

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

5 JULY, 2007

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION

Regeneration & Transport - Lead Cabinet Member, Councillor Cook
Arts, Leisure & Culture - Lead Cabinet Member, Councillor Womphrey

PRESTON PARK AND HALL MASTERPLAN

1. Summary

In 2002 Casella Stanger produced a feasibility report on the development of Preston Park. It set out an exciting vision and was approved by Council. However, it was over ambitious and unrealisable, in both capital and revenue terms.

On the back of the original report, in 2006 a Scrutiny Committee report on Preston Park and Hall confirmed the need for a revised, realistic Masterplan with an emphasis on developing and making sense of the current incoherent visitor offer.

Any realisable master plan must be informed by likely resource availability. Two grant regimes are currently available which could fund the project; the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Main Programme, and the BIG Lottery Parks for People fund which is administered through the Heritage Lottery Distributor. The maximum realisable from each scheme is £5million. The anticipated pressure of funding the Olympics, combined with the imminent Comprehensive Spending Review, leads to a decision to go to the two schemes at the earliest opportunity. The anticipated sum of lottery bids and match funding will deliver the key elements of the proposed master plan, achieving the desired transformation. However, the proposed master plan will also provide a framework for future, further development.

The phased bidding process for both grant regimes will allow us to develop and test detail over a period of 2 years. At this stage we are seeking approval for our outline proposals.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet approve the Masterplan proposals for Preston Park and Hall, as the basis for substantial capital grant applications.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To enable the progression of proposals to secure funding to facilitate a redevelopment of Preston Park and Hall

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.

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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Cabinet approve the Masterplan proposals for the Park and Hall, as the basis for substantial capital grant applications.

DETAIL

1. Following the Scrutiny Committee report in late 2006, Officers from Stockton Borough Council have been working with Cassella Stanger (now Bureau Veritas) to refresh and update their feasibility report and produce a Masterplan for the Park and Hall.

2. Specific recommendations as agreed through the Scrutiny Committee have been worked up which include a new Masterplan for the Development which incorporates much of the detail identified during the Scrutiny in its consultation about the park. In addition further consultation is ongoing with both users and non-users and current tenants / residents to ensure the detail within the proposals is right.
3. Running parallel with the development of the Masterplan, officers are working up application for funding through both the HLF and Big Lottery.
4. Subject to Council approval, it is proposed to continue to work up funding applications to HLF Main Programme stage 1 September 2007, and Big Lottery stage 1 March 08.
5. If successful in stages 1 & 2 of both schemes funds would be available from late 2009, with work commencing mid 2010.

The Masterplan

6. The Masterplan for Preston Park and Hall is a specific requirement following the Scrutiny report by members in 2006.
7. The detail within the proposal does not radically change the park but does make better sense of the whole facility, taking into account under utilised areas and maximising synergy and complementarity.
8. In addition, greater emphasis is placed upon the historic aspect of the facility and its links with the Railway, the river and the industrial heritage. Improved visitor signposting and access is proposed, as is a new visitor welcome centre, which will act as a hub for the whole facility.
9. Highlighted on the attached plan are the key features of the proposal. They are numbered on the plan and the bracketed figures in the following notes refer to those numbers. The main characteristics of the masterplan are:
 - a) Access and egress for traffic using the park is to be address (1) by improving the entrance with the probable introduction of a roundabout on Yarm Road.
 - b) The introduction of a small visitor reception centre (2) providing information for visitors to the park facilities and events, it will also incorporate toilets and a café.
 - c) A reconfigured car park / coach park area with re established planting in both the existing car park and in the identified areas (4) and (5) subdividing the current open space to the front of the hall, but not preventing continuation of existing events. This will include improved drainage throughout which will help make more space available for usage. This combined effect of the reconfiguration of the car park and re establishment of the trees part way across the 'event field' will significantly alter the impression on arrival to the park, giving a glimpse of the hall in its parkland setting, rather than having a car park as the first thing you see.
 - d) The potential to re-establish the kitchen garden areas within the park (8) perhaps including a niche retail element specialising in traditional/rare plants, flowers and fruit.
 - e) To re-establish the views from the hall, particularly across the Tees toward Roseberry Topping (11), and to provide a general improvement to the woodland and other planted areas.
 - f) A new landing stage (12) and other features to encourage greater use of the river.
 - g) An extended Play Area (14) combining the existing type of facilities with new aerial walkways and 'tree house' structures.

- h) Improved links across the river to provide access to both Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick linking the wider network of footpaths and cycleways. (15) A number of options are being considered for a crossing such as a fixed pedestrian bridge and or a ferry crossing facility.
- i) Improved entrance signage and a general improvement to all footpaths and signage including interpretation to encourage greater use of the whole park.
- j) Restricting vehicular access to the front of the Hall to wedding cars and emergency vehicles, diverting all service and staff traffic via the existing entrance at Preston lane.
- k) Plans for the Hall itself will focus on improving use of space and flow through it, to allow more of the collection to be displayed in more interesting ways, and to significantly improve physical access.
- l) Improved toilet and refreshment / catering facilities are essential, these will also increase the quality of the venue for weddings and conferences.
- m) A new consolidated accessible museum store (10) as part of the redevelopment of the workshops to the end of the Period Street, to allow items of the collection not currently displayed to be accessed by the general public.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 10. There are both capital and revenue implications arising from the anticipated development of the Park and Hall. The detail of these will be calculated during the next phase, if the outline is approved at this stage.

Legal

- 11. Statutory Duties of Care
- 12. Statutory Duties relating to maintenance of listed building

RISK ASSESSMENT

- 13. Medium risk however, the risk has to date been mitigated through the extensive monitoring and inspection regimes that are in place. This has also minimised the risk of catastrophic failure of plant or structure.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

- 14. Revitalise Preston Park and Hall, which will impact positively on the further regeneration of the Borough.
- 15. Stockton Renaissance Community Strategy 2005-08
 - i. Liveability – Improve access to quality green spaces within the borough
 - ii. Improve the health of the local community
- 16. Stockton Renaissance Regeneration Strategy 2004-08 – Action Area 2, Image and Environment.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

- 17. There has been extensive consultation with all stakeholders in developing the proposals to be included within the Masterplan

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Background Papers

Report to CMT – October 2006
Scrutiny Committee report – October 2006

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Eaglescliffe – Cllr Fletcher
Eaglescliffe – Cllr Lewis
Eaglescliffe – Cllr Rigg

Property Implications

Relate directly to the Preston Park Hall and complex