

POLICY REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Type of Report: Open	Portfolio(s): Culture, Heritage and Health
Will be subject to a future Cabinet Report: Will be need to be recommended to Council:	YES/NO YES/NO
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OPEN	

Regeneration and Development Panel

Date: 23rd March 2016
Subject: Town Hall

Summary:

The report provides additional information to support the visit of the panel to the Town Hall.

Recommendations:

The panel are recommended to consider the report and request a further report in October 2016.

1. Background

- 1.1 The building and attraction element of the Heritage Lottery Fund project for King's Lynn Town Hall is substantially complete. The Stories of Lynn opens to the public on 25 March 2016 and prior to the meeting the Panel have an opportunity to visit the complex. As well as staff from the Borough Council, representatives of the Norfolk Museum Service and Norfolk Records Office will be available to answer questions.
- 1.2 The operation of the Town Hall has changed substantially in the last five years. The buildings were underused with the attraction elements Gaol House, Regalia Rooms and Town House Museum all having low and declining levels of use. In 2011 the Council made the decision to close the Town House Museum, part of the Joint Museum Service. The closure allowed the Council to work with the Heritage Council to locate the Norfolk Registrars' Service within the Town Hall and open the building for access during the daytime. The Registrars pay an annual rent for the space used.

- 1.3 In 2011 the Council had provision of £500,000 in its Capital programme for works to improve the archive area. The archive was nationally recognised as one of the finest collections in the country including the Royal Charter from 1204 and a wealth of evidence for the development of the town over the last 800 years. Unfortunately, the environmental conditions of the archive were well below the relevant standards and consideration had been given to its possible relocation to the County Archives.
- 1.4 Rather than carry out an archive only refurbishment the Council made the decision to utilise the funding available as a contribution to enable an HLF application to be developed.
- 1.5 In 2012 the Council made its first application for the Town Hall based on a scheme at £3.8m and an HLF grant of £3.0m, unfortunately, this was unsuccessful but the HLF feedback was helpful in developing a revised bid to deliver improved value for money. In 2014 after receiving a development grant the Council was awarded an HLF grant of £1.85million based on £2.65m for the Town Hall and £350,000 allocated for public realm rights total at £2.95m
- 1.6 The HLF funding is split between building and exhibition costs which will be substantially completed by 31 March 2016 and the Activity Plan lasting for four years.
- 1.7 The approved purposes of the grant are detailed below;
- To improve access throughout the Town Hall complex.
 - To install a new permanent exhibition in the Stone Hall undercroft and Gaol House and provide interpretation of the whole building complex and archive and collection resources with a dedicated 'cross-over' space between archives and exhibition containing displays of digitised sources, information guides and catalogues.
 - To create a new front entrance and reception area to the archive, Stories of Lynn displays, heritage gateway information centre and the building complex, with shop and café space.
 - Improvements to the setting – Saturday Market Place and landscaped area will be created at the rear.
 - Employ a four year learning and engagement post, a one year curator (Oct 14 – Sept 15) and one year project manager.
 - To construct a new archive storage area on the ground floor of the Guildhall, allowing for better environmental controls, less risk of damage and conditions that meet the PD5454 standard.

- To deliver a creative and inclusive programme of activities in partnership with NMAS and NRO.

2 Works

- 2.1 The works have created a major new attraction for King's Lynn while at the same time upgrading the fabric and infrastructure of the building.
- 2.1 Previously underutilised space has been brought into productive use and will be an asset for the town for years to come.
- 2.2 Although not originally included in the scheme the Council determined to refurbish all toilets within the building as part of the project while contractors were on site.
- 2.3 Wiring throughout the building has been replaced, not originally part of the project.
- 2.4 During the works the existing lift was found not to meet current regulations for fire evacuation requiring an upgrade to the new lift to allow it to be used in the event of fire.

3 Programme

- 3.1 The programme of building works was delayed due to a number of factors not anticipated. However this was managed within the total project timetable to allow opening on the 25th March to continue.
- 3.2 Mains cable running from the electricity sub-station through the car park and around the rear of the Town Hall close to the building and back onto the highway. This delayed works to the rear of the building including the new lift, overall a 12 week delay.
- 3.3 The mains gas and drainage services to the building all required replacement.

4 Activity Plan

- 4.1 The cost of the four year activity plan is included within the HLF project and the HLF funding. This will continue following the opening of the Stories of Lynn until 31 March 2019.
- 4.2 The majority of activities organised through the plan will generate an income estimated at £20-25,000 per annum. This is not currently included in the revenue budget. The Council has the option to take this into account in the

revenue budget or to build up a reserve to allow the activity plan to continue for a further one or two years or longer on a reduced basis.

- 4.3 The SoL project includes a 4 year Activity Plan that is designed to significantly increase levels of participation with the Town Hall building, archive and collections. The plan features a broad range of activities that will appeal to a wide audience including local families, schools, adults, tourists and those with specialist interests. It will also support learning progression and active involvement e.g. through structured volunteering.
- 4.4 To deliver the Activity Plan the Borough Council is working closely with project partners Norfolk Museums Service and Norfolk Record Office. The development and delivery of the Activity Plan is being co-ordinated by the SoL project Learning & Engagement Officer Ruth Farnan, in close liaison with the Stories of Lynn Archivist Stacey Kennedy and Borough Council Town Hall colleagues, all working as part of a single Town Hall team.
- 4.5 The level of activity at the Town Hall will increase significantly following the re-opening of the building to the public in 2016. In advance of this, a number of activities have been developed or piloted. These have included:
 - The delivery of family-based events as part of Towne Centre heritage events
 - The development of a Youth Forum
 - Programmes of talks and lectures in the Town Hall
 - Community outreach activities e.g. Purfleet Trust and Matthew Project
- 4.6 A core schools programme has also been developed for the SoL featuring a number of different events. In some cases, parts of the session will be delivered at Lynn Museum and be integrated into the NMS schools offer. The schools programme will include: All the Fun of the Fair/ Frederick Savage: local history focussed (R/KS1/KS2); Lynn Mart Whaler's Tale: literacy-focussed (KS1/KS2); Flooding (KS2); Witchcraft (KS2); Crime & Punishment (KS2).
- 4.7 Other activities due to be delivered during the first year of opening will include:
 - *History Alive!* Living history events targeted at families
 - Lunchtime & twilight talks programme targeted at adults
 - Self-guided trails for families and other visitors
 - Temporary exhibitions on a range of relevant themes
 - Volunteer recruitment and development including the formation of a new team of Town Hall tour guides
 - Support for volunteer recruitment and development for other heritage sites across King's Lynn
 - A series of "masterclasses" enabling people to explore the archives and collections
 - Taught course programmes for adults

- Youth engagement activities including media projects and an active Youth Forum

5 Audrey Muriel Stratford Trust

5.1 The Audrey Muriel Stratford Trust are a Charitable Trust. The objectives of the charity are;

1. To benefit the inhabitants of King's Lynn and to advance education by:
 - a. the establishment and maintenance of a collection of documents, records and recordings illustrating as completely as reasonably practicable the past, contemporary and developing history of King's Lynn by:
 - b. making, acquiring, indexing, storing and maintaining (by whatever means) records of any or every aspect of King's Lynn's geology, prehistory and history (such records to include without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, books, photographs, diaries, letters, property deeds and documents, computerised records, maps and films).
 - c. making, acquiring, indexing, storing and maintaining (by whatever means) audio and visual recordings of the sounds and sights of contemporary and developing King's Lynn.
 - d. commencing and advancing the compilation (as such compilation is from time to time facilitated by technological developments) of a comprehensive street plan of King's Lynn until the modern industrial age and thereafter.
 - e. making such collection available (by whatsoever means and at such reasonable charges, if any, as the Trustees from time to time think fit) for public use by educational institutions and by persons concerned with research (whether now or in the future).
2. Such charitable purposes for the benefit of the inhabitants of King's Lynn as the Trustees shall think fit.

5.2 The Council approached the Trust for a charitable contribution towards the Town Hall project in November 2014 but this was rejected.

5.3 As the charity appear to be achieving most of their aims through their archive collection being contained in the Town Hall archive the Council has approached the Trust again for discussions with regard to revenue support.

6 Opening Arrangements

- The “Stories of Lynn” is opening 10.00 – 16.00 7 days a week (last admission 16.00, closes at 16.30).
- On Tuesdays and Sundays the 1st floor Stone Hall and Assembly Room are accessible to visitors.
- The Archive is open 12.30 to 16.30 Tuesdays to Fridays and on the first Saturday of the month 10.00 to 14.00, last admission at 13.30, there is no charge for visits to the Archive.
- Charge - £5.00 for adults and £3.50 for concessions and children, family visits for £13.50.

7 Finance

7.1 Capital

7.1.1 The Council has submitted an application to the HLF for additional funding with regard to the costs of the project delay and additional works.

7.1.2 Since 2011 the Council has deferred any spending on major maintenance works that could be linked to the HLF scheme, this has enabled the Town Hall reserve to be built up during that time. The Town Hall reserve stands at £213,233 in 2016/17 and will be used to fund additional works not originally part of the programme subject to the HLF application for additional support.

7.2 Revenue

7.2.1 Income for the Town Hall is based on 20,000 visitors giving income of £138,000 per year.

7.2.2 The income offsets cost:

- Full time Archivist
- Additional staff for 7 days operation

- Monthly spend (Year 1 includes £25,000 marketing in the HLF Scheme)
- Collections Management Fee to Norfolk Museum Service
- Maintenance spend on the building and exhibitions

Total £ 130,000

7.2.3 The revenue budget will be reviewed as part of the revised budget process in the Autumn

8. Panel

8.1 The Panel are asked to comment on their visit to the Town Hall and the report.

8.2 To request further report in October on the first 6 months of operation.