

Lowestoft Town Hall Project

Progress Report for June 2024 Full Council

This report covers the period to 20 June 2024.

Procurement

- Our tender for main construction works is on track for publication on 24 June, the revised date notified to Full Council's last meeting.
- We will use Experian to assess the financial stability of bidders; this will help reduce risk. I have allocated £500 of budget towards purchase of an Experian 24-month licence, with the other half potentially being funded by the Marina Theatre project. This is an excellent recommendation from our procurement consultant to ensure that we are managing supplier risk.
- We have set turnover for bidders at a minimum of £6.9m, ie 1.5x peak annual turnover on the project.
- We have developed a more nuanced scoring mechanism that will include relative pricing on the bid itself but adds in assessments for items such as provisional sums and day rates. This should help prevent lower priced bids that 'hide' additional fee opportunities in these areas.
- At the June steering committee, I proposed we amend the evaluation weighting to 70:30 (price to quality) as the Heritage Fund and several contractors who attended our Open Day felt that this placed too much emphasis on price and could risk quality. Our QS and I separately modelled multiple scenarios, and both took the view that 70:30 is likely to achieve a better balance between price and quality, avoiding forcing us to take a low price/lower quality option or indeed a high-priced top quality one. The Steering Committee approved this revision by a majority vote.
- We have reviewed Local Authority amendments for the JCT contract and will include a section on responses to FOI requests, as this is not included in the standard contract.
- I have completed my work to evidence the financial impact of any delays to opening the Town Hall (eg rental of Hamilton House, loss of income etc) and this will form the basis for the liquidated damages included in the tender documentation.

Design/Construction-related work

- The design team has met with UKPN onsite and agreed the layout for the substation. We will require an extra 1m wide strip of land from ESC to enable the safe routing of the electricity main supply cable to the Town Hall.
- We have had a further review from dry rot specialists Hutton + Rostron. Some of the timbers have dried out well and the dry rot has died out, but other areas remain quite damp. Further opening of windows to increase ventilation will be required. I will also investigate whether we can get SCC to reduce the pavement levels on the north-east corner (Mariners/High Street) as it is well above DPC levels and thus is delivering surface water into the building structure at that point.

UKPN substation/ESC land transfer/use of land during construction

- I will seek clearance prices for the adjacent land next month, once the tender has been published (see previous reports for details). This will be done before the main contractor starts.

- Sarah Foote has discussed the licence fee to occupy the site with Chris Bally at ESC. ESC Assets have proposed £16k + VAT p/a (subject to negotiation) to use the site, with the cost of clearance being offset against this. The fee has not been included in our budget planning to date and so would be a contingency spend.

Business

- We have provided Registrars with further details, eg plans marked up with square metreage per room, and will continue discussions with them.
- I visited Station Yard in Southwold to look at their new office and coworking space, and to understand more about how they propose to move forward with these elements. This will be a useful reference point for the business plan.

Activity Plan & Interpretation

- Kate Reeder and Jess Johnston have been reviewing the Activity Plan and have made some amendments (some just reallocating budgets across projects) using Kate’s experience and input to enhance the plan.
- Kate and Jess attended the D-Day commemorations and had a very successful day engaging with local people.
- Work continues on evaluation with a collection system in place for recording activity throughout the summer period, developed by our evaluation team.
- Work is also underway to finalise the role for a Heritage Trainee/Apprenticeship – this will be a two-year fixed term appointment (repeated for a second apprentice) with a fully accredited qualification available to those interested in developing a career in heritage/collections management. We now have an accredited body in place, enabling us to offer this as a formal apprenticeship.
- The interpretation RIBA4 plan has been released in draft to the Steering Committee. This covers the exhibition design for both the heritage hub and the secondary spaces, including in the café, the ‘street’ and the courtyard garden. Work will now begin on detailed content development.



Financials

- I met with our Heritage Fund monitor, Ellen Dempster, and reviewed the budgets in detail and how the Heritage Fund wish to see budget changes requested and recorded in my financials. The overall spreadsheet control system was commended for its completeness and clarity.

Total spend to date is below:

Spend to date	TOTALS
Budget	£ 9,290,089.09
Actual spend to date	£ 588,529.94
Balance remaining	£ 8,701,559.15

Invoiced expenditure in the period (nb includes some items settled by LTC in 2023 and now reclaimed, wholly or partially from NLHF):

Invoice Date	Inv Ref N	Supplier	Description	Amount	VAT	Total inc V	Project PO	
05/04/24	LTH154	Andrew Morton Associates	Prof Fees QS Mar 24	£ 1,690.50	£ 338.10	£ 2,028.60	TH52	
24/04/24	LTH155	MossKing Associates Limited	Heritage project management Jan - Mar	£ 2,460.00	£ -	£ 2,460.00	TH53	
24/04/24	LTH155	MossKing Associates Limited	Interpretation workshop vouchers	£ 404.25	£ -	£ 404.25	TH70	
16/04/24	LTH156	HAT Projects	Design team fees (RIBA4)	£ 42,040.65	£ 8,408.13	£ 50,448.78	TH51	
04/03/24	LTH157	Cloudy IT	Prof fees re IT/broadband etc	£ 210.00	£ 42.00	£ 252.00	TH72	
21/12/23	LTH158	East Suffolk Council	Postcode allocation for Town Hall	£ 43.00	£ -	£ 43.00	TH73	
06/11/23	LTH159	PJ Spillings	Degradation arrest, dry rot survey/remediatio	£ 45,603.00	£ 9,120.60	£ 54,723.60	TH61	
06/11/23	LTH159	PJ Spillings	Partial removal of asbestos	£ 18,144.00	£ 3,628.80	£ 21,772.80	TH61	
CLAIM 2	07/05/24	LTH160	MossKing Associates Limited	Project management fees Apr	£ 5,993.00	£ -	£ 5,993.00	TH50
	03/05/24	LTH161	Andrew Morton Associates	Prof fees QS Apr	£ 15,697.50	£ 3,139.50	£ 18,837.00	TH52
	14/05/24	LTH162	Sound & Lighting Hire Ltd	Drawings re further client AV rqmts	£ 550.00	£ 110.00	£ 660.00	TH67
Total spend to date				£ 588,529.94	£ 109,151.62	£ 697,681.56		

Next steps

- During July, I will be managing/undertaking the following:
 - Supporting the tender process re clarifications.
 - Securing clock conservation & repair quotations.
 - Securing quotes for clearance work at the Town Hall for site accommodation.
 - Continuing discussions etc with ESC re land transfers, licence to occupy and the UKPN substation.
 - Beginning the review of the business plan, including a review of the café operating model.
 - Procuring any further surveys or specialist advice to support the design team and/or tender.
 - Developing content for interpretation and planning activity/engagement.
 - Supporting the process to recruit our first Heritage Trainee.
 - Financial control over expenditure to support the above (in line with approved budgets).
 - Reporting as necessary to other funders.

Sheila Moss King
Project Manager