

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Introduced by the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being)	Executive Cabinet	24/05/07

## 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 Coach House 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 discreet 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 (HLF) 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. It was hoped that the first grade of the silt would take place by the end of April followed a few weeks later by final spreading and seeding. However the silt is not drying out as quickly as was hoped and therefore we are looking into the possibility of spreading the wet silt to assist the drying out process prior to final grading and seeding.

## **DEMOLITION CONTRACT**

9. The demolition work has been completed along with the health and safety plan.

## **LANDSCAPE CONTRACT**

10. Good progress is being made with the landscape contract, the contractors have made the most of the recent good weather. The renovation of the Ha-ha is complete, work to the front lawns including drainage is also complete. The driveway to the Hall frontage has been tarmaced ready for the resin bound gravel wearing course which will be laid later in the contract. The flags have been removed from the lake side and again the tarmac base course has been laid ready for the resin bound gravel wearing course. These flags are to be reused in the surfacing of the proposed courtyard to the rear of the coach house. The bound gravel path following the western boundary through the woodland north of the lake is complete. Work is ongoing in the walled garden, a new wall is being constructed to the east to enclose the garden on 3 sides and renovation to the existing walls is taking place. The next element of the work to start will be path works within the woodland along the river corridor.
11. The planning application for lighting along Chorley approach has been submitted. Further information has been sought relating to the impact the lighting would have on the bat activity within the area and a design and access statement has been provided. The application is likely to go to the June planning committee.

## **BUILDING CONTRACT**

12. The building work tenders were returned at the end of January and all tenders were in excess of the available budget. A 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. The coach house is a Grade II listed building of national importance and as such its historic fabric and context must be respected, it is therefore important that the work carried out to the building is of an appropriate quality and standard in fitting with the historic value of the property and also for its intended use.
13. £687,000 has been allocated for the building contract. The lowest tender figure is £292,000 over budget. An exhaustive list of potential savings has been drawn up by Simon Fenton Partnership (the project quantity surveyors). The total list of savings they have identified amount to £218,000, still leaving a shortfall of £74,000 (plus 15% fees). However, many of the potential savings are considered inappropriate as they would result in (a) the coach house simply being made wind and water tight and not ready for operation; and (b) poorer quality materials being used which would impact on future maintenance costs. The quantity surveyors were instructed to review the savings and revise them to address these concerns. Their provisional calculations have identified £144,000 of acceptable savings, resulting in a shortfall of £170,200 (£148,000 plus 15%

fees). It should be noted that these figures are still subject to negotiation with the building contractor.

14. Other HLF projects that have experience similar problems have submitted further bids to HLF and been successful, most notably Cuerden Valley Country Park. HLF could fund up to a maximum of 78% of the £170,200 leaving the Council to fund the remaining £37,444.
15. If we were to make an application for further funding it would be prudent to bid also for furniture within the park and to build a wall between Astley Hall and its boiler house which would enhance the walled garden and improve security. Both of these items were not included in the original bid. The cost of these works amounts to £100,812. If HLF provided funding at 78%, or £78,632, this would mean that the Council would need to provide match funding of £22,180 for this element.
16. In summary, the total costs amount to:

	<b>Total</b>	<b>HLF</b>	<b>CBC</b>
Building Contract	£170,200	£132,756	£37,444
Furniture	£80,265	£62,606	£17,659
Additional wall	£20,547	£16,026	£4,521
<b>Total</b>	<b>£271,012</b>	<b>£211,388</b>	<b>£59,624</b>

17. It is recommended that officers be instructed to submit a request for additional HLF funding, as outlined above.

## **PETS CORNER**

18. Following the decision to maintain the inclusion of pets corner within the project our consultants are now currently working on detailed designs for the pets corner and play area.
19. Once the details have been agreed a planning application for the proposals will be submitted. The remains of pets corner will be removed and the area reinstated as part of the landscape contract.

## **PLAY AREA AND KIOSK**

20. Now the decision has been made to retain pets corner as part of the project and HLF have given formal approval to the proposed adjustments of the layout of the facility, detailed designs are now being drawn up.

## **MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN**

21. Work is underway on the Management and Maintenance Plan and an initial scoping document has been produced and forwarded to HLF for comment. The production of this document 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.

## **PUBLICITY**

22. Update posters have been installed on temporary notice boards at the 3 main entrances into the park and are regularly updated on a monthly basis. Permanent notice boards will replace these in due course. A small exhibition has been set up in Astley Hall.

## **FUTURE REPORTS**

23. Much of the content of this report is very similar to previous reports. In addition, project management and reporting arrangements have been reviewed. Following consultation with the Executive Member, we have agreed only to bring reports to Executive Cabinet that require a decision.

## **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

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

## **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

25. As the tenders for the building contract were considerably above the sum provided for in the scheme budget, it is necessary to consider the consequences. The proposal by the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services is that the scheme budget be increased, provided that the Heritage Lottery Fund will contribute funding for 78% of the additional requirement. The Council's own increased contribution of around £60,000 would probably be financed by external borrowing, with annual revenue consequences of approximately £5,000 per year. Members may consider this revenue cost to be justified if it helps to ensure the completion of the project to a high standard and if it helps to attract another £211,000 worth of lottery grant.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

26. Members are asked to note progress with the project and approve the recommendation to approach HLF for additional funds for the building contract, site furniture and the construction of an additional wall to the rear of the Hall.

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

27. To increase the budget to enable the execution of the building contract without jeopardising the design and quality of the renovation giving due respect to the historic importance of the building and providing facilities fit for purpose.
28. To enable the inclusion of site furniture and an additional wall to the rear of the Hall within the project which was not included within the original bid.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

29. None.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Suzanne Cox	5262	8 May 2007	LCSREP/94113LMA