

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	11 March 2020
Subject:	High Street Heritage Action Zone award		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All Wards in Gloucester		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Proposed Representation on the Cathedral Quarter Partnership 2. HSHAZ Income and Expenditure Summary by Year		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the recent award of funding from Historic England under its High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme, and to obtain Cabinet approval to accept the funding, to contribute funding, and to make appropriate delegations of authority to issue grants and other payments.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (1) accept funding from Historic England under its High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme should the Council's application be accepted
- (2) become the designated Accountable body in the management and administration of the HSHAZ programme,
- (3) **note the existing budgets to be used as match funding, and,**
- (4) delegate authority to the Head of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, and the Council Solicitor to issue grants and payments from the HSHAZ programme and take all necessary steps including the entering into of legal agreements to enable delivery of the programme.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The City Growth and Delivery team of the Council submitted an Expression of Interest to Historic England (HE) during the Autumn of 2019 for funding of £1.9m

within HE's High Street Heritage Action Zone programme. The national programme was introduced *to find new ways to champion and revive historic high streets*. Gloucester's EoI was successful and the Council was subsequently invited to submit a full Delivery Plan in December 2019. The bid was one of 69 high streets across England to have been selected to receive a share of the £95 million fund. Final sign off of the award is awaited, but it is expected that it will be received next month and the programme will commence in April.

- 3.2 Gloucester's bid relates to the Cathedral Quarter area of the City Centre comprising Westgate Street and the lanes and links of it. The award will stimulate the regeneration of this historically and culturally important area, bringing historic properties back in to economic use, supporting business creation and growth, and reinforcing the sense of identity and community. The funding is over a four year period, commencing on 1st April 2020, and needs to be matched by local finance, creating a total programme of £3.8m. The City Council is the lead organisation and a partnership has been formed comprising heritage bodies, local businesses and other relevant agencies.
- 3.3 The Cathedral Quarter project aims to create an increased sense of place and civic pride within the zone, positioning Westgate Street as an historic gem. Local people and businesses will have more positive perceptions of their historic buildings as assets and enablers of regeneration, and visitors will spend more time and money in the city centre. People of all ages will better understand the historical significance of Gloucester. The historic environment will become valued by all sectors for its economic, cultural and health and wellbeing benefits and together with the place making agenda will provide the key link to ensure regeneration in Gloucester is a holistic process.
- 3.4 The Cathedral Quarter will become an active and vibrant centre of community and business activity. Westgate will be a hub for experiential retail and leisure, with artisan, quality and independents the hallmarks of its offer. It will be known as a place to visit in the evening, for cultural events and activities in a range of venues including the Cathedral, St Nicholas Church and the former Folk Museum. There will be a strong evening food and drink offer, and the area will feel safe and welcoming whether by day or evening. The market for guest accommodation will be rising and more people will be living, working and taking a pride in the Westgate area.
- 3.5 The project will consist of three main strands:

3.5.1 The Physical Strand

Improvements to the public realm will be undertaken in line with the City Councils adopted Public Realm Strategy. Improved seating and street furniture will be installed, and the programme will work with the County Council to improve the surfacing of the area that links Lower Westgate to Cathedral Court, so that the revitalised Folk Museum and St Nicholas Church are more clearly accessible on foot from the Cathedral. With a more attractive and uniform street scene, routes and pathways will match the high-quality public realm of the Cathedral Close.

Signage that is characterful, well designed and appropriate to the Conservation Area will be installed to ensure that the Lanes off Westgate are visible, and the

businesses they contain are promoted following the City Councils adopted shopfront, shutters and signage guidance. The routes and links to the City Centre, former Folk Museum, attractions and the Docks and Quays will become attractive, clearer and easier to follow.

Grants will be offered to property and business owners in the Cathedral Quarter to improve the built environment and bring vacant property back into active economic use. This will include residential accommodation and new commercial uses. The grants will also re-instate architectural features and, in turn, historic character through funding replacement shopfronts, windows and other lost features, including the Westgate façade of the Fleece Inn

Feasibility studies, research and historical assessments will assist with more fully understanding the heritage assets in the Cathedral Quarter. Timber framed buildings will be recorded, and dendrochronology dated. Dedicated guidance on conversion of upper floors, design of advertising, A-Boards and street furniture, and style guides for sensitive restoration will be produced supported by an 'Area of Special Control' and a listed building consent order.

3.5.2 Community Engagement Strand

The design of the programme was informed by extensive consultation with businesses on Westgate Street and heritage bodies prior to the submission of the Expression of Interest. Consultation and engagement activities will continue to underpin the programme. Training, capacity building and educational initiatives will ensure that more people are aware of the issues around older buildings, and organisations and individuals will be better able to look after, manage and develop historic buildings and heritage sites and projects in the future.

A Heritage Research and Community archaeology project will be undertaken to the rear of the Fleece where development of the site offers opportunities to engage with its transformation, including a community archaeological dig.

Business support and advice will be available to stimulate property occupancy and business growth, assisting owners to maximise the value of their premises, encouraging a broader range of uses for vacant/redundant spaces and exploring 'meanwhile' uses, opening in the evening to encourage the night time economy.

3.5.3 The Cultural Strand

This will be delivered by a consortium of the Gloucester Culture Trust, Gloucester Heritage Forum, Strike a Light, and Gloucester City Council. Gloucester Culture Trust will be the lead organisation in the Cultural consortium. The consortium will be invited to submit a proposed cultural programme to HE, and this element will be separately funded.

The programme, which has yet to be designed, will enhance the other HSHAZ strands by encouraging active participation in a range of cultural activities and events in the Cathedral Quarter. It will celebrate the heritage and history of the area and encourage greater visits to and dwell time within the Cathedral Quarter during the daytime and the evening.

3.6 Governance and Management Arrangements

A partnership of stakeholder organisations has been established to oversee the delivery of the Cathedral Quarter scheme, reporting to the Gloucester Regeneration Advisory Board. The partnership will meet quarterly and will consider projects and schemes and monitor expenditure and delivery and report back to the Council. A list of the partners that will comprise the Partnership Group is at Appendix 1.

A steering group will be established to report into the Partnership Board. It will consist of representatives of the three strands of the project plus Historic England, Gloucester City Council, Gloucester Culture Trust, Gloucester Heritage Forum, and Gloucester BID.

A Project Officer will be employed by the City Council to administer the scheme. An important element of the programme will be marketing, and raising awareness of the Cathedral Quarter to investors, visitors to the city and residents.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 The programme has been informed by consultation and engagement with numerous stakeholders, including businesses, agencies and voluntary organisations. The bid to Historic England includes a Community Engagement Statement, which describes the partnership's commitment to Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and the use of the Cathedral Quarter programme to apply community-led place making to deliver heritage led regeneration. Feeding directly into the Gloucester Regeneration Advisory Board it will link with the city-wide work of the Community Building Collective CIC and the Gloucester Culture Trust.

4.2 Through community engagement, the programme will identify local knowledge, skills and strengths as well as the challenges and aspirations of residents, visitors and businesses. It will use this insight to co-produce an awareness-raising, activity and intervention programme that delivers regeneration, whilst drawing out measures of success to create a sustainable legacy".

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 The programme will have a direct and beneficial impact on the appearance of Westgate Street and its immediate surroundings. Through investment in individual properties, improvements to the public realm, and the creation of high quality, attractive public spaces the appearance and attractiveness of the built and natural environment will be significantly enhanced. Furthermore, the programme will enable the research and gathering of valuable data on the heritage and cultural assets of the area.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Do nothing. It is the view of officers that were the Council to take the decision to not intervene and take an inactive role in the regeneration of the city centre, areas like Westgate Street would continue to struggle and decline. Through positive

intervention, including bidding for and securing external funding, the Council aims to stimulate investment and the positive transformation of the city centre.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The authority of the Council is required to accept the funding, to make budgetary provision to provide part of the match funding, and to make appropriate delegations of authority to issue grants and other payments.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 The Council's bid for funding has been approved in principle by Historic England. Formal approval of the grant is required before recruitment of the Project Officer and commencement of the programme in April.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The Council's Accountancy Manager observes as follows:

9.2 The City Council as the lead organisation for the receipt of the funding will need to ensure that the match funding of £1.9m is achieved in order to access the full £1.9m of funding from Historic England. It should be noted that any expenditure made in the absence of appropriate partnership funding will become a liability of the Council. As per Appendix 2, the total Partnership Funding included over the four years of the project is £1.2m. Accordingly, this element of the project will need to be carefully managed, monitored and reported.

9.3 The City Council as the Accountable Body for the funding will also need to ensure that, from the outset, robust financial reporting and performance monitoring mechanisms are developed and implemented with regard to the budget management and monitoring of the grant. This should include a clear format and timetable for financial reporting to the Council and its partner organisations.

9.4 As the programme progresses, and specific project needs are identified, further funding allocations and the business cases supporting them will be presented to the Cabinet for approval as appropriate

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 The Council is required to enter a legal agreement with Historic England in order to receive the grant. A draft agreement has been sent by Historic England and advice has been given by One Legal to officers about the content of the agreement. Further advice will be given to the Head of Place on the legal implications of entering into the grant agreement once the final version is issued.

10.2 The Council will be responsible for administering, monitoring and enforcing the programme and will be required to enter into grant agreements with the recipients. Historic England are likely to request that the Council use its prescribed template.

10.3 The Council has powers to provide these grants under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 10.4 State aid must always be considered when giving grants. Depending on the level of grants to be given to building owners and the amount of any grant they have already received from public bodies in the last three years, the grant may be considered to 'de minimis'. Further advice will be given to the Head of Place.
- 10.5 The partnership board and the consortium referred to in this report are not decision-making bodies. Whilst the Council would want to consult with these bodies, the Council are accountable to Historic England and have to administer the scheme in accordance with the grant agreement.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

Risk	Impact	Level of impact	Likelihood of impact	Mitigating measures
Formal approval of the HSHAZ grant is not forthcoming from HE	Unable to fund the programme	4	1	Regular communications with HE. Appointment of the Project Officer will be undertaken on a short term basis in advance of receipt of the formal offer letter.
The Council and its partners are unable to make the financial and staffing contributions required as match funding.	Unable to draw down HE funding and deliver the programme.	3	2	GCC contributions will be taken from existing resources where possible. Requests for additional match funding will be sought as early as possible. The Partnership Board will enable good understanding of partners' ability to provide match funding.
Opportunities	Impact	Level of impact	Likelihood of impact	Maximising measures
To secure government funding in Gloucester to enhance the Council's regeneration activities.	Physical, social and economic improvements to the Cathedral Quarter.	3	3	Partnership approach to governance Use of professional skills to administer the programme Effective financial management of the funding.
To engage the community in the regeneration programme.	Greater public and business ownership	3	2	Effective community engagement in the design of the programme, and ongoing engagement through appropriate bodies.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 There are no safeguarding implications of this report.

12.2 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 The regeneration of the Cathedral Quarter, designed and delivered in consultation with the local community, will lead to the area becoming a more engaging and welcoming area. An important element of the programme is the delivery of cultural events intended to attract visitors, including during the evening, leading to greater footfall in Westgate Street.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 A Project Officer position will be created for the duration of the four year programme.

Background Documents: None