

## Record of operational decision

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Decision title:</b>                   | Decision to accept a grant of £99,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund and proceed with the “Revealing Our Roots: Unearthing Common Ground” project.  |
| <b>Date of decision:</b>                 | 05/08/2024   |
| <b>Decision maker:</b>                   | Corporate Director Community Wellbeing   |
| <b>Authority for delegated decision:</b> | Powers under the Chief Executive scheme of delegation CW-18 <a href="#">Chief Executive Scheme of Delegation.pdf (herefordshire.gov.uk)</a>  |
| <b>Ward:</b>                             | Central  |
| <b>Consultation:</b>                     | Corporate Grants and Finance teams.  |
| <b>Decision made:</b>                    | <p>To approve the acceptance of a grant totalling £99,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund administered by the Museums Association.</p> <p>The grant is for a two-year project titled "Revealing Our Roots: Unearthing Common Ground." The project is aimed at collections-based community engagement, working closely with diverse communities in Herefordshire to reinterpret the Herefordshire Hoard.</p> <p>The grant will be distributed in two instalments over the two-year period, with the first payment made after finalising project planning, budgets, and outcomes with the support of the Museums Association.</p> <p>The project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage communities in co-production workshops.</li> <li>- Foster partnerships with schools, community organizations, and local creatives.</li> <li>- Produce creative outputs in the form of exhibitions and digital media.</li> <li>- Build a sustainable model of participatory practice for future museum initiatives.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reasons for decision:</b>             | <p>The decision to accept the grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund aligns closely with Herefordshire Museum Service's strategic priorities and three-year business plan (2024-2027). The "Revealing Our Roots: Unearthing Common Ground" project directly supports the museum’s shift towards a participatory practice model, placing community engagement and co-production at the core of its programming.</p> <p>The project also advances the museum’s goal of broadening access and inclusivity, particularly by engaging underrepresented and marginalised groups in rural areas like Leominster, Ledbury, and the Golden Valley. This reflects the service’s long-term commitment to expanding its reach and ensuring its programmes are reflective of the diverse communities it serves.</p> <p>Finally, the grant supports the museum’s ambition to re-establish itself as a countywide service, with sustainable, long-term partnerships at the</p>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>core of its outreach. "Revealing Our Roots" will serve as a blueprint for future community-led initiatives, contributing to the museum's broader objectives of increasing cultural participation and ensuring its transformation has a lasting impact across Herefordshire.</p>   |
| <p><b>Equality Considerations</b></p>   | <p>The "Revealing Our Roots: Unearthing Common Ground" project is grounded in principles of inclusivity, ensuring that all aspects of the programme are accessible and reflective of the diverse communities within Herefordshire. The project specifically focuses on reaching marginalised and underrepresented groups, including those in rural, economically disadvantaged areas and communities with limited access to cultural resources. It prioritises working with local partners to remove barriers to participation, such as geographic isolation, social anxiety, and lack of familiarity with museum spaces.</p> <p>The project design incorporates co-production workshops and community-led activities, ensuring that participants have a direct role in shaping the narrative of the Herefordshire Hoard. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride among participants, while promoting equity by ensuring that all voices, particularly those from underrepresented groups, are heard and respected.</p> <p>Additionally, the project aligns with the Herefordshire Museum Service's Equality Action Plan 2024-2027, which emphasises creating a more diverse, representative workforce and volunteer base, as well as developing programmes that are accessible to all. Through this project, the museum service will continue its commitment to embedding inclusivity in its operations and strengthening community ties through equitable cultural engagement.</p>  |
| <p><b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b></p> | <p><b>Risks:</b><br/> There is a risk of potential delays in community engagement activities, particularly if barriers such as social isolation, lack of transport, or unfamiliarity with museum processes hinder participation. Additionally, there may be challenges in maintaining momentum and commitment from community partners throughout the two-year project. These risks will be mitigated by building strong partnerships, regular project reviews, and offering flexible, locally based engagement methods to ensure sustained participation.</p> <p><b>Finance:</b><br/> The grant will be distributed in two payments over the two-year period, with funds drawn down in advance of each phase. The project budget will be closely monitored to ensure expenditures align with the planned activities and any changes in budget allocation will require prior approval. A contingency plan will be in place to manage unforeseen costs, ensuring the project remains within its financial scope. Any unspent funds or funds used outside of the grant's purpose must be returned as stipulated by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund's terms and conditions.</p> <p><b>Legal:</b><br/> The project must comply with the terms and conditions set forth by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, including adherence to safeguarding policies, data protection regulations, and inclusive recruitment practices for any staff or freelance roles. Compliance with the Museums Association's work on fair pay and equity in recruitment will also be</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>required. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in the withholding or repayment of grant funds.</p> <p>Equality:<br/>The project focuses on engaging underrepresented groups, ensuring equitable access to cultural activities. By addressing barriers such as rural isolation, low income, and lack of prior engagement with museum services, the project promotes equality and inclusivity.</p>  |
| <p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p> | <p>Do nothing / Decline the grant:<br/>This option was considered but rejected, as it would result in a missed opportunity to secure significant funding for the "Revealing Our Roots: Unearthing Common Ground" project. Without the grant, the museum service would struggle to deliver its strategic goals of broadening access, engaging underrepresented communities, and embedding participatory practice. The lack of external funding would limit the scope of the museum's community outreach efforts and reduce its ability to foster new partnerships across the county.</p> <p>Seek alternative funding sources:<br/>While it is possible to seek alternative sources of funding, this option was also rejected due to the competitive nature of grant funding and the specificity of the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund to collections-based community engagement. This grant is particularly suited to the project's goals, and alternative funding sources may not offer the same level of alignment with the museum service's strategic priorities, nor provide the same structured support and networking opportunities as the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund</p> |
| <p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>               | <p>None</p>  |