

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	16 December 2021
Title:	Investing in Hampshire Fund Bid – Hampshire Cultural Trust
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the award of a grant from the Investing in Hampshire Fund, to projects which will contribute to cultural development and economic recovery and growth in Hampshire

Recommendation

2. To approve an award of £75,000 to Hampshire Cultural Trust towards *878 AD: An Anglo-Saxon Experience* on condition of the written commitment of the Trust to provide the balance of funding required.

Executive Summary

Assassins Creed

3. In 2019, the Leader agreed to broaden the criteria for the Investing in Hampshire Fund to incorporate 'projects that will support economic development and business growth within Hampshire'.
4. In the context of the County Council's efforts to support economic recovery from the Covid19 pandemic, the *Assassins Creed* proposal will contribute to that objective.
5. The project will bring Anglo-Saxon Winchester to life using digital recreations from *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* to create an immersive city-wide experience and a learning programme linking literacy and gaming. The project will be delivered by HCT in collaboration with global video-gaming company Ubisoft and UK creative innovation studio Sugar Creative.

6. The project aims to inspire local pride in Winchester's significant role in Anglo-Saxon history and in Hampshire's position as a centre for digital innovation. More broadly, it is recognised that the regeneration and diversification of Hampshire's High Streets, particularly through the provision of cultural and creative activity, is an important component in the region's post-pandemic recovery. It is expected that the *Assassins Creed* project will raise the profile of, and bring wider audiences to, Hampshire's cultural attractions. The attraction and promotional activities around it will drive footfall to the city centre, generate spend in nearby shops, cafes, and restaurants, and contribute to the economic regeneration of Winchester.

Contextual Information

Assassins Creed

7. The purpose of this grant stream is to fund projects which provide community benefit and help local communities thrive and/or to help local organisations become financially self-supporting and not reliant on public sector funding. Full details, including what the County Council can and cannot fund, are set out in Appendix 1.
8. This application is for a contribution towards set up costs of a new visitor attraction based in Winchester. This attraction will take the form of an immersive experience based in Winchester's Brooks Shopping Centre, opening in autumn 2022. It will integrate objects from the City and County's archaeological collections with the digital assets from *Assassin's Creed*, to connect them with a compelling narrative as the people of Winchester wait to hear the outcome of the battle of Edington in 878 AD. A 360 degree projection theatre will enable visitors to experience a day in Anglo-Saxon Winchester for themselves, with storytelling around topics including warfare, language, food, money, music, trade, pottery, games, and fashion.
9. Hampshire Cultural Trust will work with library partners in Winchester and across the region to make this high-quality resource available as widely as possible, by installing digital equipment in a small number of libraries and developing an engagement programme around them.
10. A pilot learning programme will be launched in September 2022, based around the 878 AD attraction and drawing upon the resource of the Discovery Tour and its partners. This will feature: on demand schools programmes for each key stage which engage learners on a visit; a targeted social impact programme to engage pupils in literacy through gaming, and a series of public workshops using gaming concepts and skills.

Finance

11. The total set-up costs of the *Assassins Creed* project comprise c£480,000. The funding for set up is made up of a contribution of £100,000 from Hampshire Cultural Trust Reserves, £75,000 Grant funding (confirmed) from Winchester City Council, £100,000 sought from Arts Council England and £75,000 sought from Hampshire County Council, as well as contributions from other trusts, funds and philanthropy.
12. Beyond the initial set up costs, the outputs are designed to generate commercial income and support HCT in becoming financially sustainable, with any surplus being re-invested in HCT's work in Winchester
13. The recommended award of £75,000 can be met from within existing budget provision.
14. An award to the Hampshire Cultural Trust would be conditional on the written commitment of the Trust to provide the balance of funding required.
15. Any awards approved under the Investing in Hampshire Fund are only paid out after evidence has been provided to the Director of Corporate Operations of appropriate expenditure on the relevant project.

Consultation and Equalities

16. A high-level Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The grant is intended to have a positive impact and advance equality.
17. This particular project has been designed to extend the reach of cultural provision in Hampshire. *Assassins Creed* is particularly appealing to a demographic which might not currently engage with heritage and history.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

18. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
19. The carbon mitigation tool decision tree indicates it is not suitable for the assessment of a programme. The decision in this report is a financial decision in relation to a programme of one-off grant opportunities. Therefore, the tool is not suitable for this Climate Change Impact Assessment and has not been used.

Other Key Issues

20. Legal Implications: The Council has wide powers under Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide recreational facilities and to contribute by way of a grant or loan towards the expenses incurred by voluntary bodies in providing such facilities and activities.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Not applicable	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

2.1. A high-level Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The grant is intended to have a positive impact and advance equality.

FUNDING CRITERIA FOR INVESTING IN HAMPSHIRE

The following criteria should be taken into account when considering a request for funding.

1. Assistance will be considered only in response to direct applications from properly constituted organisations seeking assistance for one-off funding only. The application must show that the organisation is properly and legally organised and has its own bank account. Funding would only be awarded if the proposal was to support activity within agreed County Council priorities.
2. Applications will be considered for the items listed below, where these are within agreed priorities and generally only where other substantial funding exists:
 - Specific capital projects for the improvement or maintenance of significant assets or facilities within Hampshire
 - Projects that will support economic development and business growth within Hampshire.
3. Other applications will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Leader where he considers that the award will make a contribution for the wider benefit of Hampshire and its residents.
4. The wider economic and other benefits to the residents of Hampshire should be considered together with any complementary benefits for Hampshire County Council.
5. Awards will not usually be made in respect of applications from the following:-
 - Government Institutions
 - Schools
 - Overseas and out of County organisations which have no direct Hampshire involvement
 - Bodies requesting funds for onward distribution to other charities e.g. mayoral appeals, carnivals, fetes, or for their own fundraising events.
6. Apart from exceptional circumstances, the requesting body would be expected to provide their own funding towards the project.
7. As a general rule, grants in excess of £250,000 will not be awarded unless significant benefits and funding are available. In exceptional cases, where the benefits are significant and directly relate to services and functions close to the County Council's key objectives, then an award greater than the level above would be considered.

8. Given the longer-term nature of capital projects, requests can be considered well in advance, but funding will only be released once evidence of capital expenditure has been provided to the County Council or other arrangements made, consistent with the agreement of the Director of Corporate Operations.

Applicant	Hampshire Cultural Trust
Name/Location of Project	878 AD: An Anglo-Saxon Experience
Summary of Project / Bid	<p>Bringing Anglo-Saxon Winchester to life using digital recreations from Assassin's Creed: Valhalla to create an immersive city-wide experience and a learning programme linking literacy and gaming.</p> <p>HCT is collaborating with global video-gaming company Ubisoft and UK creative innovation studio Sugar Creative on a multi-faceted project based on digital recreations of Anglo-Saxon Winchester from Valhalla, the latest instalment in Assassin's Creed. An immersive experience ("878 AD") will adopt the playful approach of video-gaming, linking it with real artefacts and live performance. The journey will continue in the city through an augmented reality app and will inform a learning programme connecting literacy and gaming. The cross-sector partnership will engage new audiences and test new ways of working.</p> <p>The immersive experience in Winchester's Brooks Shopping Centre will open autumn 2022. It will integrate objects from the city's archaeological collections with the digital assets from Assassin's Creed to connect them with a compelling narrative as the people of Winchester wait to hear the outcome of the battle of Edington in 878 AD. A 360degree projection theatre will enable visitors to experience a day in Anglo-Saxon Winchester for themselves, with storytelling around topics including warfare, language, food, money, music, trade, pottery, games, and fashion.</p> <p>The expertise of specialist partners from different sectors will ensure high quality and innovative outputs. The association with Assassin's Creed will attract new audiences to culture but is also a springboard to explore new interpretive approaches based on the storytelling and interactive aspects of video-gaming. Ubisoft is known for its investment in research to create historically accurate gaming experiences, and our collaboration with the University of Winchester further ensures the authenticity and integrity of our work. This is crucial for all audiences, whatever their prior knowledge of the period or experience of the arts.</p> <p>Ubisoft's "Discovery Tour: Age of the Vikings" is the educational mode of the Valhalla game (released October</p>

	<p>2021) which includes recreations of objects from HCT's Anglo-Saxon collections. HCT will work with library partners in Winchester and across the region to make this high-quality resource available as widely as possible by installing digital equipment in Discovery Centres and developing an engagement programme around them.</p> <p>A pilot learning programme will be launched in September 2022, based around the 878 AD attraction and drawing upon the resource of the Discovery Tour and our partners. This will feature: on demand schools programmes for each key stage which engage learners on a visit; a targeted social impact programme to engage pupils in literacy through gaming, and a series of public workshops using gaming concepts and skills. Our starting point is research suggesting that engaging children through gaming outside of school can achieve marked increases in their literacy outcomes in a school setting.</p> <p>This grant application is for a contribution to the set-up costs of the attraction and of the learning programme as well as to fund digital equipment in Discovery Centres across the county. Further set-up costs that are not included in this application relate to the capital works to repurpose the venue and the development of the app which has already started. The costs for the capital works are being financed by HCT based on the strong commercial ROI of the attraction. The app is being funded by the developer Sugar Creative and by philanthropic income.</p>
Funding Requested	£75,000
Funding Arrangements (including matched funding)	<p>The organisation has committed £100,000 of their own fund and has secured £75,000 from Winchester City Council and a further £40,000 from philanthropic donations.</p> <p>They are expecting the following bids to be successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £100,000 from Arts Council England • £50,000 from the Art fund <p>They expect to generate a further £26,140 from other trusts with a further £15,000 expected from further philanthropic donations.</p>
What are the benefits for Hampshire Residents?	The immersive exhibition experience and app will inspire, inform and entertain residents of Winchester and visitors to the city, who we anticipate to be primarily from Hampshire.

	<p>We aim to inspire local pride in Winchester’s significant role in Anglo-Saxon history and in Hampshire’s position as a centre for digital innovation.</p> <p>An August 2021 visitor survey highlighted a group of Hampshire residents who previously only attended museums and galleries in London but now want to explore their local area. We believe that post-pandemic localism is an important component in the region’s recovery and that this project will raise the profile of and bring wider audiences to Hampshire’s cultural attractions. The attraction and promotional activities around it will drive footfall to the city centre, generate spend in nearby shops, cafes, and restaurants, and contribute to the economic regeneration of Winchester.</p> <p>The city-tour app will enable visitors to discover the city and further heritage sites at their own pace beyond their visit to the attraction. Tickets will be valid for a year and connect with offers to other HCT venues in the city. The prices have been carefully considered to ensure commercial return but also accessibility to the wide audiences we are targeting.</p> <p>The learning programme will initially be focused in Winchester and be integrated with HCT’s expanded offer at the Discovery Centre. Digital equipment will be installed at Discovery centres in Winchester, Basingstoke and Gosport. The activities connected to these digital labs and the learning programme as a whole will be gradually expanded across the county, building upon the experience and feedback of the pilot programme, and informing a new county-wide educational offer from HCT as a whole.</p>
<p>What are the complementary benefits for HCC?</p>	<p>The investment would align with the Hampshire 2050 Commission of Inquiry, Economy theme – “to enable Hampshire to maintain its position as an attractive place where people want to visit, live, work and take advantage of the leisure and cultural offer”.</p> <p>The investment would further support the economic independence of Hampshire Cultural Trust, further enabling it to release its reliance on Local Authority Grant funding.</p> <p>The project will deliver benefits to tourism and culture in the region, extending the reach of cultural activity to different communities and engaging with libraries and schools to offer new opportunities.</p>