



CABINET

6TH NOVEMBER 2014

AGENDA ITEM (9)

CORINIUM MUSEUM COMMUNITY DISCOVERY PROJECT

Accountable Member	Councillor Mrs. CH Topple Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure
Accountable Officer	Martin Holland Leisure Services Manager 01993 861556 martin.holland@westoxon.gov.uk

Purpose of Report	To seek authority for the submission of a Heritage Lottery grant application to fund building improvement works at the Corinium Museum.
Recommendation(s)	<p>(a) That the aims and objectives of the Community Discovery Project be supported;</p> <p>(b) That SLM be authorised to draft a Heritage Lottery Grant application for submission by the Council;</p> <p>(c) That an 'in principle' allocation in a sum of £50,000 from the Council Priorities Fund be approved to facilitate submission of the application;</p> <p>(d) That, if the grant application is successful, a further report be presented to a future Meeting of the Cabinet detailing the mitigation strategy for financial risks to the Council.</p>
Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)	To increase visitor numbers and opportunities for residents, schools and visitors by refurbishing the Museum galleries that were not included within the major refurbishment project ten years ago.

Ward(s) Affected	All Wards.
Key Decision	Yes
Recommendation to Council	No

Financial Implications	The outline total project cost has been identified by SLM as £1,321,069.20. If the application is successful, the Council's contribution would be £50,000.
Legal and Human Rights Implications	None

Environmental and Sustainability Implications	The design team will investigate environmentally friendly technologies and opportunities to incorporate viable initiatives at the detailed design stage of the project.
Human Resource Implications	None
Key Risks	<p>There is a risk that visitor numbers to the Museum will decline if the its offer remains static. Furthermore, parts of the Museum will remain difficult to access for some visitors.</p> <p>There is a risk with the scheme that the Council may exceed its VAT partial exemption di-minimis position. If the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant application is successful, further work will be undertaken with the Council's VAT advisors to seek ways of mitigating the risk.</p> <p>There is a risk associated with construction contracts relating to potential cost overrun. If the application is successful further work with the project consultants and SLM will be necessary to mitigate the risk to the Council.</p>
Equalities Analysis	The project will result in the Museum and its collection being more accessible to a wider audience.

Related Decisions	None.
Background Documents	None.
Appendices	<p>Appendix 'A' - Annual visitor figures 2004/5 - 2013/14;</p> <p>Appendix 'B' - Concept Design report - extract;</p> <p>Appendix 'C' - Outline project cost and Partnership funding</p>

Performance Management Follow Up	Visitor numbers, expenditure and income are monitored on regular basis via established communication channels with SLM. The projects specific outcomes will be monitored for reporting to funding contributors.
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Options for Joint Working	The Museum will continue to work in partnership with the Friends of the Museum and the Cotswold Museums Charitable Trust. Volunteers will have an enhanced role interpreting artefacts for visitors; the anticipation is the number of volunteers will increase as a result. Providing the pre-history link to the National Curriculum will strengthen the education offer for Schools and closer partnership working. Confirmed project partners include the Cotswold Water Park, Cotswold Archaeology and the British Museum.
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Background Information

1. Along with the Leisure Centres in Cirencester, Bourton-on-the-Water and Chipping Campden, the Corinium Museum is managed by Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) via the Council's leisure management contract. The day-to-day running of the Corinium Museum is managed within the Community Leisure Charitable Trust arm of SLM. The collections and building remain in the ownership of the Council.
2. The Museum holds large and internationally significant collections of archaeology, social and rural history. It operates two major sites - the Corinium Museum in Cirencester and the Resource Centre (reserve collections store) at Northleach. The Service also runs a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at the Museum.
3. Between 2002 and 2004, the Museum underwent a comprehensive £6.5m refurbishment called the "Corinium Project", funded jointly by the Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This brought the building and its structure up to the standards at that time and ensured its compliance with the most up to date DDA regulations and other legislation.
4. The galleries and displays were modernised but not all of the galleries benefitted from building work, new displays or interpretation. Prehistory, Iron Age and Early Roman galleries were not developed as part of this scheme and by comparison look quite tired and in need of development. The Roman Garden was also not included in the design scheme.
5. The VIC moved in to the museum shop following the Corinium Project, and adjustments had to be made to accommodate this service. The shop and VIC have a separate entrance from the main Museum, which enables visitors to visit the VIC/shop and not enter the Museum. Post project, and since the VIC came to the Museum, it has become apparent that visitor flow is problematic between the VIC, shop, reception area, end of galleries and temporary exhibition space.
6. Following the Corinium Project, visitor figures initially increased, but have now levelled out and there is a danger that they will start to reduce. Last year there were approximately 40,000 visits to the Museum. Attached at **Appendix 'A'** are details of visitor number for the period 2004/05-2013/14.
7. In order for the Museum to succeed in a difficult financial climate and to become more sustainable and resilient, it must consider its audiences and relevance to today's communities. The Museum has won a number of accolades since it re-opened in 2004 following redevelopment. However, if it is to continue to receive awards and compete with recent heritage development projects (for example, Chedworth Villa, The Wilson, Gloucester City Museum), it cannot be complacent and needs to refresh and renew its galleries.
8. The Corinium Community Discovery project, which has the full support of the Cotswolds Museums Charitable Trust and Friends of the Museum, will result in the complete re-design and fit out of new Prehistory and Early Roman galleries. This will see new interpretation and some exceptional finds go on display for the first time. The new galleries will enable the Museum to expand the formal learning programme by supporting the study of the new curriculum for primary schools studying prehistory. The new Discovery Centre, sited at the front of the building, will be a place for inspirational learning experiences for schools, families, children and a meeting place for community groups, making the Museum a heritage hub for the town.
9. The objectives of the project are to increase visitor figures and income along with reducing on-going running costs (staff, utility, maintenance etc.) to a minimum, and optimise long term business sustainability and resilience. The following works are anticipated in achieving this goal:-
 - alterations to the main entrance, shop and tourist information area to improve flow through the Museum and through the shop, uniting the shop and Museum reception counters;
 - creation of a Discovery Centre - this is to be a new, inspiring community space to be used for a variety of functions by a range of visitors; including learning, meetings and Museum collections work;

- formation of new galleries within the existing building to display the Prehistory, Iron Age and Early Roman collections with increased capacity for future acquisitions;
- alterations to the Roman Garden.

10. Officers and SLM staff have met with representatives from the HLF to discuss the project objectives and outcomes. A positive response was received and the feedback given used to further refine and strengthen the project. The HLF grant criteria stipulate that, for projects carrying out capital works to buildings, the applicant must own the freehold or have security of tenure via a twenty year lease. The Council's contract/lease with SLM is for ten years, therefore the application, if submitted, will need to be from the Council. There is a two stage application process:-

- first-round - outline proposals (development phase), detailed costs (design team fees etc.) to develop the project for the second round application. And outline costs for the delivery phase (total project cost);
- second round - detailed proposals (delivery phase), detailed costs and partnership funding secured.

11. If the Cabinet supports the recommendation, Officers intend to submit the first round application by the end of November 2014. If successful, and invited to submit for the second round, notification of the grant decision is anticipated in early 2016. SLM will undertake the project management role for the construction phase, which is likely to be late 2016.

12. The Winstone Trust generously provided funding to appoint consultants for the production of a concept design report which informs the first round, outline proposals, application. An extract from that report is attached at **Appendix 'B'** and a copy of the full report has been placed the Members' Room. The outline total project cost has been identified as £1,321,069.20. Of this sum, £391,000.00 is identified as partnership funding. At this stage of project, development contributions have been secured from the Winstone Trust and SLM and details are attached at **Appendix 'C'**.

13. If the HLF bid is successful, additional work will have to be carried out to quantify the Council's role and responsibilities as the 'accountable body' for the project. In addition, work will be undertaken to assess any potential risk to the Council's VAT partial exemption position in managing the scheme. A further report will be submitted to a future Meeting of the Cabinet, should the application prove successful.

14. In summary, the Corinium Community Discovery project proposal, if realised, will increase visitor figures and income by an estimated twenty percent. This, along with reducing running costs, will optimise long term business sustainability and resilience. Residents and visitors to the town will be able to view previously unseen artefacts which are currently in storage and become more aware of, and involved with, conservation work. It should also be born in mind that, if the Council pledges a contribution of £50,000 to the project, and the application is ultimately successful, the leverage effect will be that, for every £1.00 the Council contributes, £25.42 of external funding will be released.

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