

EGREMONT GATEWAYS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Cath Geil
LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford
REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Walker

Summary and Recommendation:

It is proposed that a sum of up to £50,000 be contributed from the Egremont Gateways project grant funding to fund maintenance subsequent to the initial three years establishment period built into the landscaping contract. It is recommended that

1. In order to ensure the continued benefit to Egremont of the new planting scheme, that Copeland Borough Council accept this contribution and takes on the responsibility for maintaining the newly planted areas alongside the A595 at the gateway entrances to Egremont.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council is the recipient of grant funding, in partnership with the Egremont and Area Regeneration Partnership, to landscape the gateway entrances to the Egremont.
- 1.2 This work has been highlighted as being of importance to the economic regeneration of Egremont in several studies, including the Mini-Masterplan commissioned by the Council. The newly laid out gateways will provide a fitting and striking entrance to the town.
- 1.3 It is important that these new areas reflect their importance to the town. The new scheme reflects the heritage of the town, focusing on apples to tie in with the annual Crab Fair, and includes an area of community orchard, that will in time provide apples that can be processed to create unique Egremont products, including for example jams, juices and chutneys, that will help to emphasise the character of the town for residents and visitors.
- 1.4 The Gateways funding has allowed for a three year establishment period, by which time the planting will be well-embedded and there will be little

problem with stock failing to grow. In discussion with the parks and open spaces team, a period of two further years should see the scheme thoroughly established, with only routine maintenance such as pruning and grass cutting required.

- 1.5 The landscaping element of the Egremont Gateways Project is valued at approximately £777,000, to be funded by West Lakes Renaissance (£437,000), ERDF (£270,000), BNG (£50,000), and CBC (£20,000).
- 1.6 The landscaping will take place at the areas marked Northern Roundabout, Northern Approach, Central Roundabout, Southern Roundabout and Pocket Park on the attached plan.
- 1.7 A contribution to cover this additional period and to ensure the successful transition from the initial contract to the Council maintenance team will be made from within the Gateways Project funding to cover the additional two years recommended by the Parks and Open Spaces manager. By this stage, with a diminishing need for management, the maintenance of the areas in question will be fully absorbed into the overall management of the open spaces in Egremont.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 Under the terms of the licence agreement to carry out the landscaping work, the Highways Agency require that an agreement for the long term maintenance be agreed. This would take the form of a maintenance schedule to be agreed and a sum of money from the project funding to contribute to any increase in costs.
- 2.2 As the land in question (as at present) is in mixed ownership, being part Council and part Highways Agency, the Highways Agency have indicated their preference that this be a single contractor and their willingness to see this on going maintenance work carried out by the Council and have expressed their belief that this will lead to a better maintained amenity for the town.
- 2.3 The Council currently carries out litter picking to the entire area and maintains its own areas, including some ornamental planting.
- 2.4 The importance of these areas, which function as Egremont's shop window for passing trade on the by-pass, requires that they are maintained with the attention to detail that a local team, with a pride in the landscape areas of the Borough, can provide.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 There are two alternative approaches that are possible for the on going care of the scheme.
- 3.2 The land could be maintained as at present, with mixed ownership, giving a consequently mixed result. The scheme as designed draws together areas in mixed ownership with a unified scheme. If they are not maintained in the same manner, whether this is with close control, or in a more natural manner, the result will be disjointed.
- 3.2 The Highways Agency could be asked to maintain all areas of the scheme. This approach would leave Egremont vulnerable to pressures of a large organisation, responsible for many areas of landscaping and unlikely to take sufficient interest in the town of Egremont. As with the present scheme, the town will potentially be failed, with another planting scheme being allowed to give a bad impression of the town.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Council is best placed to ensure that the lasting legacy of the new landscaping works is sustained, by accepting the contribution and managing the areas as part of an overall programme for open spaces in Egremont.

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 5.1 The first three years (the establishment period) is to be tendered as part of the works contract, to ensure that the works are carried out to a standard that as far as possible safeguards the future success of the scheme.
- 5.2 Subject to the proper tender process, it is possible that the Council will carry out these works and subsequently the establishment.
- 5.3 An indicative costing exercise has been carried out, which shows that the costs to the Council would be in the region of £16,000 in years four and five, but these would then diminish.
- 5.4 A sum of £50,000 will be included in the project costs against the areas to be maintained and grant funding paid to CBC to cover these years and a contingency for any unforeseen work that might arise. After this time the work will be programmed as part of the overall management of open spaces in Egremont and it is anticipated that it will have no impact on revenue costs in future years.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The three year establishment period is at the longer end of the usual range allowed. This should ensure that, even allowing for unfavourable conditions such as drought, the scheme is well-established by the time that the maintenance passes to the Council. The sum proposed as a contribution covers the anticipated costs and includes a contingency.
- 6.2 The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team have been involved with assessing the scheme and recommending the period required for the maintenance to be taken into the routine management of Egremont's open spaces.

7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 "1.1.9 Take a lead role in the development of regeneration and economic development strategy and delivery in West Cumbria"
The Council's emphasis on regeneration of its towns will be clearly demonstrated by attention to the sustainability of this scheme.
- 7.2 "3.1.6 Delivering the tourism product elements for Egremont... Develop specialist themes for ... Egremont..."
The Gateways project is an important element in attracting visitors to Egremont and helping to ensure repeat visits. The apple theme will be an important part of the town's developing visitor offer.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Plan showing areas in question

List of Background Documents: Egremont Mini-Masterplan, Egremont Gateways Baseline Study

**List of Consultees: Toni Magean, Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Corporate Team**

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed . This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

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| Impact on Crime and Disorder | The Gateways project will lead to an increase in pride in the town, through the improved appearance and through the emphasis on a heritage theme that |
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| | can be universally popular. |
| Impact on Sustainability | In excess of two hundred new trees will be planted as part of the new scheme. Sustainable ways of using the fruit, for example from the community orchard element, will be implemented. |
| Impact on Rural Proofing | None. |
| Health and Safety Implications | None. |
| Project and Risk Management | 6.1, 6.2 |
| Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues | None |
| Children and Young Persons Implications | Young people will be involved in the community orchard element of the project. |
| Human Rights Act Implications | None. |

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision YES