

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7th September 2021

Title: Perthyn 'belonging to/possessing': An exploration of how collections can create community in Ceredigion (project formerly known as Collection for a Nation)

Purpose of the report: To seek approval for matchfunding of £250,000 from the Capital Fund towards the Perthyn project

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Porth Gofal, Early Intervention, Wellbeing Hubs and Culture
Councillor Catherine Hughes

Summary :

Background

This project is stage 2 of the 3 stage Transformations project, stage 1 of which was New Approaches, which was successfully completed in 2018. Stage 2, Perthyn, focuses on creating educational and learning capacity, the 'Ceredigion Heritage Collections Centre' (accessible state-of-the-art storage for the museum's rationalised collections) and working with experts and community groups to help assess the significance of the collections. This project will also create clarity around Ceredigion's role in the Distributed National Collection in Wales, as a foundation for stage 3 of the Transformations project.

The 'Ceredigion Heritage Collections Centre' will be a facility for visitors to get a 'behind the scenes' experience of the 65,000+ historic artefacts relating to local history in the care of Ceredigion Museum.

The offer will be modelled on similar existing initiatives such as the Birmingham Museum Collection Centre and the Edinburgh Museum Collections Centre. Currently, the Museum permanently displays approximately 10% of the publicly owned collection; the new facility will provide access to the other 90% of the collection including the internationally significant Welsh textiles and art collections.

Visitors will be able to enjoy general or specialist tours, workshops and educational activities. The facility includes a learning space and workshop area.

The project also aims to explore the concept of 'belonging' and shared community values in the context of significance assessing the collection to build our understanding of Ceredigion's culture and heritage and also greatly improve physical and intellectual access to its treasures.

The new storage facility will be designed on the Passivehaus principle to reduce running costs and will free up a prime town centre location (Bath Street Garage). Currently the museum has two external storage sites; Yr Hen Gapel, Tre'r Ddol and Bath Street Garage. Savings made from decommissioning and selling/developing/renting/transferring the Bath Street Garage site and Tre'r Ddol chapel will help cover the running costs of the new facility.

The project is anticipated to run, pending successful funding applications, from 2021 – 2026

Project Costs

The costs for the project have been identified as £1.9million in a feasibility study commissioned by the Friends of Ceredigion Museum.

The project has been passed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund at the EOI stage and is currently being supported to develop the Round 1 application for a sum of £1.1million.

The remaining £800,000 will come from Welsh Government, Trusts and Foundations but there is an expectation from the NLHF that CCC will contribute towards this figure.

Discussions at Corporate Development Group have suggested that a commitment of £250,000 from the Capital Fund could be made with an expectation that much of this will be recouped from the sale of property currently used as museum storage namely Bath Street Garage and Tre'r Ddol Chapel. This represents very good value for money for CCC and will help secure the rest of the funding

The value of the land on which the Collections Centre will be built has already been factored in to the feasibility study and cannot contribute to the £800,000 match funding required.

Match funding from the Capital fund will not be required until 2024/25.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed?	Yes
	If, not, please state why	
	Summary:	
Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Long term:	The storage facility will provide long term storage for the Museum collections
	Collaboration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Wales • Common Cause Foundation • Aberystwyth University • Happy Museum

Involvement:	A variety of community groups and organisations have been consulted for the Perthyn Feasibility Study. The facility will offer opportunities for further community engagement
Prevention:	Mitigating the current threats to the long term survival of the museum's collections
Integration:	<p>People: Access to and understanding of the heritage of Ceredigion will be greatly enhanced.</p> <p>Economy: A new heritage facility will be available to improve the visitor economy</p> <p>Environment: A low impact state-of-the-art museum storage facility will reduce the Environmental impact of the museum's operations and save the Service money.</p>
Recommendation(s):	That Cabinet approves the commitment of £250,000 from the Capital Fund as matchfunding towards the Perthyn project.
Reasons for decision:	To protect the Museum collection for the future and to provide further opportunities for community engagement
Overview and Scrutiny:	Information presented at Corporate Development Group
Policy Framework:	Corporate Strategy 2017-2022
Corporate Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosting the Economy • Investing in People's Future • Promoting Environmental and Community Resilience'
Finance and Procurement implications:	A £250,000 commitment from the Capital Fund.
Legal Implications:	Tre'r Ddol Hen Gapel, one of the buildings currently storing the collection, is part of the Charity of Richard James Thomas and therefore has trust status. As such any proposals for the associated collection and/or the building itself will have to be approved by the Ceredigion County Council's Charity Trustee Committee, which in turn may need Charity Commission consent to vary the trust Scheme.

Staffing implications:	Four project posts will be created to build capacity to deliver the project, which will be funded by the NLHF.
Property / asset implications:	Creation of a new state-of-the-art Ceredigion Heritage Collections Centre on council land. Sale of Bath Street Garage Sale/lease/transfer of Yr Hen Gapel, Tre'r Ddol
Risk(s):	Failure to secure matchfunding will jeopardise the future of the Perthyn project and seriously impact the Museum's capacity to effectively store and protect its collections
Statutory Powers:	N/A
Background Papers:	Feasibility Study
Appendices:	
Corporate Lead Officer:	Meinir Ebbsworth
Reporting Officer:	Carrie Canham
Date:	24/8/21