

Centurion Way Feasibility Study - South Downs National Park Authority Application for Coast to Capital LEP Feasibility Fund

Coast to Capital has launched a Feasibility Fund to support feasibility studies from organisations that are unable to fund the upfront investment to develop projects to a business case proposition. Applications will be required to outline how the project they are looking to develop the business case for will deliver economic growth and investment, and address the priorities of Coast to Capital and its Strategic Economic Plan.

The total amount of funding available is £750,000.

The following criteria will apply:

- The project seeking feasibility funds must be in the Coast to Capital area
- The fund is open to public, private and voluntary sector applicants
- The maximum amount of funding available to applicants for feasibility is £75,000
- The expenditure must be able to be capitalised and projects can only do this if, ultimately, the proposed project goes ahead and assets are thus created. By accepting funding, delivery bodies are acknowledging that unless projects proceed within a two year timescale, with funding being capitalised accordingly, then the original sum will have to be returned. By proceed we mean that works on site should have commenced.

Application Process

An open call will be launched on the Coast to Capital website on 2nd December 2016. Applicants will be required to complete a simple application form available from the Coast to Capital website. The application form must be submitted electronically to localgrowthfund@coast2capital.org.uk by 5pm on 6th January 2017. Applications will be acknowledged within 24 hours.

If your application is successful you will be required to enter into a contractual agreement with Coast to Capital and West Sussex County Council, as the Accountable Body for this fund.

Project Name	Centurion Way Shared Use Path – Feasibility Study		
Delivery Body	South Downs National Park Authority		
Main Contact Person	Allison Thorpe, Strategy Lead Access and Recreation		
Contact Email	Allison.thorpe@southdowns.gov.uk	Telephone	01730 819243

Feasibility Costs	£172.5k	LEP Funding Sought (£)	£75k
Total Proposed Investment	£2m is the estimated total cost of the proposed Centurion Way shared use path extension from West Dean to Cocking and the South Downs Way.		

Feasibility Start	Feasibility Completion	Project Start	Project Completion
<i>date from which feasibility expenditure will be incurred</i>	<i>date by which feasibility costs will have been spent</i>	<i>date on which the main project is forecast to start</i>	<i>the date by which the main project will be constructed/implemented</i>
Jan 2017	Nov 2017	August 2018	Dec 2019

Funding Summary (Feasibility Costs Only)				
These are estimated summary costs based on quotations against the tenders issued to date	LEP Funding (a)	Public Match Funding (b) – please state	Private Match Funding (c) Please state	Totals (d)
Economic case	£5,000	£5,000		£10,000
Environmental, structural and ecological surveys and assessments	£39,000	£40,000		£79,000
Design drawings and construction specifications	£20,400	£20,500		£40,900
Ground investigations and Geotechnical Design reports for bridge, ramp to top of railway cutting and cutting stabilisation	£10,600	£11,600		£22,200
Planning application and pre planning submission management		£11,300		£11,300
Production of construction documents and bill of quantities		£9,100		£9,100
Totals	£75,000	£97,500		£172,500

1. Deliverability

1.1 Please describe the project that is being considered for development/implementation. What is the total level of investment proposed in the project if it progresses?

We are seeking funding for feasibility work which will allow us to further develop the Centurion Way shared use path. The path runs along the former Chichester to Midhurst Railway line, which was finally closed to rail traffic in 1991. A shared use path, open to the public, to Lavant was first established in the mid 90's, and in 2015, the SDNPA opened a 2km extension to the route taking it as far as the West Dean Tunnel (SU856124). This most recent extension work was funded through the DfT's Cycle Ambition programme and part of a programme of investment in cycle paths across a number of National Parks. A value for money exercise undertaken by the DfT in 2014, estimated that the overall BCR of investment in the creation of shared use cycle paths in the South Downs was 4.6.¹ This represents significant value for money.

An estimated £2m is required to complete the next 5km of the path which will meet the South Downs Way National Trail at Hill Top, Cocking (SU873166). The map at Appendix 1 shows the existing route, links with other significant paths and the proposed extension route. Appendix 2 contains a selection of images of the most recently completed section.

A contract has been awarded for this first phase of feasibility work and spend of £33k will be achieved by 31st March 2017.

1.2 What research or evidence has been undertaken to demonstrate the need, demand or impact of this project? How has this work been financed? Please attach or provide links to completed studies and impact assessments where available.

The most recently completed section of the Centurion Way included the installation of a cycling/pedestrian counter. Data indicates the path, is well used, with an average of 500 users weekly. The aspiration to extend the path further north is identified in West Sussex County Council's 2016 Walking and Cycling Strategy and in the South Downs National Park Authority's Vision for Cycling. Local cycle fora in Chichester and West Sussex are supportive of the proposals as are Midhurst Area Cycling and local parish councils and other stakeholders in the area.

The proposed path extension connects with the South Downs Way National Trail. Visitor numbers on the trail are in excess of half a million annually. However, as the South Downs Way does not currently link with villages and attractions to the south, opportunities for these locations to benefit from National Trail visitor spend are limited. Connecting Centurion Way with the Trail will open the potential for the destinations along Centurion Way to attract National Trail users and to develop associated businesses including cycle hire and accommodation. The SDNPA [Visitor Accommodation Review](#) (2014) highlights the need to turn high visitor numbers into overnight stays at nearby accommodation. It also underlines the key role of the rural country pub in defining the character of the South Downs.

¹ Value for Money Assessment Cycling Grants, Department for Transport, 2014

A number of case studies across the country show that investing in walking and cycling infrastructure can result in significant economic benefits for local businesses. The link here connects to a Sustrans' case study of the impact of a new shared use bridge in [Worcester](#) and on the Cyclescheme website, examples are given of significant growth in local businesses as a result of new cycling infrastructure in [Devon](#) and Cornwall.

A report commissioned by Coastal West Sussex identifies key markets for tourism in the area including Families and Pre-Nesters and Empty Nesters². Rural tourism, the South Downs National Park and adventure or soft adventure products are identified as particularly important to these visitor segments. The Centurion Way path is a visitor product that would appeal to all of these markets, offering easy access to the South Downs National Park, its visitor attractions and local food and drink opportunities. Walking and Cycling in the National Park is also identified in the report as key offers for the area and growing outdoor activities including walking and cycling is also identified as an area for development.

National cycling charity Sustrans has published a [report](#) identify the role of sustainable transport in boosting local economies³. Cycle Tourism is identified as a growing market worth £1bn annually, with local businesses and employment benefiting from investment in infrastructure. Sustrans also reports that walkers and cyclists spend on average a third more in local businesses when compared with car users.

1.3 What remaining work is required to determine whether the project will proceed or not?

Planning permission for the route between West Dean Tunnel and the South Downs Way remains to be secured. Completing the feasibility work, including the necessary environmental, geotechnical and heritage structure surveys will enable the SDNPA to submit a planning application in November 2017.

2. Project Need

2.1 Why is the project needed in the Coast to Capital area?

This project, when completed, significantly enhances the active tourism offer in the South Downs – something identified as a growth area by a recent study commissioned by Coastal West Sussex⁴. By completing the link (comprising a multi-user route for cyclists, pedestrians) between the Centurion Way and the South Downs Way National Trail (SDW) the project enables a number of circular routes as well as a variety of access/egress points. It also connects SDW users to Chichester rail and bus services thereby creating greater access for communities within the coastal corridor, the urban populations further afield in Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton and the important London market.

² Underground Sussex, Growing the value of tourism in West Sussex, 2016

³ Growth Market: the role of sustainable transport in boosting local economies

⁴ Underground Sussex, Growing the value of tourism in West Sussex, 2016

Further opportunities are created for economic activity by Goodwood, West Dean and Cowdray Estates. The latter is already planning a café and bunkhouse development at the junction of the SDW and the Centurion Way.

There will be significant opportunities to market local food & drink and to develop new enterprises such as cycle hire and low cost accommodation. Hospitality businesses in, and around, West Dean, Singleton and Cocking will also benefit as the case studies referred to in 1.2 above suggest.

The project will also move some cycle (and pedestrian) traffic (between West Dean and Cocking) off road and thus reduce accident rates along the busy A286.

2.2 Please explain how the project will contribute towards the Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan?

From the six headline priorities from the C2C Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) this project delivers against two:

- Developing new opportunity areas; and
- Developing transport infrastructure.

As regards the Sustainable Package (p85) it:

- Improves accessibility to rural areas; and
- Improves road safety.

On the Visitor Economy, the SEP (p118) notes that “the Tourism & Leisure sector accounts for 5,500 businesses and employs 37,000, 4% of the total employment in the LEP region. The visitor economy, especially within the leisure sectors, have low barriers to entry and provide a fertile testing ground for new start-up businesses, some of which have significant fast high-growth potential. Micro/SME ‘lifestyle’ businesses can maintain full-time employment for many.”

On p119, the SEP gives a specific commitment in regards to cycling:

“Cycling: Completing the National Cycling Network, which will connect the South Coast Towns NCN Route 2 from Brighton to Chichester, will be a new tourism resource which will link with north/south cycle routes to Guildford and the South Downs routes.”

This project provides one of these north/south links.

In the Rural Growth section (p156) the SEP highlights that “27% of the C2C population lives in rural areas and around 22% of our businesses are located there. The rural areas contribute significantly to our economic success. The majority of the South Downs National Park (62%) is within our boundaries.”

It continues “the Visitor Economy is very important to Coast to Capital, which is well placed to take advantage of this sector; as well as its extensive natural assets, the LEP area has a mix of leisure and cultural activities, is close to London and has good transport connections.”

The SEP promises “specific initiatives” to “support rural tourism”.

Although the C2C Rural Statement (2015) is primarily aimed at providing a framework for allocation of ESIF monies it also has much to say on the importance of growing rural tourism. At paragraph 12 (p4) it states that “there is scope for development of our rural

business base, and to capitalise further on the economic and social benefits of our natural assets.” At para 58, p15, it notes that “the strong presence of sports-related employment indicates the growing popularity of Coast to Capital as a destination for ‘active tourism’...due to the availability of large amounts of superb countryside in easy reach of London much of it with protected status and/or public access”.

At para 69, p18 it cites active tourism as one of the sub-sectors that “would benefit from strategies and interventions to maximise their potential benefit to the rural economy”.

This application to the C2C Local Growth Fund is the first by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and one of very few that have been rural in nature.

SDNPA is a very small local authority with only 115 FTE staff including a single Tourism Lead and a 0.8 Recreation & Access Lead. It would meet the definition of an SME.

2.3 Please explain what outputs are expected to be delivered from the project?

Key output

- 5 km of cycle path created

Indirect outputs – will include:

- Increase in user numbers on Centurion Way (the recent extension has resulted in an overall increase in users of 11% on the lower sections and on the new path, where there is no historic count data, user numbers are averaging more than 500 per week).
- Increase in overnight stays by visitors using the extended path and other shared use paths.
- Increase in visitor spend in villages along the route. (The average daily expenditure for day visitors is £9.01 but the equivalent figure for those staying overnight is £51.12).
- Potential job creation through tourism business growth or the emergence of new tourism related business associated with the path.
- Increase in levels of physical activity amongst local communities with consequent health benefits in line with the Government’s Cycling and Walking Investment [Strategy](#) objectives.

2.4 Why does the applicant/project team need a Feasibility Grant? What other options have been considered to progress the feasibility and delivery phase?

The SDNPA has a recent track record of successfully delivering sustainable transport projects, including via the DfT’s LSTF and Cycle Ambition funds. These funds have previously included an allowance for feasibility and design work. However, with the current requirement of funders to present ‘shovel ready’ schemes for capital funding applications, the SDNPA needs to secure funds for scheme development in order to access capital funds.

SDNPA is committed to the development of feasibility work for the next phase of Centurion Way and has secured some internal funds to progress this work - this in itself is unusual as the NPA’s limited resources are generally committed to delivery of core activities or as match funding for project delivery where grants have already been secured. The Centurion Way Project, however, has already demonstrated its potential as

a worthwhile investment: the most recently completed section is attracting over 500 users a week and the connectivity offered by the next phase of the route would suggest that the path will bring much needed economic activity to the villages and visitor destinations which will be reached via the new route. Lower sections of the path have also seen an increase in user numbers (11%) since the opening of the new section in 2015.

Funding from C2C LEP will enable the SDNPA to complete all the required feasibility, design work and consents to secure planning permission and enable the Authority to apply for capital funds for the construction phase. The Authority will use internal funds as match funding to support its capital bid and seek additional third party match.

Other options considered:

- Undertake feasibility in house – SDNPA is a small organisation with fewer than 115 FTE. It does not have the staff skills and resources to undertake this type of work.

3. Project Timeline and Milestones

What is the estimated timescale for delivery of the project, post completion of the feasibility phase? Please outline the following steps that have been, or will be, completed to progress delivery

Milestone (amend as necessary)	Forecast Date	Comments
Initial scheme design complete	14/4/17	Includes ground and topographical investigations, structural assessments, heritage, environment, ecology and bat surveys
Detailed design completed	2/6/17	
Feasibility work completed	3/11/17	
Planning Permission submitted	03/11/17	
Match funding secured	1/03/18	Will be in place before procurement process begins.
Procurement process issued	12/03/18	
Procurement contracts Awarded	01/06/18	
Start of construction	1/8/18	
Completion of construction	31/12/19	
Route Open	1/1/20	

Please provide details on any other key work or stages that need to be completed (by when) to ensure delivery

Milestone	Forecast Date	Comments
Funding application to Local Growth Fund	01/12/17	Estimated date based on anticipated future funding calls from C2C

Third Party funding secured	01/12/17	Estimated date based on outcomes of other funding bids and partnership arrangements
Statutory consultations completed	01/09/17	Includes consents from Natural England and other statutory bodies

4. Feasibility Costs

4.1 Please provide a detailed breakdown of the feasibility costs which you are seeking funding towards.

- Development of economic case - £10,000
 - Design and Access Statement - £6,700
 - Geotechnical Design Report - £7,000
 - Specification for ground investigation - £3,600
 - Habitat Survey - £5,000
 - Heritage report - £5,000
 - Detailed planning drawings - £24,000
 - Replacement bridge design - £10,000
 - Arboricultural Impact assessment - £3,300
 - Landscape and Visual Amenity Assessment - £3,500
 - Specification for topographical survey - £1,600
 - Detailed design and construction drawings - £5,700
 - Structural assessments of structures along the route (including bridges and former Station Buildings) - £7,600
 - Specification based on Spec for Highways Works - £4,500
 - Contract documents to NEC3 form of contract - £5,700
 - Bill of Quantities - £3,400
 - Planning application management and pre-app submission work - £11,300
 - EIA screening - £5,800
 - Bat Assessments - £33,500
 - Other protected species assessments - £15,300
- Total Feasibility costs - £172,500**

4.3 How (and when) do you intend to finance the delivery phase of the project if it progresses beyond the feasibility phase?

We intend to seek 85% capital funding as a transport project for construction of the path from C2C Growth Fund. We will also be seeking 15% match from a combination of National Park CIL funding, SDNPA internal funds, local authority partners and philanthropic funding. Subject to funding calls, we anticipate a bid for capital funds in December 2017.

Other potential sources of funding include Heritage Lottery for the restoration of particular heritage features. This would funding would be for specific elements which would enhance the visitor experience along the path but are not essential components of the route.

We estimate that the scheme will be ready to start on site in August 2018.

5. State Aid

5.1 Please provide an explanation of how the project and funding is State Aid compliant.

The project is not revenue generating in itself so State Aid does not apply.

The anticipated outputs and benefits generated are largely indirect – increased visitor spend, increased overnight stays, increased employment in hospitality and tourism businesses etc. The only direct output is construction of a 5km length of cycleway (shared use path) – this will be open to the public at no charge and the National Park Authority will not generate any revenue from its creation.

6. Declaration

I declare that I have the authority to represent **South Downs National Park Authority** in making this application. I understand that acceptance of this Application does not in any way signify that the project is eligible for future Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership support or that LEP Funds have been approved towards it.

On behalf of **South Downs National Park Authority** and having carried out full and proper due diligence, I confirm to Coast to Capital:

- **South Downs National Park Authority** has the legal authority to carry out the project; and
- That the information provided in this application is accurate.
-

I confirm to Coast to Capital:

- I understand that should the project not commence within two years and by this we mean that works on site should have commenced, that the expenditure will not be capitalised and the original sum provided from this feasibility fund will be returned to Coast to Capital.
- That I shall inform Coast to Capital if, prior to any LEP Funds being legally committed to **South Downs National Park Authority** I become aware of any further information which might reasonably be considered as material to the LEP in deciding whether to fund the application.
- I am aware that if the information given in this application turns out to be false or misleading Coast to Capital may demand the repayment of funding and/or terminate a funding agreement pertaining to this Application.
- All relevant documents are retained with a view to providing relevant information in the event of an audit or other investigation


I am aware that **South Downs National Park Authority** commences any project activity, or enters any legal contracts or makes any binding commitments, for which LEP funding is sought, that this expenditure is incurred at its own risk.

Signed*SEE SIGNATURE BELOW*.....For and on
behalf of the Applicant Organisation

Name ALAN BROUGH, HEAD OF BUSINESS SERVICES. Date: ...5/1/2017

7. Next Steps

Please email the completed version of this form by 5pm on 6th January 2017 to localgrowthfund@coast2capital.org.uk Your email will be acknowledged within 24 hours.

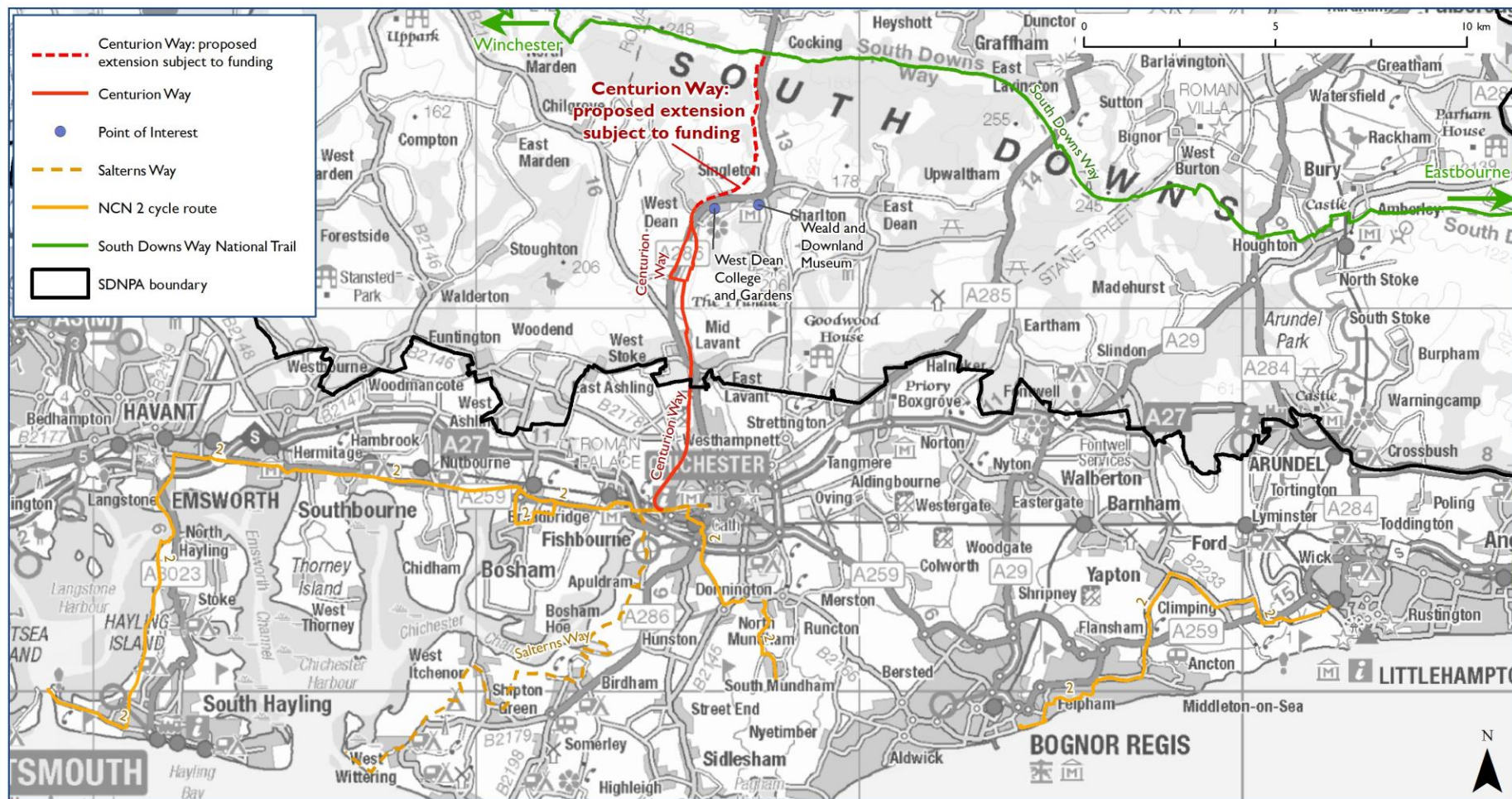
Signed.....For and on
behalf of the Applicant Organisation

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) *ALAN BROUGH* Date: *5/1/2017*
.....

7. Next Steps

Please email the completed version of this form by 5pm on 6th January 2017 to localgrowthfund@coast2capital.org.uk Your email will be acknowledged within 24 hours.

Appendix I: Centurion Way and Connecting Routes



Appendix 2: Centurion Way Images



Centurion Way extension summer 2016



Left: New Path opened December 2015

Below: Same section of disused railway line path, pre-construction 2014

