

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting2nd November 2006

1. Title of Item/Report

Review of Preston Hall and Park/Museums Strategy

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered the report and recommendations of a review of Preston Hall and Park / Museums Strategy, undertaken by the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee between April and October 2006. The report was presented to Cabinet by the Chairman of the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee.

It was explained that the review was undertaken as a result of the need to examine services offered at the Hall and Park in light of the recently adopted Museum Strategy. The Select Committee took evidence from a wide variety of witnesses – both internal and external, and also undertook consultation with residents of the Borough via a number of focus groups (including a youth focus group). The Select Committee also held a site visit to the Dorman and Captain Cook Museums in Middlesbrough in order to undertake comparative work.

The whole of the review concerned discretionary services of the Council. There was no legal obligation to provide them in this manner, or at all. Having considered this, the Committee agreed that the services and facilities should continue for the following reasons:

- The Museums Service was valued for enhancing the quality of the lives of the users, not only as part of Education but also in enhancing people's appreciation of the history of their own area and, more widely, how they had come to be.
- The Park gave varied opportunities for healthy recreation, relaxation, entertainment and the appreciation of this part of the valley of the lower Tees.
- Improved facilities for the people of the Borough were more likely to attract tourists from outside of the area, boosting the local economy.

Cabinet noted that it became apparent to the Committee that there were

problems and opportunities on three levels:

- The small things for which Officers were expected to take remedial action out of existing resources without the need for Cabinet approval. A number of these appear in the written evidence provided to Cabinet. Officers had given assurances that they would deal promptly with any Health & Safety issues coming to their attention.

- Improvements, which needed more thought, and investment but which could be started in the next year or two. An example of this would be to begin to make Preston Park an example of good practice in catering for people with disabilities, not merely complying with the Disability Discrimination Act.

- The longer-term vision, the realisation of which might depend on an unpredictable timetable of availability of external resources, such as grants. In this the Committee were heartened and encouraged by the announcement during their work of the success of the Council's bid for £206,000 Heritage Lottery Funding to restore the Winter Garden of the Hall.

Resulting recommendations were based around the need to address the issues outlined above and to ensure that the Hall and Park achieved their potential as a broadly based public amenity and facility of historical significance.

Cabinet discussed the report and supported the recommendations.

The Leader, on behalf of Cabinet, thanked the Chairman and Members of the Select Committee for the excellent work they had produced.

RESOLVED that

1. the Park and Museum Master plan be produced, with consideration given to the inclusion of the issues outlined in the findings of the review.

2. greater collaboration between the Museum Service, Events Team and various community settings (Community Centres, Libraries, Schools, etc) be undertaken.

3. neighbourhood representatives be include on the Park Management Group, to ensure:

- o Greater engagement with local communities to produce a fair and flexible activities framework

- o Improve communication between service managers and the local communities.

4. the current entrance fee be retained, until further review. Officers to explore innovative admission packages in connection with events and park and ride.

5. CMT review Park and Hall management with the aim of providing a more coherent and 'joined-up' approach to working.

3. Reasons for the Decision

This topic had been identified as an area meriting a scrutiny review.

The objectives/aims developed by the Committee for the review were as follows: -

- To ensure that the facilities are appropriately developed as a public amenity and facility of historical significance, whilst ensuring there are no detrimental effects on residents adjacent to the Park

- Re-orientation of the Museum Service in line with the Museum Strategy

- findings from the review to be reported to Cabinet/Council with recommendations

The Review excluded the Preston Lane Allotments (on the north side of the Park), owned by Stockton Council, and the allotments in the south-west corner of the Park (leased by Stockton Council to Preston Parish Council).

The review addresses the following strategic corporate objectives:

- Children and Young People: Enjoy and Achieve – Increase the range of accessible culture/leisure and sporting activities available for children and young people

- Healthier Communities and Adults – Extend the range and quality of opportunities for people to experience culture and leisure

- Healthier Communities and Adults – Improve libraries and museums

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

By no later than Midnight on Friday 10th November 2006

Proper Officer
08 September 2006