

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	11 July 2018



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
Refurbishment of the Coach House, Hurst Grange Park	Assets and Transformation	Director of Neighbourhoods and Development

Is this report a <b>KEY DECISION</b> (i.e. more than £100,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	<b>Yes</b>
Is this report on the <b>Statutory Cabinet Forward Plan</b> ?	<b>Yes</b>
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council?	<b>No</b>
Is this report confidential?	<b>No</b>

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks Member's approval to apply for external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the improvement of the Coach House building at Hurst Grange Park, Hill Road, Penwortham.

## 2. PORTFOLIO RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the compiling and submission of a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund based on Option E of the attached Options Appraisal.

## 3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Excellence and Financial Sustainability	
Health and Wellbeing	X
Place	

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

People	
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## 4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 4.1 Hurst Grange Park is the principal park within Penwortham and has been awarded the Green Flag Award annually since 2005. The Coach House within the centre of the park has been identified for a number of years as requiring repairs/restoration and having the potential to provide a range of visitor facilities within the park increasing the potential length of visitors' stay and allowing for improved interpretation of the site's landscape, wildlife and history. The building and wider park is recognised as a strategic point on the Green Links Strategy, part of the Campus Project of the Council's Corporate Plan and it is expected that demand for

facilities on site will increase further when the network becomes fully operational over the coming years.

- 4.2 The Friends of Hurst Grange Park have occupied the building in partnership with the council for over a decade and have been working to raise both funds and the profile of the building.

In 2017 the Friends Group were successful in obtaining a Resilience Grant of £15,000 from the Lottery in order to engage a consultant to provide options for the building's improvement and reuse and carry out consultation on those options.

Three of the options for the building's improvement were provided to an architect who has provided cost estimates for the work that would be required.

## **5. PROPOSALS**

### **5.1 History of the Building**

Hurst Grange Coach House dates back to the 1850s at a time when the park formed the grounds of the Hurst Grange estate. The large house was demolished in the late 1930s leaving only the Coach House in the centre of the park and the gate house on Hill Road (now in private ownership). Although the lodge is not currently on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest maintained by Historic England, the Lodge is included on The Penwortham List of Buildings/Structures within the town which contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of the Town of Penwortham (Appendix 7 of the Penwortham Town Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2026).

Originally sited next to the main house in the centre of the estate, the coach house was designed and built to be an attractive building when viewed from the eastern side (where the main drive to the house arrived). However, this elevation has been disfigured by the addition of a garage extension in the 1960's and this modern extension is now the most visible façade of the building across the park, detracting from the once attractive architectural design.

The Coach House has had a number of uses over recent decades including a Parks Department depot and base for the Scouts. Currently, the building is primarily occupied by the Friends of Hurst Grange Park and used as a base for their work parties and public events.

### **5.2 Possible Future Uses**

It is aimed to improve the building to conserve and restore the historic fabric and also provide facilities within the building allowing park visitors to remain on site longer and to add value to their visit. Proposals have included toilets and possibly a visitor centre and small catering outlet.

Enquiries are received by the council and Friends Group from individuals and organisations asking if the building, or a room within, is available for hire. The building has the advantage of being surrounded by the green space of the parkland which makes it an attractive venue for a range of events. A number of organisers of existing events within the park have also requested use of part of the building as a base should the weather be inclement. At present the condition of the building limits the amount of public access that can be facilitated and therefore, only external events are possible, generally in the summer months when the weather is better.

The future use and management of the building would need to ensure its long term financial sustainability. A mix of community facilities with an element of commercial activity (room hire opportunities and a small catering outlet, for example) would provide amenities to improve the experience of visitors to the park whilst also providing an income to offset the

ongoing running costs of the building. It is aimed to staff the building by way of new occupiers such as the suggested small catering outlet along with a group of volunteers in a similar way to the visitor centre at Longton Brickcroft Nature Reserve.

### 5.3 The Options Appraisal

The proposals drawn up by the consultants identified 10 potential options for the building ranging from doing nothing to full restoration, with commercial and residential use options also considered. Due to the local historic importance of the building, demolition was not included as one of the options. The majority of options suggested a mix of flexible uses for the building with the addition of toilets that would be accessible to the public when the building was open. There is lack of Community use premises in the local area which has been exacerbated by the closure of St Mary's Church Hall. Following consultation on the options, an architect was engaged to provide more detailed drawings for the building and cost estimates from a quantity surveyor for three of the options proposed by the consultant.

- Option E – This was the most popular option at the consultation and included improving the building providing activity/meeting space, space for a small tea room and toilets on the ground floor. This option also includes a glazed canopy over the rear courtyard to provide an open but more sheltered space that would be more usable in the winter months. The 1960's garage extension would be removed allowing restoration of the building's front façade. This option has an estimated cost of £446,000.
- Option G – This was the second most popular option and includes everything in option E above with the addition of first floor meeting/office space on the southern side of the building. This option would require the installation of a staircase that would take up the majority of the central lobby area of the building. This option has an estimated cost of £460,000.
- Option C2 (ii) – This option was considered a fall-back position should an external funding bid be unsuccessful and would include repairs only to the original fabric of the building with no additional improvement to existing facilities. The modern garage extension would be retained and fitted out as space for a small tea room. This option has an estimated cost of £265,000.

### 5.4 The Proposed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Bid

The current HLF grants programme includes a Heritage Grant (£100,000 - £5,000,000) that would be suitable for the proposed improvements to the Coach House building. The application process consists of 2 competitive stages with the last Stage 1 deadline for the current funding programme being on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

The HLF would assess the application by December 2018 and if the bid was successful at Stage 1 the plans would be worked up during a 'development phase' and resubmitted following Cabinet approval at Stage 2 within 24 months of the Stage 1 decision. If the bid was successful at Stage 2 the works would be able to proceed in the 'delivery phase'.

## 6. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As part of the work by the consultant employed by the Friends of Hurst Grange Park and funded by the Resilience Grant applied for by the group, consultation was carried out with a range of residents, groups, organisations and park visitors to discuss potential options for the future of the building. These findings of the consultation sessions are available in the Stakeholder Engagement Report (available separately).

## 7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 7.1 A range of options for the future use and improvement of the building were considered and consulted upon, the results of which have been presented in the Options Appraisal Summary (attached) and the Options Appraisal Report and Stakeholder Engagement Report (available separately).

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Based on current estimates, the cost of the works would be £460,000 of which the council would need to make a match funding contribution of 5% equating to £23,000. This council has already earmarked £50,000 to support the park and assets within it and, in addition to this, the Friends group has raised £16,000. The match funding requirement would be a first call on these budgets.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The project would be subject to the terms and conditions of any grant awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 9.2 The terms and conditions would restrict the Council's ability to use the building for the duration of the Heritage Lottery Fund conditions.
- 9.3 The Council has the power under Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976 to provide inside or outside its area recreational facilities as it thinks fit.
- 9.4 The Council has power to enter into the funding agreement and to undertake and implement the project under Section 1 Localism Act 2011 (the general power of competence).

## **10. HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None anticipated for the submission of a funding bid.

## **11. ICT/TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None anticipated for the submission of a funding bid.

## **12. PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The property is currently in a deteriorating condition, therefore 'do nothing' is not considered to be an option, a long term strategy is required to protect its future as an integral factor in the park's Green Flag status, supporting the Council's Green Links Strategy.
- 12.2 Securing HLF funding would enable the asset to be significantly improved, bringing into use by the wider community, and potentially commercial occupiers which in turn would give rise to future revenue costs in respect of building management and maintenance. It is anticipated that at Stage 2 in the process (see paragraph 5.4) when detailed plans are re-submitted, detailed appraisal of revenue costs will be undertaken, including those associated with building management, reactive and planned maintenance, in addition to potential income generation projections. A further detailed report will be provided for consideration by Cabinet if the bid is successful at stage one before the Stage 2 application is submitted. This will ensure that members are aware of all financial implications when deciding on whether to progress to Stage 2 of the process.

The Friends Group currently 'occupy' the property on a licence basis, this will be reviewed as soon as possible to ensure that all parties are adequately protected, and any associated risks addressed. With regard to future management arrangements, the Friends Group have advised that the majority of the existing membership are not currently able to increase their management responsibilities, by way of a long lease of the building 'post refurbishment' for

example. Moving forward, it is aimed to attract additional members who can volunteer time assist with staffing the refurbished building in addition to any other occupiers such as the operators of a small catering outlet, for example.

- 12.3 Consequently it is envisaged that any visitor facilities provided within the building may be managed along similar lines to the situation at Longton Brickcroft where the day to day management and caretaking of the building is carried out by the Council with a group of volunteers assisting with staffing a visitor centre or similar. In any event all occupational and/or management agreements will be appropriately documented and managed to ensure all parties are adequately protected.
- 12.4 Should the funding bid be unsuccessful, capital provision for refurbishment could be reflected in the MTFs as the project clearly supports delivery of key projects identified in the Corporate Plan.

### **13. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 13.1 The HLF's current funding programme comes closes to new applications after August 16<sup>th</sup> 2018. The funding programme for 2019 onwards is currently undecided.

There is a risk that a funding bid to the HLF may not be successful and therefore alternative funding would have to be sought to allow the project to proceed.

The building is currently in a generally poor condition and little of the internal space is currently useable. Without a robust strategy for funding the building's future restoration and improvement, the building's condition is likely to decline attracting adverse comment regarding he decline of this locally important historic building.

### **14. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT**

- 14.1 The submission of a funding bid to the HLF is not considered to have any negative equality and diversity impacts.

### **15. RELEVANT DIRECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 Cabinet are asked to approve the submission of a stage one bid to The Heritage Lottery Fund.

### **16. COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

- 16.1 The requirement to provide match funding of up to £23,000 can be met from available funding. Should the bid continue to stage 2, a broader financial assessment will be carried to ensure the full costs, including any ongoing revenue costs, are fully quantified and considered in the context of the council's medium term financial strategy at that time. At this stage, there is no commitment on the council or its financial resources.

### **17. COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

Please see legal implications section for full details but we would be acting within our powers if we were to proceed as suggested.

### **18. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Hurst Grange Coach House Options Appraisal Report  
Hurst Grange Coach House Stakeholder Engagement Report

## 21. APPENDICES

### Hurst Grange Coach House Options Appraisal Summary

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