



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	DELAPRE ABBEY RESTORATION PROJECT
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	7 December 2016
Key Decision:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Tim Hadland
Ward(s)	Delapre

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider and note financial variances to the restoration project which are as a result of delayed completion of the restoration works.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes a delay in the completion of the restoration project due to the delayed connection of utilities into the Abbey.
- 2.2 Recognises that the delay in completion of the project has led to increased costs that will represent an overspend against the approved capital budget.
- 2.3 Agrees that a detailed financial assessment of the project including resultant implications of the delay will need to be completed.
- 2.4 Notes an increase to the capital budget of £65,000 authorised by the Chief Executive to enable the urgent procurement of a servery for the café/restaurant area of the Abbey by the way of a virement of available funds within the existing capital programme.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Delapre Abbey is one of the most important historic buildings in Northamptonshire and the restoration of the Grade II* listed building is the key heritage project for the Council. Completion of the restoration will see the Abbey opened to the public for the first time in its 900 year history.
- 3.1.2 The opening of the Abbey will offer educational spaces, a shop, exhibition space, a cafe/restaurant as well as offering a specific exhibition around the Battle of Northampton as part of the Wars of the Roses which was fought at Delapre Park in 1460.
- 3.1.3 The project will also enhance the public park, increasing the public usage, whilst attracting regional and national visitors to Northampton. The park improvements will include improved public convenience facilities.
- 3.1.4 There will be close working links between the Trust who will operate the Abbey and the Museum's service to ensure compatibility across the town's key heritage assets.
- 3.1.5 Cabinet will be aware that the Council was awarded £3.6m of Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) towards the overall project costs of £6.3m for the restoration works and activity costs.
- 3.1.6 Phase 1 restoration works commenced March 2015 and works were due to complete in June 2016.
- 3.1.7 Cabinet previously considered and approved reports in October 2015 and April 2016 regarding project progress.
- 3.1.8 A revised completion date of the 10th November was agreed, primarily based upon the need to accommodate additional works to the South Range Victorian Rooms.

3.2 Issues

Capital Scheme

- 3.2.1 The existing agreed completion date of the 10th November 2016 has not been met due to delays in the connection of utilities which is outside of the control of the Council or main contractor.
- 3.2.2 A revised completion date of early 2017 is now being worked to and the previous utility delays are now being worked through. We have concluded the electricity delay. The gas main to the park is still to be reinforced to achieve the necessary gas pressure to the Abbey.
- 3.2.3 The delay in completion is having a direct impact upon the construction costs and these will continue to accrue until the project completes. These are still being quantified.

- 3.2.4 A variance has been identified within the external financial reporting of the project by the Quantity Surveyor and this is currently being assessed. This will be reported to Cabinet in due course.
- 3.2.5 The review by DAPT of the catering operation identified a requirement for a servery in the café/restaurant area to enable the successful operation of the catering offer and this needed to be authorised to avoid further delay.

Revenue Implications - DAPT

- 3.2.6 The delay in completing the restoration works will have an impact upon the revenue position of the Trust and this will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet needs to accept that the delays to the completion of the restoration works will have a direct impact upon the costs of the project.
- 3.3.2 The Cabinet realistically has no other options if the project is to be delivered and the excellent facilities at Delapre made ready for public opening.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The recommendations within this report do not set policy or have implications on existing policies.

4.2 Resources and Risk

Risks

- 4.2.1 The recommendations within this report will see the project conclude and the Abbey open to the public for the first time in its 900 year history.
- 4.2.2 The Council needs to drive forwards to complete the necessary works and support the Trust to ensure that grant conditions are met and the project opens on time and in good order.
- 4.2.3 Should the Council fail to ensure this, there would be risks to the financial and business position of the Abbey, DAPT and NBC.

Resources

Capital

- 4.2.4 The capital budget has been increased by £65,000 to allow for the procurement of a servery for the café/restaurant area of the Abbey. This has been approved under delegated powers given the urgency and is funded from an underspend elsewhere within the capital programme. A full consolidated position will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The £65,000 has been appointed under delegated virement powers in the financial regulations in the constitution. There are no other specific legal implications.

4.3.2 Legal advice is being sought in relation to the contractual obligations of the various parties involved.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 No specific health or equality matters have been raised by these proposals.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Council officers, the DAPT Director and LGSS Finance have all been involved within the review of the additional capital works required.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The successful restoration of the Grade II* listed Delapre Abbey is the key heritage priority for the Council. The additional capital works will assist in the successful conclusion to the Phase 1 works.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 None

5. Background Papers

5.1 Cabinet Report dated the May 2013, October 2015 and April 2016.

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