



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 11 th June 2019
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<u>Item</u> 7

WATER ENVIRONMENT GRANT 'TEME-ONNY-CLUN' PROJECT

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Summary

This paper provides some background on the new joint 'Teme-Onny- Clun' project between the AONB Partnership and the Severn Rivers Trust. Mike Morris, CEO of the Severn Rivers Trust will speak on this agenda item at the meeting.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

Background

With support of the Severn Rivers Trust, the AONB Partnership made in 2018 an application to the government's new Water Environment Grant scheme. Through Shropshire Council as accountable body, the Partnership was well placed to be the applicant and bankroll the project, while the Rivers Trust initiated the project proposal, prepared the application, and is key to its delivery.

The project summary is as follows:

The River Teme SSSI and River Clun SAC are two of the most important river sub-catchments within the Severn River Basin. Their designations highlight their national and international importance. The River Teme assessment is that it is in 'Unfavourable – No Change' condition. The River Clun assessment highlights that it is 'Unfavourable – Declining'. The most significant pressures on these catchments relate to unsustainable land management and overall integrated catchment management. Particular issues include siltation and agricultural diffuse pollution, and modification of the flood plain. The Springs of Rivers Teme-Onny-Clun project, part of the Teme Partnership, will be delivered by the AONB Partnership and Severn Rivers Trust (both with a proven track record and experienced), and will focus on resolving the causes of failure to reach favourable condition, namely management impacts on water quality and high priority habitat. The project will work with land managers to ensure a sustainable future for farming in the catchment by following the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) and Working with Natural Processes. The actions and their results will be through the production of 200 whole land holding plans with SMART objectives to ensure those engaged in the project are able to secure agri-environment support now and/or in the future, post-Brexit. The advice provided per land holding will be focussed on landscape restoration at a catchment scale to work towards water

quality improvements, restoring natural hydrological units, priority habitats and soil management that will benefit the designated status of each river and ensure no degradation in WFD status.

The project focuses on three areas of the Teme catchment – the Upper Teme, the Clun catchment and the Onny catchment. The main objectives are:

- 200 landowners from across the three main target areas will be provided best practice advice to issues identified within the SSSI/SAC diffuse water pollution plan and to any WFD reason for failure.
- Four high quality and well attended (approx. 50 attendees) workshops will be held across the area
- 200 landowners will have a land holding plan with SMART objectives that signposts to funding opportunities (e.g. CSF), focuses on water quality improvements, soil management, organic matter testing and natural capital through the Sustainable Management of Natural resources and/or Working with Natural Processes improvements from the holding.

The Severn Rivers Trust will employ three Farm Advisers (2.5 Full Time Equivalent) for the project. One of these, for the Clun catchment, will be located with the AONB team in Craven Arms, to maximise synergies with our other work in that area.

List of Background Papers
Background on Water Environment Grant https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-environment-grant-weg-handbooks-guidance-and-forms/guide-for-applicants-water-environment-grant .
Human Rights Act Appraisal
The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environmental Appraisal
The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
Risk Management Appraisal
Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
Community / Consultations Appraisal
The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.
Appendices
None