

King John's House Grant

Report of the Community, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

That the remaining grant for King John's House for 2023/24 be used for the purposes outlined in paragraph 6.2 and 6.3 to the report.

SUMMARY:

To consider an alternative use for the remainder of the King John's House grant for 2023/24.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a change of use of the remaining grant for King John's House (KJH) for 2023/24.

2 Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 In 2022 KJH applied for a three-year grant under Community and Leisure's Revenue Grant Programme to support the salaries of the General Manager and Deputy Manager (combined 1.8 FTE). At that time, they were 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 Test Valley Tourism Review to inform how best to meet the tourism sector needs of the Borough. Responsibility for this grant was transferred from Community and Leisure Service to Planning Policy and Economic Development Service.
- 2.3 The Test Valley Tourism Review did not take place in 2022 as it was considered necessary for it to be completed in the context of a post pandemic tourism economy. Therefore, at Cabinet on the 22 February 2023 it was agreed that:
1. 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.

2.4 This grant payment is paid in two equal instalments, one at the beginning of the financial year and the second six months later. Therefore, they have received 50% of the grant and are awaiting the final £22,908 (including the 5% inflationary rise as delegated to Head of Finance and Revenues) which covers October 2022 – March 2023.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

3.1 The recommendation within this report links to the corporate objective of Prosperity by supporting King John's House's investigation into its future viability.

4 Consultations/Communications

4.1 Officers have undertaken informal and without prejudice discussions with representatives of KJH Trustees. 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 allow the flexibility of use for the remaining grant for 2023/24 as outlined, or not.

6 Option Appraisal

6.1 The February 2023 Cabinet report gave authority for the grant and the Trusts proposals would be within the approved limit. However, the use of the remaining grant now proposed by the Trust and recommended to Cabinet is different from what was originally agreed.

6.2 King John's House has seen an impact on their visitor numbers not returning to pre pandemic levels. In June 2023 the Council were informed that the Trust was undertaking a Strategic Review of its operating model to best secure its future. To help move towards that new model the Trust wish to engage external consultancy support to help develop an application for a National Lottery Heritage Fund Operational Resilience grant.

6.3 In order to do this the Trust are requesting that part of this year's grant (£22,908, including the 5% inflationary rise) to be used to cover this cost. In order for the Trust to be more resilient in the future the recommended option is to allow the flexibility of the remaining grant for 2023/24 to be used by the Trust for the original purpose and to allow them to investigate and implement a different operating model.

6.4 If the Council were not to provide the Trust with the funds to support their investigation and grant submission it would limit their opportunity to help secure their future. For this reason this option is not preferred.

7 Risk Management.

- 7.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report has previously been reported to Members (Item 9, Cabinet, 22 February 2023)

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The remaining 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 Property Issues

- 11.1.1 King John's House Gardens are under the ownership of TVBC and leased to King John's House

11.2 Wards/Communities Affected

- 11.2.1 Romsey but also wider Test Valley

12 Conclusion

- 12.1 This report recommends that the King John House's grant is amended for the remainder of 2023/24. This would support the Trust in exploring other operating models and the submission of a bid for external funding.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Report and Minutes for Cabinet 23 February 2022 and 22 February 2023](#)

Confidentiality

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
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(Portfolio: Community, Leisure and Tourism) Councillor T Swain

Officer:	Graham Smith/Jennie Pell	Ext:	8141/8309
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	15 November 2023
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