

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	12 March 2015
Title:	Royal Victoria Country Park Chapel - Procurement Approval
Reference:	6424
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for the expenditure of £1.1million from the Country Parks Transformation programme previously approved by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources (EMPR) in December 2013.
- 1.2. The Country Parks Transformation programme is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the County Council's country parks in order for them to remain relevant to current and future visitors; deliver significant improvements; maximise investment and partnership funding; and become operationally cost neutral.
- 1.3. The RVCP Chapel project received a first round development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop a proposal for the Chapel. The development phase is now completed and an application for £1.6million to deliver the project is now ready to be submitted.
- 1.4. This project is one of the first transformational projects to be delivered as part of the Country Parks Transformation programme. The RVCP Chapel project aims to encourage more people to visit, explore and learn about the park's heritage. There is a strong focus on the financial sustainability of the park with increased revenue from existing and new income streams. The benefit of the project includes the transformation of the historically important Chapel building ensuring that it is easier to access for all, conserved for future generations to enjoy and learn about.
- 1.5. The Executive Member Culture, Recreation and Communities has indicated his support for the recommendation in this paper.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The Country Parks Transformation (CPT) programme aims to develop a suite of modern 21st Century Country Parks and includes all of the parks owned and managed by Hampshire County Council – Lepe, Royal Victoria, Queen Elizabeth, Staunton, Manor Farm and Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve. Through capital investment and external funding the parks will attract more people from Hampshire, and beyond, to visit more often, stay longer, spend more and return. By achieving this the parks aim to become operationally financially sustainable.
- 2.2. Since receiving approval for the Country Parks Transformation programme the programme team have been developing the plans for each of the country parks in conjunction with Countryside Service and Property colleagues. Over 2,000 members of the public and stakeholders have responded to the surveys undertaken to assist in understanding the needs of communities, visitors and those who currently do not use the parks. The information received is helping to shape these transformation plans.
- 2.3. The RVCP Chapel is one of the first park projects to be developed and will be the first to be delivered with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A key element of the CPT is to secure external contributions of £4.2million towards the overall programme budget of £12.9million. If successful this bid will account for 38% of this external funding target.
- 2.4. The Chapel project has received a successful first round grant of £102k from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a proposal to refurbish and transform the use of the Chapel. This proposal is now ready to be submitted as a second round application to the HLF and it is anticipated that grant funding of £1.6million will be received in June subject to approval for the match funding from the County Council.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The overall Country Park Transformation programme budget is £12.9m. This consists of £5.7m Policy and Resources capital programme funding, £3m capital from the sale of assets and a target of £4.2m from external funding.
- 3.2. The strategy still remains that the programme will support the removal of the cash limited budget by 2017/18. Once the detailed project briefs for the individual parks have been completed, any changes to the revenue position should be clearer and will be reported to EMPR.
- 3.3. The HLF have contributed £102k to the development phase of the project to produce the design for the Chapel and the conservation, activity, interpretation and business plans. Hampshire County Council has contributed £40k in match funding along with considerable time from the Countryside and Property teams.
- 3.4. The estimated total cost of the delivery phase of the project is £2.8million. Hampshire County Council is required to provide £1.1million to match the

Heritage Lottery Funding of £1.6million. The additional funding will come from a range of sources including volunteer time and fundraising.

- 3.5. The County Council match funding for the project will be met from the country parks transformation capital budget.
- 3.6. The project will be completed by June 2018, which includes implementation of the activity plan following any restoration works. Appendix A includes a high level breakdown of how the funding will be invested.
- 3.7. Once the project has been completed, it is forecast in the business plan that a small revenue surplus will be generated, increasing at around 5% per annum.

4. Performance

- 4.1. Royal Victoria Country Park, formerly home to the largest military hospital of its time, was established as a Country Park by Hampshire County Council in 1970. The Chapel is all that remains of Netley Hospital, which was commissioned by Queen Victoria in 1856 and served sick and injured military personnel from across the commonwealth until its closure after the Second World War. It was particularly busy during the First World War and this project aims to be completed in time to commemorate the anniversary of the end of this conflict.
- 4.2. The park is well liked and attracts over 260,000 visits a year along with over 1,500 educational visits. There is an active Friends group who have been fully involved in the Heritage Lottery Fund application and who will play a major role in the delivery of the project and future running of the Chapel. This year the park has been granted a Green Flag award as well as Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme award.
- 4.3. It is anticipated that the project will result in a 25% growth in income once completed. In addition the Chapel project will deliver a range of benefits including:
 - a. Extended access to the Chapel building for all abilities, carry out necessary conservation work and make the building more energy efficient.
 - b. Through increased opening hours and new activities visitors to the Chapel will rise from c1,300 to 45,000 – 50,000 visits per year. Currently the Chapel is open for 60 days per year and only a small percentage of visitors to the park visit the Chapel.
 - c. Full redevelopment of the interpretation of the Chapel and hospital to increase the understanding of the historical significance of the Netley Military Hospital.
 - d. A series of 3 – 6 trails will be developed which will encourage greater exploration and understanding of the former hospital site.
 - e. Establishing the Chapel as a well-regarded cultural venue, offering a varied programme of performances and events, thereby improving the cultural

offer of the area, increasing visitor numbers and encouraging different audiences to visit the Chapel and park.

- f. Delivery of a range of activities which will engage visitors with the heritage of Netley Military Hospital and provide a new dimension to their visit to the park. Amongst the activities that will be delivered are: an oral history project with volunteers and school children; development of handling boxes for outreach and use within the park; an annual programme of living history events; storytelling and other family-focussed activities within the Chapel and in the park.
- g. Increased number of core volunteers from 20 to 150.
- h. Improvements to the causeway and interpretation installed to provide a more inviting and more accessible route to the Cemetery, thereby encouraging greater use and understanding of this area of the park.
- i. Increased number of school pupils visiting for curriculum based learning by 100% from the low base of c.1,500 children per year to over 3,000.
- j. Significant improvement to the conservation, care and curation of the Chapel's collection.

5. Consultation and Equalities

- 5.1. A great deal of consultation and research has been undertaken to assist in the development of the application for funding. The results of this indicate that there is a demand for more family activities particularly those that help to engage and educate children.
- 5.2. Education is an important element of the HLF bid and consultation with pupils and teachers has indicated that RVCP is ideally placed to be able to offer multisensory and lively learning experiences, whilst also being able to provide the essential facilities that schools require.
- 5.3. There are some people who do not currently visit the Chapel or the park but who may have an interest in finding out about the Netley story and may benefit from being involved with this project. Previous data suggests, for example, that a lower than proportionate number of elderly people visit the park, perhaps due to perceived or actual access issues. The access improvements will help to overcome the issues to attract these audiences.
- 5.4. Recently, RVCP have installed a very popular new play feature that is fully inclusive allowing able bodied and disabled visitors to play together. The Chapel project will extend access for visitors of all abilities to the Chapel helping to build on the reputation that the park has as a place for all to visit and enjoy.

6. Other Key Issues

- 6.1. The recent increases in construction costs have inflated the estimated cost of this project considerably in under a year. If successful with the HLF bid it is likely to be necessary to commence the works ahead of the wider

programme to reduce the impact of further inflation rises and so remain within the Chapel project budget.

- 6.2. There remains uncertainty around the timing and level of funding from external sources to fund the wider park transformation programme. Positive capital receipts have been achieved from the sale of properties at Royal Victoria Country Park and the remaining properties will be sold over the next financial year, which will achieve close to the target sum of £3million. The programme team is researching other potential sources of external funding, to achieve an overall programme budget of at least £12.9million.
- 6.3. Assuming the programme is successful with raising external funding Appendix A demonstrates how the funding will be split across the Country Parks.
- 6.4. Securing the contribution of £1.6million at this early stage of the Country Park Transformation programme is an important achievement and one which will give confidence in the ability to reach the external funding target of £4.2million. However, it is feasible to reduce the allocation per park for Queen Elizabeth, Manor Farm and Staunton, and still deliver significant improvements, should the full funding target prove difficult to attain.
- 6.5. The Chapel project is a key element of the transformation of Royal Victoria Country Park and if not carried out as part of the jointly funded HLF project; costs of more than £1.1million could be incurred on the refurbishment of the Chapel alone.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1. That the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves the contribution of £1.1million from the Policy and Resources Country Parks Transformation capital programme allocation towards the Royal Victoria Country Park Chapel project and the submission of the second round HLF application.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Maximising well-being:	yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Transforming our Country Parks – Case for Future Investment	5362	12/12/13

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Audits have been undertaken by HCCs Accessibility Team on the Chapel and the causeway to the cemetery. The recommendations to be implemented will see improvements to parking bays, road surfacing and the reduction of trip hazards, internal and external lighting, signage, audio, toilets, stair and lift access. This will result in the relevant areas being compliant with current standards.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Equality impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. No significant impact has been identified in the development of this report.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

This report, seeking procurement approval, has no direct impact on the County Council's carbon footprint/energy consumption.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

This report, seeking procurement approval, has no direct impact on climate change.

**Royal Victoria Country Park Chapel Project:
Estimated Delivery Phase Expenditure**

Works	£'000s
Chapel conservation and new build elements	1220
Landscaping works and works to causeway	320
Professional fees	154
Interpretation	356
Activities delivery including events and education	259
Other costs (inflation, contingency, volunteer costs, marketing, evaluation)	524
Total	2.8m

Programme Spend Profile (assumes external funding target achieved)

Programme Spend Profile	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Expenditure							
RVCP	0	147	2,000	888	30	0	3,065
Lepe	0	0	268	2,052	25	0	2,345
QECP	0	0	50	1,050	0	0	1,100
Titchfield	0	0	10	290	0	0	300
MFCP	0	30	25	1,000	470	0	1,525
Staunton	0	0	25	225	225	3,200	3,675
Project Mgmt Costs	0	188	190	190	176	146	890
Total Costs	0	365	2,568	5,695	926	3,346	12,900
Funding							
External Funding	0	182	2,200	50	100	1,784	4,316
Capital Receipts	395	349	1,390	750	0	0	2,884
HCC Capital	0	0	0	3,974	826	900	5,700
Total Capital	395	531	3,590	4,774	926	2,684	12,900
In year (surplus)/deficit resources	(395)	(166)	(1,022)	921	0	662	0
Cumulative (surplus)/deficit resources	(395)	(561)	(1,583)	(662)	(662)	0	0