Suffolk coast and heaths and areas of natural beauty wins the Lottery!

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Councillor David Wood, Chair of Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership, said: “I am delighted with this news that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is backing our proposals with a 90% grant for our project. This is another great opportunity to put Suffolk's coastal areas higher up on the national map and to build on the work of our partners in involving local communities in playing an active and informed role in shaping their future.”

The project drawn up by Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB will include opportunities to restore, manage and survey coastal habitats such as vegetated shingle and salt marsh; tell the story of some of the iconic buildings such as Orford Ness Lighthouse and the Martello Towers; improve access to the coast, but also manage the impacts; work with young people to inspire the next generation of custodians; provide opportunities for community-led projects; and produce materials that enhance people’s experience and understanding of the area.

It is planned that the project will run along the length of the Suffolk Heritage Coast, in the coastal part of the AONB, from Kessingland to Felixstowe. It is an area that is, and always has been, subject to rapid and significant change, with the lost town of Dunwich amongst the most famous of examples.

“Touching the Tide” will look at how the coastal communities live with cultural and natural change, in this exceptional landscape of high quality heritage. It will focus on the past, the present and the future to improve understanding and appreciation of coastal change; capture and tell stories about the changing coastal landscape; actively involve people in caring for their coast and take a role in the decision making processes affecting it.

The £1million Suffolk Heritage Coast Landscape Partnership expects to start in 2013, after a funded development phase to secure the full grant that has been earmarked1 for Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The 90% award by HLF of a first-round pass is £896,800, including development funding of £86,500. The project will build on some of the pioneering work being done by partner organisations and communities throughout the Suffolk coast, and is made possible through backing from a wide range of local and national partner organisations and communities.

Councillor David Wood, Chair of Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership, adds: “With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund “Touching the Tide” will build on the current situation, in an active and engaging way for the coastal communities, by developing a greater degree of joint ownership and understanding of the heritage of Suffolk’s coast, its coastal processes and the need to adapt to change. Getting the balance right between the need to protect our world-renowned natural environment and the inevitable need to change and adapt is something that we need to engage all our communities in understanding and plotting a path forward. This exciting project will have an important role in making that all possible.”

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: “We are delighted to be able to award this first-round pass to Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Rich archaeological, religious and military heritage can be found nestling within the precious and important natural landscape of the Suffolk Coast. These threads are drawn together through this imaginative scheme, which will encourage communities and visitors to celebrate its past, explore its present and consider the future, particularly the impact of climate change and coastal erosion, by

providing exciting opportunities for people to get involved in a range of projects."

Notes to editors

[1] A Landscape Partnership (LP) earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while it does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support. The applicant then progresses to the second round and submits a further, fully-developed application to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that LPs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided that their final proposals fully meet the programme's criteria.

[2] HLF's Landscape Partnerships are helping bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and rural communities. Grants range from £250,000 up to £2m. The next closing date for LP applications is 28 February 2012.

Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. Located on the coast of East Anglia the AONB extends from the Stour estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and Kessingland in the north. It covers 150 square miles, including wildlife-rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

The UK's 46 AONBs are part of a 'family' of protected areas that also includes our National Parks. All receive special protection because of their outstanding landscape, heritage and wildlife. Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit is hosted by Suffolk County Council and supported by Defra, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Babergh District Council, Waveney District Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council and a variety of organisations from the voluntary and private sector.

Further information

Please contact Katie Owen, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6036 / 07973 613820 or email katieo@hlf.org.uk.

Alternatively, contact Cathy Smith, Funding Officer at Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit, on 01394 384 948 / 07872 417 030 or emai catherine.smith@suffolk.gov.uk.