

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Community Services**

Date: **12 March 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Historical Resource Centre: The Keep**

Purpose of report: **To update members on progress being made to achieve a new Historical Resource Centre (The Keep) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the progress that is being made on the proposed new Historical Resource Centre for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 Work is being carried out to finalise the brief for the architect and contractors, based on detailed discussions with potential partners, both about their needs and their financial commitment. At present the potential funding available, including a maximum Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) contribution of £4.9 million, is £22.6 million, excluding any additional fundraising.

1.2 The approved Capital Programme 2008/9 to 2012/13 includes an earmarked contribution for The Keep of £11.5m. The commitment to the project that East Sussex County Council is demonstrating in this way will strengthen the HLF application. In view of the changes in the new HLF programme for 2008-2013, which now requires a design to RIBA Stage D rather than Stage C (requiring a greater level of detail in the proposals) as part of 2 stage decision making process, the amount available in the Capital Programme for project development has been increased by £250k to just under £1m in total. Brighton & Hove City Council is expected to consider its financial contribution as part of a report on The Keep at their Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee on 2 April 2008.

2. Progress update

2.1 The University of Sussex has now expressed an interest in the project and has joined Brighton & Hove City Council on the Project Board. Work over the past six months has concentrated on producing a design brief for The Keep for the architect and contractors, including the needs of all the partners, by the beginning of March, and we are on target to achieve this. The selection event for the contractor and architects took place on 15 February and Kier Longley/Atkins were the successful tenderers.

2.2 The Keep will exclude Records Management storage, as this would have made the building unaffordable. While work is concentrating primarily on achieving The Keep, the option of a developer-funded Collections Centre adjacent to The Keep, which would provide less specialised and therefore cheaper storage for records management and museum and archaeological collections, is also being investigated. The Keep would enable public access to the items stored within the Collections Centre, fulfilling the project's wider vision.

2.3 A number of surveys are being carried out on the agreed site at Woollard's Field, Falmer, including ecology, tree and archaeological surveys.

2.4 The timetable for the project has been reassessed in the light of the most recent guidance received from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The needs of the Olympics have reduced the amount of money that will be available in future funding rounds. HLF has therefore reviewed its application

procedures, which has affected the bidding timetable. The June 2008 application round, which East Sussex County Council was originally planning to meet, has been abolished and a new set of application procedures and deadlines will be introduced in April 2008. It is not practical to submit an application by 31 March under the old regime and the Project Board has therefore agreed that a Stage 1 application should be made at the end of August 2008 under the new procedures. A decision would be expected in December and if we were successful a Stage 2 application for just under £5m would be submitted in 2009 to determine the outcome of our bid. The Keep would be due to open in 2012.

2.5 Work on the fund-raising feasibility study and strategy has begun but will be most effective once the architect's brief has been finalised. An INTERREG partnership project with the archives at Seine-Maritime is currently being investigated and it is hoped that this will release European funding for activities at the Centre. Staff have visited the archives at Rouen and their French counterparts are making the return visit at the end of April to finalise discussions. All of this will help to strengthen the HLF bid.

2.6 We have begun implementation of the Audience Development and Access Plan for The Keep, which was funded by the HLF, through programmes for children delivered through partnerships with the Looked After Children Team, William Parker School, Museums Libraries and Archives South East, Creative Partnerships and the Theatre Royal, Brighton. Thanks to the allocation of additional core funding from 2008/09 an Outreach and Learning Officer will be appointed, who will enable this work to be taken forward with increased momentum.

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Local members: all

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None