



**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

CRESWELL HERITAGE TRUST PARTNERSHIP AWARD FOR 2014/15

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Committee approval for continued partnership funding of £50,000 for the Creswell Heritage Trust in support of the operation and running costs of the onsite museum and education centre at Creswell Crags and the outreach programme for 2014/15.

Information and Advice

2. Creswell Heritage Trust is the body responsible for the operational management of the facilities at Creswell Crags. The Crags sit on the border of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and are recognised as one of Britain's most important cultural, archaeological and scientific sites,. They are at the northern limit of human occupation during the ice age and contain Britain's only example of rock art in Church Hole Cave. A visitor centre, including a museum, shop, cafe and educational facilities, opened on the site in June 2009.
3. In 2012/13 Creswell Crags was included on the UK tentative list for future World Heritage nominations to UNESCO (the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture). There is a challenging technical evaluation process to be undertaken before the nomination can be confirmed by Government but, if successful, Creswell Crags would be the first World Heritage Site in Nottinghamshire.
4. Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Councils have jointly provided funding to support the operational costs of the facilities since the formation of the Trust in 1991 and are joint guarantors on the lease, along with the land owner, Welbeck Estates. In addition the County Councils provide the Trust with officer support, particularly in legal services, HR and conservation.
5. Following a difficult year for many visitor centres and attractions in 2012/13, both County Councils agreed to increase their level of support. In 2013/14 both visitor numbers and returns from the trading company have shown positive trends and the addition of the Stone Age to the primary school curriculum has resulted in a significant increase in school visits. Further work is, however, still required to ensure that the Trust is able to capitalise on these positive trends.
6. Following the departure of the Director to a new post in December 2013, the Trust has recently appointed a new Director. This presents an opportunity to refresh the Business

Plan and revisit the current operating models for the different elements of the Creswell Crags offer, with a view to securing the long-term sustainability of the site and facilities. The requirements of working towards World Heritage Site status will also be reviewed.

Other Options Considered

7. The option of not continuing to fund the Trust has been considered. This has not been taken further, however, in view of both Local Authorities acting as lease guarantors. In the event of the Trust ceasing to operate, responsibility for managing Creswell Crags would rest with the two County Councils. The option of reducing the level of support has also been considered but it would be likely to have a very damaging impact on the Trust's ability to manage the site.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

8. Nottinghamshire County Council's partnership contribution is part of the core funding of the project, without which it would cease to operate. The continuation of County Council financial assistance to Creswell Heritage Trust is subject to a similar contribution from Derbyshire County Council.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

The projected year end budget outturn for the Trust is a deficit of £20,000, which reflects difficulties relating to the funding of work on the World Heritage Site. There is a risk that without continued levels of resources, the Creswell Heritage Trust would not be able to operate and manage the site to the required standards. To help mitigate this risk, it is proposed to make an award of £50,000 to the Creswell Heritage Trust for 2014/15, which is at the same level as the 2013/14 award. The funding is contained within the base budget for the Conservation Team for 2014/15. Assuming Derbyshire County Council make a similar increase on the basis of matched funding, then the projected deficit can be resolved.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

The new visitor centre has full disabled access.

Implications for Service Users

Creswell Crags is an important part of the wider culture and heritage of Nottinghamshire and the County Council partnership funding helps ensure that it can continue to operate for the benefit of its visitors. In particular, the Trust organises a broad educational programme, in which schools are invited to participate.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

Creswell Crags has a significant implication for our environmental history, heritage and culture where the partnership funding makes a critical contribution.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Culture Committee:

1) confirms partnership funding of £50,000 to Creswell Heritage Trust to support its operating costs for the financial year 2014/15, subject to a similar level of award being made by Derbyshire County Council.

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Corporate Director Policy Planning and Corporate Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Heather Stokes, Team Manager Conservation.

Constitutional Comments (NAB 14.03.14)

10. The Culture Committee has authority to approve the recommendation set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SEM 13/03/14)

11. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All