

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2005/2006 REPORT NO. **233**

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Cabinet – 14.12.05

REPORT OF:

Director of Finance and
Corporate Resources

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Agenda – Part: 1

Item: 7

Subject:

**BROOMFIELD HOUSE RESTORATION
PROJECT- CURRENT POSITION**

Wards: Southgate Green

Cabinet Members consulted:

Councillors Rye / Lavender

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises Cabinet of the current situation of the Broomfield House Restoration Project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet Members are requested to:

- 2.1 Re-affirm the Council's support for the restoration project as designed by the Broomfield House Task Force for Broomfield House.
- 2.2 To re-affirm the Council funding commitment of up to £1m from any future property disposal of the park cottages and stable building into the house restoration budget.
- 2.3 To note the position regarding the proposed adoption of model park byelaws and the progress of the Lands Tribunal litigation process for modification of the park covenant.
- 2.4 To review the status of the Broomfield House Task Force (please see 3.11 for a summary on the current make up of the Task Force).
- 2.5 To note the brief for the stable building and cottages in the depot yard.
- 2.6 To note that a £200,000 allocation within the Council's Repair & Maintenance remains ring fenced to the stable block restoration scheme.

2.7 To note that the continuous progress of the scheme has reached a stage where by a Project Board may be required to facilitate delivery.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Broomfield House is a grade 2* listed building of National Heritage importance. Severely damaged by fire, the House is listed on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register. The aim of the project is to restore and refurbish the house as a fully accessible local community resource for all residents, visitors, schools and businesses within the borough and beyond.
- 3.2 A new website was re-launched in September 2005 full of the latest news, photo galleries, and facts from the past, present and most importantly what lies ahead for Broomfield in the future. There is a fully interactive site, which has had over 22,665 hits since first being re-launched. The address: www.broomfieldhouse.org.uk
- 3.3 Broomfield Historic Buildings Trust on behalf of the Broomfield House Task Force and Enfield Council has recently submitted a Project Planning Grant (PPG) for funding support (£29,500) from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Subject to agreement of the HLF (which it is hoped will be forthcoming early in the New Year) research will then be undertaken into evidencing the likely audience for the restored house, the inclusiveness and accessibility of the intended nature of the facilities on offer as well as the necessary conservation management plan preliminary work
- 3.4 A submission was made to the Lands Tribunal for a modification of the Park Covenant. Approximately 40 objectors have been accepted as admissible and the parties are presently following Lands Tribunal orders for filing their cases. Additionally public meetings have been held with Friends organisations across Enfield for the move from the local byelaws arrangements in place at many parks in Enfield to the proposed adoption of model park byelaws already adopted by many local authorities in England. Once completed the powers of the Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO's) to enforce against anti-social behaviour in parks will be strengthened.
- 3.5 The former Chairman of the Task Force Stephen Twigg stood down over the summer. Cllr Michael Rye has been invited by the Task Force to become the Chairman and will meet the task Force in December 2005.
- 3.6 Representatives of the Broomfield House Trust on the Task Force who are not wholly committed to the approach adopted for progressing the scheme have regularly sought a solution that does not require a change to the covenant. It has not felt possible to reconcile the commercial reality of a self-financing solution with this aim. As local residents several Broomfield House Trust members have submitted objections to the proposals to the Lands Tribunal.

- 3.7 Council officers have received development options in recent months including one from a Building Preservation Trust. Enfield Council officers have rejected those proposals as not in keeping with the community based sustainable solution sought by the Task Force for the restoration programme.
- 3.8 The Task Force has obtained planning & listed building consent for the restoration of Broomfield House for community-based facilities. The scheme will facilitate access to areas of unique historical interest and provide material for individual and community education and research.
- 3.10 A brief for the prospective development potential of the stable buildings and the sympathetic (heritage) treatment or redevelopment of the cottages in the depot yard is being commissioned.
- 3.11 The Task Force is made of members of community organisations, and the Council. Membership is made up of representatives from;
The Federation of Residents and Allied Associations;
The Broomfield House Trust;
The Conservation Advisory Group;
The Broomfield Historic Buildings Trust;
Cllr Michael Rye; (Chairman)
Cllr A Zinkin;
Cllr B Charalambous;
and Council officers.
- 3.12 The Council previously made a financial commitment to the restoration of the house (Cabinet report 280 3 March 2004) from such receipts generated from seeking the disposal of the stable block (and also therefore the restoration of the stable block) as well as such capital generated from the depot cottages area.
- 3.13 The total cost of the restoration works was last estimated to be in the region of £4.35m. This will be dependent on the extent and range of facilities eventually incorporated in the scheme specification. It is envisaged that a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund could provide approximately £1.0m- £1.5m, subject to a sustainable and financially viable business plan proposal. This may take 18 months or more to be formally approved by the Fund. At this stage the Task Force options paper proposes an initial partial restoration plan to re-roof the building and make watertight as a first bid together with the annex, this acting as a catalyst for fund raising initiatives.
- 3.14 Apart from such receipts from the depot cottages and stable buildings that may generate receipts (subject to covenant clearance) and a pledge from the Hadley trust for £200,000 there remains a substantial fund raising gap.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In the context of the current profile of the application to the Lands Tribunal for the modification of the covenant it is important that the member position on this project is re-affirmed.

5. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE RESOURCES & OTHER DEPARTMENTS

5.1 Legal Implications

5.1.1 Members will note that the scheme proposed for Broomfield House involves activities that constitute trade or business e.g. café use and income generation activities like wedding receptions. The scheme will therefore be in breach of the covenant affecting Broomfield House and park, which needs to be modified if any trade or business is to be carried out. Not only is this necessary to protect the Council's position but it is a pre-requisite for potential funders, who will require certainty on the matter. The modification sought is only in respect of the use of buildings and existing restrictions on the extent of development will remain. The park byelaws are also likely to need modification if the proposed scheme is to be implemented.

5.1.2 Upon any disposal (which could include both the lease of the house to a Trust or a sale of the cottages), the Council has a statutory duty to obtain the best consideration reasonably available or to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State. A general consent has been issued which permits disposals at up to £2m undervalue if in the interests of the social, economic or environmental well-being of the area or its inhabitants.

5.2 Financial Implications

5.2.1 At present the Council's capital programme does not include provision for the restoration of Broomfield House nor has any capital bid been put forward in the current review of the capital programme.

5.2.2 Existing budget provisions include £200k allocated within the Corporate R & M budget to undertake restoration work on the stable block and a further allocation of £200k (of which approx £60k remains) which has funded the Council's costs in developing options for the future of the house and urgent works to maintain the site.

5.2.3 As previously resolved by members any further resources to support the restoration project would need to be identified from future property disposals within the park e.g. the park cottages and stable block.

5.3 Property Implications

5.3.1. Property officers have been leading the council input with the Task Force for sustainable future use, legal, planning and community acceptance. The House restoration arrangements through the Broomfield Historic Buildings Trust (BHBT) through an agreement for lease for the period of refurbishment and then a lease for occupation to a charitable management body have been discussed.

5.3.2 Officers will also when required assist BHBT in advising upon appropriate procurement methods for the refurbishment in consultation with English Heritage.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Previous alternative options have been considered at Cabinet level, following previous Cabinet reports, and by the Task Force.

7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

7.1 The programme timetable is very much dictated by the lands tribunal process and thereafter by the HLF application success.

8. ENFIELD FIRST

8.1 The restoration of the historic features at the House, stables and park landscape will provide community benefit in accordance with the priorities of Future Enfield.

The project aims accord with key decision priorities –

- Improve the look and feel of the local environment ;
- To enhance the quality of the open space provision ;
- To improve support for communities; the educational, heritage and community uses of the House will provide learning for all, access to the House will be inclusive. Completion of the overall project will contribute to the community and cultural strategies and quality of life in Enfield.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The project is complex. The Council continues to support the efforts of the Task Force and this report seeks to re-affirm that position.

Background Papers

None.