

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee



Tuesday 15 October 2024

Title	<i>Reflections water feature</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	<i>Not applicable</i>
Corporate Priority	Community
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <p>Agree one of the four options listed at point three within this report under the heading of “options analysis.”</p> <p>Delegate authority to Group Head Corporate Governance to agree the terms and enter necessary documentation should members agree to move forward with Option 2.</p>
Reason for Recommendation	<p><i>The Reflections water feature which forms an extension to the Staines War Memorial is not operational due to the plant room being flooded. A potential business sponsor has indicated that his company is willing to repair and then maintain the feature for at least the next three years at no cost to the Council.</i></p> <p><i>Councillors are asked to decide on the future maintenance of the Reflections water feature which is in market square Staines-upon Thames.</i></p>

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Reflections water feature provides an additional feature to the War Memorial in market square Staines-upon-Thames. The water tables in this area are extremely high due to its proximity to the River Thames. The plant room that runs the feature is underground and suffered from flooding in 2020, since then it has not been in operation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A business sponsor has come forward offering to carry out repairs and finance ongoing maintenance on the feature at no cost to the Council. The Council needs to decide if this is an appropriate course of action. This offer is for a minimum of three years.

This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report will provide the detail to members allowing them to make a fully informed decision on whether to allow the feature to be managed by an external sponsor with no cost to the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed information on the status of the feature is provided within this report for members to decide on the future of the water feature.

1.1 This report seeks to provide information on the sponsorship offered by a Spelthorne property owner. The owner has offered to carry out repairs and pay for ongoing maintenance for at least the next three years on the Reflections water feature which is situated within market square Staines-upon-Thames.

2. Key issues

2.1 The water feature has been in a non-operational state since flooding occurred resulting in a significant rise of water in the River Thames. This rise in water levels flooded the underground plant room of the water feature.

2.2 The water feature until this time had been managed and maintained via an external contractor by the Building Services team within Assets.

2.3 Due to the high repair and maintenance costs and the Council's challenging budget situation the feature has not been repaired and subsequently does not work as a water feature.

2.4 A company who owns land adjacent to market square and near the water feature have offered to sponsor the repairs & ongoing maintenance for at least the next three years with no cost to the Council.

2.5 Councillors are asked to consider the contents of this report and decide if this is an appropriate way to manage this feature.

2.6 The table below provides further details of the work and costs associated with the repair and future yearly maintenance of the feature.

Estimated repair costs	Plant room & water feature repairs
£16,000	Pumping out and cleaning the plant room Replace the glass reinforced plastic (GRP) tank. Clean & service pumps/float valves etc. Associated electrical works
£5000-£10,000	Repairs to surface and edging blocks Repair leaks between blocks
£21,000 to £26,000	Total estimated repair costs
Annual maintenance costs	Plant room & water feature maintenance schedule

£18,000	Maintenance to check plant room equipment and chemical dosing system, weekly. Water sampling checked against safety standards, weekly. Additional water samples for analysis to check for legionella and general water quality. Annual estimated cost of chemicals for the dosing system included.
£4000	This budget should be set aside for potential electrical issues, replacement pumps
£unknown	Electricity costs to run the water feature.
£22,000 plus electricity	Total estimated annual maintenance costs



- 2.7 It should be noted that timers are installed which control the feature and can be set to turn on and off at any time. A temperature sensor was installed to protect the feature against freezing. Once the temperature drops below three degrees the feature automatically switches off. This will then restart when the temperature rises depending on the on/off timer.
- 2.8 The electric meter to run the feature is located further into Memorial Gardens and is above ground. The meter covers the whole Memorial Gardens site including the Towpath lighting and electrical sockets, the reflections is included within this meter as is the lighting in Riverside car park.

2.9 A check meter could be installed at an additional cost to separate out the running costs. If, however, a main meter was required this would have to involve the electricity supplier and involve costs outside of our control.

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 Option 1

The water feature has not been operational since 2020 and to our knowledge there has been little or no communication from members of the public in relation to this. On this basis the feature could remain as a feature with no running water and at no cost to anyone.

3.2 Option 2

A local business sponsor has offered to carry out repairs and maintenance at no cost to the Council for a minimum of three years, after the three years a break clause of 6 months would be in the overall agreement to repair & maintain. This would create the need for a formal agreement to be made between parties on the regularity and type of maintenance which would meet the Council's requirements. A licence to carry out repairs and maintenance would also need to be agreed by both parties before any work could be undertaken.

3.3 Option3

The Council could seek its own funding for the repair and maintenance of the feature. It is highly likely that under this option other budgeted items for 24/25 and beyond would have to be put on hold as the funding would need to be diverted away from other projects to get the feature repaired and maintained.

3.4 Option 4

The Council could arrange for the water feature element of the War Memorial to be removed, and the ground made good. This work would have additional costs that the Council has not budgeted for in 24/25.

4. Financial management comments

4.1 The Building Services team looked at flood prevention measures following the floods in 2014, but at the time were unable to find a solution. This was partly due to the drainage system that serves the area, and the nature of the feature which recycles water from its surface area. This means that heavy rain further exacerbates the plant room flooding.

4.2 In 2014 the electrical installation previously located below ground in the plant rooms, was brought above ground and will reduce ongoing repair costs significantly.

4.3 Under "normal" circumstances, the plantroom could withstand flooding for short (1-2 months) periods with minimal repairs (circa £2,000 - £3,000 plus VAT). The pumps are submersible and short periods of being underwater will have little effect, so generally after a flood the plant room would need a pump out and clean with a few minor electrical repairs.

4.4 However, as the plant room was submerged for a prolonged period this has affected the pumps and filters which will need to be replaced.

- 4.5 **Option 1** has no cost as the water feature has been switched off since 2020, it does not work and has no maintenance costs.
- 4.6 **Option 2** has no cost to the Council save for legal costs in negotiating and preparing the necessary documentation.
- 4.7 **Option 3** identifies estimated costs of £26,000 for the repairs to be undertaken and ongoing yearly costs of £22,000 for the maintenance.
- 4.8 **Option 4** it is difficult to estimate these costs due to the status of what is underneath the reflections water feature but as an indication there is the potential for this to be estimated at more than £20,000.

5. Risk management comments.

- 5.1 There is a risk that even if repaired and put back into working order the underground plant room could again become flooded for a prolonged period. If this were the case the repair costs would fall to the sponsor as part of their agreement to repair & maintain for a period of at least three years.
- 5.2 There is negligible risk with **Option 1** as there are no costs associated with the feature being left as is.
- 5.3 There is a risk that if the Council decide to proceed with **Option 2** whereby a sponsor pays all costs for repair and maintenance that this could reflect negatively on the Council and how it maintains its assets. There is also the risk that the sponsor would end its sponsorship at short notice. If this were the case this could be mitigated by leaving the water feature again switched off permanently thereby removing any ongoing maintenance costs.
- 5.4 There is also the risk that official documented and signed terms between the Council and the sponsor may not be agreed and the sponsor decides not to move forward with repairs or maintenance to the water feature. In this scenario the feature would remain in its non-operational state.
- 5.5 The additional risk with this option is that there is no capacity within the Building Maintenance budget to take on another £30k of costs. It should be noted that if the sponsor terminates the repair and maintenance agreement at any time the Reflections will be switched off permanently.
- 5.6 It should also be noted that if the plant room floods post repair the sponsor will be required to fund the new repairs, this financial responsibility will not sit with the Council. If this funding is not forthcoming by the sponsor the Reflection water feature will be switched off permanently.
- 5.7 The risk for **Option 3** is that the Councillors would have to identify what projects did not proceed in the 24/25 budget to allow this work to be undertaken mid-term.
- 5.8 The War Memorial originally sat in the Memorial Gardens but was moved here in 2002 as part of the town redevelopment scheme. Market square is public highway managed by Surrey County Council. There is a risk that the County Council may not give permission for the Reflections water feature to be removed in its entirety if **Option 4** was decided by Councillors as the way forward.

6. Procurement comments

6.1 At this stage there are no procurement considerations, if however, Councillors agree **Option 3 or 4** a fully compliant procurement exercise would be undertaken to ensure best value was sought before considering any of these works.

7. Legal comments

7.1 Legal Services (g.legal@spelthorne.gov.uk) will provide advice and assistance on the preparation of the required documentation, as necessary.

7.2 If the water feature is to be fully operational as a water feature, responsibility for controlling Legionella shall be passed onto the business sponsor or will rest with the Council (as the case may be).

7.3 In the event that the selected option necessitates works on public highway, consent from Surrey County Council as the highway authority will need to be obtained prior to starting the works.

8. Other considerations

8.1 To avoid any potential complications with VAT the Council will not permit advertising of sponsorship for the reflections water feature. The sponsor has also confirmed that he does not think it appropriate to advertise sponsorship on a war memorial.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 This Council considers equality, and diversity impacts in its decisions. No issues have been identified that need consideration within this report.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 The water feature depends on the supply of both water and electricity as well as regular scheduled site visits for maintenance and treatment of the water, thus increasing the Council's carbon footprint (both via electricity required and fuel costs for transport to site) and the need to use chemicals in the treatment of water.

11. Timetable for implementation.

11.1 The timetable for implementation will be dependent on the option and way forward agreed by Councillors of this committee.

12. Contact

12.1 Jackie Taylor
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**Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer
Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.**

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices: There are none