

Green Trails – Bridle and Mountain Bike Project Brief

Project Description

To produce a plan for the delivery of a long distance horse and mountain bike trail that links hubs of bridleway access across the programme area. To establish collaborations with local, user and nature conservation groups towards delivery and subsequent sustainability of the trail and to capitalise on opportunities to develop trails as wildlife corridors.

The project has been awarded funding for employment of an officer to produce a network plan and program of works. This will facilitate collaboration by project partners on subsequent delivery.

Development of the plan will require:

- A review of existing bridle and bike provision and targeted opportunities for route creation
- Proposal and costing of a programme of works
- Collaboration with user, local and nature conservation groups to implement, sustain and promote the network

These activities are needed to establish and promote the horse and off road cycling offer in the region. This will contribute to tourism, physical activity and green infrastructure objectives.

The programme area will align with the South Central NRW Area Statement, which covers Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, RCT, Merthyr

Project Aims

The project aims are to employ an officer for 12 months to undertake the following actions:

- Undertake a desk top review of current and historical mapping identifying:
 - Existing routes
 - Potential routes
 - Network links (cycle network, transport, use patterns etc)
 - Business support (stables, accommodation etc)
 - Supporting facilities (car parking etc.)
 - Ecological opportunities
- Undertake site inspections to assess condition of routes identified
- Produce a plan of routes to be created and improved, and a costed program of works necessary to implement the plan.
 - Produce sufficient detail to allow the plan to operate as a bidding document
 - Develop project management framework for future implementation including schedule of risks, future monitoring and evaluation.
 - Identify future funding opportunities for each where possible
- Develop partnerships with local user and interest groups
 - Identify groups
 - Develop communication infrastructure with groups
 - Establish volunteer capacity and needs
- Consult with relevant representative bodies
 - Identify bodies
 - Present to local access forums, user groups and relevant conservation interests.

Green Trails Phase 2 – Bridle and Mountain Bike

Project Description

The project proposes four principle activities to establish and promote horse riding and off road cycling in the South Central NRW Area Statement region (Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, RCT, Merthyr).

The activities follow production of a Green Trails Network Plan funded under the existing round of ENRAW small scale funding (completes June 2020).

The proposed project activities are:

- Delivery of a long distance horse and mountain bike trail linking hubs of bridleway access across the South Central region, as developed in the Green Trails Network Plan (includes route, works and costs).
- Feasibility, business planning and piloting of a profit making gateway facility (bike-park) that will contribute to financially sustaining the regional trail in the long term. The pilot site is proposed to be Leckwith Woods (Cardiff/Vale border) with opportunities to replicate the model on other sites around the trail to be explored.
- Animating and supporting local, user and nature conservation groups towards delivering and sustaining the trail and capitalising on opportunities for nature conservation.
- Develop branding and marketing strategies

Delivery of the trail will involve creation of legal rights and ground works. It will be focussed around maintaining momentum amongst emergent user communities by involving them in the process and demonstrating achievements.

Gateway facilities will be profit making and provide focal points for activities around within which user communities can organise. Piloting and developing the correct business model will be key to sustaining the resource overall.

The project will contribute to tourism, physical activity, well-being and green infrastructure objectives.

Cost Heading	Description	Cost Estimate £'s
Staff	<i>Project Manager, Field Off, Engagement Off.</i>	390000
Training	<i>Staff Training</i>	1500
Establishment Costs		
Meeting and Conference	<i>Facilitation, Events</i>	15000
Travel and Subsistence	<i>Mileage</i>	1500
Publicity and Promotion	<i>Branding & Marketing Strategies</i>	10000
ICT and Telephony	<i>Officer Setup</i>	3000
General Project Management	<i>Printing, Overheads</i>	1500
Legal and Professional	<i>Legal Orders</i>	225000

Overheads		
External Contracts/Consultancy	<i>Feasibility, Business Planning, Design Work</i>	75000
Durable Goods - Infrastructure	<i>Regional Trail</i>	270000
Durable goods - equipment	<i>Volunteer Group Tools</i>	5000
Consumables		
Other		
TOTAL		997500

Project Outline

Local and regional objectives and plans.

The geographical scale of the project is regional and proposes to align with Natural Resources Wales' South Central Area Statement, covering Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, RCT and Merthyr Tydfil.

The *South Central Area Statement* has yet to be published though themes have been developed and published that the statement will be focussed around. Of these themes the project will directly contribute to:

- *Improving people's health through the natural environment* by enabling and encouraging participation in outdoor activity;
- *Improving the connection between people and nature* by providing coherent connections through the landscape and facilitating communities to take ownership of trail sections; and
- *Rebuilding resilient ecosystems* by ensuring that nature conservation principles are engrained within design, delivery and subsequent sustainability practices of the project

The themes are derived from wellbeing profiles and then objectives for the area, where health indicators are consistently poor in most of the South Central area whilst landscape and access evidence shows there are opportunities to deliver active outdoor recreation.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) are produced within each local authority and set out priorities for countryside access management and improvement on a decadal basis. Development of ROWIPs is set out within statute and statutory guidance which require extensive engagement and assessment of public need. Authorities within the area are in the process of reviewing their plans and so have recently benefited from assessments of need and user consultation exercises.

ROWIP's across the programme area highlight a need for expanding provision for horse riding, enhancing volunteer involvement and cycling opportunities. These ROWIP objectives emerge from an existing countryside access network that does not satisfactorily support off road cycling and horse riding opportunities. Where they do they are piecemeal.

Project need

Horse riding and cycling on roads is dangerous. Within the programme area police report 1036 accidents involving cycles or horses between 2012-2017 (inclusive). The British Horse Society report 3,737 incidents involving horse riders nationally including 43 rider fatalities and 315 horse fatalities between November 2010 and March 2019 whilst 32% of riders report being subjected to road rage. The British Horse Society estimate that only 1 in 10 incidents are reported to them and

that the true figures are likely to be much higher. The BHS further report that 44% of those riding once a week or less say they would ride more frequently if they had access to safe off road riding or bridleways. In addition to safety this is a limiting factor to expanding these activities for wellbeing, tourism or other economic gain.

Active Travel enhancements are distinct from recreational riding and cycling opportunities that connect the public with the countryside. Active Travel routes are however key to mobilising cyclists within urban environments and represent an important complimentary opportunity for connecting population centres with the rural network. Connections onto urban active travel networks are therefore a feature of proposed project and, in particular, of access to a pilot Gateway Facility.

Key delivery partners/collaborators

The objectives and pressures noted above have been recognised by the project partners who are currently in receipt of small scale ENRAW funding for the development of the Green Trails Network Plan.

The Green Trails Network Plan will set out a framework for the delivery of a long distance trail linking hubs of bridleway access across the programme area; collaborations with local, user and nature conservation groups towards delivery and subsequent sustainability of the trail; and opportunities to develop trails as wildlife corridors for nature conservation gains.

The project partners that support the current Green Trails ENRAW small scale project are:

- Bridgend CC
- Vale of Glamorgan CC
- Cardiff CC
- Rhondda Cynon Taff CC
- Merthyr Tydfil CC
- British Horse Society
- Sustrans
- Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation

The collaborative relationship between the project partners is therefore established and operational within governance arrangements as they relate to development of the Green Trails Network Plan.

The main beneficiaries of the proposed project remain these partner organisations and those they represent. For the next phase of the project the partners expect to be joined by:

- Natural Resources Wales.
- The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

New elements of the project

Green Trails Phase 2 will begin delivery of the regional trail based on the Green Trails Network Plan developed in the planning phase.

The project will model and pilot a site based Gateway Facility. This will represent a new innovation for the sustainable funding of the resource. It will provide a high quality managed resource near a population centre that, through association with the regional trail, will act as a bridge to the trail beyond its own site. A marketing strategy will be developed to promote the trail and gateway as a single brand under a shared umbrella.

The project will also animate local, user and nature conservation communities towards delivering the regional trail and ensuring sustainability thereafter. It will build on enthusiasm generated within the network planning phase by deploying community mapping approaches and volunteer coordination.

Community mapping will further assist with providing structure to communities of interest by exploring how to connect them across the programme area, this will be important for establishing systems and processes that sustain involvement beyond existing group membership cycles. Community mapping will also be key to determining priorities for delivery and feeding into coordination of direct works by volunteers.

Proposed activities

We propose to employ three officers with the following duties

- Project Manager
 - Oversee delivery of regional trail coordinating bids based on funding sources identified within Green Trails Plan.
 - Plan and coordinate pilot activities on gateway facility
 - Develop appropriate business models for gateway facility, relating it to sustained support of regional trail
 - Explore opportunities amongst project partners to deploy learning
 - Oversee development of branding and market strategies
- Field Officer
 - Arrange works on regional trail according to Green Trails Network Plan and community priorities
 - Assist in practical works on gateway facility
 - Support establishment and training of volunteer groups
 - Lead direct works by volunteers where appropriate
- Community Engagement Officer
 - Facilitate animation of communities through deployment of community mapping toolkit
 - Develop structures that connect existing groups
 - Establish connections with communities and users in population centres
 - Map and plan links with local businesses and service providers

In addition to staffing the following activities will be undertaken

- Regional trail
 - Creation of legal rights by partners and via consultancy
 - Design, conservation, preliminaries and engineering
 - Procurement of materials for direct works
 - Small scale construction (volunteer/ranger led)
 - Volunteer group setup costs (tools etc)
- Gateway Facility

- Consultancy activities (scoping, business planning, economic assessments)
- Site assessments (feasibility, design, conservation and preliminaries)
- Pilot activity construction
- Community engagement
 - Facilitation
 - Events
 - Volunteer training
- Branding
 - Marketing strategy
 - Brand development

Objectives

The objectives of the project are:

- To substantially improve the tourism and leisure offers for horse and off road cyclists
- To develop models for development of Gateway Facilities that will contribute to long term sustainability.
- To animate communities and establish connective structures at a regional level.
- To develop branding and marketing strategies.

Outputs

The outputs anticipated from the project are as follows. Reporting will be according to governance arrangements and via annual reports.

<i>Output</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Reporting</i>	
Regional Trail	Creation of bridleway rights	Year 1-3	Length of rights created
	Creation of bridleway infrastructure	Year 1-3	Length of infrastructure improved
Gateway Facility	Publication of business plan	Year 3	Plan production progress
	Site surveys, plans and preliminaries	Year 2	Reports production progress
	Pilot activities	Year 3	Pilot reporting
Community Engagement	Reporting of community mapping exercises	Year 1-3	Exercises completed, participant numbers
	Process and structures for connecting communities	Year 1-3	Connection/processes established
	Volunteer animation	Year 1-3	Volunteer numbers, activities, hours
Branding	Brand design work	Year 1	Brand production progress
	Marketing strategy	Year 1	Strategy production progress

Outcomes against Well-Being Goals

The anticipated project outcomes are detailed below against well-being goals:

1. A Prosperous Wales
 - Increased opportunities for private sector investment in local initiatives;
 - Enhancement of the region's adventure tourism offer and reputation.
2. A Resilient Wales
 - Creation of, and increase, in accessible green infrastructure and facilities
 - Transferable business models for sustaining green infrastructure
3. A Healthier Wales
 - Improved opportunities & facilities for outdoor leisure and recreation (increased visitor numbers and well-being);
 - Mental health benefits from increased participation in outdoor activity and community volunteering structures
4. A More Equal Wales
 - Increased partnership delivery and focus on outcomes outside of the environment alone e.g. a focus on well-being goals (new partners and strengthened partnerships);
 - Connectivity between urban communities and rural green space
5. A Wales of Cohesive Communities
 - Increase in the use of green space by individuals, communities, schools, youth groups etc.;
 - Sustainable connections within communities of interest
6. A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language
 - Increased tourism opportunities and benefits (including jobs created and safeguarded);
7. A Globally Responsible Wales
 - Planning for creation, management and improvement of lengths of hedgerow along green corridors;