

# MAYFLOWER 400 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

## ELIZABETHAN HOUSE

Executive Decision Briefing Note



### INTRODUCTION

Plymouth's Elizabethan House is a city treasure at the heart of the community for over 400 years. It is a rare survivor, enduring slum clearances in the 20's and later the Plymouth Blitz. It is a significant building recognised in its Grade II\* listed status. Grade II\* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; only 5.8% of listed buildings are Grade II\*.

The house closed to the public when major structural issues made it unsafe in 2016. In 2017 it was included on Historic England's national 'Heritage at Risk Register'.

The house now requires a capital restoration programme to remove it from the heritage at risk register and preserve it for future generations. We also need to unlock its potential through a hitherto untapped depth of interpretation and meaningful engagement with the local community to involve them in researching and sharing its fascinating history thereby engendering civic pride.

The interpretation and exhibition design will focus on placing the house in its local, national and international context. It will draw upon best practice from elsewhere and layer interesting and exciting special activities on a sound base provision. It will provide a community, education and leisure facility of significant national standard. The interpretation will include the streetscape and will link to proposed heritage and 'Mayflower' Trails through the City, 'The Box' and the 'Mayflower Museum'.

Plymouth City Council has already allocated in its budget £1.3 million of capital funding to the historic houses which will be used to preserve the fabric of the Elizabethan House and create a sustainable future use for the building. A suite of carefully targeted external funding applications have been submitted to restore the house and create an exciting and immersive visitor experience.

The 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower ('Mayflower 400') in 2020 will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to present 'Britain's Ocean City' to the world and will act as a catalyst for business growth in marine and related industries, the visitor economy, the culture of the city and raising the city's profile and reputation in the global market place.

The Elizabethan House is planned to reopen to the public in 2020 and will be a significant contributor to the 'Mayflower visitor experience'. The importance of the house will increase exponentially as one of the few city buildings which meaningfully connect visitors to the Mayflower and 1620. The house emerged during the Elizabethan period which made American colonisation possible – with all its consequences. For Plymouth in 2020, we need to grasp the opportunity to take advantage of the chance to reinstate the House and its rightful place in Plymouth's heritage offer. Developing a quality visitor attraction will increase visitor dwell times, numbers, spend and jobs in the City.

The proposed future use for the building has a solid income-generating potential and this will result in the building being financially viable, sustainable and adaptable.

The other historic building is the Merchants House which is also a grade II\* listed building and closed to the public. This building is in better condition than the Elizabethan House and is not on the 'Heritage at Risk Register'. It is no longer required as a museum and an options appraisal considering potential future uses has been undertaken. Given the level of resources required to address the higher priority issues at the Elizabethan House and the higher contribution that the Elizabethan House can make to the tourist offer for Mayflower 400, we propose to defer a decision on the future of the Merchants house for the time being.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In February 2017 the City Council confirmed their intention to commit £5 million capital funds to support the Mayflower 400 programme subject to approval of detailed business cases and a formal executive decision process. It was further agreed that the £5 million for Mayflower capital projects would be funded from corporate borrowing which was already within the borrowing envelope which was presented to full council in March 2017. This included £1.3m for the Elizabethan and Merchants Houses.

A Business Case was considered in July 2017 and a subsequent Executive Decision approved an initial drawdown of £275,000 for the historic houses to the Capital Programme of the £1.3m allocated within the £5m for them. This was to undertake Investigative works at the Elizabethan House and undertake an options appraisal for the future uses of the Merchants House.

The projected cost of the Elizabethan House works is currently £2,126,841 comprising:

▪ Development costs to date	£60,794	▪ Investigative and refurbishment costs	£1,104,900
▪ Exhibition costs	£906,100	▪ Internal costs	£55,047

Funding bids to secure additional monies have been submitted to Historic England (£50k) and the Pilgrim Trust (£30k) with decisions awaited. A funding application of £656,100 was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 with a decision date of June. We are also considering other grant funding options.

This Executive Decision seeks to draw down £1,025,000 for the Elizabethan House which is the full balance remaining for the historic houses from the original allocation of £1.3m included for them within the Mayflower 400 Capital programme. This will allow us to progress the delivery of the renovation element of the project through further development to completion in early summer 2020 and to use as match funding for the funding bids.

Should any of the current funding bids be unsuccessful and there be a shortfall in the funding required to complete the exhibition works, our strategy is to consider the following options:

- Continue to seek additional grant funding for the works (e.g. Heritage England, Coastal Communities)
- Re-direct funding from elsewhere within the £5m approved for Mayflower (e.g. the monument, event infrastructure or trails)
- Value engineer the exhibition designs and engagement processes to reduce costs

A further business case will be brought in summer 2018 once decisions have been made on the submitted grant funding applications and the investigation works to the house are complete.

An outline business case for the proposed future use for the building based on conservative estimates of future admissions and bench marking our assumptions against comparable attractions has demonstrated that the Elizabethan House has a solid income-generating potential and this will result in the building being financially viable, sustainable and adaptable. This business case will be further refined as the nature of the exhibition proposals are further developed.

## **RECOMMENDED DECISION**

It is recommended that the Leader of the Council:

- Approves the Business Case
- Allocates £1,025,000 for the project to the capital programme funded by Corporate Borrowing within the Approved Priority List
- Authorises the submission of funding applications in accordance with the funding strategy to be approved by Anthony Payne, Strategic Director for Place for both capital and revenue
- Delegates the acceptance of funding applications to deliver the project to Anthony Payne, Strategic Director for Place
- Delegates the authorisation of proposed procurement processes and contract award to the Strategic Director for Place