

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Moorlands Partnership Board
27 June 2018**

TITLE:	Approval of Projects
OFFICER:	Executive Director

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek members' approval to allocate grant funding from the Moorlands Partnership Board (MPB). The budget for this year is £50,000. Last year the Board took a more strategic approach to allocating funds and targeted projects in both Leek and Biddulph.
- 1.2 This year, officers are recommending that funds be targeted towards the repair and restoration of a number of prominent historic buildings. These buildings are listed and have significant heritage value. However, their current condition and appearance is a cause for concern. With this in mind, officers are recommending that the MPB allocate funds to consolidate and repair 3 key prominent buildings within Leek.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members approve a grant of £4,000 for Foxlowe Arts Centre, Market Place, Leek towards the cost of repairing the external envelope of the building, at an estimated budget of £117,481. The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions and the following technical conditions:-
- That the relevant listed building consents (if necessary) are obtained prior to executing works on site; and
 - Given the listed status of the building, a detailed specification for the repair of the building is agreed with the Council prior to obtaining estimates to ensure that the project employs best conservation practices.
- 2.2 That Members approve a grant of £20,000 towards a temporary roof covering at Big Mill, Leek. The work will be subject to the standard grant scheme conditions and the following technical conditions:-

- The grant is recovered if the works are not started by 1 August 2018. This will allow the reallocation of the grant before the end of the financial year.
- 2.3 Note the completion of a condition survey at Victoria Buildings (Odeon Antiques) and consider an in-principle grant allocation of £26,000 towards the repair of the building subject to:-
- The submission of a detailed grant application for consideration by the MPB at its November meeting, prior to making a formal grant offer.

3. Summary

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

4. Report

Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek

- 4.1 A grant application has been received from the trustees of the Foxlowe Arts Centre in Leek. The property is both listed (Grade II) and falls within the Leek Conservation Area. It commands a prominent location, being located at the head of the Market Place in Leek. Whilst structurally sound, the building's condition is dilapidating and decaying. In the long term, there are plans to improve the first floor access and increase the size and technical resources of performance spaces. However, they cannot proceed with this until the exterior is repaired and secured. Following on from a very detailed condition survey, the following works are urgently required:-

- Eliminating rot in the roof;
- Replacing damaged brickwork, coping and rainwater goods;
- Repair/replace rotten window frames; and
- Removal of failed cement render and replacement with a suitable lime render.

The overall project budget for the above works is £117,481 (this includes architects and professional fees, VAT and a 10% contingency). The trustees have made a bid of £100,000 to the HLF. The outcome of the bid will be known on 6 July 2018. In order to cover the shortfall the trustees have requested a grant of £4,000 with additional funds being raised from other sources.

The Foxlowe Arts Centre provides a community-led venue for music, theatre and poetry. It provides a gallery for regional arts and craftspeople, heritage exhibitions, a cinema, a self-help garden, a lively café with start-up studios for creative enterprises and a public platform for dozens of existing community groups. It is a well-used and cherished community facility.

Recommendation

That Members approve a grant of £4,000 (inc VAT) towards the external repair of Foxlowe Arts Centre subject to the conditions set out in 2.1 above.

Big Mill, Leek

- 4.2 Big Mill is a listed building (grade II), prominently located in the Leek Conservation Area on the main road into Leek from Macclesfield. Officers have been in discussion with the owner regarding his plans to convert the building into 44 flats. These proposals take up an earlier consent for conversion of the Big Mill, Shade Mill and the Wardle Davenport Mill granted in 2005. Although the Shade and Wardle Davenport Mills were both converted, the subsequent economic downturn intervened and the development of Big Mill did not proceed. The recent discussions taking place with officers have included a slight increase in the number of flats being created and potential sources of development funding.

The mill has been empty for about 10 years and, more recently, has rapidly deteriorated following the theft of lead from its roof causing internal floors and structural beams to fail. As a consequence, in addition to urging the owner to proceed with his development project, officers have threatened action under the listed building legislation to enforce some temporary and urgent works to be undertaken to prevent the continued rate of deterioration of the historic fabric. Under this procedure, the owner is required to undertake the works prescribed by legal notice by a given date to prevent the Council undertaking the works itself and seeking to recover the cost. However, this procedure carries a significant risk of the Council undertaking the works in default and being unable to recover the cost.

The Council is keen to work in partnership with the owner as much as possible – particularly if the discussions to secure the building's eventual full refurbishment are to be successful. As a consequence, the threat of action has resulted in a limited amount of internal propping being undertaken by the owner who has now also obtained a quotation to place a temporary cover on the roof. The proposals include:

- Erecting an access scaffold to the rear of the building and a safety handrail around the entire perimeter of the parapet wall to the roof.
- Placing pre-made bespoke heavy duty tarpaulin sheets over the existing roof slates and fixing into position via straps attached to the sheets which are then pulled into the building via the top floor windows and fixed to sound anchor points inside.

These works are intended to prevent further ingress of water into the building so as to allow it to dry out prior to development works to convert the building into residential use. Further internal propping may be necessary if there are significant delays in the development of the site going ahead.

The quotation has been prepared by a contractor who is retained to manage security at the site and who has a detailed knowledge of the building and its structural condition. The owner has already spent £12,500 in having the sheets manufactured but is having difficulties in securing the funding necessary to put the sheets into place.

The price quoted is £47,311.74 (inc VAT). This is significantly less than the cost of undertaking the work estimated for the Council at the time of preparing the enforcement schedule. This is largely as the contractor has devised a method of covering the roof which does not require the erection of a full scaffold to the building.

The works are urgently needed if further deterioration of the building is to be halted whilst the discussions about refurbishment are concluded. It is therefore proposed to proceed on the basis of the single price submitted and offer a grant of up to £20,000 towards the cost of these works. By doing this, the Council can avoid exposing itself to the far higher costs if it tried to enforce the repairs under the listed buildings legislation.

Recommendation

That Members approve a grant of up to £20,000 (inc VAT) towards the temporary roof covering to Big Mill subject to the conditions set out in 2.2 above.

Victoria Buildings – Odeon Antiques

- 4.3 Victoria Buildings (encompassing the properties occupied by Odeon Antiques, Boardman's Newsagents, Antiques by Design and the upper floor residential accommodation) occupies a prominent location at the busy town centre junction of St Edward Street and Broad Street in Leek. Given the building's prominence and architectural quality, its deteriorating condition and appearance is causing concern to the public and the Council.

The building is listed and falls within the Leek Conservation Area. It is in split ownership (4) and the Council's Conservation Officer has met with all the owners to discuss the condition of the building and possible repair with grant aid from the MPB. The owners are keen to explore the possibility of grant aid and as a necessary precursor to an application, have agreed to let the Council undertake a costed condition survey of the building.

CTD Architects have been appointed and will start the condition survey on Friday 15 June. Whilst the results will not be available at the time of writing the report. It is hoped that officers can update Members verbally at the committee meeting.

Recommendation

Subject to the outcome of the condition survey and costs, officers recommend that an in principle grant is allocated towards the repair of the building. Dependant upon available funds, the grant allocation would be in the region of £26,000. A formal grant offer would not be made until a grant application for the works is received and considered by the MPB at its November meeting.

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

Project Applications
File 6366

Location

Regeneration Services.

Contact

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Decision:

Reason:

Interests Declared: