

# **Unabridged wording of Surrey County Council's 2014 application to the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership for funds to develop Newlands Corner**

## **Project Name:**

Newlands Corner: an iconic visitor centre

## **Brief Description**

The project sets out to capitalise on the potential of Newlands Corner as a visitor site which already attracts 500,000+ visitors per year. The project will do this through a mixture of capital and revenue investments resulting in a multi-use site giving it a key role in the local economy. The proposed work will deliver an arrival area; a cycle centre, a 1.5km way-marked trail with family play features, an indoor café with additional outdoor seating (c150 covers), a retail unit; a ranger base; seating, signage & interpretation; security measures and new high standard toilet facilities as well as extended car parking.

The project context is both economic (visitor economy related in particular) and environmental and links to various high priority agendas such as economic stimulus and growth; balanced development; health and wellbeing; tourism and public access to quality facilities.

Any new buildings should be timber framed and use timber sourced from FSC or PEFC certified forests. Wood fuel is the preferred method of heating. The use of wood fuel requires vehicular access to a storage hopper and will be considered at the design stage.

The project will develop new outdoor and indoor facilities as described; will improve public access (and hence increase visitor numbers); enhance landscape; and harness existing leisure usage to form a much expanded and iconic visitor site.

A collaborative approach will serve to maximize social, environmental and economic gains at the same time and in a coherent way. Multi-agency and stakeholder involvement in such work will also mean being able to balance different considerations and ensure that decisions in the planning and delivery process genuinely take account of a wide range of different factors that might otherwise come into conflict.

It foresees the planned redevelopment and extension of an existing iconic site in ways that will stimulate increased levels of use; economic activity; jobs creation; enhanced visitor experiences, and; considerable public and professional interest. It will also serve as a trailblazer for work on other iconic sites in Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex and beyond with lessons learned being shared and successes showcased.

As such the proposed project is a major investment programme comprising a number of complementary delivery strands with input from a broad range of stakeholders. This implies a portfolio of funding packages to be determined and budgeted in detail pre-delivery.

Likely project partners include:

- Surrey County Council
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
- The Albury Estate

- Guildford Borough Council
- Surrey Hills AONB

### **Total LGF Ask and Profile by Financial Year**

2017/18	2018/19	Total
£0.723m	£1.077m	£1.8m

### **Total Project Cost and Profile**

Pre April 2017	2017/18	2018/19	Total
£0.15	£0.923m	£1.326m	£2.4m

### **Links to Enterprise M3 SEP Priorities**

The proposed project has a clear economic (visitor economy) focus and an equally clear sense of (distinct) place. It harnesses what already exists but takes it to a completely new level – maximising potential and driving growth through the retention and creation of jobs and the support of new businesses.

### **Innovation and enterprise**

The project explicitly sets out to create new businesses (including social enterprises) and additional jobs. It exploits an existing strength in terms both of attractiveness of place and local spending power. It harnesses the latent potential of rural areas as set out in section 2.17 of the SEP with a clear food and drink sector dimension included in what is being proposed.

### **Skills**

With the development of existing jobs and the creation of new ones there is a clear skills dimension to what we propose. This applies to both employer take-up and employability dimensions of the SEP. The multi-faceted site will offer a wide range of paid roles at different skills levels – both at the stage of doing on site work and in terms of the businesses which will operate on site once the initial investment is complete (or completing.). The project anticipates the kinds of socio-economic impacts detailed in the SEP

### **Key Development/Delivery Risks**

We have already identified a number of particular factors which will need to be (and already have been) taken into account as the project is shaped:

#### a) The planning process

There are a number of key points at which planning permissions of different kinds will be required. We understand these processes intimately and have taken close account of them in our development work, at the same time we do not underestimate their key importance and complexity.

#### b) Political changes

Political backing is extremely valuable for what we propose. This has been secured and there is no reason to think that the situation will change. That said, elections are due at various points over the proposed timeframe and political priorities do obviously shift. We are very well aware of this and used to securing lasting political backing.

c) Resource issues (beyond Growth Deal)

In order to make the capital project work in the way it needs to there is a clear inference around staff input commitment from partner organisations. This is in the process of being quantified and tested and will be enshrined in memoranda of understanding or similar between partners. The expectation is that part of this resource cost can be met through funding sources if this proves necessary (see also “leverage” section in this context).

### **Significant Barriers to Delivery/Other Issues**

The significant barrier to development is the current lack of capital investment to make this work possible – funding through the Growth Deal would overcome this obstacle and trigger other investment. There are foreseeable stages of process to be gone through and these have been analysed already in detail.

A number of these potential operational barriers have already been considered and are addressed in the “risk” section above.

### **Links to Local Economic Opportunities/Shocks**

There is a much broader economic growth - and specifically rural economic growth and rural tourism - agenda at play here. What we are proposing in this project has clear and quantifiable economic (as well as environmental and social) benefit.

### **Links to Other Projects/Programmes**

There is clear congruence between what is being proposed here in terms of business and jobs development and the EM3 ESIF programme 2014-20. We intend to explore ESIF as a source of required revenue funding for deliver aspects of the project post come 2016/17. There is no interdependence with other schemes of work but it is useful to be clear that the site management being proposed for Newlands Corner is aligned with the principles which apply across the whole of the countryside estate management work being carried out on Surrey County Council’s behalf by the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

### **Impacts on Environmental/Heritage Sites**

Newlands Corners is per se a heritage site with important environmental features – clearly recognised within the land management plan carried out by the Albury Estate and the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

This project will have a positive impact on the Environment, by providing better facilities in one place for the public and by managing access to the site. There is a public education dimension too: encouraging visitors to stay longer, enjoy the site and learn more about it and its natural resources and potential. By selling local food and drink it will help to ensure land management in the area provides an economic return.

The AONB is keen to see Newlands Corner become a gateway site introducing visitors to what makes the landscape important and encouraging them to take part in active recreation.  
(See also designations below)

### **Environmental Designations**

The Surrey Hills AONB  
Greenbelt  
common land

### **Anticipated economic outcomes**

- New visitor facilities generating income on an ongoing basis
- Greater visitor numbers and higher spend figures
- New on-site businesses with higher income generation levels
- Retention of existing jobs on site and in supply chain
- New jobs on site and increased spend in supply chains
- Project marketing, publicity and evaluation to stimulate all above

### **Leverage potential**

We envisage leverage working in two ways here: funds from other external sources and from project partners themselves:

a) Reference has already been made to congruence with ESIF 2014-2020. We are keen to explore how the two can be drawn together with one fund acting as leverage for the other in developing skills and business support programmes in a rural area. This may include some of (but not all) of the project coordination and management staff resource referred to at section c) of the question above relating to delivery risks

b) There is a clear and existing appetite on the part of identified partners to make contributions of their own to this scheme. Growth Deal funding would be shaped as part of a broader funding package and used to lever in revenue funding alongside its own capital contribution.

Clearly both elements highlighted at this section need further working up as part of the project development process – detail will be key and mechanisms will need to be explored in detail.