



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Lagan Canal Restoration Trust

Date: 18 March 2014

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officer: Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
	<u>Lagan Canal Restoration Trust</u>
1.1	In November 2006 Members approved the establishment of the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust and in 2008 the core funding bodies appointed a manager. The Trust is a not for profit company limited by guarantee with charitable status.
1.2	Members will be aware that in 2006 an offer of £1million funding was made available to Council by Ulster Garden Villages Limited (UGV) towards the reopening of the Lagan gateway Lock 1 at Stranmillis, on the bases that match funding would be available.
1.3	UGV initially supported the Council by providing funding of £50,000 from the £1 million offer, to establish a Lagan Corridor Officer post within the Development Department.
1.4	The Trust currently represents core funding bodies and key interest groups including; Belfast City Council, Lisburn City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council, Craigavon Borough Council, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL). Other Trust stakeholders include; Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Department of Social Development (DSD), Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI), Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), Ulster Waterways Group (UWG). Lagan Valley Regional Park and a number of public stakeholders.
1.5	In August 2009 the Development Committee funded the Trust until March 2011 and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee were appointed as Belfast City Council representatives on the Trust Board.
1.6	The Development Committee agreed further funding of £16,800 in April 2011 for one year and in March 2012 for a two year period to March 2014 with a total funding contribution of £34,178. The current two years of funding is due to expire

	at the end of March 2014
1.7	A number of key impact reports have been undertaken by the Trust, namely; a Business Case and Funding Strategy, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Technical Assessment of the canal and locks of the Lagan Corridor from Belfast to Lough Neagh. See appendix 1 for the Lagan Canal Trust Annual Report.
1.8	Belfast City Council in conjunction with Castlereagh Borough Council submitted an Expression of Interest for funding to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) AXIS 3, Rural Development Programme (RDP), for the Lagan Strategic Rural Project. This submission was led by Castlereagh Borough Council and was based on partnership support that included the Stranmillis Gateway project as a key element.
1.9	At the Development Committee of August 2013 members agreed £9,475 to support Castlereagh Borough Council's application for financial assistance, under this Programme. The application is for the installation of bike docks and interpretation panels at Malone House, Clement Wilson Park and the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, further enhancing the Lagan canal project.
1.10	As an emerging partnership project, the Lagan Canal corridor project is included in Belfast City Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015. Furthermore, in the Investment Programme it is recognised that the Council cannot realise the objectives on its own, and therefore an underlying principle is the need to work in partnership and develop productive relationships with the Northern Ireland Executive and other key partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

2	Key Issues
	<u>The Lagan Canal Restoration Trust</u>
2.1	The current two years of Council funding for the Trust is due to expire at the end of March 2014
2.2	While the other funders are currently considering the funding request, it is almost certain that all will continue to core fund at the same level as last financial year 2013– 2014.
2.3	The Trust has requested that Council considers further funding for the year 2014/15 as it is as yet unclear what the requirements for funding will be beyond this period.
2.4	The Lagan Canal Restoration Trust is seeking funding of £17,640.18 from Council for the period April 2014 – March 2015.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The Lagan Canal Trust is jointly funded by Belfast, Lisburn, Castlereagh and Craigavon Councils as well as by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It is anticipated that further funding will be made available from NI Environment Agency.
3.2	The amount paid by each Council is proportional to the length of canal within its

	area and for Belfast this represents a financial commitment of £17,640.18. for period 2014–2015. This has been included within the current 2014-2015 department budget.
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members agree a one year extension of funding for the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust until March 2015. Following this period, a review of future funding for this organisation is undertaken in light of the economic climate, future prioritisation by Council, potential external funding, partner commitment and Local Government Reform. The cost to Council is £17,640.18.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline: March 2015	Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>UGV - Ulster Garden Villages Limited DCAL - Department of Culture Arts and Leisure IWAI - Inland Waterways Association of Ireland DSD - Department of Social Development Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate NIEA - Northern Ireland Environment Agency CAAN - Countryside Access and Activities Network UWG - Ulster Waterways Group SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment DARD – Department of Agriculture and Rural Development RDP – Rural Development Programme</p>

8	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Lagan Canal Trust Annual Report.