

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

28 March 2017

Report title	Bradley Arm Canal Towpath Improvement – additional grant funding	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Steve Evans City Environment	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	Bilston East, Springvale	
Accountable director	Ross Cook, City Environment	
Originating service	Transportation	
Accountable employee(s)	Gwyn James	Head of Service - Transportation
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Report to be/has been considered by	None	

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the allocation of further grant funding up to £85,000 for the completion of the Bradley Arm Canal towpath improvement scheme.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 In January 2017 a project to improve the surface of the Bradley Arm Canal towpath from its junction with the Birmingham Mainline Canal to Highfields Road was approved. Following commencement of works the cost of the project has been reassessed and is now anticipated to exceed the agreed budget by up to £85,000. This report seeks approval to increase the agreed budget by £85,000 to ensure the project can be completed.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Managing Short Trips (MST) programme is a partnership with Transport for West Midlands and the other three Black Country Authorities. Through this partnership a successful bid for resources was made via the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) from the Local Growth Fund, enabling transport projects to be delivered to improve access to employment and economic regeneration.

3.0 Bradley Arm Canal Towpath Scheme

- 3.1 The Bradley Arm Canal towpath has been identified for improvement as it connects to recent works on and around the Birmingham Mainline Canal creating links to Coseley Rail Station and Wolverhampton city centre. It is also a timely scheme to deliver in view of the on-going development of Bilston Urban Village.
- 3.2 This scheme involves provision of an all-weather surface for a distance of 890 metres from the junction of the Birmingham Mainline Canal to the Highfields Road Bridge. The work is being procured and managed by the Canal & River Trust (CRT) on behalf of the Council.
- 3.3 Since work began last month, additional costs of approximately £85,000 have been identified due to the need to provide support to an embankment adjacent to the canal. This problem only became apparent during the course of construction.
- 3.4 The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has agreed to fund the additional costs, which will be passported through to CRT by the Council. However, since the project is included in City of Wolverhampton Council's capital programme it is necessary to obtain approval to the increase in budget through the Council's own financial procedures.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The original allocation of £207,000 in the Managing Short Trips programme for the payment of grant to the Canal and River Trust to carry out Bradley Arm Canal towpath improvements has been increased to £292,000 to allow for the revised costing. This represents an increase of £85,000 on the budget which is included under the Transportation element of the approved capital programme. It is wholly funded by grant from the Local Growth Fund via the Black Country LEP.[TK/10032017/N]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Conditions relating to deployment of the Local Growth Fund require the City of Wolverhampton Council to act as intermediary between the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Canal & River Trust Authority. The proper fulfilment of this role requires any necessary legal agreements to be entered into between Wolverhampton City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority, and between Wolverhampton City Council and the Canal & River Trust Authority.
[TS/09032017/Q]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 The works detailed in this report aim to increase low-cost options for travel, in particular, access to employment. The equality benefit of this has to be balanced against the impact on mobility and sensory impaired people of accommodating cyclists within traditionally pedestrian areas. The works have therefore been subjected to a Stage 1 Equality Analysis.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 The developments identified in this report will enhance the walking and cycling infrastructure, increasing opportunities for travel by environmentally benign modes. This will have a positive effect on air pollution and noise arising from motor traffic. The proposals for Springfield Campus will result in conversion of a motor vehicle-dominated environment to a pedestrian- and cycling-friendly environment.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 This report has no Human Resources implications

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 This report has no Corporate Landlord implications

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 IEDN 16/01/17 Bradley Arm Canal Towpath Improvement