

Appendices:

None



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	DELAPRE ABBEY RESTORATION PROJECT
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	21 June 2017
Key Decision:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Tim Hadland
Ward(s)	Delapre and Briar Hill

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval for additional expenditure for various works that will support the operation of Delapre Abbey, improve the visitor experience and enable Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust to maximise commercial potential.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 On the balance of options, approves the additional capital expenditure of up to £490,000 in order to meet the costs of additional works that need to be undertaken to enable the full public opening of Delapre Abbey.
- 2.2 If approval is given under 2.1, above, agree to amend the capital programme for 2017/2018 in order to provide for additional capital expenditure of up to £490,000 for Delapre Abbey funded by £120,000 of 2016/17 underspends and a reduction of £370,000 to the block capital programmes 2017/18 as detailed in 4.2.3 of this report.

- 2.3 Delegates authority to approve, control and monitor expenditure to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, as appropriate, acting in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The restoration of the Grade II* Listed Delapre Abbey (the Abbey) is a key heritage project for the Council and will see the Abbey opened to the public for the first time in its 900 year history.
- 3.1.2 The Abbey will, when fully open, provide educational spaces, a shop, exhibition space and a cafe/restaurant. It will also offer a specific exhibition about the Battle of Northampton; part of the Wars of the Roses, which was fought in Delapre Park in 1460.
- 3.1.3 The Abbey will enhance the public park in that it will include improved public convenience toilets and increase the usage of the park, attracting more local as well as regional and national visitors to Northampton.
- 3.1.4 Practical completion was achieved with the main contractor Robert Woodhead Limited on the 27th February 2017. A list of snagging items are currently being completed by the main contractor.
- 3.1.5 The Cafe opened to the public on Monday, 3rd April 2017 and has been very well received by the public.
- 3.1.6 Cabinet will be aware that the Council was awarded £3.6m of Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) towards the overall project costs, the restoration works and activity costs.
- 3.1.7 Cabinet previously considered and approved reports on 21st October 2015, and 13th April 2016, 7th December 2016 and 8th February 2017 regarding project progress, funding and necessary decisions.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 As reported to Cabinet in February 2017, a cost assessment has been completed to establish a final account position with regards to the construction works at the Abbey. The construction works are split between the contracted works being undertaken by Robert Woodhead Limited (RWL) and the further works that are being procured by the Council and delivered by other contractors.
- 3.2.2 At that meeting, Cabinet approved a maximum additional amount of £650,000 to complete the contracted works by RWL and to complete additional works including; the car park, CCTV, a water tank and external lighting.

3.2.3 Following further safety audits, specifically regarding fire safety and DDA compliance, additional works are required to ensure the building complies with regulations and can be signed off for operation. These are items that were not in the original scope of works to be undertaken by Robert Woodhead Limited or in any further works by others.

3.2.4 £490,000 is being requested to complete the Delapre Abbey Project. The proposed works can be categorised, for ease of reference into three groups:

- 1) Regulatory/Health and Safety Requirements;
- 2) Operational enhancements;
- 3) Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) requests.

These categories are further outlined in the following paragraphs.

3.2.5 1) Regulatory and Safety Requirements

The Regulatory/Health and Safety items are required to ensure the appropriate sign-off on all necessary regulations to allow the permanent operation of the site, including those arising from the Council's and DAPT's insurers. This includes some items that were gaps of omission within the scope of the main building contract or were presumed at the scoping stage to be delivered by the operator of the building. This includes things like fire refuges, some statutory signage and alarm upgrades.

3.2.6 These are essential items and should have been included within the original scope and are necessary to deliver the original objectives.

3.2.7 2) Operational Enhancements

Essential operational enhancements will support and build on the successful opening of the Abbey Café and on the early bookings that have already been made, prior to full opening. This will assist the Abbey to fulfil its commercial potential. Items here include, for example, measures to improve the existing car-parking provision and additional security measures, such as CCTV, to better protect the Abbey from potential anti-social behaviour and vandalism, as well as to promote its safe operation over time.

3.2.8 Further provision is required as the previous estimates were based on a car parking design which has now been changed to reflect a separation between visitors parking and delivery vehicles. A new planning application is being submitted.

3.2.9 3) Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) Requests

Some of these works were originally intended to be implemented in a later phase, but given the very favourable public reaction to the restoration and the desirability of avoiding future disruption to the operation of the Abbey, DAPT believe that it would be appropriate to undertake these works now. Proposed expenditure here includes completion of room finishes, some building enhancements, additional decoration, improvements to exhibitions and the provision of additional gates and control barriers.

3.2.10 These items could be provided at a later time as part of an additional phase to the Abbey, supported through fundraising.

3.2.11 Cost Apportionment

3.2.12 Table A represents a high level cost apportionment for the works which are yet to be tested in the market and therefore represent estimates with a contingency of 15% being included.

Table A: Cost Apportionment for Works to be market tested.

	Category	Cost Estimate
1.	Regulatory/Health and Safety Requirements	£150,000
2.	Essential operational enhancements	£200,000
3.	Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) requests	£140,000
	TOTAL	£490,000

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 Option 1: The Council to approve the £490,000 additional budget. The Abbey would benefit from enhancements to the Abbey that will include the CCTV and security, carpark and internal items. The additional works would considerably enhance the experience of the Abbey and enable full opening to the public.

3.3.2 Option 2: The Council choose to approve a lesser amount of money. This would amount to either £150,000 for Category 1 works, or £350,000 for Category 1 and 2 works. This would deliver less of an impact to the overall renovation scheme and also the visitor experience. It could also leave the Abbey exposed to certain security issues and also limit the capacity of available parking for visitors. Depending on the amount of money approved, the Abbey may not achieve regulatory sign offs and therefore not be able to open fully to the public.

3.3.3 Option 3: The Council choose not to approve the funding. The construction of the Abbey would still be completed to the original scope of works, however, would not open fully to the public as it would not achieve the required regulatory sign offs. It would also not benefit from additional enhancements to the CCTV and security, carpark and internal items (including enhanced decoration).

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1.1 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 Some of the additional capital works are required to satisfy fire safety, building regulations and the ongoing functionality of the Abbey post-opening. Non-completion of these works would mean that the Abbey would not be able to comply with all of the necessary regulations. This would mean that the Abbey would not be able to fully open to the public.
- 4.2.2 Failure to complete the restoration to the standard required by the HLF, as specified within their funding approval, could result in the HLF seeking repayment of some or the entire grant amount. The Council would, in this scenario, be required to fund any repayment that may be requested. The HLF are currently committed to £3.6m of funding.

Resources

- 4.2.3 This report seeks approval for additional capital expenditure on Delapre Abbey of £490,000 in 2017/2018. This will be funded from £120,000 of underspends carried forward from 2016/2017, and £370,000 from a pro-rata reallocation (taking capital programme board approved allocations into account) of the 2017/18 block capital programmes as shown below in Table B;

Table B: Funding of Proposed Additional Capital Expenditure

	16/17 Carry Fwd £000	17/18 Budget £000	Less Approved Allocations £000	Total Unallocated 17/18 £000	Delapre - Pro-rata Allocation £000	Residual Unallocated Budget £000
Capital Improvements - Regeneration Areas Parks/Allotments/ Cemetery Enhancements	322	50	-240	132	50	82
Operational Buildings - Enhancements	377	250	-370	257	98	159
Commercial Landlord Responsibilities	383	50	-36	397	151	246
	1,082	550	-660	972	370	602

- 4.2.4 The total approved budget to date is £7,799 m. Should Cabinet be minded to approve the additional expenditure requested in this report, the total forecast expenditure would be £8.177 m.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The outstanding statutory and regulatory requirements relating to Health and Safety and the Disability Discrimination Act must be fully addressed if the Abbey is to open fully to the public.

- 4.3.2 The procurement and appointment of any contractor to undertake any of the proposed works must comply fully with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 4.3.3 Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission must be secured prior to the commencement of works that affect the character and/or appearance of the Abbey.
- 4.3.4 The Council has wide powers under the General Power of Competence, in the Localism Act 2011 enabling it to approve the payments outlined in this report. As well as this the Council has a fiduciary duty to the tax payer and needs to ensure that any monies that are approved to be utilised towards the Abbey are consistent with this duty

4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1 Some of the proposed additional works are to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to the building with appropriately designed refuge points which are compliant with all statutory requirements.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 Council officers, the DAPT Director and LGSS Finance have all collaborated within the review of the additional capital works required and there has also been regular liaison with DAPT Trustees and HLF officers.

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.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Cabinet Reports dated 8th May 2013; 21st October 2015; April 2016; 7th December 2016; 11th January 2017 and 7th February 2017.

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