

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 5 JANUARY 2016

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC SPACE

WAYTEMORE CASTLE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – HLF BID

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Bishop's Stortford Meads

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To report progress of the first round of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Parks for People bid for restoration and improvements to Waytemore Castle Gardens, Bishop's Stortford.
- To confirm the potential grant fund available.
- To explain the commitments necessary for the Council to accept the grant.
- To place the second phase of the project in the 2017/18 Capital Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE: That :

(A)	the terms and conditions of the grant are accepted; and
(B)	the proposals to fund the project be approved and submitted for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme for 2017/18.

1 Background

- 1.1 A Project Initiation Document was presented to CMT on 25 November 2014 to outline the project and funding requirements as part of the Capital Programme Bid Proposals for 2015/16. At that stage in advance of the application submission it was agreed

that the project should be fully explored with a view to recommending it to Executive if an acceptable project could be developed.

- 1.2 Officers submitted an Expression of Interest bid to Lottery for funding for a project from 2016 to 2020. This was successful and therefore a first round Stage 1 bid was prepared.
- 1.3 The HLF 'Parks for People' Stage 1 bid was completed and submitted in September 2015. See **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for a copy of the submitted bid. The application has been in partnership with Bishop's Stortford Town Council who own Sworders Field. Both Waymore Castle and Sworders Field are included for improvement as part of a wider project area named for the purposes of this bid as Castle Park.
- 1.4 The Stage 1 bid was decided by HLF on 15th December 2015 and notified by telephone on 16th December 2015. On this occasion the Council were unfortunately not successful. The Council does however have the right to re-apply under the next tranche of applications in 2016. HLF will be writing to provide some initial feedback and have offered the opportunity for a post rejection meeting. They have advised that this was a "near miss" and have indicated which specific areas of the bid require further clarity. They have encouraged the Council to re-apply.
- 1.5 If successful with the next application, the Council will be required to accept the terms and conditions of the grant within 28 days of receiving a Grant Notification Letter. This report asks the Executive to approve the terms to allow this potential future project to proceed. Formal approval at this stage is important in preparation for a successful second bid given the tight timescales involved.
- 1.6 The full value of the project has been estimated within the grant application and is split into two phases; the development phase and the delivery phase. The first round "Development" involves consultation and preparatory design and costing works. The second round "Delivery" involves the final design works and installation of improvements on the ground.
- 1.7 The Council is expected to contribute toward the cost of the project (match funding). The level of contributions has been proposed in the grant application:

	<i>Full estimated costs</i>	Council Contribution	<i>Value of Grant</i>
Development Stage 1	£238,618	£23,918	£214,700
Delivery Stage 2	£1,534,169	£168,758	£1,365,410

2 Report

2.1 The purpose of the project is to conserve and enhance the heritage of the Waytemore Castle Gardens including Sworders Field and improve the park facilities to provide a wider range of activities, events and opportunities for community involvement.

2.2 The submission was introduced as follows:

Castle Park provides a fantastic opportunity to discover, protect and enhance a range of heritage features that underpin the cultural and historical development of the town of Bishop's Stortford. These include the remnants of a Norman motte & bailey castle, potentially undiscovered archaeology and the River Stort which was fundamental in the establishment and growth of the town and now has significant potential for biodiversity improvements.

Engaging people with this heritage is a central component of the project. Opportunities for volunteering and learning, interactive interpretation schemes and significantly enhanced access will open up the possibility for people to appreciate and understand their town's heritage.

2.3 Revenue funding of £23,918 for the first stage will be funded from service budgets and provide the initial match funding for 2016/17. This report proposes that it is recommended to Council to include the remaining match funding of £168,758 in the Capital Programme for 2017/18.

2.4 If successful with the second application, the Council will receive a Grant Notification Letter. This sets out the principal elements of the Approved Purposes (in Appendix 2 to the letter) to which the grant is intended to be applied. The balance of the works will be funded by East Herts Council. This will confirm the improvements to the park which the project aims to achieve.

2.5 It is a condition of the offer that the Council demonstrates that the

necessary authority is in place to accept the terms of the grant.

- 2.6 The 'general power of competence', introduced by the Localism Act 2011, gives local authorities '... power to do anything that individuals may do' subject to any pre-commencement restrictions or any post-commencement restrictions which expressly apply to the general power of competence, to all of the authority's powers or to all of the authority's powers but with exceptions that do not include the general power.
- 2.7 Acceptance of the Grant from the HLF for the, intended, purpose falls within the general power of competence and is not subject to any, relevant, pre or post-commencement restrictions.
- 2.8 The Council will be required to comply with the terms set out by the HLF (See **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**). Any breach of those terms is likely to result in a requirement that the grant be repaid in full. The terms of the grant will be binding on the Council for 25 years from the date of award. The approved purposes for which the grant is being paid must be completed within the agreed timescales. The project is currently proposed to be completed by September 2020.
- 2.9 The Council will not be permitted to start any of the works to which the grant relates unless and until defined pre-conditions have been satisfied and agreed as such by the HLF.
- 2.10 The terms of grant contain provision for withdrawal or repayment of grant in certain, specified, circumstances.
- 2.11 The Council will be required to apply for a Green Flag Award for the park in the year immediately following completion of the capital works and then take all steps necessary to retain the Green Flag Award for at least the next six years.
- 2.12 The Council, as part of the application conditions, will be required to provide HLF with a copy of the document recording its decision (this report) and a statement which must include the following information:
 - The power (statutory or otherwise) under which the Council has accepted the terms of grant.
 - An extract of that part of the policy framework under which the Council has accepted these terms of grant.

- The executive arrangements under which the decision to accept the terms of grant was made.
- The considerations taken into account in using the powers and the procedure under which any consultation took place and the decision was made.
- The authority under which the Declaration forming part of the Application is signed.

2.13 If the Council is successful with the second application and Stage 1 approval is achieved, it must be noted that Stage 2 remains a competitive process and to be successful a high quality and convincing bid, demonstrating the delivery of the concept plan and activities outlined in Stage 1, will be required. There will be the opportunity to refine the detail of the restoration proposals during the development phase. Any potential changes will be fully discussed with the HLF to reduce any risk to the Stage 2 outcome and ensure the scheme continues to deliver the Parks for People criteria and demonstrates value for money.

3 Implications / Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

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