

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting8th March 2012

1. Title of Item/Report

Preston Hall Museum and Park Update

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered a report relating to the the ongoing redevelopment of Preston Hall Museum & Park.

It was noted that Preston Hall Museum was currently closed to the public to enable the final phase of a major capital investment programme to restore and improve the Grade II listed building and the services it provided. This important project, funded through a variety of sources including a £3.581million Heritage Lottery Fund grant, formed the centrepiece of Stockton Borough Council's Heritage Strategy, and would further cement the position of Preston Hall Museum & Park as a major visitor attraction within the Tees Valley.

The project included a rationalisation and re-housing of the Museum's collections in purpose built stores, the creation of new Learning and Craft resources, a complete refurbishment and redisplay within the main museum building, and improvements to the popular Victorian Street.

In addition to this, further works, as identified through the 2008 Preston Hall Museum & Park Masterplan were being implemented. These included a recently completed £500k capital funding programme through Stockton Borough Council to provide improvements to park infrastructure including drainage works, creation and improvement of pathways and the installation of a new jetty. In addition to this, further success through the Heritage Lottery Fund had resulted in the restoration and re-interpretation of the Walled Kitchen Garden & Orchard, forming a physical link between hall and park.

The final stages of the work in the main museum building were under way, with case and display installation planned for completion by late May. Work to populate exhibition displays with the collection would take place during June, as would staff training and development. The Museum was projected to re-open to the public during the Summer of 2012 with a full programme of activities and events to

attract visitors to the new facility including two theatrical performances in the park, special exhibitions and a wide range of learning opportunities. An official opening, aiming to attract significant media attention, was still to be scheduled.

The project had been supported by local stakeholders through the Preston Hall and Park Management committee which has incorporated work being undertaken through the Tees Heritage Park initiative.

Cabinet agreed that Stockton Borough Council was committed to ensuring Preston Hall Museum & Park remained as a key visitor attraction in the Borough and a gateway to the wider Heritage Park. The listed status of the Hall already extended legally binding restrictions to any changes to its landscape setting. Furthermore, the role of the Park as a gateway to the larger Heritage Park was also reflected in the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD).

RESOLVED that:

1. the progress on Hall works, with reference to the displays, collections work, future trading opportunities and heritage branding style be noted.
2. initial plans for the reopening of Preston Hall be approved.
3. the statement that Stockton Borough Council is committed to ensuring Preston Hall Museum & Park remains as a key visitor attraction, protected by the listed status of the Hall and the undertakings of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Core Strategy Development Plan be supported.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the continued development of Preston Hall and Park meets corporate strategic priorities and the expectations of Stockton Communities. To optimise the potential benefits arising from the investment of the hall through appropriate re-opening and launch activities.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

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

Midnight on Friday 16 March 2012

Proper Officer
23 March 2012