

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

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| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 13 January 2004 |
| Subject: | Canons Park Historic Restoration Scheme |
| Key decision: | No |
| Responsible Chief Officer: | Director of Professional Services (Urban Living) |
| Relevant Portfolio Holder: | Portfolio Holders for Planning, Development, Housing and Best Value, and for Environment and Transport |
| Status: | Part 1 |
| Ward: | Canons |
| Enclosures: | Appendix 1 |

1. Summary

- 1.1 In July 2002 the Council was successful in a Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a development grant of £100,500 for the historic restoration project at Canons Park, Edgware. This has enabled the project to be worked up in detail through the current year so that the Council is now able to submit a Stage 2 bid to the HLF for grant aid of up to £917,700 in order to implement the actual restoration scheme over 2004-07. This bid needs to be submitted by 2 February 2004 to meet the HLF's programme. The project contributes to a key aim of the Community Strategy and accords with the Cultural Strategy and the new Unitary Development Plan. It fully supports the objectives of the New Harrow Project in the restoration of a public park plus its associated security arrangements for maintaining it afterwards.
- 1.2 This report notes the many activities and achievements that have taken place since July 2002 including the formation of a Friends group and a local partners' stakeholders group. It gives the latest situation on partnership funding and seeks approval to the provision of £55,700 in the 2005-06 capital programme pending the outcome of other grant applications. It also explains the need to secure the future funding of the scheme's security provision, to agree a landscape agreement with North London Collegiate School, and seeks approval for submission of the Stage 2 bid.

2. Recommendations (for decision by the Cabinet)

2.1 To authorise the submission of the Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Canons Park Historic Restoration Scheme.

2.2 To agree in principle the additional capital funding of £55,700 in 2005-06, the need for which could be mitigated partly or wholly by further partnership funding which is currently being sought.

2.3 To maintain a full-time park keeper service and part-time security night patrol in Canons Park for a period of ten years after completion of the restoration scheme.

2.4 To give approval to enter into a legal agreement with the North London Collegiate School for a peppercorn consideration that will define how the school will maintain trees and shrubs on their own land for a period of at least ten years in order to open up and maintain views of the Canons mansion from the park.

REASON: To secure the restoration of Canons Park through grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to provide evidence of commitment to maintain security staff as required by the HLF, and to enable historic park vistas to be recreated and maintained.

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

3.1 Newsletters on Canons Park are sent to Canons and Edgware ward councillors. Some ward councillors attended the first meeting of the Friends of Canons Park. A ward councillor is a member of the Friends of Canons Park and has attended several Friends' steering group meetings to hear about and discuss the project. Ward councillors were sent copies of the recent consultation newsletter on the Maintenance and Management Plan and were sent copies of the present report in draft.

4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)

4.1 Cabinet on 10 September 2002 resolved to enter into a legal agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme; to allocate £32,600 from the Capital Programme towards the restoration of the Temple and Memorial Garden; and to confirm the allocation of £33,700 from existing budgets as the Council's contribution towards the development work costs in the first year.

4.2 On 15 July 2003, Cabinet agreed, amongst a number of Capital Programme additions, £25,000 to provide match funding to assist the HLF grant in Canons Park for the development year of the scheme (2003-04). In addition, it was agreed to fund the urgent demolition of the potentially dangerous public convenience in the park. Earlier decisions relevant to the restoration project were taken at:

- Cabinet 29 May 2002
- Cabinet 15 February 2000
- Environment Management Sub-Committee 24 May 1999
- Development Control Committee 11 July 1996

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

5.1 This report addresses the Council's stated priority of enhancing the environment.

6. **Background Information and options considered**

- 6.1 Canons Park is one of the few historic landscapes in Harrow eligible for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding under its urban parks programme. In 1998 the HLF awarded the Council £15,000 for a feasibility study on its restoration. This feasibility study formed the central part of the bid for restoration funding submitted to the HLF in February 2000, which was given Stage 1 approval in July 2002 when £100,500 was awarded towards the development costs of £134,200. The Cabinet agreed in September 2002 to enter into a legal agreement with the HLF to bring about the restoration of Canons Park. The next step is for the Council to submit a Stage 2 bid for funding to implement the restoration.
- 6.2 The project will enable the following:
- restoration of the walled garden, replacing its stolen gates, and re-creating the George V Memorial Garden within it,
 - restoration of the garden temple,
 - re-formation of the tree-lined turf avenue from Whitchurch Lane including tree planting, restoration of the cambered walk and restoration of the vista to the mansion house,
 - appointment of a dedicated park keeper and refurbishment of a building for the keeper's base,
 - improved security at night,
 - better access for all through the park in all weathers without compromising the historic landscape,
 - works to other historic features in the park,
 - employment of the project officer,
 - improved understanding of the estate's historic significance through information and interpretation for the benefit of pupils and students, residents and visitors, and
 - enabling local residents to be involved in managing the park in partnership with the Council
- 6.2 The broad timetable will be:
- February 2004 Stage 2 bid submitted to the HLF
 - 4-6 months later Decision of the HLF announced
 - September 2004 Start of 3 year implementation period
 - Year 1 milestones include appointment of park-keeper, setting up new security arrangements
 - Year 2 milestones include path construction, fencing and signage, building and masonry works
 - Year 3 milestones include planting works
 - September 2007 Completion of restoration
- 6.3 The Council is currently working to an agreement with the HLF to produce a Stage 2, detailed bid for HLF grant aid of up to £917,000 towards a total eligible cost of over £1,420,000 (the difference being made up by the Council including commitments to the park's future maintenance and security, other partners, and voluntary labour and in-kind contributions). This agreement requires, inter alia, the preparation of a Maintenance and Management Plan for the park. Other work undertaken since award of the development grant is described in Appendix 1.
- 6.4 A Maintenance and Management Plan has been prepared and has been through extensive local public consultation. This describes how the park is managed now and

how it is proposed that it be managed after the restoration. It also contains an introduction to the history of Canons and details of the restoration proposals. The plan sets out targets for the Council and its partners to achieve. A copy of the full plan has been placed in the Members' library.

- 6.5 At the time of the Stage 1 bid, assumptions had to be made about several unsecured bids for external funding. Because of changing funding body requirements and other factors there is currently a shortfall of partnership funding of £55,704. Current bids being made to external bodies by partners have the potential to more than make up this difference (see Finance Observations below). However, in order not to delay the submission of the Stage 2 bid it is suggested that in the interim the Council should agree in principle a further contribution for this amount from the Capital Programme in 2005-06 so as to, in effect, guarantee the difference in the unlikely event of these current partner bids being unsuccessful.
- 6.6 As a requirement of the HLF but also to protect the Council's investment, the Council will be required to maintain a full time park keeper and part time night patrol security service in the park during the restoration years (costs covered by the bid), and also for at least 10 years following completion of the works (2007-17) at a cost of £20,000 p.a. which would be found from the Parks Services revenue budget and New Harrow Project.
- 6.7 North London Collegiate School grounds contain the 18th Century mansion of Canons which is now their 6th form building. Canons Park contains an historic avenue between Whitchurch Lane and the mansion. An agreement in principle has been negotiated with North London Collegiate School to maintain their hedges and trees between the historic avenue in the park and the Canons mansion so that the view of the mansion along the avenue is preserved. It is a requirement of the HLF that the Council enters into a legal agreement with the school to secure this maintenance regime. The school have indicated their willingness to do so subject to contract.

7. **Consultation**

- 7.1 For development of the Stage 2 bid the profile of the project and of the park has been raised by a number articles in the local press and on the internet. At inaugural public meetings of the Friends of Canons Park the restoration proposals and how they would be developed were explained. All the directly neighbouring properties to the park were mailed to announce the commencement of the Friends group, the restoration project and the opportunity to register for further information. Various members of the Stakeholder group have alerted their members of the opportunity of joining the Friends group.
- 7.2 Consultation on tree management proposals, restoration proposals, and the ten-year management plan has taken place through meetings with stakeholders, on the Council's web-site and through local libraries. This was promoted by mail to the members of the Friends and Stakeholders groups as well as other contacts who had previously expressed an interest. English Heritage have been informed of progress on the development of the plans and have voiced no disagreement on the proposals, and agreed the archaeology and the restoration approach being taken to the Temple, Walled Garden and vistas.

8. **Finance Observations**

- 8.1 The current position on funding for the Stage 2 bid is as follows:

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| <u>1,427,407</u> | Total eligible project cost agreed with the HLF, funded by: |
| 917,700 | HLF grant aid earmarked for Canons park |
| 14,200 | Stanmore Hall planning gain fund |
| 75,000 | Contribution from parks and open spaces budget (25,000 p.a. 2004-07) |
| 30,000 | Volunteer labour and job training schemes |
| 17,103 | Eligible Council expenditure on the park during bid preparation |
| 40,000 | Enhanced maintenance (2007-17) |
| 200,000* | Enhanced park-keeping and security at £20,000 p.a. (2007-17) |
| 32,600 | Capital Programme (towards Walled Garden and Temple restoration) |
| 32,600 | English Heritage (towards Walled Garden and Temple restoration) |
| 12,500 | Harrow Heritage Trust, Heritage of London Trust, CAPRA and local business |
| <u>1,375,203</u> | sub-total |
| 55,704 | funding gap currently the subject of partners' bids to other funding bodies (see below) |

* most of this cost will be picked up through existing provision and by increased provision through the New Harrow Project

- 8.2 The funding gap is being addressed in several ways. The Friends group (with the assistance of Harrow Heritage Trust and other registered charities) is currently making bids to a number of external funding bodies ineligible to the Council, including Living Spaces and the Ironmongers Company. In addition, Harrow Agenda21 (as an enrolled environmental body under the Landfill Tax Credit scheme) may be able to bid for the Council to the Hanson Trust for £25,000 – the Trust has already judged the project suitable in principle. These bids are capable of making up the funding gap.
- 8.3 In order to submit the Stage 2 bid in February, the Cabinet is being asked to agree in principle to capital cover of £55,700 for the year 2005-06 pending the outcome of these grant applications by partners. This would enable the project to proceed in line with the HLF's timetable, but would allow for the outcome of the partners' bids to be known before the Capital Programme for that year needs to be agreed. There is a risk that if the Council does not make a Stage 2 bid at this stage, the HLF will want to reclaim the £100,500 Stage 1 grant which is now largely spent.
- 8.4 This project benefits from having a fully-funded project officer, enabling the project's implementation to be closely project managed. The risk of the scheme going over-budget is further reduced by having the project broken down into discrete elements, and there is some flexibility for cost adjustments between the different elements without compromising the integrity of the whole restoration scheme. If necessary, there is scope for the extent of work to be reduced, with agreement of the HLF, to stay within the HLF grant without jeopardising the conditions of the grant. In addition, there is considerable scope for achieving further match funding from outside funding bodies.

9. Legal Observations

- 9.1 No comments

10. **Conclusion**

- 10.1 This project attracts significant external funding – over 64% funding from the HLF alone. It has already built up a strong local partnership involving Friends and stakeholders. It will enable the restoration of one of the borough's largest historic assets and the future protection of that asset, and it supports the objectives of the New Harrow Project and one of the key aims of the Community Strategy (6.1 – Preserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the parks and open spaces).

11. **Background Papers**

- 11.1 Draft Stage 2 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund
Maintenance and Management Plan, 8 December 2003
Letter from Heritage Lottery Fund of 25 July 2002
Agreement in principle with North London Collegiate School to maintain historic views

12. **Author**

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APPENDIX 1

Restoration plan development

- 1.1 The following development works for the project have been accomplished. The Project Officer was appointed January 2003. A topographical survey was completed in May 2003. An archaeological survey has been carried out in September 2003 and generated such public interest that the archaeologists are to run a day conference on the findings in Spring 2004. Revisions to the masterplan as part of the design and consultation process, preparation of the Maintenance and Management Plan, preparation of more detailed designs and re-estimating the scheme costs have been carried out and are being finalised. The original date of 23 July 2003 for submission of the Stage 2 bid has been changed to 2 February 2004 with the agreement of the HLF in order to resolve issues that were more complex than originally supposed.

Friends of Canons Park

- 1.2 This is a newly constituted local community group, required by the HLF and developed with Council support. It first met on 8 May 2003 and has now formed a number of active sub-groups. One significance of the group is that it can access external funding streams not accessible to the Council operating alone, and it is currently bidding for further partnership funding for the scheme. The Friends aim to represent park users and local residents, liaise with the Council on management issues, carry out work to improve the park through practical tasks and fundraising, and enhance the security of park users and local residents. The membership, which is still growing, now includes approximately 130 local households, local community groups and businesses with an interest in the park, as well as people from organisations based outside the Borough such as the Handel Institute, and the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust. There are also members living abroad.

Stakeholders Group and Joint Management Group

- 1.3 The HLF also require that a formal stakeholders group is set up. The Stakeholders Group first met on 25 June 2003 and now includes St Lawrence Church, North London Collegiate School, and Arnold House School (who all border the park), as well as Canons Park Residents Association, Canons Park Estate Association, Harrow Heritage Trust, and the Friends of Canons Park.
- 1.4 The group meets approximately quarterly and the stakeholders are now seen as full partners in the scheme. As well as commenting on restoration proposals they provide support to the Friends, provide meeting and event space on their premises, and have offered to assist with publicity. They also assist with making local business contacts. Harrow Heritage Trust and the Canons Park Residents Association have promised funding towards the restoration scheme. A representative from the Stakeholders group will meet from time to time with a senior Council manager and the Parks Service Manager to form a Joint Management Group to periodically review the management of the park and guide implementation of the Parks Service Manager's strategy for the park.