



Priory Bromley:
HLF bid review and
information for prospective owners

Final Report

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1 Executive Summary

This paper summarises an independent review of the Business Plan, HLF Application and associated documents connected to the *Priory Revisited* project by London Borough of Bromley. This paper summarises our conclusions from that analysis, specifically with a view to ensuring that all due diligence was taken throughout the process and to provide any useful insight to potential future bidders or applicants for the site.

1.1 History of the Site

In brief, the Priory is a Grade II* listed medieval manor house, first gifted to the Priory of Christ Church Canterbury in 1032. It was rebuilt, adapted and expanded several times by the Priory, serving as a manor, farm and staging post for priors travelling between London and Canterbury. It is significant for being one of the few pre-Reformation rectories to have survived the dissolution in the 1530s, when its ownership was transferred to the church. The freehold was sold in 1860 and a succession of private owners then made a series of new adaptations to the building and its grounds. The last private owner died in 1941 and his estate leased the building to Orpington Urban District Council. The Priory was listed at Grade II* in 1954 and has been in municipal ownership since 1959, when a modernist extension was added to house the municipal library. Until recently, it has housed a combination of civic functions, including the museum, public library and Council offices. The building currently houses the museum, surrounded by gardens which form a public park and local civic amenity.

Bromley Museum has occupied the building since 1965. The Museum is custodian of a collection of 19,566 objects. It is primarily a local history collection assembled from local archaeological finds and bequests by long time local residents. Importantly, one of these bequests was the nationally significant Lubbock Collection of some 700 archaeological and ethnographic objects. The Council's fine art collection was also transferred to Museum ownership in the mid-1990s.

Except for small scale modernisations and upgrades, the building has remained largely unaltered since the Museum was founded. When the municipal library was moved to an improved building and location in the town centre, the Council considered options for the development of the Priory site. It was then decided to pursue the ambitious strategy of expanding the Museum to embrace the whole of the building and create a fully accessible visitor destination within the park.

1.2 History of the Project

In June 2010, it was agreed that an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund would be pursued which would conserve the Priory and extend, develop and improve the museum service.

A first round application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Heritage Grants programme in June 2011 for a £2.3 million scheme with match funding from London Borough of Bromley of £447k. This application was given a Stage 1 HLF Approval, including a project Development Grant of £186,300.

In the course of more detailed design and development work (advancing from RIBA Stage C to RIBA Stage D), further investigations led to an increase in the capital cost estimate and in estimated management and maintenance costs. The building was deemed to be in worse condition than originally anticipated, with a need for significantly more repair and conservation work and an increased contingency. Total project costs thus increased from £2.46 million in the Stage 1 HLF bid to £3.61 million in the Stage 2 application, requiring some £1.06 million of match funding from the Council and a commitment to 25 years' revenue funding of some £275,000 per annum, representing a full 70% of the museum's projected operating budget.

Members elected to withdraw the application prior to a final decision by the HLF and the project was indefinitely suspended. We understand that this decision was partly informed by Council surveys in which local residents ranked the museum service among their lowest priorities in terms of extant Council services. Although no final decision has yet been made on a future use of the Priory, we understand that a key issue is whether to sell a short or a long leasehold interest on the site on the open market.

1.3 Desktop Review of HLF Application

In April 2015, Fourth Street undertook an exhaustive review of the HLF Application, the supporting Business Plan and all of their constituent appendices, including design documentation, cost schedules, condition surveys, audience profiles, activity plan and the exhibition and interpretation strategy.

In summary, we consider this to be one of the most impressive museum Business Plans and HLF applications that we have seen. It is an extraordinarily robust and rigorous body of work and, in our view, a model for other applicants to follow. Particular areas of strength include the following:

- The clarity of its Vision, aims and objectives
- Market research, analysis and audience profiling that is comprehensive in both breadth and depth
- A clear and cogent concept and business model
- A thoughtful approach to exhibition design and development
- A hugely impressive approach to programming, as articulated in the Activity Plan
- Realistic and fully justified capital costing
- A rigorous and transparent approach to operational financial planning

We had only two material reservations with the project as conceived and developed:

1. It appears to us to be a 'museum solution' for what is essentially a challenging building in an awkward, 'off pitch' location. We suspect that in a well-intentioned effort to find a use for the building that would maximise public access to it, a project was conceived that was not necessarily the best solution for the museum service or its users.
2. The whole concept and its underlying business model was ultimately predicated on a substantial amount of Council grant-in-aid, which would have represented some 70% of anticipated revenue. In the absence of that long term guarantee, the whole business model would instantly be of suspect viability. It is therefore easy to understand the rationale behind the decision to withdraw

the HLF application, even if – on the strength of this application – the chances of success must have been high.

1.4 Moving Forward

We are generally of the view that all due diligence was rigorously applied and a sincere effort was made to deliver an exciting project that would extend public access to the building, expand and enhance the Museum, and provide valuable education, learning and heritage services to the community.

In the current climate, it is easy to appreciate that the Council is unable to make a 25-year commitment to the level of revenue funding needed to make the project viable. The ultimate decision to withdraw the HLF application is therefore understandable. The likely next step is to openly market the Priory building as a development opportunity on a short or long leasehold basis to any interested third parties – including commercial, cultural, charitable or community users. We therefore summarise any key issues gleaned from the review that might inform that process going forward.

Please note that while we have taken this opportunity to alert stakeholders to any particular challenges or opportunities faced by the site – based on our review of available documentation and our own experience of adaptive re-use projects – the following thoughts do not constitute a development brief. Any formal development brief would require a much more considered articulation of objectives for the building, the locality and the Council, along with a more detailed statement on uses that are or are not considered acceptable.

1.4.1 Remedial Costs and Ongoing Management and Maintenance

Surveys undertaken in connection with the Priory Revisited project highlight the scale of the challenge in terms of building remediation and then the ongoing cost of maintaining the buildings.

We carefully considered the capital cost schedules, set against the design reports and the conservation management plan and broadly estimate the following:

- *Essential* capital costs that would be incurred by any incoming party for conservation and remediation in the context of an important Grade II* Listed building could exceed £1 million.
- *Essential* new build needed principally to make the buildings DDA compliant, safe and fit for occupation would add a further £150,000 to £200,000 to the capital costs.
- Professional fees and contingency on these would need to be assumed at c.£250,000 to £300,000.

Capital could thus amount to £1.5 million or more even before the fit-out it is considered. In the current funding climate, the only projects that will meet this kind of funding challenge will be those with a particularly robust business model, advanced by an organisation with credible governance and management.

Moreover, based on a highly detailed and fully costed management and maintenance schedule, the ongoing cost of simply maintaining the buildings to the requisite standard (excluding any museum

operations or renewal costs) could be – on an annualised basis – between £25,000 and £30,000 per annum. This would be a strain on the operational business plan of many businesses or user groups that might otherwise be interested in the site.

In short, while we do not believe that finding an appropriate (or even a ‘desirable’) end-user is impossible, the scale of the challenge has to be acknowledged.

1.4.2 Key Issues for Any Future Tenant / Owner

Beyond the key issue of remedial and ongoing management and maintenance costs, the following issues should be borne in mind by any future applicant or bidder on the site:

- The Priory is an important Grade II* Listed building, of significant architectural and historic interest which will need to be sustained and enhanced as part of any future proposal.
- The Priory is a distinctive building in an attractive parkland setting, but it is in an ‘off pitch’ and awkward location. It does not easily lend itself to any use that is dependent on high levels of passing trade (e.g. retail, high street F&B, many types of visitor attraction, including museums).
- There is a significant challenge to any visitor destination concept in *outer* London. Not only is Bromley a relatively small and predominantly residential market, it is also in competition with the world class visitor destinations of Central London that are within easy day trip distance.
- Finally, the local market is largely ‘non renewable’. What typically happens to exhibition-based destinations, in that context, is that they are heavily visited in the first 2-3 years of operation and once the market of ‘one time’ visits is exhausted, they begin to struggle. Accordingly, *if* a cultural destination is developed there in future, then we would recommend one that is not dependent on high volumes of visitor throughput or are *programming* rather than *exhibition*-based.

1.4.3 Potential Future Users or User Groups

Despite these concerns, we do believe that an inventive solution may still come forward that would afford *some measure*, if not complete, public access to the building.

We list below a set of use *categories* (if not specific users) that may be worth considering in advance of or in addition to an open marketing exercise for the building. The list is certainly not exhaustive and is

largely informed by our knowledge of companies / organisations that are currently looking for space or by successful recent building conversions and the uses that worked there. These include:

1. Creative workspace (e.g. Chocolate Factory; Craft Central; Cockpit Arts; Cockington House, etc.)
2. 'Maker space' / 'Fab lab' (e.g. Makerversity, The Old Vinyl Factory, London Hackspace, The White Building, etc.)
3. Rehearsal / recording / teaching / office and other 'backstage' functions for cultural organisations (e.g. St Luke's Church; Henry Wood Hall; White Lodge; Chetham's School of Music, etc.)
4. Niche, digital cinema (e.g. Kino Cinemas in Hawkhurst and Rye)
5. Meetings and functions venue (e.g. Forty Hall, the Monastery, Pembroke Lodge, etc.)
6. HE/FE and/or 'leisure learning' space (e.g. Percy House)
7. Landmark Trust (various)
8. Live music (various)
9. Childcare / nursery / children's play (as evidenced by the Priory Revisited research)
10. Healthcare / hospice (e.g. The Bothy)

Most of these can, of course, come together in different combinations to provide for a mix of uses and most would be complemented by ancillary F&B.

We expect that some of these would be untenable for planning reasons; some may require excessive or inappropriate intervention on the buildings; and others may not be appropriate to the local area. The list is simply meant to illustrate a range of potential uses that may come forward as part of any future marketing exercise. Inasmuch as the building itself is a heritage asset of historic and architectural interest, there is always the temptation to believe that some form of heritage experience is the only appropriate re-use option. The list above is only meant to illustrate that adaptive re-use of historic buildings can take any number of forms, ranging from strictly commercial and residential uses through to community, cultural and civic uses and permutations in between. Any re-use decision in future will undoubtedly need to be supported by a robust options appraisal that considers – in addition to finance and viability – their fit with the National Planning Policy Framework and the input of Historic England and Bromley Council.

1.4.4 Reactive versus Targeted Marketing of the Opportunity

Even if some combination of uses can be deemed 'desirable' and therefore a key target of any future marketing exercise, then a purely reactive marketing strategy is unlikely – in our experience – to yield the best response. This is a challenging site and building and the exercise requires both a 'broad' reactive approach and a deeper, more targeted and proactive approach.

1.4.5 Key Requirements of Any Future Bidder

The ultimate user or use of the building should be subject to the following conditions:

- Availability of capital funding that will meet (at a minimum) the remedial costs identified above

- A secure business model that can sustain the management and maintenance costs required to preserve the building on an ongoing basis
- Consistent with extant planning requirements, conditions and constraints
- A good physical fit with the building and its context
- Viability does not depend on high levels of passing trade or visitor throughput

1.4.6 Funding Opportunities

Outside of purely commercial or residential schemes, the Heritage Lottery Fund remains the primary funding body for historic building conservation projects. It is worth noting, however, that its funding is not limited to the larger 'catch all' category of *Heritage Grants* – which is hugely competitive, in any event. Other grant programmes that may be applicable to any future Priory project include *Heritage Enterprise*, in particular, which was specifically designed to meet the 'conservation deficit' of otherwise commercial schemes. Smaller grant programmes may also be applicable to community organisations that need to build the capacity needed to apply (in future) for the larger grant programmes. *Catalyst: Small Grants*, helps heritage organisations to build fundraising capacity, while the *Transition* programme helps organisations through the process of adapting or modernising their business model to meet current challenges. Although a standalone grant for the park alone is (in our opinion) unlikely to succeed, it is – in future – possible to think about a building-related grant in combination with a *Parks for People* application.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of this Paper

Fourth Street has conducted an exhaustive review of all available documentation related to the decision-making process, business planning and HLF application for the Priory Revisited project.

This paper summarises our conclusions from that analysis, specifically with a view to ensuring that all due diligence was taken throughout the process and to provide any useful insight to any potential future bidders or applicants for the site.

2.2 Documentation Reviewed

For completeness, we have reviewed the following in some detail:

- The Priory Revisited Business Plan and all of its constituent Appendices
 - Budget Summary for Culture Libraries & Leisure
 - Bromley Museum Service Revenue Budget
 - Bromley Museum Fees & Charges
 - Development Phase Budget
 - Capital Comparison between HLF Rounds 1 and 2
 - Designs by Caroe Architecture
 - Project Programme
 - Capital Budget
 - Project Cashflow
 - Cost Plan for the Activity Plan
 - Staffing Plan
 - Income & Expenditure Forecast
 - Income & Expenditure Assumptions
 - Management & Maintenance Schedule
 - Nursery Plans
 - Property Agent Advice
 - Letters of Support
- The full Heritage Lottery Fund Application
- Interpretation Plan & Stage D Museum Display Design
- The Activity Plan
- Project Management Structure
- The Priory Revisited Stage D Report by Caroe Architecture and all of its constituent Appendices

2.3 Summary of Conclusions

In summary, it is no exaggeration to say that this is one of the most impressive Museum Business Plans and HLF applications that we have ever seen. It is a clear, well-structured and extraordinarily robust and detailed body of work. It is easily the equal – and in several areas superior – to Business Plans that we have seen for much larger projects by National Museums.

Particular areas of strength include the following:

- The clarity of its Vision, aims and objectives
- Market research, analysis and audience profiling that is comprehensive in both breadth and depth
- A clear and cogent concept and business model
- A thoughtful approach to exhibition design and development
- A hugely impressive approach to programming, as articulated in the Activity Plan
- Realistic and fully justified capital costing
- A rigorous and transparent approach to operational financial planning

Our only real areas of concern with the plan as articulated all stem from a common issue. From an objective and independent perspective, it appears to us that the project is ‘building’ led rather than ‘service’ led. Put differently, the Museum is a vehicle for enabling public access to an historic building, but it may not be the best long term solution for the Museum service itself or for its users. This manifests itself, for example, in an exhibition fit-out budget that is arguably low compared to total building costs. The Museum is a tidy solution to the complexity and challenge of tenancing an historic building in an awkward location in way that guarantees continued public access. It does not automatically follow that this is the ideal solution for the Museum service itself, which is arguably better positioned – for a variety of reasons – alongside the Central Library.

Another key issue is the central importance of the Council grant-in-aid to the overall business model. In the project plan, this represents some 70% of anticipated revenue. In the absence of a long term guarantee of that level of subsidy – which is understandably difficult to provide in the current financial climate – the whole business model instantly becomes suspect in terms of viability. It is therefore easy to understand the rationale behind the decision to withdraw the HLF application, even if – on the strength of this application – the chances of success must have been very high.

Considering any potential future bidders for a short or long lease of the site, the following factors are worth considering:

- If the ultimate objective is to retain some measure of public access to the building and its interpretation, then there are mechanisms to achieve this, even in the context of a commercial lease. Provisions can be put in place to guarantee a certain number of open access days per annum and, more generally, we would advise a marketing programme that combines both *reactive* marketing (openly advertise and invite bids), with a more *proactive* approach (specifically targeting user groups that might welcome and encourage some measure of public access).

- That said, we note considerable risks associated with taking the building on. The surveys undertaken as part of the Stage D design have revealed a series of necessary remedial works that would need to be undertaken for health and safety, public access and conservation reasons – notably the link corridor and fabric works to the old Library building. These costs are not insubstantial and would need to be borne by any incoming user. A similar argument applies to the ongoing maintenance and management costs.

3 Background

Our understanding of the project's origin, development and denouement is as follows.

3.1 History of the Site

The Priory is a Grade II* listed medieval manor house and one of the oldest buildings in Bromley. The estate was first gifted to the Priory of Christ Church Canterbury in 1032, who built a rectory and manor house there. The house was rebuilt in stone in 1290, and expanded in 1393 and 1471. The manor and farm were an important source of income for the Priory and it became a staging post for priors travelling to and from London.

The Priory is one of the few pre-reformation rectories to have survived. After the dissolution of Christ Church Priory in the 1530s, ownership of the house was transferred to the church. It was leased to ancestors of the Spencer Churchill family who implemented several changes from the 17th to 19th Centuries.

In 1864, the church sold the freehold. This action triggered significant changes to the building that were implemented by a series of private owners, as the Rectory was transformed from a working agricultural building into a gentleman's retreat. The last private owner died in 1941 and his family moved away the following year. The building was then leased to Orpington Urban District Council.

The Priory was listed at Grade II* in 1954 and has been in municipal ownership since 1959, when a modernist extension was added to house the municipal library. Until recently, it has housed a combination of civic functions, including the museum, public library and Council offices. The building currently houses the museum, surrounded by gardens which form an attractive public park and local civic amenity.

3.2 Bromley Museum

Bromley Museum has occupied the Priory building since 1965 and the collection has evolved over time. Bromley Museum is currently the custodian of a collection of 19,566 works of art and objects. The collection is primarily local history. Initially the museum collection was made up of just a small number of local archaeological finds. More objects were acquired or gifted to the museum by local people. Then in the mid-1990s the London Borough of Bromley's fine art collection was transferred from the Council into the care of the museum. The Museum is also custodian of the significant John Lubbock collection of 700 largely archaeological and ethnographic objects.

Since the Museum's founding, however, the building has remained largely unaltered except for small scale building improvements and modernisations, delivered on occasion and as needed. These alterations included the addition of exhibition and education spaces and emergency building repairs on a wholly reactive basis.

As use of the building changed and various functions (notably the library and offices) migrated to better locations or fit-for-purpose buildings, the museum service grew. In 1999, the Council made an application

to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a strategic project which would improve Bromley Museum at the Priory as part of a wider bid to restore and conserve both the Priory and Priory Gardens. This project was an attempt to make the strategic improvements to the building and its environment that would make the Priory (then comprising both museum and library) a viable visitor destination.

The application was unsuccessful. HLF feedback stated that additional heritage and public benefits which would have been delivered by the bid did not represent 'value for money'. Heritage priorities for the site as a whole needed further consideration, especially in relation to the Priory building. A particular criticism of the application was that it did not consider how the museum could better operate within the Priory site.

3.3 The Priory Revisited

In December 2009, following consultation with stakeholders, the Council decided to relocate Orpington library to a more central location in Orpington town centre. This presented an opportunity to extend the museum into the library extension.

In June 2010, it was agreed that an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund would be pursued which would conserve the Priory and extend, develop and improve the museum service.

A first round application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Heritage Grants programme in June 2011 for a £2.3 million scheme with match funding from London Borough of Bromley of £447k.

This scheme sought to:

- Unify the building with its immediate gardens
- Provide formal and informal education and learning spaces
- Extend physical access to, around and within the Priory
- Improve visitor facilities, including a new café
- Improve interpretation and allow more of the museum's collection to be on display
- Offer a range of new activities to engage more people and a more diverse range of audiences
- Create leasable space for income generation to meet the future running costs

This application was given a Stage 1 Approval.

3.4 Project Development

As per the Stage 1 HLF approval, the Fund released a development grant of £186,300 (matched by £40,800 from the Council) towards further design and development work on the project.

In the course of this more detailed development work, further investigations triggered an increase in the anticipated development costs. The building was deemed to be in worse condition than originally anticipated, with a need for significantly more repair and conservation work and an increased contingency.

The passage from RIBA Stage C to RIBA Stage D in the design process always includes more detailed surveys and investigations and it is not unusual for project costs to vary in the process as building

conditions are deemed to be in better or worse condition than expected. In this case, the architect reported as part of the Stage D report that:

“The building fabric conditions survey ... concluded that the external envelope of the Priory is in reasonable condition, whereas the external envelope of the Former Library is in very poor condition, including flat roofs that are at the end of their life and failing cladding systems. The report also highlights the gradual degradation of many of the finishes and fixtures of the Priory and Former Library through modifications, accretions and alterations and the need for a comprehensive campaign of conservation and improvements. Stage D has seen further investigative work into the repairs required and the cost of repairs and conservation are budgeted in the cost plan.”

A separate mechanical and electrical survey also found that:

“[T]here are very few elements to the existing mechanical and electrical installation that can be considered for retention and re-use.”

Total project costs thus increased from £2.46 million in the Stage 1 HLF bid to £3.61 million in the Stage 2 application, requiring some £1.06 million of match funding from the Council and a commitment to 25 years’ revenue funding.

From a review of project costs, we note that – while some costs were reduced between Stage 1 and Stage 2 – these economies were more than offset by the need for additional repair and conservation work, where projected costs increased from £657,360 to £1,763,460. Necessary mechanical and electrical works and roof repair alone were costed at £861,000. The need for additional contingency added some £240,000 and construction price inflation since the original scheme was devised added a further £170,000 to the estimate.

3.5 Withdrawal of HLF Application

As a consequence of this project cost escalation – and now in the context of severe local authority spending cuts – Members elected to withdraw the application prior to a decision and cancel the project. We understand that this decision was partly informed by Council surveys in which local residents ranked the museum service among their lowest priorities in terms of extant Council services. We therefore assume that beyond the higher construction costs, a key consideration of the decision was the need to underwrite some £275,000 of year-on-year grant-in-aid to the Museum – a pledge that could be problematic in the current financial climate.

Although no final decision has yet been made on a future use of the Priory, we understand that a key issue is whether to sell a short or a long leasehold interest on the site on the open market.

4 Desktop Review of HLF Application

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this review is to undertake a detailed, independent review of the HLF application and its associated documentation to understand the following:

- Was all due diligence taken in the planning and delivery of the project?
- Are there any lessons to be drawn that might inform future redevelopment efforts?
- In the event that the site is openly marketed for potential lease or acquisition, are there any important factors to be considered by and communicated to any future bidders for the site?

4.2 Approach

To better organise and articulate our findings, we have structured a response along the lines of any typical feasibility study that we would undertake ourselves for a heritage building. It is worth noting, in this respect, that Fourth Street consultants have specialised in business planning for museums and heritage buildings for over 15 years. We have drafted business plans and successful HLF applications for organisations that include the largest National Museums (Science Museum, The V&A, British Museum, Royal Museums Greenwich, National Waterfront Museum), as well smaller, regional and special interest museums (Pallant House Gallery, The Corinium, Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Household Cavalry Museum).

Our standard approach to compiling these business plans and applications is to ensure a high quality response in all of the following sections:

- Vision, Aims and Objectives
- Options Assessment
- Market Research and Analysis
- Concept and Business Model
- Product and Programme
- Capital costs
- Financial planning

Accordingly, we have reviewed all of the available documentation through the prism of a model that we know to be proven and successful.

4.3 Vision, Aims and Objectives

Did the project have a clear vision?

Did a detailed set of aims and objectives cascade from this vision?

Were these aims and objectives clearly articulated with definable and measurable outputs and outcomes?

Were the vision, aims and objectives clearly communicated to the full client and professional team?

Do they capture and balance the three critical dimensions of a successful heritage project: conservation, public access and viability?

The project's vision, aims and objectives are ably captured in the Strategic Background section of the Business Plan, summarised in the HLF application document and fully reflected in all of the design documentation that we have seen. Moreover, the vision, aims and objectives speak in equal measure to the conservation/curatorial, public access/engagement and viability needs of any responsible capital project related to a heritage building or museum.

In summary,

"The Priory Revisited Project will conserve and restore the historic Priory building and develop and improve the borough's museum service to which the Priory is home. As a result, the borough will be provided with a high quality cultural destination that provides opportunities for people and communities to learn about and participate in the borough's heritage."

Cascading from this vision statement is a series of apposite and clearly articulated aims:

1. *To conserve, restore and enhance the heritage value of the Priory*
2. *To create a welcoming and accessible museum service*
3. *To interpret the borough's heritage in engaging and inspiring ways*
4. *To provide opportunities to enable a sustainable museum service and secure the future of the historic Priory building*

These are further described through a series of specific objectives, all of which lend themselves to ongoing evaluation and demonstration of outputs and outcomes:

Conserve, restore and enhance the heritage value of the Priory

- Protect and improve the external and internal condition of the Priory
- Commence the restoration of unity between the house and landscape
- Restore and un-obscure the Priory's heritage features to amalgamate them into the building's heritage character
- Reunite the two historic rooms which were absorbed into the 1959 library extension back with the historic Priory
- Improve the relationship between the historic Priory and the 1959 extension so that the site works as a whole for visitors
- Extend physical access to, around and within the Priory site

- Relocate the car-parking facilities away from the immediate Priory frontage and re-interpret the 'green court' with a new landscape design that complements the external heritage qualities of the Priory. This includes making the entrance to the Great Hall the focal point of the Priory's frontage
- Re-assign internal spatial planning to make the most of the site and to be sensitive to the heritage value of the internal spaces.

Create a welcoming and accessible museum service

- Allow for the rationalisation and extension of opening hours
- Provide welcoming visitor facilities (including the provision of WCs, a café and orientation), attractions and events
- Provide formal and informal learning spaces, including a dedicated classroom facility
- Increase visitor numbers and diversify audiences using the service through a range of targeted activities
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are trained and knowledgeable and able to meet service users' needs and expectations
- Encourage a sense of ownership among local service users
- Cement meaningful partnerships with other local, regional and national heritage organisations to deliver a cohesive and engaging service

Interpret the borough's heritage in engaging and inspiring ways

- Create new permanent exhibition spaces that make better use of the internal spatial qualities of the museum to better interpret the collection
- Allow more of the museum's collections to be viewed by visitors and increase awareness of significance of Lubbock's collection
- Provide accessible and inspiring interpretation of the borough's heritage to encourage a greater understanding of its significance
- Interpret the fabric and evolution of the Priory to improve the articulation of its significance

Provide opportunities to enable a sustainable museum service and secure the future of the Priory building

- Provide multi-functional spaces within the museum that create opportunities for income generation
- Provide some of the 1959 library extension for let-able space that will generate a long-term revenue income stream
- Improve the management of the Priory site and service

4.4 Options Assessment

Were different options considered to meet the needs of the project?

Were these options clearly defined?

Were they genuinely different solutions or just different permutations of a single approach?

Were the options assessed against conservation, public access and viability criteria?

We have not had sight of any written options appraisal, which likely pre-dates this project and is not an explicit requirement of a full HLF application. We understand, however, that Members were asked to consider three distinct solutions for the challenges and opportunities presented by the relocation of Orpington Library:

1. Relocate Bromley Museum to Central Library, on the High Street, and seek to dispose of the Priory and 1959 library extension on the open market
2. Utilise the 1959 library extension to hold the Council's book stock and continue to run Bromley Museum from the historic Priory in its existing package
3. To explore options for grant funding to extend the museum service into the library extension and to prepare part of the building as let-able space to provide revenue support for the future of the service, recognising the regeneration benefits of investment

Accepting that we have not had sight of any documentation associated with this assessment or its deliberation, there is no question that – taken at face value – the third option (i.e. the *preferred* option) is the more ambitious of the three.

For what is essentially a local history museum (albeit with some items of national significance) the Central Library is unquestionably a stronger location. Option 3, in our view, is a museum solution to a sensitive and complex building challenge rather than the ideal building solution for the ongoing delivery and development of a local museum service. Put differently, if one were to found a new local history museum in Bromley, the Central Library site would be the more attractive location; that the Council elected to pursue the third option strikes us as a sincere attempt to find a long term solution for the Priory building that would keep the site publicly accessible but financially viable in the long term.

4.5 Market Research and Analysis

Was market research undertaken and was it robust?

Did it consider and profile all current and potential audiences (residents, tourists, schools, special interest, etc.)?

Did it consider both the demand and supply side of the market?

Did it include an analysis of both competitors and comparators?

Was any primary market research undertaken?

Did it consider both current visitors and non-visitors?

Were visitor projections robust, credible and conservative?

The Business Plan includes a detailed Market Appraisal (Section 6) and further audience profiling was undertaken in connection with the Activity Plan.

We have previously worked with local authority museums services in larger regional cities like Tyne & Wear, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Portsmouth and Brighton. We have seldom seen a local museums service that is more in command of its audience profile and market positioning.

A telling indication of this is the following passage of the Business Plan:

“Visitor numbers have been counted by an electronic counting system for the past 10 years. This data is summarised in the table below.

Year	Visitor Numbers
2003/04	9,910
2004/05	16,832
2005/06	21,681
2006/07	22,343
2007/08	23,186
2008/09	24,980
2009/10	25,045
2010/11	24,552
2011/12	21,941
2012/13	21,636
2013/14	19,804

Although there are general visitor numbers for the museum going back many years, these were found to be inaccurate because they relied completely on electronic counters and no allowance was made for repeat entries by staff and contractors who enter and exit the museum multiple times on a daily basis.

To rectify this a new counting methodology was implemented in summer 2013 that showed there were approximately 400 less visitors each month than originally thought. Data collected during 2013/14 demonstrated that the museum received 19,804 visits.”

This problem of how to accurately count visitors in and out of a free-access environment is endemic in the museums sector. Most free museums will use some form of electronic counter, all of which face a similar

challenge of how to account for repeat and regular, non-visitor traffic. It is exceptionally rare, in our experience, for a museum service to even acknowledge the deficiencies of electronic counters; rarer still for them to rectify and correct for it; and yet rarer still for them to describe this correction in the context of a funding application. In isolation this is a minor point of statistical accuracy but, in our view, it is indicative of a culture within the museum service that is rigorous, responsible, market-led and data driven.

Beyond this general statement, we also note the following:

- The market research includes analysis of extant museum data (supplemented by anecdotal evidence from museum staff in instances where data was not available)
- Desktop research is accompanied by primary market research, including a bespoke *Audience Agency* study and the Service Consultation Report
- Audience profiles are fully defined, segmented, quantified and analysed
- The analysis combines ‘micro’ analysis of visitors and non-visitors, with a broader ‘macro’ analysis of general trends and patterns in UK leisure and cultural trends
- Target markets for the redeveloped museum are clearly defined and described
- Audience targeting is firmly anchored in the vision, aims and objectives of the project as described above
- A cogent and candid SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Assessment was undertaken
- Supply analysis includes a headline assessment of a lengthy list of competitors and comparators, including some of the most exhaustive and informative financial benchmarking that we have ever seen
- The resulting visitor projection, including a Year 1 target of 48,000, is – in our view – ambitious, but achievable and well supported by the research

In combination, the Market Appraisal described in the Business Plan and the Audience Profiling of the Activity Plan represent one of the rigorous and robust market analyses that we have ever reviewed – particularly for a project of this scale.

To put this into perspective, the benchmarking exercise alone that was undertaken in support of this project was easily comparable to – if not better than – one that was recently undertaken for a proposed £65 million capital project in Central London.

4.6 Concept and Business Model

We distinguish the general concept and business model from the more specific product and programme and its associated financial plan (described below).

Is the concept sound and credible?

Is it predicated on a viable business model?

Is it broadly deliverable (in the short term) and sustainable (in the long term)?

Is it clearly articulated?

Is it of an appropriate scale?

Is it market or design-led?

Will it deliver the Vision, aims and objectives?

The concept – in broad terms – is to address the challenge (and exploit the opportunity) created by relocation of the library in order to *simultaneously*:

- Refurbish and improve an important historic building
- Expand and enhance the Bromley museum and its suite of services
- Improve access to the Borough's collections
- Improve and enhance the environment of the Priory Gardens
- Create a visitor destination, educational resource and local amenity of greater significance and draw

This is all predicated on a basic business model that seeks to marry a number of income generating functions (notably a ceremonies and functions hire business, charging exhibitions, and commercial leases to a café and a childcare facility) with substantial grant-in-aid from the Council.

By comparison to other projects that we have reviewed or been involved with, we note the following:

- The concept is appropriately scaled and well within reasonable limits for a museum service of this size and in this location
- The concept is anchored in a clear vision and well-informed by rigorous market analysis; moreover, that vision and analysis have evidently informed the design rather than the inverse, which is all too often the case
- The basic business model on which it is based is sensible. In particular, we note the ongoing reliance on some 70% of revenue coming through Council grant. It is often tempting in these circumstances to use the capital project as a means to replace Council funding with earned income through overly-ambitious and unrealistic expectations of the commercial returns that could be generated in future. That does not appear to be the case here

As intimated above, our one concern is that the project is arguably 'building' rather than 'service' led. There are effectively two main heritage assets at play: an historic building and a museum collection. The collection is of mostly local interest, albeit with a small proportion of particularly important objects of national significance (the Lubbock collection). In this context, it appears that the Museum is seen as a means to tenant the building with a use that will keep it publicly accessible. It is not necessarily the optimal solution for the Museum, its collection or its visitors – but it is a tidy solution for the building. There is nothing inherently wrong with this and many (if not most) local history museums across the country are currently serving a similar function. It is also indicative of a sincere attempt to do whatever is

possible – within reasonable limits – to maximise public access to the Priory. We mention this only because cancellation of the project – whilst unfortunate – need not be seen as a major setback for the Bromley Museum or its stakeholders. Other solutions may be available to the Museum that do not involve the challenge of managing and maintaining such a large and sensitive historic building in an awkward location.

At the same time, it is worth acknowledging that alternative uses for the building that may come forward in the future do not necessarily entail a complete sacrifice of public access. A ‘proactive’ and targeted approach to marketing the opportunity to particular user groups – i.e. those that would allow if not encourage some measure of public access and interpretation – is certainly worth considering in advance of openly marketing the site.

Finally, we reinforce the point that the underlying business model is – understandably and by design – conditional on substantial, ongoing Council grant-in-aid. This is critical to an appreciation of the eventual decision to withdraw the application and cancel the project. In the event that the Council is unwilling or unable to provide that level of revenue funding, then it is difficult to imagine any permutation of this project that would be viable in the long term. In the current context of significant local authority funding cuts across the country, we are destined to see many local authority museums in similar circumstances close over the next few years. Even with the availability of a large HLF capital grant, the concept is untenable without secure revenue funding. It is preferable, in that case, to regroup and identify an alternative long term solution for the Museum, the collection and the building than to advance the project with an uncertain financial future.

4.7 Product and Programme

Is the specific product – i.e. the constituent elements that create the user experience – well defined and described?

Does the project have a clear interpretative approach?

Has it been informed by market research and an appreciation of the collection?

Is it well integrated with the building design?

Has the programme of services, events, exhibitions and activities been fully considered?

Does it account for a market that is largely static and ‘non renewable’?

The Business Plan and HLF application describe the interpretation strategy in some considerable detail and it is further described and illustrated in the separate Interpretation Plan & Exhibition Design document. The strategy is highly professional, thoughtful, and imaginative, taking account of a detailed audit of the collection, public consultation and market research (including a public survey with 685 responses), a knowledge of the museum’s target audiences, a best practice review and the input of specialist advisors and experienced exhibition designers.

In summary, the core visitor experience was to be centred on three permanent galleries:

- **Bromley Revisited.** The main local history gallery sought to balance the needs and interests of local residents with those of visitors from further afield. The Bromley 'story' would be told through the themes of 'beauty and creativity'; 'technology'; and 'spirituality'.
- **The Lubbock Gallery.** Capitalising on the unique opportunity of the Lubbock collection, a second gallery space would place John Lubbock within the context of the tradition of Victorian collecting and anthropology, and how this practice led to the development of the Victorian world view and the development of modern science.
- **Priory.** Finally, the Priory itself would be interpreted through a bespoke gallery that would explain the significance and context of a heritage asset of national significance.

Importantly, the project also included a community gallery and a fit-for-purpose temporary exhibitions gallery, with a forward plan for populating this with a series of upcoming shows, including a 'blockbuster' exhibition of national significance centred on the Lubbock story and developed in partnership with the British Museum.

The interpretative approach, as described, would be far in advance of what is typical for most local history museums of comparable scale. Key tenets of the strategy included:

- Exhibitions and interpretation designed to complement the Priory building
- Layered interpretation which allows multiple depths of engagement across a wide range of audiences
- Hands-on interactive opportunities within exhibitions
- Challenging visitors to see Bromley in a new light and to recognise what is great and special about the borough
- Raising the profile of the John Lubbock collection
- Encouraging visitors to reconsider their views on themes explored in exhibitions
- Offering links for visitors to other attractions in the borough to enrich understanding

While much of this is now 'standard' for larger national or regional museums, it is largely lacking from the vast majority of local museums, most of which have suffered from extensive periods of underinvestment and very low levels of visitation.

We are particularly mindful that, in this case, the Museum would face what we would describe as a largely static and 'non renewable' market. By this we mean that it does not enjoy a high level of passing trade by domestic or international leisure or VFR tourists who are normally a prime market for museum and heritage experiences. In the absence of that market, the single biggest challenge that a museum faces is *not* to get people to visit; but convincing them to visit *again*. With an exceptional product, the resident market in an outer London Borough would likely be exhausted within 2-3 years – in other words, the people with the highest propensity to visit would visit shortly after the museum launches; what incentive do they have to come back? Evidence from nationwide museum surveys demonstrates time and again that the key factors in attracting repeat visits are: new capital development; programming (i.e. special events, exhibitions and activities); and special promotions. It follows that for a museum like this to

succeed it must not only have strong permanent exhibitions in a well-designed environment; it needs an exceptionally rich programme.

We consider it significant therefore that, as impressive as this interpretative approach may be, it is in the accompanying **Activity Plan** that the HLF application and the Business Plan genuinely distinguish themselves. This is an impressive document. The Activity Plan is an extraordinarily detailed, well researched and thoughtful piece of work, which not only describes what the future Museum would *be*, but – critically – what it would *do*. The programme is extensive, imaginative and exciting, described in considerable detail, finely targeted to specific audiences, and fully planned, costed and timetabled. At this stage in a development process, it is one of the most cogent and meticulous supporting documents that we have seen and is easily comparable to similar programmes prepared by organisations like the British Museum, the Science Museum and The V&A for HLF applications of more than £10 million.

4.8 Capital Costs

Has the project been fully costed by a qualified Quantity Surveyor?

Is the projected capital cost commensurate with the quality described by the architect and exhibition designers?

Does the cost plan make appropriate allowances for contingency?

The project was fully costed by Sawyer & Fisher throughout its development.

Total project costs for the final scheme (RIBA Stage D Design) were estimated at £3.6 million, nearly half of which was for repair and conservation work. Having reviewed the capital costs and supporting reports in some detail, we note that a significant number of interventions are needed simply to update and modernise the building and make it fit-for-purpose as a community space.

Among these are the proposed new link corridor between the Priory and the old Orpington Library, which is deemed an essential new element to ensure statutory compliance for fire safety and disabled access. This intervention alone adds more than £200,000 to the capital costs, but it would be essential for a museum – or, indeed, for any public use of the site – given the staggered levels between the two buildings and the need to provide coherent accessibility between the two. Similarly essential interventions to modernise and update the former Library building (including the introduction of a new lift and associated mechanical and electrical works) add a further £200,000 and would equally be required of any future user that proposes some form of public access to the site.

A particular concern that we have is the relatively small budget proposed for the exhibition fit-out at £275,000 for some 200-260 sqm of high quality exhibition space (depending on the level of fit-out of the Community Gallery). This amounts to fit-out costs of between £1,000 and £1,400 per sqm. This is probably appropriate for a more conventional local history museum, but seems insufficient to deliver the quality of experience so compellingly described by the Interpretation and Exhibition plan. More specifically, fit-out of the the Lubbock Gallery, which would display a collection of national significance, is

costed at just £1,635 per sqm compared to a minimum of £2,000 per sqm that would be assumed by a national museum.

We expect that as costs escalated for necessary building fabric, structural, mechanical and electrical works, economies were made to other parts of the project, including the exhibition fit-out. This would only reinforce our suspicion the quality of the Museum experience could have ultimately been compromised by the demands of restoring, conserving and maintaining such a challenging building.

4.9 Operational Financial Plan

Have all potential income streams been identified?

Are revenue projections reasonable and robust?

Are all operating costs fully accounted for?

Are all of the underlying assumptions explained and justified?

Has grant-in-aid been secured?

Have the key sensitivities been identified?

What is the ratio of fixed to variable costs?

Have provisions been made for repairs and renewals?

Operational financial projections are a typical area of weakness for most new museum projects, with a strong temptation to overestimate revenues and underestimate costs – also known as *optimism bias*. This does not appear to be the case with the Priory Revisited project and we would suggest that this was a particularly robust and rigorously justified financial plan. Indeed, alongside the Market Analysis and the Activity Plan, the financial plan is a particularly impressive piece of work.

Aided by the benchmarking exercise described above, all forward projections and key variables are rigorously assessed against actual experience elsewhere. Assumptions are fully detailed and transparent so it is easy to see how the projections have been built up. The pricing policy is clear and benchmarked against appropriate comparables.

Expenditure assumptions are well thought through and, encouragingly, appropriate allocations have been made to areas like marketing and programming. The latter refers back to the Activity Plan which was minutely detailed and budgeted.

Another impressively detailed area that has had particular attention paid to it is the Maintenance & Management schedule, which clearly budgets for each planned and preventive maintenance requirement, describing who is responsible, its likely frequency and budget. This is frequently overlooked or trivialised by much larger organisations.

Commercial income through leases was also sense-checked by reference to a professional surveyor's estimate of likely rents and we note that the lower range of that estimate was taken into the projections, which is again indicative of the strict financial discipline evidenced by the Business Plan.

What is not immediately apparent – although it may be subsumed within other line items – is a bespoke exhibitions renewal budget, which we would normally recommend, particularly in the context of a predominantly residential and non-renewable market. This is unfortunate, but not unusual. In this case, it is partly mitigated by the annual surplus projected. Provided that this surplus is ringfenced within the Museum budget, then it would allow for the possibility of building up a sufficient reserve for exhibition renewal.

5 Future Solutions

Based on our review of the Business Plan, HLF application and associated supporting documents, we are generally of the view that all due diligence was rigorously applied and a sincere effort was made to deliver an exciting project at Priory Bromley that would extend broad public access to the building, expand and enhance the Museum, and provide valuable education, learning and heritage services to the community. In the current financial climate, it is nonetheless easy to appreciate how and why the Council is unable to meet the higher match funding requirement or provide a 25-year commitment to the level of revenue funding needed to make the project viable. The ultimate decision to withdraw the HLF application is therefore understandable.

A likely (albeit unconfirmed) next step is to openly market the Priory building as a short or long leasehold opportunity to any interested third parties. This seems a logical next step under the circumstances, with bids and proposals presumably invited from a variety of potential users, including cultural, commercial and community organisations.

In this section, we summarise some key issues of relevance to any interested parties, that can be gleaned from the business planning and development work to date.

5.1 Remedial and Ongoing Maintenance Costs

Surveys undertaken in connection with the Priory Revisited project highlight the scale of the challenge in terms of building remediation and then the ongoing cost of maintaining the buildings. Capital works deemed 'essential' are described in the tables below, which are drawn from the bid documentation.

- In Figure 1, we have included only those works considered essential in the context of the remediation and conservation of a Grade II* Listed building.
- Figure 2 includes some portion of the New Building works, notably for the purpose of making both buildings and the link between them DDA compliant and fit for occupation.
- For fees and contingency (Figure 3), we have made standard allowances that any incoming party would make when considering a project from first principles (both at 10%).

Figure 1: Repair & Conservation Works

THE PRIORY		
Adaptation of stair tower and new openings		£18,502
Works to roofs including insulation		£25,520
Works to chimneys		£14,546
Work to windows and surrounds		£18,757
Upgrade or repair external doors		£8,294
Works to the internal ground floors to restore historic finishes and enable sensitive mechanical and electrical installation.		£22,713
Internal fire screen and doorway to the corner of the Great Hall, including the removal of the safe door and make good		£10,591
Works to the internal first floors to undertake minor structural repairs, ensure that finishes comply with building regulations and to enable sensitive mechanical and electrical installation.		£23,989
Repair and redecorate ceilings		£26,413
Strip back existing Great Hall roof in preparation for a new roof to the extension		£2,424
Mechanical and electrical installation and CCTV		£391,732
FORMER LIBRARY		
Replace the existing roof covering, introduce a latchway system on flat roofing (including costs for scaffolding and temporary roof)		£207,222
Reclad columns		£26,796
Works to existing external ramp to improve access		£16,843
Repair and improve external walls including insulation		£31,007
Replace external windows		£90,596
Refurbish external doors		£12,888
Remove rolling rack from the basement		£2,680
Refurbishment works to stairs		£6,125
Repair or replacement of ceiling		£8,422
External lighting and electrical services		£38,280
Work to form WC and lift areas on the ground floor		£50,019
Work to form WC and lift areas on the first floor		£33,814
Lift		£42,108
Mechanical and electrical installation		£61,248
OTHER		
Asbestos strip out		£20,000
SUB-TOTAL REPAIR & CONSERVATION		£1,211,529

Figure 2: New Building Works

FORMER LIBRARY	
Work to form WC and lift areas on the ground floor	£50,019
Work to form WC and lift areas on the first floor	£33,814
Lift	£42,108
Mechanical and electrical installation	£61,248
LINK CORRIDOR EXTENSION	
Foundations and ground floor slab including floor finish	£22,585
Frame	£22,458
External walls	£15,057
Windows and external doors	£18,502
Roof construction, coverings and Velux window	£31,517
First floor construction	£4,594
Mechanical and electrical installation	£41,215
Scaffolding	£5,104
Link corridor extension external works	£3,828
SUB-TOTAL NEW BUILDING WORKS	£164,860

Figure 3: Total Capital Costs

TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS	£1,376,389
Professional Fees @ 10%	£137,639
Contingency @ 10%	£137,639
TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	£1,651,667

Accepting that these costs may be marginally overstated for some uses – i.e. if the specification can be reduced for an end-use that is not a publicly accessible museum – the remedial and conservation costs alone are likely to be in excess of £1 million, excluding any fit-out works. This makes the building a challenging proposition for any interested party, especially in the current funding climate.

Moreover, based on a highly detailed and fully costed management and maintenance schedule, the ongoing cost of simply maintaining the buildings to the requisite standard (excluding any museum operations or renewal costs) could be – on an annualised basis – between £25,000 and £30,000 per annum. This will put inordinate strain on the operational business plan of many businesses or user groups that might otherwise be interested in the site.

5.2 Key Issues for Any Future Owner / Tenant

Beyond the key issue of remedial and ongoing management and maintenance costs, the following issues should be borne in mind by any future owner or occupier of the site:

- The Priory is an important Grade II* Listed building, of significant architectural and historic interest which will need to be sustained and enhanced as part of any future proposal.
- The Priory is a distinctive building in an attractive parkland setting, but it is in an 'off pitch' and awkward location. Put simply, it does not easily lend itself to any use that is ultimately dependent on visibility, profile or high levels of passing trade (e.g. retail, F&B, many forms of visitor attraction, including museums).
- There is more generally a significant challenge to any visitor destination concept in outer London. Not only are these small, predominantly residential markets, but they are ultimately in competition with the whole constellation of world class visitor destinations that are within easy day trip distance in Central London. It is an unfortunate reality, but in this context, smaller visitor destinations are often better located outside of London altogether than they are in outer London.
- As mentioned, another key issue about outer London markets is that they are largely 'non renewable'. Attractions in those markets face broadly the same market year after year, without any great influx of tourists to regularly 'refresh' the pool of potential visitors. What often happens to exhibition-based or other 'static' destinations is that they are heavily visited in the first 2-3 years of operation and once the market of 'one time' visits is exhausted, they begin to struggle.¹ Accordingly, *if* a cultural destination is developed there in future, then we would recommend one that is *programming* rather than *exhibition* based.

5.3 Potential Future Users or User Groups

For the reasons described above and throughout this report, we are not convinced that a museum is the best use of the Priory building. Whilst the *Priory Revisited* was obviously a worthy and well-intentioned attempt to find a re-use for the building that would keep it fully open and accessible, in the absence of secure grant-in-aid, this option is no longer tenable. Persevering with a museum solution would likely incur more abortive costs without advancing any deliverable solution.

That said, there are *categories* of uses (if not specific user groups) that we think are worth investigating in advance of or in addition to an open marketing exercise for the building. Inasmuch as the building itself is a heritage asset of historic and architectural interest, there is always the temptation to believe that some form of heritage experience is the only appropriate re-use option. That is not always the case. We list below some adaptive re-use examples from other historic buildings to show that this can take any number

¹ We saw this recently with a major attraction in London that re-launched three years ago. Some 75% of visits in Year 1 were made by local residents; this dropped to 50% in Year 2; and by Year 3 it had reverted to its traditional visitor profile, with 75% of visits made by tourists. Without access to a large flow of domestic and international tourists, it would almost certainly have been in financial distress.

of forms, ranging from strictly commercial and residential uses through to community, cultural and civic uses and permutations in between. These include, amongst others:

1. Creative workspace (e.g. Chocolate Factory; Craft Central; Cockpit Arts; Cockington House, etc.)
2. 'Maker space' / 'Fab lab' (e.g. Makerversity, The Old Vinyl Factory, London Hackspace, The White Building, etc.)
3. Rehearsal / recording / teaching / office and other 'backstage' functions for cultural organisations (e.g. St Luke's Church; Henry Wood Hall; White Lodge; Chetham's School of Music, etc.)
4. Niche, digital cinema (e.g. Kino Cinemas in Hawkhurst and Rye)
5. Meetings and functions venue (e.g. Forty Hall, the Monastery, Pembroke Lodge, etc.)
6. HE/FE and/or 'leisure learning' space (e.g. Percy House)
7. Landmark Trust (various)
8. Live music (various)
9. Childcare / nursery / children's play (as evidenced by the Priory Revisited research)
10. Healthcare / hospice (e.g. The Bothy)

All of these (and more) may or may not be appropriate subject to market demand, planning conditions, physical feasibility, availability of operators or collections and a host of other conditions. Some of these would be untenable for planning reasons; some may require excessive or inappropriate intervention on the buildings; and others may not be appropriate to the local area. The list is simply meant to illustrate a range of potential uses that may come forward as part of any future marketing exercise.

Any re-use decision in future will undoubtedly need to be supported by a robust options appraisal that considers – in addition to finance and viability – their fit with the National Planning Policy Framework and the input of Historic England and Bromley Council.

5.4 Reactive versus Targeted Marketing of the Opportunity

We would stress, however, that even if one or some combination of uses can be deemed 'appropriate' or 'desirable' and therefore a key target of any future marketing exercise, then a purely reactive marketing strategy of advertising the site and reviewing responses is unlikely – in our experience – to yield the best response. In our view, the exercise requires both a 'broad' reactive approach and deeper, more targeted and *proactive* approach to particular users and user groups. This would normally require a

period of ‘soft market testing’ in which particular users and user groups are alerted to the coming opportunity and have the opportunity to prepare a bespoke response to it.

5.5 Key Requirements of Any Future Bidder

It finally bears mentioning that identifying the most appropriate future use of the building should be subject to the following conditions:

1. Availability of capital funding that will meet (at a minimum) the remedial costs identified above
2. A secure business model that can sustain the management and maintenance costs required to preserve the building on an ongoing basis
3. Consistent with extant planning requirements, conditions and constraints
4. A good physical fit with the building and its context
5. Viability does not depend on high levels of passing trade or visitor throughput

5.6 Funding Opportunities

Outside of purely commercial or residential schemes, the Heritage Lottery Fund remains the primary funding body for historic building conservation projects.

It is worth noting, however, that its funding is not limited to the larger ‘catch all’ category of **Heritage Grants**.

Other grant programmes that may be applicable to any future Priory project include Heritage Enterprise, which was specifically created in recognition that many historic buildings need preserving, but not all historic buildings can be visitor destinations. The **Heritage Enterprise** Grant was therefore created to meet the ‘conservation deficit’ in an otherwise more commercial scheme.

Smaller grant programmes may also be applicable to community organisations that need to build the capacity needed to apply (in future) for the larger grant programmes. **Catalyst: Small Grants**, helps heritage organisations to build fundraising capacity, while the **Transition** programme helps organisations through the process of adapting or modernising their business model to meet current challenges.

Although a standalone grant for the park alone is unlikely to succeed (in our opinion), it is – in future – possible to think about a combination of a building-related grant in combination with a **Parks for People** application.