**RATHFARNHAM CASTLE COURTYARD AND STABLES.**

South Dublin County Council is extremely conscious of the tourism, amenity and Heritage appeal of Rathfarnham Castle, its associated outbuildings and adjacent lands. In this context there has been ongoing dialogue between the Council and the Office of Public Works in recent years regarding potential complimentary initiatives to enhance the local amenity and enrich the visitor experience around Rathfarnham Castle and Park. Earlier this year, the Council engaged a conservation architect to complete a conservation report on the Rathfarnham Castle courtyard and stables. The purpose of the report, recently presented to the locally elected council members is to highlight the necessary conservation issues while identifying in general terms potential future uses which respect the heritage and compliment the amenity value of this unique setting.

In summary the report identifies a number of potential future uses which complement the local amenity and retail offer of Rathfarnham village while augmenting the existing activity and visitor appeal of the Castle and its environs.

In order to deliver on this opportunity the report has identified initial conservation, archaeological and stabilisation works with potential costs of up to €1m. Whilst this is a very significant sum it is considered fundamental to the realisation of the future development potential. At this point the council propose to proceed with the conservation works while conducting preliminary market research as to the likely interest in a joint venture collaboration in developing the stables and courtyard as a quality destination while respecting the heritage of the area. The council has an open mind as to the potential mix of complimentary uses but is very much focused on the potential offerings around the food, craft, and health and wellbeing sectors.

Following further market research and when the conservation works are agreed it is proposed to formalise proposals for a competitive process which would culminate in the selection of a an agreed joint venture partner.

This update report has been discussed and agreed in principle at the recent ACM and recommended to full council for acceptance. If approved this project will be incorporated into the capital programme with effect from 2018.