

Report title: EU Horizon 2020 Bid – Nature based Solutions

Wards affected: Knowle Ward

Strategic Director: Barra Mac Ruairi

Report Author: Patrick Goodey, Flood Risk Manager

RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor’s approval:

To seek approval for officers to submit a bid to the European Union (EU) Horizon 2020 initiative, which has the potential (if BCC are successful) to commit the Council to spend over £1.5m of EU grant funding to deliver natural based solutions to water and flood risk management in the Knowle Park area of Bristol. Approval also sought to commence the project, should the bid be successful.

Key background / detail:

1. Bristol, as one of the top 10 cities in the country at risk from surface water flooding, has identified, via our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, sustainable drainage (SuDS) and green infrastructure as a substantial method to mitigate this risk, deliver improved urban realm and place making. SuDS align with the aspirations of the European Green Capital and 100 Resilient Cities initiatives.
2. Bristol City Council (primarily Flood Team, Neighbourhoods and Sustainable City teams) has identified an opportunity to work with city partners (UWE, Avon Wildlife Trust, Local Nature Partnership and Wessex Water) and partner cities Utrecht and Bologna to deliver nature based solutions in the form of SuDS to flood risk issues in Knowle Park. Team and city partner roles have been clarified during the bid stage.
3. The opportunity is a bid for EU grant funding under the Horizon 2020 initiative. The EC has confirmed we are eligible for this funding, despite the EU referendum result. BCC will bid for up to £1.5m to fund construction of SuDS as well as reimburse staff time on the project. The project is 100% grant funded, no match funding would be required.
4. The project would have a strong community engagement and internal BCC policy focus to identify mechanisms to incentivise and encourage the uptake of smaller scale SuDS.
5. Whilst alternative maintenance arrangements are to be investigated as part of the project, it is likely that future maintenance of any features would be undertaken by BCC Neighbourhoods teams. Such maintenance could have ongoing resource pressures (in the region of £150k-£200k across a 15-20 year period) and as a result, the BCC Flood Team and Wessex Water have made a commitment in principle to provide a significant contribution (in the region of £120k-£150k) to meet these pressures.