

**BANCROFT PARK AND GARDENS – DEVELOPMENT AND REFURBISHMENT –
INFORMATION NOTE (UPDATE)**

THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Members will be aware that the future of Bancroft Hall forms part of the Councils Community Halls Strategy which will identify areas of over and under provision. This is shortly due to be consulted on and it is intended to reported back to Cabinet in September. Members have previously heard the views of the Hitchin Bridge Club and these will be taken into account as part of the consultation in the development of the strategy.

In that the outcome of the Community Halls Strategy will have a direct impact on the proposals to generate Bancroft Gardens it is sensible to wait until a decision is made about Bancroft Hall prior to finalising proposals for the wider regeneration of the Gardens.

Various funding opportunities for the regeneration have been explored and the Project Board have expressed a preference to apply to the Heritage & Big Lottery Fund under the Parks for People scheme.

This scheme is the most relevant for this type of park improvement work. The programme aims to create new opportunities for communities to learn about and enjoy the local environment, alongside improving parks and making them safer.

A project must:

- Increase the range of audiences;
- Conserve and improve the heritage value ;
- Increase the range of volunteers involved;
- Improve skills and knowledge through learning and training; and
- Improve management and maintenance

Funding is available from £250,000 to £5 million and must have match funding of at least 5% for less than £1m or 10% for up to £5m.

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