

Appendix 6 - Grants and Funding Opportunities

Accredited museums are able to access and apply for grant funding towards a range of projects. For large scale projects, the typical funding route is to apply to the Arts Council for funding via the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), (Formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)) or the Museum Estates Development Fund (MEND).

Officers have been advised that the MEND fund, part of the Cultural Investment Fund linked to the Levelling Up agenda, is unlikely to apply to most of the options within this report as it is focused on the maintenance and regeneration of existing buildings rather than the acquisition, or comprehensive rebuild of such fixed assets.

As a result, the primary large-scale grants (up to £10million project value) are best sought via the National Lottery Heritage Grants. These grants can cover a range of projects but can cover capital works and acquisitions of fixed assets.

It should be noted that in terms of acquisitions, the grant conditions stipulate that any acquisition must either be on a freehold or long leasehold basis, with a minimum of 99 years left to run on the lease. This is a key consideration as proceeding with an option involving capital works or freehold acquisition will therefore allow officers to continue applying for a National Lottery Heritage Grant to potentially support the project. Many of the options explored within this report do not meet this criteria and in this case the Council would need to accept that by pursuing these further it is accepting that the project would be ineligible for a potentially large National Lottery Heritage Grant.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund also support the exploration of options for capital cultural projects and this is something officers would plan to investigate further and apply for based on the decision taken by the committee. This would potentially share the costs of these investigations but would involve working within the National Lottery Heritage Funds prescribed timescales. It could however stand our project in good stead as and when a larger capital grant was applied for.

Officers previously applied for a grant via the Capital Investment Programme (a now discontinued capital grants allocation from the Arts Council) towards the redevelopment of the Bury Mead Rd site but on this occasion the application was unsuccessful. The general feedback was that the process was highly competitive and ultimately the grants panel could see the merits in our project but did not choose to shortlist it based on the merits of other applications.

Officers were also separately advised that an application to the National Lottery Heritage Grants was unlikely to be successful for similar reasons, though a new formal Expression of Interest has been submitted to ensure this has been fully and formally explored. If this formal Expression of Interest should prove unsuccessful, officers can seek to re-apply, and the grants are open to applications on a quarterly basis.

National Lottery Heritage Grants require projects under £1m to be supported by a minimum of 5% of the overall cost contribution and this must be committed by the organisation applying, whilst for projects over £1m, this rises to a minimum of 10%.

Full details of the conditions of such grants can be found on the National Lottery Heritage Fund [website](#), however an indicative list of over-arching criteria is as follows:

Projects should have a clear focus on heritage – this can be national, regional or local heritage of the UK.

- Projects must take into account all four investment principles (1. Ambition & Quality, 2. Dynamism, 3. Environmental Responsibility and 4. Inclusivity & Relevance).
- Projects must have a clear plan with a defined start, middle and end.
- Projects must have not already started.
- Projects should demonstrate the need for National Lottery investment.

Based on the above, the chances of successful grant funding applications may be markedly improved if an application could be made on the basis of a thoroughly detailed and comprehensively planned project. This would not lead to any guarantees over the outcome of any grant application but clearly if a consensus could be reached over how the Council intends to solve the museum storage pressures, even without the full funding identified, then this would pave the way for officers to apply for National Lottery Heritage Fund Grants with far more definitive, detailed plans, potentially maximising the chances of success.

The risks in relying on this course of action are that should such applications prove unsuccessful then the project intentions would need to be re-evaluated once more. The grants would not be applicable to all of the options detailed within this report and there is a danger that other opportunities might pass us by whilst waiting for grant funding support which might never materialise.

Whilst every effort is made to explore all potential grant funding opportunities which may benefit the North Herts Museum Service as a whole, there could be other grant funding sources available of which Cultural Services officers are unaware. The Council's Corporate Grants Officer is actively exploring alternative sources of funding which may be applicable to this project but as of the date of this report, this exercise has yet to identify other major funding possibilities applicable to this project.

There could also be wealthy individual donors or charitable trusts which may be minded to assist in funding such projects, however officers are not presently aware of any such contacts through which the Council can apply for funding.

Some charitable trusts are restricted to solely funding other charities or charitable causes and as such, some museums have their own affiliated trusts, typically in the form of 'Museum Friends' schemes or similar. North Herts Museum does not currently have a 'Museum Friends' scheme, would rely on members of the community coming forward to fill the administrative and leadership roles of such an organisation. It should be noted that the creation of such an organisation would not automatically guarantee forthcoming funding or success in applying for it however this might open up new funding opportunities.

One alternative route through which the museum service may be able to apply for charitable support is through the Workman's Hall Trust. This trust is an active legacy entity from the days before the North Herts Museum was created. The trust existed to run the Workman's Hall which previously stood in the location of the North Herts Museum. The details and limitations of this trust in the context of applying for funding on behalf of the North Herts Museum Service are currently unclear, but this is being actively explored by the Council's Corporate Grants Officer.