

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING WITH CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

15 December 2015

Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities

COLLECTIONS IN THE LANDSCAPE

1. Purpose of the report:

To inform the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities, of progress with the Collections in the Landscape project; to inform the Cabinet Member of further success in securing additional funding, and to request permission to spend this funding.

2. Information and analysis:

- 2.1 On 10 February 2015, the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities, agreed permission for Buxton Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) to proceed with the Collections in the Landscape programme, supported by a grant of £869,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
- 2.2 The project is being led by a board of officers from the Council including from Health and Communities and from Corporate Resources (Transformation and Property Services) and experienced museum volunteers. The board meets quarterly. It is active in ensuring that all aspects of the project are managed correctly, and that advice is available to staff developing the programme. The HLF have provided a project monitor who meets museum staff monthly and a project mentor to advise on particular aspects of the project.
- 2.3 By July 2015 a project team had been appointed, including an Assistant Collections Officer to co-ordinate the programme, two Collections Assistants (part time) undertaking collections care, documentation and interpretation, and a Visitor Services Assistant to provide capacity to the administrators who are managing the project. Three of these appointments are new to the museum. All the posts have been appointed to 30 December 2016.

The staff have used the first year development phase to understand the project and its aims, and to familiarise themselves with the collections and the opportunities they offer. They have undertaken training to use the museum collection database, to improve writing skills and have attended

appropriate conferences to contribute to their knowledge, confidence and advocacy of the programme. They have met staff at the University of Derby Department of Tourism and Leisure Management and visited museums to see best practice including Derby Museum, Birmingham City Museum (the Staffordshire Hoard), Salisbury Museum, Wiltshire Museum (at Devizes). Staff are also negotiating with the British Museum, Brighton Museum, the Manchester Museum and Derby Museum for potential loans to the new gallery.

- 2.4 In October 2015 project managers, Rex Proctor and Partners of Bradford were appointed. They will manage the capital programme to develop the 'Wonders of the Peak' gallery and the development of the digital experiences, the 'Pocket Wonders'.

Other specialist suppliers have been appointed including Innovate Educate of York to undertake the evaluation of the programme; Pete Brown of the High Peak to oversee the copy editing and Gordon MacLellan an artist from the High Peak to deliver the engagement workshops both in the museum and in the landscape. An artist in residence and education advisor will be appointed.

- 2.6 An access audit was undertaken in January 2015. This was commissioned in response to the HLF's requirement that a lift is installed and physical access in the building improved. The findings are the focus of Property Services attention. There have been several suggestions to resolve this requirement without impacting on the limited gallery spaces and decorative interiors within the museum.

There are other concerns in Peak Building that Property Services identify needing attention such as the provision of an adequate fire escape to the third floor currently used by the Courts Service, repairs to the roof over the south wing and an upgrade of the heating system and electrical provision, both of which are due for renewal. It is intended to undertake a full programme of work later in 2016.

- 2.7 The museum has continued to pursue additional funding. In 2014/15 the Art Fund supported the building of a display case for the Kirk Ireton hoard, a Made in Derbyshire commission. Early in 2015 Arts Council England (ACE) provided Resilience funding for the museum to review its retail facility and the Bingham Trust provided support for one of the Buxton digital experiences.

Subsequently, the museum has been awarded:

- £20,000 from ACE towards capital works to ensure the new gallery meets the government indemnity standard. This means the museum will be able to borrow items of high value from the national collections

and other major museums with insurance cover from central government.

- £10,000 from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art online to make the museum's 18th and 19th century views of the Derwent Valley World Heritage site available digitally. This builds on the legacy of a previous HLF programme, Enlightenment! and will continue the partnerships with Derby Museums and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. This theme is one of those earmarked by the Collections in the Landscape programme.
- £1,716 from Museum Development East Midlands to assist in developing the marketing plan for the project.
- £800 from the Beecroft Bequest towards the purchase of a watercolour by Mary Mitford, an 18th century artist who travelled to Derbyshire, of Dovedale.

2.8 The project has attracted interest by many people wanting to volunteer. Volunteers have given 205 days to the project, valued at £44,450, and are undertaking research, documentation and preservation of the collections, and audience surveys.

Many of the partners from the first round of the project remain supportive and are anticipating the appointment of the digital designers. The project has built a good relationship with that at the Crescent, in which both teams see mutual benefits.

2.9 The museum is aware of the potential implications of the digital experiences with regard to any interface with the County's IT provision. Officers have been in regular discussion with the supplier of the museum's documentation software, MODES with reference to the digital outputs.

2.10 The project timetable for 2016 has been refined:

- January: The Wonders of the Peak gallery closes for redevelopment
- March: The Project Space will open. This will be in the museum's main upstairs gallery. Part of the gallery will be used for object storage and to allow curators and volunteers to work on the new displays. Meanwhile half of the gallery will be open to the public and staff will talk to visitors, ask for feedback and provide opportunities through workshops and lectures for the museum's visitors to participate in the gallery development

- September: The museum will close for building works including the installation of the lift, improvements to the toilets and refurbishment

It is anticipated that the ground floor museum will reopen in January 2017 with the new Wonders of the Peak gallery having a 'soft' opening in the late spring. The project space will be closed for refurbishment prior to the 36th Derbyshire Open Exhibition in June that year, and there will be a formal opening and launch event in September 2017.

- 2.11 The project team has reinvigorated their Collections in the Landscape project blog at www.collectionsinthelandscape.wordpress.com

3. Financial considerations:

- 3.1 The project was estimated to cost £1,361,000 including the support in kind from the Council. The museum has identified £491,519 of income and volunteer time, of which £80,000 was unsecured.

There has been success in securing further grant funding for example, £20,000 of capital funding has been awarded by ACE which contributes towards this shortfall. The museum will continue to resolve the shortfall through applications for further funding to other bodies.

The project funding also included match funding of approximately £70,000 that was derived from the sale of the contents of the former Judges Lodgings in 2005. This has been identified in the reserves as £66,428.82 retained as a capital reserve until projects that benefitted the museum collections in the County were identified.

A further £222,000 was identified through staff time, provision of meeting rooms and access to marketing opportunities contributing to the programme.

- 3.2 Property Services were fully engaged in the formulation of the original bid before it was sent to the HLF and are aware of the additional building works and the resources required.

4. Legal considerations:

The contract between the Council and HLF is for the delivery of this improvement programme for Buxton Museum as proposed in the submission to the HLF in August 2014. The project will be completed by December 2017.

5. Equality of Opportunity considerations:

- 5.1 The project will extend the reach of the museum by creating accessible digital media meaning that the museum's collection will be accessible from any internet enabled device.
- 5.2 An access audit has been undertaken and the museum is working with Property Services to undertake improvements in the provision of physical access to BMAG.
- 5.3 The museum has secured the services of skilled specialists who will ensure that other access issues remain at the heart of the project, for example, having audio text signed and typed or having written text available as sound versions. The museum will ensure that the displays and digital outputs are accessible to all and remain interesting to people regardless of need and ability.

6. Human Resources considerations:

- 6.1 The recruitment of four staff has been completed in accordance with existing County Council policies. All the contracts have been awarded until 30 December 2016 and they will be regularly reviewed in advance of this date.
- 6.2 The commissioning of the specialist advisers has been undertaken with support from the Council's Procurement team and the HLF mentors. The contracts have been advertised through Source Derbyshire.
- 6.3 There will be significant input from volunteers who are recruited in line with the Council's established guidance.

7. Property considerations:

The County Council owns Peak Buildings and the forthcoming improvements to the heating and electrical services have been timed to coincide with the removal of the existing gallery structures, and contribute to the match funding for the project. The anticipated works to the toilets and the provision of a lift will provide much needed visitor facility improvements. The museum is trying to identify further funds to refurbish the foyer.

8. Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, environmental, health, and transport considerations.

9. Background papers:

Cabinet, 20 September 2005. Joint report of the Director of Cultural and Community Services and the County Property Officer (Cultural and Community) Judges Lodgings.

Meeting with Cabinet Member, Leadership and Culture 12 June 2012, Report of the Strategic Director, Cultural & Community Services, Collections In The Landscape Bid to The Heritage Lottery Fund.

Meeting with Cabinet Member, Health and Communities 10 February 2015, Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities, Collections In The Landscape Bid to The Heritage Lottery Fund.

Meeting with Cabinet Member, Health and Communities 14 April 2015, Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities, Award of Arts Council and Bingham Trust Funding.

10. Key Decision:

No

11. Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? No

12. Officer's Recommendations:

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities:

1. Notes the progress made to date in delivering the Heritage Lottery Fund supported improvements at Buxton Museum and Art Gallery;
2. Agrees permission to spend the grants awarded subsequently, being:
 - £20,000 from ACE towards capital works to ensure the new gallery meets the government indemnity standard.
 - £10,000 from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art online to make the museum's 18th and 19th century views of the Derwent Valley World Heritage site available digitally.

- £1,716 from Museum Development East Midlands to assist in developing the marketing plan for the project.
 - £800 from the Beecroft Bequest towards the purchase of a watercolour by Mary Mitford, of Dovedale.
3. Is kept informed about the progress of the project.

David Lowe
Strategic Director
Health and Communities