

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF PROJECTS AND REGENERATION	PLANNING COMMITTEE	21 SEPTEMBER 2022	6
KIRKHAM FUTURES: WALL AT HILLSIDE			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

This report gives an update as to the status of the retaining wall contained within the ownership boundary of the Hillside property in Kirkham and a summary of plans to incorporate an element of works to the wall within the Hillside project as part of the Kirkham Futures Programme.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Head of Projects and Regeneration

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

A resolution was made within the last information item on Kirkham Futures to update the Committee on the status of the wall at Hillside.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Introduction

1. This item concerns a retaining wall at Kirkham, which runs approximately 68m in a north/south orientation, from the grade II listed former Hillside restaurant at 48 Preston Street in the north, to the properties known as the Conifers and Mulberry Mews in the south. The northern section of the wall is owned by the council, having been acquired as part of the purchase of Hillside in December 2021. The southern section of the wall is understood to be owned by the owners of the various properties that it abuts.
2. The acquisition of Hillside was funded from the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) grant award to enable the commencement of repair and conversion works funded through both Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and FHSF to secure a sustainable future use for the building.
3. The wall is in a dangerous condition, in particular the south section, having already suffered a partial collapse. The collapse occurred in the south section of the wall, which is not within the boundary of the Hillside Property.

A detailed report of the condition of the wall prepared by the Council's Chief Engineer has been included as Appendix A. Before the acquisition of Hillside, the council took action under 77 of the Building Act 1984, seeking an order that the reputed owners of the wall put it in repair. Despite being satisfied of the dangerous condition of the wall, the court declined to make the order. Nevertheless, and despite the collapse occurring in the part of the wall outside the council's ownership, it is necessary to carry out works to rectify the condition of the part of the wall associated with Hillside.

Next steps

4. The acquisition of Hillside is now complete, and phase 1 emergency works to the property have commenced. Phase 2 of the project (the main refurbishment) has been paused whilst the outcome and recommendations of the Growth Lancashire Mid-Term Review are finalised. Once finalised, the scope of Phase 2 will be refined to align with the recommended end-use and business case for the building.
5. The council's Estates Team negotiated a reduction to the planned acquisition price, to take account of the poor state of the wall within the Hillside boundary. It is now proposed to use the 'surplus' money (circa £70k) resulting from this reduction to carry out works to secure the wall within the Hillside boundary. At the Council Meeting on 5 December 2021, it was resolved "that the Council underwrite any additional costs to the project arising from the repair or rebuild of the retaining wall bounding Hillside (as estimated in the report) that cannot be met from the approved funding for this scheme, to be funded from the Funding Volatility Reserve, if required."
6. It is now proposed that officers within the Technical Services division will manage a project in parallel to the Hillside refurbishment works to carry out the necessary repairs to the wall within the boundary of the Hillside as soon as practically possible. This will include the appointment of a structural engineer to examine the options available within the available budget and procurement of a suitable contractor to carry out the works.
7. Colleagues from Building Control will retain their involvement within the project to agree the final technical solution for securing the wall.
8. It is proposed that officers prepare a further report to be considered by a future Planning Committee once the scope of the works is agreed and a plan for implementation is known.