

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Introduced by the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being, Cllr Mark Perks)	Executive Cabinet	29/03/07

ASTLEY PARK PROJECT - UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress with the Astley Park Project and to agree the way forward with the Pets Corner element of the project.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- The project contributes to all of the Council's strategic objectives in some way. But, particularly the strategic objectives to improve equality of opportunity and life chances, improve access to public services and develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live.

RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy		Information	
Reputation	4	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial	4	Operational	4
People		Other	

- The key risk areas associated with this project relate to reputation, financial and operational matters. As you will read, the project has been split into a number of discrete elements and risks are assessed and mitigated at each stage. Further in this report Members will note specific actions that are being undertaken to address these risk issues further.

BACKGROUND

- Following notification of the successful Heritage Lottery fund award in 2005, work began on site in February 2006. The Astley Park Project is a high profile project which has a valuable role to play in maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of local people. The regeneration of the park along with a proactive management regime has the potential to offer a hugely enhanced asset to the people of Chorley and visitors.
- The project has been implemented to a number of individual contracts and the purpose of this report is to update Members on the various aspects of these contracts and the overall project.

WOODLAND AND TREE CLEARANCE CONTRACT

7. This contract has been completed and all outstanding snagging issues have been resolved.

LAKE CONTRACT

8. The de-silting works have been completed and the dam wall made good. The grading of the silt and the restoration works are planned to be completed by May 2007, as programmed. Overflow works are now being carried out for the woodland water feature. Members who have visited the park recently will notice that the resurfacing of the road across the dam and the installation of the new railings is now complete, as part of the contingency works previously reported.

DEMOLITION CONTRACT

9. The demolition work has been completed along with the health and safety plan.
10. During the demolition work a stone void was revealed within the walled garden. The stone void has been examined by Derbyshire Caving Club and a report of the findings has been provided. The void has been identified as an underground cistern for holding water, possibly for run-off water for watering the gardens. The tank has stone sides with the top constructed of stone slabs. All appear to be in excellent condition. The voids were being maintained, the roof will be reinstated and a manhole incorporated for future access. The extent of the void is to be plotted onto the layout plan and adjustments made from the use of the space to allow for the manoeuvring of vehicles.

LANDSCAPE CONTRACT

11. The landscape tender came in over budget, however, after some amendments the contract figure has been reduced to a more manageable figure of £8,000 above initial budget. The project consultants are confident that further savings can be made within the project to balance this overspend. Alternatively, the £8,000 could be used from within the contingency budget built into the overall project. However, this is not the favoured option at present, so early in the project.
12. The landscape contract has been awarded to Barton Grange Landscapes and work has just started on site. There has been a delay in the start of the works, in part due to a wedding at Astley Hall and the contractors completing another project in the intervening period. The delay will not impact on the overall programme and works are still programmed to be completed within the previously agreed timescale.

BUILDING CONTRACT

13. The building work tenders returned at the end of the January and all tenders were in excess of the available budget. An initial tender report has been provided by the project Quantity Surveyor and in addition a value engineering exercise was undertaken to generate a list of proposed tender economies for the scheme. A list of approximate savings for consideration were also compiled. Further options are currently being considered and an updated tender report is expected in March.

PETS CORNER

14. Public consultation in relation to pets corner is now complete. The consultation included telephone survey conducted by external consultants Beacon Research and 6 hours of on-site surveys over a 3 day period. The results have been collated and are attached as an Appendix to this report. As Members will see, the results show significant support for the inclusion of a pets corner within the project. A decision on the way forward is essential in

order not to delay other elements of the project, for example, the landscape contract. The delay in reaching a decision on this element of the project has been an area of concern for the Heritage Lottery Fund monitors assigned to the project. Indeed, one of the Heritage Lottery Funding monitors has pointed out that further delays with this element of the project would result in us falling short of our contract with Heritage Lottery Fund and we could face the risk of payment claims being put on hold until the issue is resolved. In any capital scheme of this nature, it is important to maintain positive relationships with funding bodies but at the same time not compromise on matters that will have a material impact on the future success of the park.

15. Given the findings of the public consultation exercise, it is recommended that the pets corner element of the project be retained.

PLAY AREA AND KIOSK

16. New locations for the play areas have been approved in principle by Heritage Lottery Fund. Formal approval will be sought when a decision has been reached regarding pets corner. The reason for this is that pets corner will have an impact on the detailed design of the play area facilities. Once this has been done planning approval will then be sought.

LIGHTING

17. A planning application has recently been submitted for the lighting scheme and full details of the wall adjoining Astley Hall and the boiler house.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

18. Work has just started on the preparation of the management and maintenance plan for the project. Scott Wilson have teamed up with Community First Partnership consultants to assist us in this task. The production of such a plan is a condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Further details of the plan, and any areas requiring Member decisions, will be brought for approval in due course.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

19. Since the last report, the Leader of the Council has transferred responsibility for the delivery of the project from the Development and Regeneration Directorate to the Leisure and Cultural Services Directorate. The Executive Member responsibility has transferred between the respective portfolio folders with the member lead now being taken by the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being, Councillor Mark Perks.

PUBLICITY

20. In the coming weeks, it is planned to increase the amount of information and publicity for the project. Initiatives that are planned include regularly updated information boards at the three main entrances to the park; contractors positioning A boards close to their work areas for members of the public to read about what is going on and collect leaflets; and moving the project display from the space at the end of the coach-house into the Great Hall in Astley Hall.

FINANCIAL MONITORING

21. As mentioned previously, a review of the cost of the capital works is currently ongoing. In addition a wider review of the financial position of all of the capital and revenue implications of the project is underway. The detailed financial position will be reported to Members in due course.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

21. There are no Human Resource issues arising from this update report.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

22. The project is within budget.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

23. Members are asked to note progress with the project and approve the recommendation to proceed with the pets corner element of the project.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) (If the recommendations are accepted)

24. To monitor progress with the project and ensure that it is delivered to time and within budget.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

24. None.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Carson	5815	13 March 2007	LCSREP/94113LM