

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	20 October 2015
Title:	Invest in Hampshire
Reference:	7003
Report From:	Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1 In 2013, recognising the importance of supporting tourism, the arts, cultural development and major investment opportunities the Executive Member agreed to the establishment of an Invest in Hampshire fund which would allow capital contributions to be made particularly to projects where there was strong evidence of their financial viability and fundraising, and where they would add to the economic performance of the area.

2. Gilbert White's House

2.1 Gilbert White Museum in Selborne, Hampshire is partly used as a museum, visitor attraction and garden to commemorate the work of Gilbert White, one of the pioneering English naturalists and worlds ornithologists.

2.2 The County Council has supported the Trustees of the museum for many years and they are now developing the final part of their building project involving the conversion of existing buildings for meeting space, improved dining arrangements, enhanced visitor experience and opportunities to interpret the work of Gilbert White and access to the garden and landscape to the rear of the building. The project is estimated to cost £2.8 million and so far the Trustees have raised, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, some £2.4 million. This is a significant achievement in the current financial climate.

2.3 While the buildings have some constraining characteristics, particularly with regard to parking, the quality of the museum interpretation and development of the museum is to an exceptionally high standard.

- 2.4 A private benefactor has been found to provide 50% (£200,000) of the shortfall, subject to the County Council being prepared to make a similar contribution. This would provide a unique opportunity to complete the project and, given the nature of the remaining building works, establish the museum on more viable revenue funding terms, allowing it to increase visitor numbers, the experience and the revenue-raising opportunities that modern catering, eating and conference facilities would provide.
- 2.5 The criteria for meeting the use of Invest in Hampshire funds were principally that the project would be sustainable and add to the quality of the fabric of the visitor experience to Hampshire. Gilbert White's Museum in the South Downs National Park and in the landscape of Selborne is uniquely placed. It is recommended that the County Council therefore, subject to all the necessary funding being in place, that a balancing contribution of £200,000 be made from Invest in Hampshire subject to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services agreeing the timescale for this contribution.
- 2.6 The County Council continues to provide architectural services to the Trustees and it is anticipated that this would continue through to the completion of the project.
- 2.7 It is recommended, subject to the necessary information being confirmed as to the availability of the required funding, the County Council make a match-funding contribution of £200,000 to match the private contribution being proposed by the Trustees.

3. Hampshire Cultural Trust and Southampton City Council

- 3.1 Hampshire Cultural Trust was established in 2014 with the support of the County Council, to run, operate and develop the cultural offering previously directly managed by the County Council with long-term funding and asset arrangements being made in favour of the Trust. The Trust has had an impressive start-up period as it seeks to develop and exploit culture in different ways and connect to Hampshire's creative economy. The Trust also took on responsibilities for a significant number of the County Council's former museums and cultural staff.
- 3.2 The Trust has made an impressive start in building its brand, reviewing its organisation and developing its offer across Hampshire. These are difficult financial times to undertake such activities.
- 3.3 A long-term objective of the County Council before it passed its responsibilities to the Trust was to seek to develop a long-standing relationship with Southampton City Council, particularly over the access to, and public presentation of, its world-class art collection. While the County Council has no direct responsibility for how the Trust develops, it has indicated that if it could help broker a deal with the Trust and the City Council over access to, and presentation of, its art collection, then it would be happy to consider how best that should be done by way of what political,

organisational and financial support. The Trust has developed a Flagship Gallery proposal that would see a very productive partnership approach aimed at maximising inward investment to Hampshire in securing that vision and objective.

- 3.4 Any development along the lines mentioned above would simply strengthen the foothold and reputation of the Hampshire Cultural Trust and may bring benefits to the City Council in terms of its longer financial position, given the need to see the wider cultural offering integrated across the wider geography of Hampshire.
- 3.5 This discussion on potential resolution of the issues has been ongoing, formally and informally for some months. It is not clear to what extent the County Council could help broker a partnership or arrangement between the Trust and the City Council although it is obvious that any financial support that the Council was prepared to make would have to come through Invest in Hampshire.
- 3.6 In the circumstances it is recommended that, subject to the final agreement of the Executive Member for Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services be authorised to negotiate and facilitate future discussions on the basis outlined above for a further report.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That subject to the necessary information being confirmed as to the availability of the required funding, the County Council make a match-funding contribution of £200,000 to match the private contribution being proposed by the Trustees of the Gilbert White Museum.
- 4.2 That subject to the final agreement of the Executive Member for Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services be authorised to negotiate and facilitate future discussions concerning the partnership approach outlined above in respect of the Hampshire Cultural Trust.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Maximising well-being:	yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The proposals in this report will have a positive impact on equalities given the nature of the projects that they support and the fact that they will target certain groups who might otherwise experience exclusion.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The County Council has an obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the impact of all decisions it makes on the prevention of crime. The proposals in this report aim to improve the general wellbeing of Hampshire residents and reduce the risk of crime occurring through the provision of facilities that will support the local community.

3. Climate Change:

3.1 The initiatives proposed support the culture of self help and self reliance which may have been impacted by climate change. The building related aspects of the projects will have due regard to reducing the impact on climate change.