



## STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBER/OFFICER REPORT

<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY</b>	Cotswold Canals Connected Project Board
<b>DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED</b>	22 June 2023 (Project Board Meeting)

### BRIEF REPORT:

A last Canal Project Update was provided for the S&R Committee Meeting in April 2023 and this briefing follows the latest Project Partners' Board Meeting, held on 22 June 2023.

Positive progress has been made on the canal over the last quarter and a notable success was the Lock Challenge and Canal Spring Festival held over the weekend of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May.

However, the project remains at risk due to the delays with the flood modelling which is impacting planning approval and the engineering programme. The flood modelling has been reviewed by the Environment Agency and, we expect to complete the updated Environmental Statement (incorporating Flood Risk Assessment) and planning application which will be re-circulated to the statutory consultees for comment and approval. However, we will not meet the deadline required for consideration by the Development Control Committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023, and an extraordinary meeting has therefore been scheduled on 28<sup>th</sup> September for this review.

Planning Approval is the next key milestone for this project as this will then enable us to progress works on the Missing Mile section of the canal. This is the most complex and expensive part of the project as we will be constructing a mile of new canal, with two locks and a mooring basin, including routing the canal under the M5 which involves connecting with the River Frome, in order to avoid building a new bridge under the M5. This work will be done using a combination of volunteers and 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors. An ITT is currently being prepared to complete the M5 crossing section of the canal as the intention is to complete this work in 2024.

As reported in the last S&R report there is a funding gap for the project and we now have a phased programme of work which will enable us to deliver the project in line with the funding plan. This approach has been discussed with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and there will be an onsite meeting on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July to review this plan in more detail.

This is the largest NLHF funded project in the south-west and NLHF recognise the strategic importance of this project to the district and the benefits to communities, environment, heritage and economic development. It is expected that NLHF will continue to support the project and provide additional funding, however they need to understand the risks, costs and programme for completing the project.

The £1m additional grant awarded by the S&R Committee in November 2022 has clearly demonstrated the commitment of SDC to the successful completion of this project and this has been recognised by NLHF and the other project partners. These funds will go towards reducing the funding gap.

<b>FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	28 September 2023
<b>REPORT SUBMITTED BY</b>	Chris Mitford-Slade
<b>DATE</b>	29 June 2023