

North York Moors National Park Authority

26 March 2012

Landscape Intervention Fund Grant for the Removal of Unsightly Buildings on Carlton Moor

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To obtain Members' approval to contribute up to £35,000 of grant aid to secure the removal of the unsightly buildings associated with the former 'Carlton Moor Gliding Club', and restore an important piece of moorland to its former glory

2. Background to the Landscape Intervention Fund

- 2.1 The Landscape Intervention Fund was established in 2006/07 specifically to provide the Authority with an opportunity to achieve conservation at a large scale and in ways that would significantly increase landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity value.
- 2.2 The Landscape Intervention Fund budget is financed by the savings that have resulted from the transfer of Farm Scheme agreements to the National Agri-Environment Schemes, which has been an ongoing process since the introduction in 2005.
- 2.3 Members approved the delivery guidelines for the Landscape Intervention Fund on 24 September 2007. The principle of utilising savings from the Farm Scheme for the delivery of large scale environmental improvements through the Landscape Intervention Fund was set out in the Authority's Business Plan 2009-2012.

3. Background to the Carlton Moor Gliding Club

- 3.1 Carlton Moor Gliding Club (formally known as Newcastle Gliding Club) was founded in 1931 and originally operated from the site that subsequently became Sunderland Airport. The Club became tenants of the site at Carlton Moor in the early 1960's and later changed its name to better reflect its location.
- 3.2 In April 2009 a representative of the Gliding Club notified the NPA that the club was ceasing operation as the membership had declined significantly.

4. Rationale for the offer of Authority Grant Aid

- 4.1 The buildings, are considered to be an eyesore and detract from the special qualities of the Park, especially given their prominence in the landscape. Aerial photographs will be available at the meeting to demonstrate the impact on the landscape that these buildings have. The buildings extremely peaceful location, is flanked by Public Rights of Way. The site has important Local and European designations as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Section 3 Moorland and Special Protection Area which the National Park has a responsibility through its Local Development Framework to protect.
- 4.2 A meeting was held in October 2011 between the owner of the site, two representatives of the Gliding Club, the Director of Conservation and the Area Ranger, at which all parties appeared to be in agreement that the removal of the buildings would be a desirable outcome to all parties.

- 4.3 The desirability to remove the buildings became even more apparent recently when the buildings were broken into and used as a location for a rave. The Police were required to intervene and the Area Ranger and a team of volunteers had to spend time clearing up bottles/litter from the site.
- 4.4 The recent closure of the gliding club and the willingness of the owner of the site to enter negotiations with the NPA presents the Authority with an opportunity to secure the removal.
- 4.5 Planning Officers have advised that **any** alternative use would be contrary to a number of planning policies, namely Core Policy A - delivering NP Purposes and Sustainable Development and Core Policy C – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- 4.6 The presence of asbestos in the buildings increases the cost of their safe removal and makes it prohibitively expensive for the Owner of the site or the Gliding Club to undertake the work themselves without the offer of grant aid by the Authority.
- 4.7 The Authority does not have legal powers to force the owner or club to remove the buildings.

5. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 In order to facilitate this work it is proposed that the Authority enters a grant agreement with the owner of the site under which the Authority would reimburse the owner the costs for carrying out the work to an agreed amount, no greater than £35,000. Early estimates for the work suggest costs will be in the region of £25,000 - £30,000 (excl VAT).
- 5.2 Staff time will be required to develop the agreement between the Authority and the owner and to monitor the work and future management of the site to ensure that it is undertaken to the Authority's satisfaction.
- 5.3 The grant will be allocated from existing budgets within the Conservation of Natural Environment.

6. **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 6.1 In terms of the National Park Management Plan, the recommendations contained in this report will have the following significant *beneficial* sustainability implications. The work proposed will secure the removal of redundant buildings associated with the former gliding club which have become derelict over time and that detracts from the special qualities of the National Park. Although not considered as part of this report, the removal of the buildings is likely to present an opportunity for the restoration of the moorland which has become degraded as a result of the activities of the gliding club over the past 50 years.

7. **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 A legally enforceable grant agreement would need to be drawn up setting out the terms under which the Authority provides grant aid and all subsequent management requirements and indemnifying the Authority from future liability in relation to the works and the site.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That Members approve the allocation of up to £35,000 in grant aid to the owner of Carlton Moor to secure the removal of the derelict buildings associated with the former Carlton Moor Gliding Club.

Contact Officer:
Irene Brannon
Director of Corporate Services
Tel No 01439 770657

Background papers to this Report

File ref

Delivery of the Landscape Intervention Fund

2110/3