

Forward Plan reference number: (N/A)

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| Report title: To Agree Sector Support Funding Grant Allocation to Gourmet Garden Trails | |
| Report to: Managing Director of the SELEP | |
| Report author: Rhiannon Mort, SELEP Capital Programme Manager | |
| Date: 10.10.2018 | For: Decision |
| Enquiries to: Rhiannon.mort@essex.gov.uk | |
| Divisions affected: Pan – SELEP, but primarily Kent, Medway, Essex and Thurrock | |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the recommendations and supporting documentation of the Sector Support Funding (SSF) Bid for the Gourmet Garden Trails project (the Project) which has been through an Independent Technical Review (ITR) process, to enable £60,000 of Growing Places Fund (GPF) Revenue grant to be devolved to Kent County Council for Project delivery. The bid document is included in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The ITR report sets out an analysis to demonstrate that the Project meets the criteria for funding. This report is included in Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To **approve** the award of £60,000 GPF Revenue grant to Kent County Council to support the delivery of the Project identified in the Funding Bid and which has been assessed as meeting the criteria for funding.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1. On 9th June 2017 the SELEP Strategic Board approved the use of the GPF Revenue grant to fund a programme of works to support the sector focussed activities that are being undertaken on a pan-LEP basis and predominantly led by the SELEP working groups, namely, referred to as SSF.
- 3.2. The Board, in 2017, agreed the programme of total funding available in each year would be up to £500,000 of revenue grants per annum for three financial years, beginning 2017/18. Subsequently, on the 28th September 2018, the Board agreed to increase the amount of SSF available in 2018/19 to £629,000 to utilise £129,000 SSF underspend from 2017/18.
- 3.3. The purpose of the SSF is to support one-off, discrete pieces of work of a pan-LEP nature with a sector focus that brings demonstrable benefits and has support across the LEP. All applications must meet the criteria detailed in section 3 of the SSF Guidance and be submitted in line with the process in section 4 of the same. This process ensures that the funding is allocated in

accordance with the requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework.

- 3.4. Go To Places has submitted a bid for SSF of £60,000 to support the delivery of the Project.
- 3.5. The Board endorsed the Project for SSF on the 9th June 2017, subject to compliance with the assurance framework and demonstration of value for money.

4. Project Summary

- 4.1. The Project is a proposal to launch a series of tourist trails showcasing England's beautiful gardens and unique food and drink.
- 4.2. The Project will target visitors from Germany and The Netherlands and take them on a sensory journey around different parts of the country as they explore new tourist trails through both famous and little-known gardens and gourmet sites across rural England.
- 4.3. Locations and organisations currently involved in the project include Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Cheshire and The Peak District and Derbyshire. The project will also be supported by leading tourism and travel partners including Eurotunnel, P&O Ferries, The Camping and Caravanning Club and Southeastern.
- 4.4. The output of the Project will be a leisure travel planning resource allowing visitors to plan and book accommodation, courses, wine and brewery tours and visits to English gardens, individually or via the Gardens & Gourmet visitor Pass. Gourmet Garden Trails will enable visitors easy access to stunning scenery, immersive experiences and opportunities to sample the rich, authentic tastes of England's produce and local dining.
- 4.5. Working with a wide range of destination, transport and commercial partners, and, by refining existing content management platforms, we will produce specially curated itineraries - themed around gardens, food and drink, and stunning sights across either one or more counties - that international visitors can book. It will also be possible for visitors to create their own personalised itineraries.
- 4.6. The itineraries will be complemented by detailed transport and accommodation advice and tips, with booking widgets, destination information and live transport updates, so international visitors have all the information they need to travel across the country hassle-free

5. Project Funding

- 5.1. The total cost of the Project is estimated at £1,270,000, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Project Funding breakdown (£s)

| Source | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Sector Support Fund | | 60,000 | 60,000 |
| Visit England (DEF) | 237,000 | 763,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Herts LEP | | 25,000 | 25,000 |
| Go Trade – Interreg | 20,000 | 20,000 | 40,000 |
| Project Partners | 40,000 | 40,000 | 80,000 |
| Private Investors | 32,500 | 32,500 | 65,000 |
| Total Project Cost | 329,500 | 940,500 | 1,270,000 |

- 5.2. A majority of the other funding sources to the Project, as set out in Table 1 above, have been confirmed. Details of the certainty of the funding contributions are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Certainty of Match Funding Contributions

| Source | Certainty |
|---------------------|---|
| Visit England (DEF) | Funding is secured through Grant Offer Letter; 2017/18 allocation has been received and spent |
| Herts LEP | Awaiting approval |
| Go Trade – Interreg | Go To Places is a project partner in Go Trade, this funding represents match funding for joint marketing work at the end of 18/19 and will be received when work is complete. |
| Project Partners | Funding is secured through Letters of Commitment and a Project Partner Agreement. 17/18 allocations have been received and spent. 18/19 funding is being processed |
| Private Investors | Funding is agreed through letters of commitment; 17/18 allocations have been received and have been spent. 18/19 allocations are currently being processed. |

6. Issues for consideration

6.1. Risks and Dependencies

6.1.1. Project risks have been identified within the application form. A majority of these risks relate to the timing of funding decisions from the various parties involved in the Project.

6.1.2. Project monitoring will be put in place to ensure the project achieves the outputs set out within the application and will be reported to the Strategic Board twice a year.

6.2. Outcome of ITR Process (*Accountable Body Comments*)

6.2.1. The Accountable Body has independently assessed the Project Bid Document and has confirmed that the Project meets the criteria for funding, including the Assurance Framework requirement with regard to the expectation that high value for money will be achieved.

6.2.2. The economic appraisal has stated that the expected Project benefits total £3,016,650. This has been calculated based on the number of additional visitors that are expected as a result of the marketing campaign. Relative to the total cost of the project (£1,270,000), the Project is expected to achieve high Value for Money.

6.3. Financial implications (*Accountable Body Comments*)

6.3.1. Up to £500,000 of the GPF revenue grant was made available in 2017/18 to support the SSF. Based on the funding applications which have been endorsed by the SELEP Strategic Board to date, there is sufficient funding is available to support the request for this Project, as set out in the following table:

Table 3: Sector Support Fund Summary

| | Strategic Board Endorsement | 2018/19 £ |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Available Fund Balance | | 839,000 |
| Total seeking approval following board endorsement | | |
| SECEN Cultural Coasting Projects | 09-Jun-17 | 150,000 |
| Gourmet Garden (Tourism and SECEN Colours and Flavours) | 09-Jun-17 | 60,000 |
| Kent Medical Campus Enterprise Zone – Innovation Centre Design Work | 28-Sep-18 | 156,000 |
| Good Food Growth Campaign | 28-Sep-18 | 60,400 |
| Future Proof: Accelerating Delivery of High Quality Development across the LEP | 28-Sep-18 | 110,000 |
| Planning and prioritising future skills, training and business support needs for rural businesses across SELEP | 28-Sep-18 | 96,000 |
| Total endorsed | | 632,400 |
| Balance following approval | | 206,600 |

6.3.2. This grant is a fixed maximum contribution to the Project; any Project overspends incurred will be required to be addressed by the Project delivery partner.

6.3.3. It should be noted that not all of the match funding for the Project has been confirmed as agreed by the respective funder which represents a risk to delivery and to the realisation of the potential benefits.

6.4. Legal implications (*Accountable Body Comments*)

6.4.1. The grant will be transferred to the respective upper tier authority via a grant agreement with the Accountable Body; the grant agreement will include a requirement for claw back of the funding if it is not fully expended or not expended in line with the Project Bid Document.

7. Equality and Diversity implications

7.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

7.3. In the course of the development of the project business cases, the delivery of the project and the ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, the promoting local authority will ensure that any equality implications are considered as part of their decision making process and were possible identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

8. List of appendices

- 8.1. Appendix 1 – Project Bid Document
- 8.2. Appendix 2 – Independent Technical Review report

9. List of Background papers

- 9.1. Sector Support Funding Guidance
- 9.2. SELEP Assurance Framework

9.3. Minutes of the Strategic Board Meeting 9 June 2017

| Role | Date |
|--|------------------|
| Accountable Body sign off Stephanie Mitchener (On behalf of Margaret Lee) | 04/12/18 |

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| I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.  Adam Bryan Managing Director for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership | Date 06/12/18 |
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