

Report of the Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 2 November 2011

Subject: Lotherton Estate Consultation Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Harewood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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. Approval was obtained at July Executive Board for an injection of £160,000 in to the capital programme for improvements at Lotherton Estate and Hall and in support of charges for entry to all facilities.
2. As requested at July Executive Board, this paper reports on the results from public consultation which closed on the 9 August 2011.
3. As a result of the comments received during consultation, changes have been proposed in relation to the prices for entry in to Lotherton Estate and Hall as detailed in this report.

Recommendations

1. Executive Board is requested to approve the new pricing structure.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To advise Executive Board on the outcomes of the public consultation and how it has been used to refine the proposals for Lotherton Hall Estate discussed at Executive Board in July.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Approval was obtained at July Executive Board for an injection of £160,000 in to the capital programme for improvements at Lotherton Estate and Hall and in support of charges for entry to all facilities.
- 2.2 The Lotherton Hall and Estate was gifted to Leeds City Council by the Gascoigne family in 1968. The deed of gift does not require Lotherton Hall and Estate to be offered as a free facility. Lotherton Hall has been charging for approximately 15 to 20 years.
- 2.3 Car parking is currently charged at £3.70, there is an admission charge of £3.00 for the house and the bird garden is free.
- 2.4 The range of facilities on offer are comparable to other country house estates providing an average dwell time of around 3 hours and are already attractive to families (who form 67% of visitors). Organised groups make up only 8% of visitors indicating that there is plenty of opportunity for growth in this area.
- 2.5 Overall the impression is of a municipal park which happens to contain a historic house and a bird garden; rather than our aim which is for Lotherton to be a coherent estate that is also a quality visitor attraction.
- 2.6 The report brought to Executive Board in July was approved for an injection of £160,000 in to the capital programme and authority to spend for various improvement works at Lotherton. This will be funded by prudential borrowing from additional income raised from changes to the current charging policy. The main improvements will be:
- to relocate the exit route to remove the safety risk of cars near the playground
 - to create a new pay point to provide information and orientation to visitors, also ensuring the high level of non payment of parking ceases
 - to relocate the main car park
 - restoration of gardens and creation of more picnic, playground and play areas
 - display the collection of coaches and horse drawn carriages
 - improve signage and interpretation
 - eradicate drainage and sewage issues.
- 2.7 Public Consultation has taken place on the proposals during the summer and it was agreed to return to Executive Board to outline the outcomes of this and any refinements generated.

3. Main Issues raised through Consultation and resulting action

- 3.1 The price of the adult entrance fee was too high at £6 and this has been reduced to £5.
- 3.2 A concessionary rate of £4 will be introduced for entrance and £24 for a season ticket.
- 3.3 The family season ticket charge was too high and this has been reduced from £45 to £40.
- 3.4 An off peak, parking only, charge to be introduced of £3.70 or £15 for a season ticket.
- 3.5 Short stay coach trips who use Lotherton cafe as a tea/lunch stop and all cyclists will be allowed free entrance.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 contains a table of the prices, as reported to the July Executive Board, and a comparison with the prices now proposed after consultation.
- 3.7 To enable more of the improvements to be made it is proposed to introduce the new prices from 1 January 2012 rather than the 1 October 2011 suggested in the first report. To avoid any problems for season ticket holders, a temporary season ticket is offered until the 31 December, for the charge of one parking payment, £3.70, and the receipt can be exchanged in the shop or hall for an interim parking pass.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Executive Member for Leisure has supported the programme of improvements to the visitor experience at Lotherton Hall, and for these to be linked to the introduction of entry charges to the estate.
- 4.1.2 The Executive Member for Leisure has been briefed on the amendments to prices, resulting from the outcome of the consultation.
- 4.1.3 Consultation took place with local members on 1st June during which planned improvements were presented along with the proposed pricing structure.
- 4.1.4 Public consultation events were publicised for 23 June, 28 June and 13 July in the form of drop in sessions where staff were available to answer questions and take comments. Display boards around the site outlined the proposals and improvements to promote discussion and generate further ideas for improving the visitor experience. Information was available in other venues such as libraries and One Stop Centres and a leaflet explaining the key points was also available. People could share their views using comment cards.
- 4.1.5 Information is available on the Lotherton Hall web pages and through Talking Point the Councils consultation platform.

- 4.1.6 Local Parish Councils and interested organisations were invited to take part in discussions and current season ticket holders were contacted with new proposals for them to comment on.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 As part of the consultation process, officers have conducted an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 4.2.2 Proposals include improvements to accessibility in the house, the installation of a changing places toilet, disabled parking and provision of 'parking for all'.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The project is compliant with the Council's Business Plan. In particular health and safety, environmental matters, equal opportunities issues and customer care are all relevant to this project.
- 4.3.1 Changes to the current onsite road layout will make significant improvements to community safety. Additionally security will be significantly improved through recently installed equipment and additional security cameras. This will improve the safety and security of visitors.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 Additional revenue costs are expected and include additional staffing for the collection of admissions and for opening the Lotherton Hall on Mondays, enhanced marketing / events spend and arrangements for the collection of season tickets.
- 4.4.2 The scheme is to be funded from prudential borrowing which will be paid back from the additional income generated from the revised charges. A detailed prudential borrowing case has been developed and was approved at July Executive Board.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 Further information is available in July 2011 Executive Board Report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The detailed business case approved at July Executive Board was developed after considerable research and took into account a sensitivity analysis of the pricing arrangements proposed.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 Following approval at July Executive Board this report summarises the outcomes of public consultation and describes the opportunities now available to increase the customer experience when visiting Lotherton Estate.

6 Recommendations

6.1.1 Executive Board is requested to approve the new pricing structure.

7 Background documents

7.1 Executive Board Report July 2011.