

6. ARTS COUNCIL GRANT AWARD

Recommendation

- 1. The Museums General Manager recommends that:
 - a) the allocation of partnership funding as set out in the report be approved; and**
 - b) he be authorised on behalf of Museums Worcestershire to develop agreements with its partners in accordance with Arts Council guidelines.****

Background Information

2. In 2013 the Arts Council awarded Museums Worcestershire a strategic funding grant under the umbrella title of "Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy".
3. The programme had a number of strands and it enabled the service to commission some major reports on Heritage and Tourism as well as research at the Commandery. In addition it allowed for the production of a marketing plan for the Commandery and a fundraising strategy for the service.
4. In order to take forward the recommendations in these reports, a further application to the Arts Council has been made, concentrating on the "resilience" priority.
5. Earlier this month, the Arts Council announced that Museums Worcestershire was one of 19 museums in the Midlands to receive funding, a grant award of £129,100 in total. The funds are to be spent over two financial years.
6. The funds will be directed towards the following Museums Resilience programme:
 - Development of internal fundraising skills and capacity including the appointment of a fundraising post
 - Investigating audience needs in relation to the Museum and Art Gallery collections
 - Development of our joint working with the Elgar Birthplace Museum on collections and marketing.
 - Increasing marketing capacity within the service, including a post to be shared with the Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust
 - Investment in a customer relationship management system.

7. This grant will help to transform Museums Worcestershire's ability to plan capital projects more effectively, to raise funds to secure improvements in the service, to develop our relationships with partners and customers and to contribute towards the City's ambitions to be a Heritage City. There will also be a financial benefit from increased admissions as a result of enhanced marketing of events and exhibitions.

8. A condition of the grant award is that £20k needs to be found in partnership funding, spread over two financial years. In addition the service in its role as lead applicant needs to enter into partnership agreements with the Elgar Birthplace and Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust. Guidelines on the form of agreement required are provided by the Arts Council.

9. The shared service has a reserve of £17K currently and it is proposed that £10K is committed to be able to take up the grant offer in April. Making this budget decision relating to the use of end of year surplus funds is one of the joint committee's delegated functions. Funds from the revenue budget in 2016-17, or from reserve funds, will need be set aside to meet the balance of partnership funding required in the following financial year.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Point for this report:

Iain Rutherford, Museums General Manager
(01905) 361827/361821
Email: IRutherford@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the Museums General Manager the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Arts Council Resilience Fund application 2015-17