

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	13 September 2018
Subject:	Headstone Manor HLF Parks for People Grant
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Paul Walker, Corporate Director of Community
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Environment Councillor Keith Ferry, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Employment
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Headstone North
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report seeks Cabinet approval to carry out a procurement exercise for the Delivery Phase of a Heritage Lottery Funded Parks for People project in Headstone Manor with total £2.16m investment to restore the park.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. grant permission to commence procurement and select a landscape architect consultancy to provide services to complete the Detailed Design RIBA and construction drawings to RIBA Stage 4-5 including all specifications and cost plans.

2. delegate to the Corporate Director, Community, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Employment and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, to finalise all related procurement and subsequent award of the contracts.

Reason: (For recommendations)

This project will ensure the Council fulfils its statutory responsibilities for the management of flood risks as required under the Flood & Water Management Act and also the actions set out in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The Parks for People project will complement the current HLF Manor House, Museum and New Visitor Centre by improving the 3 main approaches into the park and provide a much needed 150 space overflow car park to accommodate the private hire and Council venue events.

Our Community Engagement Team have worked with the park user group and completed visitor surveys and volunteer days so that we understand what is important to our residents and what they would like to see in the park.

This project has also enabled a successful GLA Green Capital Grant bid providing an additional £300k to the park and it will be our aim to achieve Green Flag status for this park to add to the 5 Green Flag standard parks in the Borough.

Options considered

The Commission Divisions Infrastructure Team have combined the Council flood risk and open space strategies with the Capital Projects delivery team objectives of investment in infrastructure by making a 1st round HLF Parks for People application in Headstone Manor that will also support the long term business case and sustainability of the previous HLF project for Headstone Manor Museum and Visitor Centre.

The team received a 1st round pass in June 2016 and the 2nd Round Development Phase has been successfully completed in June 2018.

This is a one off opportunity to undertake much needed restoration infrastructure improvement work for park wide areas including the moat, footpaths, river network and playground areas that will complement the new visitor centre and Manor House and museum restoration work and raise flood protection levels in the park and elsewhere in North Harrow.

Current situation

The wider park areas, playing fields, footpaths, river network, trees, playground and historic moat have suffered from a lack of investment and maintenance for many years. In particular the historic moat has poor water quality, overgrown vegetation blocking sight lines which detracts from the visitor experience and risk affecting the private function venue bookings. The current site also does not provide a suitable setting and arrival to both the park and historic buildings and also lacks sufficient parking arrangements to support the business model that will provide long term sustainability to the previous substantial investment into the Manor House, Museum and Visitor Centre.

Why a change is needed

The Parks for People project will complement the current HLF Manor House, Museum and New Visitor Centre by improving the 3 main approaches into the park and provide a much needed 150 space overflow car park to accommodate the private hire and Council venue events.

Our Community Engagement Team have worked with the park user group and completed visitor surveys and volunteer days so that we understand what is important to our residents and what they would like to see in the park.

Work to construct sedimentation cells to prevent large scale suspended silts entering the historic moat and also a reed bed system that will filter the water from the culvert before flowing into the moat.

There will also be work to modify the Yeading Brook including deculverting a section and improving flood risk protection to the historic buildings and making biodiversity improvements to the water environment.

We will deliver a 3 Activity Action Plan working with park volunteers and our 3rd sector delivery partners to create outdoor education opportunities for schools and residents and will include 1 full time Outdoor Learning Officer and 3 x 1 year horticultural apprenticeships.

The current playground is dated and does not comply with current industry standards in terms of equipment and safety surfacing zone such as bound rubber mulch to provide a sufficient critical fall height. The project will enhance what will become the cultural and historic heart and hub for Harrow and will be linked through to the new Civic Centre via the new green corridor through the former Kodak Site which will provide a much needed additional approach to the Manor House, Moat and Museum.

There will be an additional 93 trees planted including restoring a historic orchard and we will be providing new footpaths and bridges and refurbishing existing footpaths. This will enable both projects to work together to provide a new and unique identity to the park. This will help to improve the visitor experience and bring an increase and more diverse visitor numbers to the park that will support the commercialisation strategy.

Implications of the Recommendation

Environmental Implications

Other than the areas that form part of the project at Headstone Manor (which had been surveyed in 2015) the whole site was subject to a standard 'Extended Phase 1 Survey' in July 2017. Whilst there are presently some trees, scrub, hedges and woodland and a section of the Yeading Brook crossing the site from NW to SE, much of the site is given over to playing fields, which have a relatively low ecological value. Additionally, whilst the moat around the manor house has potential for biodiversity alongside its historical interest, much of this is not realised because of nature of the water that has been used to fill it.

Site surveys from 2010 include a list of 264 plant taxa (predominantly to species level) together with observations of birds and more obvious invertebrate and other vertebrate species likely to be encountered on site.

Although the site's existing wildlife interest is largely concentrated within the main wooded and streamside areas and the moat, which are collectively designated as the Headstone Manor Recreation Ground Site of Interest for Nature Conservation, it offers considerable scope for enhancement. The project proposals will undoubtedly capitalise on this, resulting both in areas of new and enhanced habitat which will also benefit habitat creation targets for Harrow/London.

Planned actions and their benefits

1. Brook widening/Pinner View entrance to the site/outdoors learning

Associated with what will be a welcoming new entrance to the site, leading to the new outdoor learning area will be the widening of part of the brook. This currently lies in a relatively deep, steep-sided channel that runs through an area of species poor scrub.

The project will result in a much more varied area, with new reed bed, and marginal

plants offering a mix of micro-habitats. Species will be able to colonise from up and down stream.

2. Ancient Woodland

Unlike the main part of the site, the long established woodland area has remained largely undisturbed for many years. By working with the Harrow Nature Conservation Forum to provide a low level of management work, including at the woodland's edge alongside road and pathways, will ensure that the area increases in its value for wildlife whilst remaining a quiet refuge within what is likely to become an even more visited site. *The controlled access that is planned will be important in retaining the value and character of the Spinney and the benefits it brings to the site as a whole.*

3. Moat

One of the main features of site, partly because of its association with the manor house but also because it is presently the only area of open water, occupying almost 0.4 ha. Unfortunately, the quality of the water in the moat is presently very poor and it is generally devoid of plant life. With works to be carried out upstream and trees and scrub to be cut back where appropriate, the wildlife interest of both the moat and its margins will be increased. *A crucial part of this will be the desilting of the moat itself. Small bats (Pipistrelle species, Daubenton's) are regular visitors in summer months and enhancements to the moat will have value to them and their prey species.*

4. Overflow car park

With the Manor House restoration likely to further add to the numbers of park visitors, and the weekends being especially busy, adequate parking provision is an important part of the overall design. The overflow carpark will provide the needed capacity but will be retained as green space. There will necessarily be a loss of some of the scrub but this will be more than offset by other enhancements

5. Wetland/Moat

This represents the largest and most important of the wetland elements within the planned habitat enhancements. Located within an area of semi-improved grassland, it will comprise 4 separate wetland cells. A tributary of the Yeading Brook will flow through these cells in turn, gradually being cleaned of particulate and some other pollutants, before flowing into the moat. As well as preventing the moat returning quickly to its present condition this will provide a valuable area for a wide range of plant and animal life. *Although it will initially be planted up with different mixes of wetland and aquatic species, it will be fascinating to see what colonises in response and the area develops in the longer term.*

6. New Orchard

Established orchards can have considerable value for wildlife, supporting a range of generalist and specialist species. In addition to providing fruit for local people and wildlife to enjoy, the mixture of varieties orchard will complement the mix of other habitats within the site. This will include solitary bees, bumble bees and other pollinators and this will increase as the trees ages and develop, with the mix of species changing with the seasons.

7. Headstone Lane Entrance

Minor works here, whilst sympathetic to the adjoining SINC section will enable more light to reach ground flora

8. Playground/Picnic/Deculvert area

Taking the river out of the culvert in which it currently sits will enable the creation of habitat to further benefit species associated with flowing water and its margins. The additional benefit is that this is in the very centre of the site, providing opportunities for all visitors to enjoy a much naturalistic area within the recreation ground, whether walking through or making use of the adjacent picnic and playground areas. *Additionally this will complement and contrast with the other wetland areas on the site.*

Overall, new UK priority habitat will be created on c.2.5 ha of the site (more than ten per cent of its total area) with enhancement/management benefitting a still larger area of the recreation ground, without impacting on the recreational areas. Together the planned interventions will add considerably to the value of the site, through intrinsic wildlife benefits whilst also providing important opportunities for access to nature and reducing adverse water quality on the Yeading Brook.

The project should result in an eventual expansion of the designated SINC (presently 2.12 ha) as well as supporting borough targets in relation to the proportion of locally designated sites in active management.

Some species will be introduced to the site, e.g. in connection with the wetland cells or via the planting of the orchard and other trees. Others, particularly invertebrates, birds and bats will colonise naturally, spreading either from within or beyond the site.

In summary, the project will provide important biodiversity gain. The planned changes will make possible a considerable amount that couldn't otherwise happen; bring a welcome change for people and for wildlife, and permanently enhancing the setting of Headstone Manor.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No
Separate risk register in place? No

There are no risk management implications.

Procurement Implications

The procurement will be done under an OJEU open tender process.

Legal Implications

The procurement process to be undertaken by the Council for the Landscape Architect Consultancy and any subsequent procurement exercises required as part of the Headstone Manor Parks for People project will be carried out in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 taking into consideration required thresholds for works and services contracts and the general treaty principles of equal treatment, transparency, mutual recognition and proportionality.

The award of any contract will be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and Legal Services should be instructed to complete the contract documents.

The Council must also comply with the agreements it has entered into with regards to the external funding obtained for the Headstone Manor Parks for People Project.

Financial Implications

The funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a total investment of £2.16m at Headstone Manor Park has been successful. HLF has awarded a grant of £1.126m towards improvements to the park, water management and delivery an activity programme. The remaining costs of the project are to be met from the GLA Greener Capital grant (£300k), S106 funding (£370k), CIL (£300k) and volunteer time (non-cash).

The Headstone Manor Parks for People project is included in the current capital programme with a total budget of £1.797m, which represents the capital element of the planned project expenditure. Any revision to the capital / revenue split will be confirmed following the procurement exercise.

The expenditure for this project is to be fully met from the external funding listed above. Grant claims will be made on a periodic basis based on actual expenditure incurred.

Resources, costs

This project will be delivered by the Infrastructure Team working with the Community Engagement Team and Planning Specialists. A successful decision will provide 1 new FTE Outdoor Learning Officer and 3 new 1 year contract horticultural apprentices that will be managed in conjunction with the £267k Activity Plan delivered by the Community Engagement Team. The Capital work will be supervised by the Infrastructure Team and Planning Specialists.

Staffing/workforce

The project will be delivered by the Infrastructure Team and therefore no additional staffing resource required.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The proposals described above do not adversely impact upon persons within the protected categories.

Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

This report incorporates the following administration's priority:

- **Making a difference for communities** - The provision of this service will provide benefits to the community and all its boroughs residents.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert

Chief Financial Officer

Date: 6 August 2018

Name: Blessing Enejo

on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 6 August 2018

Section 3 - Procurement Officer Clearance

Name: Nimesh Mehta

Head of Procurement

Date: 7 August 2018

Ward Councillors notified:

YES

EqIA carried out:

YES

EqIA cleared by:

Dave Corby, Community - Equality
Task Group (DETG) Chair

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Venetia Reid-Baptiste.

Tel: 020 8424 2492

Venetia.reid-baptiste@harrow.gov.uk

Background Documents: None

**Call-In Waived by the Chair
of Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]