

Report of: Director City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 16th July 2014

Subject: Morley Heritage Centre

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Morley South, Morley North	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. At the full council meeting on 26th March 2014 Members referred a deputation from Morley Heritage Centre to Executive Board for further consideration of the issues raised. The deputation requested the Council to “consider allowing the Morley Heritage Centre a permanent location within the town centre and within current council owned property”. The Heritage Centre aspirations are supported by the local MP.
2. Morley Heritage Centre first opened in July 2013 and is based on the collections created by Mr Peter Aldred over the last fifty years. The collections reflect the rich history of Morley during the industrial revolution and the 19th and 20th centuries, and provide a valuable cultural and educational resource for the town. Mr Aldred is now supported by a group of volunteers.
3. At present the Council does not have any appropriate vacant premises in Morley town centre. The Council, is however, currently carrying out a full asset review in Morley and the surrounding area. As part of this, should suitable council or other accommodation become available the group will be advised. The proposal could be referred to the Outer South Community Committee to consider the extent to which it is prepared to support the funding of the project’s accommodation either in LCC premises or elsewhere.

4. The report is consistent with the Best Council Plan 2013-17, and in particular the best council objective of ensuring high quality public services through the most efficient use of our buildings, and through supporting community aspirations.

Recommendations

5. Executive Board is recommended to:
 - i) note the deputation request to Council;
 - ii) note that the Council does not have at this time vacant and suitable accommodation in Morley Town Centre, but that it is possible that the asset review of Morley may identify suitable space;
 - iii) refer the request to the Outer South Community Committee to consider whether there is local support to fund for this initiative should Leeds City Council, or other accommodation, be identified;
 - iv) note the actions required to implement the decision and that the Chief Asset Management and Regeneration Officer will be responsible for implementing the decision.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To consider a response to the deputation from Morley Heritage Centre presented to Full Council on 26th March 2014.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The collections of Morley Heritage Centre have been gathered by Mr Peter Aldred over the last 50 years, and provide a fascinating resource for understanding the history of Morley and the surrounding area. Leeds is made up of a number of distinctive areas, each with their own histories and identities, which together create the diversity and vibrancy of the city as a whole, and Morley Heritage Centre contributes to that overall picture
- 2.2 The collections consist of newspaper cuttings, photographs, documents and objects relating to the history of Morley and the surrounding area. As the collection has grown, Mr Aldred has become concerned over its long term future and use and a small group of volunteers, under the name Morley Heritage Centre has formed to assist Mr Aldred.
- 2.3 Since July 2013 the Heritage Centre has been open to the public, in three premises, consecutively, on a pop-up basis. The premises have been identified and supported financially by East Street Arts. The nature of the property arrangements with East St Arts means that the Heritage Centre is vulnerable to termination of its lease at short notice (two weeks), if a commercial tenant is identified for the premises. For this reason the Heritage Centre has had to re-locate twice since January 2014, and is now seeking a more secure home for the collection, which

provides good public access and the ability to provide space for educational visits and other community activities.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Morley Town Hall has been identified as a preferred option by members of the Heritage Centre. This building is one of the most significant historic and public service buildings in Morley and is included in the asset review. The aim of the review with regard to the town hall, is to make best use of the building. If suitable space can be made available in the Town Hall, or other properties can be identified, officers will work with the Outer South Community Committee and members of Morley Heritage Centre to explore the possibilities for providing a more permanent home for the Heritage Centre if it is considered a local priority.
- 3.2 The deputation presented to Council noted that “at this moment in time we do not have the revenue to secure premises”. As part of the asset review, if the Council is able to identify suitable premises, it is intended that officers working with the Outer South Community Committee and Morley Heritage Centre, will seek to establish a financially sustainable partnership arrangement.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Ward members for Morley North and South have been consulted and have indicated that if suitable premises could be provided they would “look favourably on a partnership funding approach where Leeds City Council, Community Committee and the Heritage Centre itself agreed to a joint funding arrangement to make sure the Centre is sustainable in the long run”. Other comments included that it should be noted that council owned premises should not be the only option considered, and also a preference from one member for use of the upper floor of the library for this purpose.
- 4.1.2 Morley Town Council – the Town Clerk advises that Morley Heritage Centre has not yet made any formal approach to the Town Council for assistance

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening form has been completed and is attached as an appendix to this report. The screening concluded that the issue has the potential to create a perception that one group is being treated more favourably than others. The issue may also impact on the location of council services in the Morley area.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The request of the deputation is consistent with the best council plan, and in particular the best council objective of ensuring high quality public services through the most efficient use of our buildings, and through supporting community aspirations.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 There are no immediate financial issues consequent on this report.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 If the collections of Morley Heritage Centre were to be housed in council premises the legal status and constitution of Morley Heritage Centre as an organisation would need to be established. The council would provide advice and assistance in this process.

4.5.2 If a council premises is identified the council will need to understand the legal ownership status of the collections held by the Heritage Centre. Should the Heritage Centre for any reason cease to exist as an organisation, the council may find itself liable for legal responsibilities with regard to the collections.

4.5.3 This report is eligible for call-in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 Morley Heritage Centre as an organisation currently has no legal status, though they intend to apply for charitable status subject to receiving funding from HLF, East St Arts and the council. If the council provides premises and the Heritage Centre ceases to exist as a group, the council could be left with responsibility for material, the legal ownership of which is currently unclear.

4.6.2 Morley Heritage Centre currently has no revenue to support the acquisition or rental of premises, there is a risk they would be unable to fund any additional costs associated with the use of council premises. This risk will be addressed through the Outer South Community Committee and potentially a partnership arrangement

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Council currently has no suitable vacant space which would meet the requirements of Morley Heritage Centre for publicly accessible displays, however it is possible that the current asset review will identify suitable premises either owned by the council or others.

5.2 If a premises is identified for the Heritage Centre it will need to be supported and funded from local sources, therefore the matter will need to be referred to the Outer South Community Committee to seek to identify a sustainable partnership arrangement.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is Recommended to:

- (i) note the deputation request to Council;
- (ii) note that the Council does not have at this time vacant and suitable accommodation in Morley Town Centre but that it is possible that the asset review of Morley may identify suitable space;

- (iii) refer the request to the Outer South Community Committee to consider whether there is local support to fund for this initiative should Leeds City Council, or other accommodation, be identified;
- (iv) note the actions required to implement the decision and that the Chief Asset Management and Regeneration Officer will be responsible for implementing the decision.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 The deputation speech

8.2 EIA screening

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.