

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	12.
Date:	7 th March 2011	Status	Open
Category			
Subject:	Barlborough Heritage Centre		
Report by:	Head of Regeneration		
Other Officers Involved	Projects Officer Business Growth Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager		
Director	Director of Development		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Regeneration		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES – Providing excellent customer focused services

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities by ensuring continued use of town centre premises.

TARGETS

N/A

VALUE FOR MONEY

Enabling valuable community led projects to be delivered by community organisations.

1. Background

Barlborough School House Trust has recently submitted a funding application to the RDPE LEADER Programme for the conversion of Barlborough Resource Centre (Ward Lane, Barlborough) to Barlborough Heritage Centre. This project includes the relocation of the underutilised Community ICT facility to a smaller room within the centre and using the space currently occupied by the ICT facility for a heritage exhibition room and revenue funding to support staff costs/overheads until September 2013. The exhibition room would showcase all the artefacts, photos and historical records which have been collated during a recent Heritage Lottery Funded project along with work of the local history group. Barlborough Resource Centre is already a hub for many walkers who visit Barlborough and this project would enhance the visitor experience and engage with the local community promoting the heritage of the area.

The project was seen as a valuable project for the area and approved for grant support through the LEADER Local Action Group (16th December 2010) and subsequently ratified by emda. Unfortunately, the RDPE LEADER 2011/12 budget was cut/capped to a maximum spend of £500,000 (24th December 2010) which effectively stopped the Barlborough Heritage Centre project progressing.

Since then, much work has been undertaken by the Economic Development Team to save this project. At a recent LEADER Local Action Group meeting (21st January 2011) the project was reconsidered on a smaller scale (capital only) and shorter timescales. The LEADER Local Action Group have committed to support the capital elements of the project (£33,509.17) but spend must be completed before March 31st 2011.

Discussions have taken place with Barlborough School House Trust regarding future sustainability of the Heritage Centre in the longer term. Following those discussions Barlborough School House Trust have decided to rationalise their use of the building, vacating the upper floor to allow the area to be let as business unit(s) generating an income which will sustain the Centre for the future.

It is estimated the letting of the upper floor of the Heritage Centre would generate £13,488 per annum based on 80% occupancy. This estimate is based on recommended rental price provided by Bothams Commercial Agents.

This report is recommending BDC provide funding to Barlborough School House Trust from 1st April 2011 for Commercial Agent Fees (marketing of the property, valuation, photos, lease agreements, etc), small building alterations as required for effective business centre operation and a transitional fund to support the organisation until the offices are let. The funding would be broken down as follows:

Agent fees = £1905 inc. VAT (Bothams Agent fee quote - 17 Feb 2011)
Alterations = £1454 inc. VAT
Transition funding (April 1st 2011 to 31st March 2012) = £13,500 (Based on the forecast annual income)
Total = £16,859

Although the amount of revenue support proposed in this report is significantly less than that outlined and approved in the original LEADER application (£66,510), this funding would support the organisation through a transitional period to achieve sustainability. The Heritage/business centre will provide a valuable, self-sustaining, heritage/tourism asset and much needed high quality, small business office accommodation.

On receipt of the proposed funding it would be a requirement for Barlborough School House Trust to seek professional business advice (Business Link, LEO, Clowne Enterprise, etc) to assist in the delivery of the project to ensure

sustainability. This is available free of charge and can be accessed through the Economic Development team.

The suggested source of this funding would be the element of Transformational Reserve. The LEGL Programme: Property Ladder Workstream has in recent years funded similar conversion of properties to business centres in Clowne, Shirebrook and South Normanton, all of which are managed by social enterprises/community organisations (Clowne Enterprise, Shirebrook Business Services and SNaP Development Project) to create an income which will sustain the future continued use of the building. Examples of these schemes can be found on the attached 'Property Ladder/Business Realm – Evaluation Report'.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial : Transformational Reserve to be used to fund the project to a maximum value of £16,859 which will complement the activity funded by the LEADER contribution of £33,509.17 capital funding. This funding will contribute to the long-term sustainability for Barlborough Heritage Centre.

Legal : Grant funding agreement to be drawn up and agreed with Barlborough School House Trust. It is suggested the WNF funding agreement is adapted.

Human Resources : Resource committed to reviewing progress. It is suggested this is undertaken by the WNF team.

RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 1. The Council provide £16,859 grant funding to Barlborough School House Trust to support the long-term sustainability of a local heritage/tourism asset and provide high quality small business office accommodation for Barlborough. This is subject to evidence of landowner approval to sub let on a commercial basis.**
- 2. Delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive Officer to agree the terms of and sign the grant agreement.**
- 3. Partnership team administer and monitor the grant in line with the proven WNF Grant funding process.**

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

In order to develop vibrant town centres and flourishing rural communities.

ATTACHMENTS: 'Property Ladder/Business Realm – Evaluation Report'

FILE REFERENCE: None

SOURCE DOCUMENT: None