

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of Portfolio Holder: Councillor Neil Harden

Portfolio: Residents & Regulatory Services

Date of Report: 02/04/2014

Heritage Funding Levels and Heritage Commissioning

Recommendations made and reasons:

1. To award Dacorum Heritage Trust a grant in line with its three year Strategic Partner Programme status of £58,000 for the 2014/15 financial year.
2. To commission a three year Heritage project from 1st April 2015 from existing Heritage grant budgets.

Background

Dacorum Heritage Trust is currently funded through the Strategic Partner Programme, through which the trust have a three year partner status with the Council. This status expires on 31st March 2015. Existing funding levels are £58,000 per year. Although they are part of the Strategic Partner Programme, the scheme is directed towards voluntary sector organisations offering solutions to social concerns such as debt advice, volunteering and supporting people in crisis. As such, Dacorum Heritage Trust does not neatly fit within the scheme. In attempting to develop an amended approach it became clear that the Council does not have any clear policy or guidance that covers financial assistance to groups such as Dacorum Heritage Trust. It is not possible therefore, to review grant aid to this organisations within any strategic framework. In October 2011 Cabinet agreed to set up a Task and Finish group to seek Councillor's views towards reviewing support to Dacorum Heritage Trust (and Tring Arts Trust). The Council worked with, and consulted, the relevant community groups however a conclusion for how to proceed was not reached. As 2014/15 is the last year of Dacorum Heritage Trust's Strategic Partnership with the Council and is therefore the final year of funding, the Council see this as an opportunity to rethink heritage funding and ensure that processes for awarding and monitoring funding are robust, transparent and fair.

Commissioning Heritage Project

The Council recognises that heritage is an important part of our community. In order to continue the Councils commitment to heritage (as articulated in the Heritage Policy Statement) this report recommends that existing heritage budgets are utilised to commission a three year borough wide Heritage Project to be commissioned and in place from 1st April 2015.

This will require Officer support to develop the project specification in line with the appropriate commissioning model during the 14/15 financial year in order that it can commence on 1st April 2015. This work will be undertaken by the Community Partnership and Procurement teams.

Financial Analysis

- Existing funding of £58,000 to be used to commission a Heritage project for the borough.

Officers / Councillors / Ward Councillors / Stakeholders Consulted:

Steven Baker, Assistant Director, Chief Executive's Department

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Matthew Rawdon, Group Manager People
Natalie Webb, Community Partnerships Team Leader
Cllr Andrew Williams
Cllr Neil Harden

Monitoring Officer/Chief Financial Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer: - No further comments.

Deputy Section 151 Officer: No further comments.

Implications:

Risk: failure to approve the recommendations in this report will result in a reduction in financial support of the heritage community in Dacorum. This could have a negative impact on the delivery of heritage in Dacorum. There is also a reputational consequence to the Council.

Value for Money: the Council has the opportunity to maximise value for money by commissioning (through an open and transparent process) a heritage project for Dacorum.

Options Considered and reasons for rejection:

To continue Dacorum Heritage Trust Strategic Partner status: This is rejected because the Strategic Partner Programme is not a robust or appropriate way of managing a heritage organisation.

To not fund any heritage organisations/projects: This is rejected because there will be a significant detrimental impact on the local heritage community and on local residents.

Portfolio Holders Signature:

Date:

Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:

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Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder: 28/05/14

Date Decision Published: 29/05/14 Decision No: PH/023/14

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period: 05/06/14

Date any Call-In received or decision implemented: