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| <b>PART B:</b>          | <b>RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL</b>                                   |
| <b>REPORT TO:</b>       | <b>POLICY AND RESOURCES</b>   |
| <b>DATE:</b>            | <b>17 MARCH 2022</b>  |
| <b>REPORT OF THE:</b>   | <b>PROGRAMME DIRECTOR FOR PLACE AND RESOURCES<br/>PHILLIP SPURR</b> |
| <b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b> | <b>PICKERING TOWN COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY<br/>GRANT REQUEST</b>  |
| <b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>  | <b>PICKERING</b>  |

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To secure approval from Policy and Resources on a grant allocation request from Pickering Town Community Interest Company (PTCIC) for funding the development and promotion of cycling and active outdoors related activity in Pickering.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) Policy and Resources recommends to council that it gives approval for funding of £175,000 to fund works outlined in section 6.12, subject to overview of detailed plans, with delegated authority given to the Programme Director to release the funds, in consultation with the chair of Policy and Resources Committee.

### **3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 The grant request is to support cycling and active outdoors development and promotion activity in Pickering as part of a programme of projects to improve and maintain existing cycling infrastructure, enhance public access to these facilities and support further developments outlined in the CIC's business plan. The works outlined would provide a sound investment for community use in Pickering, and seek to utilise funds originally allocated for community use in Pickering by the Policy & Resources committee on 18 March 2021.
- 3.2 Approval of the funding and implementation of the project will enhance the cycling provision for residents and tourists, encouraging greater uptake of physical activity with consequent improvements to public health. It is also likely to contribute towards reduced congestion and carbon emissions and therefore have a positive impact in

relation to climate change.

- 3.3 A large number of businesses in Pickering and its environs paid for membership of Welcome to Yorkshire. With the recent demise of this organisation, there is an opportunity to support a locally focused organisation that can attract local business funding for the purposes of promoting the town.

#### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS**

- 4.1 Pickering Town Community Interest Company's directors regard the works outlined in this report as a key aspect of the development of their business plan and to stimulate recovery for Pickering post-Covid. The CIC seeks funding from RDC to support these developments which they anticipate will be instrumental as part of the recovery of Pickering and help establish the town as a regional hub for outdoors activities. Without agreement of financial support there is concern that they will not be able to progress with the developments set out in the business plan and the opportunity this presents for Pickering.
- 4.2 This funding request is deemed essential to kick start activity and encourage further funding from other stakeholders, including Pickering Town Council, who have committed funding to developing the path between Newbridge Park and the Community Park. There is a substantial risk that if the project doesn't receive RDC support then other partners won't commit match funding or the management and or provision of activity contained within the CIC's business plan. Financial support would help unlock private sector income from businesses, whom due to the collapse of the towns business group (Pickering in Business), are currently not investing in the marketing or promotion of Pickering as a visitor destination.

#### **5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 From April 2021, Pickering Town CIC members have met every fortnight with support from the Tourism & Development Officer to explore the current provision and opportunities that development of activity to support the outdoors sector would provide to Pickering and the wider Ryedale District with the facilities being accessible to all. The CIC membership consists of one Ryedale District Councillor, two Pickering Town Councillors, two private sector business representatives and one further Pickering resident.
- 5.2 Pickering Town CIC has developed a business plan for implementation on receipt of streams of funding (Appendix 1).
- 5.3 The Council Plan 2020-2024 and the Destination Development Plan 2020-23 highlight the ambition to support Ryedale's market towns and develop the outdoors activity sector. Investment in the activities outlined would support that aim and widen opportunities for business and tourism development as well as strengthening the District as a sustainable place to visit, also a key component of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. The recent development of the Malton and Pickering cycle route also supports the foundations of developing this activity.
- 5.4 The project is fully in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the Councils Scrutiny Review into Climate Change as adopted by Council (11 April 2019) and in particular recommendation under 3d "Foster the use of alternatives to fossil fuels for travel through promotion of public transport, walking and cycling."

## REPORT

### 6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 Pickering town CIC (“PTCIC”) was established in 2021 in order to promote Pickering for the local community. The CIC comprises of personnel from a range of backgrounds who have experience in multidisciplinary business leadership roles, roles in the community and within the public sector and have shared aims on how the town could be developed for the benefit of the community.
- 6.2 At a meeting of Pickering Town Council on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the council resolved that it is supportive of this initiative (PTCIC) and would like to appoint two members of the council as its representatives on a group to submit a bid for funding, and that other members of the council who wished to be involved in this project outside of this formal representation should be allowed to do this. The council appointed Councillor Lovejoy and Councillor Steadman as its representatives.
- 6.3 With the assistance of RDC, PTCIC applied for funds from the Community Renewal Fund to develop the activity set out in this report. Unfortunately, this bid was unsuccessful. PTCIC are also looking to raise funds from other organisations as well as RDC.
- 6.4 The projects that PTCIC are particularly focused on for RDC capital funding are relating to the Newbridge Park cycling area and the Welcome to Pickering website and social media sites relating to Welcome to Pickering. Numerous businesses in Pickering paid for membership of Welcome to Yorkshire. With the demise of this organisation, there is an opportunity to ‘fill the gap’ with a locally focused organisation that can attract local business funding.
- 6.5 The CIC have produced a business plan containing a series of aspirations including:
- ‘Development’ – new cycling infrastructure, visitor interpretation, and footpaths
  - ‘Maintenance’ - continuation of management of existing and new assets delivered as part of the project, and
  - ‘The Community’ – engagement within the local community to ensure the assets are utilised, promoted and benefits spread - i.e. creation of a carbon free ‘last mile’ transportation concept.
- 6.6 The following progress has been made and developments are continuing. These include:
- Establishment of the CIC and recruitment of a number of directors to the board with a range of expertise.
  - Development of a business plan to source funding from relevant bodies
  - Recently, the Pickering in Business group has been wound up and accordingly there are no other groups particularly focused on initiatives for the community in Pickering. As a result of Pickering in Business being wound up they have transferred the Welcome to Pickering website to PTCIC. PTCIC want to refresh this website and ensure that it is fit for purpose for both local information for the community as well as to attract more tourism to the area and promote local businesses.
- 6.7 Pickering Town CIC is being supported by RDC’s Tourism and Development Officer who is working with the committee to help identify opportunities, develop activity and avenues of funding. This has included to date:

- introductions to funding providers and opportunities
- development and submission of a Community Renewal Funding application to North Yorkshire County Council to support cycling activity via revenue funding, which although was unsuccessful has led to wider discussions around developing a business plan.

**Pickering Town Community Interest Company Business Plan:**

- 6.8 A business plan has been developed to provide a strategic framework for establishing Pickering as Yorkshire’s cycling hub, to provide additional/improved facilities to both Pickering residents and visitors.

Initially the focus was an application for £261,000 from the UK Community Renewal Fund (“CRF”). The CRF bid was encouraged and supported by our local MP as well as the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Unfortunately that application was unsuccessful therefore funding is now being sought from Ryedale District Council.

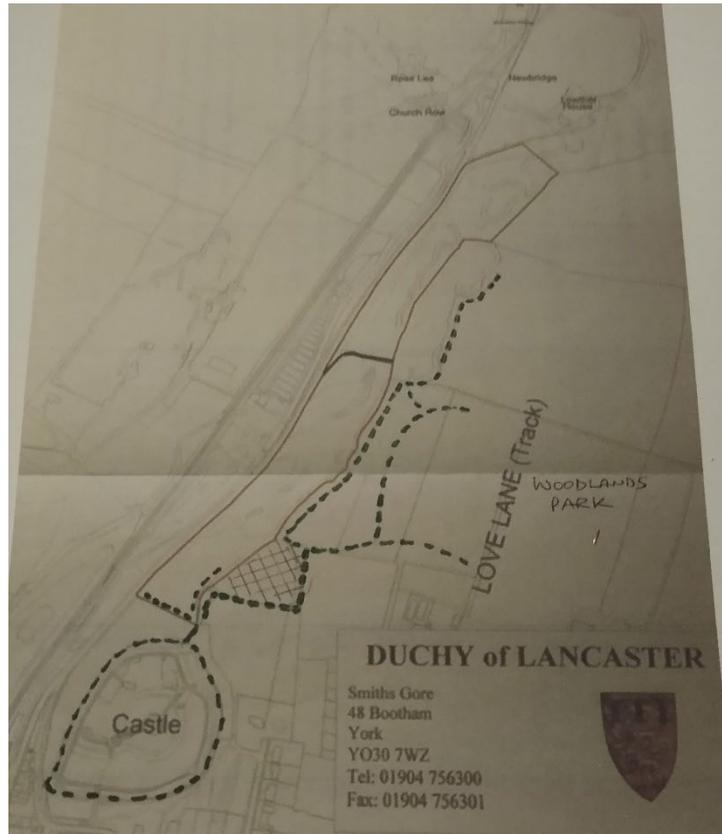
- 6.9 The Business Plan programme will deliver eight key ambitious objectives for the next ten years. This includes:

- Build an ambitious vision as ‘Yorkshire’s Cycling Hub ‘to unite the town and deliver a sustainable commitment towards harnessing active travel within the local community, businesses and landowners.
- Re-invigorate the town centre as the base and location for cyclists and families creating a café culture to stimulate new opportunities within the town centre.
- Connect local communities through safe cycling routes, promoting active travel and associated health and carbon reduction benefits.
- Innovate both through a unique digital mapping app and through feasibility studies to create integrated opportunities with local tourism assets such as the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.
- Invest in existing local cycling assets i.e. Newbridge Park to take it from something good to something great
- Incorporate links between Newbridge Park and the Community Park to improve access to both
- Train and provide access to local cycling guides who may also provide cycling proficiency lessons
- Encourage third parties to provide access to rental bikes/equipment to support the growing interest in wellness tourism post pandemic.

- 6.10 To the rear of Pickering Castle is the area known as Newbridge Park which is owned by the Duchy of Lancaster and leased to Newbridge Park Ltd. This has been a very successful off-road cycling area for the local community particularly for young people and is an excellent facility for Pickering. Residents and visitors can enjoy mountain biking, walking or picnicking in a wonderful woodland setting right on the edge of the town.

There are mountain bike cross-country trails and a skills park, footpaths and a family picnic area in the formerly neglected woodland. Locals and visitors can enjoy family walks in a wonderful woodland setting and a long term woodland management plan aims to reintroduce native species.

Plan showing location and size of Newbridge Park (Solid line area also showing footpaths)



For detailed information re Newbridge Park please refer to its website <http://www.newbridgepark.co.uk/>

Newbridge Park Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and has five directors, however the committee are looking to relinquish their responsibility of the land due to other commitments. In order to ensure that this community facility can be maintained and restored as well as improved PTCIC is looking to take over the area if it can ensure that it can raise the capital funding required to do so. The area is currently leased from the Duchy of Lancaster and access to the area is through woodland paths, and the intention would be to reassign the lease.

If the funding allocation were to be successful PTCIC will enter into discussions with the Duchy of Lancaster estate on the transfer of the lease from Newbridge Park Ltd and would become the leaseholder over a new 10 year term. At the end of the term the lease would be reviewed with regards to continuation. If Newbridge Park Ltd ceases to operate and the land not be maintained, the land must be returned to its original condition, ultimately meaning the asset would be lost as a community asset. A significant amount of work has been undertaken at Newbridge Park to provide mountain biking and walking routes in a scenic environment.

6.11 The Business Plan has been developed to strategically consider all aspects of activity and its potential but is realistic in its ambitions. The open willingness to work with partners and explore opportunities demonstrates a strong strategic direction for the project.

6.12 **Grant Request:**

The Business Plan identifies areas for capital improvements which would improve the facilities and appeal of Pickering as an outdoors activity hub. The areas identified for

improvements are:

- **Newbridge Park**

The capital funding required for Newbridge Park includes the following costs which have been sought from quotes from current stakeholders:

- Management of mature trees in the area to ensure that the area is safe for purpose – (£15,000)
- Improving the cycling tracks which have been worn over many years – (£13,000)
- Adding a pump skills track for younger riders in the area (a looped sequence of rollers and berms (swoopy, banked turns) for bike riders) - £TBC
- Lease costs for 10 years to Duchy Of Lancaster for the Newbridge Park site – (£5,000)
- Insurance costs for 10 years re Liability insurance for the area – (£7,000)
- New signage between the town, Newbridge Park and the Community Park– (£2,500)
- Bike maintenance station – (£1,500)
- PR & website (£5,000)

An additional element of this project is to link Newbridge Park to the Pickering Town Community Park.

At present there is a very poor woodland path which is quite difficult to negotiate which links Newbridge Park to the Community Park. Given the number of families and young people who now access the Community Park, which is expected to increase with additional facilities being proposed by Pickering Town Council, including an outdoor gym and skateboard park, it is felt that having a quality safe off-road link between Newbridge Park and the Community Park would provide an improved and safer access to encourage use of both facilities for residents and visitors. Currently access to the Community Park requires a walk along Whitby Road which is a busy road and hence not friendly for walkers, cyclists and people with pushchairs or wheelchairs. Other alternatives are to walk through a housing estate and access via Love Lane.

In order to provide the link between Newbridge Park and the Community Park a small strip of land of about 150m would need to be acquired from two private owners so that the existing footpath can be made both wider and safer to enable people to do this link on foot and/or with pushchairs and bicycles.

This new improved link would enable people to come up through Pickering town along Castlegate to Pickering Castle and then using the footpaths that circumnavigate the castle get to the junction whereby they could go up through the woods to the Community Park or along to Newbridge Park. A safer and more attractive option than the other routes that access the Community Park. *As of 21 February 2022, Pickering Town Council have committed to funding and managing this aspect of activity with a view to utilising Community Levy Infrastructure funding.*

To complement activity at Newbridge Park additional activity would be undertaken to boost the profile of Pickering as a destination for active outdoors activity:

- Pickering – The Great Outdoors website and associated digital marketing to improve the profile of the destination of Pickering and attract visitors to the area– (£24,250)
- 10 secure bike stands at key locations within Pickering to support active travel and complement cycling route developments including Malton – Pickering and the

- North York Moors Cycle Way– (£30,000)
- 100 charging units for e-bikes available to businesses to support the growing trend of ebikes and facilitate multi-generation family friendly cycling groups– (£15,000)
- Training cycle guides/teachers on cycle maintenance – (£15,000)
- Setup staff costs to deliver all activity, to include one project manager to manage the funding allocation and delivery of the activity on an 18 month fixed term contract. Flexible working arrangements to include office base or home – (£50,000).

Total identified costs amount to £183,250.

6.13 The aforementioned objectives would deliver the following outputs:

- Building an ambitious vision as ‘Yorkshire’s Cycling Hub’
- Creation of a dedicated online presence and new material to promote the area as a cycling hub.
- Launch Pickering Town Community Interest Company to drive community ownership of the vision and ambitions.
- Reinvigorating the town centre.
  - Create a new opportunity for third parties to provide rental bikes, for both able and disabled cyclists.
  - Stimulate town centre collaboration
    - Secure cycle racks
    - Maintenance/E-bike charging points for bicycles
    - Improved signage for cyclists and tourists generally
    - Establishing a cycling friendly code for local businesses
  - Supporting carbon neutral or even carbon negative active tourism with related health benefits.
- Connecting local communities
  - Mapping and promoting safe cycling routes between rural villages, towns and attractions
  - Leverage the Pickering to Malton cycle route creating a link between Yorkshire’s Food Capital and Yorkshire’s Cycling Hub
  - Create formal links to local cycle areas such as Newbridge Park and Dalby Forest
  - Provide new skills and employment opportunities by training cycle guides
  - Measuring and monitoring air quality
  - Sustainable tourism supporting the economies of Pickering and surrounding villages
  - Work with NYCC Highways department to explore opportunities for new and improved safe cycle routes
  - Securing the operation of Newbridge Park and associated recreation opportunities the site presents to the community of Pickering and it’s visitors
- Innovating through digital and feasibility studies
  - Develop a specialist digital mapping system that provides a clear digital, interactive map of Pickering and surroundings with easy-to-use navigation systems and search facility. Allowing a search as specific as “30-minute walks from here” or “cafe”. Instant information would be overlaid on top of the interactive map allowing for every business/event organiser to upload and maintain information
  - Conduct feasibility studies to explore new/improved cycle lanes such as links to local villages using old railway lines
  - Undertake a feasibility study to explore opportunities to create one-way cycle

friendly public transport tickets to create exciting new routes accessible to less experienced cyclists. E.g. with North Yorkshire Moors Railway one-way ticket to Grosmont and cycle back

Activities in the grant request and business plan are all aimed at improving access to a much needed public space, amenities and the profile of the destination of Pickering. Activity has been determined based in particular on the response to resident consultations undertaken by Ryedale District Council and Pickering Town Council over the last three years in relation to improvements residents would like to see to improve the town. Both a Ryedale District Council Place Standards consultation activity carried out in 2019 and a more recent survey undertaken by the Town Council in June of 2021 asked young people aged 10-16 what facilities they wanted to see in Pickering and access to outdoors recreation facilities came out as a priority.

Investment in this project will support the aims of Ryedale District Council's Plan 2020-24 under the following strands:

- Promoting health and wellbeing for all by offering leisure facilities and access to physical activity.
  - Promotion of the Ryedale's market towns and the area for active recreation.
  - Improving air quality in our market towns by tackling congestion and promoting sustainable transport and commerce.
  - Opening cycle and walking routes and identifying new ways to link our communities in sustainable ways.
  - Supplement activity set out in the Destination Development Plan 2020-2023 to help promote and develop the Ryedale tourism sector and visitor economy through supporting product development and delivering marketing and promotional campaigns – particularly around improving the area as a place for outdoors recreation and eco-tourism.
  - Support funding for new developments and improve existing facilities with key stakeholders.
- 6.14 RDC members previously voted to ring-fence £200,000 towards community use in Pickering and to date £25,000 of this allocation has been awarded, to CaVCA for use on the Hungate Centre, the balance sits within the council's reserves. Pickering Town Community Interest Company would like to request the remaining allocation (£175,000) from the council's reserves to support these identified areas of activity. The balance of costs will be sought from other organisations, both public and private sector, however if Ryedale DC funding does not materialise the project is unlikely to progress.
- 6.15 Support for this project could help stimulate further external funding from other sources i.e. Pickering Town Council, North York Moors National Park tourism grants scheme, larger private sector organisations within Pickering and help leverage smaller business contributions towards website advertising. These revenue streams have been identified as income to support capital activity and the ongoing maintenance costs associated with the Newbridge Park development and digital marketing activity.
- 6.16 The following key developments by Pickering Town CIC demonstrate their willingness to develop the plan of activity collaboratively and strategically:
- a strategic approach to activity delivery developed through community and professional consultation
  - volunteer development through new policies and procedures
  - a business plan addressing key areas of strategic development

- improved development of business and community networks with local groups
- an effort to work collaboratively both locally and regionally

6.17 A decision is requested on whether the Policy and Resources committee will support the release of funds for all or part of the work outlined.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial:

£175,000 to contribute towards the cost of the activity identified in the grant request. This amount has been set out in the Capital Programme in the revised Financial Strategy, subject to Council approval. Without agreement of financial support there is concern that the project will not be able to progress with the developments set out in the CIC's business plan. Funding will kick start activity and encourage further funding from other stakeholders, including Pickering Town Council who are supportive of the activity outlined between Newbridge Park and the Community Park. Financial support would demonstrate to local businesses a will to develop Pickering with a focussed cohesive plan and support help unlock private sector income from businesses who are currently not investing in the marketing or promotion of Pickering as a tourism destination. If public funding were not to materialise then elements of capital activity would be removed or downsized from the proposed activity, these include:

- A reduction in the number of bike stands
- Removal of charging units for ebikes
- Removal or reduction in the number of training cycle guides/teachers to support active travel opportunities

At present, all capital activity is forecast to be completed by April 2023 further to discussions with stakeholders.

b) Legal

If all or part of the financial request is granted, the legal team can draw up a grant agreement with approved terms and conditions.

c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)

All necessary health and safety protocols to be followed if the works outlined in the grant request are to go ahead. These can be outlined in the terms and conditions of any grant awarded.

- Delivery of the project will have a positive effect upon:
  - i) Equality – by making more of the developments available for those with disabilities;
  - ii) The environment – by encouraging greater uptake of non-motorised forms of transport and providing greater opportunities for physical recreation the project will contribute towards a reduction in congestion and improved air quality;
  - iii) Climate change – as above, the project will encourage greater uptake of non-motorised forms of transport with a resulting reduction in carbon emissions.

**Name of Head of Service**  
**PHILLIP SPURR**

**Job Title**  
**PROGRAMME DIRECTOR FOR PLACE AND RESOURCES**

Author: Craig Nattress, Tourism & Development Officer  
Telephone No: Tel: 01653 600666 ext 43315  
E-Mail Address: [craig.nattress@ryedale.gov.uk](mailto:craig.nattress@ryedale.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:**  
Pickering Town Community Interest Company Business Plan

**Background Papers are available for inspection at:**  
Location or web address