



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE LEADER

TOPIC – REVENUE GRANT TO WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

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SUMMARY

- The Winchester Bible is arguably the greatest bible ever made in England. Believed to have been commissioned in 1160 by Henry of Blois, grandson of William the Conqueror and Bishop of Winchester, it is thought to have been crafted in the Cathedral.
- Winchester Cathedral began the painstaking process of conserving the Bible in January 2014 as part of a wider plan to improve the interpretation of the cathedral building and precious artefacts. Each volume will be re-bound in authentic Romanesque style and a full digital copy taken of the dis-bound pages – a process which will enable the recording of hitherto unseen scribe's notes hidden in the margins.
- The Council has been approached by the Cathedral's Fundraising Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dame Mary Fagan, to make a contribution towards the costs of restoring the Bible.
- The Cathedral has been successful in securing significant sums of

Heritage Lottery Fund monies to support other elements of the restoration and redisplay work, and the Council has made a contribution to these capital works. However, it has proved more difficult to secure funding for work on the Bible in view of the religious nature of the document.

- It is therefore proposed that a grant of £80,000 be made available over a four year period to the Cathedral specifically to support the work on the preservation and digitisation of the Winchester Bible, with the budget to be taken from existing tourism and economic development budgets.
- It is proposed to release the first annual payment of £20,000 in early 2016/17, followed by 3 further payments of £20,000 in future financial years at times to be agreed with the Cathedral, in line with the cash flow requirements of the project.
- Subject to Member approval of the grant, which falls outside the usual programme of community grants because of its size and the nature of the project, officers will prepare a Funding Agreement, setting out the Council's requirements and expectations. This will include the requirement to acknowledge in all publicity and promotion of the works the contribution made by the Council. The Cathedral will also be required to communicate regularly with Ward Members, the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Estates and relevant officers to inform them of project progress.
- The Funding Agreement will set out the dates of the three remaining annual grant payments, with a view to aligning these payments with key project milestones in the restoration of the Bible.
- Winchester Cathedral is recognised as a cornerstone of Winchester's economic, social and cultural life, and the decision to support the restoration of the Bible will help to enhance its attraction for visitors and worshippers alike as well as to extend its reach in digital terms. As such, the grant will be supporting delivery of the economic prosperity outcome of the current Winchester District Community Strategy.

DECISION

- a) That approval be given to incur revenue expenditure of £80,000 , funded from existing General Fund revenue budgets, payable in four equal annual instalments, commencing 2016/17;
- b) That responsibility for the drafting and completion of a Funding Agreement with the Cathedral Chapter be delegated to the Assistant Director (Economy and Communities), in consultation with the Head of Finance, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Estates.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

As indicated above, the Cathedral plays a key role in the life of the Winchester District and wider Hampshire. It is a recognised driver for the visitor economy, and has transformed the 'off peak' winter season over recent years through its popular ice rink and Christmas market. However, it also underpins Winchester's reputation as a fine historic city which encourages businesses to locate themselves here; parents to send their children to study here and creative industry practitioners to cluster in the area. The 'Cathedral effect' permeates throughout the local economy, in fact, the planned Bible project will serve to enhance the visitor experience and also to preserve this important artefact for future generations to enjoy and study.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The total revenue costs are £80,000, spread in equal annual installments of £20,000 commencing in 2016/17, funded from existing General Fund revenue budgets.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

n/a

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

n/a

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 14.07.16

Councillor Stephen Godfrey – Leader

APPENDICES: None