

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Warwick Area Committee
Date of Committee 23rd January 2007
Report Title Warwick Parks and Gardens Project

Summary WCC has been invited by WDC to be a partner in a bid to the 'Parks for People' fund of the National Lottery. The bid is for investment in St Nicholas's Park, Warwick, to include (subject to WCC agreement) the garden of St John's House, Warwick, managed by the County Museum Service. The proposals will go to public consultation locally in January. The report summarises the issues and implications. It is not envisaged that the proposals would lead to additional ongoing revenue costs.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision] No.

Background papers None.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) Councillor C Browne, Councillor M Haywood, Councillor R Randev
- Other Elected Members Councillor S Boad, Councillor C Hayfield, Councillor Mrs J Compton, Councillor F McCarney
- Lead Cabinet Member Councillor A Farnell
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Jane Pollard, Alison Hallworth, Ian Marriott
- Finance Philip Lumley-Holmes, Financial Services

Manager

- Other Chief Officers Graeme Betts, Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Peter Hunter, Area Officer
Chris Elliott, Warwick District Council
Rachel Baconnet, Environment and Economy
Angela Baines, Environment and Economy

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation Public consultation will be undertaken in January, organised by Warwick District Council. Details of the proposed bid will be drawn up taking the results of this and the comments of this Committee into account.

Warwick Area Committee – 23rd January 2007

Warwick Parks and Gardens Project

Report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health & Community Services

Recommendations

That members:

1. Comment on the proposal and the issues raised
2. Subject to the proposals not resulting in net increased revenue costs, support the submission of a bid in partnership with Warwick District Council with the final decision whether or not to proceed being made by the Strategic Director of Adult, Health & Community Services in the light of public consultation and review of the final draft bid.

1. Background

- 1.1 WCC Museum Service staff have for some time been participating in discussions with Warwick District Council and the owners and managers of various parks and gardens in Warwick about the potential of bidding to the lottery for investment and improvement.
- 1.2 The National Lottery 'Parks for People' funding stream (jointly run by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Bid Lottery Fund) has been identified as the best current opportunity.

2. The Current Proposals

- 2.1 Following pre-application discussions with the National Lottery, Warwick District Council have identified St Nicholas's Park, Warwick, as their first priority, and this was endorsed by their Executive on 11th December 2006. Because St Nicholas's Park and its car park adjoins the land at St John's House, and because there are benefits to developing them together, the District Council have invited the County Council to become a partner in the bid. A further bid for Priory Park (which may also have implications for WCC) may follow later.
- 2.2 Warwick District Council have appointed an experienced Parks and Gardens consultant, Plincke, to undertake the public consultation and write the bid. The target is to submit the bid by March 2007 to go to the September 2007 national committee of Parks for People.

- 2.3 Details of the scheme have not yet been worked up; this work will be led by the consultants, with input from all relevant stakeholders, over the next few months.

3. Benefits and Issues

- 3.1 Investment in the garden at St John's House fits well with the overall strategy for the development of the Museum Service, and builds upon other improvements at St John's House – both by the Regimental Museum, with Heritage Lottery Funding, on the first floor, and with the current WCC capital project to enhance the entrance hall and visitor welcome.
- 3.2 The current garden and grounds, while enjoyed and appreciated by visitors, do not reach their full potential. A successful bid has the potential to improve the presentation of the site and the setting of the Listed Building, to attract more and different visitors, to increase the educational value of the garden and grounds, to enhance and augment use of the entrance from St Nicholas Park, and to build partnership with the District Council and the local community.
- 3.3 The proposal also has potential to strengthen the visitor economy in Warwick, by encouraging visitors to the Castle to explore the town more widely. It would also provide more inviting through-routes between the park and that end of the town.
- 3.4 The proposals could however raise issues in relation to capacity, security, staffing and opening hours – these issues, and their full implications, would be explored during the development of the detailed bid, as would the sustainability implications of revised planting and garden/grounds management schemes.

4. Funding

- 4.1 Warwick District Council have allocated funding for the consultants to undertake the public consultation and write the bid, to which they are not seeking a WCC contribution. The Museum service will need to contribute staff time to the bid-writing process. This can be accommodated within the service plan.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that the total value of the bid would be around £2 million pounds, of which perhaps £300,000 would relate to St John's garden. In order to participate in this project, WCC (as landowner of St John's) would need to join as a partner in the bid, and pledge approximately £60,000 (20%) match funding to the project (subject to the success of the bid), of which at least half would be in cash; the remainder could be in kind. This contribution would be needed in financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 4.3 The investment already being made in the Visitor Welcome to St John's House may well qualify as in-kind funding. It is envisaged that the cash balance of funding (£30k) would come from re-prioritisation of the capital funding already allocated to Libraries Learning and Culture subject to the Aylesford capital receipt.

- 4.4 Care would be taken during the development of the plans for the garden to ensure that proposals do not lead to increased revenue implications – either in terms of garden maintenance, or in terms of visitor services, unless the funding sources to meet these can also be identified.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Plincke will be organising public consultation in Warwick in January; the results of this will contribute materially to the shaping of the proposals.
- 5.2 WCC staff will involve in the consultation process the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (Royal Warwickshire), who lease the first floor of St John's House, and also make use of the grounds.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Comments made by members at or following the meeting will be fed into the consultation process.
- 6.2 Museum staff will work with colleagues from WDC and Plincke to develop the bid and to clarify the detailed implications of the benefits and issues outlined above.
- 6.3 In view of the tight timescale which needs to be met for submission to the lottery, members are asked to authorise the Director of Adult Health and Community Services to make the final decision whether or not to join the bid as a partner.

GRAEME BETTS
Strategic Director of Adult, Health &
Community Services

Shire Hall
Warwick

December 2006