

BRADBOURNE LAKES - SEVENOAKS

Direct and Trading Advisory Committee - 11 July 2017

Report of Chief Officer, Environmental and Operational Services

Status For Consideration

Key Decision No

Executive Summary: This report provides an update on the condition of the Council owned Bradbourne Lakes, and suggests a possible way forward to obtain external funding for restoration works.

This report supports the Key Aim of a green and healthy environment.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Matthew Dickins

Contact Officer Richard Wilson, Ext. 7262

Recommendation to Direct & Trading Advisory Committee:

To consider whether the District Council should assess, as part of the 2018/19 budget setting process, a one-off 'Invest to Save' proposal along the lines outlined in the report and for it to report its conclusions to Cabinet alongside any other suggestions for funding the capital works required at the Bradbourne Lakes.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Bradbourne Lake's are a tranquil local park owned by the Council located 2km north of Sevenoaks town centre. It measures approximately 350m long x 100m wide, covers 3.5 hectares, and is severed nearly in half by Betenson Avenue. It comprises a series of five ornamental lakes with waterfalls, cascades and a circular walking route set in areas of amenity grass, dense overgrown vegetation and clumps of trees, and some striking specimen Veteran Trees.
- 2 The Park was formerly part of the Bradbourne Park Estate, first laid out between 1740-1761 by Henry Bosville as a picturesque landscape of lakes and waterfalls, forming the setting for the house of the same period. During the 19th Century there were frequent changes of ownership and parts of the Bradbourne Park Estate were sold off. In 1870 Francis Crawshay purchased the estate and retired to Bradbourne Hall. He had an interest in Druids and brought to the grounds and surrounding area of Bradbourne many stone monoliths from within the British Isles. These were erected in lines and circles according to Druid practice, and still survive today mostly within the

back gardens of the surrounding houses. In 1896 Major William Gore Lambarde inherited the estate and by 1926 had sold off the contents followed by the house the following year. The land was eventually passed to the new Ideal Homesteads Company with the land surrounding the chain of artificial lakes being passed to Sevenoaks Urban District Council in 1935 to become a public park and recreation ground. In 1937 the mansion was demolished and the new streets were laid out. Domestic building took place over the next 30 years finally enclosing the last remaining 3.5 hectares of the Park, and the current layout that exists today.

- 3 It was Henry Bosville who carried out the majority of the works to the grounds, involving the damming of the branch of the River Darent (the Brad Stream) which flows northwards through the park. This involved complicated engineering works and produced a series of six interconnected lakes to the east of the mansion, later reduced to five, which remain largely unchanged. The construction of Betenson Avenue severed the Park in two leaving four of the upstream lakes to the South, and one large lake downstream to the north.
- 4 Some of the original picturesque features such as waterfalls built of local ragstone still survive, although the lake edges have deteriorated in places, with evidence of more recent repair works involving metal shuttering and concrete. The lakes themselves are heavily silted from years of deposited leaf matter from overhanging trees, and are in need of de-silting in the near future. The woodland areas are overgrown and have contributed to the damage to the lake edges in places, and there are several examples of self-seeded trees that have added to the dense and wild nature of some areas of the Park. Some of the lakes are dominated by Geese who have destroyed large swathes of grass, and because of the heavy silting there are lake areas devoid of life and ecological habitat.
- 5 The Park has a local friends group in the form of the Bradbourne Residents' Association (BRA) which was reformed in December 2011 to work towards the restoration and conservation of Bradbourne Lakes as well as all issues affecting local residents. They are an active group who have recently carried out much needed conservation work involving the clearance of some of the overgrown vegetation areas. This is in addition to the conservation and management work carried out by the Council involving tree works, replacement of fences, drainage works, path repairs, bridge repairs, weir protection and replacement of litter bins, seats and signage.
- 6 The Lakes were the subject of an HLF grant Stage 1 application made in 2015, which was refused a first round pass in December 2015. The reasons stated were that several aspects of the proposal were unclear, including:
 - 7 A perceived under-costing in relation to the de-silting process and removal of the extracted silt;
 - 8 Locations of the stone monoliths and cost uncertainty regarding their removal from private residencies and reinstatement on the site;

- 9 Legal requirements and formal ownership of the stone monoliths with the potential for additional associated costs;
- 10 Lacking of an overall vision and strategy.
- 11 Following the unsuccessful Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2015, contact was made with an experienced landscape architectural company, LUC, who believe they would be in a strong position to resubmit on behalf of the Council, to the HLF 'parks for People programme' for main funding, with additional smaller grants from local landfill operators via the landfill tax levy scheme.

The HLF

- 12 If the Council agree to make a re-submission to the HLF, it is important to understand the key HLF criteria to achieve a successful bid and the implications and onus on the Council to deliver these if successful.
- 13 The HLF has a set of outcomes describing the difference that they want to make through their grant awards, involving:

13.1 Outcomes for Heritage, resulting in:

- **better management**
- **better condition**
- better interpreted and explained
- identified/recorded

13.2 Outcomes for People, giving:

- **developed skills**
- **education about heritage**
- changed attitudes and/or behaviour
- volunteered time

13.3 Outcomes for **Communities**, providing:

- **reduction in negative environmental impacts**
- **engagement of more and a wider range of people with heritage**
- a better place to live, work or visit for the local area/community
- boost to the local economy
- more resilience to your organisation

14 It is essential therefore that any *Parks for People* project put forward to the HLF has the potential to contribute to all ten outcomes, and it is in an applicant's interest to favour 'better managed', 'developed skills' and 'your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit' as these are the outcomes HLF value the most.

15 The HLF during their assessment of applications consider the following questions:

- What is the heritage focus of the project?
- What is the need or opportunity that the project is responding to?
- Why does the project need to go ahead now and why is lottery funding required?
- What outcomes will the project achieve?
- Does the project offer value for money?
- Is the project well planned?
- Is the project financially realistic?
- Will the project outcomes be sustained after the project has ended.

16 Therefore as part of the first round application the following information and outline detail is required under these man headings:

16.1 Activities

- Who is the project likely to involve
- The nature and range or activities that will engage people with heritage

16.2 Capital work

- An initial breakdown of the capital work planned to deliver
- Plans for architectural elements up to and including RIBA work stage 1
- Plans for non-architectural elements, such as interpretation or digital outputs, at the equivalent of RIBA work stage 1

16.3 Project outcomes

- Outline information about the outcomes the project might achieve

16.4 Project management

- Detailed information about the work during the development phase
- Detailed information about the development phase, including briefs for work to be undertaken by consultants
- Detailed timetable for the development phase
- Outline information about the delivery phase
- Outline timetable for delivery phase

16.5 After the project ends

- Outline information about sustaining the outcomes of the project after funding has ended, including funding additional running costs.

16.6 Project costs

- Detailed costs for the development phase.
- Outline costs for the delivery phase
- Possible sources of partnership funding for the delivery phase and/or a fundraising strategy for the development phase

Proposed HLF Stage One Outputs

- 17 It is also important to understand that the *Parks for People* programme requires any successful HLF scheme to be **landscape-led**, and **must not be a catalogue of repairs** to built structures and landscape fabric the applicant should be undertaking as part of a programme of planned ongoing maintenance, but instead the scheme must look to put the **community at the heart** of any enhancement proposals.
- 18 With these requirements taken into account, as well as current knowledge of the site and its inherent quality, LUC consider the following key elements to be of greatest importance in developing the Stage One bid:
- 18.1 A clear vision for the future of the Park and the Lakes in the form of a Vision Masterplan to LI Work Stage B.
- 18.2 Interpretation of the heritage significance of the site.
- 18.3 A strategy for future maintenance and sustainable management for the upkeep of the Lakes.
- 18.4 Environmental and ecological enhancements proposals and the benefit this will provide.

- 18.5 A robust cost plan that covers every aspect of the development and delivery phase, with more or an onerous place on those items that are currently uncertain, e.g. volume of silt to be removed.
- 18.6 A thorough fundraising strategy including likely future contributors and the likelihood of securing additional funds.
- 18.7 A greater understanding of the condition, the structure and the connections between the Lakes; what their role is in the local hydrology of the area; and how their conservation and restoration can improve and educate on the increasing issues of hydrology and flood risk.
- 18.8 The inclusion and future involvement of the Bradbourne Residents' Association in the long-term management of the site.
- 18.9 An understanding of the local site users, but more importantly who don't use the site and how they can be engaged to increase audience numbers and diversity.

LUC

- 19 LUC are experienced and well known for their work on historic designed landscapes. For over forty years they have undertaken commissions for owners, managers and interest groups ranging from Historic England, The National Trust, The Royal Parks and Local Authorities to Friends Groups and local Garden History Societies. For example they have been consultants to The Royal Parks (TRP), for over 40 years, and remain term consultants to the TRP, having undertaken numerous projects of relevance to this commission, including a Conservation Management Plan for Regent's Park; a Tree Management Strategy in Kensington Gardens; and feasibility studies for restoration and re-use of the boating lake in Greenwich Park. By using facts, analysis and debate with clients they put together a clear presentation of the issues to be addressed, build up a list of actions that need to be taken and proposals for how to achieve the recommendations. They were also involved in the Calverley adventure grounds project in Tunbridge Wells.
- 20 Their knowledge of the field of historic landscapes and contacts established through project work enables them to network quickly and ensure they are up-to-date with relevant policies and current thinking.
- 21 The brief for the project at Bradbourne Lakes would require a number of professional skills for a wide range of specific tasks, and that the findings should be used to prepare a co-ordinated set of recommendations for a Stage One HLF submission. LUC are accustomed to working to this type of brief and would be the overall project managers and lead consultants. They understand how a project should be presented at HLF Stage One, so that it has the best chance of securing funding and expect to provide guidance to clients during this process.

Timescale

22 If it is decided to fund a HLF Stage One bid the work would be carried out in May-July 2018 in readiness for the HLF bid submission date of August 2018.

Fee Proposal

23 LUC have submitted a fee proposal of £33,018 to prepare a stage One HLF bid (May 2017 prices). This may be increased by inflation for a Spring 2018 bid. Other Landscape Architect Companies with similar experience could also be approached to provide a competitive fee proposal.

Key Implications

Financial

If agreed, there would be a one-off cost of approx. £35,000 for a Stage One HLF bid to be prepared and submitted. The cost of de-silting the lakes, alone, without any other remediation work is estimated at £130,000.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

A contract would be entered into to engage the landscape architect to prepare the bid.

Risk Assessment

There is no guarantee, if a bid is submitted it will be successful. If successful, a Stage Two bid would be submitted to fund the identified works and project management costs.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

The Council will, in the near future, have to incur considerable costs on maintaining the Bradbourne Lakes site, including de-silting the lakes. A one-off, invest to save, bid to the 2018/19 budget is an opportunity to seek external funding for these works, but with no guarantee of success.

If it was agreed in principle, an application for the funding could be submitted as part of the 2018/19 budget setting process.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

- Bradbourne HLF Stage One bid 2015

- Submission prepared by LUC - September
2016

Richard Wilson

Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services