

Waverley Borough Council

Report to: Executive

Date: 9 July 2024

Ward(s) affected: All Farnham Wards

Report of Joint Strategic Director: Richard Bates, Finance

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Report Status: Open

Key Decision: No

Accepting a National Heritage Lottery Grant of £230,310 for the historic brickwork repair project for Willmer House: The Museum of Farnham.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Waverley Borough Council has been awarded a grant of £230,310 by the National Heritage Lottery Fund towards the costs of delivering the historic brickwork and timber joinery repairs to the front façade of Willmer House. This report outlines what the grant will be used for, and the terms and conditions applied by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Officers are keen to advance the grant acceptance process to prevent delaying the start of the repair works, which are planned to begin in August 2024 and must be completed by April 2026.
- 1.2 Officers will bring an update report on project progress once the procurement process for the Main Contractor contract is complete.

2. Recommendation to Executive

- 2.1 The Executive is asked to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Finance, in consultation Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to agree and enter into a grant funding agreement, with the National Heritage Lottery Fund, on behalf of the Council.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

- 3.1 The Council must agree to the terms of the grant within three months of the offer letter. The National Heritage Fund may also request further evidence of property ownership, statutory permissions, secured cash contributions and evidence of compliancy with procurement law. Once the funder has processed this information, they will confirm their permission to proceed in an email whereupon the Council can begin to deliver the project.
- 3.2 The grant is in addition to the £734,335 funding already secured through Arts Council England's Museum Estate and Development Fund ("MEND"). To ensure the programme of repairs are delivered within the MEND deadline of April 2026 and taking account of a suspension of works over the winter months the Council is advised to begin works in the late summer of 2024. However, any work which starts before permission has been obtained from the National Heritage Fund would be done at risk particularly as the Council would be required by the terms and conditions of the National Heritage Grant Funding Agreement to have requested and received 100% of its Grant by its Grant Expiry Date (project completion date). After this date, the Grant offer expires, and the National Heritage will not be able to make any more payments to the Council.

4. Exemption from publication

- 4.1 Not exempt

5. Purpose of Report

- 5.1 To inform the Executive of the National Heritage Lottery Grant and to obtain the Executive's approval to agree; and
- 5.2 To inform the Council about what the grant will be used for and its contribution to project costs pre-tendering the works.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 Culture contributes to the wellbeing of Waverley's communities. This project will ultimately lead to the delivery of a high-quality public service accessible for all.
- 6.2 The National Heritage Lottery grant delivers value for money and creates the potential for future opportunities to achieve a more sustainable

future for the museum. The project aims to reduce the council's costs and liabilities associated with the ownership of a Grade 1 Listed building.

7. Background

7.1 The Council has applied to the National Heritage Lottery Fund and been awarded a grant of £230,310 towards the costs of delivering a 1.2-million-pound programme of essential conservation and repair works to the principal façade of Willmer House. The grant is in addition to the £734,335 funding already secured through Arts Council England's Museum Estate and Development Fund.

7.2 The capital works we will be carrying out are repairs and conservation to the front façade as follows:

- Replace the existing altered parapet wall with a new gauged brick parapet using lime mortar.
- Replace the existing tile parapet wall coping with a red sandstone coping to provide long term durability.
- Replace the brick cornice with a new gauged brick cornice to match the original details.
- Rebuild the second-floor window arches with new gauged brickwork to resist sagging and collapse.
- Replace inappropriate cement mortar repairs.
- Replace localised damaged gauged bricks.
- Fill fractures through brickwork.
- Refill deeply eroded gauged brick mortar joints with lime mortars.
- Repair and redecorate original timber sash windows (*not included in the MEND application)
- Repair the timber main entrance doorway (*not included in the MEND application)
- Remove paint coatings on Portland stone windowsills, the stone to be cleaned and repaired (*not included in the MEND application)
- Repair and conserve lead downpipes and replace damaged cast iron elements.
- Clean the entire façade from environmental deposits.

7.3 In addition to the capital works the National heritage Lottery Grant enables us to involve and connect with the local community throughout the restoration period, using the conservation as a vehicle to share our heritage with a broad demographic of people. The community

engagement programme, which will run alongside the museum's full activity programme includes:

- **Primary school workshops** – Willmer House, its occupants and construction will inspire learning about Farnham as a brick-built town, the rise and prosperity of the hop trade and the town's expansion in the Georgian era – with hands on conservation activity.
- **Family Day** – families will be invited to a day of free, fun, and accessible conservation activities. Brick rubbing, clay, crafts and Lego brick construction will provide hands-on fun while reenactors bring the history of the Georgian era alive.
- **Filming the conservation** – commissioning brief for UCA film students
- **Loneliness and social wellbeing** – Working with Men in Sheds, we will use the conservation of Willmer House as the starting point for a community-based heritage project which will focus on the sharing of woodwork skills and the promotion of wellbeing in older men. We also plan to work with Creative Response to develop an arts-based project for people with complex mental health needs. We will use this opportunity to consult people on the positive changes we can make to ensure the museum offers a welcoming environment for vulnerable adults.
- **Community Conservation Open Day** – We will hold a conservation day to demonstrate the conservation and repair techniques deployed in the project. The specialist workforce will be on hand to give talks and there will be displays and workstations set up in the garden.
- **Talks** – offered to local civic organisations as well as being part of town events such as Heritage Open Days.
- **Professional development** – we will create a peer-led case study about the experience of carrying out a complex capital project, which can be offered to Museum Development South East and the Surrey Museum Partnership. We will host a talk and tour of the conservation to the Surrey Conservation Officer Group and get in touch with The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation to offer a visit.

- **Exhibition and website** – the museum will host a rolling exhibition which will be regularly updated with photos and news from the museum parapet. The museum webpage will also be regularly updated, and the Farnham Maltings members will receive updates in their monthly online newsletter.
- **Buy a Brick** – we aim to run a public giving fundraising campaign throughout the construction period which will be led by Farnham Maltings.
- **Immersive audio experience** – we will commission a sound artist to create a new immersive audio trail delving into the history of Willmer House and sharing the stories of the people who have occupied it inspired by local historian Pat Heather’s book ‘The Town of Farnham: A History of West Street’. This will be a permanent visitor experience and a legacy of the historic renovation.

7.4 The table below shows the budget submitted for the National Heritage Lottery Funding application. The capital figures are based on pre-tender estimates for the project as the procurement process, which will confirm costs has not yet concluded.

Expenditure	Cost in £
Professional fees	134,236
Repair and conservation work	853,247
Community engagement activities	15,000
Digital outputs (audio installation)	15,000
Publicity	500
Evaluation Reports (MEND and HLF)	5,000
Contingency	161,662
Total Expenditure	1,184,645

Income	Cost in £
MEND	734,335
National Lottery Heritage Grant	230,310
Waverley Borough Council	275,000
Farnham Town Council	10,000
Museum Society	10,000
Total Income	1,184,645

7.5 On completion of the procurement process for the Main Contractor and the Specialist Brickwork Subcontractor, Officers will bring a report to the Executive, which sets out the schedule for the repair programme and a project budget based on the actual cost of the works.

8. Consultations

8.1 The MEND Project Board received an update on all aspects of the project at its meeting on 18 June 2024.

8.2 Local residents and museum stakeholders were invited to a presentation and Q&A about the repair works on 8 February 2024; 37 residents attended.

8.3 Listed Building Consent has been granted for the proposed conservation and repair work and the decision notice was published by the Planning Authority on 19 June 2024.

9. Key Risks

9.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund generally recommend that grant recipients do not start work on their projects before the permission to start is in place. However, if it were deemed essential to commence any preparatory works, the funder has confirmed that it would be permissible to start, as long as any work is dated after the decision date. This means that the funder could theoretically pay out against any invoice dated after the 5th of June 2024. Any work done before the grant acceptance is in place will be done at the Council's own risk and if for any reason the acceptance process failed the Heritage Lottery Fund would not be able

to pay out against anything the Council may have done during this time. This applies for capital and any other works.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 This grant of £230,310 will reduce the amount of Waverley's own funds needed to fund this project. Finance will work with the service once tenders have been received for this project to understand the full budget requirement. A report will then be taken to the Executive once these actual costs are known.

10.2 Care should be taken in ensuring we meet all conditions of the grant to protect Waverley potentially having to fund a budget gap if this grant was lost. Finance will work with the service to ensure all conditions of the grant are met and funds received.

11. Legal Implications

11.1 The Council will be required to abide by the National Heritage template terms and conditions and to maintain full compliance with these terms and conditions **indefinitely**, as the Museum is a heritage item. The Grant Contract cannot be terminated in any period of time after the Project Completion Date. Should at any point following the installation of the requisite capital works (a building or building restoration project), the Council wish to sell, destroy or dispose of the Museum, the Council is obliged to seek prior permission from the National Heritage or the National Heritage may claim back all, or part of, the Grant or require a share of proceeds in proportion to the value of the Grant.

11.2 The above said, the most crucial legal implication to be observed when receiving and/or accepting this grant is that the Council is obliged to carry out Subsidy Control checks as required by the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Where these checks are found to be deficient, the grant award may be subject to recovery.

11.3 The National Heritage's terms and conditions are fairly standard for this family of form of contract and are non-negotiable. The Council only has two options, which are (a) to accept the terms, and consequently, the funding, or (b) reject the terms and lose the offer of grant funds.

11.5 There is no risk or concern prohibiting acceptance of the grant funding agreement.

12. Human Resource Implications

12.1 N/A

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1 In the application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund the Council demonstrates how the project will increase inclusion, access and participation through the museum's community engagement activities.

14. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

14.1 The application demonstrates how the project protects the environment by seeking to achieve a long term sustainable conservation for the building by carrying out repairs which durable.

15. Summary of Options

15.1 a) to accept the terms, and consequently, the funding or
b) reject the terms and lose the offer of grant funds.

16. Conclusion

16.1 Officers recommend that authority is granted to accept the National Heritage Template Terms and Conditions.

17. Background Papers and Appendices

17.1 None

Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report.
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Service	Sign off date
Finance / S.151 Officer	20.06.24
Legal / Governance	20.06.24
HR	NA
Equalities	NA
Lead Councillor	20.06.24
CMB	N/A
Executive Briefing/Liaison	25.06.24
Committee Services	20.06.24