

Subject:	Rossendale Museum, Whitaker Park	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	12 th June 2013
Report of:	Head of Health Housing & Regeneration	Portfolio Holder:	Regeneration Tourism & Leisure
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes	Attached: Yes
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That the contents of this report be noted.
1.2	That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Regeneration, Tourism & Leisure to finalise the details of a lease for the premises.
1.3	All future minor amendments to strategy and programme be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing & Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To update Members on the progress of the discussion to explore options for the management and operation of Rossendale Museum.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
 - **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
 - **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 In June 2012 Cabinet approved a process to begin work to consider the current management arrangements for Rossendale Museum and to develop options for potential cost savings.
- 5.2 Formal notice was served on Lancashire County Council to end the Management Agreement at the 31st March 2013 and despite officers from both Councils exploring

options to reduce costs, no viable alternative was able to be offered.

- 5.3 In November 2012 Cabinet also approved a process to seek expressions of interest from suitably experienced organisations to manage and operate the museum.
- 5.4 From this exercise a number of expressions of interest were received from interested parties. However, only one organisation was felt to have met the vision and aspirations of the Council to improve the offer of the museum and park and create a key visitor attraction and sustainable model for the future.
- 5.5 This organisation is known as the Whitaker Group and brings together Directors of the See Gallery, the Dave Pearson Trust, the Horse + Bamboo and private sector investors. The group have also been working closely with the Friends of the Museum who have supported the interim opening and events held at the museum.
- 5.6 The Whitaker Group have been operating the museum under licence from the Council and during this time have taken the opportunity to speak to visitors to the museum and seek their views on the visitor experience.
- 5.7 The Whitaker Group are now at the point of finalising the basis of a longer term lease of the museum with the Council's Legal Services team which will provide them with the necessary security for investment and provide the Council with the right levels of assurance and comfort that the museum will be managed in a professional and proper manner.
- 5.8 In order to support the development of the proposal the Council has allocated £30,000 to support the organisation through the initial Licence period. In the main this has been costs associated with the insurance and maintenance of the building and infrastructure. Once the organisation becomes the leaseholder of the premises no further financial support will be required from the Council.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 The £30k noted above and any other incidental costs will be contained within the existing net budget of £112k per annum. It is anticipated that a minimum c. £70k could be saved in 2013/14 subject to the granting of a satisfactory long term lease, later in the Autumn. Saving for future years could rise to £112k per annum.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 Comments included within the report

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 8.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard in the exercising of its functions to three considerations. The need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The amount of regard that is “due” is set out in the Act and will depend on the circumstances of the case.

Under the general equality duty there is a requirement to engage with people with protected characteristics and to have an adequate evidence base for Council decision-making.

The duty to inform, consult or involve requires that the council must involve communities and those directly affected at the most appropriate and proportionate level in ‘routine functions, in addition to one-off decisions.’ Further, under the duty of best value the Council is required to consult representatives of a wide range of local people; this should include local voluntary and community organisations and small businesses in such consultation.

8.2 The proposed partnership will address the requirements of the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy. Consultations have been carried out with Lancashire County Council, Friends of the Museum, Citizens Panel, Portfolio holder, Rossendale Museum Advisory Group, visitors to Rossendale Museum.

8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of this process and no adverse impacts have been identified on any specific protected equality groups. It should also be noted that this decision would have a wider positive community benefit by ensure a local community facility remains open for public use.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Council, the Friends of the Museum and the Whitaker Group have worked closely together to develop a sustainable future for the museum. The museum is a valued asset for the Borough and it has been important to ensure that this proposal is able to provide the best outcome for both residents of the Borough and the Council. This option will result in significant savings for the Council to contribute to the requirements of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.

No background documents