

Members Briefing Note – ESIF (European Structural Investment Fund)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 30th April 2018

Background

Gloucester City Council has been working on a joint European bid (ESIF – European Structural Investment Fund) with a number of partners including Tewkesbury Borough Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, University of Gloucester, Environment Agency (EA) and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT).

Gloucester City Council will be project lead on the “Urban Greening Project” and responsible for ensuring that the project delivers the proposed 250 hectares of habitat creation and /or habitat improvements.

The total spend for the scheme is around £1.3m which is approximately 50% match funded by partners. The majority of spend will be in Gloucester City at a number of sites including;

Plock Court	Combrook Close Balancing Pond	Sections along the Sud brook
Armscroft Park	Clock Tower Park and Balancing Pond	Manor Farm Park, Kingsway
Estcourt Road Gardens	Barnwood Park Balancing Pond	Baneberry Road POS
Haycroft Drive	Milton Avenue	Sections along the Horsbere brook including the Horsbere Brook Meadow, Sandyleaze Park, POS off Evergreen Walk and POS off Ferndale Close
Matson Rest Garden	Matson Park	
King George V Playing Field	Appleton Way Balancing Pond	

Other sites identified are along sections of verges, footpaths and POS to link sites together improving movement and access for wildlife.

The regeneration of Matson and Podsmead will have little effect on what is proposed however we will ensure that we work with communities in those areas, organisations and officers involved with the regeneration.

Why are we carrying out the works?

To deliver a number of positive environmental outcomes including:

- Habitat creation
- Increased Biodiversity
- Reduced Flood Risk
- Improvements to water quality

- Increasing target species
- Engaging our communities with the outdoors
- Improving urban air quality
- To provide an improved, interconnected network of habitats
- Enhancing sites as valuable public green space with enhanced biodiversity
- Increased level of amenity
- Improving health and well-being
- Significant reputational gains to be had by The City Council and GWT and scope to deliver local Green Infrastructure exemplars that could be used around the country
- Continuing to build upon our success as a Bee Guardian City – Gloucester City was the first bee guardian city in the UK in 2011

A walkover survey was carried out by an Ecologist from GWT and the Flood Risk Management Officer (from Gloucester City Council) of the sites above to identify existing species and potential improvements that would create a more diverse habitat and bring about an increase in biodiversity.

What will the works consist of?

The proposed works will consist of a combination of the following:

- Changes to maintenance regimes
- Wildlife Meadow Creation
- Creation of wildlife corridors
- Woodland Planting
- Native hedgerow species planting
- Orchard creation
- River Restoration including; renaturalising sections of watercourse - incorporating bend and meanders, removal of concrete sections of channel banks and bed, marginal planting, berms etc
- Construction of SuDS features – swales, reed beds, ponds and scrapes

When will the works be carried out?

It is hoped that final approval from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formally DCLG) who are administering the grant will be the end of May and that scheme will have to be completed within 3 years of the start date.

It is confirmed that the referendum result will not impact this scheme as funding has already been allocated.

We plan to consult with communities in areas where works are planned some of which will be carried out by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

Other related works

GWT are looking to submit a bid for funding to Wild up Gloucestershire with Gloucester City being chosen as the pilot city. This work will focus on more inner city areas creating further connectivity where people and wildlife can thrive, inspire more people and communities to take action for nature and lead on natural solutions.

We will be working closely with GWT to identify areas where potential works could be carried to complement our proposed ESIF scheme.