

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 14 OCTOBER 2014
title: CLITHEROE CASTLE GARDEN PINNACLE
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To present to Members a request from the Clitheroe Civic Society for a letter of support from the Council, for them to take the lead on a Heritage Lottery Grant to investigate, and potentially arrange for repairs to be carried out, to the Palace of Westminster pinnacle in the gardens of Clitheroe Castle.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – to improve the health of people living and working in our area
- Corporate Priorities - to protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area, to help make people's lives healthier and safer
- Other Considerations – to work in partnership with other bodies in pursuit of the Council's aims and objectives

2 BACKGROUND

Members of the Clitheroe Civic Society have met with council officers to discuss the state of the pinnacle in Castle Park. The pinnacle was donated to the town by the then MP, Sir William Bass, in 1937, to commemorate the coronation of King George VI; it came originally from the Palace of Westminster.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The pinnacle is located within Castle Park, and the Council is the landowner. The Society requires the Council's permission to submit a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out investigative work to determine the scope of works that should be undertaken. Members of the CCS have asked if they can be given a letter of support by the Council to help their application. The Society and council officers met earlier this year, at which point the society provided a quotation they had obtained from a specialist for repairs of up to £10,000. The society has now identified 2 options, the aforementioned sum and a more extensive one for up to £40,000. The latter project sum is the favoured option by the CCS.

3.2 The structure is made from limestone, and over time this has deteriorated, a process which is accelerated by the corrosion of the ferrous metal cramps within the structure.

3.3 Without any intervention, the structure will eventually become unsafe and have to be dismantled. The Council has no identified budget to carry out significant work at this time on the structure.

- 3.4 The CCS wants to prepare and submit a development grant bid to the HLF. The development grant would provide an initial funding sum to allow the Society to engage specialists to prepare a more detailed submission for a main grant submission. Currently, professional volunteers have given their time, some at risk in the hope of a grant being awarded; thereafter their fees would be paid for from the grant, others on a voluntary basis.
- 3.5 HLF grants ordinarily require match funding, which can be a combination of cash and in-kind support. The Society is not seeking any funding support from the Borough Council, and is aware that the pinnacle will not form part of any capital bid submission for 2015. Members of the Society are confident of raising the necessary match funding for the bid. Officer time spent helping the Society could be used as in-kind match funding for the HLF bid.
- 3.6 The extent of the work required to the pinnacle is not known yet, though it might involve it being taken apart, prior to be rebuilt using non corrosive metal to replace the ferrous cramps. Such work would require listed building consent, which would be the subject of a separate application from the Society to the Council. CCS has been informed that a letter of support to them will not imply that LBS would be automatically granted. It is not planned to restore the stone work, as that would materially alter the structure from a historical perspective.
- 3.7 As part of the preferred bid, the Society would carry out some interpretation work in relation to the pinnacle, and this could form the basis for an exhibition in the museum &/or the library.
- 3.8 If CCS make and have a successful bid, they plan to make any contractor appointed use apprentices to help them develop their skills, in addition to involving local school children to help them understand the skills required to repair such a structure.
- 3.9 Council officers will need to work with the CCS to establish the guidelines in terms of the project, prior to any bid being submitted. This will ensure that risk assessments, CDM Regulations, etc are resolved.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The Council's position has been made clear about the structure to the Civic Society, there is no identified budget available to carry out any extensive work to the structure, and there is no plan to include a bid for capital resources in the 2015 budget. However, there is risk if the Society carries out an initial assessment which indicates a range of work that needs to be undertaken. If CCS is unable to raise the funds for the work, the Council could be faced with choosing between having the work done, for which there is no current budget provision identified, or applying for LBC to have the structure taken down for safety reasons.
- Political – The Council has shown commitment to working with local groups to date, providing advice, and officer time to help projects where no actual capital funding is provided by the Council.
- Reputation – The pinnacle has a historic value for the town, and there is undoubted enthusiasm from the Civic Society to lead on a grant application, and

subsequently manage the repair project. Without work, the pinnacle will continue to deteriorate and may ultimately have to be removed. There is no current time frame for this.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Considers the request for the Council to provide a letter of support to the Clitheroe Civic Society.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge, extension 4479.

REF: MB/14.10.14/Community Services