

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO CABINET**

16th July 2024

Report Title: Brampton Museum funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: Leisure, Culture and Heritage

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To update cabinet on Brampton Museum's 2025-27 national lottery heritage funding bid "A Sustainable Future for Brampton Museum" and to seek approval to accept funding should this subsequently be awarded.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the museum's application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage be authorised to accept and utilise any funding allocated in line with the bid. 			
<u>Reasons</u>			
<p>Brampton Museum's award-winning work is partly delivered through externally funded projects. The current National Lottery and other external project funding ends in March 2025. Without external funding the museum will return to its core staffing and much of its award-winning work will cease.</p>			

1. Background

1.1 Brampton Museum has successfully delivered a transformative National Lottery Heritage Fund project which is due to draw to a close in March 2025. Thereafter unless new funding can be found, the Museums current project funded staff will no longer be employed, and the Museum will no longer be able to draw on its externally funding for events, marketing and equipment purchase.

1.2 The museum's transformation has delivered a 60% increase in visitor numbers and a 117% increase in income compared to 2019/20, alongside Enjoy

Staffordshire awards as “Small Visitor Attraction of the Year,” “Business Venue of the Year,” “Accessible and Inclusive Tourism” and “Ethical and Sustainable Tourism.” Community feedback shows that 77% of visitors who attended an event left feeling proud to live in Newcastle and felt more connected to their community. Many of these benefits are delivered and sustained by externally funded projects. Without further funding, this work will cease in March 2025 which will likely result in a drop in income, visitors, events, awards and positive reputation for the council.

1.3 For the last nine months museum staff have been developing a 2025-27 funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The bid is based on the evaluation of the Museum’s current work and taking account of consultation with various community organisations. Advice has been sought on improving the museum’s financial sustainability from the West Midlands Museum Development Trust and its environmental sustainability from the Council’s in house team.

1.4 The project meets the council’s current priorities and the National Lottery’s four investment principles of:

1. Improving the museum’s financial and organisational suitability
2. Protecting the environment
3. Inclusion, access and participation
4. Saving Heritage

Feedback on the proposed circa £98,000 bid from the National Lottery has been positive, with a key feedback that the application must be submitted soon if to be approved and work to begin in 2025.

1.5 The project will help the Museum diversify its audiences by supporting previously under-served communities to share their heritage with a series of free, open-to-all, vibrant events and activities co-created with local community groups. Lottery funding will provide the skills and capacity to create a ‘Friends of’ membership scheme for regular donors and lead a £1-£1 match fundraising campaign for local businesses. These and other new, long-term income streams will conserve the museum’s collections. Finally, Brampton will reduce its environmental footprint and running costs by upgrading lighting, taps and insulation, and inspiring visitors to change their travel behaviour with a new bike rack.

2. Issues

2.1 The council is not in a position to fund an activities and event officer, a museum events and marketing programme and much of the museum’s award-winning work. Much of the museum’s outstanding work that Newcastle residents and visitors have come to enjoy and expect relies on external funding.

2.2 To support the council’s objective of becoming carbon neutral the museum needs several further environmental improvements. These are beyond the scope of the museum’s existing revenue budget. Making environmental improvements will reduce unnecessary utility costs and support the council’s sustainable environment plan.

2.3 The museum is responsible for a beloved collection of 34,000 items, the majority of which have been donated by local people. Many larger items need large scale conservation work, above and beyond what can be delivered with the Museums annual £500 conservation budget or current level of public donations. The museum needs financial support to develop long term, regular donation and sponsorship schemes to support its ongoing work, including starting a membership style 'museum supporters' scheme. This work cannot be delivered by its current 3.6 members of part time staff.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Cabinet

Approve the museum's application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage be authorised to accept and utilise any funding allocated in line with the bid.

4. Reasons

4.1 The council benefits from the reputation, income and footfall from museum work that is externally funded. If the museum does not carry out externally funded work in 2025-27 it will only have a basic staff to deliver core activities funded directly by the borough council. There will be a significant loss in footfall, income, activities and reputation.

4.2 Applying now for a National Lottery grant to begin April 2025 means no loss of capacity or momentum at the museum. Any delays to the application will result in much of the museum's work ceasing. If this capacity is lost, the museum will no longer have the internal resources to apply for future funding bids or to support council wide cultural initiatives.

5. Options Considered

5.1 The preferred option of employing a permanent events and activities officer for Brampton Museum has been previously considered but it is difficult to confirm sufficient income to cover the full costs. The museum therefore continues to rely on short term external funding to deliver much of its award-winning work for the community.

5.2 A two-year crowd funding campaign raised £1000 towards delivering future events. This demonstrates that public donations alone are insufficient to deliver the award-winning work local people have come to expect from its museum.

5.3 Ten local businesses who have supported the museum in the past were approached to support or sponsor the museum's upcoming project. Those that responded expressed a wish to donate to the museum's conservation work

rather than towards environmental improvements or financial sustainability work. This type of vital work can only be completed by external grants.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

6.1 None foreseen.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 This funding application is accessibility and inclusion focussed and will increase access to the museum. This will be monitored through the museum's annual application to the Enjoy Staffordshire accessible and inclusive tourism awards.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 No new match funding from the council is required for this application.

8.2 The application if successful will increase staff resources and finances available to the museum, not diminish it.

8.3 The existing museum team is experienced in delivering externally funded projects alongside its core work.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

9.1 The project is low risk. Risk register and project plan available on request.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1 The project focuses on improving the environment and reducing inequalities.



11. Key Decision Information

11.1 The total value of the grant payable on the back of a successful application will be below £100,000 so this is not a key decision.

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 None.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 None.

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 Project plan and risk register available on request.