



Rural Development Programme for England (2014 – 2020)

RDPE Growth Programme

Full Application Form

Please read the guidance on 'How to complete a full application' carefully before completing this form

Key things to remember:

- To submit a full application you must first have received the formal notification that your Expression of Interest (EOI) has been endorsed.
- **Your business will need to be registered with the Rural Payments Agency** and have a Single Business Identifier (SBI) number.
- Send the completed full application to us by email along with the completed appendix spreadsheet. We cannot accept scanned copies or PDF versions of these forms.
- Send a signed hard copy of the application form to your named contact at the address set out in the email notifying you that your EOI had been endorsed.
- You must submit all applicable supporting documents as set out at the back of this form. You can submit these electronically or in hard copy format.
- Complete all sections below.

Section 1. LEP identification details

1.1	DORA reference number	
1.2	LEP area	C2C
1.3	Call reference number	04RD17TO0004
1.4	Type of grant	Rural tourism infrastructure

Section 2. Applicant details

Please provide the details of the business or organisation applying for the grant. The applicant is normally the owner, a director or partner named in the business accounts.

2.1	Name of business/organisation	West Sussex County Council
2.2	Single Business Identifier (SBI – 9 characters)	110118071
2.3	Business/organisation address, including postcode	County Hall, West St., Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RG
2.4	Applicant name (Title, first name, surname)	Mr Matt Davey
2.5	Role in business/organisation	Director of Highways and Transport
2.6	Applicant email address	Jess.winkworth@westsussex.gov.uk
2.7	Applicant mobile telephone number	07927 906675
2.8	Business/organisation telephone number	033022 22955
2.9	Have there been any changes to the applicant/business details since the expression of interest (EOI)? (If 'No', proceed to question 2.10)	Yes
2.9a	If 'Yes' please explain below what they are and why they have occurred:	
2.10	Is the applicant business linked to any other business through shared ownership or control? (if 'No', proceed to question 2.11)	No
2.10a	If 'Yes', provide details of the linked business(es) including employee numbers and the most recent turnover and net assets figures: (you must provide latest financial accounts for all linked businesses)	
2.11	Is the applicant business a member of a Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation (PO)? (if 'No', proceed to question 2.12)	No
2.11a	If 'Yes', please provide the name of the PO: (Please note that if the applicant business is a member of a PO under the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Aid Scheme, it cannot receive a Growth Programme grant towards any items that are also being funded by the PO)	

2.12	Have any of the business principals been:	
	disqualified as a director?	No
	listed on the individual insolvency register?	No
	subject to bankruptcy proceedings?	No
	subject to a county court judgement?	No
2.12a	If 'Yes' to any of the above, please provide details:	

Section 3. Agent details

3.1	<p>Have you used an agent, consultant or business manager to complete this application?</p> <p>If 'Yes', and you would like us to discuss the application with them on your behalf, please complete sections 3.2 to 3.7 below.</p> <p>If 'No', please continue to Section 4.</p>	No
3.2	Name (Title, first name, surname)	
3.3	Agent's business name	
3.4	Agent's address, including postcode	
3.5	Contact email address	
3.6	Contact mobile phone number	
3.7	Contact landline phone number	

Section 4. Project overview

4.1	Project name	Downs Link – Connecting Communities																																
4.2	<p>If the project is located at a different address to that at question 2.3 please give the location details, including postcode.</p>	<p>The project is located at different sections along the Downs Link route in West Sussex. As this is a rural area, postcodes represent the nearest buildings along the Downs Link route, so may be adjacent to or a distance from the Downs Link.</p> <p>North, middle and south sectional postcodes are:</p> <table data-bbox="794 371 1513 779"> <tr> <td>Area 1 Rudgwick to Slinfold</td> <td>RH12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3HZ RH12 3BU RH13 0RB</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Area 2 Copsale – West Grinstead</td> <td>RH13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6QY RH13 8LX RH13 8LU</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Area 3 West Grinstead</td> <td>RH13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8LY RH13 8ED RH13 8ED</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Area 4 Partridge Green</td> <td>RH13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8ED RH13 8JT RH13 8JN</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Area 5 Henfield Car Park</td> <td>BN5 9PP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BN5 9PR BN5 9PJ</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Please find below the co-ordinates for the interpretation boards:</p> <table data-bbox="794 922 1276 1196"> <tr> <td>Rudgwick</td> <td>TQ08563340</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slinfold</td> <td>TQ11363099</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Southwater</td> <td>TQ15742623</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Copsale</td> <td>TQ17072486</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Henfield</td> <td>TQ20601618</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Grinstead</td> <td>TQ18402258</td> </tr> </table> <p>As part of the whole project match-funding, a section of the Downs Link at Christs Hospital will be fully funded by S106 monies and the Annual Delivery Programme blocked-funded from the DfT.</p> <p>Please see Appendix A for postcodes and maps.</p>	Area 1 Rudgwick to Slinfold	RH12	3HZ RH12 3BU RH13 0RB		Area 2 Copsale – West Grinstead	RH13	6QY RH13 8LX RH13 8LU		Area 3 West Grinstead	RH13	8LY RH13 8ED RH13 8ED		Area 4 Partridge Green	RH13	8ED RH13 8JT RH13 8JN		Area 5 Henfield Car Park	BN5 9PP	BN5 9PR BN5 9PJ		Rudgwick	TQ08563340	Slinfold	TQ11363099	Southwater	TQ15742623	Copsale	TQ17072486	Henfield	TQ20601618	West Grinstead	TQ18402258
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4.3	Describe the background to your business, how it has developed and how the need for the project has been identified:																																	

As the local authority, West Sussex County Council has a duty to maintain the Public Right of Way that runs along the Downs Link. However, the Downs Link is a promoted route and is such a popular route the Council would like to upgrade the surface so that it can be used year-round by a number of different user groups. Currently, the majority of the Downs Link has a rough surface and the clay soil tends to develop ruts and other surface defects which harden in summer and become water-logged and clogged with soil and leaf detritus in winter. Whilst this might be acceptable in terms of the Council meeting its duty, it does not meet the desire for the route to be an all-purpose path used by all.

The sections included in this application are particularly badly affected parts of the Downs Link that are not up to the standard that local users and visitors expect, especially as it is a promoted route and connects with other long-distance routes such as the North Downs Way, South Downs Way, Wey South Path, Greensand Way, Sussex Border Path and National Cycle Network routes 2 and 22.

The County Council has previously been approached by cycle groups who want the route to be improved for road bike use, as this is not currently possible on all of the route and acts as a deterrent. Improvements to address these issues and ensure a smoother, more consistent and properly cambered surface for drainage would provide a route for visitors and residents to enjoy all year round that could be used by all ages and abilities. As well as receiving representations from cycle groups the Council has carried out its own research via online which indicate that there is strong demand for an improved route which would greatly increase usage and extend take up across a broader range of users e.g. families.

As a result of this, the Council has developed this project to respond to the user demands. Once the improvements have been carried out, the Council will maintain the improved route.

4.4	Provide a short summary of the project: (This should include details of what the project is, what it will do and what it is aiming to achieve) (500 words)
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This project will upgrade the quality and accessibility of the Downs Link track to enable a wide range of visitor user groups, including families, the disabled, older age groups and less confident walkers, cyclists and horse riders, to use it along its length and throughout the year. At the moment, at certain times of year, large sections of the track are inaccessible to all but the most determined users. Through the provision of a smoother, consistent, properly cambered surface of sufficient width along the Downs Link in West Sussex, this will be rectified and the route will be enhanced, greatly increasing its marketability and usage and enabling it to be promoted more widely. The project will help to increase visitor numbers and extend the season. This will benefit not only nearby visitor economy businesses but also the wider visitor economy. Through links to other tracks and countryside, it will help to put our area on the map as a destination for active tourism.

The project will enable the following upgrades and improvements to the existing route. Works include surface clearance, excavating ditches, infilling, surfacing re-graded area with sub-base course, base course and top dressing, with surface laid to camber.

Area 1: Rudgewick – Slinfold

1,330m resurfacing and smooth consistent path to improve access from the villages and amenities and links to other bridleways.

Area 2: Nuthurst FP1815 and West Grinstead south end of tunnel

Resurface and improve 1700m section to improve access at West Grinstead hub and link to rural villages and local economy.

Area 3: West Grinstead tunnel and Needs Bridge

Resurface 1800m of Downs Link, DDA complaint style ramp to meet bridge and to be flush with

bridge edges.

Area 4: Needs Bridge West Grinstead and B2125

Resurfacing 2,000m and DDA compliant style ramp to meet bridge and to be flush with bridge edges.

Area 5: Henfield Car Park

Car park repairs and resurfacing 300m of Downs Link, remove bollards and replace with post and fence rail, to provide access for disabled and link to Henfield Village and route (96)

Christ's Hospital

This section has been identified as a missing gap along the Downs Link route and WSCC will provide the match-funding that will address this, completing the section to an all-weather standard compatible with the other project areas.

Section 5. Project costs, funding and quotes

5.1	Total grant funded expenditure (£) net of VAT (unless VAT is non recoverable)	£ 916,914.20
5.2	Total grant funding sought (£)	£ 611,914.20
5.2a	Grant intervention rate requested (%)	66.74%
5.3	Private match funding (£)	£ 305,000.00
5.4	Total non-grant funded expenditure (£) net of VAT (unless VAT is non recoverable)	£ 32,400.00
5.5	Please detail the sources of your project funding and provide confirmation that this is in place to start the project: (You must provide evidence of all of the funding you have identified including funding for any non-grant funded expenditure)	

Match-funding: £305,000.00

Made up of £292,771.00 from Section 106 funding
£ 12,229.00 Annual Delivery Programme block DFT funding

Total: £305,000.00

Explanation of Match Funding sources

Section 106 developer contributions were approved in the Highways and Transport Integrated Forward Works Annual Delivery Programme 2018/19 and are available for this scheme. A summary of the contributions and reference to the previous approval for the S106 (appendix 2b lists the scheme on page 2 scheme no 6008895) are attached.

Funding from the Annual Delivery Programme, block funding from the DfT, will make up the match-funding balance of £12,229.

Non Grant Funding £32,400

Funding for the visitor counters will be covered by internal department budget allocations. The Business Training element will be delivered by Experience West Sussex, a West Sussex local authority partnership tourism initiative, established in 2015 and funded by pooled business rates.

5.6	If you have included irrecoverable VAT within your project costs and grant request please explain why: (You must provide evidence of your VAT status)
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See Annex

5.7	If you have provided less than 3 quotes/references to catalogue listings/tenders for any of the project costs, please explain why and how you have assessed value for money:
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5.8	Do you or your business have any connection or association with any of the businesses providing quotes on the project costs? (If 'No', proceed to question 5.9)	No
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5.8a	If 'Yes', please identify the supplier and explain the association:
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5.9	Do you intend to purchase any of the project items second hand? (If 'No', proceed to question 5.10)	No
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5.9a	If 'Yes', please provide details and explain why you consider this to be appropriate: (You must provide a declaration from the supplier of the second hand item)
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5.10	Have there been any changes to the project details since the expression of interest (EOI)? (If 'No', proceed to question 6.1)	select the answer
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5.10a	If 'yes' please explain below what they are and why they have occurred:
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There has been an overall increase in the project costs but the amount of match funding from WSCC has also increased.

	EOI £s	Full Bid £s
Total project costs	798,300.00	
Total grant funded project costs	465,800.00	916,914.20
Total grant requested	372,640.00	611,914.20
Match funding	93,160	305,000.00
Intervention rate	80%	66.73%

Justification

This is because all surfacing works have now been designed and the scopes adjusted to enable delivery on the ground in the most practical way, for example surfacing between points that would make sense to users and were recorded as in most need of repair in asset surveys.

Detailed explanation

Following scoping adjustment and detailed specification, a number of changes have therefore taken place since EOI stage. The newly defined areas of works are set out in the first column of the table below to provide a key to the changes described and the differences in amounts set out in Table B.

Full Bid: New area descriptions	Relationship to EOI area descriptions
Area 1 - Rudgwick – Slinfold	B Rudgwick to Slinfold
Area 2 - Copsale – West Grinstead	A, D and E
Area 3 - West Grinstead – Needs Bridge	A, D and E
Area 4 - Needs Bridge to Partridge Green	New section of Downs Link
Area 5 - Henfield Car Park	F
Information Boards and Fingerposts	G
Christ's Hospital	C

Table A: Changes to area descriptions between EOI and Full Bid

Specifically, the changes to the schemes are;

1. The work between Rudgwick and Slinfold (originally B in the EOI) is now included as Area 1
2. The work in and around West Grinstead originally A, D and E in the EOI) has been separated into 2 sections: Area 2 and Area 3
3. The work at Christ's hospital (originally C in the EOI) is now being fully funded by WSCC as the bid's overall match funding contribution of £305,000 or 33.27%.
4. This increases our match funding overall from 20% to 30%. The scheme is currently being designed again after some feedback on the original designs, so it has not been possible to obtain three quotes. The works are anticipated to cost in the region of £305,000 but any additional funding needed for this element of the project would be provided by WSCC. We therefore do not believe the three quotes are necessary for the bid.
5. The work at Henfield (F) has been focused around the car park to provide better access facilities onto the Downs Link itself.
6. The interpretation boards and fingerposts elements have not changed (G)
7. A new area of surfacing (4) has been included in the bid as it is an area where access is as difficult as the 3 other stretches in the bid. To not improve this area would appear strange to users and the increase in our match contribution hopefully justifies its inclusion.

The costs of the schemes have increased as we have now been able to develop full specifications on site and the obtain quotes from contractors.

EOI Area	Works	EOI project costs	Full Bid area	Full Bid project costs	Difference £s +/-
B	Rudgwick to Slinfold	£87,000.00	Area 1	£87,403.80	
	<i>Sub Total EOI Area B</i>	<i>£87,000</i>	<i>Sub Total Full Bid</i>	<i>£87,403.80</i>	<i>£0.00</i>
A	West Grinstead resurfacing of land at station	£45,000.00	Areas 2 & 3	Area 2. £124,726.49 Area 3. £159,044.78	
D	West Grinstead station to Copsale	£157,800.00	Area 2 & 3		
E	West Grinstead: Resurface and widen 250m of Downs Link, to provide access for all & link to café	£12,000.00	Area 2 & 3		
	<i>Sub Total EOI Areas A,D and E</i>	<i>£214,800</i>	<i>SubTotal Full Bid Areas 2 & 3</i>	<i>£283,771.27</i>	<i>+£68,971.27</i>

N/A	Needs Bridge to Partridge Green	£0.00	Area 4 (new)	£172,671.40	
	<i>Sub Total EOI</i>	£0.00	<i>Sub Total Full Bid</i>	£172,671.40	+£172,671.40
F	Henfield improve surface to provide access for disabled and link to Henfield Village and other route (96)	£16,000.00	Area 5	£42,805.73	
	<i>Sub Total EOI Area F</i>	£16,000.00	<i>SubTotal Full Bid Area 5</i>	£42,805.73	+£26,805.73
G	New interpretation boards and mile markers	£20,000.00	Info boards and finger posts	£9,125.00 £16,137.00	
	<i>Sub Total EOI Area G</i>	£20,000.00	<i>SubTotal Full Bid: info boards & finger posts</i>	£25,262.00	+£5,262.00
C	Section at Christ's Hospital and from Christ's Hospital to College Farm	£128,000.00	Christ's Hospital	£0.00 (Cost = £305,000.00 Paid for by WSCC Match)	
	<i>Sub Total EOI Area C</i>	£128,000.00	<i>SubTotal Christ's Hospital Full Bid:</i>	£305,000.00 Funded WSCC Match	+£177,000
	Total project costs EOI	£465,800	Total project costs Full bid	£916,914.20	+£451,114.20

Table C: changes in funding from EOI to full bid stage

Section 6. Other funding

6.1	Have you or the applicant business applied for or received any public sector or European funds since the EOI was submitted? (if 'No', proceed to section 7)	No			
6.1a	If 'Yes', please complete the table below:				
Source of funding	Was/is this De minimis?	Details of the project funded or applied for	Amount of funding (£)	Date of funding award or expected decision	End date of project (if applicable)

Section 7. Permissions and licences

7.1	Will the project take place on rented / leased / tenanted land or premises? (If 'Yes', refer to the guidance and provide the required documents)	No
7.2	Is planning permission required for the project? (if 'Yes', you must provide a copy of the full planning consent with your application) (if 'No', proceed to question 7.2a)	No
7.2a	If the project involves building work or change of use of existing buildings please explain why planning permission is not required: (you must provide evidence of this)	
<p>The following sections of the Highways Act give the local authority the right to the enter onto Public Rights of Way and complete surfacing work without having to seek permission.</p> <p>HA80s291 (Powers of entry of highway authority for purpose of maintaining, etc. certain structures and works) gives the necessary authority to access land.</p> <p>We have a duty to maintain existing highways (HA80s41) and powers to improve (HA80s62).</p> <p>Please see Appendix B for</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HA80s291 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/291 2. HA80s41 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/41 3. HA80s62 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/62 		
7.2b	Please list any other permissions or licences that are required for your project and when they will be obtained:	
Permission / Licence Required		Date due to be obtained

Section 8. Selection criteria

The answers you give in this section will help us to determine whether or not your application is successful. The 'How to complete a full application' document contains specific guidance on each question below and explains what we expect your answer to contain.

8.1	Strategic fit and priorities
8.1.1 Fit with national priorities	
Explain how the project meets the national priorities for funding set out in the RDPE Growth Programme handbook:	
<p>8.1.1.1. Create jobs</p> <p>The project will create no new jobs at West Sussex County Council, as the project will be managed, delivered and maintained using current capacity. However, the project will deliver wider benefits to the local economy that will potentially lead to new jobs. This includes the use of small to medium-sized local contractors to deliver the work which will help to create and maintain jobs in these SMES. There will be wider benefits as the increase in the number of visitors and users will sustain and potentially lead to new jobs across the visitor economy sectors. (See 8.1.1.4 below)</p> <p>We are actively investigating the provision of multi facility hubs at key points along the route once this project is completed. For example at Christ’s Hospital, south Horsham a hub with more facilities would have direct links to local shops and eating facilities. This will not only link the route to public transport but will allow for future provision of café and cycle hire facilities. Similar hubs have been shown in other places such as Brockenhurst in the New Forest to significantly increase trail usage, particularly by families, and create jobs.</p> <p>8.1.1.2. Extend the tourism season</p> <p>The Downs Link project will attract tourists outside of the usual season of May to October by making the route accessible all year round. At present, much of the Downs Link is inaccessible to all but the hardest users in the winter. It will also mean it can be promoted to target markets who are likely to use it out of season, for example active retirees (Visit England: Domestic Leisure Tourism Trends for the Next Decade), making them a viable market for this type of holiday since they are not tied to school holidays.</p> <p>https://www.visitengland.com/sites/default/files/visit_england_report_print_tcm30-39493.pdf</p> <p>Information on local accommodation, food and drink outlets, shops etc. will be made available online at www.experiencewestsussex.com with links to their websites, as our target groups need to know in advance that they can access the facilities they need out of season.</p> <p>Once the Downs Link is upgraded, we will work with our partners including the South Downs National Park Authority and the local authorities responsible for linking routes such as the North Downs Way, the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Coastal West Sussex to create a marketing strategy that promotes the Downs Link to our wider target markets and ensures that they know it is accessible all year round. This dovetails with the ‘Experience West Sussex’ on-going tourism promotion initiative being supported by West Sussex County Council.</p> <p>https://www.experiencewestsussex.com/things-to-do/active-outdoors/</p> <p>8.1.1.3: Develop tourist attractions and infrastructure, encourage tourists to stay longer and increase their spend.</p> <p>This project develops the quality of the infrastructure along the Downs Link. Through access to the network of other routes such as the North Downs Way, the South Downs Way and the Sussex Border Path as well as the national cycle network, this project will not only attract more people to the area but will also encourage people to stay longer, exploring attractions such as the South Downs National Park, and thereby increase their spend.</p> <p>Overnight stays will be encouraged by promoting local accommodation and the outstanding local food and drink offer online at www.experiencewestsussex.com.</p> <p>For example, West Sussex and the South Downs is becoming increasingly well known for award</p>	

winning vineyards many of which offer tours and other experiences (Nyetimber, Tinwood, Wiston, Bolney), over 60 small breweries (Hepworths, Langham, Dark Star) and a range of local cheese makers, bakers and other producers. The “Experience West Sussex” initiative, set up by partners to promote local food and drink, will link online to this project to signpost Downs Link users to local food and drink experiences, boosting awareness and sales for these local small businesses.

This project will also help to develop local tourist attractions such as our extensive heritage of historic houses and world-class gardens by promoting these at access points and online. We are investigating the scope for linking attractions together along the route through promotional offers.

8.1.1.4: Wider benefits This project provides benefits to the wider tourism economy in the rural area; by establishing the Downs Link as a destination in its own right, making it accessible to all and attractive to a much wider market throughout the year, we will increase significantly the number of visitors and tourism spend in our area.

Evaluations show that investment in all-weather cycling and walking trails boosts local visitor economies and increases employment. SQW (Devon cycling and walking trails 2015) found that three trails in Devon, the Tarka, Drake’s and Exe Estuary trails, generated a total of £9.3m per annum direct contribution to local businesses with a 1.44 multiplier effect giving additional indirect expenditure of £13.39m. It was estimated that the overall increase in GVA would support circa 200 full time jobs.

https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/sqw_devon_cycling_and_walking_trails_economic_impact_report.pdf

Our calculations show that the Downs Link calculated on a pro rata basis according to its length might be expected to generate 33 jobs and an additional £0.945m GVA. However, to achieve this kind of impact, the route will need to meet the quality standards for safe, all year-round enjoyment, that appeal to a wider audience than the current one which comprises mostly dedicated mountain bikers and hardy hikers.

We will ensure our project benefits the wider economy through a marketing strategy to ensure that the increased number of visitors are encouraged to use local facilities, shops, cafes, pubs and accommodation, cycle hire, riding stables etc. This will be done by providing more promotional information online at www.experiencewestsussex.com and at the main access points including on the Horsham and West Grinstead hubs interpretation board.

Our marketing and promotional strategy will also aim for a dedicated Downs Link section on the Experience West Sussex website, with web links to accommodation, food and drink provision, cycle hire and local attractions so visitors can book directly with the providers. This will greatly extend market reach for the Downs Link, for example opening it up to international markets which have significant potential benefits for the local economy, jobs and growth.

Along the West Sussex stretch of the Downs Link, we have identified over 125 businesses in nearby villages and market towns along the route that could directly benefit from this project. Of these, over 82 are within the rural area, the remaining 43 are in the coastal area of Shoreham-by-Sea which is included in the Adur & Worthing Growth Deal.

The rural section of the Downs Link in West Sussex includes, among others, the following businesses, attractions and amenities :

- **Rudgwick** - 3 pubs in the village and 4 nearby, a brewery, farm shop and café, camping and 2 B&B’s;
- **Slinfold** - a village shop, a pub, caravan site, a B&B, country club and nearby hotel;
- **Christs Hospital and Southwater** – 3 pubs, a nature reserve and café, 3 eateries and a leisure facility
- **West Grinstead/ Partridge Green** - 4 pubs, a bakery and 2 cafes, a brewery and B&B;

- **Henfield** - 6 cafes and 4 eateries, 3 pubs, a farm shop, a holiday cottage, B&B, a hotel, and a farmers' market;
- **Steyning/Bramber** - 7 B&B's, 2 hotels, holiday cottages, a walking tours operator, a farmers' market and several cafes and restaurants

See Appendix X for full details and spreadsheet of businesses adjacent and in the vicinity of the Downs Link in West Sussex

8.1.2 Fit with local priorities

Explain how the project meets the local priorities for funding for your LEP area as set out in the RDPE Growth Programme handbook under the 'LEP Directory':

Coast to Capital's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), Gatwick 360 highlights the LEP area's strength in the visitor economy and supporting services which is one of 12 economic specialisms. The SEP includes a specific objective to: "*build a strong national and international profile*" This sets out an intention to "*co-ordinate work with active partners in inward investment and tourism, to establish an alliance of organisations focussed on developing a strong brand proposition*". This project fits with this priority by improving the Coast to Capital offer as a destination for tourism, particularly active tourism.

The project will meet Coast to Capital priorities for funding as set out in the RDPE handbook, the overall aim of which is "*to grow and develop tourism in rural parts of the Coast to Capital LEP area to increase the economic benefits and create jobs*", specifically in the following ways:

1. Develop and increase active tourism:

By making the Downs Link much more accessible to a wider range of users including families, the disabled and people of all ages, our project will enable increased numbers of visitors to enjoy the benefits of active tourism. Many places such as Cumbria and Wales are making active tourism part of their place-making strategies. For example, Wales Year of Adventure 2016 which, with mountain biking facilities at centres such as Coed y Brenin and Bike Park Wales combined with restaurants and other facilities along routes such as the Coastal Path, has helped to put Wales on the map for activity holidays.

By providing the missing piece in an extensive linked network of accessible, all year-round routes and through targeted, online promotion with links to accommodation and other facilities, greater numbers of visitors will be encouraged to come and explore the LEP area and engage in active pursuits such as walking, cycling and equestrian activities. In due course, through links from www.experiencewestsussex.com to other facilities and accommodation providers' websites so that visitors can book direct, access to cycle hire and other services will facilitate growth in active tourism, along with promotion of the area's many other natural, cultural and heritage attractions.

On completion of this project, with the enhanced Downs Link, the network of LEP area routes will comprise the North Downs Way in the north linked by the 37 miles of the Downs Link to the Greensand Way, the Sussex Border Path, the Monarch's Way and the South Downs Way in the south as well as the south Wey path which runs from north to south and linked to the National Cycle Network. This enhanced network of routes will act as a magnet for those seeking active tourism experiences.

2. Encourage longer stays and higher spend by tourists in the rural part of the LEP area:

The Downs Link project, by joining up and enhancing access to a number of routes in the LEP area, will encourage longer stays among the increasing numbers of people who enjoy long distance walking and cycling. Through providing an integrated offer at towns along the route, including access to public transport, car parking, cycle hire, equestrian activities and information on local accommodation, food and drink and attractions, which ultimately will be bookable on-line, longer

stays will be encouraged and facilitated. The integrated offer will also provide improved access to and promotion of local businesses, increasing tourism spend.

3. Projects that show they are environmentally sustainable:

By encouraging visitors to leave their cars at the car parks and making it easy to cycle as well as promoting linkages to public transport at key access points, the Downs Link project will encourage green tourism and be environmentally sustainable. We will encourage all the accommodation providers that we promote to Downs Link users online and through other information to sign up for Visit Britain's sustainable tourism certification which has been shown to be good for business as well as the environment.

4. Benefit multiple businesses and destinations:

As well as directly benefiting more than 82 rural businesses along the route itself including historic pubs, village shops, B&Bs, independent hotels and farm shops, the Downs Link project will promote and encourage access to the many natural, cultural and heritage attractions along its route. These include, for example, Ropetackle Arts Centre and Shoreham Fort at the southern end of the route (outside the EAFRD rural area but within Coast to Capital and Worthing Growth Programme), St Mary's House and Gardens in Steyning, Bramber Norman Castle, Sussex Prairie Garden, Wappingthorn Manor near West Grinstead, and Southwater Country Park. In addition, the linked network of routes including the North Downs Way, the South Downs Way, the Sussex Border Path, the Wey South Path and national cycle routes will increase access to the protected landscapes and many natural attractions in West Sussex including the South Downs National Park and the High Weald AONB.

5. Link tourism to the wider economy:

Through linking to nearby towns and villages through signage and information at key access points and online at www.experiencewestsussex.com the project will signpost users to local businesses, farmers' markets, food and drink businesses, local shops and accommodation.

Because the Downs Link follows the route of a disused railway, there are many adjacent villages and small towns along the route that stand to benefit including: Rudgwick, Slinfold, The Haven, Southwater, Copsale, West Grinstead, Partridge Green, Henfield, Botolphs (where the Downs Link meets the South Downs Way) and Shoreham.

We will encourage nearby towns and villages to join the Walkers are Welcome (WAW) network. As well as the economic benefits for local shops, B&Bs, hotels, pubs, cafés, restaurants, etc. through increased footfall the scheme have also been shown to strengthen the destination's reputation, promote local visitor attractions and complement economic generation/tourism plans and strategies. We will also encourage accommodation providers to join the Cyclists Welcome scheme.

6. Support the aims of the Coast to Capital rural statement and relevant destination management plans

The Coast to Capital Rural Statement 2016 identifies 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. Cycling is recognised as an increasingly important leisure activity in the area and the statement highlights that active tourism eg. Cycling, walking and equitation, would benefit from strategies and interventions to maximise their potential benefit to the rural economy.

The project will support the Rural Economy Aim of the **Coast to Capital Rural Statement** in particular:

- Priority 1. - To grow the rural business population
- Priority 3. Support priority business sectors.

The **Coast to Capital ESIF Strategy** that underpins the Rural Statement includes support for the rural economy and for rural businesses including tourism, which is set out in *EAFRD Priority 3*:

Supporting tourism activities in rural areas.

The project will help to grow the rural business population by increasing the number of visitors and tourism expenditure. It will support the tourism sector which is a priority for Coast to Capital as well as supporting local towns and cultural and heritage attractions.

We recognise that the businesses that stand to benefit need to be able to offer goods and services of sufficient quality and that are available all year round. We will seek new resources working with the local Business Growth Hub and Tourism South East to provide training to the tourism businesses that our project can potentially benefit.

National Park's are expected to increase tourism and enable access for a wide range of visitors in the Government's 8 Point Plan for National Parks 2016-2020. **The South Downs National Park's Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2015 to 2020** has as one of its four themes, "*Adventure Land: aimed at being active in the great outdoors; exploring the National Park widely and taking part in adventure based activities*" and *Objective 5: To encourage change in travel behaviour of visitors accessing the National Park* as well as specific actions to "*improve cycling facilities on key trails with priority given to the development of services for recreational cyclists on route such as cycle repair, water points and appropriate signage*".

The Downs Link southern section traverses the South Downs National Park and, once upgraded to meet its full potential, will play a key strategic link in the infrastructure that will delivering the National Park Authority's objectives. In particular it will help to make it possible to encourage a modal shift among visitors to more sustainable forms of transport in the Park as well as increasing opportunities for adventure-based activities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020>

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Sustainable-Tourism-Strategy-2015-20.pdf>

The recently published **Horsham District Visitor Economy Strategy 2018-2013** highlights that the growth of the visitor economy is an economic development priority for the C2C LEP, West Sussex Country Council, the South Downs National Park Authority as well as Horsham District Council (HDC), where it is one of the five priorities in Horsham District Council's Economic Strategy.

The aims of the Visitor Economy Strategy include

- To increase the benefits the visitor economy brings to the district and monitor its performance focusing on:
 - a. Attracting longer staying visitors and
 - b. Increasing visitor spend across the District
- To be the base for a visit to our wider area, an easy place to reach, get around, shop, find information and travel out from
- To have close relationships with and promote our valued neighbours, in particular the South Downs National Park, the AONBs, our coastal towns and Gatwick airport
- To create trails to walk, cycle, ride or kayak, so guests can discover our wildlife, share our local stories and produce

The relatively flat countryside and extensive public rights of way (PROW) network in the district provide walking and cycling opportunities that are varied and easily accessible and complement the higher profile South Downs Way. However, despite the extensive PROW network the cycle route infrastructure is fragmented. This project aims to upgrade the worst sections of the Downs Link, all of which are sited with Horsham district, thereby providing a consistent, smooth surface that will enable all year round use that interlinks with NCN 2 and 22 and improve access for multi-users.

See Appendix X for:

Coast to Capital Rural Statement

https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/storage/downloads/rural_statement_2016-1476886718.pdf

Horsham District Visitor Economy Strategy 2018-2023

https://www.horsham.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/49337/Final-Strategy.pdf

Horsham District Visitor Economy Strategy Appendices 2018=2023

https://www.horsham.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/49338/Visitor-Economy-Strategy-2018-23-Appendices.pdf

8.1.3 Cross cutting themes - Environmental, Equality and Diversity Impacts

a) Explain how you have considered the environmental impacts associated with the project:

1. Design, Construction and Safety Impacts

The appointed contractors will be required to complete Risk Assessments and Method Statements that will cover construction and environmental aspects.

Design and Visual Impacts Currently, large sections of the Downs Link are prone to becoming muddy and rutted with standing water in places and collecting leaf matter and other detritus which is unsightly. The proposed path surface will be cleared of all existing mud, vegetation and organic matter to enable standing water to drain towards existing/proposed drainage ditches. Subsequent material will be discretely placed along the edges where it will not re-enter the ditch or cause a nuisance to the ditch. Depressions and low spots will be infilled. The surface will be regraded and a top dressing of 30mm limestone dust rolled and compacted, which has a low visual impact. There are no visual impacts outside the immediate area.

Noise – Method Statements will outline steps and legislation to minimise noise impact during delivery of materials and construction of the pathway.

Safety – The contractor will work with WSCC regarding the measures to be put in place for the safety of workers, contractors and the public. The appointed contractor will be required to undertake a hazard plan and site visit to view and assess any potential hazards.

2. Flooding and other water impacts

Improvements to the surface and the provision of a consistent smooth camber will help address flooding on those sections identified that become water-logged in winter.

The contractor shall take due care with all works where the bridleway crosses streams and watercourses to ensure that pollution does not occur.

3. Safeguarding flora and fauna

The specifications details measures that must be put in place to mitigate the impact including work to be carried out from end July to end September on sections where disturbance to nesting birds is likely. Driving on verges is to be avoided to protect their integrity for flora and horse riders.

4. Sustainable Transport and CO2 emissions

Upgrading of the Downs Link will help improve sustainable transport provision in the local area by offering a year-round, all-weather alternative to car transport along the route that connects with villages and towns and interlinks with other long-distance paths, bridleways and the national cycle network. This could encourage a modal shift from car transport for those travelling for leisure, work

or school to walking and cycling with an associated reduction in CO2 emissions.

b) Explain how you have considered any equality and diversity impacts associated with the project:

West Sussex County Council is committed to equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The Diversity and Inclusion policy statement (see appendix x) sets out the County Council's commitment to deliver fair and inclusive services for all West Sussex communities. West Sussex County Council will meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Act says people should not be treated differently or unfairly because of the following 'protected characteristics.'

The proposed project is the upgrading of sections of the Downs Link for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horseriders, families, wheelchair and mobility scooter users. There are no adverse impacts or unfair disadvantages on any other person identified under 'protected characteristics'.

8.2 Value for money

8.2.1 Job creation resulting from the project

No FTE jobs will be created as a direct result of this project, because delivery, management and maintenance of the project will be covered under current in-house capacity in West Sussex County Council.

However, wider benefits to the rural economy will help sustain and grow the visitor economy which will result in an increase in employment within that sector. Our calculations of wider impacts are included in section 8.1.1.4 and show a potential increase of 33 FTE jobs as a result of the project.

8.2.2 Direct outputs resulting from the project

Where the project will achieve direct outputs additional to job creation, please explain your rationale and assumptions below:

(The outputs resulting from your project should be listed in the FA appendix spreadsheet at Tabs D and E)

- Number of businesses supported: 1 West Sussex County Council
- Number of new products: 11
 - ✓ 1 x all weather promoted route suitable for year-round use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as a result of upgrading the quality and accessibility along 5 sections of the Downs Link (6 sections when Christs Hospital match-funded area is considered).
 - ✓ 6 x interpretation boards
 - ✓ 4 x finger posts
- Additional number of day visitors 24,598 over 3 years.

The baseline figure has been calculated using data from over 476 online surveys carried out during December 2018. At this point, 458 users is the minimum number of day visitors that can be evidenced using the online and hard-copy survey results. However, it seems reasonable to assume that these respondents form only a sample of the current users as not all Downs Link users will have completed the survey. Online surveys typically get typical response rates of 10% to 15% (<https://www.surveygizmo.com/resources/blog/survey-response-rates/>)

However, we are assuming a 25% response rate as Downs Link users are generally committed and motivated and have something to gain by responding i.e. improvements in the route.

The survey was taken over a 2-week period, so there was an average of 219 respondents per week. Assuming a response rate of 25%, this would give a total weekly user number of 876 (876 x 25% = 219) and an annual user number of approximately 45,552 users per annum (876 X 52).

This would give a baseline estimate at current rates of 136,656 (45,552 x3) users in a three year period. An increase of 18% based on the increase in Centurion Way following improvements (see below) gives a net new visitor number of 24,598 over 3 years.

Centurion Way

This estimate is informed by usage counters at similar projects in other locations locally, such as the Centurion Way which is also a disused railway line that has been upgraded and the Egret's Way in East Sussex where sections have been upgraded. (see annex x for the report)

The traffic monitoring data base for the Centurion Way shows that the 24hr average (including weekends) has increased from 90 cycles in 2016 to 106 in 2018 a percentage increase on the baseline of 17.77% or an increase from 32,850 trips in 2015 to 38,690. The counter records the number of bikes that cross it (i.e. the number of trips) so, assuming everyone uses the route for their return journeys then an increase from 16,425 in 2016 to 18,250 in 2017 and to 19,345 in 2018 can be assumed.

However, as the counters only records cyclists and our surveys indicate that over 30% of users are walkers and horse riders, we have therefore added an additional 30% onto these figures to allow for these users.

This gives the following numbers of users (cyclists and walkers)for Centurion's way

2016: 16,425 users +30% = 21,353

2017: 18,250 users +30% = 23,725

2018: 19,345 users +30% = 25,149

Net increase: 3,796 or 17.77%

A larger growth in day visitors is expected in Years 1 and 2 as each phase completes and marketing activity heightens, then levelling out in Year 3.

To assist with monitoring the increase in day visitors, counters will be installed at four places; Rudgwick, Copsale, West Grinstead and Needs Bridge, which will measure the actual increased usage by day visitors along the project route.

- **45,620 rural population benefitting from improved tourism infrastructure**

We have included the numbers of residents in the wards directly adjoining the Downs Link (source: ONS Mid 2017 Ward-level population estimates):

Rudgwick	2,897
Itchingfield, Slinfold & Wareham	5,964
Cowfold, Shermanbury & West Grinstead	5,495
Southwater	11,269
Nuthurst	2,923
Henfield	5,383
Steyning	6,255
Bramber & Upper Beeding:	5,434

Total rural population: 45,620

8.2.3 Wider outcomes resulting from the project

Provide details of any indirect outputs, benefits or wider outcomes to the rural/local economy that will be achieved as a result of undertaking the project:

The Downs Link project will provide several wider benefits and outcomes that will support the rural/local economy, strengthen the tourism sector and supply chain network, offer people the opportunity to connect with the countryside and provide positive social impacts:

Supporting the local economy

Recent studies into the benefits of walking and cycling in pursuit of the above objectives are compelling. Reporting on the benefits of sustainable travel initiatives such as; the Sustainable Travel Towns, Cycling Demonstration Towns; Local Sustainable Transport Fund; Cycling Ambition Grants and the Linking Communities Fund; the Government cites benefit cost ratios between 2:1 and 32:1, typically in the region of 5:1 and 6:1. All these studies indicate that investing in cycling and walking infrastructure supports the local economy.

Specifically the Downs Link will support the rural/local economy through better connecting rural towns and villages and providing a safe leisure and utility route that can be used for recreation, work and school. Towns and villages adjacent to the Downs Link and the interlinking network between Rudgwick in the north of the county and Shoreham-by-Sea in the south include Slinfold, Christs Hospital and Southwater, Partridge Green, West Grinstead, Steyning and Bramber.

An increase in demand for visitor services as a result of investment in the upgrading of the Downs Link will benefit the supply chain, including food and drink producers and providers, cycle shops, attractions, accommodation providers, and local shops and businesses. Over 82 visitor attractions, pubs, accommodation providers and local businesses that provide goods, facilities and services to the visitor economy are situated adjacent to or in the vicinity of the rural Downs Link in West Sussex and are potential beneficiaries.

Proximity to the channel ports of Portsmouth and Newhaven, Brighton City Airport at Shoreham and nearby Gatwick Airport, provide the potential to attract European and international visitors. The Downs Way interlinks with several long-distance paths including the North Downs Way, South Downs Way, Sussex Border Path, West Sussex Literary Trail and the Monarch's Way, and with National Cycle Network route 2 in the south and route 22 in the north, offers the potential to draw visitors from across the south of England and nationally to the area.

The **West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy 2016-2026** points out that the county is well placed to increase walking and cycling due to the nature of the countryside and the relatively good weather. However, despite recent investment in routes, there are not enough facilities or facilities of sufficient quality to meet demand.

This project clearly supports this strategy which includes four strategies based on the following priorities that guide the County Council's approach to maintaining, managing and investing in transport, and meeting the main objective of improving quality of life for the people of West Sussex:

- Promoting economic growth
- Tackling climate change
- Providing access to services, employment and housing
- Improving safety, security and health

The **South Downs National Park Authority's Cycling and Walking Strategy** and the **Sustainable Tourism Strategy** highlight that creating a welcoming environment for cyclists and walkers will encourage higher satisfaction levels, increased visitor spend and more frequent overnight stays, delivering economic benefit to the area.

Creating Jobs

By establishing the Downs Link as a destination in its own right, making it accessible to all and attractive to much wider target markets, we will increase significantly the number of visitors and tourism spend in our area thus increasing employment. Investment in cycling and walking infrastructure elsewhere has been reliably shown to increase jobs. An SQW evaluation of three cycling and walking trails in Devon (**Devon Cycling and Walking Trails 2015**) found that they generated £5.8m GVA which it was estimated would support 200 full time jobs.

The Downs Link on a pro rata basis might be expected to generate 33 jobs and £0.945m GVA. However, to achieve this kind of impact, the track will need to meet the quality standards that appeal to a wider audience than dedicated mountain bikers and hardy hikers and that people now expect for safe enjoyment.

Sustainable tourism

The **West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy** also identifies maximising sustainable tourism as an opportunity, stating that the environment of West Sussex is uniquely suited to encourage sustainable tourism. Key objectives in the strategy that relate to wider benefits include:

1. To ensure that cycling and walking are recognised as important travel modes and therefore part of the transport mix
2. To make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys (such as journeys to school), or as part of a longer journey
8. To increase the vitality of communities by improving access by bicycle and on foot
9. To help people to access rural areas and enjoy walking and cycling

See **Appendix X** for copies of or relevant extracts from:

- Downs Link West Sussex business mapping list

See **Appendix X** for copies of or relevant extracts from

- WSCC Economic Growth Plan: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/partnership-work/economic-growth-plan/>
- WSCC Walking & Cycling Strategy 2016-2026: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/policies-and-reports/roads-and-travel-policy-and-reports/west-sussex-walking-and-cycling-strategy-2016-2026/>
- Devon Cycling and Walking Trails 2015) https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/sqw_devon_cycling_and_walking_trails_economic_impact_report.pdf
- Both the SDNPA Walking & Cycling and Sustainable Tourism strategies can also be viewed at <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/>

8.3 Need for the project

8.3.1 Rationale for the grant request

a) Explain why grant funding is required to enable your project to proceed:

The Select Committee specifically stated that, for the West Sussex Walking & Cycling Strategy, the priority routes for WSCC investment should be inter-community utility routes and urban cycling improvements. Existing Department for Transport funding is prioritised annually to identify projects that will be delivered through the West Sussex Local Transport Improvement Programme. Schemes such as the Downs Link project have to compete alongside projects relating to School Transport Issues, Road Safety Projects and schemes to mitigate the demand from development. As a leisure

route, the Downs Link will tend not to score as highly as others and is unlikely to be prioritised and allocated funding. (The Downs Link did score well using the Sustrans RATE Tool and is the second highest scoring leisure route.)

Therefore, as the Council receives only £3.7m per annum from Government for ALL local transport improvements in the county (the Integrated Transport Block allocation) the only way this project can progress is with external funding.. Without this funding, however, at a time when resources for new projects are very sparse, the improvements would not happen. There are no Department for Transport funding opportunities currently open, European Funding opportunities for the current programming period are coming to a close and there are unlikely to be many more calls for projects. As yet, is unclear how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will operate and active tourism is not mentioned as a priority in the Government's UK Industrial Strategy which it is intended to deliver.

West Sussex County Council is a public body, with a duty to only maintain the current status of the Downs Link. This project will substantially upgrade the Downs Link from an often muddy and sometimes impassable track for all but the fittest and most determined visitors to an important piece of the outdoor leisure infrastructure that is accessible to the majority all year round. Once upgraded, the County Council will maintain the track in its new state.

b) Explain what options you have considered in arriving at your preferred project:

We have considered upgrading and extending other routes in our area e.g. Selsey Greenway which was the subject of a separate EOI. However, on closer examination this did not deliver anything like the same level of benefits as the Downs Link in terms of satisfying latent demand, benefits to the local economy, strategic linkages to other cycling and walking routes and return on investment. Through the series of targeted interventions and upgrades specified in this project, the 33.9 kilometres (21.18 miles) of the Downs Link in West Sussex will be brought up to a universally high standard, enabling year round usage by a wide variety of visitors of all ages and abilities and linking to an extensive range of businesses and services. No other route in West Sussex offers this development potential for comparatively limited outlay.

We have considered applying for European Funding in particular Interreg France Channel England programme which is currently developing a project aimed at increasing trail-based tourism. However, the lead partner for this is Norfolk County Council and it is unlikely to be available in our area or to fund the type of infrastructure improvement this project requires.

The project does not meet the requirements of the LEP's Local Growth Fund as it does not fall within the priorities and the LGF is currently fully committed in any case.

c) Explain what will happen to the project and the delivery of the direct project outputs if grant funding was not offered:

Without grant funding, the project is unlikely to be delivered and the County Council will continue only to maintain the Downs Link to its current standard. This will mean the uptake by a much wider target markets and types of visitors as well as increases in visitor numbers and benefits to local businesses and the local economy will not be realised. The opportunity to include the Downs Link in the wider strategic infrastructure and link it to other trails and paths will be missed. This will impact on the contribution to the rural economy, the interlinking and neighbouring towns and villages along the West Sussex Downs Link. Without grant funding, the project is unlikely to be delivered.

8.3.2 Market need and demand

a) Describe the market need for your project and explain what research has been undertaken to support this:

NEED versus DEMAND

In this response, we have distinguished between “need” and “demand”. We have interpreted “need” as being the response of planning and policy makers to such drivers as the need to promote healthy and active lifestyles, improve environmental sustainability and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging modal shift to greener forms of tourism and transport.

“Demand” we have taken to mean the desire among current and potential users for better and extended cycling and walking facilities and in particular to have the Downs Link upgraded to a higher standard so that it is easier and more attractive to use. Demand has been evidenced by surveys and by consultation with representative organisations such as cycle groups.

The need.

The need for this project is demonstrated by the breadth and depth of policies, strategies and plans published. These range from top-level government and departmental papers to LEP and county-developed strategies and plans as well as destination management plans. Research into these publications reveals a common theme, to provide people with access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking and to support the visitor and local economy by improving infrastructure and access. The following extracts from national, regional and local strategies, policies and plans provide evidence in support of the market need for this project:

Department of Transport CYCLING & WALKING INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2017

“We want to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys, or as part of a longer journey.”

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603527/cycling-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

The West Sussex Plan 2017-2022

“We will make it easier to walk and cycle in our county, to visit our landmarks, museums and galleries, to get the most out of living in West Sussex.”

The West Sussex Plan also contains how success will be measured, for example, infrastructure that supports a successful economy is an outcome that will be measured by the number of new cycle paths.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/the-west-sussex-plan/>

West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy 2016-2026

The strategy contains a prioritised list of over 300 potential walking and cycling improvements suggested by a range of stakeholders and partner organisations. Subject to available funding, availability of land and other constraints they could be implemented during the strategy period.

A feasibility study has already been undertaken on upgrading sections of the Down Link and supports this application. The Downs Link NCN223 all-weather path (Upgrade of the Downs Link to all-weather surface -with priority to populated sections e.g. Southwater) has been identified as a priority by stakeholders.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/policies-and-reports/roads-and-travel-policy-and-reports/west-sussex-walking-and-cycling-strategy-2016-2026/>

WSCC Rights of Way Management Plan 2018-2028

The West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan (RoWMP) 2018-2028 notes that Rights of Way can bring benefits to health and well-being, the local economy and the environment, and are used for a wide range of leisure activities, enabling residents and visitors to enjoy the beauty and

tranquillity of large parts of the West Sussex countryside.

West Sussex County Council has also been working with the South Downs National Park Authority and neighbouring transport authorities to deliver a £5 million programme of infrastructure schemes to enhance walking and cycling within, and connecting to, the National Park, which was completed in 2015 and included the provision of a safe Downs Link crossing point on the A283 Steyning Bypass south of Bramber village.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/public-paths-and-the-countryside/public-rights-of-way/rights-of-way-management-plan-2018-2028/>

DEFRA 8-Point Plan

The DEFRA 8-Point Plan for England's National Parks 2016 aims to promote innovative schemes to support public health and realise the immense potential for outdoor recreation in National Parks. The Plan also sets out ambitions for connecting more young people with nature and for encouraging more International Tourism. Cycling and walking initiatives have a role to play in supporting this Plan.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509916/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020.pdf

The **SDNPA Partnership Management Plan 2014 – 2019** states that encouraging alternatives to the private car will help make tourism and community travel more sustainable and, according to recent surveys, increase the spend per person, so supporting the local economy.

There are a large number of cycling clubs and individuals riding in the National Park, and many cycling events that use the road. There is a real demand for commuting and leisure cycling opportunities, but the cycle network is currently fragmented and limited in its extent.

<http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/>

SDNPA Cycling & Walking Strategy 2017 – 2024 states that the ambition for the National Park is to be home to a network of largely traffic free routes providing opportunities for a range of users of differing abilities and ages. The wider benefits of the strategy, including impacts on the local economy in the National Park, increased opportunities for improving health and well-being, air quality and volume of sustainable journeys.

Key issues identified include:-

Network - There is a shortage of 'family friendly' paths that are suitable for inexperienced cyclists and vulnerable users who prefer traffic free, level, easily navigable trails with prepared surfaces (all weather) that are easily accessed.

Tourism – The tourism offering for cyclists and walkers is under-developed but provides significant opportunities to support local economic growth. As users their needs differ slightly from other visitors in terms of information, facilities and services they require from amenities (such as: accommodation and refreshment venues), destinations and transport providers.

Public Health – There is a growing body of inactive people with health problems and associated conditions, especially within urban areas near to the National Park, who could benefit from increasing their physical activity and mental wellbeing by participating in outdoor activities.

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SDNPA-Cycling-and-Walking-Strategy-2017-2024.pdf>

The Demand

We have undertaken an online survey among local visitors and potential users which received 463 responses in just two weeks and 13 face-to-face responses on site. The responses have demonstrated clearly a very high level of demand among existing and potential users of the Downs Link, as follows:

- 445 online respondents said they use the Downs Link
- 25.8% every week
- 28.1% every month
- 31.5% once every couple of months

The predominant users are cyclists (67.6%) followed by walkers (22.7%) and horse riders (9.7%).

Respondents cited the following would encourage them to make more use of the route:

- 57.7% Suitable for all weather / season use
- 57.5% Improvements to the surface
- 55.5% Easier access to and from nearby villages and improved access for different users (eg families, disabled)
- 26.8% Better information about facilities

Reasons for travelling the Downs Link include:

- 92.9% Recreation and leisure
- 76.2% Health and fitness
- 55.9% Accessing the countryside

Other responses included family time, sightseeing, organised events, dog walking, horse riding and avoiding road traffic when cycling.

- 81.4% would consider eating in pubs, restaurants and cafes
- 74.7% drinking in pubs, restaurants and cafes

Comments from both the online and face-to-face surveys include:

- This route has huge potential if is given a high-quality sealed surface.
- I would increase use of the Downs Link if the surface was safe in wet weather.
- I feel our local businesses don't realise the increased business this route can bring.
- I also use the Downs Link to take out a client in an electric wheelchair ... It is the most amazing facility we have in West Sussex.
- I love the fact that it links with other footpaths. A great resource.
- Some surface is very muddy in winter.
- Good to have disabled-friendly route, uncomfortable for buggies.
- A great day out.
- Lovely route.
- Excellent family activity.

Respondents home locations include:

Horsham, Brighton, Worthing, Hove, Crawley, Billingshurst and some villages along the route as well as towns much further afield including Cranleigh, Dorking and in Surrey, Somerset and London.

In addition, the current condition of the Downs Link limits it to mountain bikers and/or dry weather only and receives many comments on social media. "Unfortunately, nearly all of the Downs Link in West Sussex is a bumpy, muddy mess, especially in winter" and "It has immense potential as a leisure route that would justify focused large scale investment" and "Lovely ride to Shoreham on Downs Link today but my jarred body says when are we going to get a proper surface" are just three of the many recent comments on Twitter. A review on TripAdvisor states: "it is let down by poor design in parts. Where the path meets a road then you are forced down poorly maintained slopes and made to cross the road where traffic is definitively king"

Local Neighbourhood Plans also contain evidence of demand as they are based on extensive consultation, albeit with local residents rather than visitors. For example, the Community Facilities and Infrastructure Focus Group Report which was carried out to inform the forthcoming Henfield Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 identifies the Downs Link long distance trail and surrounding footpaths and bridleways which are well used by residents and bring many cyclists, walkers and equestrians to Henfield.

The research carried out by the Focus Group highlighted that improvement was needed in order to provide: *'A better place for walking, cycling and access to facilities'* through paths suitable for the disabled, the elderly and the young, safe routes, to improve connections to the surrounding countryside, Downs Link and other long distance routes, to neighbouring communities and to essential services within the village.

<https://www.henfieldhub.com/hnp-key-information/henfield-neighbourhood-plan-update>

The developing Southwater Neighbourhood Plan 2018 also contains evidence of demand as the Downs Link crosses the parish from Christ's Hospital in the north, passing the Bax Castle pub and skirting the Country Park. The Parish Survey 2015 collected data on residents' use of cycle and pedestrian pathways. Over 1000 people (nearly 80% of those responding) confirmed that they would walk or cycle from their home to the local Lintot Square shops; 947 respondents would walk or cycle from their home to Southwater Country Park; and 871 respondents would walk or cycle from their home to shops on the Worthing Road. This data demonstrates a high volume of cycle and pedestrian activity in Southwater. When asked what could assist in getting people to cycle or walk more, 511 residents replied that more or improved cut-throughs/cycle or footpaths were needed; and 421 replied that improved maintenance of cycle or footpaths was needed.

<https://southwater.joomla.com/component/jdownloads/send/4-n-plan/1-reg-14-southwater-neighbourhood-plan.html>

b) Identify your target market(s):

Our project, by upgrading the track to provide a proper, all-weather surface will increase usage by existing walkers, cyclist and riders and extend the season for them. Encouraging existing visitors to stay longer and spend more will be crucial, since our research shows that, during the season, up to 45,500 visitors a year use the Downs Link. There is proven demand, but the Downs Link, as a relatively long route, is not achieving its full potential or full usage along its length due to the poor surface, lack of all year-round accessibility and high-quality facilities and limited access to local services.

We will also focus on tapping latent demand. The **CBI report, "What are the opportunities for adventure tourism from Europe 2016"** identifies Leisure Adventure Travellers as the largest segment for UK active tourism. They opt for activities alternated with other things such as cultural excursions. Mature members of this group have more time and money, take several holidays a year, prefer lower risk activities and require more comfort than younger members. We believe they offer a major market opportunity and can be reached by online promotion with other attractions in our area and by tailoring the offer to both the FIT (Free Independent Traveller) and GIT (Group Inclusive Tours) markets, working with cycle and walking tour companies.

Another market segment with growth potential is the Regional Actives. Currently, many visitors to West Sussex are local, 73% of visitors are day visitors. They tend to be conservative and low-spending. 42% are over 55, 62% come from Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire and only 6% come from London. **Team Tourism** in a recent report for the South Downs National Park highlighted the Regional Actives as a market segment with good potential. They are motivated by outdoor activities (walking, cycling, niche sports).

According to a study by the **LSE: The British Cycling Economy** men, particularly younger men, dominate the UK cycling market making over 70% of cycling trips. We believe “hesitant females” are also a market segment with significant capacity for growth which is particularly beneficial since they often encourage family cycling. Their main concern is safety, but they also want facilities such as car parking, cafes and bike hire to be available.

ATTA 2018 Adventure Travel Trends Snapshot

Each year the **ATTA produces the Industry Snapshot Report**, a compilation of data as a result of surveying adventure travel industry operators on topics such as destinations, activities, and industry business practices. The 2018 report reveals industry insights to top of mind destinations for the adventure traveller, average trip length, common operational practices, the average amount of money per client that stays in a destination, and more.

Example key findings in this year’s report include:

- The number one in demand adventure activity is hiking; ecotourism, cultural, environmentally sustainable, culinary, cycling, and safaris.
- 66 percent of the per guest trip cost is estimated to remain in the local region.
- In terms of adventure traveller demographics, the largest group of adventure travel tour operator clients (41 percent) are between the ages of 50-70. The average age of the adventure traveller reported is 49 years old.

The recent **Oxford Economics report “Gatwick Airport’s impact on the visitor economy”** has identified that in 2017 Gatwick generated over 5.5m inbound (non-UK resident) visits, of which 78% were visiting for holiday or visiting friends and relatives. A consortia of south east based organisations including West Sussex County Council, North Downs Way, South Downs Way and the South Downs National Park Authority have recognised the potential of this lucrative inbound market and are in stage 2 of a Discover England Fund bid specifically targeting three key market segments (Outdoor Enthusiasts, Mature Experience Seekers and Families) that align those of the proposed Downs link trail.

Letters of Support - 24 letters of support for this project were received from a broad range of businesses, organisations and stakeholders. These included: bed and breakfast accommodation, cafes, a brewery, district and parish councils, Sussex Food & Drink Network, the British Horse Society, Sustrans, and regional economic partnerships.

Extracts from the Letters of Support, detailing how the project will attract additional users, extend the season and benefit the local visitor economy, include comments as follows:

‘Provision of an improved surface suitable for all users, whatever age and ability, that enables use all year round, will undoubtedly encourage more NMUs to explore the Downs Link, and include its use in their leisure and recreational activities, resulting in wider benefits to the local economy through tourism’. *Tricia Butcher, County Access & Bridleways Officer, British Horse Society*

‘Improvements to the Downs Link will primarily:

- Provide a much improved and more accessible leisure route in West Sussex between Rudgwick in the Horsham district to the coastal town of Shoreham-by-Sea and
- Attract visitors outside of the usual season of May to October.
- Be a far more appealing tourism asset and improve connectivity and links across a wider geographical area.’ *Caroline Wood, Director, Coastal West Sussex Economic Partnership*

‘Our Brewery, with its Bar and Shop, is becoming increasingly popular as a walking and cycling destination. Along with our neighbours the Milk Churn Café, we have turned a derelict, redundant brickworks into an unusual visitor attraction, and in fact there are more employees at the various

businesses on the site than there were when it was an operating brickworks. Already we have some visitors from the adjacent Downs Link, but the improvements planned by this project will substantially increase this number in our estimation.

A number of us who work at the Brickworks site commute by cycle on the Downs Link, but this is generally not possible in the winter because of the mud. The improvements planned by your proposal would certainly increase the number of cycle commute journeys.’ *Richard Peters, Founder, Firebird Brewery*

‘As the owner of a bed and breakfast business that will benefit from increased use and development of the Downs Link, I am writing to offer my support for your full application for funding.’ *Sue Fuest, Foxglove B&B*

‘The Downs Link is identified as a Strategic Cycle route in the South Downs National Park’ Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017 – 2024. It is also an important link to the South Downs Way National Trail for which the National Park Authority is the lead partner in the SDW Trail Partnership.’ *Andy Gattiker, National Trails and Rights of Way Lead, SDNPA*

‘The Downs Link runs through the heart of Slinfold parish and is very important to our community. It helps to support our village pub and shop and offers our residents of all ages and opportunity for cycling, walking or horse riding. All which help us to keep mentally and physically fit. It is a popular destination for families just wanting to enjoy some fun time out in pleasant surroundings.’ *Mrs Mary Burroughs, Clerk, Slinfold Parish Council*

‘Increasingly visitors and residents are wishing to incorporate food and drink experiences into their leisure time and the Downs Link will support of many rural artisan businesses which offer experiences along its route. Visits to West Sussex food and drink-based experiences will enhance a sense of place, promote sustainable leisure activities whilst supporting local businesses. Many vineyards, breweries and other food and drink experiences should benefit from the Downs Link project and promote a greater knowledge of the artisan food and drink the area has to offer whilst supporting the visitor economy.’ *Hilary Knight, Sussex Food and Drink Network*

‘Improving the surface, to enable NMUs of all ages and abilities to make greater use of the DL throughout the year will be of significant benefit to the local communities. The Forum fully supports your application.’ *West Sussex Local Access Forum*

See Appendix x for copies of Letters of Support

See Appendix x for relevant extracts from:

- CBI – What are the opportunities for adventure tourism from Europe 2016?
<https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/adventure-tourism/adventure-tourism-europe/>
- Team Tourism <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/South-Downs-National-Park-Customer-Segmentation-and-Market-Propositions-2018.pdf>
- LSE The British Cycling Economy
https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/corporate/The_British_Cycling_Economy_1_8Aug.pdf
- Adventure Travel Trends Snapshot 2018 <https://www.adventuretravel.biz/research/2018-adventure-travel-trends-snapshot/>
- Gatwick Airport’s Impact on the Visitor Economy 2018
<https://www.gatwickairport.com/globalassets/business--community/new-community--sustainability/economy/gatwick-visitor-economy-impact-final.pdf>

8.3.3 Ability to supply

a) Explain how you will meet the need and demand for your project as set out above:

This project will enable the upgrading of the quality and accessibility of the Downs Link track to allow a wide range of visitor user groups, including families, the disabled, older age groups and less confident walkers, cyclists and horse riders, to use it along its length and throughout the year. It will provide much better linkages to local businesses and services including improved information and signage.

To enable this demand to be met, WSCC has co-ordinated a project management team with the experience and expertise to deliver the project. The team has in place all the necessary skills and has delivered many successful countryside route improvement projects on time and within budget.

WSCC has in place a Service Specification and a Framework Agreement delivering projects across the county of West Sussex on sites owned and managed by the Council. This includes the sites that will be improved along the Downs Link which means that there are no issues with planning permission or access.

b) Explain how you will communicate the new / improved product / service to your target market(s):

A comprehensive Marketing Strategy and Marketing Planner addresses how the project will be promoted from the date of the grant announcement, through delivery and launch of the schemes, and on-going marketing to help achieve the growth in visitor numbers. A Marketing Strategy with a Timeline Planner is prepared.

This will support the aim of establishing the Downs Link as a destination and promote the proposed project as an accessible off-road, all-year, networked leisure and tourism route for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders that interlinks with the towns and villages along the route. Promotion of the route improvements will extend the market to users of all ages and abilities, attract visitors and users outside of the usual season, and benefit the local economy.

The marketing activities will be co-ordinated through the Experience West Sussex initiative, a partnership of West Sussex County Council and all the districts and boroughs in the county.

The objectives of the marketing strategy are to:

- Promote the improved Downs Link route as a destination
- Promote the wealth of activities, experiences, attractions in and around the Downs Link
- Promote the varied accommodation options available
- Encourage longer visits with planned itineraries, checklists and round-ups
- Encourage out of season visits through specific audience targeting

The main channels of delivery are the marketing activities led by Experience West Sussex, WSCC corporate communications, and the WSCC Economic Growth, Highways and Transport teams. Communications will be delivered through three main communication streams, Business to Consumer, Business to Business, and stakeholder engagement.

Updates and announcements relating to the Downs Link project improvements will be added to the WSCC external website and internal staff intranet, including key announcements of funding, delivery of each phase and completion points. Press releases will be timed for the announcement of funding, delivery of the two phases and completion. The National Trail and Rights of Way Lead at the South Downs National Park Authority has suggested tying in promotional work with the North and South Downs Way (see email accompanying Letters of Support).

Businesses and stakeholders will be updated at key points during the delivery of the project. Businesses will also be offered training and guidance on how to make the most of the Downs Link improvements.

As well as digital marketing, the strategy plans for targeted tourism campaigns, PR releases to the travel trade and local media, business engagement and business training, consumer and partner email/e-newsletter campaigns. These campaigns will include highlighted promotions around specific offers and experiences, including the Downs Link route itself and 'experience packages' with businesses and attractions along the route.

The attached Marketing Strategy and accompanying Marketing Planner offer a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and activities that will be followed to promote the Downs Link project from the announcement of the grant, the delivery of the project, the official opening of all the schemes, and ongoing promotion of the West Sussex offer.

See Appendix x for Service Specification and Framework Agreement

See Appendix X for Marketing Strategy and Marketing Planner

8.3.4 Competition and displacement

a) Provide full details of any other businesses offering the same or similar services or products as proposed by your project:

There are a number of other popular cycling, walking and riding routes in the area including the North and South Downs Way, the Monarch's Way, Centurion Way and the National Cycle Route. However, the project will enhance and support these routes, providing a better network of routes overall that will appeal to active tourists who will do one or more route and are more likely therefore to extend their stay in the area. Therefore, is not in competition with other businesses, services or facilities, and will contribute to a continuous all-weather traffic-free shared route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders that interlinks with other public rights of way along its length.

b) Explain what impact your project will have on the competitor businesses identified above:

In fact, the other linked routes such as the North and South Downs Ways and businesses near them are likely to benefit. The project has been discussed with the National Trails & Rights of Way Lead Officer, responsible for the South Downs Way at the South Downs National Park Authority, who is fully supportive of this application and even suggests tying in promotional work with the North and South Downs Way. (see Letters of Support and accompanying covering email)

We are anticipating that the increased numbers will come from the rapid growth in active tourism in our area, as well as the projected increase in staycations and overseas visitors, and will not displace users of other tourist attractions to any significant extent. The most recent published statistics clearly demonstrate an increase in active tourism, of which cycling and walking are key activities, and an increase in staycations and in overseas visitors. This is evidenced in the following extracts:

The **Horsham District Visitor Strategy 2018-2023 (Appendices)** points out that in a sector that is predicted to grow nationally by 3.8% per annum to 2025 there is a clear opportunity to increase the benefits that the visitor economy could bring to the district, and that the district was not fully capitalising on stronger national and regional growth in both domestic and international overnight visitors who generate higher levels of expenditure per trip than day visitors.

The report explains that research conducted by ABTA in 2016 found that holidaying at home, or taking a staycation, is on the rise once again with 30% of respondents saying they planned to only holiday in the UK during 2016, compared with 23% in 2015. Average number of trips in the UK also rose to 2 trips per year, up from 1.7 trips in the previous year. Countryside breaks continue to be popular with almost one quarter (24%) of respondents and are the third most popular option behind city breaks and beach holidays. Mintel reported in 2015 that expenditure on domestic trips rose 22%

between 2010 and 2015 and has further forecast that the value of domestic trips should rise steadily to 2020.

The Visitor Strategy Appendices also outline the main national tourism trends that are most relevant to Horsham District, growth areas that underpin this project in seeking a larger share of a growing market, rather than displacement of current visitors from other areas, facilities and services. These growth areas include:

- The continued growth in demand for domestic short breaks from the empty nester, family and millennials (20 to 40-year olds)
- The growth in leisure trips linked to visits to friends and relatives
- The increasing interest in experiences, activity holidays and breaks and spa breaks
 - Demand for leisure breaks from empty nesters and Millennials
 - International visitors (inbound tourism to UK is increasing) from Dutch, German, Swiss, French

Visit Britain 2018 inbound tourism forecast is for 41.7 million visits, an increase of 4.4% on 2017; and £26.9 billion in visitor spending, an increase of 6.8% on 2017.

<https://www.visitbritain.org/forecast>

Horsham District Visitor Economy Strategy 018-2023 Appendices points out that Horsham is not capitalising on the growth of both domestic and international staying visitors. The southeast is attracting increased numbers of international visitors, however they are not finding their way to the Horsham district. These are higher spending visitors than day visitors and those international visitors staying in serviced accommodation were spending on average £122 per night.

https://www.horsham.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/49338/Visitor-Economy-Strategy-2018-23-Appendices.pdf

Gatwick Airport's Impact on the Visitor Economy 2018, a study by Oxford Economics in 2017 commissioned by the Gatwick Growth Board to look at the impact of both overseas and inbound visitors to the local economy (including London). This report confirms that Gatwick's tourism footprint extends far wider than the capital city. This reveals that in 2017, while just over half (56 percent) of overseas visitors' overnight stays were within London, a further quarter (24 percent) were spread across the South East, including the Coast to Capital LEP (12 percent) and the Gatwick Diamond area (4 percent).

Based on data from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), it is estimated that 5.5 million international visitors entered the UK through Gatwick in 2017. While these visitors were predominantly European in origin and the majority travelled to the UK for leisure purposes (such as holidays and visits to friends and relatives), Gatwick's overseas visitors hail from every continent and reflect a full variety of trip purposes, including business trips, study and shopping.

The report – Gatwick Airport's Impact on the Visitor Economy - estimates that 90,000 nights were spent in the Horsham district by overseas visitors entering the country via Gatwick Airport and 20,000 nights by domestic visitors flying in via the airport.

The Gatwick report estimates, that under one scenario of passenger traffic growing by around 20% from 2016 to 2025, the Airport's activity would facilitate an increased economic impact, reaching £6.5 billion in GDP terms (measured in 2016 prices) and around 98,000 jobs. Some of this would undoubtedly lead to a growth in the visitor economy in the Horsham area, in which this project lies.

<https://www.gatwickairport.com/globalassets/business--community/new-community--sustainability/economy/gatwick-visitor-economy-impact-final.pdf>

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8.4	Financial health and projections
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a) Explain how the proposed project will impact financially on your existing business operations:

The proposed project will not impact financially on existing business operations. West Sussex County Council is a public body, with a duty to only maintain the current status of the Downs Link. The proposed project involves one off costs for upgrade and will then continue to be maintained from existing West Sussex County Council revenue funding.
The matched funding has already been identified from funding streams including Section 106 and the Integrated Transport Block that have to be spent on physical infrastructure projects and that therefore will not impact on our main business operations.

b) If you are a new business or self-employed, explain your financial capacity to successfully deliver the project:

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c) Provide the rationale and key financial assumptions used to complete the cash flow projections in the FA appendix spreadsheet at Tab A:

The cash flow forecast is based on West Sussex County Council's draft Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 which will be formally approved by County Council in February 2019. As a Local Authority, West Sussex County Council has a statutory requirement to operate a balanced revenue budget. The Council's long-term cash-flows are driven by (a) the Council's approved capital programme; and (b) forecasts for usable reserves, provisions and working balances.

8.5	Delivery and sustainability
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8.5.1 Project delivery

Explain how you will ensure that the project is successfully delivered:

The upgrade to the Downs Link is fully deliverable in the timescale for EAFRD, the delivery schedule has been scoped, match funding is confirmed and there are no planning or ownership issues.

Governance

WSCC has an established governance framework for managing Capital Programmes of this nature. A specific Project Board will be set up and will meet monthly to ensure the day to day delivery of the schemes is on track. This Board will be chaired by the Senior Responsible Officer who will also report monthly to a Directorate Level Board that monitors the delivery of the Highways and Transport Capital Programme. Delivery against key milestones and the management of budget and risk will form the basis of these meetings and reports. Any issues can be escalated quickly if necessary and addressed.

The project management team comprises experts in their respective areas, who collectively bring years of experience delivering similar projects. They include:

Charlotte Weller – Countryside Services Manager

Geraldine Fewster – Countryside Ranger

Financial management of the project -

Jess Winkworth – Economic Development Officer

Jess has worked in Economic Development and on visitor economy initiatives for the past 4 years. Jess will ensure that promotion of the improvements and visitor growth is delivered through the

'Experience West Sussex' tourism initiative using WSCC corporate and digital marketing channels.

Kim Adsett – Communications and Engagement Lead (Economy, Highways and Infrastructure)

Kim has 20 years communications experience and has worked in WSCC's communications team for 12 years. Kim will oversee the WSCC corporate communications for the project including media coverage, social media, design work and stakeholder communications.

Cobb Digital Ltd – Digital Marketing Agency

Cobb Digital Ltd is a full-service digital marketing agency delivering the 'Experience West Sussex' marketing campaign and specialist PR activities. Founded in 2013, the team is comprised of experts in their field experience in online marketing, website optimisation, paid media and PR. Cobb Digital have been delivering the marketing campaign since 2018.

Complete the table below by listing the main risks to the success of this project that you have considered and provide details of the steps that you will take to manage or mitigate them:

Risks description	Chance of risk occurring	Impact of risk	Planned action to manage or mitigate against the risk or impact
<p>Financial Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding target not reached, project will not commence • Contract overruns and exceeds forecast costs, delayed project completion, risk to funding awarded • Contractor goes bankrupt • Risk to WSCC finances and reputation 	<p>Low</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match-funding has been confirmed and agreed by the Council. • Specifications will inform tender process. All work to be executed in accordance with the Countryside Contractors Framework Agreement 2015. • Active contractor management, regular progress update, Construction Phase Plan • Procurement will take place using the already established Countryside Contractors Framework where Contractors have been vetted as part of the initial procurement process and are again competitively selected for individual projects • Contracts will be raised that will determine remuneration in line with stages of development, all cash flow forecasts and invoices will be managed internally
<p>Health & Safety Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk to safety of workers and the public during construction • Working on embankments and near water courses • Visitors, walkers and cyclists using the path during construction • Wet weather conditions causing delays/unacceptable material installation 	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors will complete Risk Assessments and Method Statements as part of the overall safety management of the project, to be approved prior to commencement of any work • Put in hazard form and point out at site visit • Contractor to work with WSCC regarding management of public whilst works are ongoing, eg when can public access, can they be escorted through by contractor?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazards that cannot be removed by design including traffic management, works causing injury, fumes, etc 			<p>No work to be carried out at weekends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply and install protective fencing and warning signs with appropriate emergency contact information • Contractor to monitor weather forecast and notify of any delays • Contractor to use appropriate plant, undertake briefings and install marking and goal posts • Contractor to prepare RA and method statements to document safe procedures and to be included in the developed Construction Phase Plan
<p>Environmental Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nesting birds, other protected wildlife in the works area • Risk of flooding from surface water 	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, avoid driving on verges to maintain their integrity for flora and horse riders. • Work to be carried out from end July to mid-September on sections where disturbance to nesting birds is likely • Contractor to address risk and controls as identified in the Construction Phase Plan • The contractor shall take due care with all works where bridleway crosses streams and watercourses to ensure that pollution does not occur.
<p>Communication Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness by locals and visitors of extended pathway – outputs and projected use is not achieved 	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Plan outlines media activity to raise awareness and profile of the improved sections, includes construction phase and section re-opening. Signage on route, monitoring usage along the route

8.5.2 Exit strategy and future sustainability (for revenue projects only)

Explain how your business will continue to deliver and sustain its service / provision after the grant funding ends:

Once upgraded, the County Council will be able to maintain the Downs Link in its new state from its own resources. Revenue funding is provided by WSCC to deliver maintenance works on its Countryside sites and Public Rights of Way. The Downs Link is both a Public Right of Way and a Countryside site so the total budget available for works on these types of assets across the county is approximately £400,000 per annum. Defects are identified through routine inspections by staff or reports by members of the public. The works are then prioritised and delivered through our routine maintenance contractors or by volunteers, led by WSCC staff.

The revenue elements of the marketing strategy will be co-ordinated by the Experience West Sussex on-going tourism initiative, which is a jointly funded tourism partnership formed by West Sussex County Council and all of the Districts and Boroughs of West Sussex, funding by pooled business rates. This initiative has been running since 2015 and has a strong base of over 300 tourism sector businesses which is growing annually

Section 9. Confidential information

9.1 Tell us here if there is any information in this full application that you wish to keep confidential from the LEP Area ESIF Sub-Committee and explain the reason why:

Please read the declaration and sign in the relevant space below, then complete the supporting documents checklist to ensure that you provide all of the information required to assess your application.

Declarations and signatures

Applicant's Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information contained in this application is true and correct and I accept full responsibility for it.

I understand that, should this application be successful, I will be required to supply additional information. If there is any change to the information I have provided, I will notify Rural Payments Agency without delay.

I understand that any information I supply may be used by public bodies or their appointed agents in connection with the Rural Development Programme for England and that I may be contacted from time to time, whether or not my application is successful.

If applicable, I confirm that I am a farmer as defined in Article 4 of Council Regulations (EC) 1307/2013, and as referred to in the BPS Guidance.

I am aware of the conditions that apply to this application and have complied with them. I declare that I have read, understood and complied with all of the relevant guidance information relating to the Rural Development Programme for England.

I understand that my business may be inspected and I agree to give access, cooperate and provide such assistance as is required. I confirm that I have disclosed details of all business interests held by any members of this business.

I have declared details of any thing or person connected with my business (including employees) and this grant application that may impact on or cause a conflict between my business and any part of this grant application.

Where I am signing the application as an officer, partner or director authorised to do so, I will provide a copy of the authorisation to RPA on request.

I understand that if my application is successful, I will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement, and payment of any grant funding will be conditional on compliance with the terms of that agreement.

I recognise that it is my responsibility to obtain all necessary permissions from my landlord and in signing this application confirm that I have done so.

I understand that use of an agent will not limit my responsibility to comply with the terms of that agreement, nor does it affect my personal responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this application.

This declaration must be signed by:

- a) the applicant(s) in his or her or their personal capacity or;
- b) where the declaration is being signed on behalf of an incorporated body such as a limited company;
 - i) all partners or directors of the incorporated body or;
 - ii) a partner or director of the incorporated body who is authorised to sign on behalf of the incorporated body or;
- c) where the application is being signed on behalf on an unincorporated body:
 - i) all partners, trustees or an officer of an unincorporated body or;
 - ii) a partner, trustee or officer who is authorised to sign on behalf of the unincorporated body

Applicant name **Date**

Applicant signature

Applicant name **Date**

Applicant signature

Applicant name **Date**

Applicant signature

Applicant name **Date**

Applicant signature

To ensure that we can continue to improve the effectiveness of our services and schemes we provide, we may wish to contact you in the future. Please indicate whether you would be happy to be contacted by us or a third party working on our behalf.

Yes

Important Information

You should not commence project activity, or enter in to any legal contracts, including the ordering or purchasing of any equipment or services, before your application has been formally approved and you have entered into a grant funding agreement. Any expenditure incurred before the approval date is at your own risk and may render the project ineligible for support.

If you know or recklessly make a false statement to obtain grant aid for yourself or anyone else you risk prosecution, the recovery of all grant payments, an additional financial penalty and exclusion from other schemes

operated by the RPA/EU. By submitting this form you are confirming that you have read and agree with the above declarations and you consent to us processing the information that we collect from you in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

Privacy Policy

Your information will be stored and processed in accordance with the current data protection legislation. Defra is the data controller for personal data you give to us or we hold about you. For more information visit our Web site at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency/about/personal-information-charter>.

We are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other obligations under law which require us to act transparently and which grant certain rights of access to the public to information held by us. This means that, whilst we will respect the sensitivity of the information you provide, there may be legal requirements which oblige us to disclose this information.

We will use the information you provide to administer, process and assess your application for funding under the Rural Development Programme for England and to administer any funding if your application is successful. We may publish details about this application on our website (this may include all or some of the project and applicant details).

Information may be shared with other persons or organisations helping us with the assessment and monitoring of applications. Information you provide may also be shared with other government departments, agencies and third parties appointed in connection with the administration of the Rural Development Programme for England. Such organisations may use this information to contact you for occasional customer research aimed at improving the delivery of this programme.

Your information may also be shared with other government departments and agencies for the purpose of fraud prevention. The application and evaluation of grant funding is also subject to audit and reviews by internal auditors who may need to access the information you submit in your application.

If you supply personal information relating to third parties (e.g. delivery partners) as part of your application, you must ensure that you inform those third parties about how you use this information and inform them that this information will be passed to and processed by us as set out in this policy.

You may be asked to supply some sensitive personal data as part of your application such as information about racial or ethnic origin, political opinion, religious beliefs, trade union membership, physical or mental health, criminal offences or proceedings. We will only use this information for the purpose of processing your application and for statistical analysis. If it is shared with other government bodies for the purpose of statistical analysis, it will be shared on an anonymised basis.

We will not hold your information for longer than is necessary. We will hold the majority of your information for three years after the programme closure (currently expected to be 2023), unless we have a legitimate reason to hold this for longer, for instance in defending any legal proceedings brought by any person or body in relation to your application or any funding we have provided, or as required by law or any relevant code of practice.

If any information that we hold about you is, or becomes, inaccurate or incomplete, please tell us and we will correct it.

Agent Authorisation

If you wish an agent or business manager to act on your behalf in respect of communication with the RPA over this project you must enter the details at section 3, consent and sign the following declaration:

I the undersigned, hereby authorise the person named at question 3.2 on the application form to act on my/our behalf to liaise with the Rural Payments Agency over any future correspondence concerning this application and for all correspondence to be copied to the email address provided in question 3.5.

Applicant name

Date

Applicant signature

Supporting Documents Checklist

Where applicable, you must submit the following documents with your full application.

Please note that we will not return any documents so please provide copies.

Please read the guidance on 'How to complete a full application' for more details on the supporting documents.

Document	Supporting Notes	Click to confirm it is included	Applicant's comments
Full application appendix spreadsheet	You must complete all tabs in the spreadsheet: Application details Tab A – Cash Flow Forecast Tab B – Costs & Suppliers Tab C – Funding & Claims Tab D – Project Milestones Tab E – GP Outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>For the applicant business:</u> Last two or three consecutive and most recent years of full statutory audited / unaudited accounts	For applications for grants of less than £35,000, copies of financial accounts are needed for the last two years. For applications for grants over £35,000, copies are needed for the last three years Make sure your accounts are full sets. All pages are required, including profit and loss, balance sheet, cover, title and notes pages	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p><u>For any linked businesses:</u> Last two or three consecutive and most recent years of full statutory audited / unaudited accounts for any linked businesses</p>	<p>For applications for grants of less than £35,000, copies of financial accounts are needed for the last two years. For applications for grants over £35,000, copies are needed for the last three years</p> <p>Make sure the accounts are full sets as shown above</p> <p>If the applicant business is part of a group of companies (parent or subsidiary) please provide consolidated group accounts as well</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><u>For new businesses or self-employed applicants:</u> Latest tax returns, management accounts or an opening statement from an accountant that includes expected income and operating expenses</p>	<p>New business are those that have been trading for less than 2 years and do not have a set of accounts reporting at least 12 months trading performance</p> <p>Self-employed applicants may not produce formal business accounts</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><u>Appropriate consents and permissions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of full planning permission or • Evidence that planning is not required • Tenancy agreement information <p>Environmental consents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed building consents • Any other licences or consents required for the project 	<p>Tenancy information must include the sections from the tenancy agreement containing the property address, tenant, landlord, signatures and for fixed term agreements, the tenancy term</p> <p>You must ensure that you have full planning consent for your project before submitting your application</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Confirmation and evidence of private project funding from each funder</p>	<p>The evidence must show who is providing the funding, whether it is confirmed (or the timescale for obtaining confirmation), the amount of funding, who it is being offered to and that it is in relation to the project</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>3 quotes, references to catalogue listings or formal tenders for each item of expenditure</p>	<p>Each of these will be checked to ensure they comply with the requirements set out in the 'How to complete a full</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	<p>application' at page 22</p> <p>If tenders are proposed or have been obtained, provide a detailed specification of works that has been compiled by a professionally qualified external consultant, for example a Quantity Surveyor</p>		
For any second hand item – confirmation from the supplier	Please see the guidance on 'How to complete a full application' at 5.9 for specific details of the requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If applicable, proof of irrecoverable VAT on eligible costs	You will need to provide evidence of the VAT status of the business that confirms that you are not VAT registered or are making exempt supplies (confirmation letter from a professionally qualified independent accountant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Evidence of support for the project	For example, this will be letters of support or forward orders from existing/potential customers and trade industry organisations where their support is linked and of benefit to the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Evidence of need and demand for the project	Feasibility studies, market research, marketing plan or publicity plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
A copy of your Equality and/or Diversity Policy	Please submit this if your business has one	<input type="checkbox"/>	