multi-user route between Bovey Tracey and Moretonhampstead, an important part of the wider strategic context to link from Exeter to Moretonhampstead via Newton Abbot. Appendix A is a map of the full Wray Valley Trail route.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. Teignbridge's Council Strategy calls for a cycling revolution with more dedicated cycle paths linking city, towns and countryside. The Exe Estuary Trail and the Town Quay route (Brunel Industrial Estate to Kingsteignton) have already helped to fulfil these objectives, and the recent Members decision to commit match funding towards the preparation of a planning application for the Teign Estuary Trail between Passage House and Teignmouth Urban Edge was another significant step. Supporting the Wray Valley Trail is in-keeping with this positive sustainable travel message.
- 2.2. The Local Plan reflects this position and supports enhancing sustainable travel networks to support low carbon choices and healthier communities. The Teignbridge Infrastructure Delivery Plan specifically identifies this as an important strategic route.
- 2.3. Devon's Walking and Cycling Strategy highlights the need for completion of the Wray Valley Trail as one of the strategic priorities. The route is widely supported by local stakeholders including cycle group members, and it is expected to function as an important recreational route.

## TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 2.4. Teignbridge District Council recently declared a 'climate change emergency' with a view to increasing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting sustainable travel is an important tool to provide air quality and public health benefits.
- 2.5. The cost estimate to complete the route is £1,000,000, with funding from DCC's cycle infrastructure budget and local travel plan. This figure was value engineered in order to enable delivery at this time and not to lose the opportunity, meaning a reduction of surfacing durability, of route marking density, landscaping and other beneficial aspects. Route completion on the ground is due by autumn 2019, and works are currently underway. The £100,000 funding will contribute towards ensuring improved delivery through a suite of benefits:
- better quality surfacing of the path
  - quantity and quality of route marking
  - landscaping/planting along the route
  - opportunities for display of artefacts recovered during the works for increased heritage and educational value.
- 2.6. An overview of the Wray Valley Trail delivery to date is provided in bullet points below:
- Moretonhampstead Branch Line opened in 1866 and closed to passengers in 1959 and freight in 1964.
  - The track was lifted in 1970.
  - Initial planning permission for the Wray Valley Trail was approved in 2008.
  - To date, 5.5km of the route has been completed, the total route will be approximately 11km.
  - Most of Phase 1 was completed in 2011, Moretonhampstead to Steward Wood including Budleigh Farm Bridge, was completed in 2011.
  - Phase 2, Station Road, Bovey Tracey to Lower Knowle Road was completed in 2013, with a further extension towards Lustleigh including Wilford Bridge in 2015 (Phase 3).
  - The most recent section between Steward Wood and Wray Barton (the remainder of Phase 1) was completed in the summer of 2016.
  - Current works include clearing the remainder of the route, undertaking cliff stabilisation work at Caseley cutting, re-establishing drainage and engaging contractors to build two structures.
  - The stretch through Lustleigh is on-road and route signposting will be installed as part of the final route delivery.
  - Approximately 3.5km of off-road route delivery is required to complete the final stretch of the Wray Valley Trail.
- 2.7. The route is designed as a minimum 2.5m wide path with 0.5m wide grass verges on either side, to allow sufficient width for ease of use for different user types and reducing risk of conflict.
- 2.8. Teignbridge has consistently identified budgets for contributing towards important cycle projects and over the past 7 years our partnership approach to investment with Devon County Council has helped to bring forward more than 45km of new cycleway across the district. It is proposed to use an element of existing uncommitted cycling budget to meet the £100,000 funding recommended for the Wray Valley Trail.

## TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 2.9. Teignbridge contributed £25,000 towards delivery of an earlier stage of the Wray Valley Trail and Dartmoor National Park Authority has contributed £5,000.

### 3. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The Council's existing budget and capital programme identify £380,000 to support 'other' cycle routes outside of the Heart of Teignbridge (Newton Abbot, Kingsteignton and Kingskerswell) and Teignmouth/Dawlish, over the period 2019 – 2021. This is funded through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts and none has been committed to date.
- 3.2. The budget of £380,000 is adequate to fund the proposed £100,000 contribution. The total cost of preparing the planning application is estimated at £1,000,000 and the balance will be funded by Devon County Council.
- 3.3. Having made this commitment, Teignbridge Council will still be left with budget that it can allocate as a contribution towards further cycle projects as external funding opportunities arise.

### 4. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. It is proposed to delegate authority to the Business Manager Strategic Place and the Solicitor to the Council to finalise a funding agreement with Devon County Council.
- 4.2. The two councils have already completed various infrastructure funding agreements and are well placed to draw on that experience in preparing a simple agreement for this project.
- 4.3. Amongst the agreement's terms would be provisions relating to:
- a) The timing of payment/s in accordance with:
    - the Teignbridge Capital Programme;
    - the availability of funds; and
    - the occurrence of agreed incurred expenditure
  - b) A proportionate reduction to the contribution in the event of reduced costs.
  - c) Recovery of unspent budget.
- 4.4. Liabilities associated with any design, planning and delivery work would remain with Devon County Council. All that is proposed is a contribution towards financial costs that will be incurred by the County.

### 5. TIMESCALES

- 5.1. It is anticipated that the route works will be complete by the end of autumn 2019.

### 6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1. Committing the funds at this point would diminish the amount that Teignbridge has available to contribute to other cycle projects, not committing the funds would mean the route is delivered at the value-engineered level of quality described in 2.5 above.

## TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### 7. JUSTIFICATION

7.1. Contributing towards the Wray Valley Trail route cost will allow improvements in the quality and benefits (as described in 2.5 above) for an anticipated high quantity of users of this important cycle and multi user route that is supported by a large number of stakeholders and strategies, including Teignbridge's own up-to-date strategies.

7.2. Devon County Council commissioned a review of the economic benefits generated by three important multi-use trails in Devon: the Exe Estuary Trail, Drake's Trail and the Tarka Trail, which was published in 2015. This calculated £9.3 million generated in goods and services demand 2013-2014 associated with users of these Trails and the leisure/tourism related spending. In addition to this are the public health benefits related to facilitating good-quality outdoor recreation and commuting. The publication can be viewed via the link:

[https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/sqw\\_devon\\_cycling\\_and\\_walking\\_trails\\_economic\\_impact\\_report.pdf](https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/sqw_devon_cycling_and_walking_trails_economic_impact_report.pdf)

**Estelle Skinner**  
**Green Infrastructure Officer**

<b>Wards affected</b>	Bovey Tracey, Lustleigh (Parish), Moretonhampstead
<b>Contact for more information</b>	Spatial Planning & Delivery, 01626 215755
<b>Key Decision</b>	Y
<b>In Forward Plan</b>	Y
<b>In O&amp;S Work Programme</b>	N