

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (People) (Introduced by the Executive Member for People, Councillor John Walker)	Executive Cabinet	04/12/08

ELLERBECK AND DUXBURY COLLIERIES – POTENTIAL EXTENSION OF GREEN CORRIDOR

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To gain approval for an appraisal and site investigation of Ellerbeck and Duxbury Collieries (known as Ellerbeck). This work will be funded by REMADE and project managed by Chorley Council.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To approve the site appraisal and investigation of Ellerbeck.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. REMADE, which stands for Reclamation and Management of Derelict Land, has funding to carry out site surveys, investigations and studies which will inform the subsequent design and future of the Ellerbeck site. The longer term aim is to reclaim Ellerbeck in a similar way to Birkacre and Big Wood, bringing it up to standard to be included as part of Yarrow Valley Country Park, connected via the existing footpath network.
4. Although Ellerbeck will be identified as part of Yarrow Valley Country Park through the design and the concept of conservation, recreation and education, it is proposed to have a distinct and separate identity through the end use being tailored to outdoor pursuits and ideally, in part, self managing and financing. The initial appraisal, investigations and surveys will inform what this end use of the site can be.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

5. REMADE are offering to fund the whole of the site appraisal, investigations and survey. This can be seen as a cost saving for Chorley Council. Ellerbeck is owned by Chorley Council and as such the Council have the public liability to keep the site safe. It is in our interests to know of any problems on site which could have a detrimental effect on the environment or the safety of local residents.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6. Alternative option would be to not carry out the surveys and not take up the funding.



CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	4
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

BACKGROUND

8. The site of Ellerbeck is located to the south of Chorley's urban fringe and to the north west of Adlington on land owned by Chorley Council. The Council bought the land in September 1997 from British Coal.
9. This 28.45 ha former colliery exhibits typical coalfield dereliction on a large scale in the form of derelict mineshafts and contaminated and unstable ground, though this is now hidden within woodland and dense undergrowth. It is on the register of derelict, underused and neglected (DUN) sites in Lancashire.
10. The site is allocated for informal recreational use and nature conservation within the Local Plan. The Council recognise the leisure/nature conservation potential of the site as not only benefiting the Borough of Chorley but the region as a whole.
11. Ellerbeck has the scope to provide a valuable recreational, nature conservation and educational visitor attraction in the North West. The Park's particular location also serves to enhance other linkages to the rest of Yarrow Valley Country Park and the West Pennine Moors.
12. As a first step in realising the reclamation, REMADE is offering to provide funding to carry out an initial appraisal of the land. The feasibility works will cost £25,000. The project will be managed by Chorley Council. We have received assurances from REMADE that by accepting the offer of funding for the feasibility works we are not committing the Council to any future works, nor will the funding be clawed back if the Council decides not to proceed.
13. The initial appraisal will look at:
 - An ecological survey of the site
 - Contaminated land survey and recommendations
 - Investigation into mining activity on site and any remaining structures
 - Topographical survey.
14. Armed with the findings of the survey, the next step for us would be to look at the possible recreational uses of the site. Initial thoughts are that this could include some outdoor pursuits/activities that could open up opportunities for alternative management and funding arrangements.

15. Subject to satisfactory findings, and approval from Members at a future date, funding bids could then be put into REMADE and other suitable funding streams along with local agencies such as the Environment Agency, Coal Authority and Natural England being approached to find finance and support to carry out the remedial work. This will involve decontamination, pollution control, removal of dangerous structures and mineshaft capping, followed by reclamation and development works such as woodland management, footpath infrastructure, access controls, boundary treatment, car parking, drainage, planting, site interpretation and development of recreational activities.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

16. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance	4	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

17. The proposals in this report are at a very early stage of development and the initial phase is not reliant on any financial support from Chorley Council. However, if the project progresses and grant approval is forthcoming then it is essential to identify any costs that will be required from the Council at the earliest possible stage for consideration in the budgetary process. This will be both capital and revenue costs in the form of match funding or maintenance costs

JAMIE CARSON
CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PEOPLE)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lindsey Ralston	5218	Sept 08	