

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**6 MAY 2014**

**Report of the Director of Property**

**(COUNCIL SERVICES)**

**Proposed extension to Derbyshire County Council and National Trust joint working at Elvaston Castle and Country Park**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

To seek approval to the recommendation of the Elvaston Castle and Country Park Working Party regarding a proposed extension to the joint working between the Council and the National Trust, and to update Cabinet on the consultation process on the associated draft 10 year 'Vision and Plan'.

**2. Information and Analysis**

**2.1 Background**

The County Council has been looking for a number of years for a solution which will provide a sustainable future for Elvaston Castle and the surrounding estate and relieve the Council of the significant on-going annual maintenance costs, whilst maintaining public access to the Castle and the Country Park.

At its meeting on 26 March 2013 Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Elvaston Castle and Country Park Working Party from its meeting on 8 March 2013 for:-

The Council to enter into a mutually acceptable partnership arrangement with the National Trust to find a sustainable future for Elvaston Castle and Estate and;

Allocate £125,000 from General Reserves for 2013-14 to fund the appointment of a project officer and other work to be undertaken by the National Trust, along with external legal and financial support required to

assist the Council with the preparation of funding applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and, if applicable, other funding bodies, the drafting of legal documentation and the development of options and associated business cases.

## 2.2 Partnership working between the County Council and the National Trust

In practical terms the partnership working between the Council and the National Trust involves three discrete activity streams:-

1. Construction of a compelling and palpable vision which has wide stakeholder input and ownership;
2. The formation of a formal coalition of partners from public, private and voluntary sectors to enact the vision;
3. The construction of capital and revenue funding packages to underpin the delivery of the vision

The intended outcome of this work was that by the end of the current joint working in June 2014 there should be:-

- An agreed and shared vision;
- A package of funding bids;
- A procurement package for the future involvement of private and community sector interests to take forward the vision.

## 2.3 Update on Progress – draft 10-year ‘Vision and Plan’

Since the report to Cabinet in January 2014, a public consultation process on the draft 10-year ‘Vision and Plan’ has been undertaken, finishing on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Over 1000 comments have been received.

The themes from the consultation responses received can be summarised as follows:

- (1) Support for the Vision statement that looks ahead to 2024;
- (2) Support for the ‘Outcomes’ outlined over the next 10 years, with the exception of enabling development, where there is a mixture of views. Some see enabling development as acceptable if needed and sympathetically and sensitively integrated into the Estate, others are opposed to it in principle;
- (3) General support for the six ‘Guiding Principles’ (refer to Appendix 1);

- (4) A range of questions from stakeholders that relate less to the 'what' in the Vision and more about the 'how'. For example, 'What will be the relationship between the Council and the proposed single management body?'
- (5) Some reservations about the potential scale of residential conversion that may happen across the Estate and perceptions that this may impact negatively on public access; and,
- (6) A variety of views about the proposals to develop a new access driveway and additional car parking for the Estate, with concerns that the route proposed would bring the potential for conflict with visitors to the Estate. Interestingly, there have been a number of suggestions through the consultation process about the potential to create proper vehicular access from the A6 that could serve the regeneration of the core buildings and provide the main entry point for visitors. These alternative options are something that the DCC: NT project team is currently investigating further. What is clear from the process however is recognition from many of the key stakeholder organisations that regenerating the core buildings will necessitate greater vehicular demand than at present, and that the existing vehicular access infrastructure is not fit for this purpose.

Importantly, supportive consultation responses, including constructive suggestions and other comments, have been received from both English Heritage and South Derbyshire District Council. In addition, a constructive meeting has been held with the Friends of Elvaston Castle and Social Enterprise East Midlands to explore a number of issues related to the draft 'Vision and Plan'.

Due to the large number of comments received through the consultation process, the time needed to consider these properly, and the need to also reflect on the outcomes of the recent initial stage of market engagement, it has been agreed to re-schedule taking the final 'Vision and Plan' to Cabinet, to June 2014 rather than May 2014. As the time frame for other related workstreams, such as the market engagement process and the planned bid to the HLF has also been extended, this will not detrimentally impact on the wider project.

#### 2.4 Proposed extension to the joint working between the Council and the National Trust

The Working Party meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014 discussed the potential need to extend the time period required to meet the original project outputs agreed between the Council and the National Trust. This has arisen partly

because the market research process has been extended to give the Council more time to better understand what the market may be able to deliver, which in turn impacts on the timeline for a proposed Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, one of the original project outputs.

The DCC: NT project team have re-profiled the project timeline based on a February 2015 submission date for the planned Stage 1 HLF bid for Elvaston. This would effectively become the end date for the planned project extension.

To resource the preparation of the HLF bid and this extended programme, the National Trust would require an additional £60,000.

In addition, a number of discrete elements of project work will require buying in specialist external advice over and above that provided by the National Trust and this will require a budget of £20,000, which it is envisaged would be managed by the Trust.

Discussions continue with colleagues from many other services across the Council to ensure the project has sufficient officer capacity and input to complete the projects outputs within the revised timeframe.

## 2.5 Working Party Recommendations

The Working Party met on 2 April 2014 to consider progress on the project and is making the following recommendations to Cabinet:-

That Cabinet note:-

- The range and depth of consultation to date, and the themes that have emerged;
- That it is now proposed to finalise the 10-year Vision and Plan for consideration by Cabinet in June 2014; and,
- That it is proposed to extend the joint working between the Council and the National Trust from the end of June 2014 to February 2015, as detailed in the report, subject to Cabinet approval and the necessary funding being agreed;

To enable the joint working between the Council and the National Trust to be extended and the originally intended outcomes achieved, it will be necessary to waive standing orders in relation to contracts.

### 3. Council's Commitment

Delivery of the Vision for Elvaston Castle and Estate will help meet the County Council's pledges to the people of Derbyshire:

- **A Derbyshire that works**

Delivery of the Vision will result in a vibrant and working Estate that provides an attractive visitor and tourist attraction, together with a setting for business and living, supporting the local economy. This will gradually secure the future of the site financially, reducing the historical annual deficit facing the Council, and allowing Council funds to be prioritised elsewhere;

- **A healthy Derbyshire**

The Elvaston Estate already provides a wonderful resource for recreation and play, and this will only increase through delivery of the Vision;

- **A safer Derbyshire**

The regeneration of the site will provide a safer, more resilient Elvaston.

- **A Derbyshire that cares**

The Elvaston Estate already provides a resource for all sectors of the community, and this will only increase through delivery of the Vision;

- **A local Derbyshire**

Community and other stakeholder engagement have already helped inform and shape the draft Vision for Elvaston. Going forward, increasingly community involvement in the care of the Estate will be central to its future success and delivery of the Vision.

### 4. Financial Considerations

Funding of £125,000 was approved by Cabinet on 26th March 2013, £75,000 of which was to finance the NT Project Development Team in delivering the Project Management Plan work streams identified.

The extension to the project will require an additional allocation of £80,000. It is proposed that these resources be funded from general reserves.

## **5. Legal Considerations**

The Council's Standing Orders permit Cabinet to waive the requirement to seek competitive tenders in respect of a proposed contract where Cabinet is satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying exemption.

The Director of Legal Services has advised that the circumstances set out in this report justify the waiving of Standing Orders to enable the Council to enter into this partnership arrangement with the National Trust, which will include the outcomes to be delivered by the Trust over the next 12 months.

Appropriate legal frameworks which would allow for the development and future management of the Estate are being investigated. Any proposal to grant leases of any parts of the Country Park to which the public have access will require the Council to publish statutory notices and consider any responses received before reaching a decision on whether to proceed.

## **6. HR Considerations**

Consultation with staff based at Elvaston Castle and Estate has already commenced and will continue to be carried out in accordance with County Council policies and procedures.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health and transport considerations.

## **7. Key Decision** **NO**

## **8. Call-in**

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? **NO**

## **9. Background Papers**

Files held by the Director of Property.

## **10. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Cabinet:

- 10.1 notes the range and depth of consultation to date on the draft 10-year Vision and Plan, and the themes that have emerged;

- 10.2 notes the proposal to bring the finalised 'Vision and Plan' to Cabinet for approval in June 2014 following consideration of the consultation feedback;
- 10.3 approves the allocation of £80,000 from general reserves for 2014/15 to fund an extension to the joint working with the National Trust; and
- 10.4 agrees to waive standing orders in relation to contracts to enable the joint working arrangements with the National Trust to be extended to February 2014.

JEREMY GOACHER  
Director of Property

## **Appendix 1**

### **Guiding Principles**

1. Freehold of the Estate will be retained by Derbyshire County Council.
2. A competent single management body will control the overall governance of the estate with the balance of conservation, heritage and access at its core.
3. Financial sustainability will be fundamental to the delivery of the vision, facilitated by a business model that provides on-going reinvestment in the long term stewardship of the Estate without eroding its significance.
4. The historic, landscape and biodiversity significance will be protected, conserved and, where sustainable, enhanced.
5. Public access to the gardens, parkland and house will be provided and maintained; the parkland at least will be free at the point of entry on foot. The stories and rich heritage will be understood, shared and celebrated.
6. People, community involvement and partnership working will be at the heart of all activities.