

HORTON CHAPEL – UPDATE

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
<u>Contact:</u>	Simon Young
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
<u>Annexes/Appendices</u> (attached):	Annexe 1 – Summary of Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society work so far Annexe 2 – Draft assessment criteria
<u>Other available papers</u> (not attached):	Previous reports to committee and various project papers.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report updates members in relation to the community bid process previously agreed by the Committee, and seeks guidance on the way forward.

RECOMMENDATION (S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- (1) Notes the progress so far.**
- (2) Considers the draft criteria and process for assessment of bids, and provides such comments as are considered appropriate.**
- (3) Agrees that officers should continue to work with the interested parties who submit formal expressions of interest by the end of June 2016, and close the opportunity for other expressions of interest following the end of June.**

Notes

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 Resolving the position in respect of Horton Chapel, preferably by way of giving it over to a beneficial community-led use was a service plan action under the former Corporate Plan. Whilst it is not specifically an action under the new plan, resolving the position will contribute to the Council's current Key Priorities of Supporting our Community and Managing our Resources.

2 Background

2.1 Horton Chapel has a long history, which was more fully set out in the report to Strategy & Resources Committee on 27 January 2016. The main point to note is that the Council has consistently sought to ensure that Horton Chapel is preserved, refurbished and subsequently used for the benefit of the community. A number of projects have failed to proceed, mainly due to lack of sufficient funding. It was considered appropriate to give a final opportunity for a community proposal to be implemented, failing which we would look to dispose of the building on the open market.

2.2 At its meeting on 27 January 2016, the Committee agreed the following:
That:

- the position to date be noted
- officers be Authorised, following consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee, to finalise a pack of information to be available for anyone interested in putting forward a bid for the building, such pack to be available by the end of February 2016.
- the allocation of funds be as follows:
 - Up to £450,000 to be available to any purchaser to be expended on the refurbishment and renovation of Horton Chapel.
 - Up to a further £1 million to be available to any purchaser proposing a wholly community/charitable end use for the building
 - Any mixed use incorporating community/charitable uses and commercial use would be entitled to a sum between the above figures, depending on the nature of the mix proposed, with the intention that it be limited to a sum up to £500,000 in addition to the sum at a).
- Additional sums be held at this point as a contingency and to meet the cost of all professional advice and assistance.
- bids be invited for community/charitable proposals to be submitted by the end of June 2016, and
- a further report be brought to the Committee at its meeting on 28 June 2016 to update on progress and to consider whether/when/how marketing for commercial bids should commence.

- 2.3 It was not possible to engage agents to prepare the pack of information anticipated. However, information has been sent to those who have expressed interest, site visits have taken place and we are working with interested parties in order to assist with them submitting bids for consideration.
- 2.4 We have had interest from several parties. Whilst it is not clear what bids we may or may not receive, the following have expressed a clear intention to submit a bid:
- Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society (see the attached information at Annexe 1)
 - Oasis Church Auriol (linked with Oasis Church, Colliers Wood)
 - Mr C Parker (Mo-ichido Martial Arts)
- 2.5 The different bids are at different stages of preparation, and there are different issues which pertain to each organisation. For example, it seems clear that the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society will be dependent on the success of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Due to the heritage lottery bid process, a first round application is not likely to receive a decision until December 2016. Oasis Auriol have only become aware of the opportunity at a late stage, and are therefore not in a position to submit a complete bid at this time, but should be able to do so over the next few months.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that we continue to work with the interested parties who express interest by the end of June, and close the opportunity for other expressions of interest at that time. By the Committee meeting in September it is hoped that we will be in a position to select a preferred bidder.
- 3.2 It is necessary to set out the criteria by which competing bids will be assessed. Some draft heads for the criteria are attached at Annexe 2, and members are invited to provide such comments as are considered appropriate before these are finalised prior to assessment bids.
- 3.3 The criteria will be scored and will be weighted. Again, comments are sought on the proposed scoring and weighting.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The financial implications of the bids will be considered in full at a later date, when the relevant information is known.

4.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** *The funding currently earmarked for use in relation to the refurbishment of Horton Chapel comes from a number of different sources. It is important in assessing bids that we are mindful of the purposes for which the funding has been allocated and any restrictions on use.*

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The implications arising from specific bids will be considered in full at a later date.

5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** *It is important that each bid is considered objectively and fairly, and that there is transparency about the process followed. More work is required on the mechanism by which bids will be assessed, in order that a recommendation can be made in due course.*

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 There are no Sustainability or Community Safety implications arising from this report.

7 Partnerships

7.1 The bid process gives the Council the opportunity to work in partnership with an organisation in order to bring Horton Chapel into use for the benefit of the local community.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 In conclusion, a number of bids are expected to be received by the end of June. These will be in varying states of completeness and will be qualified in a number of ways, for example, in respect of the sources of funding required. However, it is possible that each may be feasible. In order to bring the matter to a conclusion, it is considered that officers should continue to work with each of the parties over the next few months in the hope that a preferred bidder will be able to be selected. It is considered that this process should run its course before the fall-back option, to dispose of the building on the open market, be implemented.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Court, Ruxley, Stamford