
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2003**

EX.326/03 THREE RIVERS PROJECT (Non-Key Decision)

Portfolio Infrastructure Environment and Transport

Subject Matter

To consider a report from the Head of Economic and Community Development (ECD.36/03) outlining opportunities for tourism, leisure, ecological and environmental projects in the river corridors of the Eden, Patteril and Caldew. There was an existing document from the early 1990's "Carlisle 2000 Three Rivers Strategy" which had implemented certain proposals but not produced an overall masterplan.

A cross service working group had now been established and had made an initial assessment of the potential scope of work, topics that a feasibility study could cover and the objectives of any new Strategy.

Three options were submitted to take forward feasibility work:-

Option 1: Updating landscape appraisal work, which would contribute to the Local Plan review, the Restoring Eden Project and the Centre of Excellence for Wildlife. Existing open spaces with river frontages would be included in the work. Some of these sites have community involvement and interest already, giving a sound basis on which to involve interested parties further. A set of realistic indicative 'public realm' opportunities related to the City's strategic priorities could be identified to be banked for implementation over a period of years. Opportunities should be based on sound public consultation including partner agencies and users.

Option 2: Investigate practical measures to improve access, such as determining locations for additional, well designed pedestrian/cycle river crossings. Opportunities could be explored for 'cross city' riverside routes/walks, linking with City Council owned public space and reflecting existing walks already mapped and promoted by the Council. Any improvement to long distance trails would need to be discussed with the various management groups overseeing such routes. The work must also link closely with the cycling strategy being prepared by the County Council.

Option 3: Assessing development potential within the built up area, identifying brownfield sites, clarifying ownerships, identifying constraints and recommending land uses.

It was the recommendation of the working group that the second option to investigate and improve public access was likely to prove of most immediate benefit, building on

initiatives already under way. In taking any work further, the views and involvement of landowners, users and appropriate partner agencies would need to be sought, including the Environment Agency, English Nature and British Waterways as well as tourism and heritage partners, community organisations and river related interest groups.

The Head of Finance advised that a budget of £50,000 had been approved for 2003/04 to undertake feasibility studies for both the Three Rivers, and also to consider Sports Development opportunities. Expressions of interest for The Sports feasibility project had now been sought and tenders for the work would be issued in due course. The budget allocation for the two projects has been equally divided at this stage pending further information being available on actual costs for each.

No additional financial resources have been earmarked for these projects, and any recommendations arising from the studies would need to be considered alongside other Council priorities in a future budget process.

In agreeing that Option 2 represented the best way forward, Councillor Bloxham, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport Portfolio Holder, considered that investigations should also be made into the potential for economic regeneration along some of the rivers.

Summary of options rejected

Options 1 and 3 detailed above were rejected.

DECISION

1. That it be agreed to pursue Option 2 in taking forward any feasibility work and investigations should also be made into the part of Option 3 dealing with the potential for economic regeneration along some of the rivers.
2. That the report be referred to the Community and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in January 2004 and the Head of Economic and Community Development be requested to submit a further report to the Executive incorporating the comments from those meetings.

Reasons for Decision

To clarify the purpose of the project and ensure value for money in any consultancy work undertaken.