

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

20 NOVEMBER 2018

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES

#### OUR GREEN SPACES – ENABLING NATURAL RESOURCES AND WELL-BEING GRANT

#### 1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the submission of a full application to the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-Being Grant (ENRaW) and, if successful, to accept the resulting funding offer and enter into any legal and management agreements required to implement the projects funded by the grant.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This work aligns with the following Corporate Priorities:

1. **Supporting a successful local economy** - taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
3. **Smarter use of resources** - ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

#### 3. Background.

- 3.1 The Enabling Natural Resources and Well-Being grant (ENRaW) is administered by Welsh Government (WG) and supports projects that make improvements in residential areas by delivering benefits for people, businesses and communities. It has been designed to incorporate sub-measures 7.4 and 16.2 of the Rural Communities Development Programme (RDP) and provides a combination of revenue and capital funding. It is composed of three types of funding (1) revenue; (2) capital for small scale infrastructure; and (3) combined revenue and capital. The grant focusses on pilot and demonstration projects at the right scale, promoting cooperation and collaboration to address the following three themes of action:

- Developing, regenerating and broadening access to sustainable green infrastructure;
- Improving the quality of the urban and rural built environment; and
- Developing resilient ecological networks, areas and nature based solutions.

- 3.2 The grant focusses on delivering the cross cutting ambitions of Prosperity for All and the Natural Resources Policy. It encourages collaboration from the outset with new partners *outside* of traditional areas (e.g. business, health, tourism, etc.) and the project based funding is for up to three years. It is focused on outcomes and multiple benefits across the well-being goals and WG are looking for continuous improvement in light of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) and Environment Acts.
- 3.3 Building on the Bridgend Public Services Board Well-being Plan, and other evidence bases such as the Local Biodiversity Action Plan / Nature Recovery Plan, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan and green infrastructure mapping, the Our Green Spaces project aims to form a collaboration to better manage the green infrastructure of Bridgend County.
- 3.4 Officers have undertaken outreach to form the collaboration – a critical part of this grant. Firstly, officers and representatives of third sector organisations from Biodiversity Action Groups across South Wales have been meeting to coordinate ENRaW projects as they are developed to avoid conflict or duplication. There are three green infrastructure projects being developed across South Wales, a South West project, this pilot project for South Central and a South East project.
- 3.5 At a local level, partner organisations involved with the Public Service Board (PSB) have been engaged to bring cross sector organisations into the collaboration.

#### **4. Current situation / proposal.**

- 4.1 Our Green Spaces is a project to manage the green infrastructure of Bridgend County for the benefit of people, businesses and communities. The project is split into four themes that align with the Bridgend Public Services Board (PSB) Well-being Plan and through delivery will identify opportunities to maximise benefits across a range of sites.

- Enabling the best start in life
- Enabling safe and cohesive communities
- Enabling equality
- Enabling healthy choices in a healthy environment

#### **Enabling the best start in life**

- 4.2 This theme aligns with the wellbeing objective “best start in life”, contributing to: “Working with communities we will seek to further strengthen and expand our community infrastructure to improve support for children, families and communities, with the long term aim of improving wellbeing and resilience to deal with the challenges of life”.

- 4.3 The project will aim to improve the educational outcomes for children and improve their early years' experience. This will be done by developing our green spaces as early years learning spaces, providing activities and facilities aimed at experiential learning of children outdoors. Teacher and family resources will be developed at the foundation stage to maximise early years learning outdoors. Schools and nurseries will be signposted to local green space and the resources being developed for education in that space.

#### **Enabling safe and cohesive communities**

- 4.4 This theme aligns with the wellbeing objective "Support communities in Bridgend County to be safe and cohesive", contributing to: "We will work with communities to help them improve the local environment and increase opportunities to come together to promote a sense of ownership and security".
- 4.5 The project will aim to do this by engaging community members to use their local green space, develop a sense of ownership of that green space and foster behavioural change so people have less negative impact on our green space.
- 4.6 The project will work towards this by promoting educational activities, recreational activities and countryside volunteering. Activity will take place in partnership with friends groups and countryside volunteers in habitat management to promote biodiversity and create high quality green space that will maximise our natural resources and contribute to the wellbeing of our communities.

#### **Enabling equality**

- 4.7 This theme aligns with the wellbeing objective "reduce social and economic inequalities". The project will aim to develop four flagship sites, and each of these sites will be themed as an example of best practice in unlocking green space. These themes will be:
- Increasing access for parents with early years' children
  - Increasing access for older people
  - Providing a space for mindfulness
  - Increasing access for the partially sighted
- 4.8 The project will promote walking and cycling as well as exploring safer cycle storage for people visiting our green spaces. This will encourage a lower carbon economy. The projects aims to develop a 30 minute green space walk from key PSB buildings so that staff have the option to do a health and well-being walk during their lunchtime.

#### **Enabling healthy choices in a healthy environment**

- 4.9 This theme aligns with the wellbeing objective "healthy choices in a healthy environment". The Well-being Plan recognises "Bridgend County has attractive woodlands, beautiful landscapes, coastline and wildlife. People come from far and wide to experience them. Well managed green spaces give us all a better quality of life and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and provide access to nature where we live and work. In our assessment, local people told us they value the green spaces

in our towns and villages. This objective is about valuing and maximising benefit from our natural, cultural and built assets.

4.10 This theme will address the steps outlined in the Well-being Plan to encourage healthy choices in a healthy environment. These steps include:

- Building on the evidence base, e.g. the Bridgend Nature Recovery Plan, to identify opportunities to improve the quality and extent of natural assets available, and develop a programme to take forward these opportunities in collaboration with local communities and business.
- Improving the public estate and green spaces, in urban areas, by encouraging award of green flag status and through community involvement.
- Exploring how assets can be used to provide opportunities for GPs and others to direct people to activities that will help improve their health and wellbeing (social prescribing).

4.11 This theme will also aim to undertake steps towards sustainable management of green space to reduce invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam to protect habitats, increase biodiversity, reduce soil erosion and flood risk from the fast runoff associated with these species.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.**

5.1 If opportunities arise to undertake works on land not in the control of BCBC then advice will be sought from relevant departments in relation to potential legal, property and insurance issues prior to considering an appropriate course of action. Where there is a requirement for any legal or service agreements between BCBC and any other land owner these will be developed with support from BCBC legal and property departments.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics and an EIA status of low priority is considered appropriate at this stage.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment**

7.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report.

- **Long Term** – The project will foster a longer term understanding of green space and well-being, as well as a sense of ownership between communities and green space. The habitat management works will also enable the green spaces to be more resilient to long-term change.
- **Prevention** – The aim of the project is to promote use of outdoor space and well-being by focussing on access to and management of our green spaces by enabling the best start in life; enabling safe and cohesive communities; enabling equality;

and enabling healthy choices in a healthy environment. All of these themes are based upon the well-being plan in Bridgend County with a view to tackling and preventing identified problems with health, community cohesion and the environment.

- **Integration** – The project will contribute to the well-being goals:
  - Protect assets that support rural businesses and tourism.
  - Preserve and protect habitats, promote sustainable management of green spaces, prevent loss of assets, mitigate against climate change, biodiversity decline and flood risk.
  - Promote physical activity, social and supportive networks, reduce car use to reduce carbon air emissions.
  - Provide safe and accessible cultural and green assets for older people, carers, disabled people, young families and children.
- **Collaboration** – The project will bring together a wider stakeholder group to lead the project, with a smaller steering group of core partners that will manage the project. Local Authority officers from Biodiversity Action Groups across South Wales have been meeting to coordinate ENRaW projects as they are developed to avoid conflict or duplication.
- **Involvement** – the project has been developed in close partnership with a wide range of local stakeholders including a number of bodies with an interest in well-being goals including members of the PSB. These are widespread across the County Borough, and the range of sites currently suggested for inclusion in the project include a relatively equal spread of rural and non-rural areas. The stakeholder groups will be involved in monitoring and supporting the delivery of activity during the project.

## 8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The timeframe is proposed as starting in spring 2019 and ending in spring 2022, subject to WG decision making processes.
- 8.2 The project is currently costed at £734,579. A breakdown of the funding package as currently drafted is presented below. This is subject to final discussion with WG and may be subject to change.

-	Capital	Revenue	Total
WG grant	£182,900	£409,263	£592,163
BCBC Resource	£0	£146,916	£146,916
<b>Total</b>	<b>£182,900</b>	<b>£556,179</b>	<b>£739,079</b>

- 8.3 Of this value, it is currently considered that match funding to a value of £146,916 will be provided through existing budgets in the Economy and Natural Resources Service. A value of £125,068 will be in the form of matched staff time and a value of £21,848 will be in the form of matched revenue resource. This will be evenly allocated over the 3 years of the project. Any increase in total value of the scheme will be conditional on further existing resources being available to maintain the 80% intervention rate.

8.4 All procurement process will be in line with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) policies and procedures and support will be provided by BCBC procurement department.

**9. Recommendation.**

Cabinet is recommended to:

9.1 Approve the submission of the Our Green Spaces proposal as outlined above to the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-Being Grant

9.2 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, to finalise and submit, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the full application and accept any resulting funding offer.

9.3 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities upon receipt of any resulting funding offer to put in place the required legal and management agreements in consultation with the Head of Legal and Regulatory Services and the Section 151 Officer.

**Mark Shephard**  
**Corporate Director, Communities**  
**12<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

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**Background Documents**

None