

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

27 FEBRUARY 2007

EXECUTIVE

13 MARCH 2007

HISTORIC PARKS HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To outline to Members the contents of the Stage I – Historic Parks Heritage Lottery Bid and the process necessary to gain approval prior to submission in March 2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There has been general support for putting together a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery for Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens for a number of years and the project features high on our list of priorities for lottery fund bids within Exeter.
- 2.2 The Parks for People Heritage Lottery Scheme introduced in 2006 provided the opportunity for a bid to be constructed to revitalise these two parks which is seen as another crucial step in the regeneration of the Castle Quarter.
- 2.3 At its meeting on the 28 March 2006 Executive approved additional funding to allow a Stage I bid to be developed and submitted to Heritage Lottery. The Head of Contracts and Direct Services was appointed as project leader.

3. PROJECT PROGRESS

- 3.1 Since that time a great deal of work has been undertaken putting us in a position to submit a bid at the end of March 2007.
- Specialist consultants have produced an Audience Development Plan and a Conservation Management Plan both of which are pre-requisites to the submission to Heritage Lottery.
 - A project team of council officers was set up to develop the proposal and has met with the consultants both on a regular and ad-hoc basis to drive the project forward.
 - User surveys and stakeholder development have been undertaken. A summary of the results of the user survey is attached at Appendix I for information. A full copy of the survey report is available on the intranet and in the Members' Room.
 - Various physical surveys of the site have also been undertaken to identify the key historic features of the site that need to be retained and developed. An

access audit has also been undertaken to inform the proposals in respect of access to the parks for people with disabilities.

- The obvious opportunities in linking the proposal with neighbouring sites have been explored and the bid will draw on links to the RAMM, the Castle, The Phoenix and the Central Library.
- The main landscape character areas have been identified and are shown on the attached map (Appendix II) entitled Landscape Character Areas.
- Option appraisal of the potential options that could be carried out in order to develop a scheme that would satisfy the Parks for People criteria and meet the aspirations of the stakeholders.

3.2 The option appraisal critically examined a total of eight options and scored them against a range of criteria that reflects the Heritage Lottery assessment criteria, under the two main headlines of culture and heritage, and access and involvement. These options are listed in Appendix III. The scores from the assessment were then cross referenced against the estimated costs of each scheme to produce a cost / benefit analysis.

3.4 The first four options were quickly discarded as they did not score sufficiently highly and would definitely not attract lottery funding. Option 3 did in fact score highly due to the low cost but was not considered further as it did not fulfil lottery criteria. This left the four remaining options that can be summarised as:

- Option 5 which restores and conserves both gardens but it is thought would be unlikely to achieve funding on its own. The drawing titled Restoration Proposals Base Case identifies the major pieces of work that would be carried out, cross referenced to a map of the site, under this option. It is attached at Appendix IV.
- Option 6 is option 5 plus Castle Quarter cultural links only.
- Option 7 is option 5 plus community links only.
- Option 8 includes all of the above.
- The drawing entitled Restoration Proposals, Community Links and Castle Quarter Integration identifies the major pieces of work identified to deliver community links and castle quarter integration again cross referencing to the map. It is attached at Appendix V.

3.5 The result of the analysis demonstrates that options 6,7 and 8 all score highly in terms of cost / benefit but obviously option 8, whilst costing the most, provides additional benefits and presents a more holistic approach to the restoration which is likely to be considered more favourably by the Heritage Lottery. It is proposed therefore that option 8 forms the focus of the Lottery Bid.

3.6 The project team are now working hard to produce a bid for submission at the end of March 2007. Meetings have been held with the local Heritage Lottery staff who have been very supportive throughout the process. The draft project plan is attached at Appendix VI together with a plan that shows the project timescale in relation to the RAMM Project. As can be seen the decision on the Stage II Bid will be known in March 2009 which would allow the work on the gardens to begin as the work on the RAMM is finishing.

3.7 The draft Conservation Management Plan is available on the intranet and a copy has been left in the Members' room for information.

4. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPOSALS

4.1 The recent excellent news that the RAMM Stage II Heritage application has been approved and that the sale of the Castle has been finalised means that improvements to Rougemont and Northernhay assume greater importance.

4.2 A successful Heritage Lottery bid is the only way that a major improvement of the infrastructure of the Historic Parks can be achieved.

4.3 Clearly there is still work to be done to finalise the Conservation Management Plan and other elements of the bid but this will be in terms of the details and not the principles that are identified above.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 Following a very constructive meeting with the Local Heritage Lottery Team on 13 February 2007, the Project Team have greater clarity as to the acceptability of producing a bid based on option 8.

5.2 The bid document together with a outline cost plan will be submitted to Heritage Lottery at the end of March 2007 following formal approval by Executive on 13 March 2007.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Work done to date indicates that approximately £4.5 million will be needed to fund the proposals contained within the preferred option and that will be the substance of the bid.

6.2 As stated in the previous report to Executive the Council will need to provide match funding up to a maximum of £1.1 million.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposal provides an opportunity to improve these Historic Parks to a standard worthy of their place in history and to reclaim them for the people of the City.

7.2 The proposal is widely supported by all the stakeholders and seen as an integral part of the regeneration of the Castle Quarter.

8. RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that Members support the Stage I Heritage Lottery Bid as detailed in the report.
- 2) that further improvements to the bid documents be delegated to the project leader and Director of Community and Environment in consultation with the portfolio holder such that the finalised bid documents can be submitted to Heritage Lottery in March 2007 following formal approval by Executive.

HEAD OF CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES

Originator: Paul McCormick

S:PA/LP/Committee/207SCC10
14 February 2007

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None