
RIVER CROUCH COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for Rochford District Council (RDC) to assume the secretariat role for the River Crouch Coastal Community Team (CCT) and the Accountable Body role for the Coastal Community Fund.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Maldon District Council (MDC) is currently the Accountable Body for the Coastal Community Fund monies. MDC is also responsible for performing the secretariat function to support the CCT. A small grant of £10,000 was awarded by DCLG for the establishment of the CCT in 2015, of which £1,556 remains. Activities carried out by the CCT since that time include production of an Economic Plan, production of leaflet promoting the River Crouch to visitors, signage on the Burnham side of the river; and a Cycle Feasibility Study on the Rochford side.
- 2.2 MDC intends to resign its secretariat and accountable body roles and has requested that RDC takes on these functions. MDC has expressed a desire to continue to participate in the CCT as a member.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The CCT was set up and operated as a result of a successful bid by MDC, in partnership with the Council, in June 2015 to the (then) DCLG Great British Coast Fund, which later evolved into the Coastal Community Fund.
- 3.2 The CCT comprises members of the public, private and voluntary sectors, ensuring that it represents a broad range of interests across the area. The Council has been a founding member of the CCT and currently the following Members attend (although not necessarily as representatives of the Council): Cllr Mrs D Hoy, Cllr M Hoy, Cllr G J Ioannou, Cllr Mrs J R Lumley and Cllr T G Cutmore.
- 3.3 The CCT has been working towards tangible deliverables which improve the local economy of the River Crouch area:
- Creation of an Economic Plan (which can be found here at https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/business_rivercroucheconomicplan_2.pdf)
 - Commission of a Cycle Feasibility Study, as mentioned above, to connect Rochford and Rayleigh train stations to the coast and Wallasea Wild Coast project;
 - Provision of feedback to Natural England on the Coastal Path Project;

- production and distribution of the “Beauty of the River Crouch” leaflet https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/leisure_canewdonpromo_0.pdf

Opportunity

- 3.4 If the Council agrees to take on the role vacated by MDC, then this is an opportunity for the Council to work more strategically across the district and its important coastal areas. The CCT engages with all groups and organisations that have an interest in the economic well-being of the coastal area, including closer working with the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP). This will support the Council’s economic growth strategy and its emerging approach to tourism.
- 3.5 A grant of £663,565 has been awarded from the most recent round of Government’s Coastal Communities Fund to Essex County Council, which will support the ‘Path to Prosperity Project’. A further £261,331 in cash match funding will be financed by Essex County Council and other project partners. This initiative aims to raise awareness of the county’s coastline as a high quality visitor destination, including the stunning RSPB Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project. The ‘Path to Prosperity Project’ is designed to act as a catalyst for economic growth and regeneration, creating 277 jobs while also converting 20 apprenticeship posts to 15 direct jobs. The funding will also help to target businesses along the coastal path with commercial support. The CCT will be a significant stakeholder in this project.
- 3.6 The current Chair of the CCT is Dean Border, Managing Director of Baltic Distribution Ltd and Bergs Shipping Ltd, and he is keen to review the Terms of Reference for the CCT to enable the CCT to refresh its work, its membership and its focus plus apply for new sources of funding to support the coastal communities of the district.

Governance

- 3.7 If the Council agrees to take on the role vacated by MDC, then the CCT should be added to the list of outside bodies on which Members represent the Council. The numbers and identity of such Members will follow the existing representation, pending any changes which may be agreed by the CCT in future, namely Cllr Mrs J R Lumley and Cllr G J Ioannou (as Portfolio Holder).
- 3.8 MCHLG has confirmed that it is happy that the accountable body status for the remaining grant be transferred from MDC to RDC. RDC will keep the residual balance of grant ringfenced for the purposes of supporting the CCT and will monitor and report on its use to the CCT.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If the Council does not take over the role, then MDC will disband the CCT and amalgamate it with the Maldon and River Blackwater Coastal Community

Team. This will leave the district's River Crouch community under-represented and dilute its impact on coastal economic development.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 RDC will perform the secretariat and accountable body functions within existing resources. There is a small amount of residual grant monies totalling £1,556 which will transfer to RDC to support any administration costs.
- 5.2 Any projects/programmes of work proposed by the CCT will be subject to a business case being agreed setting out the funding arrangements, including any resource requirements from individual partners. There are no outstanding commitments/contracts being transferred to RDC under the proposed arrangement.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) indicates that the proposal in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

To assume the secretariat role for the River Crouch Coastal Community Team and to be the Accountable Body for the Coastal Community Team Fund.



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Background Papers:-

None.

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.