

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-072-2015/16**

**Date of meeting: 3 March 2016**



**Portfolio: Leisure and Community Services**

**Subject: Epping Forest District Museum Resilience Funding**

**Responsible Officer: Julie Chandler (01992 564214)**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Cabinet notes the findings from the two Feasibility Studies undertaken through £55,000 funding from Arts Council England, as included within the attached, study documents;**
- (2) That a submission be made to Arts Council England for a further £280,000 funding, to support the recommendations from the two consultant studies;**
- (3) That the Cabinet notes the contributions of £10,000 each from Broxbourne Borough and Chelmsford City Council towards the proposed Resilience Fund proposal;**
- (4) That the Council's required match funding of £20,000 for the bid be funded from the Council's Invest to Save Fund; and,**
- (5) That the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee considers the formation of a Development Trust for Epping Forest and Lowewood Museums.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Prior to the commencement of the redevelopment of the Council's Museum in Waltham Abbey, a successful funding bid was made to the Arts Council England's Resilience Fund, which secured £55,000 funding, to enable two feasibility studies to be undertaken.

The first of these studies was to investigate the potential to establish a Development Trust to sit in parallel to the Council's operation of the Museum, Heritage and Culture Service in order to enable the service to access external and charitable funding that the Council would be prohibited from applying for.

The second study was to investigate potential revenue income generating opportunities for the Museum, Heritage and Culture service following the complete redevelopment and expansion of the Museum and amalgamation of Museum Services and Community Arts.

These studies have now been published and Cabinet Members are asked to consider the recommendations of the reports, with a view to these being progressed to the next stage, via a further funding to bid to Arts Council England (ACE) for £280,000. This amount was deemed as more favourable than a higher bid, following a meeting with ACE Resilience Fund Officers in February.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Officers are optimistic of securing further funding from Arts Council England, to enable the recommendations of the two feasibility studies to be realised.

## **Other Options for Action:**

Not to proceed with a further funding submission to Arts Council England.

## **Report:**

1. In April 2015, Officers were successful in securing £55,000 funding from Arts Council England (ACE) as part of its' Resilience Programme, to undertake two feasibility studies. The aim of the studies was to investigate opportunities for supporting resilience of the Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC) service over the long-term and during economic austerity.

2. A tender exercise was undertaken to appoint consultants to fulfil the required work and two companies were appointed, these being the Management Centre and Barker Langham, both of which have a high level of experience in the cultural sector and significant expertise in the specific areas to be considered.

3. The Management Centre was appointed to undertake the study into the establishment of Development Trust model, and were given the brief to investigate a stand - alone 'entity' that would be able to access funding opportunities that the Council would be prohibited from. Barker Langham were successful in being awarded the contract to investigate business and income generating opportunities, across both the Council's own MHC service and Lowewood Museum, which is managed on behalf of Broxbourne Borough Council under a Service Level Agreement.

4. In addition, Winckworth Sherwood Legal Consultants were appointed to provide Legal advice in relation to the establishment of the proposed Trust entity.

5. The process for the studies involved detailed liaison with staff and the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder throughout the duration of the work, to ensure that targets and objectives were kept on track. Regular progress meetings were also held with the Portfolio Holder and the Assistant Director Community Services and Safety. Draft reports were presented to the Portfolio Holder in September 2015 and further work undertaken, where required, to demonstrate examples of best practice and to consider all available options for the Council.

6. The final reports from both companies were completed before Christmas and Officers have since, spent time considering the implications and recommendations of the reports in line with the redevelopment and expansion of the district museum and in conjunction with colleagues from Arts Council England (ACE). The key recommendations were as follows:

- To review Museum entry, services, facilities and events charging policy across the two Museums;
- To develop a cross-service retail policy;
- To review the Service Level Agreement and expand partnership working with Broxbourne Borough Council;
- To apply to Arts Council England to appoint a Commercial Manager;
- To reconfigure the ground floor rooms at Lowewood Museum;
- To undertake an options appraisal for future Capital development of Lowewood Museum;
- To develop a transformational project for Lowewood Museum to position it as

- part of an Arts Quarter in the area; and
- To establish a Development Trust for Epping Forest and Lowewood Museum as a company limited by guarantee and registered charity.

7. In mid-January, Officers were advised that ACE was in a position to release a further round of Resilience funding across the UK and that this would follow a strict schedule and funding period from October 2016 to March 2018. The first application stage (Expression of Interest) for this fund was 18 February 2016 and due this timeframe, Officers have already submitted an EOI for a sum of £280,000 funding. However, should the Council be successful at this stage, we will be invited to submit a full proposal by 5 May 2016. The maximum amount available through this round of funding is £450,000 per bid and applicants are required to contribute a minimum of 10% match funding towards the total amount of their submission.

8. As the Council was only one of a few local authorities in the Eastern Region to be successful in securing Resilience Funding in the first round, Officers are optimistic for a second round bid to ACE to enable the recommendations of the reports to be fully implemented. As such, an 'Invest to Save' proposal was presented to Management Board on 3rd February, to seek the match funding required for the proposed second round bid and the finalised version is included with this report for approval by the Cabinet.

9. The amount of match funding requested through the Invest to Save bid is in fact less than 10% of the total Resilience Fund proposal of £280,000 and this is because, Officers have been successful in securing contributions from Broxbourne Borough Council and Chelmsford City Council of £10,000 each towards the match funding. Broxbourne BC agreed to commit this funding to the proposal, in relation to the work that will be undertaken for Lowewood Museum, which will include the implementation of commercial operation for general management of the Museum and funding towards the establishment of a joint Development Trust.

10. The contribution from Chelmsford City Council however, resulted from an approach by Chelmsford in early February, for Epping Forest Museum to provide advice and support in respect of a current Heritage Lottery Fund project that is being delivered at Chelmsford's main Museum. This meeting was very successful and resulted in agreement for the inclusion of Chelmsford City Council within the Resilience Fund proposal to be submitted to ACE.

11. At this meeting, The Director of Community Services from CCC, also committed to secondment of Chelmsford's Visitor Services Manager post to the Resilience project, on the basis of 50% of their work time, for up to a year. It is therefore envisaged that the post holder will work with the Commercial Manager appointed through the Resilience Funding, to develop their own skills and to support the roll out of the commercial operations plan across all three sites.

12. Originally, the intention was to submit a bid for the maximum amount of funding available (£450,000), but, following a meeting with ACE in early February, Officers were advised that the competition for Resilience Funding will be extremely high, particularly given that it is open to applications from the whole of the UK. It was therefore felt that there is likely to be more chance of success with a lower level bid, with a greater level of match funding.

13. Therefore, subject to Cabinet approval of the aforementioned recommendations and the Invest to Save proposal, and success in the first stage bidding process, Officers plan to submit a fully costed bid to the Arts Council England.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Subject to Arts Council England's acceptance of the Expression of Interest from the Council,

the Council will be invited to submit a full application for Resilience funding for £280,000, which will enable the recommendations of the feasibility studies to be actioned. The match funding contribution required from the Council will be £20,000, which will be supplemented by contributions of £10,000 each from Broxbourne and Chelmsford Councils.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

If successful in securing further funding from ACE, the Council will lead and direct the work associated with implementing the study recommendations. The collaborative working with Broxbourne Borough Council in relation to the new funding will be detailed within the revised Service Level Agreement.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted on the Museum re-development project and this second phase funding proposal builds upon this. Recent consultations were additionally held with Broxbourne Borough Council Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer and Chelmsford City Council's Director of Community Services.

**Background Papers:**

EFDC Trading Income Generation Feasibility Study: Barker Langham  
Fundraising Strategy and Action Plan: Management Centre  
Development Trust Legal Report: Winckworth Sherwood

**Risk Management:**

Risk Management and assessment will be undertaken as part of the development of the second round funding bid, if the Council is invited to formally apply for Resilience Funding.

# Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

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The second phase Resilience Fund bid would include a specific element of work relating to increasing diversity amongst Museum employees and visitors to the Museums. It also seeks funding towards the employment of a part-time Diversity Development Officer.