Plans for Delapre HLF bid revealed

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Northampton Borough Council will submit the plans to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) as part of a second round bid for around £3.6million that would help preserve Delapre Abbey for future generations.

In October last year, the Borough Council was awarded more than £250,000 of development funding by HLF, which was spent on the preparation of the plans that are made public for the first time today.

These plans would see parts of the main Abbey building restored for use as spaces for functions and public events. The 18th century stable block and 19th century stable yard would be transformed into lively and exciting areas to attract visitors and raise revenue to support the future sustainability of Delapre Abbey.

The plans have been developed in conjunction with partners Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust and other key organisations. They will be discussed with other stakeholders, including local residents' groups, next week.

In detail the plans propose:

Main House: The lower ground floor and south wing would be refurbished and opened for tours and events. The conservatory could be rebuilt. The first floor of the South Wing could be opened for functions such as conferences and training.

18th century stable block: This would be restored and a new reception area, shop, classroom and exhibition space would be created there.

19th century stable block: This would be restored and units or spaces created for use by small, niche retail and other businesses.

The plans and bid for £3.6million will be submitted to HLF in the summer and if successful, would mean the first phase of work focussing on the main house and the stable block could begin in September 2014.

But even if the funding is awarded to Delapre Abbey, there will still be a shortfall of more than £1 million that will be needed to complete the work. Northampton Borough Council plans to meet that shortfall through its own capital budget and possibly some fundraising with the Friends of Delapre Abbey and the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust.

Councillor David Mackintosh, Leader of Northampton Borough Council, said: "This is an exciting moment, with an amazing opportunity to win further funding and kick start the restoration of Delapre Abbey. We want to bring that building back into the daily life of the town and to put it on the map as a regional attraction.

"We need to win funding from the HLF before we can even make a start and I hope local people will get behind the bid and show their support for the future of Delapre Abbey. Northampton is moving forward with an amazing programme of development through Northampton Alive, and our culture and heritage is a vital part of that."

Councillor Tim Hadland, Cabinet Member responsible for Heritage Assets and also a Trustee of the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust, said: "A number of groups have worked closely together to put forward realistic plans that would allow for development in the use of the building as well as a high level of public access. Success in this bid is very

important to us in safeguarding the future of the Abbey and I hope that everyone who has the opportunity, backs the bid.”

The plans revealed today represent just the first phase of work that could be carried out in the future, if funding were available, to bring even more of the Abbey back into public use.

The Borough Council should find out whether or not the bid has been successful later in the year.

Further information

Northampton Borough Council Communications Team on 01604 837 777.