

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 22 December 2010

MOTE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Issue for Decision

To consider approval of financing and all related issues regarding the above project

Decision Made

That the allocation of capital funds of £524,802, to enable the implementation of the Mote Park Regeneration project, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

The Council applied for funding towards the Mote Park Regeneration Project to the Parks for People Scheme, which is jointly administered by the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Big Lottery Fund (HLF), in September 2009. The Stage 1 application was approved and funding provided to progress to the detailed stage procedure.

After significant consultation with local people, Friends of Mote Park and other stakeholders the Stage 2 application was produced and submitted in June 2010. This Stage 2 bid was assessed by the HLF and on 30th September 2010 a grant of £1,867,000 was awarded to the Council towards the total cost of £2,505,752 for the restoration and site wide improvements in Mote Park.

Initial forestry works are programmed to begin in Mote Park in January 2011, with the main tendered works beginning in April 2011, taking around 12 months to complete.

The details of how this project will be funded are as follows:

Heritage Lottery Funding	£ 1,867,000
Section 106 Funding	£ 100,000
Volunteer Funding (in kind)	£ 13,950
MBC Capital Requirement	£ 524,802
Total Phase 3 Project Cost	<u>£2,505,752</u>

Section 106 funding to the value of £100,000 will come from developer contributions that qualify to be used towards the Mote Park Regeneration Project, over the next 15 months. The allocation of these funds to this

project would need to be approved by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture.

There will be an increase in revenue funding for Mote Park over the next 10 years totalling £40,500. This is a result of the mechanical sweeping of new paths and increased tree maintenance work and will be funded from within existing parks budgets.

The detailed offer from the HLF requires that the Council accept the offer within 21 days of receipt. The contract was signed by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture on 15th November 2010. The cabinet member has also agreed, subject to Cabinet's agreement to release the funding, to the preparation and issuing of tenders for the works associated with the scheme. The results of the tenders will be reported to the Cabinet Member in due course.

However, this offer is different to previous HLF grants in that it requires the Council to confirm that its financial contribution, throughout the term of the project, is available within 28 days of the signing of the agreement and hence, the request to Cabinet to release the capital funding to implement the scheme. This confirmation needs to be received by HLF before permission to start work on the project will be granted.

Following a press release by the HLF on 4th November 2010, entitled "Heritage Lottery Fund brings in new measures to help applicants in tough times", officers met with the HLF officers for further guidance and to discuss the possibility of reducing the Council's match funding requirement. The HLF confirmed that it would require a new application which would have to be entirely re-evaluated in competition with other new applications. Following this meeting and further discussion with the HLF officers, it is considered that the risk of losing the £1.86million grant offered by HLF, if this course of action is pursued, is too high.

By agreement the HLF has not signed and released the contract whilst the further discussions have taken place. However it is now appropriate for the contract to be completed and the capital monies released.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

Alternative action could be to not release the capital funding to the Mote Park Regeneration Project, this is not thought appropriate as there is high possibility that it would result in the HLF withdrawing their offer and the project would be unable to progress.

It would be possible to make an application for further grant following changes to the HLF funding criteria. However this process could put the whole project at risk and is not considered appropriate.

Background Papers

Record of Cabinet Decision "Mote Park Regeneration Scheme and its funding through a lottery bid" - 12th September 2008

*The Mote Park Improvement Project Stage 1 and 2 submissions to the HLF Parks for People Scheme.
Report to Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture regarding the agreement to sign the HLF agreement.
Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Plan 2009-12.*

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: **5 January 2011**