

		Executive Committee 3 December 2008	Agenda Item No.
<b>Title</b>		Potential Recreation of the Mere at Kenilworth Castle.	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>		Paul Pinkney, Head of Economic Development and Regeneration (Housing and Development) (01926) 456016 paul.pinkney@warwickdc.gov.uk	
<b>Service Area</b>		Economic Development and Regeneration	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>		All Kenilworth wards.	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>			
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>			
<b>Background Papers</b>			

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	Yes

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Relevant Director	19/11/08	Bill Hunt
Chief Executive	19/11/08	Chris Elliott
CMT	13/11/08	
Section 151 Officer	19/11/08	Mary Hawkins
Legal	19/11/08	Peter Oliver
Finance	19/11/08	Mike Snow, Melanie Gillman
Portfolio Holder(s)	2011/08	Cllr Hammon
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>		
As part of the preparation of this report to Members outline discussions have taken place with Advantage West Midlands and English Heritage.		

<b>Final Decision?</b>	No
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>	

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Executive's support for progressing a scheme involving the recreation of the Mere at Kenilworth Castle, the methodology that will be followed through project management, proposed feasibility stages of the project and the proposed reporting stages.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Executive:

- Agrees that the recreation of the Mere at Kenilworth Castle is a scheme that it wants to support ;
- Agrees that officers should seek funding for the feasibility studies from Advantage West Midlands (AWM), other appropriate sources of funding and formally approach the relevant land owners and agencies to gain their support and involvement;
- Notes that a report will be brought back to the Executive when the results of the feasibility work (both stage one and stage two) are known; and,
- 
- Approves the establishment of a Member steering group to oversee the delivery of the scheme, within the project management and the Kenilworth town centre management partnership structure.

## **3 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 This project could potentially have a significant positive impact on the economic development and regeneration of the district and has wider implications for the sub-region. The objectives to progress this project will be designed to deliver additional visitor numbers, and relate to specific economic development and regeneration outcomes. It is anticipated that the project to the recreate of the Mere at Kenilworth Castle will bring significantly more tourist visitors to the area which will have a positive impact on the local economy and the vitality and viability of Kenilworth town centre.
- 3.2 The delivery of this project will depend on the findings of two large feasibility studies which AWM have indicated informally that they may be prepared to provide funding. In the event that AWM are unable to provide this funding the project will not progress. The project will also be dependant on the cooperation of a number of land owners.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the project should be progressed within the framework of a members working group which will consider the findings of the project team and feed recommendations to the Project Board on the Council's behalf.

## **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Executive could decide not to progress this project at this time or the Executive may suggest that another authority or organisation take on the lead role for this project. Either option would be likely to delay the delivery of the project or, in the worst case, mean that the project is not pursued for a significant period of time.

## **5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 Detailed project costs are currently unknown: it is estimated that the costs for the first stage of the project (technical feasibility) may be c.£60,000, with the second stage of the project (planning and development) being c.£40,000. The project will be delivered within a partnership agreement. It is anticipated that the costs relating to the feasibility of the project will come from external sources (i.e. AWM). It will not be until stage two has been completed that the actual cost of the project will be known. It is unlikely that the Council will have any significant capital resources for this project, and the Council is in a position of diminishing revenue resources, so it is important not to raise expectations that cannot be realised. External funding sources should be sought to progress the project.
- 5.2 Members may consider that the flooding of a substantial area of land close to residential areas and a historic monument is too risky, would bring budgetary pressure or that it is not a strategic objective and WDC does not have the capacity to deliver the scheme.

## **6. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 The proposal looks to progress the policy set out in the Corporate Strategy 2008 - 2011:

Vision: "Warwick District: a great place to live work and visit."

### **Leadership**

- provide clear community leadership and effective management of resources whilst delivering responsive public services in an open and transparent manner.

### **Culture**

- increase participation and attendance in the Council's cultural offering.

### **Development**

Create thriving town centres, keep pleasant villages and make the district an attractive place to live and work

- To support the development of thriving town centres
- To exploit the appropriate opportunities for new business growth
- To ensure the high standard and quality in new developments and promote regeneration, where needed, in our town s and villages.

### **Customers**

- improve the efficiency of service delivery to the Council's customers

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 The ambition to recreate the historic mere at Kenilworth Castle was discussed at an initial meeting between English Heritage, Shakespeare Country, Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and WDC.

- 7.2 Kenilworth Castle is a key visitor attraction within Warwick District and the West Midlands area. The castle is currently managed by English Heritage. The property is the flagship English Heritage destination in the West Midlands and is a significant part of the local and regional tourism economy and offer.
- 7.3 The Mere adjoined Kenilworth Castle until the defensive capacity of the castle was destroyed shortly after 1656, when the Tiltyard was breached to empty the Mere and the north wall of the Keep demolished.
- 7.4 The recreation of the historic Mere in its original location at Kenilworth Castle will act as a unique selling point and it is anticipated that it will significantly increase visitor numbers to the castle as well as offering a unique and positive focus for marketing and public relations for the attraction.

## **8 Project Management**

- 8.1 It is proposed that Warwick District Council become the lead organisation in terms of the facilitation of the project and project management. The project will be delivered through the principles of the Prince 2 project management system.
- 8.2 It is proposed that a project team is established so that issues relating to the project can be considered by the appropriate authority as the project progresses. It is anticipated that the membership of the group will include representatives from:
- Environment Agency;
  - English Heritage;
  - Warwick District Council;
  - Warwickshire County Council;
  - Kenilworth Town Council;
  - South Warwickshire Tourism Partnership;
  - Kenilworth Chamber of Trade;
  - Advantage West Midlands; and;
  - Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership.

In addition to the project team a Member steering group will be established to support the progress and delivery of the project.

- 8.3 The first stage of the project will consider the technical feasibility of the project, particularly at whether it is a realistic proposition to reintroduce a large body of water adjacent to a site of significant historical importance, residential and commercial areas. In order to carry out this work it will be necessary to commission external consultants. It is estimated that the cost for this work will be c.£60,000, it has been informally discussed that this will be funded through a partnership agreement. The Project Board will consider the findings of the report and recommendations will be reported to the Executive. If the project is considered to be technically feasible then the project will move on to stage two.
- 8.4 The second stage of the project will consider the planning and development issues relating to the project. This will look in more detail at the feasibility of these areas of the project and it is anticipated that it will be necessary to commission external

consultants. It is estimated that the cost for this element of the work will be c.£40,000, again it has been informally discussed and it is anticipated that this will be funded through a partnership agreement. This will follow the same procedure set out above, going to the Project Board and Executive. Only if the project is considered to be feasible at this point will the project progress to stage 3.