

## **CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA**

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**2 NOVEMBER 2006**

**REPORT OF ADULTS,  
LEISURE AND CULTURE  
COMMITTEE**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Arts, Leisure and Culture– Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor O'Donnell**

#### **REVIEW OF PRESTON HALL & PARK / MUSEUMS STRATEGY**

1. Summary

This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the review of Preston Hall and Park / Museums Strategy undertaken by the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee between April and October 2006.

2. Recommendations

Recommended that:

1. A Park and Museum Master plan to be produced, with consideration given to the inclusion of the issues outlined in the findings
2. Greater collaboration between the Museum Service, Events Team and various community settings (Community Centres, Libraries, Schools, etc)
3. Include neighbourhood representatives on Park Management Group to ensure:
  - Greater engagement with local communities to produce a fair and flexible activities framework
  - Improve communication between service managers and the local communities.
4. To retain the current entrance fee until further review. Officers to explore innovative admission packages in connection with events and park and ride.
5. Request that CMT review Park and Hall management with the aim of providing a more coherent and 'joined-up' approach to working.

### 3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

This topic was identified as an area meriting a scrutiny review at a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum held on 8 March 2006. The issue was subsequently referred to the Adults, Leisure and Culture Committee for approval, and passed to a meeting of the Executive Scrutiny Committee as part of the work programming procedure.

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. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek

improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.**

**AGENDA NO.**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**2 NOVEMBER 2006**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

## **CABINET DECISION**

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## DETAIL

1. The review was instigated as a result of the need to examine services offered at the Hall and Park in light of the recently adopted Museum Strategy. 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). Members concluded the process off with a site visit to the Dorman and Captain Cook Museums in Middlesbrough in order to undertake comparative work.
2. The whole of the review concerned discretionary services of the Council. There is 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 came to be as they are today
  - The Park gives 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 are more likely to attract tourists from outside of the area, boosting the local economy.
3. It soon became apparent that Committee Members saw problems and opportunities on three levels:
  - The small things which could not be missed by anyone looking carefully 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 in **Appendix 5** of the report as having been remedied by the time this report was finalised. Officers gave 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.
4. Resulting recommendations are based around the need to address the issues outlined above and to ensure that the Hall and Park achieve their potential as a broadly based public amenity and facility of historical significance

## **CONSULTATION, INCLUDING WARD COUNCILLORS**

4. Initial consultation has been undertaken with Members, Officers, Residents and Park Users, and will be an integral and ongoing element of the recommended Master plan

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5. To be identified as part of the recommended Master Plan

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

6. Services offered at the Park and Hall are integral to Economic Regeneration, Liveability and Children and Young People themes.

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### Background Papers:

See page 26 of the appended report

### Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

N/a