

North Somerset Council

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REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 19 JUNE 2018

SUBJECT OF REPORT: HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND APPLICATION FOR GROVE PARK

TOWN OR PARISH: WESTON SUPER MARE

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: JOHN FLANNIGAN, COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE MANAGER

KEY DECISION: N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel receives and considers the contents of this report which provides information on a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application for Grove Park.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Lottery provides significant grants to renovate heritage sites and engage local communities. This report describes why a lottery application is being considered for Grove Park, the application process and financial implications.

2. POLICY

A HLF application would meet all three of the Council's objectives
Quality Places
Health and well-being
Prosperity

3. DETAILS

Grove Park has a rich and varied heritage which reflects the character and history of its neighbourhood. It was the first public park in Weston-Super-Mare opening in 1891, having been the home and garden of the Smyth-Piggott family since c. 1805. It is registered Grade 2 on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens (list entry Number: 1001658). It contains a Grade 2 listed bandstand (recently restored) and war memorial (currently being restored).

The park also includes more modern elements such as a children's play area, Jill's garden (created by the TV programme Ground Force in memory of Jill Dando who grew up in the

town), public toilets, 3G five a side pitch, café, sensory garden and floral beds, an extensive rockery with cascade and pond area.

Being close to the High Street and surrounded by residential properties it is a popular place for recreation and leisure. The Park also hosts events throughout the year ranging from classic car shows to Pride and regular music events.

The proposed HLF project will focus on enhancing the park with emphasis on the Victorian public park features and the Memorial Garden which still dominates the park and is particularly poignant as we approach the centenary of the end of the First World War. Many of these features are showing signs of decline and therefore require renovation to reflect the park's status.

In addition to restoring the park's key heritage features and infrastructure we wish to bring back into use redundant buildings, link the park better to the High Street, encourage more events, volunteer activity and increased opportunities for formal and informal learning particularly around traditional artisan skills such as horticulture and stonemasonry.

HLF grants are processed using a two-stage method. Expressions of interest are required at Stage 1 where the project proposals are presented along with community outcomes and project costs. Officers are currently putting this outline bid together and hope to submit it in August 2018. This stage does not commit the Council to proceed with the project but is a useful exercise in exploring the benefits, costs and risks associated with such a project.

If the HLF approves the Stage 1 application it will progress to Stage 2 where more detailed work must be carried out. At this point detailed project plans will need to be provided along with detailed costings and in-depth explanation to the purpose of the project and what the community benefits will be. The detailed work required to put this information together is funded by the HLF which ensures that the capacity required to complete the detailed bid is made available and sufficient skills and expertise utilised as necessary.

It is only at Stage 2 when the Council will have to commit to the full project and at that point it will be in full knowledge of the costs and resources required to deliver it. Stage 2 would be submitted in Summer 2019 and works would be expected to start in 2020, if successful.

HLF grants are becoming increasingly competitive as more organisations bid for reducing funds. The current work is therefore being carried out to investigate options and costs and to engage with stakeholders and the HLF.

4. CONSULTATION

Whilst investigating options around this HLF application we have discussed options with the Friends of the Park, the Town Council, local Members and the Civic Society. All groups are aware of the speculative nature of the application, at this stage.

If successful Stage 2 will include a detailed consultation programme to ensure that all stakeholders are considered.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is estimated that the project would cost c. £4 million and would require match funding of c. £500,000 from North Somerset Council and partners. This would be spread across the five

years of the project. However, it will not be until detailed plans are put together for the Stage 2 application that accurate costings will be available.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

As freeholder of the site North Somerset Council is responsible for decisions made about renovation and maintenance at Grove Park.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are currently no risks because Stage 1 application is speculative and does not commit the Council to any future action.

A full evaluation of risks would be carried out for the Stage 2 application when the Council would be more committed to delivering the project.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment will be completed on the Stage 2 application.

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The renovation of Grove Park would restore an important part of the Council's estate and contribute positively to the economic regeneration of Weston super Mare.

10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

More detailed options will be considered if the HLF approve the Stage 1 application.

AUTHOR

John Flannigan, Community and Environment Service Manager

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None