

ITEM NO: 19

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| DECISION-MAKER: | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LEADERS AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL | | |
| SUBJECT: | PROPOSED NEW HERITAGE CENTRE | | |
| DATE OF DECISION: | 25 MARCH 2008 | | |
| REPORT OF: | CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS | | |
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| STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY | | | |
| N/A | | | |

SUMMARY

This report sets out the progress with the feasibility study for the new heritage centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To note and comment upon the report.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To feedback to the Scrutiny Panel and to receive the views of the Scrutiny Panel for inclusions in the relevant different Council and Cabinet reports.

CONSULTATION

2. Officers have presented the feasibility to members of the Cabinet and the Major Projects Steering Group. Initial discussions have been had with English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund who will be key stakeholders.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. As this project is still in the feasibility stage, no alternative options have been considered.

DETAIL

4. The former Magistrates Courts became vacant (with the exception of the Coroners Court) in 2000 / 2001, when the new courts were opened in the Avenue. Since that time they have remained largely unused.
5. Proposals for a new heritage centre first emerged in 2003 / 2004, and entailed feasibility work to identify possible sites. This led to a report published in October 2004 that identified that either the waterfront, or the vacant Education land at Lower High Street would be suitable, subject to issues of land ownership and funding being resolved.
6. In 2006 the Police announced their intention to vacate their current accommodation in the civic centre due to their need for more space (specifically more cells). They are due to vacate and move to new premises

by the end of 2010. Given that this will lead to the whole of the courts / police block being vacant, officers were asked to look at the possibility of converting the building into a new heritage centre.

7. In late 2007 Officers commissioned Capita to carry out early outline feasibility work to explore the use of the magistrates court as a heritage centre. The results of this very early work were presented in January this year, and briefed to the then Cabinet member for Leisure and Leader of the Council and the Major Projects Steering Group. The Vision set out was:

*To create and develop a national heritage destination that is capable of winning the hearts and minds of visitors. A “**must see**” attraction which will have an unlimited capacity to identify, present and sustain the story of the international importance of Southampton’s history through a blend of physical objects and imaginative interpretive techniques.*

8. In essence, the proposals were a three-stage development, encompassing the courts, the police block, and land to the north and south of the building. Extensions to the building were proposed, as the existing building lacks the ceiling height and expanses of space required to exhibit large items and exhibitions. The existing building will meet the requirements of some exhibitions and space needs, but cannot meet the brief as set out above, which was approved by Cabinet and Council in September 2007.
9. The proposed first stage would see the development of the land to the north, with the second stage comprising conversion of the existing building, and the third stage being the construction of a new extension on land to the south. The estimated cost for these works was in the region of £39m.
10. The next stage in the process in summary is to interrogate the work carried out to date, including the assumptions and supporting figures and to see if there is a potentially fundable scheme that could deliver part of the project including a Titanic offer in time for 2012. Part of this work will include exploring whether it would be possible to incorporate the works to the courts in the first phase of the project.
11. The table below sets out the next steps in the process. The aim is to have this work completed by mid April so that it can be presented to the Major Projects Steering Group. However the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announce the changes to their rules for funding major projects change in April and the context of the funding rules is a significant issue and it may be better to brief members after officers have this information as well. Following the overall review, if there is general support for the project the first opportunity to apply for funding from the HLF would be September 2008.

| Action | Why |
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| <u>The Brief</u> Review of brief of heritage centre | To examine in more detail and explore whether there is scope for reducing the sqm requirement |
| Develop a brief for the Titanic | To outline the requirements for a |

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| Offer | 2012 exhibition |
| <u>The Design</u> Examine the Capita proposed design in detail | To investigate scope for reducing the cost of the project |
| Discuss any highways implications with relevant officers | To conclude if the Capita proposals would be possible, what the process would be and what the timescales and cost implications would be |
| Identify the exact legal status of all the green spaces proposed to be used for the project by Capita | To conclude if the green spaces could be used, what the process would be, and what the timescale and cost implications would be |
| Review the project timetable | To identify which elements of the project could be delivered by 2012 |
| Determine when the police block is going to be available by speaking direct to those officers leading on the relocation project | As it materially affects the timetable for the project |
| Determine whether the magistrates courts could go into Phase 1 of the project | Because there have been a number of enquiries that this is explored |
| <u>Capital Costs</u> Review existing capital costs and projections | To see whether all the costs have been built in and investigate how the capital costs can be reduced |
| Source the costs estimates developed already by Taylor Woodrow regarding the magistrates courts maintenance | To inform the cost report |
| Explore sources of funding for the project. | To identify the size of project that could be potentially funded |
| <u>Consultation</u> English Heritage | To share information, to seek advice and their support for the project |
| Property Services | To share information, to suggest the commissioning of an option appraisal, to explore their plans for the commissioning of a conservation strategy |
| Development control and conservation officer | To share information, to seek advice and their support for the project |
| <u>Economies of Scale</u> Explore economies of scale of linking this work more widely with Civic Centre work. | i.e. conservation management plan, energy efficiency systems, asbestos removal, replacement of work out services |
| <u>Revised Design Proposal</u> To design a revised proposal based on the results of the above work | To identify a project that is potentially deliverable within the prescribed timescale and within a realistic budget |
| <u>Report</u> | To include: |

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| Detailed report outlining the results of the work. | Background Proposed approach Design Phasing Capital costs Timetable Next Steps In preparation for April |
| <u>Presentation</u> To present the results of the work to Cabinet member and the Major Projects Steering Group | To provide an update on progress |

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

12. £50,000 has been set aside in the Leisure and Culture Capital programme to support the work of this project in 2008 /2009.

Revenue

13. The early outline feasibility work carried out by Capita cost £19,000. This was funded from a specific budget within the Leisure and Culture revenue budgets. There will be some additional minimal costs incurred before the end of March which will be funded from within the existing Revenue budget for 2007 / 2008.

Property

14. There will be substantial implications for Property Services should this project proceed. However, at present feasibility work is at an early stage, and there are no immediate Property implications.

Other

15. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

16. Under Section 12 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, a local authority may provide and maintain museums within its area and may do all such things as may be necessary or expedient for or in connection with the provision and maintenance thereof. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council shall have the power to do anything calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of its functions. This includes the power to enter into a contract in this regard.

Other Legal Implications:

17. Not applicable.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

18. The City Strategy identified 'imaginative arts and cultural opportunities' as one of the six strategic objectives. The 2007/08 Corporate Improvement Plan identifies "Establish robust proposals for a New Heritage Attraction" as an action for the Leisure and Culture portfolio.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

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| 1. | None |
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Documents In Members' Rooms

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| 1. | None |
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Background Documents

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| Title of Background Paper(s) | Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable) |
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Background documents available for inspection at:

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| FORWARD PLAN No: | N/A | KEY DECISION? | N/A |
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| WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: | |
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