

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

5TH FEBRUARY, 2009

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Portfolio Culture & Leisure – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mary Womphrey

PRESTON PARK & HALL REDEVELOPMENT

1. Summary

Preston Park is the biggest recreational park in the Tees Valley, and the largest and most visited facility in Stockton Borough. The Park & Hall was the most visited facility in Teesside throughout the 80's and early 90's, a position we believe we can regain. However, the attractions now are generally run down.

The Stockton Museum Strategy 2005 set the objective of establishing a master plan for the redevelopment of the Park & Hall. The master plan was produced through lengthy and widespread consultation, incorporating the recommendations of the 2006 Adults Leisure & Culture Select Committee review. The master plan was approved by Cabinet in June 2007 as a basis for major funding applications.

The Council was unsuccessful in its application for funding from the BIG Lottery Parks For People scheme for improvements to the Park, but was successful in securing an offer of £3.58million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for works to the Hall.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the package of works that are deliverable in the first phase and to gain approval for the resources required, including the release of the Spence Bequest, to match the HLF offer and fund these works.

2. Recommendations

1. To ratify the release of the Spence Bequest capital sum to contribute to the cost of a new accessible collection store
2. To agree that the new store will be held by the Council on Trust in accordance with the Spence Bequest charitable objects.
3. To authorise the Director of CESC in consultation with the Director of Law and Democracy to take any further action required in respect of the release of the Spence Bequest capital sum including the application for and completion of a Scheme to the Charity Commissioners.
4. To approve the redevelopment of Preston Hall/Park and the prudential borrowing required to support match funding of £1.93m, funded from the current Medium Term Financial Plan.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To re-establish Preston Park & Hall as the most popular visitor facility in the Tees Valley, fostering pride, illuminating our history and heritage, and providing educational opportunities for schools, residents and visitors.

4. Members' Interests (the text below is fixed and should not be altered by the author, however, extensive guidance on the **Members' Code** of conduct is available to officers if required)

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 (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must 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 (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

1. The need to refocus and refresh Preston Park & Hall has been recognised for many years.
2. The Stockton Council Museum Strategy adopted in 2005 recommended concentrating the Museum function on the Preston site, finding alternative uses for the Green Dragon Museum and closing the Billingham Art Gallery. The 2005 strategy reaffirmed the need to refresh the Park and Hall.
3. The drawing up of a realistic but holistic plan for the long-term development of the Park & Hall was carried out over a 2-year period, involving extensive public consultation and Member involvement. In 2006 Adults Leisure and Culture Select Committee reviewed Preston Hall and Park and added detail to the outline recommended areas of improvement. In a public survey at the time, 97% were in favour of the master plan.
4. The master plan was approved by Cabinet in 2006 as the basis for major funding bids to the BIG Lottery, and Heritage Lottery. An initial allocation of £1 million was agreed in the MTFP at that stage, recognising further funding would be required to deliver the projects.
5. Detailed cost estimates for all desirable elements of the redevelopment were produced and a series of options were evaluated in August and September 2007. The decision was taken to pursue the preferred scheme requiring the approval in principal of further resources of up to £3.5million, to be secured by future Capital receipts or prudential borrowing. In September 2007 a Key Decision was taken to enable the submission of Stage 1 bids, by Cabinet Members for Culture, and Economic Regeneration, in consultation with Leader, Chair of Executive Scrutiny, Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Director of CESC.
6. Considerable time and resources were invested during 2008 to secure HLF Stage 1 approval for works to the Hall, and to submit the detailed scheme for BIG Lottery Parks For People Stage 1 assessment. Our 'Parks For People' bid was not supported by the lottery Trustees, despite a positive recommendation by their assessing officer. However, Heritage Lottery Trustees met in London on December 16th 2008 and approved the Stage 2 HLF bid, allocating £3.58 million to the Hall redevelopment.
7. At the time the provisional approval was given, the financial position of the Council was stronger and more optimistic than at present with good prospect of Capital receipts. However, subsequent global economic factors have changed our circumstances.
8. To accept and draw down the £3.58m HLF grant and undertake related essential works, we need to provide £3.5m of matching investment. £1.03m capital has already been identified and allocated in the MTFP. In addition, the release of the Spence Bequest is expected to release £240,000. A further £300,000 of revenue will be found from Museum Service budgets over the project life, and a further £1.93m of capital is required. The prudential borrowing required to support match funding of £1.93m, funded from the current Medium Term Financial Plan, is the subject of a recommendation of this report..
9. The Spence Bequest was gifted to the Authority in 1925, comprising a large collection of 'objets de vertu' and armoury, plus a sum of money. The Charities Commission have indicated their willingness to allow us to release the capital sum to contribute to the cost of the new accessible collection store proposed as part of the Hall works. This is conditional upon formal approval of Cabinet to the release of the Spence Bequest capital sum, and the placing of ownership of the collection store asset within a suitable charitable vehicle.

10. The master plan should guide investment over time, making sure individual elements and attractions contribute to our overall ambitions. The key themes of the redevelopment combine practical functional issues with style and content issues. We want to tell the story of the Borough of Stockton, illuminating the 1825 Stockton Darlington line trackbed and interpreting the heritage landscape of the park. We need to address issues like drainage and improve paths and toilets. We want to retain a broad mix of attractions, adding new play features, creating a track for off road cycling and a skateboard/in-line skate area. To more effectively promote events in the Park we need improved signage along Yarm Road and part time traffic lights to avoid congestion at peak times. We also want to link the Park to other green corridors and routes, improving access to the River, introducing a river crossing and connecting the cycle-ways and footpaths.
11. The Grade 2 listed Hall needs over £1million of renovation work, plus new toilets and a lift to comply with DDA requirements. The period street will be improved with a new education area and an accessible store to help people see the thousands of collections items that are not on permanent display. Works in the Main building will also make it easier for us to use the Ballroom for a wider range of functions. All of these works can be included in the first phase thanks to the HLF award.
12. The failure to secure funding from Parks for People means work to the Park will need to be phased over the longer term, and will be dependant on wider economic circumstances. However, there are aspects of the Park redevelopment that we believe are a necessity in the short term, either because their completion is critical to the success of the works to the hall or critical operationally for the effective use of the Park, or because there is real and pressing public demand for them.
13. The following are considered to be a critical works package for the first phase;

Yarm Road entrance improvements for safer traffic flow,
Improved drainage to the main field
Service access road improvements from Preston Lane
Refurbishment of the toilets
Improved access to the river
14. We believe it is important to address the critical works outlined above within the first phase, and this report recommends approval of prudential borrowing sufficient to generate £500,000 toward these elements.
15. The anticipated schedule would result in the completion of major works by Spring 2012.
16. In addition, there is a strong public demand for the relatively inexpensive provision of skate area and off-road cycle track. This would address the call for more facilities for young people that is a perennial feature of MORI and other residents' surveys. The cycle track also helps us address a safety and environmental protection problem in Quarry Woods. We are investigating alternative sources of funding for this element.
17. Advice from Lottery and other funding agencies suggests it will be possible to deliver some elements, such as the Stockton Darlington line interpretation and the Victorian Kitchen Garden, as stand alone heritage projects.
18. We also expect to fund some improvements to the play area through play funding already secured.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19.

	CAPITAL	REVENUE	TOTAL
PROPOSED EXPENDITURE			
Preston Hall	£5.25m	£0.72m	£5.96m
Contingency	£0.43m	£0.02m	£0.44m
Inflation	£0.20m	£0.02m	£0.23m
Subtotal	£5.87m	£0.76m	£6.63m
Preston Park	£0.50m	£0.00m	£0.50m
Subtotal	£6.37m	£0.76m	£7.13m
Less Non-Cash	£0.00m	£0.05m	£0.05m
Total	£6.37m	£0.71m	£7.08m
FUNDING			
HLF grant @ 54% (Preston Hall)	£3.17m	£0.41m	£3.58m
Spence Bequest	£0.24m	£0.00m	£0.24m
SBC – Previously identified	£0.03m	£0.00m	£0.03m
SBC - Originally approved	£1.00m	£0.00m	£1.00m
	£4.44m	£0.41m	£4.85m
Additional funding required – Funded through Prudential Borrowing/MTFP	£1.93m	£0.30m	£2.23m
Total	£6.37m	£0.71m	£7.08m

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. The release of the Spence Bequest is subject to legal and Charities Commission conditions which are addressed in the detail section and reflected in the first recommendation of this report. In addition there are statutory duties, in relation to the listed buildings, which will guide the work to the Hall.
21. There are no other legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

22. “This (subject matter of report) is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.” However, the project will continue to be monitored as a Level 1 project.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

23. Explain how the report impacts on the key policy platform areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy:-

Economic Regeneration and Transport – re-establishing Preston Park and Hall as the most visited attraction in the Tees Valley will contribute directly to economic activity and to the improvement of the image and reputation of the area.

Safer Communities – the Park & Hall provides a safe space for a range of positive community activities and fosters pride and a sense of belonging which helps to build tolerant and cohesive communities.

Children and Young People – the Scheme will significantly improve the educational and leisure opportunities on the site and address

Health and Wellbeing – the park is the site for a number of active health programmes, as well as a space for informal leisure with physical and mental health benefits.

Environment and Housing – Preston Hall & Park is an important part of the green infrastructure, linking with cycle routes and green corridors, and contributing to the amenity value of the area.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

24. "This report is not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment because the Master Plan itself includes wide-ranging consultation, disability audit & action plan and a Marketing Plan designed to include all potential audiences. Furthermore, the scheme itself will have a positive impact on equality and as such does not require to be subject to a separate EIA."

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

25. The plans for the Hall & Park redevelopment have been the subject of widespread consultation, including surveys, exhibitions, seminars and discussions with partner organisations and elected members. The core elements of the plan are those advocated by the Council Adults Leisure and Culture Select Committee Scrutiny Review which were also the subject of consultation.

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Background Papers (guidance)

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Eaglescliffe – Cllr Fletcher

Eaglescliffe – Cllr Lewis

Eaglescliffe – Cllr Rigg