

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 11 July 2024

Report of the Director of Finance and Commerce

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Burnley Rural;

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Queen Street Mill Museum, Burnley

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

This report sets out proposals for capital investment to provide match funding in support of a grant application to Arts Council England to fund essential maintenance work to Queen Street Mill Museum, Burnley and to provide a library service in the entrance gallery of the museum.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (i) The submission of a funding application to Arts Council England to fund urgent and essential maintenance work to Queen Street Mill Museum.
- (ii) The acceptance of grant funding from Arts Council England, if successful in its application.
- (iii) Match funding in support of the application as set out at Appendix 'A', the cost of which is to be met by new capital borrowing.
- (iv) Capital funding to provide a library service in the museum as set out at Appendix 'A'.

Detail

Arts Council England Grant Funding

Queen Street Mill in Burnley is a Grade I listed building which is operated as a museum by the county council. The mill was built in 1894/5 and is the last surviving 19th century steam powered weaving mill in the world. The mill is home to designated industrial collections of historical significance including working machinery.

A heritage condition survey was undertaken in 2023 which identified a considerable maintenance backlog, with the main area of concern being the northlight roof including the ridges, copings, flashings, timbers to the northlights, slating and glazing. In total there is 1.5km of ridge tiles and northlights with the estimated cost of repairs in excess of £1m. In several areas the ridges are now starting to collapse. The condition of the roof is such that there is an immediate risk to the building and collections which needs to be addressed.

As there are limited resources in the county council's condition led maintenance programme, the inclusion of works of this expense and scale would result in other high priority work being deferred to a future year's programme.

In February 2024 Arts Council England announced a fourth round of the Museum Estate and Development fund with a total of £23.8m available to local authorities based in England responsible for maintenance of non-national Accredited museum buildings. Whilst the guidance allows applications for up to £5m, Arts Council England has advised that it would be preferable for projects to be capped at £1m.

An expression of interest was submitted in respect of obtaining grant funding to undertake the urgent maintenance to the roof at Queen Street Mill which is described above. The expression of interest sets out a proposal for a programme of roof repairs. The county council's match funding contribution would be to cover the cost of the fees and disbursements associated with this project with the remaining funding being awarded by Arts Council England.

The expression of interest was successful, and the Capital Board has supported the allocation of capital to provide match funding in support of the grant application.

Library Provision

The former Briercliffe Library building is in the same locality as Queen Street Mill Museum but has not been operational since both sites were closed in 2016.

The museum was reopened in 2018 but the library was not included in the reinstatement programme as it was proposed that a library service would be provided in the museum which would serve the local community and increase footfall in the museum. Discussions are ongoing with Briercliffe Parish Council about the future of the library building.



The library project was placed on hold during protracted discussions with the National Trust about a potential partnership which would affect the future operation of the museum. The National Trust presented a partnership proposal to the Cabinet Working Group for Museums in October 2022. After reviewing the proposals and taking advice from officers, the Cabinet Working Group concluded that the partnership offer from the National Trust would not add sufficient value to justify developing the partnership proposal further. A recommendation not to enter into a partnership with the National Trust was subsequently approved by Cabinet in November 2022.

Following this decision Cultural Services has developed a business plan to increase visitor numbers and enhance the offer at the museum. One of the measures set out in the business plan was to provide a 'Band D' library service in the entrance gallery of the museum which would drive up visitor numbers to the museum and increase revenue in terms of tours and also café sales.

An appraisal was undertaken to assess the extent of work required to provide a 'Band D' library offer in the entrance gallery of the museum. The works required include improvements to the main entrance to make it more accessible, redecoration of the entrance gallery and WC's including some replacement floor coverings, the provision of library furniture, ICT provision and associated electrical work. Environmental conditions in the entrance gallery will be improved if the Arts Council England grant application is successful and roof repairs undertaken.

The estimated cost of this proposal is set out at Appendix 'A'.

It is proposed that a commitment is given to the allocation of capital funding in support of the project but that the project will only be undertaken when the grant funding has been secured and roof repairs undertaken. Arts Council England will notify successful applicants of their grant awards in March 2025 with the repairs to the roof being undertaken in 2025/26 and the library project following on. The cost estimate for the library includes an inflationary uplift to take a 2026 start date into account.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Estimated Costs and Capital Implications

Consultations

Consultation has taken place with Arts Council England and Historic England as part of the Museum Estate and Development Fund application process.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:



Legal

In addition to the Procurement implications set out below, if successful in bidding for funding, the council will be required to accept Arts Council England's grant funding conditions, which will seek to ensure that, among other things, the funding is spent lawfully and that the project aims are achieved. Legal colleagues will be available to assist colleagues in reviewing the terms of any grant funding at the appropriate time.

Once further details are provided as to which of the legal commitments as set out in the Estates section below will be sought then property lawyers can advise at that time. However, it should be noted that section 13(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 sets out that a local authority may not mortgage or charge any of its property as security for money which it has borrowed or which it otherwise owes.

Financial

The capital implications, including the cost of any borrowing on the revenue budget, of this proposal are set out fully at Appendix 'A' and are exempt from publication for the reasons set out below.

Risk management

Queen Street Mill is a Grade I listed building and houses industrial collections of historical significance. Failure to address the condition of the roof is placing these collections at significant risk. It is considered that seeking to obtain funding from the Museum Estate and Development Fund to undertake these urgent repairs is the most appropriate way of addressing this risk. Should the funding application be unsuccessful consideration will be given to the inclusion of a more limited programme of repairs in the county council's condition led maintenance programme, this will be dependent on other priorities within the building portfolio.

Estates

If a capital grant is successful, then the Museum Estate and Development Fund will wish to ensure that the buildings will be used for the grant purposes. This means they may require us to make legal commitments to secure the grant. The form these take depends on the amount of grant and the type of organisation receiving the grant and will be set out in the funding agreement. These will range from a deed of covenant with restriction on title to a fixed and floating charge, together with supporting legal documents relevant to the transaction. These legal commitments will need to be in place prior to the release of any grant funding.

Procurement

The selection of contractors to undertake the capital works will be carried out in full compliance with the relevant procurement legislation.

Procurements that commence after the entry into force of the Procurement Act 2023, on 28 October 2024, must be conducted by reference to this act only, whilst those procurements that were commenced under the previous legislation (the Public Contracts Regulations 2015) must continue to be procured and managed under that



legislation. Any contracts awarded under the previous legislation will continue to be managed under that legislation until such a time as the contract, or commercial tool ceases to exist.

It is intended that the capital works referred to in this report will be procured either through the existing Partnering Framework, or through undertaking a compliant procurement exercise where appropriate.

Environmental Sustainability

Both Arts Council England and the county council are committed to environmental sustainability and the maintenance work to the roof will reflect this commitment by improving the environmental performance of the museum.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Appendix 'A' contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

