

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Mount Edgumbe Means Business
Committee: Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee
Date: 17 July 2015
Cabinet Members: Councillor Smith Plymouth City Council
Councillor Duffin Cornwall Council
CMT Member: Anthony Payne, Strategic Director for Place (Plymouth)
Peter Marsh, Head of commissioning and Asset
Management (Cornwall)
Author: Jerry Master, Interim Park Manager
Contact: Tel: 01752 822236
E-mail: jerry.masters@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref: ME
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

This report outlines progress to date in respect of the Transformational Change project at Mount Edgumbe.

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17: Plymouth City Council.

This report links to delivering the priorities within the Councils Corporate Plan particularly with regard to raising aspirations and providing value to communities

Cornwall Council

Business Plan Immediate Priorities: Use of resources and performance management

Environment, Planning and Economy Directorate Plan priorities:

- a) Creating a Green Cornwall
- b) Creating a better place to live
- c) Delivering excellent service

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

There are no resource implications

Other Implications: eg. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

N/A

Equality and Diversity:

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken: No

Recommendations and Reasons for Recommended Action:

It is recommended that the Joint Committee -

- Notes the report;
- Supports the proposed schedule of projects for the next phase of transformation for Mount Edgumbe;
- Requests that the Mount Edgumbe Manager develops a detailed business case for each of the proposals;

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

N/A

Published Work/Information:

None.

Background Papers:

None.

Sign off:

Fin	n/a	Leg	n/a	Mon Off	n/a	HR	n/a	Assets	n/a	IT	n/a	Strat Proc	n/a
Originating SMT Member David Draffan													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes													

1.0 Introduction

In 2014 the 'Mount Edgcumbe Means Business' strategic vision and action plan was adopted by the Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee, which outlined a number of quick wins as well as some longer-term proposals to steer the development of the park towards a more sustainable future.

Many of the proposals have now been delivered and either are or will now begin generating an income for Mount Edgcumbe. Others are underway and are nearing completion, whilst a few may need reviewing given the level of investment required to implement them against the time needed to recover the capital investment.

This report provides members with an update on the current position of the strategic framework, and outlines the next round of project in a second phase of transformation and the funding opportunities that might part fund the costs.

2.0 Transformation phase I: current position

The 'Mount Edgcumbe Means Business' strategic vision and action plan presented to the joint committee in 2013-14 set out a number of short and longer term proposals to help develop the income earning potential of the park. In summary the proposals included:

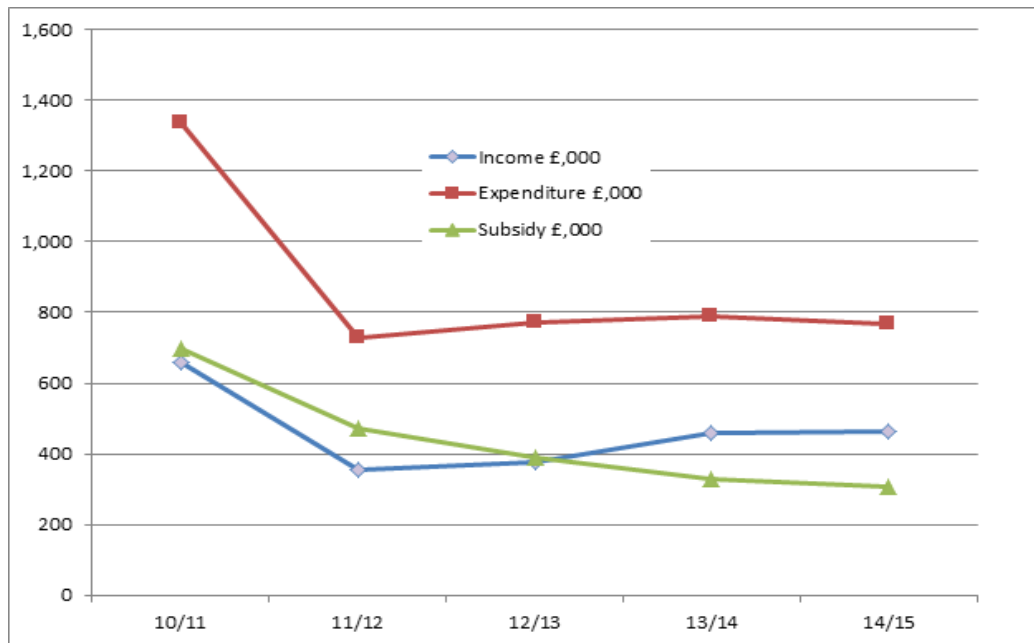
- Allocate and let commercial unit spaces
- Make the Barrow Centre more visible
- Install a quality WiFi system
- Develop the existing series of events
- Create a themed play area
- Purchase of land train to drive footfall up to the Barrow Centre & House
- Convert the Cremyll shop building into a holiday property whilst retaining the gift shop at the front
- Consider a one-way system into the park
- Provide cosmetic improvements to the Triumphal Arch entrance

A copy of the vision is attached to this briefing note as appendix I for your reference. Many of these early proposals have now been implemented, some of which have been reported in early joint committees, but in summary:

- Most of the spaces at the Barrow Centre are now let on a commercial basis and are also providing an additional draw for visitors (see Manager's report for further details).
- The Cremyll building has been converted into a holiday letting cottage whilst the Cremyll gift shop is now operated by a commercial tenant.

- Fibre optic cabling has been installed to provide on-site WiFi for the park traders as well as providing a digital connection for staff to Plymouth City Council’s network.
- Unfortunately the project to purchase a land train was shelved as the vehicle selected was not suitable for dealing with the gradients of the park roads or unsurfaced tracks – something that was only apparent following a full assessment of the vehicle on site. We are continuing to work with the Friends to provide an alternative daily service, and will look again at different options that are more fit-for-purpose. In the meantime, the residual budget that was allocated for the land train was used to refurbish a flat in the Barrow Park to create a second holiday property, which will shortly be available for renting.

Please see graph below to show the level of impact these proposals are having on the annual revenue budget for Mount Edgcombe:



Work has also begun on some capital improvements to a number of outlying structures on the park as part of the Higher Level Stewardship programme. This will include interpretation panels at each site of the structures and an interpretation leaflet which will add to the overall visitor offer to the park.

3.0 Transformation phase 2:

The ‘Mount Edgcombe Means Business’ strategic vision and action plan also sets out a number of longer term proposals.

Some initial scoping work has been completed to better understand the possible costs to implement and their likely return on investment, and a proposed priority list of these proposals is now set out below, although a detailed business case for each of the proposals will still need to be developed:

Completion of the WiFi installation

The cabling infrastructure is now in place and the final piece of work that will provide cabling to the wireless access points in the House and Barrow Centre, the hardware, licences and testing now needs completing. Costs to carry out this work are estimated at £12,000, but the return on this investment will be significant as there is already considerable interest from conference and wedding bookings where this service can be built into the fee charged.

Development of three 'Glamping' units

A discreet site has been identified to provide three 'shepherd hut' mobile units that come fully fitted out and can sleep either two or four people. Electricity, water and drainage services will need to be provided to the three units. An estimate of overall costs suggests a capital outlay of £135,000 with an annual income per unit of £16,000 less management costs of £3,000.

Development of camping and caravan pitches by the Dry Walk Car Park

A toilet block already exists that with some adaption could provide a shower facility to service a camp site with ten pitches and a similar number of caravan pitches. The proposal would create hard standings with service connections available on a pay-to-use meter. Early estimates suggest a capital cost of around £70,000 earning an annual income of around £12-14,000 per year less management costs of £4,000 per year – this is based on an average pitch charge of about £7 per night.

External electricity services for markets & fayres adjoining House & Barrow Centre

Mount Edgcumbe is currently encouraging a number of markets and fayres to operate within the park and particularly around the House and Barrow Centre. To encourage take up by mobile traders the park provides electricity feeds from the house. However the existing network cannot meet peak demands and the electrical supply can sometimes trip out during very busy periods, something that will get worse if we intend to increase the number of markets. The proposed solution is to lay a new electrical service from the distribution board in the Barrow Centre to eighteen exterior-rated electrical outlets at an estimated cost of £45,000. The estimated cost is relatively high due to the need to 'hand dig' around the existing services already in and around the Barrow Centre. However the work is estimated to earn £7,000 per year, which will increase as the number of events increases – something that this proposal will make possible.

4.0 Possible capital funding opportunities within Mount Edgumbe

Land at Polhawn Fort

A long standing issue regarding encroachment on land owned by the park but let on a tenancy for agriculture has recently been resolved with the sale of a small parcel of land proposed to the adjoining Polhawn Fort management.

Both councils are currently in the process of confirming agreement of the proposed terms of the sale which should be passed to Plymouth City Council's legal services for completion within the next few months.

The proceeds from this sale will be shared between the tenant and the two councils, and the latter split evenly between Plymouth City and Cornwall Councils. Plymouth have already ring-fenced this income to Mount Edgumbe, and Cornwall is expected to do the same shortly, and will provide a capital income of £30,000

Captain Blake's Hut, Whitsand Bay

Mount Edgumbe owns a structure known as 'Captain Blake's Hut' situated midway between Polhawn Fort and the Whitsand Bay chalets. It was formerly leased to the YMCA as its location was a convenient point to stop off on YMCA organised treks along the coast for its members overnight, but has since been returned to Mount Edgumbe by the YMCA.

Since then, an options appraisal has been carried out for a future use of the hut with Plymouth City Council's surveyors, and no obvious alternative uses have been identified as the site is remote from the park and is difficult to manage with present resources. The most attractive option is to put the property on the market for a leasehold sale (similar to the chalets further along the bay) recognising that the capital earned could make a significant contribution to potential projects on the park whilst retaining its annual ground rent.

Early estimates suggest that such a sale is likely to raise in the region of £80-100,000 given that a recent chalet sale in a dilapidated state with only six years remaining on the lease made over £100,000.

5.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Joint Committee -

- Notes the report;

- Supports the proposed schedule of projects for the next phase of transformation for Mount Edgcumbe;
- Requests that the Mount Edgcumbe Manager develops a detailed business case for each of the proposals.