

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

7 June 2007

**GRANT AID TO WILTSHIRE HERITAGE AND SALISBURY AND SOUTH
WILTSHIRE MUSEUMS – SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Purpose

1. To move forward with the request of Council for a scrutiny review of the Wiltshire Heritage and Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museums.

Background

2. At full Council on 13 February, in determining this year's revenue budget, grant aid to the two museums was made conditional. One of the conditions was for the museums to agree to a review of operations and funding prior to grant aid recommendations for next year.
3. This decision was preceded by earlier considerations at Cabinet about not funding the Wiltshire Heritage Museum but subsequent discussions resulted in a broader, longer-term approach being pursued.
4. A letter was sent to the two museums setting out the following conditions and seeking their agreement prior to the staged release of funding:
 - "Your organisation(s) participates in the Scrutiny Task Group.
 - That Wiltshire Heritage Museum work in partnership with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum to investigate and produce proposals to consider sharing curatorial expertise, outreach activity and management of the two museums.
 - That a Management Review of the Board(s) is undertaken on terms to be agreed with this authority.
 - That the museum(s) reinvigorates the income generation and fund raising strategy and look at selling a wider range of products with a view to raising income.
 - That active involvement with English Heritage should be pursued with a view to increasing your income stream(s) from this organisation. In our view this could be achieved by levying a hire charge for exhibits for the Stonehenge Visitor Centre.
 - That no reductions in opening hours to the public are implemented 2007/8."

Funding will be released in three tranches for 2007/08. The first target has been met by both museums. The condition for the second two tranches will be met if the terms of reference at paragraph 8 are accepted and the museums 'sign-up' to the ensuing action plan.

5. Clarification to the content of the letter was sought by the Museums resulting in further correspondence. Tacit agreement to the conditions has now been received enabling the review to proceed. However on going discussions continue which may need updating at the meeting.

Scrutiny Review

6. In discussions with the Assistant Director of Community Services an item was submitted to the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 29 March seeking agreement in principle to the request of Council for a review subject to acceptance of the conditions by the museums.
7. The Committee agreed to this and asked for an update report to the next meeting from which appropriate terms of reference and membership can be established.
8. In discussion with the Assistant Director of Community Services, the following terms of reference are proposed:
 - (1) To review and comment on the partnership working between the two Wiltshire Designated Museums including proposals to consider sharing curatorial expertise, outreach activity and the management of the two museums to secure efficiency savings.
 - (2) To review and comment on the income generating activities of the museums and to identify any additional opportunities for the museums to consider.
 - (3) To aim to conclude the review within 3 months of the first meeting and report its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny and Management Committee for endorsement.
9. The usual protocol for the operation of task groups will be applied and circulated to all those involved. It is proposed to appoint five non-executive members to serve on the Task Group, and to allow it to appoint its own chairman. It is likely that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee will nominate eligible members at the meeting having first consulted the database of members experience, interest and availability.
10. A query has already been made about the role of the members who currently serve as Council representatives on the Managing Boards of the two museums (Tony Molland, Julie Swabey, Bill Moss and Tony

Deane). Although probably best not serving as members of the Task Group due to potential conflict of interest, it is likely that they will be invited to participate fully as “witnesses”. A broad range of stakeholder and independent input is also important when reviewing an “external” service.

11. Once appointed, the first meeting will scope the detail of the review within its terms of reference and communicate out its intentions to all interested parties. It is likely that site visits will be an important component of the evidence-gathering process. The Task Group’s final report, once endorsed by the Management Committee, will play an important part in determining any future grant aid by the museums.

Recommendations

12. To note the decision taken in principle at the last meeting to establish a task group to review the two museums.
13. To note the agreement of the two museums to the grant aid conditions, including the scrutiny review.
14. In light of the above, to formally establish the task group with the terms of reference set out in paragraph 8.
15. To note the position of the current Council member representatives on the museum managing boards with regard to the review.
16. To appoint the five members nominated by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the meeting, noting that the Task Group will elect its own chairman.
17. To look forward to receiving the Task Group’s final report at the Management Committee’s meeting on 1 November once the review has been concluded.

STEPHEN GERRARD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Report author: Paul Kelly
Scrutiny Manager

Public documents relied on in the preparation of this report: None