

THE EXECUTIVE

15 JUNE 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES

EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE AND VALENCE HOUSE MUSEUM SITE	FOR DECISION	
<i>This report seeks permission from the Executive to use an element of capital funding to cover additional work required by the Heritage Lottery Fund.</i>		
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report updates Members on progress with the preparation for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bids for Eastbury Manor House and the Valence House site. It requests permission from the Executive to proceed with the delivery of background research for business planning purposes.</p>		
<u>Wards Affected:</u> Valence and Eastbury		
<u>Recommendation</u>		
<p>The Executive is asked to allow officers to proceed with the commissioning of external consultants to work with Council Officers to produce the necessary background business research information to enable a bid to the HLF for Project Planning funds for the Valence site and a subsequent Heritage Lottery Grant.</p>		
<u>Reasons</u>		
<p>To provide the detailed information needed to ensure the specified project is the right approach to the delivery of services on the Valence site and to secure up to £2 million pounds in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p>		
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1. **Background**

1.1 A previous report to The Executive of 21st October 2003 asked permission for officers to take forward two bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund to:

1. support the re-development of the Valence House site to create a vibrant local history centre, museum and archive, and;

2. support the Stage III renovation and interpretation works to Eastbury Manor House and gardens.

1.2 The Stage III works at Eastbury would include the following elements:

- a) restoration and refurbishment of the central and eastern ranges of the house, including Old Hall, Garden Vestibule, Winter Parlour, Summer Parlour, Painted Chamber, Long Gallery, Central Attic and East Attic;
- b) external works, including northern elevations of central and eastern ranges at all levels, eastern elevation at all level and courtyard elevations;
- c) garden works, including North garden, North field, South garden, Walled garden;
- d) interpretation of the history of the house through a series of innovative and interactive exhibitions;
- e) other works to include the extension to heating system to remainder of house, the strengthening of west stairs (if required), the strengthening of attic floors (if required), the sound proofing of attic floors, the updating of lightning conductors, the installation of ground floor toilet facilities and the enclosure of the metal fire escape stair.

1.3 The Lottery have now awarded a Project Planning Grant of £34,300 to support the planning of this project and the commissioning of an updated Conservation Plan, an Audience Development Plan and an Access Plan. In relation to the Valence Redevelopment, this project aims to incorporate the following elements:

- a) redevelopment of the permanent galleries at Valence Museum to display hitherto unseen museum objects and to instigate a programme of contemporary collecting for local people;
- b) the repositioning, or in some cases new development, of several facilities including the Local Studies Library, conservation room, education room to a new building to ensure the facilities suit the purposes they have. A vital element of this is the creation of a specialist archive store room which meets the government regulations for archive repositories to ensure that the Borough's historic records can be safeguarded for years to come;
- c) the creation of a modern link building between the old and new facilities, which incorporates an orientation space with shop and café facilities.

2. Main Body of the Report

2.1 Council Officers have been meeting regularly with Grants Officers at the Heritage Lottery during the development of the Project Planning Bid. The following points have been raised:

- the heritage resources currently managed by LBBD Heritage Services are of strong local significance and, in some cases, of national importance;

- these resources are in need of conservation and appropriate redevelopment if they are to fulfil their heritage potential as well as their potential for public access and enjoyment;
- taken together the Valence Re-development represents a challenging and complex project requiring significant capital expenditure;
- it is essential that the Council has all the evidence, and has undertaken the breadth of consultation, necessary to ensure that the development of Valence House represents best value for money, meets the needs of Borough residents and other users, and maximises the heritage merit of the site and collections.

2.2 In light of the above, the Heritage Lottery has asked the Council to withdraw the Project Planning Bid, carry out further work and then re-submit the bid. They have asked the Council to work with external specialist consultants to establish a detailed business case for the Valence Re-development as specified. This work should include:

- up-to-date market research on users across all the heritage functions carried out on site;
- a non-user survey to establish existing and potential audiences for heritage services in general;
- a review of this information in the context of current and proposed demographic change, transport infrastructure analysis and the Borough's regeneration strategy;
- exploration of potential partnerships within or without the Borough;
- a space assessment in terms of the current and potential size and nature of the museum, archive and local studies libraries collections, and the implications of ICT for access to those collections;
- an assessment of the resources – staffing and revenue - necessary to deliver a user-responsive service.

This work is required to demonstrate that the project is viable. Once completed, these research documents will be used by Council Officers in the development of a detailed Business Plan for the Valence site to be submitted to the HLF as the backbone of a bid for Project Planning funds and the Heritage Grant itself. This work will cost in the region of £30K, subject to satisfactory quotations.

3. Consultations/financial and other implications

3.1 Consultation

Throughout the Valence Re-development plans Project Officers have had input and provisional agreement from Steering groups containing ward members, representatives from English Heritage and the Friends of Valence House. The research work specified above will involve extensive public consultation of existing users of heritage in the Borough and non-users. This report has been approved by DEAL Finance.

3.2 Financial implications

There is £500,000 capital receipts funding in the capital programme for the Valence project. The project has been approved by the Capital Appraisal system. A successful bid to the HLF will draw in matched funding in the region of £2 million pounds. This leaves a shortfall of around £3.5 million from original estimates.

Regeneration and DEAL officers are working together to explore alternative sources of funding for the shortfall, or the implications of a reduced bid.

It is proposed that an element of the funds set aside for this project in the current financial year is dedicated to delivering the research and business planning information specified above. Procurement for this would be in line with Council Standing Orders and HLF requirements.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The priority is to ensure that the Council has the necessary business planning information to support a successful Project Planning Grant application and subsequent Heritage Grant.

5. Consultation

5.1 This report has been approved by DEAL Finance.

Public background papers used in preparation of the report

- Valence House Conservation Plan
- HLF External Consultant Report