



Subject:	Lagan Canal – Request for support from Lagan Canal Trust
Date:	22 April 2015
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Brian Johnston, Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts Unit, ext 3586

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>In November 2006 Members approved the establishment of the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The main purpose of the Trust is to work towards reopening the canal from Belfast to Lough Neagh. Current priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development of the Union Locks- Feasibility assessments of the Aghagallon village plan- Reinstating the pedestrian route from the Blackstaff River to the Lagan towpath- Development of an EU project addressing climate change in the Lagan valley- Development of the Waterways College
1.2	<p>The Trust currently represents core funding bodies and key interest groups including; Belfast City Council, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL). Other Trust stakeholders include Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Department of Social Development (DSD), Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI), Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), Ulster Waterways Group (UWG) and Lagan Valley Regional Park.</p>
1.3	<p>Financial support from the relevant councils is currently calculated based on the length of</p>

1.4	<p>canal which lies within their area. In 2013-14 this was 18% of the canal amounting to £17,341 of funding. Following the boundary changes, this is now 22% for Belfast City Council.</p> <p>At their December meeting of the Council's Development Committee, Members agreed to provide £4,652.31 towards the costs of relocating the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust's offices from the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre to Lisburn.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to agree three annual payments to the Lagan Canal Trust totalling £122,808.84 in the period 2015 – 2018, subject to review of progress on an annual basis.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The current funding agreement between Lagan Canal Trust and the relevant councils runs out in March 2015. The Trust has requested a new funding package for the next three year period, totalling £172,560 in 2015-16; £192,190 in 2016-17; £193,472 in 2017-18. Lisburn City Council is expected to contribute 35% of this, DCAL 20% (down from 25% in the last round), NIEA 15% (up from 10%) and Craigavon 8%, the same as previously. Belfast City Council is being asked to contribute 22%, or £37,963.20 in year one, £42,281.80 in year two and £42,563.84 in year three, a total of £122,808.84 over the three year period.</p>
3.2	A business case prepared by Trust staff is included as Appendix 1. The business case proposes an enhanced staffing profile for the organisation in order to deliver on some key priority projects to progress the re-opening of the canal. It assumes a significant uplift in the financial commitment from Belfast City Council in order to meet the commitments agreed by the Lagan Canal Trust Board in October 2014.
3.3	Members will be aware that the council prioritised the work on the Lagan as part of the Investment Programme and some progress has been made in securing resources to re-open the locks within the council boundary.
3.4	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>A request has been made that Council contribute £37,963.20, £42,281.80 and £42,563.84 respectively in each of the next three years, a total of £122,808.84, which would be included in departmental estimates</p>

3.5	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are currently no equality or good relations implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 - Lagan Navigation Draft Core Funding Business Case, 2015 - 2018