

CABINET

7 February 2006

ITCHEN NAVIGATION HERITAGE TRAIL PROJECT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

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RECENT REFERENCES: None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The main aim of the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail project is to enhance and improve an internationally renowned chalk river system for the benefit of the local community, biodiversity, and to enhance its tourism potential.

The project was established as a partnership which includes Winchester City Council and by a project planning grant received from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2004. This grant provided funding for the preparation of a major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out the main aim as outlined above. The Lottery bid was submitted in September 2005 as a two stage project, the outcome of Stage One being announced by March 2006 and the outcome of Stage Two being announced by March 2007.

This report outlines the Lottery bid and makes a recommendation regarding a financial contribution from Winchester City Council as a partner and main beneficiary of this project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the content and purpose of the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail project insofar as it affects Winchester District be endorsed.
- 2 That should the application to the Lottery be successful, Cabinet approve a total contribution of £50,000 over the five year life of the project (£10,000 per annum) funded from the planning grants revenue budget.

CABINET7 February 2006ITCHEN NAVIGATION HERITAGE TRAIL PROJECTREPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENTDETAIL:1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail project aims to enhance and improve the internationally renowned chalk river system to celebrate its wildlife, history and value to local people. The project seeks to secure the conservation of the Itchen Navigation, recognising its importance as a heritage feature and its valued status in terms of habitat. It also seeks to benefit local people and to encourage visitors where it reflects the importance of the heritage and conservation element, giving consideration to the access, enjoyment and understanding of the Itchen Navigation.
- 1.2 The route of the Navigation runs south through the Itchen valley, passing through the western end of the proposed South Downs National Park and located just outside the AONB. It passes through or adjoins the parishes of Compton and Shawford, Otterbourne, Twyford and Colden Common. There is a 10.5 mile long footpath following the Navigation, providing access to the unique chalk river habitat, situated in a valley of outstanding historic and landscape value.
- 1.3 The Navigation itself was established in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century as an important trading link between Winchester and Southampton. It ceased to be used in 1869 and is now regarded essentially as a heritage structure and sits within a European Special Area of Conservation. Today the greater part of its length is maintained and managed by various landowners and fisheries managers. However, in some areas the Navigation has become unstable and physical structures, including the banks, are in need of urgent attention and require sympathetic conservation works to bring them back into favourable condition and prevent irreparable damage.
- 1.4 The Itchen Navigation project is a partnership between Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (who lead the partnership), the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, Winchester City Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Southampton City Council, English Nature and the Inland Waterways Association.
- 1.5 In 2004 the Itchen Navigation received a £48,000 project planning grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This funding was secured by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and, with additional support from the Environment Agency, funded a project officer for 12 months. This enabled the production of a Conservation Management Plan to help restore the Navigation for people and wildlife, followed by the preparation and submission of a major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for 75% of the monies required to undertake and complete the project as outlined above.

1.6 An application for just under £2 million has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to preserve the Itchen Navigation for the next century. A decision on Stage 1 funding is expected in March or April 2006.

1.7 Stage One – Project development

£130,000 has been requested for detailed river engineering design work to be produced during 2006 in preparation for preserving the Navigation. This stage will also see involvement of local people in wildlife surveys along the water course.

Stage Two – Project implementation

£1.9m has been requested for implementing engineering work and for enhancing wildlife habitats, historic assets and for people to enjoy these benefits along the length of the Navigation. If successful the funding will commence in March 2007. This stage will continue to see involvement of local people in wildlife surveys as above and various community projects.

1.8 Hampshire Wildlife Trust is seeking £96,000 in partnership funding for five years of the Project. Winchester City Council has played a key role in the planning of the project. The outcomes of that planning phase have listed capital works required for the Itchen Navigation, most of which lie in the Winchester City Council area. The Project is likely to benefit the Winchester area more than Eastleigh or Southampton. A request for funding of £50,000 from Winchester City Council has been made by the Trust to reflect this impact. Full details are provided in Appendix 1.

2 The Project

2.1 The Conservation Management Plan produced in the project planning phase sets out information on the Itchen Navigation and what the project needs to do to preserve it. This can be found at [www.hwt.org.uk/itchen.htm](http://www.hwt.org.uk/itchen.htm) and includes an overview of the importance of the area; assessment of significance of the area; assessment of access and interpretation; management issues and vulnerability; policies and objectives for managing the site; a work and maintenance schedule and a monitoring and review strategy.

3 The Scope of the Project

3.1 The principal aims of this project are to enhance and improve the internationally renowned chalk river system to celebrate its wildlife, history and value to local people. It also seeks to benefit local people and visitors where it reflects the importance of the heritage and conservation element, giving consideration to the access, enjoyment and understanding of the Itchen Navigation. The wildlife designations that emphasise the importance of the River Itchen system in a UK and European context and additionally the industrial heritage are the main drivers for the project.

3.2 There is presently little in the way of intellectual access such as interpretation and literature about the Navigation. In terms of physical access, there is a public footpath alongside the Navigation. The project is not creating new rights nor is it curtailing existing rights. It seeks to increase awareness of the Navigation through the use of promotional literature and displays and will seek to improve the condition of the public footpath where appropriate.

#### 4 Ownership of the Project and Stakeholders

- 4.1 The project will be managed by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust with the help of individual partners and the community, where appropriate and feasible.
- 4.2 Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is leading the project on behalf of the partnership and has employed an officer to carry out the planning phase. The Trust will remain as lead partner if the bid is successful and when funding is awarded for the main project, retaining a project officer and an assistant to carry out this work. They will also provide ecological expertise and experience in working with and managing volunteers.
- 4.3 The Environment Agency is a funding partner and is providing advice and support on flood defence, water resources, engineering issues, legal issues, fisheries, nature conservation, recreation and external funding. The Agency also owns and operates some of the water control structures on the Navigation.
- 4.4 English Nature is supporting the project by advising on issues concerning the sites designated for nature conservation ie the Special Area of Conservation and the Site of Special Scientific Interest. All proposals affecting the designations will have to be agreed by English Nature. English Nature has also set up Site Management Statements with landowners in the designated areas. These are voluntary agreements and the project will support their objectives.
- 4.5 Hampshire County Council is a funding partner and is providing advice and data on archaeology and history, ecology, public rights of way, access, recreation and interpretation. The County Council is also a landowner on parts of the Navigation.
- 4.6 Winchester City Council is presently supporting the project by advising on landscape issues, archaeology and history, access and recreation. The City Council is also a landowner on parts of the Navigation.
- 4.7 Southampton City Council is supporting the project by advising on city issues, nature conservation, recreation, rights of way, archaeology and community liaison. The City Council is also a landowner at the Southampton end of the Navigation.
- 4.8 Eastleigh Borough Council is a funding partner and is also providing advice on borough issues, nature conservation and recreation. The Borough Council is also a landowner on parts of the Navigation.
- 4.9 Inland Waterways Association is supporting the project by advising on preservation of locks and other canal-associated structures. When funding for the main project is awarded they will support the project through providing funds and volunteers to carry out some of the proposed restoration works.
- 4.10 Landowners and managers support the project through agreeing to allow works to take place on their land. They own and manage some of the land either directly or through tenants. Their ongoing management of the site is crucial to the future of the Navigation. There are numerous fisheries interests along the Navigation. Fisheries managers have been invited to comment and input to this conservation management plan and the project as a whole.

- 4.11 Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre is supporting the project by providing data and advice on biodiversity.
- 4.12 English Heritage is unable to support the project at this time due to staff changeovers. However they have requested to be kept informed of the project.
- 4.13 Other parties that may also have an interest include wildlife and history groups and local communities who have been invited to input to the project through consultation meetings. Hampshire Countryside Access Forum has also been invited to comment as they represent access interests across the county.

## 5 Significance of the Navigation

- 5.1 The Itchen Navigation falls within the area designated as a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. It also has several Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation along its length and established game and course fisheries. It is an example of early navigable water that had rare turf sided locks. Some of its associated structures are still visible today and provide an insight in to what it may have been like when it was an operating navigation. It is a chalk stream that has a public right of way running along its length. This is rare in Hampshire and provides people with the opportunity to enjoy this chalk stream in a valley of outstanding beauty and heritage.

## 6 Management issues and vulnerability

- 6.1 In its present state the Navigation is leaking and breaches regularly. This is due to the perched banks becoming unstable through erosion from livestock and recreational use, and trees growing on top of the banks and their roots undermining the banks and threatening to rip out the bank if they are to fall. Both the breaching and leaking are resulting in the river losing water.
- 6.2 The desire for a multi-user route has been expressed but to facilitate it would involve the compulsory purchase of considerable amounts of land from a variety of landowners. The installation of the required structures for such a multi-user route would result in significant damage to the European Special Area of Conservation and the UK Site of Special Scientific Interest. The scale of damage to the European and UK site would not be justified in terms of the total benefits of such a scheme.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This is an excellent opportunity to resolve the heritage and conservation issues of the Navigation. The complex process of preparing and submitting a major Heritage Lottery bid has only been made possible with the appointment of the Project Officer and the setting up of a partnership. The City Council is a principle beneficiary of the proposed project and on behalf of the Council as landowner the Chief Estates Officer supports the proposals.
- 7.2 Cabinet is asked to confirm its support for the principles of the project and the allocation of the very small (in percentage terms) partnership funding now being sought. Should the Lottery application be unsuccessful the contribution will not be required.

## 8. CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO)

Support for the project would be in accordance with the Council's adopted Environment Strategy and the draft Biodiversity Action Plan. It would be consistent with policies supporting the protection of heritage, enhancement of the environment and the creation of new opportunities for leisure and recreation.

The project supports two of the three strategic objectives in the Council's tourism strategy.

## 9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The total cost to the Council of participation in the project would be £50,000 along with an amount of officer time which will be accommodated in work programmes. It is proposed that the £50,000 be provided over the life of the project at £10,000 per annum commencing in 2006/07, the cost to be met from the planning grants revenue budget. There is therefore no additional budget provision required. Although the profile for the scheme attached in Appendix 1 shows a different profile for annual contributions this can be accommodated within the scheme finances.

Appendix 1 to the report shows the breakdown of contributions from the partners to the project and the proposed expenditure by district. The total contribution in cash sought from the City Council is 3% of the total funding bid. If the Lottery bid is unsuccessful at stage 1 then no funding will be required from the City Council. Contributions from local authorities to stage 1 will be pro rata the total contribution sought and this would be the limit of expenditure if stage 2 is not successful in producing further Lottery funding.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

## APPENDICES

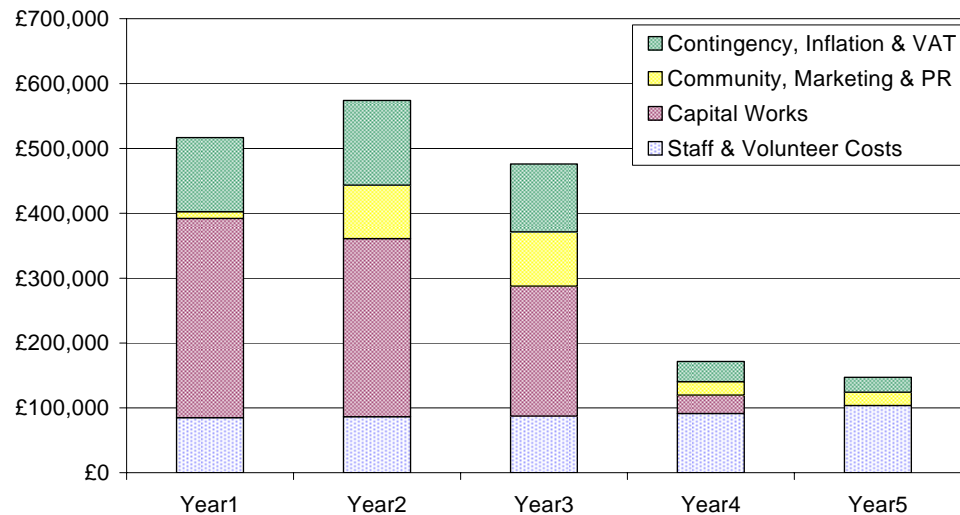
Appendix 1 – Financial Profile

### Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project Financial Profile

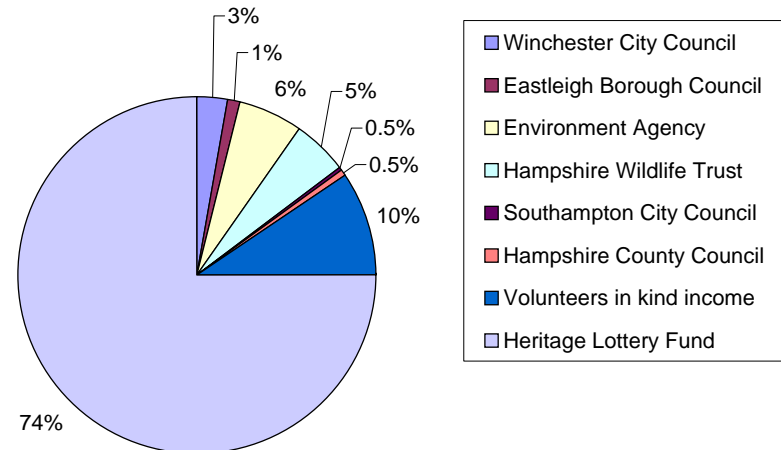
#### Income and Expenditure Breakdown

	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Total
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Staff & Volunteer Costs	£84,829	£86,291	£87,452	£91,214	£103,679	<b>£453,465</b>
Capital Works	£307,250	£274,800	£200,300	£28,500	£0	<b>£810,850</b>
Community, Marketing & PR	£10,218	£82,500	£83,500	£20,500	£20,500	<b>£217,218</b>
Contingency, Inflation & VAT	£114,352	£130,395	£104,753	£31,296	£22,753	<b>£403,548</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£516,649</b>	<b>£573,986</b>	<b>£476,004</b>	<b>£171,510</b>	<b>£146,932</b>	<b>£1,885,081</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proposed Income</b>						
Winchester City Council	£13,704	£15,224	£12,626	£4,549	£3,897	<b>£50,000</b>
Eastleigh Borough Council	£6,852	£7,612	£6,313	£2,275	£1,949	<b>£25,000</b>
Environment Agency	£29,052	£32,276	£26,766	£9,644	£8,262	<b>£106,000</b>
Hampshire Wildlife Trust	£25,781	£28,642	£23,753	£8,558	£7,332	<b>£94,066</b>
Southampton City Council	£2,193	£2,436	£2,020	£728	£624	<b>£8,000</b>
Hampshire County Council	£2,467	£2,740	£2,273	£819	£702	<b>£9,000</b>
Volunteers in kind income	£49,306	£54,778	£45,427	£16,368	£14,022	<b>£179,900</b>
Heritage Lottery Fund	£387,296	£430,278	£356,827	£128,569	£110,145	<b>£1,413,115</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£516,649</b>	<b>£573,986</b>	<b>£476,004</b>	<b>£171,510</b>	<b>£146,932</b>	<b>£1,885,081</b>

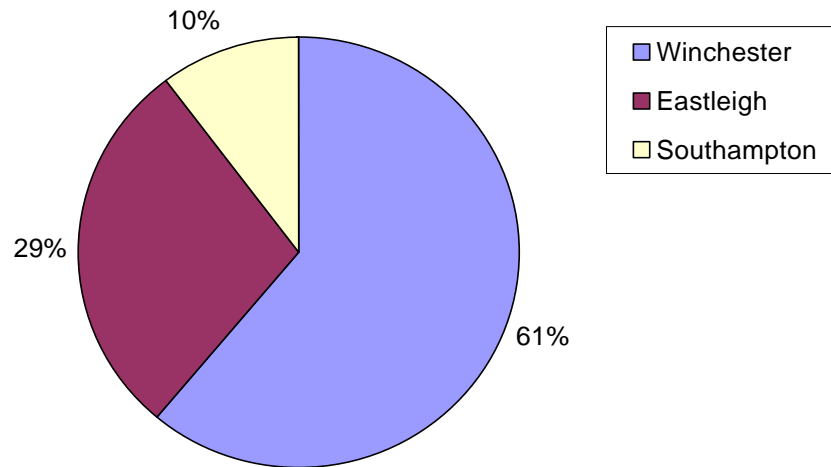
**Total project spend per year - Itchen Navigation Project**



**Income Profile for Itchen Navigation Project**



### Proportion of Total Project Spend in each Local Authority Area



### Proportion of Total Project Spend in each Local Authority Area

	<b>Winchester</b>	<b>Eastleigh</b>	<b>Southampton</b>
Capital Works	£497,600	£217,700	£95,550
Staff & Volunteer Costs*	£276,614	£136,039	£40,812
Community, Marketing & PR*	£132,503	£65,165	£19,550
Contingency, Inflation & VAT*	£246,164	£121,064	£36,319
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,152,881</b>	<b>£539,969</b>	<b>£192,231</b>
% of Total	61%	29%	10%

\*costs allocated proportionately across the LA areas according to the length of the Itchen Navigation watercourse in each area (which is Winchester 8.655km or 61%, Eastleigh 4.257km or 30%, Southampton 1.338km or 9%)



