

Application for Financial Assistance (Historic Buildings Grants) from the Conservation and Heritage Fund - Queen Victoria Statue, Queens Gardens, Newcastle (Ref: 11/12001/HBG)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Working Party recommends that the Planning Committee accept accepts these changes and revised costs and that it approves a grant of £1,535 for the Queen Victoria Statue, subject to the appropriate standard conditions.

Purpose of report

To consider an application for financial assistance towards the cost of the restoration and conservation of this Grade II listed statue in Newcastle Conservation Area.

The application for grant aid is for the restoration and repair of the fabric of the statue situated in Queens Gardens, a Grade II listed building. In 2011 the Council's Landscape Development Section applied for Heritage Lottery funding to upgrade the Gardens and restore the statue using funding from the HBG Fund to match the bid. This bid was not successful and the future of any bids for the Gardens is unknown at present. The statue however still requires repairing.

The Newcastle Civic Society now wishes to restore the statue, in memory of one of their key founder members. This report seeks agreement to the change in applicant for the grant from the Council to the Civic Society and also to agree the revised amount from the chosen contractor who provided the lowest quote.

The original quotation was £8,910 in 2011 when VAT was at a rate of 15%. An up to date quotation has now been received and the cost of repair work is now quoted at £6,978 including VAT. The statue has not deteriorated in the last 2 years. The Landscape Division has agreed to supervise the work on behalf of the Civic Society at a rate of 10%. The total cost of the works would accordingly be £7,675.80 which meant that a grant of 20% or £1,535 could be offered according to the terms of the Historic Buildings Grant scheme. Work is expected to begin in the autumn and will take approximately one week.

Financial Implications

There is sufficient funding to meet this grant application of which £1,960 is already committed and agreed expenditure. The actual cost of the works has decreased in the interim, and the £1,535 can be covered as there is approximately £55,000 presently unallocated in the Fund.

Conclusions

The principle of supporting this conservation work to the statue has already been established. This grant application meets all the Council's criteria for the repair and restoration of the heritage asset and supporting the application would help deliver the Council's statutory duty to preserve and enhance buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The views of the Conservation Advisory Working Party will be reported to the Planning Committee who will make the decision on whether or not to award the grant.