

Subject:	Stanmer Park Master Plan & Application for HLF Grant Funding		
Date of Meeting:	11 July 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director of Environment, Housing & Development/ Executive Director of Finance & Resources		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Angela Dymott/ Jan Jonker	Tel: 29-4722
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 Stanmer Estate and Country Park is an important 18th century landscape with many historical features and buildings. It is used for recreation, sport and leisure space as well as land for food growing. It is home to residents in Stanmer Village and is an operational base for a number of businesses and organisations. It lies within the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), has significant conservation value and is home to three Scheduled Ancient Monuments and ten Archaeologically Sensitive Areas.
- 1.2 The land was purchased by the Brighton Corporation (now BHCC) in 1947 principally to protect the aquifer water supply.
- 1.3 Stanmer Park is in decline and is on the English Heritage at Risk Register. The Council is working with the SDNPA in partnership with other stakeholders on a Masterplan for the park to help prioritise restoration and improvement works in the estate over the next 10 years. The proposals will include restoration of the council owned, Grade II Listed Home Farm buildings for a number of uses, which may include a SDNPA area office and a visitor centre.
- 1.4 It is proposed to submit Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant applications to help deliver the Masterplan once finalised. This report summarises the progress made to date on the project, seeks approval to progress the HLF bid, sets out proposed governance arrangements to oversee its delivery and seeks permission to consult on the Master Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees the approach outlined in this report to apply for grant funding for the Stanmer Project which includes the submission of a Stage 1 Parks for People application in August 2014 and a Heritage Grant in October 2014.

- 2.2 That the Committee notes the funding requirements for the project and agrees in principle the ring fencing of the match funding identified in this report and to explore options to meet the shortfall in match funding.
- 2.3 That the committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Development & Housing and the Executive Director of Finance & Resources to oversee the completion of the Stage 1 funding bids and to sign off the final documents prior to submission to HLF.
- 2.4 That the committee agrees in principle to the relocation of the City Parks Depot out of Stanmer Park and authorises officers to continue to look into alternative locations and funding options for the relocation.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Stanmer Park is a popular, historic country park. It is a significant gateway to the South Downs National Park and has potential to encourage eco-tourism, promote sustainable growth and create new jobs linking in closely with the objectives of the Biosphere.
- 3.2 There is no long term management plan for the estate, it is in decline and historically important features of the park landscape and the Conservation Area are on English Heritage's 'At Risk Register'. The SDNPA has reviewed all listed buildings and the Well House is assessed as At Risk and the Long barn is Vulnerable to risk. The Estate contains 29 listed buildings or structures and four scheduled monuments.
- 3.3 In April 2012 Cabinet approved proposals to carry out a development appraisal for the council managed Home Farm agricultural buildings and the report also confirmed work had commenced on a Masterplan to ensure a holistic approach to any development proposals. The development appraisal was jointly funded with the SDNPA.
- 3.4 In January ETS Committee agreed governance arrangements for the project and granted permission to consult on a Masterplan in preparation for submission of a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project is being managed as a corporate 'Major Project'.
- 3.5 Since January the following progress has been made:
 - Revised governance arrangements, including a Project Board with representation from SDNPA and English Heritage and a Member Panel have been established. The Board oversees the management of the project and meets on a monthly basis. The Member Panel with representation from BHCC and SDNPA has had its first meeting on 20th June.
 - Significant progress has been made on the development of the Masterplan, the key elements of which are summarised below.
 - The Masterplan has been costed and options for grant funding have been evaluated and a preferred funding option identified.
 - A meeting has been held with HLF who are very positive about the scheme and support the suggested approach to grant funding.
 - Public consultation on the Masterplan has been completed and is broadly in support of the proposals.

- Engagement with key stakeholders has continued, in particular with Stanmer residents and businesses, Stanmer Organics and Plumpton College.

4. SUMMARY OF THE MASTERPLAN

4.1 The Masterplan will deliver improvements across 3 key areas of the estate: the 18th century parkland and approach to Stanmer House; the Home Farm Complex and Stanmer Village; and the Walled Garden and Nursery.

4.2 The aims of the Masterplan are to:

- Restore the council owned agricultural Home Farm buildings, which are at risk and return them to viable uses including office space for SDNPA, Visitor/Interpretation Centre, appropriate retail and small businesses and community use.
- Restore the designed landscape and its assets and restore key heritage features.
- Address traffic and parking issues and improve access to the park, including improved sustainable transport links within the park.
- Relocate the City Parks depot and other modern structures which are not in keeping with the remainder of the park.
- Restore the walled garden nursery and surrounding area.
- Deliver horticultural and heritage gardening training and food production.
- Engage people in the understanding of the landscape and in volunteering and training.
- Provide interpretation and learning facilities for the heritage of the estate and South Downs.
- Deliver a financially sustainable park management plan and a new coherent management structure to ensure future maintenance to a high standard.

Relocation City Parks Depot out of Stanmer Park

4.3 As the Masterplan has been developed it has become clear that the City Parks depot located in the park is not compatible with the restoration plans. The operations include a vehicle workshop, a waste transfer station and temporary structures. These facilities also generate a significant volume of traffic including large vehicles which exacerbate the damage to the park infrastructure.

4.4 If these facilities are not relocated the chances of the funding applications being successful are considerably reduced. The grant applications will consider making good these areas but they will not include any new facilities off site. Officers have started to look at alternative sites, including co-locating some services on existing sites, and funding options.

Traffic & Parking

4.5 There are no parking controls in Stanmer Park. This is resulting in significant displacement from other areas, particularly the University of Sussex which operates a pay and display system within its own car parks. During the weekends the high number of cars results in access problems for larger vehicles and on a number of occasions the bus service in to the park has been suspended. Parking options are being developed and need to balance visual impact of car parking against access needs for residents, visitors and organisations based in the park.

4.6 Irrespective of the Masterplan, parking issues have to be addressed and it is proposed to progress this element of the project early in 2015. A business plan would be developed to fund any car parking improvements through the implementation of Pay and Display as has been done in Preston Park and is currently being progressed in East Brighton Park.

5. MASTERPLAN COSTS & FUNDING STRATEGY

5.1 The Masterplan has been costed in detail by the project consultants and quantity surveyor. The total cost to deliver the Master Plan is £11.949 m with a match funding requirement of £2.987 m. The costs include:

- £7.5 m capital repair and conservation costs.
- £0.6m for the development phase of the project up to the submission of the final funding bids.
- £0.8m for the delivery of activities, interpretation and staff costs to deliver the management plan once the works have been completed.
- £3m allowance for contingency, inflation and management costs.

5.2 The cost plan may change slightly as the project progresses. For example improvements to car parking may be funded through a separate 'spend to save' business case by implementing parking controls. Sufficient contingency has been built in to the costs such that they are not expected to increase.

5.3 It is proposed to submit two funding applications for the project:

- A Parks for People Application for £4.171m to fund the restoration of the access to the park, the walled garden, nursery and provide educational facilities.
- A Heritage Grant application for £4.791 m to fund the restoration of the agricultural Home Farm buildings.

5.4 This approach has been used on other projects and HLF have indicated that they support this approach and have identified the same support officer to support the council with both applications. . The value of the two grant applications and the match funding requirement is set out in the table below.

	Parks for People Grant 75% grant/25% Match	Heritage Grant 75% grant/25% Match	Total
	Landscape, roads, car parking, walled garden	Home Farm Complex	
Potential HLF Grant	£4,171,449	£4,790,642	£8,962,091
Maximum Match Funding Requirement from BHCC	£1,250,483	£1,396,881	£2,647,364
Minimum Match Funding Sought From Other Sources	£140,000	£200,000	£340,000
Grand Total	£5,561,932	£6,387,523	£11,949,455

5.5 For both grants it is proposed to apply for 75% of the total value of the work with a match funding contribution of 25%. Up to 95% grant funding can be applied for however reducing the match funding contribution significantly reduces the chances of the bid being successful. Based on experience with other bids the 75%/25% split is considered to be the best proportionate split to demonstrate the partners commitment to the project and maximise the chances of the bids being successful.

6. MATCH FUNDING

6.1 A number of sources of match funding have been identified which consist of:

- 50% of capital receipts from disposal of non-core assets identified from the agricultural portfolio.
- 100% of capital receipt disposal of residential development site within Stanmer.
- Prudential borrowing based on income stream from commercial uses of the traditional agricultural buildings following refurbishment.

6.2 The SDNPA, as a key project partner, is also reviewing opportunities to fund the project.

6.3 Property & Design have identified a number of non-core assets held within the agricultural portfolio which could be sold with limited impact on rental income and without detriment to the estate. It is estimated that the disposal of the land and properties identified could create a total gross receipt of £2.32m with a loss of income of only £18,600pa. The rent loss may be offset by top slicing the capital receipt by approximately £0.260m to repay debt and reimbursing the rental budget. The properties are set out in a separate report in Part 2 of this meeting.

- 6.4 It is proposed that capital receipts realised from the disposal of the agricultural non-core assets identified be split with 50% supporting the Council's capital investment strategy and 50% supporting the Stanmer HLF bid.
- 6.5 There is a vacant plot within Stanmer Village, created through the demolition of the building that stood there some 70 or so years ago, that has long been identified for potential residential development. Following consultation with the SDNPA planners, it has been advised that there may be an opportunity for a suitable scheme to be developed. SDNPA have made it very clear that this is outside the settlement area and a convincing case would need to be made – such as an “enabling” development for the conversion of the farm buildings.
- 6.6 Based on the development option suggested by Turner and Townsend in their May 2013 report the refurbishment of the agricultural buildings has the potential to achieve an annual rent of approximately £0.105m pa. It is estimated that £0.035m pa would support the ongoing management of Stanmer and maintenance of the buildings. The remaining income stream would be sufficient to provide financing costs to support borrowing of up to £1.0m.
- 6.7 In summary the potential sources of capital funding identified total £2.43m which would leave a shortfall in Match Funding from the Council of £0.217m.
- 6.8 The funding strategy also seeks £0.340m worth of match funding from other sources. This will include any match funding the SDNPA is able to contribute as a key partner.
- 6.9 The bulk of the match funding would have to be in place subject to prior to grant money being released for the construction phase which would not be until early 2016 at the earliest, and is more likely to be 2017. Match funding of £0.173m would need to be available earlier (early 2015 onwards) as part of the development phase of the project

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 The proposed Masterplan requires significant investment and a holistic approach to managing the park is proposed. The alternative options, Do Nothing or Fund Essential Works Only have been considered below.
- 7.2 Do Nothing
- Stanmer Park including Home Farm is on the English Heritage At Risk Register. As a minimum the council is required to prevent further deterioration to the park and the buildings and it can be subject to an Enforcement Notice to address these issues by the SDNPA as the planning authority.
 - Some of the offices in the park, accommodating the SDNP animal welfare and pest control need to be replaced as they are no longer fit for purpose. If no new offices are provided it is likely that the SDNPA will relocate elsewhere.
 - Traffic and parking is having a detrimental impact on access to the park and its infrastructure. The access road and car parks are in a poor state of repair.

7.3 Fund Essential Works Only

- The authority could fund essential works to address the immediate conservation concerns from the funding identified and fund some improvements to parking through the implementation of parking controls.
- The access road will need to be resurfaced properly in the medium term with an estimated cost of £0.66m.
- It is estimated that £0.4m worth of investment is needed in Home Farm to prevent further deterioration. However this would not put the buildings back in to economic use and would not benefit the park. Without significant investment the park will continue to decline.

8 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Two stages of consultation have been carried out to inform the Masterplan. In the summer of 2013 a consultation took place to find out how residents use the park, what is important to them and what would help them enjoy their visits even more. Over 1500 people responded to the consultation. These comments, together with feedback from the Stanmer Stakeholder Group were used to develop a draft Masterplan.
- 8.2 Proposals in the draft Masterplan were subject to a second stage of consultation in March 2014. Respondents were asked their views on proposed physical improvements to the parkland, uses for Home Farm, restoration of the Walled Garden and activities they would like to see in the park. Over 1,100 people responded to the consultation.
- 8.3 The consultations have shown that there is overwhelming support for the high level proposals and significant interest in some of the proposed uses and activities in the park.
- 8.4 Throughout the project engagement has taken place with key stakeholders and numerous workshops and meetings have been held on specific aspects of the project, including parking, Stanmer Church, Stanmer Nurseries and Home Farm.

9 NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 Subject to the decision by this Committee, the next steps in the project are summarised in the table below.

Date	Milestone
August 2014	Submission of Stage 1 Parks for People Bid
October 2014	Submission of Stage 1 Heritage Bid
January 2015	Decision on Stage 1 bids
Spring 2015	Consultation on Parking
Summer 2016	Submission of final stage 2 bids
January 2017	Decision on Stage 2 bids
2017	Construction Procurement/ Preparation
2018	Construction

10. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 10.1 The Masterplan costs are detailed in paragraph 5.0 above and proposes a combination of HLGf Grant funding with match funding from both the Council and other partners and bodies as identified in paragraph 6.8. The Council's strategy to meet the match funding is detailed in paragraph 6.0 and involves the use of capital receipts and borrowing met from increased revenue income associated with the project. There is a potential funding gap of £0.217m which will need to be identified and options to close this gap will be explored which may include the use of reserves, further borrowing or disposal of other assets yet to be identified.
- 10.2 The Heritage Lottery Fund Grant application excludes costs associated with the relocation of the City Parks Depot from Stanmer Park. Various options are being explored to relocate the depot and further work will be required to identify the funding to support this move as part of the project. The remaining 50% balance of the capital receipts from the disposal of the assets within the agricultural portfolio will be used to support investment in the corporate capital investment strategy and may be used to support any funding gap in the relocation of the depot.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen

Date: 11/0614

Legal Implications:

- 10.3 Insofar as the improvements envisaged by the Masterplan include building operations or changes of use, applications for the necessary planning and listed building consents will need to be made to the South Downs National Park Authority as local planning authority for Stanmer Park.

The introduction of controlled parking will require the making of a traffic order or orders under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Procedural regulations require public notice of the proposed orders to be given and allow any person to object to the making of such orders. Any duly made objections must be considered by the Council when deciding whether to make the orders.

Lawyer Consulted:

Name Hilary Woodward

Date: 10/6/14

Equalities Implications:

- 10.4 The approach to the Stanmer Project has been subject to a thorough Equalities Impact Assessment. The detailed consultation will proactively seek views from minority groups and residents who currently do not use the park to assess what barriers prevent them from using the park. Accessibility will be a key element of the Masterplan and the funding bid.

Sustainability Implications:

- 10.5 The Stanmer Estate is of significant importance in terms of heritage and nature conservation. The estate is in decline and the Masterplan and funding

applications seek to restore the heritage and implement a sustainable Management Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Appendix A

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 11 A risk register is maintained as part of the project governance arrangements. The main risks in relation to the project relate to the feasibility of relocating City Parks Operations out of Stanmer Park which would have a significant impact on the likelihood of the bids being successful. An officer working group has been established to explore options for this work.
- 1.2 The other main risks relate to being able to secure sufficient match funding. This report sets out proposals to ring fence a significant proportion of the require match funding. It is not unusual to have an identified shortfall in match funding at this early stage in the project. The shortfall would need to be secured prior to the submission of the final funding bids which is expected to be in the summer of 2016.
- 1.3 The heritage grant application process is competitive and there is no guarantee that the bids will be successful. However feedback from HLF officers has been positive on the project as a whole and on the proposed funding approach. Feedback from the Stage 1 submission will inform the next stages of the project.

Public Health Implications:

- 1.4 Para on recreational use

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.5 Para on importance of Stanmer to city and to area/ linking City to South Downs. Only country park in close proximity to city.