

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Council

**Date:** 28 June 2016

**Reporting officer:** Service Manager Regeneration & Policy

**Subject:** Clock Tower, Gravesend restoration scheme

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To advise Members of the scheme to restore Gravesend's Clock Tower and to seek agreement to this project being added to the list of Capital Schemes for 2016/17

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Gravesend Clock Tower restoration scheme be added to the list of Capital Schemes for 2016/17

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 6 June 2016, Cabinet recommended to Council that the Gravesend Clock Tower Restoration Scheme with costs of £215,400 be included in the 2016/2017 Capital Programme.
- 1.2 The Grade II listed Gravesend Clock Tower was built in 1887 from public donations to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. It is in the ownership of the council and is reputed by some to be the finest Clock Tower in Kent.
- 1.3 The tower is built of white Portland stone with bands of red sandstone at the base and the top and stands approximately 51 feet tall. Chimes were added to the clock in 1891 and a medallion of Edward VII was added in 1912. The tower is an excellent example of Victoriana with its ornate architecture reflecting the town's previous history as both a thriving port, being the last stop before the Port Of London Authority jurisdiction and the popularity of Gravesend as a seaside destination during the Victorian era.
- 1.4 The clock tower was last subject to restoration in the 1960's at a cost of £3,000. Some of the repair works from that time were carried out in an unsympathetic manner, such as concreting over the steps and, apart from causing some damage to the historic fabric, would not be permitted today.
- 1.5 The Clock Tower is now in a serious state of disrepair and is urgently in need of cleaning and restoration work. The stonework has become grime, guano and

lichen covered over the years and elements of the stonework are in need of refurbishment and replacement. The spire is cracked and needs rebuilding. The clock faces require refurbishment to address problems with broken and mismatched glass. In addition, the clock tower is poorly lit and as a result has minimal presence in the street scene in the hours of darkness.

## **2. Financial**

- 2.1 A bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for funding towards the Clock Tower's restoration was announced as having been successful in March 2016 with an award of £172,300.
- 2.2 This is matched by the sum of £38,100 from the council's Property Maintenance budget which has been allocated towards repair works to the Clock Tower, plus the sum of £5,000 from Councillor Cribbon's KCC Members Community Grant budget, bringing the total budget available to £215,400.

## **3. The works**

- 3.1 The project includes both physical restoration work and a programme of community engagement which will utilise the Clock Tower as the main theme. The entire project is programmed to take place over a period of 26 weeks.
- 3.2 The budget will fund the total restoration of the Clock Tower. The tower's pinnacle has a crack due to the failure of the fixings and will be rebuilt, the stonework will be cleaned to remove lichen, guano and atmospheric soiling accumulated over the years and the stonework and missing detailing will be restored sympathetically using original materials.
- 3.3 The clock faces, which are a patchwork of repairs, will be restored along with the clock hands, chaptering and the weathervane atop the spire. The clock does not currently keep good time so a new pendulum regulator will be installed which will automatically adjust the clock for daylight time saving twice a year and keep the clock accurate.
- 3.4 New colour changing lighting will be installed which will enhance the architectural merits of the tower and the clock faces, once lit by gaslight, will be internally lit.
- 3.5 The community engagement activities associated with the project include a diverse range of activities intended to reach a wide audience of possible participants. Engagement activities will include working with volunteers in delivery of the various events/activities and will provide learning opportunities for those willing to get involved. Activities include the compilation of a photographic record of the clock tower with a subsequent exhibition, talks and demonstrations of the stonemason's art, history tours, art projects with schools, youth groups and the local CRI project, a reminiscence project with local sheltered housing residents, a street party and activities associated with Gravesham in Bloom. Once the project is complete an interpretation board will be installed providing information about the history of the clock tower.

#### **4. Capital Programme**

- 4.1 This project is not currently included in the Capital Programme for 2016/17 as HLF funding was not secured in time for its inclusion.
- 4.2 It is recommended that Members agree to its inclusion in the Capital Programme for the current financial year.

#### **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 5.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**APPENDIX 1**

<p><b>Legal</b></p>	<p>Beyond the matters set out in the main body of the report and in the financial comments below, there are no substantial legal comments. It is noted that listed Building Consent has been granted for the installaiton of architectural lighting around the base and at the spire of the Clock Tower.</p>
<p><b>Finance and Value for Money</b></p>	<p>As the main body of the report sets out, the Capital Programme for 2016/17 does not include the Clock Tower restoration project as funding was not in place at the time of developing and approving the programme for the year; this report seeks approval for the addition of the scheme.</p> <p>The scheme is fully funded through a successful grant award from the Heritage Lottery Fund, KCC Members Community Grant and existing revenue provision for repair works to the Clock Tower.</p> <p>Ongoing annual revenue provisions for the maintenance of the Clock Tower will be reviewed following the works to ensure that this is reflective of the requirements of upkeep; it is expected that this will be reduced from the current level, resulting in an ongoing revenue saving to the Council.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>The risk of the cost of works exceeding the budget available has been minimised through preparation of a detailed specification for the works based on a full conditions survey carried out by an historic buildings expert surveyor. During works, costs will be managed through appropriate project management and regular communication with HLF.</b></p>
<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Screening for Equality Impacts</b></p> <p><b>Question</b></p> <p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. <b>No</b></p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. <b>No</b></p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
<p><b>Corporate Plan</b></p>	<p>Objective 4</p>
<p><b>Crime and</b></p>	<p><b>None</b></p>

<b>Disorder</b>	
<b>Digital and website implications</b>	None
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	None