

BRIEFING REPORT - PART I

Plymouth's Natural Grid



I. INTRODUCTION

A partnership between Plymouth City Council, The National Trust and Real Ideas Organisation, the Natural Grid is a proposal for funding from the [Green Recovery Challenge Round 2](#). It aims to deliver a cross-city nature restoration and enhancement project, connecting wildlife sites from inner city to wider landscape – aligning with the Lawton principles ‘bigger, better and more joined up’, supporting access to natural spaces and climate proofing and employment in the sector.

We submitted the £1.2m bid in May and have now been informed that we have been successful in the application with project expected to start in September 2021 and run until the end March 2023.

2. PROPOSAL

Plymouth's Natural Grid aims to catalyse an urban nature renaissance that supports economic prosperity and addresses social inequalities. The project will springboard the city's recovery through a programme of work across a grid of nature-protected and connected sites by:

- improving 390ha of land for people and wildlife, including rewilding and nature conservation/restoration, access and interpretation
- providing 22 new jobs including apprenticeships and Kickstart placements, focusing on young people not in employment, education or training
- supporting short-term accredited learning opportunities for 95 young people
- providing 4 on-site nature engagement weeks in our more deprived urban areas, connecting 1000 people with nature on their doorstep, and raising awareness of learning and employment opportunities.

This proposal supports the following Corporate objectives:

- a green sustainable city that cares about the environment
- a clean and tidy city
- a welcoming city

It also supports the delivery of the following JLP policies by ensuring that we make the most of one off funding opportunities to enhance the urban forest and green space of the city, engage communities with their local natural spaces and amenity trees whilst increasing the biodiversity value of trees throughout the city.

- DEV026 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation,
- DEV027 Green and play spaces,
- DEV028 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows

3. CONSULTATION & STAKEHOLDERS

The Natural Grid (NG) proposal has been informed by evidence gathered in the [Plymouth Open Space Assessment 2017](#) and is part of the city's wider strategy to ensure high quality wildlife-rich space for all our residents that deliver vital natural services – embedded in our Climate Emergency Response, Joint Local Plan and Covid Recovery Plan. Our ambition can be seen [here](#).

4. OUTCOMES & BENEFITS

Financial

Natural capital of the city's urban forest increased – Plymouth's trees contribute £4.6 m of benefits to the city per year and provide £3.5 billion in amenity value.

Ecosystem services to the city increased and long term cost savings through; urban cooling, surface water attenuation, increased property values of tree lined streets, carbon capture and storage.

Non-financial

- improving 390ha of land for people and wildlife, including rewilding and nature conservation/restoration, access and interpretation
- providing 22 new jobs including apprenticeships and Kickstart placements, focusing on young people not in employment, education or training
- supporting short-term accredited learning opportunities for 95 young people
- providing 4 on-site nature engagement weeks in our more deprived urban areas, connecting 1000 people with nature on their doorstep, and raising awareness of learning and employment opportunities.

5. FINANCE

Total Project cost = £534,003 (Capital £168,725 & Revenue £365,278)

External funding secured = £0.534 million from DEFRA Green Recovery Challenge Fund 2

Procurement

The delivery of works will be procured through the council's procurement team in line with financial regulations.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Leader of the Council:

- Approves the Business Case
- Allocates £168,725 to the Capital Programme, to be funded by external funding secured from Green Recovery Challenge Fund