

Committee: COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 15 March 2007

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Title: MUSEUM SERVICE: HERITAGE QUEST
CENTRE FUNDING AND HERITAGE
LOTTERY FUND APPLICATION

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Item for decision

Summary

- 1 Members are asked to approve plans to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in June 2007 for 72.5% of project costs, and to agree a capital contribution spread over the three years of the project totalling £150,000, in order to secure HLF support. Other matching funding is either in place already or is planned; the newly-formed Heritage Quest Trust Ltd will be applying for substantial landfill tax grants concurrent with the application to HLF. It will take a minimum of 6 months to obtain a decision from the HLF. At this stage, approval of the application does not commit the Council irreversibly, as the project will depend on the HLF's decision. Progressing the application at this stage will however maximise chances of obtaining HLF funding while retaining grants already offered as matching funding within a reasonable timescale.

Recommendations

- 2 Officers are to prepare and submit a formal application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Heritage Quest Centre project Capital funding totalling £150,000 is committed to the project over a three-year period: £60,000 in 2007/08; £50,000 in 2008/09 and £40,000 in 2009/10

Background Papers

- 3 Minutes of Resource Centre Project Team
Museum Service Forward Plan (Community Committee minute C7, 08/06/06)
Members' Bulletin 16/0207 (update on Heritage Quest Centre)

Impact

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Communication/Consultation	Extensive consultation over the past two years involving audience development consultants, local societies, community groups, parish councils and a number of other services and organisations in Essex. High-profile media coverage in local press, on TV and radio. Fund-raising launched in August 2005, regular fund-raising events.
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Community Safety	No specific issues. Police advice has been taken on design of Centre and site to minimise risks to staff and visitors, and deter casual misuse of site or vandalism.
Equalities	New Centre will allow disabled access to reserve collections (currently not possible in off-site store)
Finance	Capital funding totalling £150,000 over three years as described in the report
Human Rights	No specific issues
Legal implications	None in making application (contracts are only drawn up when HLF awards the project a grant).
Sustainability	New-build Centre will offer opportunity to design an energy-efficient and sustainable building, replacing inefficient off-site store
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden: site for Heritage Quest Centre will be on Thaxted Road (full planning permission already granted)
Workforce/Workplace	Will reduce travel time and costs for Museum Service staff, compared with travel to offsite store (Centre is 1 mile for Museum; current off-site store 3.5 miles)

Situation

- 5 The Heritage Quest Centre project forms Stage I of the Museum Service's Forward Plan and provides for the provision of a resource and research centre to preserve and improve usage of the collections. The project includes a three-year outreach programme to take the collections and service out to the wider Uttlesford community, and develop new audiences. The project also forms the foundation of future developments and sustainability for the Museum as increased usage and visits depend on collections-based activities and services, and on the ability to re-organise areas of the Museum building.
- 6 The HLF provided a 90% project planning grant in 2005 for an Audience Development Study for the Museum Service and Heritage Quest Centre project. While this does not guarantee further HLF support, it is an indication of HLF's interest in the Heritage Quest Centre project.

- 7 The application will be a partnership bid by the Council, Saffron Walden Museum Society and newly-established Heritage Quest Trust Ltd, but the HLF application and project will be led by the Council and executed by Council officers.
- 8 With a total project cost estimated at a maximum of £1.28 million, the HLF could in theory fund up to 75% although maximum grants are not always awarded. Likelihood of success increases with the amount of matching funding and evidence provided of support for the project. HLF officers have also advised that applications are more favourably viewed if local authorities demonstrate their desire to attract HLF investment by contributing more than the minimum 5% matching funding required of them to qualify for HLF support. Council capital funding of £60,000 earmarked for this project for 2007/08 is equivalent to 5% of total project costs, the minimum qualifying amount. If further capital contributions are made over the three-year span of the project - £50,000 in 2008/099 and £40,000 in 2009/10 – the Council’s total capital contribution will be £150,000 or 12% of the project costs. This would significantly strengthen the application.
- 9 Funds and support received so far amount to £93,700 with a further grant and donations anticipated, which should bring the total raised to over £100,000. The breakdown of funding already available is summarised as follows:
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|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Saffron Walden Museum Society | £ | 10,000 |
| Museum fund-raising activities | | 4,600 |
| BAA Stansted | | 32,000 |
| Uttlesford sources | | 19,476 |
| Essex sources | | 16,660 |
| Other sources | | <u>10,970</u> |
| | | 93,706 |
- 10 The project is able to demonstrate wide-ranging support through donations, grants and letters received from Uttlesford, Essex and further afield. In addition, the application will go forward with a letter from Colchester Museum Service, on behalf of the East of England Museum Hub, confirming that Saffron Walden Museum has been identified as one of the key local museum services in the region for preserving significant archaeological archives from major developments (Stansted Airport and associated road schemes).
- 11 Other matching funding raised or anticipated will bring the total matching funding package to a minimum of £350,000 or 27.5% of the total project costs. HLF will therefore be asked to make up to 72.5% maximum of total project costs, or £930,000. In the event of anticipated matching funding not reaching this target, there is still sufficient margin for the application to HLF to proceed, provided that HLF are prepared to meet more than 72.5% of the project costs.
- 12 The HLF does not require all matching funding to be in place at the time of application, but expects a realistic plan to complete fund-raising. We plan to raise a further £100,000 by the end of 2007, subject to confirmation:

Landfill tax grants (Heritage Quest Trust applications to operators)	75,000
Funds accessed via Saffron Walden Partnership Board	<u>25,000</u>
	100,000

Further funding will also be pursued from local businesses, donations, fund-raising events and any additional sources identified. This should ensure a 'safety margin' if the main sources above do not meet expectations. Alternatively, if we exceed our target, it will strengthen the HLF application.

13 The timetable for application to the HLF and other organisations is as follows:

April – May 2007	Officers prepare application and supporting information Heritage Quest Trust to be registered with Entrust (pre-requisite for landfill tax grants)
Mid June	Deadline for submission to HLF (6 months to decision)
June onwards	Apply for landfill tax grants (up to 6 months to decision) Continue local fund-raising and publicity
Early December	HLF decision and confirm landfill tax grants. Confirm funding via Saffron Walden Partnership Board

Subject to successful applications, we should know if we can proceed with the project in January 2008, pending signing of contracts with the HLF.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Reduced likelihood of successful HLF application if bid delayed	Medium Becoming High with increasing time	High	Proceed with application spring 2007 (result anticipated by early 2008)
Loss of some grants and credibility with some funding agencies if project does not progress	Medium Becoming High as year progresses	High	Proceed with application in spring 2007

HLF application fails if matching funding & local commitment are inadequate	Low	High	Good level of support from across district, county and regional museum Hub Capital input from Council of £150,000 to attract HLF investment of £930,000 Other matching funding: already in place or achievable plan to raise remainder by project start
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