

Appendix 'A'

Report to the: Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services

Submitted by: Director, Community Services

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Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Preston City

The Harris Museum and Art Gallery (The Harris) – Shared Services Initiative

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Executive Summary

The Harris Museum and Art Gallery is owned by Preston City Council with Lancashire County Council leasing approximately 40% of the building for the Central Library. Leaders of both Councils have discussed informally the need to establish a vision for one shared facility at the heart of the city centre which would act as focal point for arts and culture and community activity and would be a regional draw for visitors from across Lancashire and beyond.

Delivery of such a vision will require a clear strategy and significant investment, with the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council likely sources of external investment.

The development of a strategic vision will need to be underpinned by both a viable business plan and change management framework and this will require a dedicated project lead officer.

This report seeks approval to part fund the cost of a lead officer and summarises the key next steps which will need to be taken by the two councils to begin the process of securing a shared and sustainable future for the Harris.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services is asked to:

- (i) Authorise expenditure of up to £120k as the county council's contribution to the cost of appointing a Centre Manager for a fixed term period of three years
- (ii) Approve the scope and objectives of the initiative as detailed in this report

Background and Advice

1. Background

- 1.1 The Harris Museum and Art Gallery (The Harris), a Grade 1 listed building, is owned by Preston City Council (PCC). Lancashire County Council (LCC) leases approximately 40% of the building to house the central library. Leaders of both Councils have discussed informally the need to establish a vision for one shared facility at the heart of the city centre which would act as focal point for arts and culture and community activity and would be a regional draw for visitors from across Lancashire and beyond. The development and implementation of such a vision will be vital to securing any national government and lottery funding and therefore the longer term sustainability of the Harris.

2. Heritage Investment

- 2.1. The development of the vision for the Harris is set within a wider cultural context for the City and the Harris has been identified as a primary target for future heritage investment. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has been consulted on the potential for making a bid for a national award from the HLF including the concept of a shared and integrated service provided by the two councils for the art gallery, the library and the museum to create a more flexible use of the collections and the space the building affords.
- 2.2 In order to put together a competitive and credible HLF national bid, both councils would need to provide strong evidence that their partnership working was robust, structured and capable of being delivered expediently.

3 Proposed Centre Manager

- 3.1 It is considered that key to a successful bid is the appointment of a Centre Manager who will:
 - a) Develop a new vision for the Harris as an arts and cultural centre for the community and an important regional visitor destination;
 - b) Prepare a business case to support a new joint staffing structure;
 - c) Prepare a major bid for HLF and other funds to deliver the established vision; and,
 - d) Exploit commercial opportunities and efficiency savings to reduce the councils' revenue costs.
- 3.2 An Arts Council "Resilience" fund of £95,000 has been awarded which will provide specialist consultancy support to the Centre Manager.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the appointment of a Centre Manager is made, initially on a 3-year fixed term basis. The post would be managed by PCC. The 3-year cost of this position is estimated to be £120,000 for each council.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the county council's contribution is funded from earmarked reserves.

4 Governance

4.1 The Preston Collaboration Board will oversee the implementation of this initiative, supported by an officer programme board.

Consultations

Staff of the Harris Museum and Library services have received a briefing in respect of the proposals and further briefings and consultation will take place as the process evolves. The unions have also been advised on the progress to date.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk Management

Personnel – Unable to recruit a candidate of the required standard. Implications for current staff working in the Libraries, and staff utilised / shared across other libraries across the county. The officer programme board will oversee the delivery / implementation of these aspects, ensuring fully compliance with LCC / PCC policy and procedures.

Financial – Additional budget requirement to support initial resilience bid and / or further 2016 HLF bid. Ongoing funding for additional work will be reviewed as part of the detailed collaboration model.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
The Harris Museum and Art Gallery Report – Preston Collaboration Board	11 th Feb 2015	Phil Barrett – Director, Community Services - (01772) 538222