

Decision Record – Application to Heritage Lottery Fund for Gateway to Warwickshire Project

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking decision: *name and portfolio*

Councillor Colin Hayfield – Portfolio Holder for Customers Access and Physical Assets

Date of Decision: (NOT BEFORE 9 March 2012)

9 March 2012

Decision taken

I, as Portfolio Holder for Customers, Access and Physical Assets approve an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant of £1m to deliver a project entitled “Gateway to Warwickshire”.

Reasons for Decisions

The funding if obtained will fund the changes needed to effect the modernisation of Market Hall interpretation and create and launch the gateway website. The scope of the project has been determined following discussion with grant development offers at HLF, consultation with local residents, visitors, on-line users and communities. It has factored in the context and agreed outcomes of the HCS transformation programme and its need to create ongoing sustainability and stability for heritage and culture within Warwickshire. The HLF funding criteria are a very good fit with our transformation programme objectives

The project will support economic growth and the visitor economy through links with WCC’s strategic tourism role, and ensuring that both the re-launched Market Hall and the community gateway website promote local tourism. The latter will also provide an infrastructure which supports ongoing commercialisation of appropriate aspects of enhanced service delivery.

Background Information/ factors considered in arriving at these decisions - (set out below):

- 1.1 The Heritage and Cultural Services group (HCS) is achieving its savings plan targets through the delivery of a transformation programme. The programme will create an integrated service which safeguards Warwickshire’s heritage and enables visitors, local residents and communities to celebrate and participate in the county’s rich and diverse past and present.

- 1.2 The transformed service will operate from three fixed sites (Market Hall Museum, St. John's House and County Record Office) and across the county and beyond. Working with partners, communities and volunteers to develop expertise and increase capacity is a keystone of the transformation programme. Web delivery of services is a growth area, and we will continue to maximise opportunities for a worldwide as well as a local audience to engage with heritage and culture through innovative and high quality virtual media.
- 1.3 The transformed service identifies the Market Hall Museum as its flagship site, hosting not only a fresh and modern telling of stories of Warwickshire's past, but also acting as a gateway and signpost to cultural opportunities and heritage resources and events throughout the county. The Museum will position itself at the heart of Warwickshire's communities, celebrating the richness and diversity of cultural life in its role as the County Museum. St. John's House, the venue for community events, school learning sessions, fairs and outdoor activities, will deliver an enhanced programme of participative opportunities, and the County Record Office will remain the hub for primary research into the county's documented history.
- 1.4 Communities have much to offer in terms of knowledge, information, enthusiasm and local records and artefacts. The transformed HCS places a strong emphasis on empowering communities to harness their assets and champion a vibrant heritage and culture across the county. Community feedback supports the creation of a gateway website to complement the role of the revitalised Market Hall, a virtual infrastructure for all organisations to share and promote heritage and culture within their local area.

Financial and Legal Implications

The HLF grant funds require applicants to match fund the grant with cash and in-kind contributions. These must total a minimum of 5% of the total grant requested. HCS received Cabinet approval in the 2010/11 Outturn Report to carry forward £50,000 which will be used towards the match funding. This in itself would be sufficient to meet the requirement for 5% match funding. In addition, we would propose to use underspends arising from the early delivery of savings plans in 2011/12 as a further contribution, subject to Cabinet approval in the 2011/12 Outturn Report. The project includes significant volunteer time, and will also seek financial support from project partners and supporters. This will include local grant awarding agencies as well as local history groups and the Friends of Warwickshire County Record Office.

The grant application process requires us to identify risks inherent within the project and appropriate mitigation for those risks. It should be noted that acceptance of a grant from HLF pre-supposes that the public and heritage benefits that the grant funding will achieve will be maintained and supported by the parent organisation for a reasonable period. In previous applications, this has been 5-10 years. If not, financial penalties could be incurred, including full or partial repayment of the grant. In the event that future corporate decisions

challenge the service's ability to fulfil this requirement, savings plans would need to include any potential repayments to HLF.

The grant application underpins transformational change which will enable Heritage and Cultural Services to achieve Warwickshire-wide heritage benefits, a greater reach into our communities, and ongoing sustainability in the context of greatly reduced core funding.

Next Steps

The funding application will be submitted in March 2012 and a decision made in June 2012. If successful, we will be allocated a small proportion of the overall funds (c. £50,000) to develop our proposals in more detail before re-submitting the application in summer 2013. 5 out of 6 applications that are successful at Stage 1 achieve a Stage 2 pass. Project delivery will take a further 18 months minimum.

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| Report Author: | Caroline Sampson |
| Head of Service: | Caroline Sampson |
| Strategic Director: | David Carter |
| Portfolio Holder | Colin Hayfield |

Checklist

Urgent matter: yes/no*

No

Confidential or Exempt (state category of exempt information)

No

Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework

No

List of Reports considered [please attach or forward a copy]

Report (text included above).

List of Background Papers [please include directorate contact names and numbers for access to background papers]

None

Any members and officers consulted or informed and any comments given. For Comment:

Cllr Colin Hayfield (decision maker).
Ian Marriott (Legal)
Alan Bury (Finance)
John Betts (Head of Finance)

For information:

Cllrs John Whitehouse, Richard Chattaway, Chris Saint