

AGENDA ITEM

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Moorlands Partnership Board

13th March 2019

TITLE: Approval of Projects

OFFICER: Executive Director

1. Reason for the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek member's approval to allocate grant funding from the Moorlands Partnership Board (MPB). The budget for this year is £50,000. So far, the budget has been allocated as set in the table below. The focus this year has been on the repair and restoration of a number of prominent key historic buildings.

1.2

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Foxlowe Arts Centre | £4,000 |
| Big Mill | £20,000 |
| Victoria Buildings (Odeon Antiques) | £20,000 in principle allocation and subject to grant applications from owners |
| Balance of funds | £6,000 |

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Members approve a grant of £401 for interpretation panels at Leek Brook station at an estimated budget of £801. The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions.

2.2 That Members approve a grant of £6599 for the repair and restoration of 1 High Street, Cheadle at an estimated budget price of £17,600. The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions and the following technical conditions;

- Two comparable estimates are received for the scheme of works prior to the commencement of works.
- All external repair works and specifications are agreed with council officers prior to commencement of works.
- A scheme of decoration is agreed with council officers prior to commencement of works.

- 2.3 That Members approve to defer the ‘in principle’ grant of £20,000 towards Victoria Buildings to the next financial year 2019/2020 and reallocate funds totalling £19,000 towards the reinstatement of 200m of rail track from Leek Brook station northwards. The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions.

3. Summary

- 3.1 This report allows members to consider applications for Environmental Enhancement Grants for funding toward projects within the district.

4. Report

Leekbrook Station – Interpretation Panels

- 4.1 A grant application has been received from the North Staffordshire Railway Company to install two free standing interpretation panels at Leekbrook Station. The panels will provide information on the history of the line and will build upon the success of the restoration of the original waiting room.

Two panels will be made and placed outside of the waiting room and platform steps. Two estimates have been received for the interpretation panels, the lowest of which totals £801 (inc VAT).

Recommendation

That Members approve a grant of £401 (inc VAT) towards the manufacture of two free standing interpretation panels at Leekbrook Station.

1 High Street Cheadle

- 4.2 1 High Street Cheadle is a prominent building located within the Cheadle Conservation Area. It is not listed but was the former butcher’s shop and adjacent cottage. Despite being in poor condition and repair it benefits from retaining many traditional features such as sash windows and original joinery details.

The property benefits from new owners who are keen to restore the property and potentially look at a conversion to holiday accommodation. The original butcher’s frontage will be retained as part of the conversion.

The proposed scope of works include the following:

- Chimney and roof repairs (including leadwork)
- Rainwater repairs or replacement
- Removal of cement render and repairs to brickwork
- Repair of historic joinery details (windows and doors)

Given the timescales, the applicant has been unable to obtain two comparable estimates but has been able to provide a budget cost for the works. This totals £17,600. Grants are offered at a rate of 50% and up to a maximum of £4,000. In the past and in particular circumstances, Members have agreed to offer grants in excess of the maximum figure. Given the location and prominence of the building and the fact that it actually includes two units, officers recommend that the remaining balance of grant funds totally £6599 is offered towards its repairs.

Recommendation

That Members approve a grant of £6599 (inc VAT) towards the repair and restoration of the former butcher's shop and adjacent cottage. The grant amount represents the balance of funds from the 2018/2019 budget.

4.3 Leekbrook Station – rail track installation

Members will be aware that the Board has previously offered £22,000 (2017/2018) towards the professional fees and services required for the implementation of the heritage rail link between Leek Brook Station and Cornhill. These funds have been fully allocated and the grant paid. The Churnet Valley Railway has been invited to submit a full application to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). However, in the interim there is an option to physically start on site and construct 200m of rail track from Leekbrook Station northwards. This land is within operational railway control and subject to funding, can be delivered immediately. The advantage of undertaking these preliminary works are as follows:

- It sends a strong message to the wider community that works are commencing
- It will encourage greater take-up/commitment to Share Issue (which will be used to match fund second stage works)
- The majority of costs regarding more complex engineering will be north of this point

The cost of the works would be £40,000 for materials plus volunteer labour. Churnet Valley Railway can fund £21,000 towards the cost of the works but would require an additional £19,000. There are insufficient funds within the remaining MPB budget to offer a grant. However, at the time of writing the report there have been no grant applications submitted from the various owners of the Victoria Buildings. The 'in principle' allocation of £20,000 against the Victoria Buildings could be reallocated from next year's budget and the funds redirected to a project that will start imminently.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the 'in principle' grant of £20,000 against Victoria Buildings is deferred to the next financial year and that a grant offer of £19,000 is made to the Churnet Valley Railway for the rail track reinstatement.

5 Implications

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| 5.1 | Community Safety: | Nil |
| 5.2 | Workforce: | Nil |
| 5.3 | Equality and Diversity | This report has been compiled in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies. |
| 5.4 | Financial: | Any funding approvals will be financed from the Partnership's existing allocated budget. |
| 5.5 | Legal: | Nil |
| 5.6 | Sustainability: | The repair and reuse of historic buildings contributes significantly to sustainability. |

Dai Larner

Executive Director

Background Papers

Location

Contact

Regeneration Services.

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Decision:

Reason:

Interests Declared: