

Area West Committee – 19th October 2011

## 7. Area West – Request for Capital Grant (Executive Decision)

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh (Place and Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Helen Rutter/Kim Close (Communities)  
*Service Manager:* Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)  
*Lead Officer:* Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer  
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### Purpose of the Report

For members to consider an application for capital funding from Crewkerne Heritage Centre.

### Public Interest

Crewkerne Heritage Centre has submitted an application for financial assistance to carry out essential building works over the winter period. The application has been assessed by the Community Regeneration Officer whose comments and recommendations are contained in this report.

### Recommendations

That members approve a capital grant of £2,500 for work on a staircase wall in Crewkerne Heritage Centre.

### Grant Application Details

The Heritage Centre is housed in a Grade 2 listed building, which was renovated some 12 years ago under the supervision of SSDC. In addition to the museum exhibition space on the ground floor, the first floor houses the research room and a meeting room, which is rented by groups and used by local schools. The first floor is accessed via a stairwell, which has an original lime plastered wall. The plaster is in an unstable state, and the Trustees have carried out a number of minor repairs to small holes that have appeared along the length of the wall. The Trustees have sought a professional opinion from a trusted builder regarding the current state of the wall and following an inspection the builder has discovered cracking in the plaster, which suggests that adhesion to the laths is 'suspect'. The builder has advised that:

“Due to the age of the property, the plaster can fail due to its weight and being in a dry atmosphere.”

Although Heritage Centre volunteers are happy to carry out minor repairs to the building, as this particular job would involve completely replastering the whole wall it is necessary that the work is carried out by a professional.

As the stairway is regularly used by the public to gain access to both the meeting room and the research room, the Committee would like to remedy the problem before the stairwell becomes unsafe and impossible to use. Such an occurrence would limit their ability to hire out the meeting room, which would affect the amount of income they can secure towards their running costs.

The cost of repair and maintenance to the building has been covered to date by the help of the Friends Association and volunteers giving time to carry out minor works. The

Trustees wish to maintain a high standard of repair to the building ensuring its continued use by the public. Carrying out the repairs to the staircase wall at this stage would be less costly than waiting until more holes appear. The work could be carried out during the closed winter season thus ensuring little loss of income and use of the related area.

The cost to carry out the work will be £2,500, which includes:

- Removing existing plaster
- Moving, setting aside and refitting 2 light fittings
- Refixing / replacing laths where required
- Replastering walls
- Decorating newly replastered walls

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
South Somerset District Council	£2,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,500</b>

Crewkerne Heritage Centre is requesting a grant to cover the whole cost of the building work. It should be noted that although Crewkerne Town Council are not contributing financially to this particular building repair project they do regularly provide an annual grant to the Heritage Centre. During the current financial year the Heritage Centre was awarded £1,500 by the Town Council and they have submitted an application to Crewkerne Town Council for help towards their running costs for the financial year 2012-13.

The Crewkerne Heritage Centre is not in a position to fund this work themselves because they operate to a very tight budget. The projected annual running costs for the current year to May 2012 is £9,380 with an expected income of £9,420, which leaves a very meagre profit of £40. The Crewkerne Heritage Centre does have a small pot of reserves of £1,773.31, but given the current economic climate it would be prudent for the Heritage Centre to maintain their reserves in case the projected income does not cover their running costs.

Crewkerne Heritage Centre is one of the organisations that Area West Committee currently supports through an annual Service Level Agreement. This financial year they were awarded £2,114 towards their running costs. The Service Level Agreement was set up with the Crewkerne Heritage Centre in recognition of the important role the museum plays in the town not only culturally but also economically by helping to promote the town and attract visitors to the area.

The Community Regeneration Officer has assessed the application and the table below shows the breakdown of the grant scoring.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Target Groups	4	7
Project	4	5
Capacity of Organisation	12	15
Financial need	4	7
Innovation	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>

## **Financial Implications**

There is currently a balance of £11,340 in the unallocated capital programme for 2011/12 (£106,448 in total). If this grant for £2,500 is approved the balance in the current year will reduce to £8,840 (£103,948 in total).

## **Corporate Priority implications**

The project helps SSDC meet the following corporate aims and targets:

- 1.11 A vibrant and sustainable Yeovil, market towns and rural economy.
- 3.11 Increased choice & quality of life for older people
- 3.18 Individuals and communities enjoying healthier and more active lifestyles
- 4.16 An empowered community where all people take part in shaping their neighbourhood
- 4.19 Increase civic participation in the area
- 4.22 Sustainable local community

## **Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)**

None.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Crewkerne Heritage Centre promotes its services to all.

**Background Papers:** *AW Grant applications June 2011*  
*CRO Assessment on File*

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