

## **Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the Environment**

Meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011

### **Part I - Item No. 7**

Electoral Division affected:  
Rossendale

### **Adrenaline Gateway / Lee Quarry Mountain bike trails, Rossendale**

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#### **Executive Summary**

The Adrenaline Gateway is a visitor/sporting destination programme initially conceived for Pennine Lancashire but capable of expansion across the County, aimed at growing visitor numbers exponentially by increasing the scope of, and participation in the outdoor lifestyle sports sector. The Programme currently comprises two main areas of activity.

The first takes the form of co-ordinating private and public sector activities to transform the size, value and economic impact of both the outdoor lifestyle sports sector and the visitor economy via planned investment in new infrastructure and compelling events.

The second is largely built upon the new infrastructure delivered by the first and is likely to comprise a destination management service, based on a strong brand and events strategy, that brings together, promotes and provides easy access to the outdoor lifestyle sports sector.

This report outlines for the Committee the progress made in these two areas of work and the County Council's input.

#### **Recommendation**

The Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the Environment is asked to note the principal aims and objectives of the Programme along with the significant progress that has been made to implement it.

#### **Background and Advice**

The original Concept and Feasibility Study for the Adrenaline Gateway Programme was undertaken during 2005/06 by Tribal Consulting, and included a delivery plan based upon a range of funding scenarios. The Study was funded as follows Lancashire County Developments Limited (LCDL) £50,000, Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) £37,500, and the Environment Directorate £10,000. The concept was based on the physical development of a range of facilities in Pennine Lancashire

including Lee Quarry near Bacup to tap in to the growing "adrenaline sports" market and encourage a diversification in the local economy of the area.

The original delivery model was based upon a "big bang" investment whereby the Programme would have been delivered by way of a significant capital investment through the bidding process for the Peoples Millions. The Programme proceeded through the long listing and assessment stages but did not make the final short list. The assessor's feedback was not critical of the Programme; the reason for it not proceeding was that in comparison with funded schemes, the Adrenaline Gateway was 'younger' and therefore less well advanced through the project management lifecycle. By way of example, successful applications included the Eden Project and the Natural History Museum. Although the Programme Team was disappointed at not proceeding, the feedback provided by the Assessors encouraged the Team to reconfigure and deliver the programme on an incremental basis. Due to funding constraints the delivery model has been based upon a combination of the funding available and the optimum delivery mix of projects.

Delivery so far has concentrated on the development of the mountain biking facility at Lee Quarry near Bacup, in a number of phases as an initial anchor for the overall programme, This work has been linked to the Valley of Stone Project and the ongoing development of public art in the area linked to the Irwell Sculpture Trail, all of which have received support from the County and Borough Councils in securing external funding.

This incremental approach to delivery has enabled comprehensive and ongoing integrity tests of the design and quality of construction which has been a key factor in de-risking the works and ensuring the final product is attractive to users. Should the existing pace of delivery be maintained, by the end of this year (2011), the trade press and National Cross Country Coaches are of the view that the quality and quantity of the new infrastructure provided will be capable of rivalling anything in the Country.

The mountain biking aspect of the Programme also owes some of its origins to the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan which identified a lack of suitable provision for mountain bikers (now a very large and growing user group) across Lancashire. As a consequence, the Programme is making a significant contribution to the place making/shaping agenda and the destination/leisure agenda in the East of the County.

In order to test the quality of the designs and structural integrity of the construction, the Programme Team arranged a competitive 'Test Event' on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of July, 2008. A key element of the weekend was obtaining written feedback from competitors. Although the event was not publicised it (the event) attracted competitors from across the length and breadth of the Country, with visitor numbers in excess of 700. The event along with the trails and trials areas it was based upon received critical acclaim in the 'trade press'.

A group of local mountain bike enthusiasts have established the Brownbacks Club which is running a series of Cross Country races in Lee Quarry. These short circuit races follow the same format as the Olympic cross country races and have proved to

be very popular with beginners through to serious athletes. So far there have been over 15 races each one attracting over 100 riders.

Rossendale Road Club has recently formed a youth mountain bike section which is offering coaching to young people from the area every Saturday morning. Even throughout the winter this has had an average of 12 riders each morning.

The site has also developed excellent links with British Cycling and their Olympic Academy which has been using the site twice a week during the winter for training. This gives the County Council access to some world class athletes and in turn allows them to have access to an excellent training facility. Some of the construction work currently being delivered is based on requests from British Cycling. The link with British Cycling will also result in the County Council having the opportunity to host a number of National Race School events on the site where young people from all over Great Britain are selected by British Cycling coaches to attend for specialist training. In return for the County Council providing the venue there will be the opportunity for a limited number of the young people from the Rossendale club to take part in these events.

The site is also increasingly being used by colleges and youth groups and it is increasingly common to see minibuses from, for example Salford or Burnley on site with instructors to spend a day in the quarry cycling.

In addition to Olympic athletes developing their skills in the area, a number of businesses/organisations have started to use the site to train adults to develop their mountain bike skills. This is helpful for the County Council as it is assisting in building the reputation for quality and innovation along with the opportunity to pass on information to riders about access and countryside issues.

The mountain bike trails have also created links in to the local bridleway network including the construction of over 2km of new bridleway and the upgrade from footpath to bridleway of a further 4km. When viewed in isolation these are relatively short sections however they form valuable "missing links" allowing horse riders and cyclists to link in to the Pennine Bridleway. Along with the bridleway construction, habitat restoration has also been undertaken including works on Brandwood Lower End Moor, which has halted and repaired damage to the peat bog, restoring a valuable "carbon sink".

This year will see the third annual Singletrack Weekender event to be held in Lee Quarry. This is a small but growing event which in 2009 was voted the 15<sup>th</sup> best mountain bike event in the world by IMTTO (International Mountain-bike Trade Team Organisation) beating many large budget events. This year, 2011, the event has attracted Shimano (the world's biggest cycle parts manufacturer) as the event sponsor.

Local mountain bike manufacturing companies, for example Hope and Orange have been using the site for product testing and development. This enables the County Council to support local business in return for significant and otherwise costly publicity and access to world level riders.

One of the biggest impacts of the project though has been on local young people during the school holidays and summer evenings. The site is now heavily used by local young people increasing their levels of health and fitness and occasionally having the opportunity to ride alongside a world class rider they would a couple of years ago only have seen in a magazine or on video.

The Programme Team is in the process of preparing a framework to help guide and govern the terms upon which sponsorship may be both sought and accepted.

### **Consultations**

N/A

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

The scheme was originally managed by a Project Team comprising representatives from LCC/LCDL, Rossendale, Ribble Valley and Pendle Borough Councils, Rossendale Leisure Trust and Lancashire Sport; and chaired by the then Chief Executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust. Following the departure of the Chief Executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust for a post elsewhere in July 2009 LCDL's Programme Manager (Physical Regeneration) has chaired the Project Team.

In the context of the diversity and complexity of the Programme, the projects brought together within a structured Programme Management framework which coordinates, aligns, manages, and controls the activities involved. The approach has delivered significant focus on delivery, risk and performance management.

### **Financial**

The development of the new facilities has been financed with grants secured from external bodies which have been used to maximise the benefits which can be obtained from existing County Council budgets, for example for the maintenance of rights of way and intellectual capital. Thus achieving significantly greater output than would be achieved through the investment of the County Council's very limited resources alone.

### **Any representations made to the Cabinet Committee prior to the issue being considered in accordance with the Public Notice of Forward Plans**

Name:	Organisation:	Comments:
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N/A

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985  
List of Background Papers**

Paper Date Contact/Directorate/Tel

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A