

North York Moors National Park Authority

Monday 25 September 2017

Ryevitalise Landscape Partnership Scheme

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To bring Members up to date with progress in the Development Phase of the Ryevitalise Landscape Partnership Scheme, outline the Partnership Delivery Phase and outline Heritage Lottery Fund requirements
- 1.2 To detail the match funding requirement by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the first two years of delivery at the time of the Stage Two bid submission

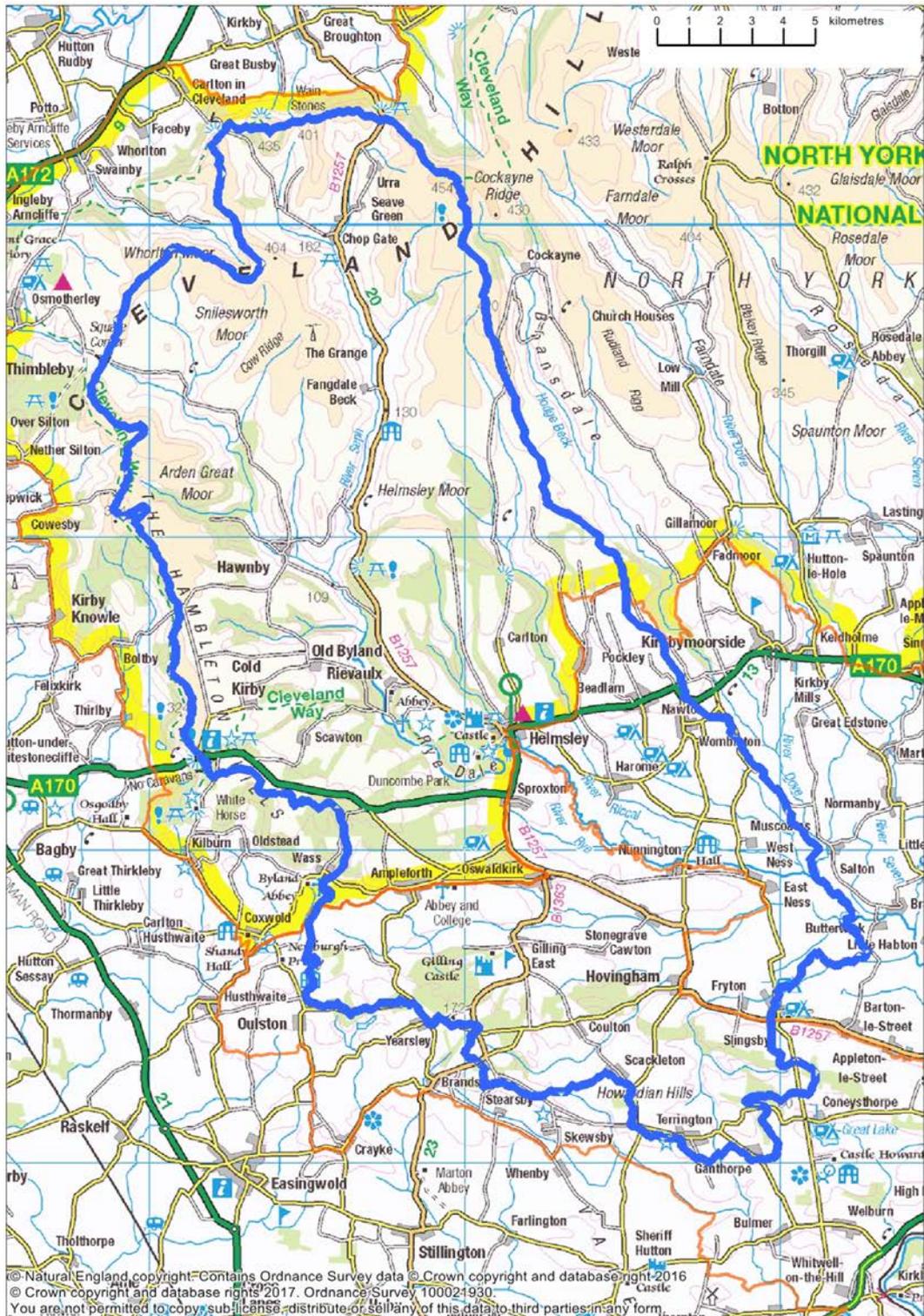
2. Background

- 2.1 The Ryevitalise Landscape Partnership provides a unique and exciting opportunity to develop a broad framework in which to revive species abundance and diversity only known to the older generation, redefining the area as an exemplar landscape recognised nationally. This ambitious scheme will provide a step change in land management practices on a landscape scale, which on completion of the four year delivery phase will leave the long term legacy required to sustain and build on positive changes. The Scheme incorporates the main upper Rye catchment, made up of the upper valleys of the Rye including the River Seph and River Riccal. The delivery area is made up of 63% National Park Authority Administration and includes part of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Ryedale District Council administrative boundaries. The Scheme is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It was developed in partnership and submitted by the North York Moors National Park Authority to HLF in June 2016. A Stage One pass was received in December 2016, triggering a two year Development Phase with an HLF grant of £274,600 to fund development costs. The submission deadline for the second stage application is 31 October 2018. The total funding earmarked by HLF for delivery, subject to a Stage Two approval, is £1.834m over a four year delivery timeframe from spring 2019.
- 2.2 The Scheme aims to protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, resulting in a more natural, better functioning and better understood landscape. Ryevitalise projects will cover three themes:

Water Environment and Water Quality, investigating aquatic habitats of the Rye and rare and threatened species, working with land-owners and managers to improve water quality;

Water Level Management, working alongside our delivery partners to harness natural processes to manage the sources and pathways of flood water waters; and

Reconnecting People, improving the understanding of the river landscape by telling the story of its evolution and encouraging people to protect their heritage.



Ryevitalise consists of 27 complementary project elements in response to the three themes.

- 2.3 Ryevitalise will restore and enhance habitats along the riparian corridor of the Rye and its tributaries, identifying priority areas for restoration through detailed surveys to ensure existing high-value habitats and species are in positive management. Ryevitalise will also look to develop a strategy for controlling invasive non-native species.

Once in positive management, the project will focus on making these habitats larger and more connected, through creating habitat corridors enabling wildlife to move freely through the landscape.

- 2.4 Ryevitalise will develop a deeper knowledge of where colonies of the rare and recently discovered Alcatraz bat and other key bat populations are, and what this and other bat species require so that we can best ensure their survival. It will educate people about the species, encouraging and promoting appropriate land management and habitat restoration. Attention will be drawn to the tremendous resource of veteran and ancient trees in the Ryevitalise landscape area. Delivery will be in partnership with the North Yorkshire Bat Group, University of Leeds, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust.
- 2.5 White-clawed crayfish surveys will be conducted to identify where remaining populations are or might still be present, enabling the project to prioritise protective measures to safeguard our native crayfish populations. A feasibility study will be undertaken to identify where potential local ark sites could be located for white-clawed crayfish to establish isolated new populations, safe from non-native crayfish – a key focus after a recent discovery of an invasive non-native American Signal crayfish was confirmed in the Ryevitalise Scheme area. Ryevitalise will survey existing barriers to migratory fish, aiming to secure separate external funding to create fish passes at the most significant of these barriers, where appropriate and not to the detriment of other species including white-clawed crayfish.
- 2.6 Ryevitalise will seek to restore the Rye's ancient woodland, through survey and assessment of plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) in areas that have not had restoration already initiated. A programme of restoration is based on the remaining ancient woodland features present, their position in the woodland network, and how these relate to the water environment, riparian habitat corridors and to species that rely on these important habitats such as bats.
- 2.7 Ryevitalise will reduce sediment and diffuse pollution from agriculture to improve water quality, complementing partners work particularly the Environment Agency and Natural England Catchment Sensitive Farming priority activity, delivering a demonstration and advice programme to promote agricultural best practice, peer to peer learning and self-monitoring across the scheme area. Ryevitalise will also monitor and minimise non-agricultural sources of pollution, such as septic tanks and outflows from water treatment works, with Yorkshire Water as a key partner.
- 2.8 Ryevitalise will deliver a number of complementary community engagement and awareness initiatives including an oral history project to build a picture of the historic landscape, assuming that positive changes in people's perception of place leads on to positive impacts and value shifts, empowering people in the area to imagine a diverse natural landscape enabled by their own actions. Riverfly monitoring will provide volunteer training to assess and promote that invertebrate groups require pristine clean water to survive, delivered alongside a Citizen Science Framework for wider surveying and monitoring of the natural environment. A young angler initiative will bring young people together to learn about the ecology of their local river. Schools' education activities and wider physical and virtual interpretation, events and promotion will also be delivered.
- 2.9 The scheme will explore the remaining evidence of human relationship with the river over the centuries, including recording and interpreting the early settlements and the move to more industrial practices including the mills.

2.10 The Ryevitalise Landscape Partnership is being promoted and driven by a broad partnership of organisations and individuals under the leadership of the NPA and is being co-ordinated and developed by the Ryevitalise Project Team who sit within the NPA's Conservation Directorate. The Partners are statutory agencies including Natural England, AONB, the Environment Agency, Ryedale District Council, North Yorkshire County Council and the Forestry Commission together with charities and organisations which include the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and East Yorkshire Rivers Trust.

3. **Progress to Date**

3.1 The Ryevitalise Project Team started in post in April 2017. The Team comprises Programme Manager Anne-Louise Orange and Catchment Restoration Officer Alex Cripps. The Team is supported by specialist officers from the Conservation and Park Services Directorates, as well as input on financial, procurement and other back office management issues from Corporate Services and input on specific planning concerns and building conservation advice from the Planning Directorate. In this sense the Ryevitalise Project is a genuinely cross-Authority Programme, as well as a community inspired one, with consultations ongoing and many opportunities for engagement and involvement in both the development and delivery phase of Ryevitalise.

3.2 A detailed programme has been produced and agreed by HLF who have appointed an independent Monitor to advise the Team and to report back to the HLF on progress throughout the Development Phase.

3.3 Detailed access, habitat, crayfish, and PAWS surveys have been commissioned. The access survey will explore creation and enhancement of circular route ways at strategic locations within the scheme area, to physically connect communities and visitors with the natural and cultural landscape. The final report is due in October this year. The habitat survey involves ground truthing and updating the existing Phase 1 habitat surveys for the entire project area and more detailed habitat surveys and assessments of priority habitat areas and sites associated with these where opportunities exist to improve habitat connectivity particularly in the riparian habitat zone. The crayfish survey is looking at where existing populations of white-clawed crayfish are within the scheme area. An ark site feasibility study will also be undertaken with a high level action plan produced detailing suitability of any potential isolated ark sites and what future management may be required to support our native crayfish populations. Both the habitat and crayfish reports are due in December this year. The PAWS survey will be surveying PAWS sites throughout the scheme area culminating in detailed recommendations being made to inform future management. PAWS surveys are expected to be finished by the end of March 2018.

3.4 A riparian habitat, bats and ancient trees, fish passage and interpretation and audience development surveys will shortly be commissioned to further inform project development and provide evidence of need.

3.5 A farmers update meeting took place on 4 July 2017 to garner further input and support from land owners and managers. Over 90 people attended, many expressing interest in finding out more and requesting farm visits to explore potential delivery options for land management improvements. Ryevitalise attended the Ryedale Show in July 2017, represented by the Team and partners, with a number of participants requesting farm visits as a result. Individual farm visits will commence from October this year to gauge willingness to participate and gain feedback.

- 3.6 There have been three meetings of the Partnership Working Group this year so far, one attended by the HLF Monitor to assess progress against the Development Phase programme. The HLF Monitor will be attending every other meeting, the Group meets bimonthly, for a five minute update on each of the 27 project elements. Project leads have now been assigned for each of the project elements from across the partnership, to ensure a strong and balanced partnership.
- 3.7 Consultation events are planned for Chop Gate, Helmsley and Nunnington in November this year, to provide an update on the scheme and seek views on the current Delivery Phase programme, in order to identify any gaps in provision and particular areas of interest.
- 3.8 In parallel to the development work, the Project Team are collating the information for and drafting the background documents which will form the evidence base for the Stage Two application to HLF.

4. **Next Steps**

- 4.1 Work will continue in the early months of 2018 to draft the Landscape Conservation Action Plan. This is the main HLF submission document and the complete draft is anticipated by the end of September, to allow plenty of time for final changes to be made and for the document to be optimised throughout October. In their (HLF) words, this is the 'prospectus' or 'manifesto' for our landscape it will be a comprehensive document containing an analysis of the landscape and its significance. This analysis includes its human and cultural value as well as its importance as a physical landscape. A full Statement of Significance, compliant with international conventions, is being drafted to capture the question of 'why this landscape is important and to whom it is important?'
- 4.2 Following the survey results, consultations and evaluation of the key riparian, habitat, built heritage and community engagement proposals, detailed project plans will be prepared for each component project. Each will be fully detailed, costed and will clearly set out who will deliver it, what precisely will be done, how it contributes to the nine HLF programme outcomes, being:
- For heritage: better managed, in better condition and identified/recorded.
 - For people: developed skills, learnt about heritage; volunteered time.
 - For communities: negative environmental impacts will be reduced, more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage and your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit as well as the costs and management arrangements and the legacy/sustainability proposals. As it is unlikely that all proposals will be within the £1.843m budget, a degree of prioritisation will be required.
- 4.3 All statutory, legal and landowner consents and match funding will need to be in place for the first two years of delivery prior to the submission in October 2018, alongside a detailed roll-out programme for the first two years of delivery as per the requirements by HLF.
- 4.4 The National Park Authority has a commitment to match fund the HLF with £170,000, and to underwrite any outstanding match funding commitment for the first two years of delivery at the time of stage two submission. The total match funding commitment outstanding for the four year delivery period is currently £255,000.

- 4.5 Closer analysis of the figures with the External Funding Officer has identified that incremental rises in salary costs have not been included, amounting to an estimated additional funding requirement of £238,000 over the four year delivery period, therefore a significantly larger shortfall will need to be underwritten. However, the delivery grant of £1.834m from HLF still represents a sound return for this investment.
- 4.6 The current funding programme for the four year Delivery Phase is detailed below, with indicative allocations against each source of funding.

Source of Funding	Value
NYMNPA Revenue Contribution	170,000
NYMNPA Salary Shortfall (upper limit)	238,000
Environment Agency	160,000
Howardian Hills AONB	20,000
Forestry Commission	20,000
Local Enterprise Partnership	40,000
Landowner contribution to capital grants	224,000
Large Charitable Trust Funding	153,000
Other Fundraising	238,000
Non-cash Contributions	30,000
Volunteer Time	190,000
Total Income	1,245,000
HLF Grant Request	1,834,800
TOTAL	3,079,800

- 4.7 The Partnership will continue to seek match funding for the bid to meet the requirement by HLF for all funding requirements for the first two years to be secured at time of submission.
- 4.8 Membership of the Partnership Working Group will be kept under constant review and strengthened as necessary to ensure it reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of the Scheme, its communities of place and interest and that it has the necessary expertise to ensure long term success.

5. Longer Term Plans

- 5.1 HLF have confirmed that they will take a number, as yet undefined, months to assess the final bid before they issue their formal 'Permission to Start' document. On this basis, the Project Team are planning for a Delivery Phase start date of April 2019. It should be noted that it is unusual for a Landscape Partnership Scheme to fail to secure its Stage Two approval, but this is absolutely no guarantee of success, and the coming months will represent a significant but achievable challenge in terms of securing the Delivery Phase.
- 5.2 The HLF funded Ryevitalise programme would run for 4 years which is anticipated to be until the end of March 2023. The legacy of the programme must however last well beyond.
- 5.3 The approved Stage One bid envisages a five person delivery team and a graduate placement, comprising of a Programme Manager, Catchment Restoration Officer, Heritage and Engagement Officer, part time Volunteer Coordinator and a Administration Assistant. It is expected that these five posts would be recruited in time for the expected formal start of the Delivery Phase in April 2019. The Ryevitalise programme would continue to rely on and integrate with the wider work of the Authority as the lead partner for the Scheme.

- 5.4 The Partnership would continue in place throughout the entire Delivery Phase and would not be wound up until a Succession Strategy is agreed, approved and functioning effectively.
- 5.5 The Partnership will commission an Evaluation study as part of its commitment to meeting HLF expectations. Delivery of the Evaluation study would trigger the release of the final 10% of the HLF funding towards the end of the Scheme.

6. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 The current Development Phase has secured £274,600 of HLF funding to cover staffing and consultancy costs. The funding has a contingency allowance to cover additional investigative work as required. There is a full time Programme Manager and a full time Catchment Restoration Officer.
- 6.2 The overall Scheme would receive up to £2.109m of HLF grant if the Stage 2 application is successful. The current £274,600 is part of the overall £2.109m.
- 6.3 The National Park Authority's Business Plan commits to supporting the stage two application. This involves a commitment to match fund the HLF with £170,000, and to underwrite any outstanding match funding commitment for the first two years of delivery at the time of stage two submission. The total match funding commitment outstanding for the four year delivery period is currently £255,000.
- 6.4 Closer analysis of the figures with the External Funding Officer has identified that incremental rises in salary costs have not been included, amounting to an estimated additional funding requirement of £238,000 over the four year delivery period, therefore a significantly larger shortfall will need to be underwritten. However, the delivery grant of £1.834m still represents a sound return for this investment in the National Park.
- 6.5 The Programme is reliant on a significant amount of in-kind time from all departments which in some cases may impact on the delivery of core funded work. This is however understood and accepted on the grounds of the significant opportunities and benefits the programme can bring to the National Park and to the Ryevitalise Partnership.
- 6.6 The potential need for a larger contribution from the NYMNPA, which is largely dependent on the outcomes of external funding applications, and the financial implications of this will be discussed by officers before the next FRASC. A proposed strategy to deal with these issues will be put forward and can be subsequently be agreed by members and included in next year's budget.

7. **Contribution to National Park Management Plan**

- 7.1 The Ryevitalise Scheme will contribute to a wide range of Management Plan targets. In particular:
- E1 The landscape character of the National Park will be maintained/enhanced
 - E5 The archaeological heritage will be conserved or restored
 - E8 Knowledge, awareness and understanding of the archaeological heritage will be increased
 - E9 The traditional skills base will be developed
 - E11 Existing habitats will be conserved, restored and expanded
 - E12 The connectivity and resilience of habitats will be improved particularly in relation to species rich grasslands, woodlands and river corridors

- E13 The conditions for wildlife within streams, rivers and riparian habitats will be improved
- E36 Better connected and more resilient woodland habitat networks...through restoring PAWS
- E43 Watercourses will be protected and restored for the benefit of wildlife
- U10 The awareness of the National Park amongst the regional population and visitors will be increased
- U11 Under-represented groups will be supported to increase their awareness/access
- U13 Children within and outside the National Park will be engaged during their school career
- B21 Employment and training opportunities will be increased
- B23 Traditional skills will be developed within the workforce
- C2 Opportunities for volunteering will be created
- C3 Communities will be involved in plan-making and delivering services and projects
- C4 Local communities will be supported to maintain and celebrate local heritage etc and record their social, cultural and economic history
- C5 The interpretation of the landscape and cultural heritage will be encouraged

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Land management agreements will follow the Heritage Lottery Funds conditions of a minimum of 10 years maintenance commitment post delivery, and will look to securing longer term agreements to deliver the step change and sustainable legacy required. Agreements with landowners to carry out works will be subject to legal contracts with access obligations where appropriate.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That Members approve in principle underwriting any unsecured match funding at the time of Stage Two bid submission, and reaffirm their support for the Projects and direct officers to propose a financial plan to FRASC for meeting the match funding requirement in the 2018/19 – 20/21 budgets.

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Background papers to this Report

File ref

1. None