

Title of Report: **Restoration of Shaw House**

Item 14

Report to be considered by: Executive

Forward Plan Ref: EX0829

Corporate Plan Priority:

S4 – Achieving better and fairer outcomes for children and young people by delivering high quality integrated services through partnership.

S9 - Enhancing the sustainability of the West Berkshire Community and preserving the local environment.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Corporate Plan priorities by:
Providing fit for purpose accommodation for the continuing professional development of teachers and other employees who work with children and young people. Providing high quality physical education facilities at Trinity School to comply with DfES and Sport England standards and improving class management. Removal of the education centre from the Fir Tree site will eliminate more than 100 traffic movements per day through the school entrance improving pupil safety and enhancing the overall learning environment.

Ensuring that a Grade I listed heritage building is restored and put into productive use. The overall project will provide replacement accommodation for the time expired and dilapidated wooden structure that forms the Education Centre and the existing school gymnasium. The removal of the sports facilities from within the curtilage of Shaw House itself will improve the setting of this building and will support future grant applications for external funding to restore the grounds.

Contributing to the diversity of visitor attractions that encourage the growth of the local tourism economy.

Purpose of Report:

To outline the terms and conditions of the proposed contract between the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and West Berkshire Council in respect of the offer of a grant for the restoration of Shaw House.

Recommended Action:

- 1. To enter into an agreement with the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) committing the Council to use the grant offered by NHMF in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.**
- 2. To delegate to the Chief Executive authority to signed all contractual documents on behalf of the Council.**

Reason for decision to be taken:

The recommended action gives officers the authority to confirm to the Heritage Lottery Fund that their offer of grant, and the terms and conditions under which the offer is made, have been accepted by West Berkshire Council.

List of other options considered:

No other options have been considered.

Key background documentation:

- Stage One Application to Heritage Lottery Fund
- Stage Two Application to Heritage Lottery Fund
- Report to WBC Executive 23rd October 2003
- Planning Applications 03/02336/FUL, 03/02328/LBC, 04/01308/FULMAJ, 04/00622/OUTMAJ

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Implications

- Policy:** In 1999, West Berkshire Council and English Heritage agreed a conservation plan for Shaw House and the historic grounds to the property. This plan recognised the need for some separation of the heritage asset and the operational areas of Trinity School. The work already undertaken to provide high quality permanent accommodation to replace the village of mobile classrooms, and the construction of new car parking and an artificial turf sports pitch, has already delivered some of the aspirations of that plan. This project will complete the restoration of the house and it's setting.
- Financial:** The Acceptance of the terms and conditions under which the grant is offered does not in itself carry any financial implications.
- Personnel:**
- Legal:** The contract with NHMF requires the body seeking funding to ensure that it has specific authority to enter into the contractual arrangements. In order to achieve this the Council needs to approve the two proposals set out above. Without such a resolution the contract would be invalid and the Council may be acting ultra vires.
- Property:** Shaw House is a Grade I listed property dating from the sixteenth century. The house is nationally important example of an Elizabethan gentry house which has retained much of its original form and fabric. The house is one of three buildings in West Berkshire on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register (grade C). The other two are in private ownership. This category of buildings are identified as those where there is "slow decay and no solution agreed with English Heritage for its future". Only a Grade D classification "imminent danger of collapse" is a higher cause for concern.
- The restoration of the house and gardens is included in the approved WBC Asset Management Plan.
- Risk Management:** A full risk register has been developed and will be included with the final project appraisal.

Supporting Information

1. Background

On 30th June 2004 the Heritage Lottery Fund notified West Berkshire Council that the application for grant aid had been approved. Contact documentation was received from the Heritage Lottery Fund on 27th July 2004 with a request that the signed contracts should be returned within three months. A condition of the letter of offer states that

“If the contract is not signed within three months of receipt, Trustees may consider withdrawing the grant.”

Furthermore,

“The Grantee must send to NHMF a certified copy (signed to confirm it is a true copy) of the document recording the Grantee’s decision (or the decision of the relevant properly constituted committee, executive or authorised officer) authorising the Grantee to enter into this Contract.”

The Head of Legal and Electoral Services advises that the decision to enter into the agreement should be taken by the Executive and should include delegated authority enabling the contract to be signed on behalf of the Council.

Three months from the date of receipt is 27th October. The contract deals almost entirely with the Council’s obligations to provide monitoring information, contract details, adequate insurance and security, and to acknowledge the National Heritage Memorial Fund in all publicity. All of these obligations relate to the period once the project is underway and the Council has started to draw down funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Signing the contract does not commit the council to letting a contract for the restoration works.

Local Stakeholders:

The Shaw House Project Management Board includes representatives from Trinity School, St. Mary’s Church, Shaw cum Donnington Parish Council, the WBC Ward Member, and the Executive Member for Children and Young People. This Board has recommended the proposals set out in the business case and plan.

Earlier this year, an explanatory was delivered to householders in properties adjacent to Shaw House, Trinity School and that part of the school playing fields included in the overall project design. Included with this letter were information sheets outlining the scope of the project and the timetable for decisions.

An exhibition about the history of Shaw House and the plans for the restoration was held in Newbury Museum in November 2003.

Officers Consulted: Chief Executive
Corporate Director Strategy and Commissioning
Corporate Director Children and Young People
Head of Highways and Engineering
Head of Planning and Transport Strategy
Head of Legal Services
Head of Property Services
Head of Resources.

Trade Union: No formal consultation at this stage.