

Report to Cabinet



Date of Meeting	31 st August 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Economy and Communications
Report Author	Nick Barton
Public/Private Document	Public

Hopwood Hall - Historic England Repair Grant for Heritage at Risk

Executive Summary

- 1.1 Hopwood Hall is a grade II* listed manorial hall in Council ownership. A grant has been secured from Historic England of £368,294 towards eligible works of £460,367 to carry out repairs to the building. This report seeks authority to accept this grant.

Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees to accept the grant funding offer from Historic England.
- 2.2 Authorise the Director of Economy to accept the grant on behalf of the Council.
- 2.3 Authorise the Assistant Director, Legal, Governance & Workforce to undertake any legal work on behalf of the Council to ensure that the grant funding offer from Historic England is obtained.

Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 The acceptance of grant funding requires Cabinet approval.
- 3.2 Approval to accept this grant funding offer will enable the Council to carry out extensive repair works to Hopwood Hall, a grade II* listed building in the Council's ownership, assisting in the viability of proposals for the sustainable reuse of the building.
- 3.3 As the owner of the listed building, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that the property is adequately maintained.

Key Points for Consideration

4. Hopwood Hall is a grade II* listed manorial hall. A largely 17th and 18th century building, incorporating parts of a medieval open-hall timber-framed structure. As a grade II* listed building, it is recognised as being amongst some of the most important listed buildings in the country.
 - 4.1 Originally the home of the Hopwood family, it was sold to the Lancashire Cotton Corporation shortly after the First World War. Following World War the hall was sold to a trust, under which it became a training college for teachers under the De La Salle Brothers.
 - 4.2 The hall came in to the ownership of the Council as a consequence of education reforms in 1989, with the surrounding land and buildings being transferred out of Council ownership upon the incorporation of Hopwood Hall College in 1992. Whilst some educational uses continued in the hall until 1993 and has not been in use since this time.
 - 4.3 Both the Council and Hopwood Hall College have previously developed proposals for alternative uses for the hall, including as corporate headquarters, residential and hotel. However, these proposals have not progressed largely due to the high cost of repair of the hall creating what is known as a conservation deficit, meaning that cost of repair and conversion is significantly more than the end value of the property.
 - 4.4 In 2017, the Council entered in to an option agreement with Hopwood DePree, an American descendant of the Hopwood family. The agreement gives Mr DePree the option to acquire the hall from the Council if he can meet conditions including securing listed building consent for the repair of the building and demonstrating a viable business case. The agreement expires in July 2022.
 - 4.5 The Council have worked with Historic England to secure funding for repairs to the hall including, jointly funding a £276,000 programme of repairs, which included significant roof repairs, structural works and leaded window reinstatement. This work has been complemented by further works by Hopwood DePree and the Friends of Hopwood Hall Estate.
 - 4.6 As a result of recent discussions with Historic England, an offer of further funding of £368,294 (Heritage at Risk grant) has been made, against eligible works of £460,367, requiring Council match funding of £92,073. The match funding requirement can be met from existing Capital Programme budgets allocated to Hopwood Hall.
 - 4.7 These works would support the continued reversal of decay of the building and further reduce the conservation deficit associated with the building, increasing the viability of securing a beneficial future use.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.8 The Council is not obliged to carry out all of the works identified within this grant offer and could choose to carry out more selective repairs and

maintenance in order to meet its minimum legal requirements to maintain the building. However, this is unlikely to offer value for money, due to both the level of grant funding available and the likelihood of increased costs if works are not carried out in the near future. Additionally, the opportunity to significantly reduce the conservation deficit would be lost.

Costs and Budget Summary

- 5.1 The Historic England grant is in two parts:
- A project development grant of £24,553 against estimated costs of £30,691 for engagement of a conservation architect and associated professional services to design the scheme and tender a repairs contract.
 - A repairs grant of £343,741 against estimated costs of £429,676 for works including repairs to roofs of the Library, Oak Room, Spere Truss Room, Georgian Room, Long Corridor and Courtyard Bay, Edwardian West Wing and Victorian South section plus elevation repairs including brick repairs, lime mortar works and lead flashing repairs in addition to other miscellaneous works and a continuation of the leaded window repair programme. Including scaffolding, overhead and contingency.
- 5.2 Project management costs related to delivery of the scheme by the Council's Capital Projects Team are included in the eligible costs.

The Council contribution of £92,073 can be met from existing 2021/2022 Capital Programme allocations associated with Hopwood Hall.

Risk and Policy Implications

- 6.1 Risks relating to the decay and loss of an important heritage asset are mitigated through acceptance of this grant and carrying out the associated repairs.
- 6.2 Risks associated with costs exceeding estimated costs are mitigated by a two stage development and delivery process and through a robust project management process.
- 6.3 Policy P2 of Rochdale's Core Strategy identifies that enhancing and protecting the borough's unique character can lead to improvements in quality of life and can also help to boost the visitor economy and inward investment. Stating that we should prioritise the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.
- 6.4 Property ownership and property development carries risks of expenditure on liabilities, health and safety/statutory responsibilities. There is a risk that by not carrying out the types of works detailed in this report the Council is unnecessarily exposed to risk that may result in financial and reputational damage.
- 6.5 Section 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 gives a local authority a power to borrow money for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or for the purposes of prudent management of its financial affairs provided it does not exceed its affordable borrowing limit.
- 6.6 Councils also have a general power to borrow under the General Power of Competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. It gives local authorities the legal capacity to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited. The general power gives councils more freedom to be more creative in the way it delivers services and to bring about innovative things to meet local people's needs.

Consultation

- 7.1 Middleton Township members are provided with regular updates regarding Hopwood Hall and are support of the approach of seeking external funding to carry out repairs to the hall.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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8.1 There are no background papers.	
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