

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member and Advisers for Business Growth and Regeneration</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Proposed Chesterfield Canal Members Steering Group</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

### 5. Summary

5.1 This report proposes the creation of a Members Steering Group, guided by the attached 'Terms of Reference' to progress the development of the remaining disused section of the Chesterfield Canal in the Borough of Rotherham, situated between Kiveton Park Station and Killamarsh.

### 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That Cabinet Member approves the formation of the Chesterfield Canal Members Steering Group.
- 6.2 That the attached 'Terms of Reference' outlining the composition, objectives, frequency of meetings and reporting procedures of the Steering Group be approved and adopted.

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### 7. Proposals and Details

The Chesterfield Canal is situated between West Stockwith, Nottinghamshire and Chesterfield, Derbyshire and traverses the south part of the Borough as indicated on the appended plan. Constructed between 1771 and 1776, the Canal was an active installation for the following 130 years until the collapse of a section of the Norwood Tunnel near Kiveton Park had the effect of isolating the western section of the Canal between Chesterfield and Killamarsh. This led to the cessation of commercial traffic on that section of the Canal during the Great War, followed by closure of the eastern section of the Canal in 1961.

Since 1976, an organisation comprising volunteer enthusiasts known as the Chesterfield Canal Society has worked closely with local authorities along the Canals route to restore it to navigable condition.

A short section of the Canal has been restored at its western (Chesterfield) end, together with a longer section at its eastern end (between West Stockwith and Kiveton Park Station), leaving a nine mile gap that requires restoration in order to make the Canal navigable along its full length.

It is proposed that the Members Steering Group be established with the intent of driving forward restoration of this disused section of the Canal in Rotherham in order to meet up with the ongoing restoration of the Derbyshire section at Killamarsh.

The attached 'Terms of Reference' set out the proposed composition of the Group; its aims and objectives; the intended frequency of meetings; and its reporting procedure, which entails submitting the Minutes of its bi-monthly meetings to the subsequent meeting of the Cabinet Member for Business Growth and Regeneration.

Recognising the constraints imposed by the current economic climate, the 'Terms of Reference' propose that whilst not losing sight of the medium and long-term objectives of the project, particular emphasis is placed on a series of "short hops" in terms of intended development, influenced by socio-economic "drivers" such as the potential development of a marina facility at Kiveton Park Station, which in turn might help generate further revenue to fund subsequent works.

## **8. Finance**

The current proposal entails no financial cost to the Council, indeed one of the objectives of the proposed Steering Group will be to investigate sources of funding for the project.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

There are few risks attached to the establishment of the Steering Group itself; the main risk to the overall project remains a lack of funding from external sources, which continues to frustrate the ambitions of the various partners. The key partners themselves possess little in the way of funding.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The project contributes to Objective 1 of the Corporate Plan "Stimulating the Local Economy and helping Local People into Work" insofar as restoring the Canal to active use will create a key tourist attraction, with the potential creation of new jobs for local people.

Successful delivery of the project in a sustainable and well-planned manner could also contribute to the Councils 'Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan' by encouraging improved bio-diversity in the Canal environs and supporting "Green Transport" in the form of increased Canal traffic activity.

Policy CS10 of the Local Development Framework recognises the necessity of protecting the Chesterfield Canal for posterity in view of its recreational potential and historic significance.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Appendix A - Chesterfield Canal Members Steering Group - Terms of Reference

Appendix B - Plan of the Chesterfield Canal (Rotherham Section)

Rotherham MBC Corporate Plan

Rotherham MBC Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2011 - 15

Rotherham MBC Local Development Framework

Chesterfield Canal Trust 2020 Vision

Chesterfield Canal Trust Five Year Action Plan 2011-16

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted over the proposed Terms of Reference and has indicated that he has no objections to the proposed Terms of Reference for the Steering Group.

The Head of Financial Services has also been consulted and has indicated that he has no objections to the proposed Terms of Reference for the Steering Group.

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