

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EASTCOTE HOUSE BUILDINGS AND GARDENS

Cabinet Members	Councillor Keith Burrows/Councillor Sandra Jenkins
Cabinet Portfolios	Planning & Transportation / Environment
Officer Contacts	Charmian Baker / Sarah Harper, Planning, Environment and Community Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1 - Map of Eastcote House Gardens Appendix 2 - Results of Public Consultation on the Future of Eastcote House Buildings and Gardens Appendix 3 - Draft Urgent Works Schedule for Eastcote House Buildings and Gardens

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	Cabinet are asked to note the Conservation Management Plan, and agree that proposals are progressed with regard to the relocation of the Eastcote Billiards Club; urgent works to the buildings and a Part 1 Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the refurbishment, conversion and interpretation of the listed buildings and park at Eastcote House Gardens, for community use.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	<i>Contributes to the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Council Plan Corporate objectives including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain local heritage; - Ensure heritage and natural environment are protected and enhanced - Expand cultural and sports activities - Extend opportunities for older people to participate in leisure, recreational and cultural activities - Work in partnership to maximise the effective use of resources - Reduce anti-social behaviour
Financial Cost	The £150,000 required for the urgent works to the buildings is to be provided under the Hillingdon Improvement programme. If the Council's Part 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund were successful, there would be financial implications in providing matched funding for the Part 2 application. This would have to be addressed through the MTFF.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Eastcote & East Ruislip

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 1) **Welcomes the Conservation Management Plan for the site;**
 - 2) **Authorises officers to investigate the relocation of the Eastcote Billiards Club, with a further report to Cabinet in December to discuss the findings;**
 - 3) **Instructs officers to draft a detailed, prioritised and costed schedule for urgent works to the stables, dovecot and walled garden; to form the basis of a Capital Release Report for £150,000 from the HIP for this work and;**
 - 4) **Authorises officers to proceed with a Part 1 Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the refurbishment, conversion and interpretation of the listed buildings and park at Eastcote House Gardens, for community use.**
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INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The listed buildings at Eastcote House Gardens comprise the Stables (formerly known as the Coach House), Dovecote and Walled Garden. They are all included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, and within the Eastcote Village Conservation Area. The buildings have been in Council ownership for many years and are in need of significant repair work. The tenants of the Stables, the Eastcote Billiards Club, are no longer able to carry out maintenance to the building, and its intermittent use and derelict appearance is encouraging vandalism in the gardens. The Stables has been included on the Heritage at Risk Register, published by English Heritage.

It is considered that urgent repairs are now necessary to the listed structures, and up to £150,000 has been allocated in principle from the Council's Hillingdon improvement programme for urgent works to the listed structures. Other extensive repairs are also necessary and the site represents a much under-used community facility. It is considered that an application for external funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund, supported by a Conservation Management Plan, may be the only realistic long term solution. Officers are supported in this view by the Ward Councillors, the M.P., English Heritage and the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens, Eastcote Village Residents Association, and the Northwood Ruislip and Eastcote Local History Society.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Cabinet could decide not to proceed with this project. In this case no application would be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. In this scenario, the Eastcote Billiards Club would remain in The Stables, the Dovecote would continue to be used for the storage of gardening equipment and the walled garden would remain as it is, until such time as these buildings and structures fell into such disrepair that they were unusable and presented a health and safety risk to the public.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee

No comments received at this stage

Supporting Information

Background

1. Eastcote House Gardens is located in Eastcote to the east of Eastcote High Road and the north of Field End Road, with access from both. It once formed the grounds of Eastcote House (demolished in the 1960's), and comprises the timber-framed 16th century Stables, the 18th century Dovecote, the 18th/19th century Walled Garden and an area of public parkland. The Stables, Dovecote and Walls of the Walled Garden are listed Grade II and the park is included on the draft Parks and Gardens Local List, while the site falls within an Archaeological Priority Area, is designated as Metropolitan Open Land and has been included within the Eastcote Village Conservation Area. (A map is appended to this report in Appendix 1).

2. The site has been in the Council's ownership for about seventy years. Significant repairs are now urgently needed to all three buildings such that they have been included on the Heritage at Risk Register, published by English Heritage. The Stables, which is in very poor condition and also in need of full modernisation of the electrical, plumbing, sanitary and kitchen installations, has been occupied for many decades by the Eastcote Billiards Club. However the Club's declining and aging membership has led to an inability to meet obligations under the repairing lease, which came to an end in 2004, pending a decision on the future of the building.

3. In September 2009, Cabinet authorised officers to proceed with the drawing up of a Conservation Management Plan, which was the necessary precursor to an application for Heritage Lottery Funding. This Plan was funded by English Heritage with match funding from the Council.

4. Following a tender process, MRDA (Margaret and Richard Davies and Associates) were appointed and the company carried out the work between January and June 2010. The process was guided by a Steering Group which met at regular intervals and was closely involved with the public consultation and with the proposals put forward in the Plan.

5. In addition to officers from the Conservation and Green Spaces Teams, the Steering Group comprised the three Ward Councillors, the Chairman of the Friends of Eastcote Gardens and Chairman of the Eastcote Village Conservation Panel, the Chairman of the Eastcote Residents Association, the Hon. Secretary of the Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society, and the Historic Areas Advisor from English Heritage.

The Making of the Plan

6. The Steering Group initially identified sixty key stakeholders in the local area, and MRDA sent out a preliminary questionnaire to them, following this with interviews to discuss the potential for the community use of the gardens and its buildings. This informed the first draft of the Plan. Subsequently, a well publicised exhibition was held for three weeks, simultaneously at Eastcote Library, Eastcote Methodist Church and at the Stables itself, asking residents to submit their comments via e-mail, the various Suggestions Boxes or the Council's web site. Finally throughout the weekend of 20th /21st March 2010, a public drop-in session was held in the Stables itself, with exhibition boards. This was hosted by MRDA,

with the assistance of members of the Steering Group. This was very popular and many local residents, and others from further afield, availed themselves of the opportunity of visiting the buildings and discussing possible future options for their use.

7. The Public Consultation, including a transcription of all the comments, has been well documented in the Plan. In all, 15 local groups and 201 individuals submitted written suggestions. These showed considerable support for the community use of the buildings with occasional functions, good visitor facilities, and the interpretation of the history of the site, including the Dovecote. (The results of the Public Consultation are set out in Appendix 2).

The Findings of the Plan

8. The Plan contains a thorough analysis of the gardens and buildings, their condition, management, designations, history and current usage, includes ecology, access and security surveys, together with an archaeological assessment and details of the results of the public consultations.

9. The Plan includes detailed proposals for the repair of the Stables, Dovecote and the walls of the Walled Garden. It also includes proposals intended to improve its accessibility and its security.

10. The proposals for the community uses of the site are presented in the form of 'suggestions', a list of possibilities put together from the public consultations and from knowledge of other compatible sites. It should be noted that none of the suggestions in the Plan will be taken forward without further public consultation. Suggestions for the gardens include the revealing and interpretation of the foundations of Eastcote House, a rose garden, a sculpture walk, an informal play area using tree stumps and other natural features, a pond dipping area, site interpretation and the relocation of the car park to provide a better setting for the Stables. Educational activities are explored, as are volunteering opportunities and training, and links which could be made with the wider area, such as The Celandine Route to Manor Farm, Ruislip.

11. Suggestions for the Dovecote include an interpretation display for educational purposes, sales of plants or seeds, the re-opening of some or all of the nesting boxes and even the re-introduction of doves.

12. As the Stables building is of limited size, and the insertion of an upper floor within it would detract from its historic character, options have been explored for its extension to provide the necessary ancillary facilities to support a community use.

13. Three options for the extension of the Stables have been included in the Plan. These are intended to illustrate how an ancillary building, in the form of a modern, timber-clad building linked to the Stables by means of a glazed conservatory, could provide facilities for the site. Thus the Stables could be used as art and exhibition space, meeting room, and function room for hire to local groups and individuals, while the ancillary building could provide toilets, kitchen, a small café, which could also sell some garden produce and craft items, and premises for a caretaker/manager.

14. Independently, the Green Spaces Team entered Eastcote House Gardens for a Green Flag Award. The entry failed in August 2010, on grounds which include: the historic structures need to be conserved; CCTV is needed to provide better security; an events programme is needed; the use of the stables as a billiards club does not promote the park;

conservation must be given a higher priority if the considerable potential of this site is to be realised; plans to convert the stables to a community resource should be pursued actively; and efforts should be made to encourage local people to use the park for a wider range of activities. They suggest that a café, toilets, interpretation centre, and small scale play area would improve the site.

The Eastcote Billiards Club

15. The condition of the Stables is such that it is not viable for the Eastcote Billiards Club to remain there for much longer without extensive repairs and the modernisation of services being carried out. This situation would pertain, whether or not the Council decided to proceed with external funding. Nevertheless such extensive repairs to the Stables, Dovecote and Walled Garden, can only realistically be undertaken by external funding, and this would only be available for uses of the buildings and gardens which benefit the whole community.

16. The Borough Solicitor has advised that the lease made between the Council and the Trustees of the Eastcote Billiards Club expired on 3rd September 2004, since when the current tenants have been “holding over”. This is a business lease which means that the Club enjoy some protection under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. The Council’s obligations appear to include relocation with the grant of a new lease.

17. In a letter to MRDA, dated 23rd April 2010, the then Club Secretary set out the Club’s concerns if they were to be moved, and their relocation needs in terms of proximity to Eastcote, space requirements and facilities.

18. The Steering Group have made enquiries of the Eastcote Cricket Club and the Eastcote Hockey Club to determine whether there might be scope for either to incorporate the Billiards Club. Another possible solution would be the erection of a modular building on Council owned land at Haydon Hall, for the exclusive use of the Club, under a new and more appropriate lease.

19. The cost of such a modular building, properly insulated and strengthened to take two billiard tables, together with adequate external lighting, path and signage would be in the order of £90,000 for a new structure and closer to £65,000 if a suitable second hand unit can be located. The Corporate Landlord will be progressing the options for the relocation of the Billiards Club to reach a satisfactory conclusion. The relocation of the Club would be the responsibility of the Council, as the Heritage Lottery Fund would not consider this project eligible for funding under their Parks and Gardens scheme.

Urgent Building Repairs

20 In early August, £150,000 was allocated from the Council’s Hillingdon Improvement Programme for urgent works to the listed structures. A detailed specification for these works will be required as the basis for a Cabinet Member decision and for the contractor tender process. The works to be undertaken are only those required to address the most urgent repairs to the structures. This will ensure that they are maintained in a stable, wind and weather proof condition until grant funding for their full repair and reuse, ideally from the Heritage Lottery Fund, can be obtained. A draft Urgent Works Schedule is set out in Appendix 3.

The Heritage Lottery Fund

21. The Conservation Management Plan was a necessary prerequisite to a bid for external funding, for example to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

22. A pre-inquiry application was made to the HLF, in order to obtain a preliminary response. Following this, a meeting was held between officers and the HLF on 21st July 2010. The response was favourable, and encouragement given to the Council to apply for funding under their Parks and Gardens scheme. The heritage buildings, the extent of volunteer commitment by the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens, the enthusiasm of local residents for community uses on the site and the presence of a Conservation Management Plan, were all viewed very favourably.

23. One element which was particularly welcomed was the archaeological investigation of the foundations of Eastcote House. Initial discussions between Council officers and the Museum of London and English Heritage suggest that this site would be suitable for a community archaeology project. Run by a professional archaeological company, with the participation of local school children/and or volunteers, this could be a project which might be very well received in Eastcote. It is also likely to be particularly attractive to the HLF, in the event of a Stage 1 Bid being submitted.

The Next Steps

24. Following this informal response from the HLF, the next step would be to submit a Stage 1 Application, by the deadline of end of February 2011. This would describe a set of proposals for the site, with approximate costings for both the buildings and the landscape. This Application must include the heritage merits of the scheme, the benefits to be delivered to the locality, with a discussion of its social context, how the local communities have been engaged, proposals for management and maintenance and how it would address skills development and education. There were some areas, such as development of the historic landscape, assessment of remedial works and proposals for social inclusion which needed more officer research. Before submission, officers from the HLF would meet Council officers again to advise.

25. Before the proposals are defined and costed for the Bid, the Steering Group would consult local organisations and residents again on the options for the site, to ensure that the final proposals were supported by the community. The proposals, and the results of the public consultation, would be reported to Cabinet early in 2011, before the Stage 1 Bid were made.

26. If the HLF were to accept the Stage 1 Bid, the next step would be a Stage 2 Application. This would be a weighty piece of work, which would require the presentation of detailed proposals, including drawings, planning permissions, and audience development, access, interpretation, business, training, learning and marketing plans. HLF would pay for 75% of the work required for this, with the Council paying the remaining 25%. At least 5% of the Council's contribution would be required as a financial payment, whilst the remainder could take the form of other types of contribution, or grants from other organisations.

27. If the Stage 2 Application were acceptable, the HLF would assess the likely cost of the project and award the Council a figure not exceeding 75% of the total, the remainder coming from the Council in various forms. The project manager would be funded directly by the HLF.

Financial Implications

The £150,000 estimated for the building works has been allocated by the HIP Steering Group from the environmental assets capital programme. This programme has a total budget of £2million for 2010/11, of which £133k has already been allocated.

The work associated with a Stage 1 HLF application can be contained within existing staffing resources within planning and any associated sections. A Stage 2 application however would require additional resources (including a project manager) which it is indicated that HLF would at that stage fund up to 75% of the costs. The Council would be expected to contribute at least 5% of the remainder with potential for contributions from other organisations up to 20%. Any shortfall from other organisations would have to be made up from Council resources, potentially therefore a maximum Council contribution of 25%.

If the bid for the full development of the project to HLF is successful, the HLF can give a grant of up to 90% of costs for projects under £1 million. Therefore in order to progress the project the Council would be required to provide a level of matched funding between 10% - 25% of the costs. For example with a project cost that ranges between £99K, to £500K. However HLF funding reduces to 50% for any new build elements, and this has been outlined as a possibility in the report above, therefore the potential call on Council resources could increase from the above example.

There would also be an impact on future revenue costs for the site, with increased maintenance costs of the grounds and buildings, a resource to manage the facilities, in addition to the financing costs relating to any Council required contributions,

There will potentially be some new income streams that could accrue to the Council as a result of development of the site. This would include the possibility of letting income from a café facility, room hire and potential private function hire. These would contribute to reducing any increased revenue costs as outlined above.

Any such new provisions, both capital and revenue, to be made from Council resources as above, would have to be addressed through the Council's Medium Term Finance Forecast (MTFF) and annual budget setting process.

While options for the relocation of the Billiards Club are to be further worked up by the corporate landlord, the indicated option of a modular building estimated at £90K would require a funding strategy to be established. Further work would also be needed to refine the costs of such a move, for example specialist removal required for the Billiard Tables.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The effect of the recommendation would be to address the urgent repairs needed to make the listed structures stable, wind and waterproof; and to pursue the funding application to HLF through the submission of a Stage 1 Application.

If the application to HLF were successful, external funding could secure the repair and upgrading of the buildings in Eastcote House Gardens, and their conversion to educational

/community use would provide an attractive facility for local residents, community groups and visitors of all ages. It would enable the repair and re-use of an attractive group of historic buildings, which, without urgent attention, could otherwise be lost to the Borough. The interiors of the Stables and Dovecote are particularly fine and can rarely be enjoyed by the general public.

The repair and re-use of the buildings would also deter the vandalism and address the safety issues which have beleaguered the site in recent years.

Such a project could significantly enhance the site, providing, through external funding partners, significant Value for Money for the Council.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The following have been involved throughout the project as members of the Steering Group: Ward Councillors, English Heritage, Friends of Eastcote House Gardens, Eastcote Residents Association, Eastcote Conservation Area Advisory Panel, Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society, and the Council's Green Spaces and Conservation Teams. Advice has been sought from the Corporate Landlord and Borough Solicitor on the relocation of the Eastcote Billiards Club. Nick Hurd M.P. has also taken a keen interest.

In addition, extensive public consultation has taken place in the locality during the compilation of the Conservation Plan. (See Appendix 2)

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

The £150k urgent works can be met from the HIP allocation agreed by the HIP Steering group. However the financial implications of a successful stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application are not currently budgeted for and would require a funding strategy through the MTF.

Legal

As many of the buildings have been identified as listed structures, the Council has a legal duty to protect and preserve these buildings.

The proposed works would not only preserve and restore Eastcote House Gardens but also ensure that those parts which are currently derelict and dangerous would be made safe and brought into proper use, subject to a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) was established in 1980, with a substantial endowment. It receives annual grant-in-aid from DCMS for the Heritage Memorial Fund (HMF). In 1994, the NHMF also took on responsibility for managing grant-giving of money raised through the National Lottery for heritage projects. This is what is known as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The HLF has a number of different grants programmes. Each programme has its own application form, associated guidelines and assessment criteria.

The National Lottery was established by the Government under the National Lottery etc Act 1993 to create extra funds for five good causes: heritage, arts, sports, charities and

projects to mark the beginning of the new millennium (a sixth good cause, the New Opportunities Fund was created in 1998). The Act also appointed NHMF as the distributor of funds to the heritage sector, and NHMF established the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out this task.

HLF's mission is:

'To improve the quality of life by safeguarding and enhancing the heritage of buildings, objects and the environment, whether manmade or natural, which have been important in the formation of the character and identity of the UK in a way which will encourage more sections of society to appreciate and enjoy their heritage, and enable them to hand it on in good heart to future generations'

HLF is funded by the proceeds of the National Lottery and receives 16.66% of the good causes share of the income.

There are four main Acts that define NHMF's legal framework. These are:

- National Heritage Act 1980
- National Lottery etc Act 1993
- National Heritage Act 1997
- National Lottery Act 1998

In addition, the Secretary of State has the power to issue directions on how it wishes NHMF to distribute lottery funds, and on how NHMF must manage and control its funds. These are known respectively as Policy and Financial Directions.

Kindly note that, in the event of a successful bid to the HLF, the Council will have to enter into an Agreement with the HLF, which would set out specific conditions and monitoring milestones for the Council. The legal department should be consulted on the suitability of these obligations.

The Council has already been advised of its legal obligations in regards to the now expired lease. Whilst some protection is afforded to the lessee, officers should carefully consider any relocation proposals for the existing tenants. The Council should ensure that it has properly discharged any duty in regards to this aspect.

Corporate Property

The Billiards Club occupies the Coach House by virtue of a lease which commenced on 4 September 1990. The lease term has expired but the Club are holding over and as the lease was within the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954 security of tenure provisions, the Club has a statutory tenancy until such time as terminated. The Club's lease can only be terminated under certain limited grounds specified under the Act or with the agreement of the Club.

Corporate Procurement

The report is not considered to generate any specific procurement implications at this stage. If all recommendations are accepted, any external expenditure resulting from that approval will need to be completed in line with all relevant procurement regulations and Council standing orders.

Relevant Service Groups

The Council's Green Spaces Team support the recommendations in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Conservation Management Plan
Heritage Lottery Fund Guidance Note