

# King John's House Grant 2023/24

Report of the Community, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder

## Recommended:

1. That the King John's House grant of £43,634 be extended for one year to cover 2023-24.
2. That authority be given to the Head of Finance and Revenues to agree up to a 5% inflationary rise on the grant for 2023/24 in discussion with King John's House.

## SUMMARY:

- The purpose of this report is to outline the rationale to extend the grant to King John's House (KJH) for 2023/24.
- In 2022 KJH applied for a three-year grant but was awarded a one year grant but with provision to fund for a further two years in order to align more closely with the wider Tourism activity and a future review to inform how best to meet the tourism sector needs of the Borough.
- The Review has not yet taken place and the proposal is to extend the grant for one more year in order to maintain services whilst the review takes place.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the extension of the grant to King John's House (KJH) for 2023/24.
- 1.2 King John's House and Tudor Cottage Trust exists to preserve the medieval house for the benefit of future generations and to share the house in an educational context. The Council has provided grant funding to support KJH to position themselves at the centre of a developing regional tourism market in active collaboration with the Visitor Information Centre in Romsey, Tourism South East and other local attractions to meet the needs of the whole Borough, whilst also developing the house and gardens as an attraction in its own right, creating a more engaging experience which broadens its current narrow demographic of visitor.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 At Cabinet on 23 February 2022 it was agreed to provide funding of £43,634 for 2022/23 under Community and Leisure's Revenue Grant Programme. KJH had applied for three year's funding but one year was agreed as the funding programme was to be managed by Planning Policy & Economic Development (PPED) Service and future funding tied into a wider Tourism Review. This funding supported the salaries of the General Manager and Deputy Manager (combined 1.8 FTE).

- 2.2 The 2022 Cabinet Report outlined how the Council's tourism contract, which includes the running of the Visitor Information Centre, would be coming up for renewal in 2023. The nature of this contract will be significant to the future objectives for any funding provided to KJH and therefore the report only made recommendations on one year's funding so that funding from 2023-4 onwards is better coordinated with the tourism contract.
- 2.3 There was also provision for future funding covering 2023/24 and 2024/25. This was set at £43,634 which did not include any inflationary rise. It is therefore recommended that any inflationary request be confirmed following discussions between the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, Head of Finance and Revenues and KJH.

### **3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities**

- 3.1 As a tourist asset within the centre of Romsey and co-located with the Visitor Information Centre, supporting King John's House would meet the Town Centre and Communities Corporate priorities.

### **4 Consultations/Communications**

- 4.1 Subject to the outcome of this decision, communication will be continued with King John's House and its trustees.

### **5 Options**

- 5.1 The option to consider is whether to award King John's House a further year's funding.

### **6 Option Appraisal**

- 6.1 King John's House and Tudor Cottage Trust (KJH) exists to preserve the medieval house for the benefit of future generations and to share the house in an educational context. The funding helps to continue those objectives whilst a wider review of tourism is undertaken.
- 6.2 This recommendation was linked to the wider Tourism review which has not yet taken place but is planned for 2023. This review has not yet taken place as it was considered necessary for this to be completed in the context of a post pandemic tourism economy. It will also ensure that decisions can be informed with a full year of visitor figures and data.
- 6.3 KJH applied for three years' funding in 2022 but were awarded one year and the funding was moved to PPED. As a result a further application has not been requested. By providing a further year of funding it would bring this into line with the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) contract this is currently out to tender for one year, 2023/24. With the extension to the VIC contract and the grant support for KJH the Council would be able to carry out the review whilst the tourist services continue. Both organisations have experienced challenges recently. These external factors have affected their ability to implement and monitor the progress of their proposals. Without having a clear picture to understand the circumstances it is not possible to recommend a future specific model of tourist service delivery in the Borough.

6.4 It is intended that as part of the grant offer that the Trust would need to submit regular monitoring reports. This will give the Council an accurate picture post Covid of how the organisation is running and demonstrate an increasing involvement in the work of Romsey Future and other town centre partnerships whilst also supporting the wider Test Valley Tourism objectives. This will be in the form of:

- To provide a quarterly report submitted 10 days post quarter end outlining visitor numbers and clearly articulating the role the Centre plays in supporting both the tourism activity and community activity.
- To work with TVBC and partners to proactively promote Test Valley, its businesses, and events through all relevant social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to prospective visitors; and be able to provide statistics on the number of posts, followers etc. attributable to this work.
- To work closely in an open and proactive way with TVBC during 2023 through providing data as we scope and develop the wider Test Valley Tourism offer.

6.5 Should the recommendation not be agreed it would not provide KJH with the certainty and security that the funding provides whilst the monitoring and review process is undertaken and to understand the function and role that KJH can have in the future.

## **7 Risk Management**

7.1 An evaluation of the risks indicate that the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks have been identified at this time.

## **8 Resource Implications**

8.1 The recommended grant, together with an inflationary allowance can be managed within existing budgets.

## **9 Legal Implications**

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **10 Equality Issues**

10.1 An EQIA screening had been completed in accordance with the Council's EQIA methodology as part of the February 2022 Cabinet report and no potential for unlawful discrimination or negative impact had been identified, therefore a full EQIA had not been carried out. The considerations within this report reflect that earlier decision.

## **11 Other Issues**

11.1 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – None

- 11.2 Wards/Communities Affected – Romsey but also wider Test Valley.
- 11.3 King John’s House Gardens are under the ownership of TVBC and leased to King John’s House.

**12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation**

- 12.1 This report recommends that the King John House’s grant is extended for one year.
- 12.2 During 2023 a complete tourism review in the context of a post pandemic tourism economy will be undertaken. By extending this grant, together with the tender of the VIC for 2023/24, both services will continue, feed data into the review process and play a role in developing the new Test Valley tourism offer.

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| <u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>  |             |           |                  |
| None   |             |           |                  |
| <u>Confidentiality</u>   |             |           |                  |
| It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public. |             |           |                  |
| No of Annexes:   | None        | File Ref: | N/A              |
| (Portfolio: Community, Leisure and Tourism) Councillor D Drew  |             |           |                  |
| Officer:   | Jennie Pell | Ext:      | 8309             |
| Report to:   | Cabinet     | Date:     | 22 February 2023 |