

Report No.1

Report to Planning & Environment Committee 10th February 2015

Request for matched funding for the Malmesbury to Cowbridge Footpath

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To consider a request from the Malmesbury Area Board's Cowbridge Footpath Task Group for matched funds of £2.5K to enable the first phase of the project to provide a pedestrian footpath from the development at Cowbridge into the town to be completed.
- 1.2. The Task Group comprises of representatives from a diverse number of interested community organisations in addition to local residents – Malmesbury Area Board [Cllrs John Thomson & Simon Killane], Malmesbury Town Council [Cllr Steve Cox], St Paul Without Parish Council [Cllr Deborah Clogg], Malmesbury & St Paul Without Residents' Association [Caroline Pym], MVCAP [Peter Gilchrist], Civic Trust [Barry Dent], Sustrans [Alistair Millington], local residents [Judy Jones, Ted Palmer, Miles Cross, James Stanger]

2. Background

- 2.1. As part of the initial planning permission for the redevelopment of the old Lucent Technology site at Cowbridge an S106 Agreement was concluded that provided for a £125K contribution toward the refurbishment of the Town Hall and £25K to establish a safe pedestrian footpath from the town to Cowbridge and reverse.
- 2.2. The first part of the Agreement has been delivered and MTC has reaped the benefit. Sustrans were appointed as the project manager for the delivery of the second element. Unfortunately the project has been dogged by delay because of difficulties with obtaining agreement on the size and scope of the project, the necessary permissions from landowners, the diversion of existing footpaths around a property owned by one of the landowners and finally obtaining planning permission. These difficulties have now been resolved and competitive tenders for the work of delivering the footpath obtained and a contractor selected. The work needs to be commenced before the 'bird nesting' season commences in mid-March.
- 2.3. The total cost of the project has been identified as circa £40K, this includes fees for obtaining the necessary landowner permissions, planning and footpath diversion permissions and contractor costs. To date the project has amassed circa £30K and is thus £10K short of its required target. This shortfall could be satisfied by an application to the Malmesbury Area Board in March for £5K and shared matched funding of £2.5K from both Malmesbury Town Council and St Paul Without Parish Council; the latter Council has already resolved to provide its share of the matched funding.
- 2.4. The delivery of this footpath will enable a safe pedestrian link to be established for residents living at both ends of the facility as an alternative to the present hazardous route via the very narrow pavement alongside the B4042, which is already the subject of a Community Speedwatch scheme due to the speed of vehicles travelling well in excess of the 30mph restriction. It will provide a safer, healthier, more sustainable link to the town and its main shopping area in the High Street for the 200 or so residents on the Cowbridge site. Journeys into the town will be made safer and easier with the potential to have a small positive impact toward a reduction in vehicle congestion and car parking demand in the town.

2.5 The Town Hall & Facilities Committee, in recognition of the above benefits in addition to those that will accrue to local town residents of having a safe, properly prepared and easily transversed footpath into the open countryside, has recently formally supported the project and hence this request for MTC matched funding through the P&E Committee.

3. Proposal

3.1. In recognition of the benefits to all categories of resident in the local community, schoolchildren, adults with young children and the elderly as a small sample, the P&E Committee is asked to agree to the sum of £2.5K as a matched funding contribution to the completion of the Malmesbury to Cowbridge footpath subject to the March Area Board agreeing the grant application of £5K.

4. Financial implications and risks

4.1 This matched funding of £2.5K, or 6.25% of total costs, represents the sole contribution from MTC to this £40K project.

4.2 All on-going maintenance on the footpath, and any capital shortfall, will be the responsibility of the St Paul Without Parish Council who will make financial provision in future budgets to cover this item.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members are requested to support the proposal contained in 3 above and sanction the sum of £2.5K as matched funding for this project.