

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 06 June 2016

Portfolio:	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Westbury Manor Museum Re-Modelling Proposal
Report of:	Director of Operations
Strategy/Policy:	Leisure Strategy
Corporate Objective:	Leisure for Health and for Fun

Purpose: To consider a proposal to re-model the Westbury Manor Museum as a vibrant 'culture stop', with pop-up exhibitions and events, enhanced café and retail outlet.

Executive summary:

Westbury Manor Museum is a community museum that tells the story of Fareham's rich and varied local history. However, the exhibitions and reception spaces require modernising and visitor numbers are in decline.

In May 2015 the Executive approved a vision for the transformation of the cultural facilities in Fareham. This included the re-invention of Westbury Manor Museum as a vibrant 'culture stop'.

Officers from the Leisure & Community team, Hampshire Cultural Trust and Hampshire County Council architects have prepared a feasibility study to deliver the vision for a re-modelled Westbury Manor Museum. The aim is to create a vibrant cultural heritage attraction at a key strategic location on West Street, Fareham.

The cost of the main building works is £665,000 with Hampshire Cultural Trust funding £217,000 and Fareham Borough Council £448,000. It is proposed that £285,000 held by the Council in the Winfred Cox Charity is utilised plus an additional £163,000 from reserves.

The Council would enter into a 10 year management agreement with Hampshire Cultural Trust, including a lease for the building. After taking account of the cost of capital, the saving to the Council over the 10 year agreement would be £396,000.

This provides an exciting and unique opportunity to transform one of the key cultural facilities in Fareham and create a vibrant 'culture stop' which will re-energise the visitor experience to the museum and a focal point for the town centre.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

The Executive are asked to approve:

- (a) Proposals to remodel the Westbury Manor Museum as outlined in the report;
- (b) £285,000 held by the Council in the Charity of Miss Winifred Nellie Cox be used towards the cost of funding the works;
- (c) £163,000 from capital reserves is allocated towards the cost of funding the works;
- (d) Up to £35,000 is allocated from the Innovation Fund for improvements and enhancements to the frontage of the building;
- (e) 10 year management agreement and lease to Hampshire Cultural Trust for the provision of a museum service in the Westbury Manor building, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed; and
- (f) £64,500 funding from revenue for the first year of the new management agreement.

Reason:

To modernise current exhibitions and reception spaces and address the decline in visitor numbers. There is also the opportunity to deliver significant revenue saving to the Council.

Cost of proposals:

The project requires an investment from the Council of £448,000. The proposal is to use £285,000 held by the Council in the Winifred Cox Charity plus an additional £163,000 from reserves. There is up to £35,000 in the Innovation Fund for improvements and enhancements to the frontage of the building. There is a requirement to provide £64,500 from revenue for the first year of the 10 year agreement which is already accounted for in the budget. The 10 year agreement will deliver revenue saving to the Council of £395,910.

Appendices: None

Background papers: File of papers

Reference papers:

Report to the Executive 3 March 2014 – Westbury Manor Museum – Hampshire Cultural Trust Proposals

Report to the Executive 18 May 2015 – Fareham Cultural Facilities Transformation

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	06 June 2016
Subject:	Westbury Manor Museum Re-modelling Proposals
Briefing by:	Director of Operations
Portfolio:	Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. In March 2014, the Executive agreed new arrangements to transfer the management of Westbury Manor Museum to the newly established Hampshire Cultural Trust. The new Trust was formed following a strategic review of the arts and museum service in Hampshire, commissioned by Hampshire County Council.
2. The current arrangements for Westbury Manor Museum include a three year funding agreement, which expires in 2017. There was also a commitment from Hampshire Cultural Trust, in partnership with Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, to develop a strategic vision for the integration of cultural facilities in the Borough of Fareham.
3. In May 2015 the Executive approved a vision for the transformation of the cultural facilities in Fareham as two distinct projects. The amalgamation of the Ashcroft Arts Centre into a remodelled Ferneham Hall and the re-invention of Westbury Manor Museum as a vibrant 'culture stop'.
4. In addition to the transformation of the facilities, there was an ambition to reduce the cost for providing the facilities by 40%.
5. This reports sets out the proposals to remodel the Westbury Manor Museum in accordance with the vision for the transformation of cultural facilities.

BACKGROUND

6. Westbury Manor is a grade 2 listed building and overall is in a good state of repair, although no major work has been undertaken in recent times. Until recently the building hosted the Tourist Information Centre as well as the museum.
7. Westbury Manor Museum is a community museum that tells the story of Fareham's rich and varied local history. The ground floor includes a café, temporary exhibition space and local studies area and the museum displays are primarily on the first floor with offices on the second floor.

8. The exhibitions and reception spaces are dated tired and require re-energising and modernising. There is also a walled garden to the rear of the property which is managed by the Council as a public open space.
9. In 2013/14 there were over 26,000 visitors, but numbers have subsequently declined with the largest attendance usually associated with the temporary touring exhibitions.
10. Hampshire Cultural Trust has a 3 year agreement, for providing a museum service in the Westbury Manor building, which expires in March 2017. The cost of funding the operation is shared with Hampshire Cultural Trust, with Fareham Borough Council contributing £64,500 per annum.
11. The cost of maintaining the building is currently funded by Hampshire County Council.
12. Fareham Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the gardens.

BUILDING PROPOSALS

13. Hampshire Cultural Trust and Hampshire County Council architects have produced a feasibility study to deliver the vision for a re-modelled Westbury Manor Museum. The aim is to create a vibrant cultural heritage attraction at a key strategic location in Fareham town centre.
14. Externally the railings enclosing the front courtyard will be removed giving a more open and welcoming aspect to the building. The attention of customers approaching from the pedestrianised West Street will be drawn in by new signage and pavement layout that entices them into the gardens of Westbury Manor and into the building via re-modelled main and garden entrance.
15. Inside, they will discover a ground floor transformed into a vibrant cultural space with pop-up exhibitions and attractions, and a unique café experience with museum artefacts forming a visual backdrop with a cultural theme. On the ground floor there will be a community space that will be available for private hire.
16. There will also be a shop where customers can buy quality arts and produce made in Hampshire. The courtyard facing onto West Street and the garden patio will have tables and chairs and become an outdoor extension of the café space.
17. Upstairs, customers will find the local story of Fareham told through an engaging and imaginative combination of real objects and digital information. The intention will be to use a combination of interactive exhibits and digital media to enhance the visitor experience.
18. The second floor space will be converted into incubator studios for creative practitioners. The aim is to encourage local start up business with a cultural theme to take up space in the building and create a working feel to the facility.
19. Discussion has taken place with officers in Development Control regarding the general proposals and in particular any potential impact on the building given it is grade II listed. Subject to detailed plans and specifications no concerns in principle have been identified at this time and officers in Development Control will continue to be involved in the preparation of detailed plans and the construction works.

20. Discussions have also taken place with officers in Environmental Health to consider issues relating to licensing, noise and anti-social behaviour that has been a problem in the area adjacent to the buildings and in the garden. No specific concerns were identified but officers will continue to be involved in the detailed design process to ensure that relevant community safety and licensing matters are appropriately considered.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital Costs

21. The feasibility study undertaken by Hampshire County Council Architects has identified a total capital cost of £665,000 to undertake the works required. This figure is subject to a competitive tender.
22. Hampshire Cultural Trust will provide £217,000 towards the cost. This includes £100,000 grant funding for equipping the first floor exhibition space. A grant of £50,000 towards the cost of the Café facilities and £67,000 in kind support from Hampshire County Council Architects.
23. Two sources of funding have been identified to provide the £448,000 balance of funding from Fareham Borough Council.
24. Fareham Borough Council holds £285,000 in the Charity of Miss Winifred Nellie Cox. The bequest is for the funding of the Charity to be used either for a museum or for a public garden. It is proposed that the bequest is used to fund the works to re-model the Westbury Manor Museum.
25. This leaves a balance of £163,000 and it is proposed that this is funded from Fareham Borough Council's capital reserves.
26. An additional sum of up to £35,000 has been identified in the Town Centre Innovation Fund. This funding was provided to improve and enhance the town centre infrastructure. This will be used to create a sense of place in the Westbury Manor frontage with the creative use of contemporary street furniture, paving and landscaping.

Revenue Costs

27. Hampshire Cultural Trust has made a commitment to operate the museum without any financial contribution from Fareham Borough Council to the management of the facility, after the first year of opening. This is on the basis that the Council provides the balance of capital funding to deliver the project.
28. This will mean that the current funding agreement will need to be extended by one year until March 2018. This will cover the period that the building works are being undertaken and a start-up period to allow the new operational arrangements to be established.
29. There will be a new 10 year management agreement and lease of the property to the Hampshire Cultural Trust.
30. Hampshire County Council is not able to commit to undertaking the repairs and maintenance on the property for a 10 year period. They will however provide a sum of £12,500 that can be drawn down by Fareham Borough Council to undertake the required repairs and maintenance of the building. This will mean that responsibility for repairs and maintenance will transfer from Hampshire County Council to Fareham Borough Council.

31. A condition survey was carried out in 2012 and revealed no significant problems. Another condition survey is currently being carried out by the Hampshire County Council Architects to determine the maintenance liabilities for the building over the period of the 10 year agreement.
32. The Council will have to pay £64,500 for the first year of the agreement but over the remaining nine years there is a saving of £580,500. The capital investment from the Council of £163,000 plus the loss of interest on the funding provided by the Council comes to £184,590.
33. This means that over the 10 year period of the agreement the Council will save £396,000.

PROJECT TIMELINE

34. The proposals will be presented to the Leisure & Community Policy Development and Review Panel on 1 June and the Museum Joint Management Committee on 6 June 2016.
35. Subject to approval by the Executive, detailed designs will be developed in preparation for the submission of a planning application and tender documentation for the construction works. Hampshire Cultural Trust will also need to seek approval to proceed with the project from their Board of Trustees
36. If this work is completed and the tender issued by October then it is anticipated that the building would close and work would start in January 2017. The construction work is estimated to take four months to complete and therefore it is anticipated that the new facility will open in May 2017.

RISK ASSESSMENT

37. The business plan prepared by Hampshire Cultural Trust indicates that they will subsidise the operation of the facility at least in the start-up period. They have confirmed that this is a low risk as they can offset the subsidy against their total operation and they have opportunities to obtain external funding which will provide additional income. The arrangement means that the risk of funding any shortfall in the revenue costs lies with the Hampshire Cultural Trust and not the Council.
38. Hampshire County Council is not able to continue to maintain the building for the duration of the 10 year agreement. They have made available a sum of £12,500 for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the building. The last condition survey of the building was carried out in 2012 and identified no significant problems. However, another survey is currently being undertaken and this may identify works that will need to be undertaken, over the course of the agreement. Any such works may require funds over and above that provided by Hampshire County Council. Therefore Fareham Borough Council would be liable for these additional costs.
39. A construction period of four months has been identified based on the work undertaken in the feasibility study. Given that it's a listed building, there may be some complications that arise in the construction process that may result in a delay in completing the works. A contingency of 17.5% has been allowed for in the total project cost.

CONCLUSION

40. The new partnership between Fareham Borough Council and the Hampshire Cultural Trust has provided an exciting and unique opportunity to transform one of the key cultural facilities in Fareham.
41. Westbury Manor Museum will play a key role in championing cultural activity across Fareham town centre, working with local businesses and community organisations to develop pop-up festival activity. The Hampshire Cultural Trust has already made a contribution to the town centre events programme and the aim will be to build on and enhance this presence in the town centre.
42. In addition to the transformation of the facilities and the potential benefits for the town centre, there is also financial revenue savings for the Council. The original ambition was to deliver a 40% reduction in the cost to the Council of operating the facility.
43. The proposal provides a saving of £396,000 over the duration of the 10 year agreement. This far in away exceeds the original ambition and provides a significant contribution to the Council's efficiency savings.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Mark Bowler (Ext 4420)