

Thursday, 20 January 2022

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Skills, Planning, Economy and Waste

Curtain Wall Tender

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To seek approval of expenditure above £100k limit from a secured budget for the purpose of completing essential capital works at Tamworth Castle.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Approval is given to tender to market for the proposed capital works.
2. Consideration is given to allocating £100,000 from the Capital Contingency Budget, in addition to the budget already secured for this project, to allow additional necessary work to take place and to achieve cost savings over time.
3. Approval is given for delegated authority in consultation with the portfolio holder to enter into contract with the most competitive tenderer.

Executive Summary

Tamworth Castle's condition report (2019) identified that serious and urgent remedial works were required to the curtain wall, this is the external perimeter wall that extends around the castle. The recommendation at that time was to immediately cordon off the area as the likelihood of falling masonry was high and therefore the potential to injure a member of the public was significant. The area continues to remain closed and as such prevents visitors from enjoying the circular path around the castle and the views from the summit.

Officers have worked with Purcell architect to scope a range of options for the capital works but given the urgency of the work, the rising costs, and the need to mitigate financial risk it was envisaged that work could commence on the immediate repairs only.

Budget has already been secured to carry out the work (Capital Scheme Budget).

Following consultation with S151 Officer the extent of the savings to the authority has been investigated for further essential work to be completed within the scope of the curtain wall project.

Options Considered

A range of work programme options have been considered as part of the pre-tender preparation with Purcell architect. These have included combining the scope of the curtain wall works with works to the chimney stack, south range west and north elevations, making use of scaffolding and contractor fees to achieve savings to other necessary works. However, due to rising costs and in order to mitigate financial risk the secure budget extends only to those works identified as 'Stage 2' immediate repair to the curtain wall.

The costed works to complete the programme of repairs have been estimated at pre-tender stage to be £322,345. This work will ensure that the historic fabric of the building is restored and Tamworth Borough Council's health and safety obligations are met allowing the perimeter to be safely re-opened to the public.

If no action is taken the condition report advises that there will be inevitable further deterioration of the historic fabric with an expectation of falling masonry and a high risk of injury.

Resource Implications

The budget for the capital works has already been identified via Capital Scheme budget. The Capital Scheme CY2817, has a total budget of £400K which was approved for spend in the 2020/21 budget (£250K) and 2021/22 budget (150K). Spend has already been committed on structural surveys to support the condition survey, and on architect fees in drawing up plans and schedule of works to support the tendering process. Amount spent to date totals £40,344.15 with a committed further spend of £27,787.85. This leaves a remaining budget of £331,868. Work has been delayed due to the Pandemic.

There is a balance available in the General Capital Contingency budget of £120k.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

The risk of not approving expenditure, or delaying approval, is that the heritage building deteriorates further, costs of repairs increase and the site remains cordoned off to prevent an injury caused by falling masonry. It is possible that even with the cordon in place an injury could occur until the repairs are made.

Equalities Implications

All procurement procedures will be adhered to.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

Approval of the recommendations will ensure that Tamworth's historic environment is protected, and that the fabric of the Scheduled Ancient Monument is preserved.

Background Information

Tamworth Castle condition survey (July 2019) undertaken by Purcell identified in section E10 (External Castle Walls) that the South and West walls were extensively weathered with a high expectation of falling masonry and a subsequent high health and safety risk to the public. A recommendation was made at the time of inspection that the section of the wall be cordoned off to the public until repair work has been completed. A programme of works which includes stone consolidation, rebuilding and replacement is required.

A budget of £400,000 was identified for this work and has funded pre-tender development work with Purcell and Pulse Quantity Surveyors which included exploration of a range of options to include further necessary works identified in the condition survey with the aim of achieving cost savings overall.

Due to the nature of the works and rising costs, a cautious approach to management of the secured budget was proposed with the lowest costed option and no additional works included.

Appendix A provides the costed options. Option 6 is the lowest costed option which will become the scope of the tender if no further budget is identified.

Appendix B indicates the cost savings available if the scope of the work is to be extended to include options 1 to 5 within the original scope rather than being completed in two or more phases of later works. Depending on the extent of the scaffolding required for the later works and assuming no further deterioration of the Castle the current table shows a £54,000 saving if the works are carried out in one phase. This is largely a saving on scaffolding costs and access but is also subject to inflation and rising costs if the work is delayed.

The pre-tender estimate for all options was £401,421 (September 2021) Appendix A refers. The request for £100k contingency would allow this work to go ahead and provide some contingency should costs rise. Any unused contingency would be returned to the General Capital Contingency Budget.

The next steps in the process will be for the consultant team to prepare a tender which will be reviewed by the Borough Council's procurement team. It is expected that the work will take approximately 6 months and will commence upon a successful tender process.

Should the decision be taken to extend the works to accommodate the cost savings identified, then the extended scope will take longer to deliver, but it would be a more efficient way of delivering the works overall than if delivered in separate conservation phases. There will be no operational changes to the castle during the works and it will continue to open as normal.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

Tamworth Castle condition survey July 2019 - Purcell

Appendices

Appendix A - Pre-tender estimates – Pulse December 2021

Appendix B - - Pre-tender estimates options appraisal – Pulse January 2022

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