

Appendix 4 – Urgency - General Exception Form

Urgent Cabinet Report/Delegated Decision Form

Report/Decision Title	Tees Urban Nature Network (TUNN)
Date of request	29/07/2025
Date of meeting/decision	

Urgent – General Exception - Reasons for urgency outlined below

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council as lead applicant and accountable body, in partnership with Middlesbrough Council, Stockton Borough Council, and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, and others, have been successful securing a Nature Towns and Cities Grant for the Tees Urban Nature Network project. Led by the National Trust, National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and Natural England, the Nature Towns and Cities programme supports councils and communities to embed people and nature at the heart of urban regeneration.

The Council were notified by NLHF on 10 July 2025 that the TUNN proposal has been selected by the evaluation panel to receive funding. A deadline of 7 August 2025 to confirm acceptance of the funding has been imposed by the funder, warranting the request to take a general exception to the Delegated Decision Forward Plan requirement to publish the decision record for 28 days in advance of the decision being taken. Without the general exception the Council is at risk of not fulfilling mandatory grant conditions and forfeiting the grant allocation.

This request is compliant with the requirements of the general exception process, with the Climate and Environment Scrutiny improvement Committee Chair, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Culture, and the Leader having received written notification of the matter to which the decision is to be made.

The 3-year project is expected to start on 1st August 2025 and will end 31st July 2028.

I confirm that the relevant chair of Scrutiny and Improvement Committee (or if there is not chair, the whole committee individually) and the Cabinet Member have been informed by notice in writing of the decision to be taken.					
Officer name (Delegated Power Author)	Lisa Haetzman	Officer Signature		Date	29/07/2025
Assistant Director Name	Chris Moon	Assistant Director signature		Date	29/07/2025

This urgent report/decision has been seen and agreed by the following:	
Officer / Member	Signature
Managing Director	
Section 151 Officer	
Monitoring Officer	

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Are the details of the decision to be public or confidential?

Public

If the details of the decision are confidential, please select the category for exemption under the Local Government Act 1972

Choose an item.

Reference	GEE-25-247
Corporate Plan Priority	Clean and Tidy
Delegation Title	Tees Urban Nature Network (TUNN) Project
Delegated Power Number	184 – power to accept and utilise grants towards expenditure incurred by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and authority to sign appropriate application forms.
Date of Exercise	30/7/25
Cabinet Member	Cllr Carrie Richardson
Assistant Director	Chris Moon

Type of Decision (Key/Executive/Non-Executive)	Key - Executive
FOR KEY DECISIONS ONLY	
Delegated Power Forward Plan Ref	If a key decision has not been published in the forward plan at least 28 days in advance of the decision being taken, then the urgency or special urgency rules must be applied, and relevant forms completed in conjunction with Democratic Services
Date Decision Published in Forward Plan	Click or tap to enter a date. To be completed by Democratic Services
Urgency (For Key Decisions not included in Forward Plan only)	Urgent - General Exception - Forms Attached

Background to decision:

In October 2024 the Government launched the Nature Towns and Cities programme led by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust, and Natural England. The programme aims to embed people and nature at the heart of urban regeneration, offering revenue grants of between £250,000 to £1 million from a £15 million UK wide aspiring to enable 100 towns and cities to become better places to live and work.

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) as lead applicant and accountable body, in partnership with Middlesbrough Council (MA), Stockton Borough Council (SBC) and Tees Valley

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Wildlife Trust (TVWT) have successfully secured funding from the Nature Towns and Cities grant for the Tees Urban Nature Network (TUNN) 3-year project.

A broad network of cross-sector partners co-developed the full bid and delivery structure through an extensive series of online and in-person workshops. The approach aligns with relevant local and national policy and supports embedding learning and best practice from successful local place-based initiatives such as You've Got This and Nextdoor Nature.

The grant allocation of £649,000, alongside match funding and in-kind contributions, will support TUNN to build the capacity and capabilities of communities and partners to deliver nature recovery, and secure sustainable investment in blue and green infrastructure.

The 3-year funding aims to empower communities by building capacity through inclusive, evidence-based engagement, particularly for marginalised groups. It supports training for community organisations to participate in decision-making and manage green and blue spaces equitably. The project will host events to share learning, establish a collaborative network of partners, and recruit key staff to lead the initiative. It also includes participation in regular learning sessions, working towards Nature Towns and Cities accreditation, and developing a long-term sustainability plan focused on partnerships, policy influence, green finance, and community involvement.

To accept the grant funding total allocation of £649,000 from The National lottery Heritage Fund, grant conditions and formal contract must be adhered to.

Decision Considerations:

Terms and conditions of the grant funding and formal contract.

Presented at DMT 17 July 2025.

Full details of decision:

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC), Middlesbrough Council (MA), Stockton Borough Council (SBC) and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (TVWT) known as the TUNN Partnership Management Team have entered a formal collaborative agreement with each other.

Approval is requested to accept the grant funding award of £649,000 on behalf of the partnership as lead applicant and accountable body.

The project is to commence in August 2025 and will end on 31 July 2028.

Financial detail:


The revenue only grant funding will be allocated over the 3-year period as follows:

- Dedicated staff (new recruitment)
- Training for staff and volunteers
- Travel and expenses for staff and volunteers
- Event costs
- Equipment and materials
- Recruitment
- Publicity and promotion
- Evaluation

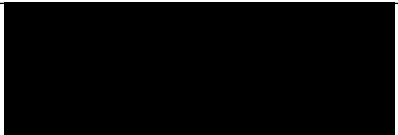
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning and community enablement <p>Total value of the 3-year project is £747,792 including match funding and in-kind contributions, the total grant funding allocated from The National Heritage Lottery Fund is £649,000.</p>	
Budget Code	11519
Is budget available for full contract/service without causing additional pressure?	External revenue grant funded project
Annual Contract Value	£N/A
Total Contract Value	Grant funding allocation: £649,000
<p>Delivering Social Value:</p> <p>All spend commitment will take into consideration the Council's Social Value Charter 2022.</p> <p>The TUNN collaborative partnership will seek to create new innovative bespoke blended funding models whereby a co-ordinated approach to social value commitments will be key.</p> <p>The TUNN collaborative partnership will work to ensure community voice is embedded in the development of green/blue space projects and decision-making.</p>	
<p>Reasons for Decision:</p> <p>This investment will nurture collaboration between communities, local authorities, nature organisations, education establishments, businesses, and community groups. It will unite and empower communities to lead transformational change and work towards unlocking innovative new finance models to reimagine and sustain green infrastructure in urban areas.</p> <p>The decision supports several strategic aims including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Recovery & Environmental Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore, connect, and enhance habitats across the urban core of the tri-borough area. Address habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity. Support community resilience through nature-based climate adaptation. Build the value of nature in communities, transforming green/blue spaces to valued community assets. Community Empowerment & Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable and support communities to participate, co-create, lead change, and engage creatively with green/blue spaces. Build collective capacity and support training, skills development, volunteering, citizen science, and non-academic routes to employment in the environment sector. Prioritise access and inclusion, particularly for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. Health & Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to and engagement with nature to address health inequalities. Embed green/blue infrastructure into health, care, planning, sustainability, 	

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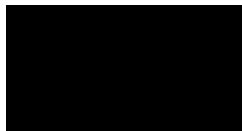
<p>environment, cultural, and regeneration strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote active lifestyles and mental wellbeing through safe, inclusive, and accessible natural spaces. <p>4. Policy Influence & System Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence local policy and planning to embed nature recovery in decision-making including the refresh of the Local Plan. Challenge barriers to community participation and sustainable land management. Align with and support the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and local and national policy frameworks. <p>5. Sustainable Investment & Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a pipeline of innovative and investable green/blue infrastructure projects. Explore innovative mechanisms to sustain investment in green/blue infrastructure and deliver multiple environmental, economic, social and health benefits. Build long-term funding strategies to reduce reliance on short-term grants and ensure the sustainability of our natural assets. 	
<p>Details of alternative options considered (if any) and reasons for rejection:</p> <p>Do not accept the funding – Rejected - Local Authorities are experiencing increasing budgetary pressures resulting in underinvestment in green infrastructure. External capital grant funding is unsustainable and offers little opportunity to achieve the magnitude of change required, nor sustain any investments made due to restricted capacity to take on additional maintenance of new or improved assets in existing teams. Additional capacity is required to support the development of new ways of working, and to tackle some of the issues affecting progress.</p>	
<p>Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Elected Member consulted in relation to the decision:</p> <p>This must be left blank. Business Support will seek this information from the Cabinet Member.</p>	
<p>Details of any dispensation granted in respect of any conflict of interest:</p> <p>This must be left blank. Business Support will seek this information from the Cabinet Member.</p>	
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p>State where any additional papers may be held, any background information (if applicable)</p>	
Officer Name (Print)	LISA HAETZMAN
Officer Signature	
Officer Submission Date	29/07/2025
Procurement Officer Name (Print)	N/A

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Procurement Approval Signature	N/A	Procurement to confirm the decision complies with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules
Date of Approval	N/A	
Finance Manager Name (Print)	Christine Wood	
Finance Approval Signature		Finance Manager to confirm that budget approved for the decision
Date of Approval	29/07/2025	

Reference	GEE-25-247
Delegated Power Forward Plan Reference	
Corporate Plan Priority	Clean and Tidy
Delegation Title	Tees Urban Nature Network (TUNN)
Delegated Power Number	184
Date of Exercise	31/07/2025
Cabinet Member	Cllr Alec Brown
Assistant Director	Chris Moon

Signatures

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER 	Date 30/07/2025
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR GROWTH ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT 	Date 30/07/2025

Call-In (Key Decisions Only)

Call-In to be dis-applied due to urgency, reasons as follows:

The Council were notified by NLHF on 10 July 2025 that the TUNN proposal has been selected by the evaluation panel to receive funding, and subject to an embargo until 18

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July 2025. A deadline of 7 August 2025 to confirm acceptance of the funding has been imposed by the funder, warranting the request to take a general exception to the Delegated Decision Forward Plan and dis-apply call-in. Without the general exception the Council is at risk of not fulfilling mandatory grant conditions and forfeiting the grant allocation.

Reasons for dis-applying Call-In due to urgency to be added here if relevant. This will need to be reported to the next meeting of the Borough Council and the reasons must demonstrate that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.

Date Decision will become effective	7 August 2025 To be completed by Democratic Services – date will be not less than expiry of 5 working days from publication unless urgency applies.
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