

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	9 November 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2313
TITLE:	The Future Management and Restoration of Sydney Gardens	
WARD:	Bathwick, Walcot / All	
AN ITEM FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION		
List of attachments to this report:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix 1 – HLF approval notes and process• Appendix 2 – Draft timetable, project stages and resource implications• Appendix 3 – Risk Assessment		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The restoration of Sydney Gardens has been in discussion for several years and the recent successful completion of the restoration of the Holburne Museum and a change in grant percentage offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) (from up to 75% to up to 90%) in the Parks for People programme presents a good opportunity to take a scheme forward for a Round 1 application for feasibility funding of the project.

1.2 This report seeks approval for an application to the HLF to submit a Round 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), under their continuing Parks for People programme, for the restoration of Sydney Gardens.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet:

2.1 approves and authorises officers to progress work on:

- The feasibility and development work to make a Round 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, under the Parks for People programme, for development funding for the restoration of Sydney Gardens;
- In conjunction with this, examining potential alternative future governance arrangements for the management of Sydney Gardens.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The financial implications in broad terms at this stage are:

- The submission of a Round 1 application for development funding will cost no more than £30,000 and will be met from the existing one-off fund, created specifically for the purpose of supporting the restoration of Sydney Gardens.
- Officer time to support the development stage.
- A pre-condition of proceeding with the project is that there should be no overall increase in costs to the authority

3.2 Detailed costs estimates for the full future delivery of the project (subject to obtaining funding approval from HLF) and how they will be borne will not be clear until the necessary detailed assessments of cost items are undertaken as part of the survey and assessment work within the development stage work. Any costs falling to the authority will be borne from within existing revenue budgets.

3.3 Governance arrangements for the project will include the formation of a project board which will meet regularly and provide update reports on the financial and resource implications of developing the project to the Council's Capital Strategy Group.

3.4 It may be necessary (in support of a funding bid) or desirable (to ensure the most appropriate arrangements for the management of the Gardens in the future), to consider amendments to the current governance arrangements for the Gardens (e.g. if a Trust or other alternative form of governance were to be created). It is anticipated that revenue costs of any such arrangement would be no greater than the current revenue costs of maintaining the Gardens.

4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live
- Developing resilient communities

Equal Opportunities

4.1 A detailed equality impact assessment is being carried out, not only as a requirement of the Council, but also HLF in their stated desire to see an increase in the audience and diversity of people enjoying the use and benefit of parks.

5 THE REPORT

Background

5.1 The proposed restoration of Sydney Gardens presents a great opportunity to take forward a project that has been identified for a number of years and one that, if successful in obtaining funding from HLF, will restore one of the oldest and finest pleasure gardens within the country for the benefit of residents and visitors and re-connect with and provide a complementary setting to the recently refurbished and extended Holburne Museum.

HLF Parks for People programme

5.2 There is a need to combine the needs and aspirations of the community, HLF, the Holburne and BANES. HLF's Parks for People programme has the aim that every community should have:

- access to a well-designed public park maintained to Green Flag Award standards;
- have opportunities to learn about the heritage value of their park;
- have opportunities to take an active part in managing and using their park

5.3 Potential project submissions must meet all three priorities of the programme:

- the community values the park as part of their heritage;
- the park meets local social, economic and environmental needs; and
- the park management actively involves local people.

In addition, the project must meet the five required outcomes of the programme:

- increasing the range of audiences;
- conserving and improving the heritage value;
- increasing the range of volunteers involved;
- improving skills and knowledge through learning and training; and
- improving management and maintenance.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author has undertaken an initial draft risk assessment, attached as Appendix 3 and which will require further checking and sign off with the Lead Member, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 A proportionate equalities impact assessment will be developed as part of the requirements of the submission to HLF.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The rationale for the recommendation for the preparation and submission of a restoration project is set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 5.2 of the report.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 The first option is not to submit a restoration bid to HLF. Whilst this would save the authority the development stage match funding it would go back on commitments made and could have a negative impact on the relationship with the Holburne Museum, as well as missing out on the opportunity to take advantage of the current favourable level of contributory funding from HLF.

9.2 The preparation of a submission to HLF also enables consideration of options for future potential alternative governance arrangements for the gardens, as part of the process of developing the submission. Learning from this process of working with the local community and stakeholders is relevant to opportunities identified within the Localism Bill and could be transferable for other parks, gardens and green spaces within Bath and North East Somerset.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Ward Councillors; Cabinet Members; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies

10.2 Meaningful consultation is an important element of the preparation for a successful submission and as part of this there is a need to ensure engagement with local Ward Councillors, wider stakeholders and statutory consultees (i.e. Residents Associations, Elected Members, Civic Society, Bath Preservation Trust, English Heritage, Garden History Society, British Waterways, Network Rail etc.),

10.3 Consultation will be carried out using a variety of methods including visitor surveys, consultation material made available at the Holburne Museum, Central Library and local schools, and facilitated workshops including use of the specialist advisors from the urban design and public realm panels.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Property; Young People; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations.

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Dave Dixon Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	