

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING   | <b>Planning, Housing and Economic Development Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b> |
| MEETING   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2016  |
| TITLE:  | <b>The Archway Centre – Progress Report</b>   |
| WARD:   | Abbey   |
| <b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>                      |   |
| <b>List of attachments to this report: None</b> |   |

### **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The report describes progress to date on the Archway Centre project to create a World Heritage Centre and Roman Baths Learning Centre adjacent to the Roman Baths complex in Bath city centre.

### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Panel note the report.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 Council agreed in February 2016 to include this project in the Fully Approved capital programme at an estimated cost of £5.3 Million. The cost of the project is under review prior to submission of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Council will contribute £1 Million to the cost of the project, which will consist of £750k corporately funded borrowing and £250k service supported borrowing.
- 3.2 The balance of the cost will be funded by grants from external grant-giving bodies, principally the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) from whom £3.35 million is being sought.
- 3.3 The Roman Baths Foundation has been established as a charitable company separate from the Council to support learning and conservation at the Roman Baths. Its first priority is to raise funds from philanthropy and from grant-giving bodies that do not fund local authorities.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The buildings in which the project will take place all belong to the Council. Some of them are Grade II listed. Some of them are in poor condition. The project will conserve them and give them a new lease of life. It will improve their thermal properties and reduce their

carbon footprint by augmenting their heating system with energy recovered from the hot spring.

- 4.2 Scheduled Monument Consent has been received to allow limited re-excavation of known Roman features in preparation for the project. Some excavations may extend more than five metres below street level requiring a separate consent under the provisions of The County of Avon Act 1982.
- 4.3 There has been close liaison between the Project Design Team and colleagues in the Planning Development Team, and a pre-application proposal has been submitted. A full application for Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent will be submitted in late April. Building regulations consent will be applied for during the 'Delivery Phase' of the project, probably in 2017.
- 4.4 The World Heritage Centre and Roman Baths Learning Centre will comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation.

## **5 THE REPORT**

### **Background and Milestones.**

- 5.1 In July 2013 Cabinet approved a new project to develop a World Heritage Centre in 10 York Street and a new Roman Baths Learning Centre directly above it and in adjoining buildings in Swallow Street.
- 5.2 Heritage Services commissioned a feasibility study to establish whether the project could be delivered in these buildings and what the likely project cost would be. Based upon this work the Service consulted with numerous relevant bodies and prepared a Round One application to HLF for a grant of £168,000 to work up the Round Two 'Development Phase' application. The Round One bid was submitted in June 2014
- 5.3 In September 2014 HLF awarded Heritage Services the sum of £168,000 it had requested. Using the Council's project management framework an internal project team was formed and an external Design Team of architect, structural engineer, M/E engineer, quantity surveyor and interpretation designer was procured. A specialist Project Manager with experience of working on HLF-funded projects was recruited to plan and deliver the Round Two application.
- 5.4 Key documents required by HLF that have been prepared or are in preparation include:
  - Conservation Plan for the buildings and monuments in question;
  - Activity Plan setting out what all elements of the project will deliver to users;
  - Project Management Plan including a timetable, cash-flow projections, detailed cost breakdown, project management structure, briefs for internally and externally commissioned works and job descriptions for new posts to be filled;
  - Interpretation Strategy and detailed Design specification;
  - Evaluation Plan;
  - Carbon Footprint Assessment;
  - Project Business Plan.
- 5.5 In January 2016 HLF visited for a day-long 'mid-point' meeting to assess the state of the application to date. These meetings are usually about 80% of the way into the Development Phase and are a gateway to proceeding completion of the application. HLF were satisfied with progress to date and so work on the application continues.

5.6 The anticipated submission date of the Round Two bid is June 2016. The HLF trustees will consider the application in September 2016 with a decision notified to the Council later in that month.

### **The Buildings.**

5.7 The project is named after the Victorian stone arch that connects the Roman Baths with 10 York Street, which is currently a Council-owned retail unit managed as part of the commercial estate. To reserve the shop and ensure it will be available for the project, Heritage Services has taken the lease on it. On behalf of Heritage Services, Property Services lets it out on a series of short-term leases to earn rent which reduces the sum payable by Heritage to the Commercial Estate.

5.8 The adjoining premises in Swallow Street are currently occupied by the Heritage Services' retail warehouse and maintenance workshop. Both are still needed and will be reconfigured with the Roman Baths Learning Centre extending over them at first floor level.

### **The Project.**

5.9 The project will create an on-street **World Heritage Centre** in 10 York Street. This will tell people why Bath is a World Heritage Site and send them out to explore it, either on self-guided tours using downloaded or hard-copy resources provided in the Centre, or on conducted walking tours conducted by partner bodies such as the Mayor's Honorary Guides, the National Trust or Bath Preservation Trust.

5.10 A new state-of-the-art **Roman Baths Learning Centre** to nationally accepted standards will be created in the upper floor of 10 York Street and on the same level in the adjoining Swallow Street buildings. It will increase by 400% the space available for learning activities. Its unique feature will be the use of an existing underground tunnel for taking learning groups from the Centre into the heart of the Roman Baths without having to cross the street or venture out into the weather.

5.11 The Learning Centre will include an '**Investigation Zone**', a large undercroft beneath York Street where learning groups will be able to study Roman building materials and in-situ remains and undertake various hands-on activities.

5.12 The project will also open up to view for daytime Roman Baths visitors some Roman remains in a smaller York Street undercroft which have never been visible before. These include a *laconicum*, a small round dry-heat room originally part of the West Baths.

5.13 A 'smartphone app' will be developed to interpret the on-street evidence for the Victorian spa – the extant buildings in York Street and Swallow Street; the arch itself (which once carried spa water across the street); and the Boiler House chimney visible to the East of Swallow Street.

## **6 RATIONALE**

### **The World Heritage Centre.**

6.1 'The City of Bath' was inscribed by UNESCO as a 'cultural' site on its World Heritage List in 1987. This put on the local authority not just a duty of care for the site's conservation but also for its interpretation. To date there has been no one place where residents and visitors can learn about World Heritage and why Bath is a World Heritage Site.

6.2 A mission sent by UNESCO in 2008 "to inspect the state of conservation of the Site" recommended that the Council do more to interpret it.

## **The Roman Baths Learning Centre.**

- 6.3 Over the last ten years Heritage Services has implemented a comprehensive development programme of conservation and interpretation, measures to improve the 'visitor experience' and refurbish the shops. The result has been record visitor numbers, excellent visitor feedback and higher returns to the Council.
- 6.4 However, as guardian of the country's most important heritage sites, the Council has responsibilities not just to care for the ancient monument but also to realise its educational potential. Many other leading UK visitor attractions have been developing state-of-the-art learning facilities and, at the same time, the needs and expectations of visiting school groups have risen.
- 6.5 Currently the Roman Baths has only one education room. It lacks the facilities that schools now expect such as cloakrooms, toilets and lunch-eating space. It is booked to capacity – the programmes delivered in it are very popular – but it is also too small and does not meet the currently accepted minimum standards.
- 6.6 The new Learning Centre will provide two learning rooms to contemporary standards, plus a further meeting room and the underground 'Investigation Zone'. When not in use by school groups it will be available to learning and community groups of all ages for a variety of purposes, and its proximity to the World Heritage Centre will make it an obvious base for meeting and seminars on that theme.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 None.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

The project has involved extensive consultation with many organisations and these are listed below alphabetically.

- 8.1 **Educational:** Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA); B&NES Primary and Secondary Teachers; B&NES Special Educational Needs Group; Bath Spa University Heritage Studies course; Black Families Education Support Group; City of Bath College; Classics for All; Elac Study Vacations; Languages United (Bath School of Languages); Royal High School, Bath; St John's Primary School, Midsomer Norton; U3A Bath Branch; University of Oxford Institute of Archaeology; Warwick School; Wellbeing College.

The following universities have been working as partners on research projects that will inform and rich the educational offer in the Investigation Zone: Bath, Bath Spa, Bournemouth, Bristol, UWE and Warwick.

- 8.2 **Equalities / Wellbeing:** Action of Hearing Loss; Bath Stroke Association; B&NES Black & Minority Ethnic Workers Group; B&NES Carers' Centre; B&NES Disabled Workers Group; B&NES LGBT Workers Group; Genesis Trust; Independent Equalities Advisers Group; Julian House; Young Persons' Equalities Group.
- 8.3 **Economic:** Bath Business Improvement District (BID); James Dyson Foundation; West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- 8.4 **Archaeology / Heritage / History:** Association for Roman Archaeology; Association of Leading Visitor Attractions; Bath Heritage Watchdog; Bath Preservation Trust; Bath World Heritage Site Steering Group; Combe Down Heritage Society; Historic England (English

Heritage); History of Bath Research Group; ICOMOS UK World Heritage Committee; National Trust (Bath Branch); Roman Research Trust; Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.

**8.5 Neighbours:** Abbey Residents Association; Bath Abbey; Bath Festivals Trust; Charter Trustees; Mayor's Honorary Guides; Roman Baths Focus Group; St. John's Hospital; Theatre Royal; Thermae Bath Spa.

Other local HLF-funded projects, either completed, in progress or being planned, have been taken into account; they include: Bath Abbey Footprint, Holburne Museum / Sydney Gardens, No.1 Royal Crescent, Bathscape Project and Cleveland Pools.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. A comprehensive risk register is maintained by the Project Manager and is reviewed regularly by the Project Steering Group.

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| <b>Contact person</b>  | Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services (01225 477750)  |
| <b>Background papers</b>   | E2663 Cabinet May 2014: Heritage Services Business Update<br>E2811 Cabinet February 2016: Heritage Services <u>Business Plan 2016-2021</u> update |
| <b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b> |   |