

Delegated Decision Report

13 May 2020

Extension to Stage 2 National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Phase: Durham History Centre: a whole new story. Activities, exhibitions and digital transformation

Report of Jenny Haworth, Head of Strategy

Electoral division(s) affected:

All electoral wards are covered by the History Centre Project however, the centre's location is within the Neville's Cross division.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on progress to the development phase of the National Lottery Funded Project: Durham History Centre: a whole new story.
- 2 To provide recommendations on how to move forward.

Executive summary

- 3 In March 2020, the National Lottery Heritage Fund approved permission to start on the development phase of the Durham History Centre: a whole new story project with an expected stage two submission date of 23 November 2020
- 4 This report describes the impact of Covid-19 on the NLHF stage 2 development phase for the Durham History Centre: a whole new story Project and details delays to key programme tasks resulting from the Covid-19 restrictions
- 5 An extension to the programme of three months is proposed to mitigate these delays, with capital costs associated with the programme underwritten by contingency within the capital budget.

Recommendation(s)

- 6 The Corporate Director of Resources is recommended to:
 - note the delay to key elements of the development phase programme resulting from the impact of, and restrictions associated with, Covid-19.
 - approve a request to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to extend the development phase to March 2021.

Background

- 7 The Durham History Centre project will bring together five archive and heritage collections, with the registration service, in the grade II listed Mount Oswald Manor House, which will be restored and extended creating a facility where people can discover and explore nationally and internationally significant collections. The History Centre will house the county's archives, historic registration records, environment and archaeology records, local studies collections and the Durham Light Infantry collection.
- 8 In December 2019, the project received notification from NLHF of a stage 1 pass for Durham History Centre: a whole new story; and confirmed a Development Grant of up to £43,500.00.
- 9 In March 2020, NLHF approved a programme for the development phase and granted permission to start with stage 2 submission agreed for 23 November 2020.
- 10 In mid-March 2020, lockdown restrictions were put in place by the UK Government in response to Covid-19.

Summary of Covid Impact

- 11 In March 2020 a programme to deliver the NLHF development phase was agreed.
- 12 Later in March 2020, lockdown restrictions were put in place by the UK Government in response to the outbreak of Covid-19. These restrictions have resulted in the requirement for the project team and service teams to work from home. As a result, several key tasks which require team members to have significant working access to either the collections, e.g. sorting the backlog and digitising collections; or the general public, e.g. volunteer recruitment, consultation and piloting of activities, are now not possible within the agreed timeframes.

Considerations and Implications

- 13 There is no confirmed timetable for the lifting of restrictions at this point in time; therefore, further impact on the programme is considered to be likely.
- 14 If the stage 2 application is submitted in line with the existing programme it is likely that several key elements will not be completed. This may result in a loss of grant income during the development phase in relation to the key tasks which are not completed and will in turn impact significantly on the quality of the stage 2 submission.
- 15 A lower quality stage 2 submission based on partial delivery of the development phase will place the submission at a significant disadvantage and may be more likely to result in a negative outcome.
- 16 There are four NLHF grant award panels each year and projects are able to request extensions to their development phase to submit to a later award panel. If we were to submit for the March 2021 panel meeting, we could expect a grant decision in summer 2021. This is a three month delay compared to our current programme. Table 2 below provides a proposed revised programme.

Task	Start month	Start year	End month	End year
Permission to start	February	2020	March	2020
Develop strategic marketing and comms plan	February	2020	February	2020
Draft Interpretation Plan	March	2020	March	2020
Procurement of Activity Planner	February	2020	April	2020
Procurement of Digital Consultant	February	2020	April	2020
Appoint Activity Planner	April	2020	April	2020
Appoint Digital Consultant	April	2020	April	2020
Purchase flatbed scanner	March April	2020	April May	2020
Develop fundraising strategy	April	2020	April	2020
Develop strategic consultation and engagement plan	February	2020	May	2020
Agree volunteer job roles and volunteer coordination	March	2020	May June	2020
Begin digitising collections	April	2020	April	2020
Recruit volunteers	May July	2020	May July	2020
Proress report submitted to NLHF	July	2020	July	2020
Q1 grant request	July	2020	July	2020
Piloting activities	June July	2020	October November	2020
Draft activity plan, including volunteering plan and training plan	July September	2020	July September	2020
Draft evaluation framework	July September	2020	July September	2020
Draft conservation plan	July September	2020	July September	2020
Draft digital implementation, management and maintenance plan	July September	2020	July September	2020
Planning approval and land transfer	May July	2020	July October	2020
Durham History Centre landing page on Durham County Council website	May October	2020	May October	2020
Proress report submitted to NLHF	October	2020	October	2020
Q2 grant request	October	2020	October	2020
Consultation and engagement	May June	2020	October November	2020
Sorting the backlog	May	2020	October February	2021
Heritage Fund review	August December	2020	August December	2020
Proress report submitted to NLHF	November January	2021	November January	2021
Q3 grant request	November January	2021	November January	2021
Develop job descriptions for delivery phase posts	October January	2021	October January	2021
Detailed delivery phase budget finalised	October February	2021	October February	2021
Final activity plan	October February	2021	October February	2021
Final conservation plan	October February	2021	October February	2021

Final digital implementation, management and maintenance plan	October February	2021	October February	2021
Delivery phase application submission	November March	2021	November March	2021
Proress report submitted to NLHF	April	2021	April	2021
Q4 grant request	April	2021	April	2021

Table 1. Proposed revised programme of works for NLHF development phase

- 17 A delay to the grant outcome of three months will mean that the project will need to carry at risk the £200k contribution to capital costs against digital infrastructure for the exhibition to avoid delay to design development and construction.
- 18 The capital budget includes a significant contingency of £1.74 million, it is proposed that the £200k at risk could be underwritten by this.

Conclusions

- 19 This report describes the impact of Covid-19 on the NLHF stage 2 development phase for the Durham History Centre Project.
- 20 As a result of Covid-19 restrictions key aspects of programme delivery have been delayed.
- 21 An extension to the programme of three months is proposed to mitigate these delays.
- 22 Capital costs associated with the programme can be underwritten by contingency within the capital budget.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Permission to Start Documentation Durham History Centre: a whole new story

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

This decision is taken in accordance with Part 3 Table 1 paragraph 4(e) of the Council's Constitution.

Finance

£200k will be carried at risk underwritten by contingency

Consultation Councillor Joy Allen, Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Culture and Tourism has been consulted in relation to the proposals as Lead Member for the Project and is supportive of the proposals.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

none

Climate Change

none

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

The History Centre will provide transformed facilities for the Council's Historic Collections and Registration Services, members of the public accessing the services and the staff working within the relevant services.

Risk

A detailed risk register is maintained and regularly reviewed by the History Centre project team and board.

Procurement

None