

Subject:	KEARSNEY ABBEY ANCILLARY BUILDING
Date	1 July 2022
Decision to be taken by:	Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) and Section 151 Officer
Report of:	Head of Assets and Building Control
Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property
Decision Type:	Executive Non-Key Decision
Call-in to be Suspended:	No (Call-in not applicable to a non-key officer decisions)
Classification:	UNRESTRICTED
Delegated Authority:	Delegation C33 to the Section 151 Officer under Section 6 (Scheme of Officer Delegations) of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Constitution: ‘To authorise new projects up to £50,000 that can be funded within the overall resources of the approved Medium-Term Financial Plan’.
Purpose of the report:	<i>To approve a new project to construct an ancillary building at Kearsney that supports wider access to the historic billiard room as well as providing an additional sales outlet that enhances the customer experience during busy periods.</i>
Recommendation:	<i>To approve a new project to construct an ancillary building at Kearsney that supports wider access to the historic billiard room as well as providing an additional sales outlet that enhances the customer experience during busy periods.</i>

1. Summary

- 1.1 The café at Kearsney is very popular, especially at peak times. This has created pressure on the servery and seating. Limited storage space also means that the billiard room is used as a store and staff area and is not open to the public. It is therefore proposed to repurpose and relocate a previously purchased kiosk to provide a separate peak time outlet for teas, coffees, ice creams etc. It is also proposed to repurpose a second-hand shipping container (purchased for £3k) to provide a small staff rest area, a single office and a small storage area in order for the billiard room to be used by the public.
- 1.2 The combined costs of the works to repurpose the kiosk and adapt and screen the shipping container, install utilities, equipment, fit-out etc are £33k. It is estimated that the billiard room will enable Kearsney to serve 40 more covers by seating more people (an increase of 33%), hold functions etc. The estimated additional income from the kiosk and billiards room is circa £120k pa.
- 1.3 These ancillary buildings can be delivered within a budget of £33k which can be funded from the Corporate Maintenance Special Revenue Budget.

1.4 The report justifies the release of the funds and identifies that it is possible to complete the project in August 2022, in time to exploit the opportunities for additional income during the school holidays and provide unfettered access, including access for events, to the historic billiard room at the earliest opportunity, thus fulfilling one the NHLF strategic goals.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 One major work stream of the NHLF project at Kearsney was to restore and showcase the billiard room, the sole remaining structure of the house at the Kearsney Abbey site. The NHLF project sought to restore the billiard room and release it for both unfettered public access and for events. The construction of the extension housing the new café was designed, among other things, to free up the billiard room for these purposes.

2.2 The popularity of the new facility, whilst extremely welcome has meant that the demand on space within the building is intense with the effect that the billiard room currently must serve multiple functions that include providing additional storage, space to carry out back-office functions and an informal staff rest area.

2.3 The popularity of Kearsney has meant there are periods when the demand for grab and go food and beverages has led to queuing that adversely impacts on the enjoyment of those using the café for more substantial meals.

2.4 Officers therefore explored and evaluated cost effective options that would provide solutions to the challenges outlined in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3. The most cost-effective solution is to provide a single storey ancillary building and container, of just under 30 square metres in area, located adjacent to the disabled parking bays opposite the café. The buildings comprise of a stand-alone kiosk, sized to allow the serving of ice creams, snacks and beverages, with a container to provide a small staff rest area, a single office and a small storage area.

2.5 The building will of course comply with all regulatory requirements, specifically Planning, Building Regulations and Food Hygiene Regulations as well as achieving the wider compliance measures required by the Health & Safety at Work Act.

2.6 Although the window for the delivery of the project in August is extremely tight, necessary to take advantage of the opportunities for increased summer revenues, the governance and procurement arrangements will be consistent with the constitution and procurement rules. In terms of governance the project is small enough that the decision to proceed can be taken by the Section 151 Officer. In terms of procurement the sum involved is such that contract standing orders normally require a minimum of three quotes. However, timelines are so short that finding multiple contractors who are prepared and able to quote then deliver with such a tight deadline not realistic, it would cause delays that would make it impossible to deliver on programme. The lead times for gearing up post award would further make the August deadline impossible to achieve. Therefore, awarding the contract based on a single quote supported by evidence that demonstrates 'best value' is the preferred procurement route.

2.7 A site plan showing the size, floor layout and location of the proposed building is attached at Appendix 2.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Proceed with project to construct ancillary building and release necessary financial resource.
- 3.2 Cancel project and continue to operate solely from existing building.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Proceed with project to construct ancillary building and release necessary financial resource. Officers have looked at various on-site locations and potential solutions including a substantial extension to the café, which resulted in a capital bid of £550k and a smaller kiosk building immediately adjacent the billiard room. The proposed medium-term solution, at a cost of £33k, is the output of careful consideration of a low-cost suitable building located to take advantage of services originally provided as part of the NHLF project to serve the temporary concession whilst the café was built. Off site solutions were discounted because of the increased operational costs associated with moving equipment and people between sites. This is the recommended option.
- 4.2 Cancel project and continue to operate solely from existing building. This option will perpetuate the use of the billiard for purposes other than the public access and events uses envisaged by the NHLF. There is a risk that NHLF could choose to seek to recover grant money if the present uses continue. The option also foregoes the opportunity to increase income and enhance the customer experience of café users in busy periods. It is not the recommended option.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The £33k will be funded from the Corporate Maintenance Special Revenue Budget and includes an allowance of £2k officer time. Any additional officer time, which cannot be financed from the project will be absorbed into the Assets & Building Control staff budget.

6. Climate Change Implications:

- 6.1 The project seeks to facilitate the NHLF goals and commitments, together with realising opportunities for increased revenue both financially and in terms of energy and resources. The buildings will comprise of a timber kiosk together with a second-hand shipping container to provide the office and storage requirements. The container will be adapted for the new purpose and overclad with timber in order to be visually more in keeping with the park surroundings. The nature of the building means that it will be used mostly during summer months, heating is therefore not being provided meaning that energy requirements are minimal.

7. Corporate Implications

- 7.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comments. (DL)
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equalities implications however, in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate)The Principal Climate Change Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
8. **Appendices**
- Appendix 1 - Ancillary buildings floor plans
9. **Background Papers** Relevant documents held of Property Services Files

Contact Officer: Keith Read, Strategic Development Lead (Building)