

9. COMMANDERY REDEVELOPMENT – PHASE 1

Recommendation

1. The Museums General Manager recommends that the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for phase 1 of developments at The Commandery be approved.

Background Information

2. The Commandery is one of Worcester's most important buildings and a key part of Worcester's heritage.
3. Development work undertaken prior to 2007 stabilised the fragile structure, enabling the site to be more accessible. Further work is needed to enable visitors to fully understand and enjoy the site and its significant history.
4. Over 2012/13 Museums Worcestershire commissioned a significant body of research (funded by Arts Council England) into the potential of the English Civil War heritage to provide an overarching theme for the Commandery as a visitor destination. The research looked at the current visitor experience at the historic site from the perspective of existing and future visitors, evaluated pilot interpretation with these audiences, identified potential future markets for a Civil War product and quantified the wider Civil War history that exists in Worcester. Reports were presented at a Civic Presentation in April.
5. The findings of this research have informed strategic planning for The Commandery and we now wish to realise The Commandery's potential by better interpreting and explaining the historic significance of the site and its Civil War story and by strengthening its position as a visitor destination. This work will be carried over four phases.
6. An application to the HLF Our Heritage Fund is required for the first phase of this work which will see the reintroduction of the English Civil War as a theme in a significant section of the building, the rebranding and repositioning of The Commandery and the curation of a high profile events programme throughout 2015 leading up to a product launch in Spring 2016.
7. The total value of the first phase of the project is estimated at £126,000, with HLF requested to fund £98,000. The remaining £28,000 will be sourced from existing budgets, sponsorship and in-kind support of volunteers.
8. Expenditure falls in the areas of new interpretation and displays (43%), 12 month liberty and democracy events programme (8%), relaunch and repositioning The

Supporting Information

Commandery as a key visitor destination (46%).

- Appendix - The Commandery phases of development 2014-19 outline

Contact Points

Specific Contact Point for this report:

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Background Papers

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

The English Civil War in Worcester – a report by TSE Research

Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester - a report by TSE Research with the Audience Agency

Heritage Product Development - a report by TSE Research

It Happened Here – audience research and evaluation of pilot interpretation at The Commandery – a report by Morris, Hargreaves, McIntyre

The Commandery Marketing Strategy - a report by Blue Sail Marketing.