

King John's House Grant 2024/25

Report of the Community, Leisure and Tourism (including Diversity and Inclusion)
Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

That the King John's House grant of £48,107 be extended for one year to cover 2024/25.

SUMMARY:

- In 2022 King John's House (KJH) applied for a three-year grant. They were awarded a one year grant with provision to fund a further two years, in order to align more closely with the wider review of the tourism sector needs of the Borough.
- This Review has taken place and as the implications of the Review are considered, the support for KJH will enable them to carry out the actions to enable them to become self-sustaining.
- Therefore, the grant for 2024/25 will support staffing as per the original application but maintain the flexibility agreed at Cabinet on 15 November 2023 to help support the transition activities identified in their Strategic Action Plan.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to explain the rationale to award King John's House the final year of grant funding, 2024/25.

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 took place in the autumn of 2023. As the implications of the Review are considered, the support for KJH will enable them to carry out the actions to enable them to help them become self-sustaining.
- 2.4 KJH have a Strategic Action Plan which outlines the steps they need to go through to move to a self-sustaining model. They have already started carrying out these actions, which include building capacity in areas such as fund raising on the Trustee Board. They attended the Romsey Volunteer Fair seeking Trustees to fill identified skills gaps as well as volunteers for KJH.
- 2.5 The 2024/25 grant will give them the capacity to carry out these actions during the year and TVBC will work closely with them to help achieve this ambition.
- 2.6 Consequently, they are requesting the same flexibility to the grant that was agreed at Cabinet on 15 November 2024 [Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#). This allowed them to use the grant for the original purpose which was to fund staff but to also allow them to use the grant to investigate and implement a different operating model should it be required, e.g. employing a funding consultant to assist with funding applications to external bodies.
- 2.7 They provided a Business Plan and associated budget plan that covered the period up to 31st March 2025. In that they requested a grant of £48,107 which is based on the 2023/24 grant level plus an allowance for inflation.
- 2.8 The budget for 2024/25 is currently not confirmed but there is sufficient identified to meet the amount of grant requested (plus £1,428 to cover parking permits)

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 Options to be considered include:
- Approving the award of the 2024/25 grant to King John's House (recommended).
 - Approving a lower amount of grant for 2024/25.
 - Not approving any grant for 2024/25.

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.
- 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. This Strategic Review includes an Action Plan to guide them to sustainability. It also identifies the need to bring in external expertise, both paid and to build the capacity of the Trustees. They have started on these actions which will continue through 2024/25.
- 6.3 In order to support the Trust with these actions the recommended option is to allow the same flexibility as agreed for part of the 2023/24 grant (Cabinet, 15th November 2023) for the 2024/25 grant. This would allow them to use the grant for its original purpose, staffing costs, but also give them flexibility for it to be used to cover potential costs associated with this actions within their Action Plan.
- 6.4 If the Council were not to provide the Trust with the funds to support them whilst they carry out the actions necessary to transition to self-sustaining model including any possible 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, 22nd February 2023)

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The remaining grant, together with an inflationary allowance can be managed within existing budgets.
- 8.2 This grant payment is paid in two equal instalments, one at the beginning of the financial year and the second six months later.

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 to cover 2024/25 is approved. This would support the Trust in carrying out the actions within their Action Plan as they seek to become fully sustainable.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u> Report and Minutes for Cabinet 23 February 2022 Report and Minutes for Cabinet 22 February 2023			
<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 (including Diversity and Inclusion)) Councillor T Swain			
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