



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Lagan Canal Restoration Trust
Date:	12 August 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development ext. 3470
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Relevant Background Information

At the Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub Committee meeting held on 27 November 2006 Members approved in principle a draft business plan for the establishment of the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust. Following the acceptance of this draft business plan it was decided that a partnership organisation should be established representing core funding bodies and relevant stakeholders. This partnership would take the form of a not for profit company limited by guarantee which would apply for charitable status, and its lifespan would be limited to the restoration of the canal.

In February 2008 a Trust Manager was appointed and progress to date has focused on the formal establishment of the Trust with agreement on the structure, membership and roles, and at its meeting of 13 August 2008 the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee were appointed as the Belfast City Council representatives on the Shadow Board of the Lagan Canal Trust.

The aims of the Trust are to provide;

- Restored and revitalised waterway and 'greenway' linking Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Craigavon and Lough Neagh
- Sensitive restoration of Industrial, cultural and natural heritage values associated with the Canal and its corridor
- The development of this major recreational and tourism asset for Northern Ireland
- Interpretation, education & enjoyment for all
- Economic regeneration of the communities along its route

The key benefit of Trust membership is Belfast City Council's capacity to influence and shape the future strategic vision of the restored Lagan Canal and corridor, in areas such as tourism and recreation, heritage, education, economy, employment, the

environment, quality of life and regeneration.

Key Issues

Belfast City Council is a key player in the development of the restoration of the Lagan Canal and has made a positive contribution along with its partners, to the development of the Trust through a number of key projects (see appendix 1).

The Trust will be in an advantageous position to bid for funding opportunities that may not otherwise be available to individual partners. There has been a clear indication and commitment from all of the Trust partners to provide the necessary funding and to work in partnership to progress the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust over the next two years. Given the possible impact of RPA in 2011 the current funding package will take the Trust to this key date. This will be reviewed by the partners as RPA approaches.

The Trust contributing bodies have been asked to continue the funding commitment to the Trust for the following two financial years. A formula for the sharing of organisational costs between the 4 local authority partners has been proposed, based on the number of locks in each authority area, plus contributions from DCAL and EHS. Therefore, the financial contribution requested from Belfast City Council is £18,995 in 2009/10 and £14,967 in 2010/11.

		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Lisburn City Council	40%	36451.2	40096	31144.8	112400
Belfast City Council	18%	14500	18995	14967	50580.6
DCAL	20%	18225.6	20048	15573	56200.6
NIEA	10%	9112.8	10024	7786.2	28100
Craigavon Borough Council	8%	7290.24	8019.2	6228.96	22480
Castlereagh Borough Council	4%	3645.12	4009.6	3114.48	11240
		89224.96	101191.8	78814.4	281001.2

Resource Implications

Financial implications

Financial contribution requested from Belfast City Council is £18,995 in 2009/10; £14,967 in 2010/11. Current financial provision exists within the 2009/2010 budget.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note the updates set out within the report;
2. Approve a two-year funding commitment to the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust of £18,995 in 2009/2010 and £14,967 in 2010/2011, subject to the estimates for that year being approved.

Decision Tracking

Implementation of agreed funding for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011

Timeline 2009/2010: September 2009

Timeline 2010/2011: April 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

RPA	Review of Public Administration
DCAL	Department of Culture Arts and Leisure
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
DSD	Department of Social Development (Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate)
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 Key Outputs to Date

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Lagan Canal Restoration Trust - Key Outputs to date:

Belfast:

- A Topographical and River Survey has been completed for Lock 1 Stranmillis Gateway.
- A Scoping Study was completed for the Lagan Gateway Project from the Lagan Weir to Edenderry (First Phase)
- The Lagan Steering Group was established to exchange advice and information between stakeholders.
- A three dimensional model of the proposed development at Lock 1 Stranmillis Gateway has been completed.
- A virtual (computer generated) model completed. This allows detailed examination of the project through 360 degrees. This interactive 3D environment will allow the user to navigate around in real-time and assess views from any location. It is compatible with use on the Council Website and is being used as a marketing and promotional tool.
- Interpretative signage has been installed beside Lock 1 Stranmillis Gateway and includes interpretation of the Lagan Navigation, the history of the area, the river and canal.
- DSD has installed interpretative signs based on the Council's signage template. They link areas along the Lagan from Belfast Harbour to Stranmillis.
- Funding applications are currently being explored
- A workshop was held in June 2008, in Enniskillen to raise awareness of the potential to establish a single inland waterway with a maritime connection at either end linking the East and West coasts of Ulster to form a new water based tourism product. (East-West Project) This workshop attracted support from Alderman Jeffrey Donaldson MP, MLA and Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan TD. The overall aim was to raise awareness and buy-in from stakeholders especially Central Government and Waterways Ireland.
- A reciprocal meeting was held in December 2008 at Lisburn City Council. Alderman Jeffrey Donaldson MP, MLA and Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan TD. Pledged their support for the East West project.
- New web pages have been constructed highlighting the Lagan Corridor Navigation and the proposed development at Lock 1 Stranmillis Gateway. This web page has been added to Belfast City Council's website www.belfastcity.gov.uk/lagan
- A site meeting was arranged for members of the Development Committee, in June 2008. Representatives from DSD, DCAL, Lagan Valley Regional Park

Board, Lagan Trust Manager and Belfast City Council Officers visited the Lagan Lookout to Locks 1, 2 and 3 via the Tow Path.

- Waterways Ireland arranged a best practice visit for officers and steering group members in June 2008, for the Lagan Steering Group to Ballyconnell Lock in Co Cavan. The purpose of the visit was to view the operation of the lock and gain an understanding and insight into the benefits of canal restoration.
- DSD currently undertaking a major refurbishment of the Lagan Weir worth £2 million. DSD have also commissioned a feasibility report on the redevelopment of the Lagan Lookout, and an economic appraisal on two proposed bridges over the lower Lagan. They have also currently commissioned an economic appraisal on dredging of the tidal stretch of the Lagan from the Lagan Weir to Stranmillis Gateway Lock 1.
- Belfast Activity Centre - based in Barnett's Demesne, have recently completed the building of a boat house at Shaw's Bridge, rebuild of the canoe steps and reinstatement of the slipway. (Cost approximately £270k)
- DCAL through the Lagan Navigation Trust has currently commissioned consultants to examine a Business Case for the re-opening of the Lagan Navigation from Stranmillis to Union Locks, Lisburn

Castlereagh:

- Lock Keepers Cottage – Castlereagh Borough Council
The Lock keeper's cottage (Lock 3) grade B1 listed building has been refurbished and the new visitor centre, café, toilets and Interpreted space is opened. They propose to erect canoe pontoons and moorings at the lock. DCAL are currently restoring the Lock and gates at Lock 3. These are due for completion summer '08.

Lagan Valley Regional Park:

- Lagan Valley Regional Park is working in partnership with Castlereagh Borough Council in the development and refurbishment of the Lock 3 project. This has included towpath improvements, extension and interpretation signage.

Lisburn:

- Lisburn Council operates a Lagan Corridor Programme. They re-opened lock 12 as part of the new Island Civic Centre. They have created a strategic framework – identified nodes for development along the canal which includes improvements in towpaths, interpretive signage, land purchase, and potential links to developments such as the Maze complex. These nodes pass through various eligible areas identified under the NISRA rural classification 2005.

Craigavon:

- Received funding from NITB for the restoration of a Lagan barge "Lighter" for their proposed canal/waterways museum at Oxford Island. They have also developed a canal leaflet for the Craigavon section of the Lagan Canal.