

## EASTCOTE HOUSE BUILDINGS AND GARDENS HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND STAGE 2 BID

<b>Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Councillor Keith Burrows Councillor Jonathan Bianco Councillor Ray Puddifoot
<b>Cabinet Portfolio(s)</b>	Planning, Transportation and Recycling Finance, Property and Business Services Leader of the Council (Heritage brief)
<b>Officer Contact(s)</b>	Charmian Baker – Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix 1 - Map showing Eastcote House Gardens, with Proposals superimposed Appendix 2 - Heritage Lottery Fund Award Offer, with Terms and conditions

### 1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

<b>Summary</b>	The Heritage Lottery Fund have accepted the Council's Stage 1 bid for the project at Eastcote House Gardens, and awarded it a grant to progress the scheme to the second stage. Authorisation is sought to develop the project in detail for submission at Stage 2 and to go out to tender for the necessary consultants.
<b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b>	<i>Contributes to the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Corporate objectives including:</i> Maintain local heritage; Ensure heritage and natural environment are protected and enhanced Expand cultural and sports activities Extend opportunities for older people to participate in leisure, recreational and cultural activities Work in partnership to maximise the effective use of resources Reduce anti-social behaviour.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	£15,000 for preliminary investigations, urgent works and monitoring of the listed buildings (money already earmarked under the HIP programme). £1,200 for postage, publicity and expenses in connection with the public consultation in summer 2012 (from existing Group budget). A £74,000 grant has been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, while the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens have committed 40 volunteer days to helping with this stage of the project
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Residents and Environment Policy Overview Committee

**Ward(s) affected**

Eastcote and East Ruislip

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Cabinet:**

- 1). Authorises a Part 2 Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the refurbishment, conversion and extension of the listed buildings, and the upgrading and interpreting of the park at Eastcote House Gardens, for community and educational use and;**
- 2). Delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services to proceed with and accept tenders for the necessary consultants, and commissioning a Construction Design and Management (CDM) co-ordinator to advise on site safety, as set out in the Stage 1 Bid.**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

The Council has been successful in being awarded a First Round pass by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to proceed to the next stage. Owing to the grant from the HLF, and the input from the Friends Group, new costs to the Council for the development phase would be low. If successful at the second round, the Council would receive an HLF grant of around a £1 million which, together with the volunteer work of the Friends Group, and a reasonable contribution from the Council, would enable the buildings and gardens to be turned into a very valuable community and educational resource. The Consultants required are described and costed in the Stage 1 Bid, which formed the basis of the First Round pass.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

Not to proceed with the project. In this scenario, the Eastcote Billiards Club might remain in The Stables, the Dovecote would continue to be used for the storage of gardening equipment and the walled garden would remain as it is, until such time as these buildings and structures fell into such disrepair that they were unusable and presented a health and safety risk to the public. Such a situation would leave the park even more insecure.

The lack of any toilet, shelter or refreshment facilities in the park would continue to constrain the work of the Friends Group, particularly their hosting of educational visits. The Green Flag status, awarded this year on the understanding that an HLF Bid would be submitted to repair the buildings and bring them back into community use and provide visitor facilities, would be difficult to achieve again.

### **Policy Overview Committee comments**

None at this stage.

### **3. INFORMATION**

#### **Background**

1. Eastcote House Gardens, once the grounds of Eastcote House (demolished in the 1960's), comprises the timber-framed 16<sup>th</sup> century Stables, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Dovecote, the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century Walled Garden and an area of public parkland. The three buildings and structures are all listed Grade II, whilst the park is included on the draft Parks and Gardens Local List. Within Hillingdon's adopted Unitary Development Plan, the whole site falls within an Archaeological Priority Area, is designated as Metropolitan Open Land and has been included within the Eastcote Village Conservation Area.

2. The site has been in the Council's ownership for over seventy years. Significant repairs, the complete modernisation of services and a viable future are now urgently needed for the buildings, which have been included on the Heritage at Risk Register, published by English Heritage. Moreover, the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens, established in 2008, have been very successful in replanting and maintaining the gardens, holding community events and encouraging educational trips from local schools and uniformed groups, despite there being no shelter, toilets, refreshment facilities or a secure store for tools and equipment on the site, the only facility being one garden tap. It was concluded that the only way to render the buildings fully usable and fulfil the enormous potential of the gardens, was to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

3. In September 2009, Cabinet authorised officers to proceed with the drawing up of a Conservation Management Plan, which was the necessary precursor to an application for Heritage Lottery Funding. This Plan was undertaken by architectural consultants, funded jointly by English Heritage and the Council. Their work was guided by a Steering Group made up of the Ward Councillors, residents holding key positions in local organisations, Council officers and an officer from English Heritage.

4. Central to the Conservation Management Plan was a comprehensive public consultation to determine what residents in Eastcote would like to see in the park. This comprised questionnaires and interviews with sixty stakeholders, an exhibition at three locations in Eastcote, and a public drop-in session in the Stables itself, over the weekend of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> March 2010. The results are well documented in the Plan. In all, 15 local groups and 201 individuals submitted written suggestions. These showed considerable support for the community use of the buildings with occasional functions, good visitor facilities, and the interpretation of the history of the site, including the Dovecote. A pre-application Bid, submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2010, received a positive and encouraging response from their officers, particularly for the proposed community excavation on the site of Eastcote House. It was recommended that a Bid be submitted under the Parks for People category, which is part funded by the Big Lottery.

5. In September 2010, Cabinet welcomed the Plan and authorised officers to proceed with a) the submission of a Stage 1 Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, b) an investigation into the relocation of the Eastcote Billiards Club and c) work to ensure Urgent Works were carried out meanwhile.

6. In the months that followed, officers in Corporate Property and Construction continued to search for a solution to the relocation of the Eastcote Billiards Club, identifying a building for potential alteration and conversion in January 2011. At about the same time, the Heritage

Lottery Fund changed its funding thresholds to make the process more attractive to Local Authorities facing challenging spending cuts.

7. Officers submitted the First Round bid to meet the August 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 deadline after a period of planning, when the Steering Group worked together to draw up plans for the buildings and gardens, pull together details, discuss preferred options, measure out buildings on the ground, conduct a visitor survey, meet with an archaeological trust and start fund raising.

8. A schematic plan of the project is shown in Appendix 1. The proposals include :

- The repair, extension, installation of new services and conversion of the Stables building to form a community space, with kitchenette, storage, meeting room, Park Manager's Office and landscaping
- The extension of the Stables by means of a covered courtyard linked to a new, low-rise building, to accommodate a tea room with sale of garden produce, toilet facilities and storage.
- The relocation of the car park to the treed area close to Eastcote High Road, for health and safety reasons and to enable the landscaping of the Stables' frontage.
- A community archaeological excavation on the site of the old House, to take place over four seasons, to inform the full interpretation of the site, with lectures and oral history project.
- The repair and improvement of the dovecote, with re-instatement of the dormer window and working 'potence', re-opening of nesting boxes and installation of exhibition boards.
- Improvements to planting on the banks of the River Pinn, in line with Environment Agency recommendations.
- Installation of logs for an outdoor classroom on the opposite bank of the river, with ecology walk, natural playground, board walk and pond dipping facility in a historic water feature (to be re-opened).
- Landscaping to include the extension of the orchard. (Planted by volunteers, and paid for by sponsorship, late 2011)
- Improvements to paths and seating, and creation of raised beds with sensory garden, to allow wheelchair users and vision impaired visitors the fullest access possible to the site, to help them enjoy the feel and smell of plants and to encourage their participation in suitable gardening projects.
- Construction of a new gardeners' facility to include tools storage, secure potting area and rest/area/training venue for volunteers. (Included in the Bid as partnership funding)
- Increased security to include lighting, CCTV, alarms and improved fencing
- A part-time Parks Manager (salary included in the costings for first five years)

- Management and maintenance of buildings and gardens (figures included for first five years)
- Activity plan to include volunteer training, guided walks, production of leaflets, educational visits, talks, events and apple festival.

9. There are three phases to the project:

- The development stage, in which the site investigations are carried out; the plans are drawn up in detail; public consultation takes place before finalisation of the plans; the necessary permissions are obtained; and the activity plans are produced to include such areas as business, marketing, audience development and management and maintenance plans). Work to be carried out by Consultants, with the appointment of a separate Archaeological consultant, under the supervision of, and with input from, the Steering Group. All of these elements will comprise the Second Round Bid, to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund at the end of February 2013.
- The delivery stage, subject to the results of the Second Round bid in June 2013. If successful, the Council will let the contract for the work on site, under the supervision of a Project Manager. The work on site is expected to take about 6 months.
- The project stage, in which a Parks Manager is recruited to liaise with the volunteers; take responsibility for organising school visits; take bookings for the Stables building; organise educational events such as lectures, guided walks, and exhibitions; and act as caretaker for the buildings, organising repairs and maintenance, cleaning and providing a presence on the site for enhanced security. There will also be a duty to bring in visitors from less advantaged parts of the Borough, increase the number and diversity of the volunteer groups, and ensure their training,

10. On 13<sup>th</sup> December, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery awarded a first round pass to the project, with a development grant of £74,000, representing 78% of the total eligible development work cost of £95,200. This is to be spent on the appointment of consultants to develop the project, in liaison with Council Officers and the Friends Group, to the second stage, as defined in the First Round Bid. The consultancy fees were calculated as a percentage of the delivery stage, with the fees for the archaeology consultant based on a quotation from an Archaeological Trust, who were invited in to scope the work. It is important to emphasise that staff costs of officers employed by the Council cannot be included in the calculations.

11. A Monitoring Officer has been appointed by the Heritage Lottery Fund to act as Project Mentor, authorise minor re-arrangements of costings, receive reports on progress, measured against the Standard Second Round Checklist, and ensure that the particular requirement laid upon this project, to explore ways of diversifying the park's audience and working with under-represented groups, is addressed. A formal review of progress will take place at the outline proposals stage, when outline costs have been developed through the receipt of quotes or tenders. The review is to ensure that neither the proposals, nor the overall costs have changed significantly since the original Bid.

12. Legal Terms and Conditions, have been appended to the offer, and they are set out in Appendix 2 to this report. They include the following warnings: if less is spent on the development work than approved in the budget, the final HLF grant will be reduced pro rata; a start should not be made before the Permission to Start forms have been signed off; the

development work must be started within 12 months, and finished within 24; and the grant will be withdrawn if the project does not pass the review. They also emphasise that the Council must keep exclusive control of the property; use it only for the approved purposes; insure and secure it appropriately and apply annually for a Green Flag Award.

13. The offer of an award for the development stage of the project is considered to be a great achievement in this very competitive national arena, and a great opportunity, indeed the only realistic opportunity, to solve the intractable problems which have been associated with this site over the years. However, the project will go much further than achieving the full repair of the listed buildings and giving them a sustainable future: it will help the site reach the tremendous potential it is deemed to have. The project has the capability to provide a really valuable community and educational resource, for residents living locally as well as those living in other parts of the Borough, and will be of particular benefit to schools, and as an attractive venue for community and family events.

### **Financial Implications**

The Heritage Lottery Fund award of £74,000 will cover the cost of the consultants necessary to progress the project through the development stage to the second round.

The estimated 40 volunteer days will be used for assistance with interviewing consultants, attendance at the meetings to steer the details of the proposed development, manning and helping to facilitate the public consultation and putting together the Activity Plan.

The chief implication for the Council at this stage is £15,000 for preliminary investigations and urgent works to the listed buildings, which is to be funded as part of the planned Urgent Repairs, identified through the HIP budget, £150,000 having already been drawn down for this purpose. Secondly, as it was deemed important for the public consultation to be handled by the Council, rather than external consultants, a sum of £1,200 has been identified for the publicity and postage necessary in connection with leafleting residents and putting on a manned exhibition for a weekend.

Success at the Second Round is dependent on the strength of the Bid in meeting the HLF criteria, at a similar cost to that estimated at Stage 1. As this should be achievable, the implications for the Council of the delivery stage can be broadly considered.

The delivery stage, which includes both the physical works on site, and the first five years that the site is operational, is currently estimated to cost around £1.4 million, of which the Heritage Lottery Fund would be expected to fund £1.05 million. The difference between the two would be met partly by costed volunteer time and volunteer fund raising, to be provided by the Friends Group, and partly by the Council from capital and revenue streams. A proportion of this would be offset by fees and rental income, the remainder coming from other sources such as S. 106 money identified for community facilities.

After the first five years, not only would the maintenance costs identified above, be ongoing, but the Parks Manager post, would be expected to be funded from Council resources and would be subject to inclusion in a future MTF as a growth bid.

## **4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

### **What will be the effect of the recommendation?**

If the application to the HLF were successful at the second stage, the future of the buildings at Eastcote House Gardens would be secured in perpetuity, whilst their repair and conversion to educational /community use, and the enhanced proposals for the grounds, would provide an attractive facility for residents, community groups, schools, uniformed groups and visitors of all ages, background and disabilities, particularly those from other parts of the Borough. It would provide a very attractive location for events, and a training ground for volunteers in horticulture, archaeology and other disciplines. It is very unusual to be able to provide an opportunity for residents to take part in archaeological excavations, and it is anticipated that this will be very popular indeed.

The interiors of the Stables and Dovecote are particularly fine but not generally open to the public at the present time. This project would enable them to be enjoyed and understood by visitors to the park, through enhanced interpretation and guided walks, leaflets and lectures.

The repair and re-use of the buildings, the community involvement in the Activity Plan and the security measures to be taken, would also deter the vandalism and address the safety issues which have beleaguered the site in recent years.

Such a project could significantly enhance the site, providing, through external funding partners, significant value for money for the Council.

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

The Steering Group of Eastcote House Buildings and Gardens, comprising the Ward Councillors, the Chairmen of Eastcote Residents Association and the Eastcote Conservation Panel, the Secretary of the Northwood, Eastcote and Ruislip Local History Society, officers from English Heritage and members of the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens, has been a part of this project since January 2010, and are fully supportive of officers taking the Bid to the next round. Much local interest was generated through the previous public consultation in March 2010, and this was used as a sounding board for ideas for possible community uses.

The development stage of the HLF bid, makes provision for a very thorough public consultation, with exhibition and drop in, once the plans are developed in more detail. This is programmed to take place at the end of the summer, 2012.

## **5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications included above. There is sufficient capacity within existing revenue budgets to support expenditure arising from the recommendations in this report.

As this bid progresses, potential impacts on future revenue budgets and capital programme will be managed through the MTFP process and further reports to Cabinet.

## **Legal**

As the buildings within Eastcote House Gardens have been identified as listed structures, the Council has a legal duty to protect and preserve these buildings. The proposed works would not only preserve and restore Eastcote House Gardens but also ensure that those parts which are currently derelict and dangerous would be made safe and brought into proper use, subject to a successful Part 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) was established in 1980, with a substantial endowment. It receives annual grant-in-aid from DCMS for the Heritage Memorial Fund (HMF). In 1994, the NHMF also took on responsibility for managing grant-giving of money raised through the National Lottery for heritage projects. This is what is known as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). HLF is funded by the proceeds of the National Lottery.

In the event of a successful bid to the HLF, the Council will have to enter into an Agreement with the HLF, which would set out specific conditions and monitoring milestones for the Council. The legal department will be consulted on the suitability of these obligations.

This report also seeks authority to go out to tender for a Lead Consultant and an Archaeological Consultant in order to progress Part II of this project. The Council's Procurement & Contract Standing Orders- Schedule H details the duties and processes to be adopted by Officers when placing contracts.

In particular, Standard Order 4 specifies the number of quotations or tenders that should be sought for a particular contract value and also recommends that, before embarking on a tendering process, Officers should consult the Procurement Standard Operating Procedures, to confirm and determine how the goods, works or services should be tendered. In addition to this, appropriate guidance should also be sought from the Procurement Team and Legal Services.

## **Corporate Property and Construction**

Corporate Property and Construction have been working closely with the Planning Specialists and Green Spaces Teams to advance the Heritage Lottery Fund project and are fully in support of the proposal to take the Bid to the Second Stage.

These listed buildings have been a Council liability for many years. It is considered that the proposals would enable them to be put into a good state repair, with future uses which would benefit the whole community and enable them to enjoy these historic structures. The proposals would make the best use of Council assets, add to their value and, in the short term, reduce future spend on maintenance.

## **Relevant Service Groups**

Green Spaces fully support the recommendations made in this report.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 Bid, as submitted by the Council in August 2011, with amendments made subsequently through agreement with the HLF Case Officer.