

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING

TOPIC – GRANTS UNDER THE PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS ACT) 1990

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the City Secretary and Solicitor, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Performance Improvement Committee.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Richard MacCullagh

Tel: 01962 848527 Email: rmaccullagh@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator: Colin Veal 01962 848438 cveal@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

This report recommends the allocation of funding from the Historic Building Grant budget for two projects. The proposed grant offers exceed the amount which is delegated to the Director of Development and therefore require Portfolio Holder approval.

The grants will protect and enhance the historic built environment.

DECISION

It is recommended that the following grants be awarded from the Historic Building Grant Scheme.

1. That an offer of up to £10,000 (4.2%) be made on eligible repairs to the Grade II* listed St Andrew's Church, Meonstoke.
2. That an offer of up to £10,000 (additional offer 45% in total) be made on eligible repairs to the Grade II listed Heathcote Mausoleum, All Saints Church, Hursley.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

In both cases the proposals meet the criteria of the Council's Historic Building Grant (HBG) Scheme and the St Andrews Church offer will be subject to a public access condition.

The **St Andrew's Church, Meonstoke**, grant offer covers essential repairs to roof, belfry, leadwork, stonemasonry and rainwater goods. The works will be undertaken by skilled craftsmen and supervised by a Conservation Architect. The works will preserve the character of this very fine C13 church which is an important landmark building to the village and Meon Valley. The building is located within Corhampton and Meonstoke Conservation Area and also the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The total cost of repairs is £237,207 and so far the Church have raised £206,000, which includes an "in-principle" grant offer from English Heritage of £91,000. Due to this success in fundraising and our limited budget it is recommended that a grant of £10,000 be made which will ensure the work goes ahead in 2005.

The **Heathcote Mausoleum** grant offer covers essential repairs to roof structure, lead roof, brickwork and painting woodwork. A Grade II listed mausoleum dating from 1797 which contains the remains of 37 members of the Heathcote family who lived at Hursley Park. Unfortunately there does not appear to be any direct descendants of the family left who could be held responsible for the repair of this listed building. The building is therefore in the guardianship of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust.

The building is on the Council's Building at Risk Register and has had scaffolding supporting the original lead roof for the last 3 years. It is in a very poor state of repair and unless the works are undertaken soon the building's condition will deteriorate quickly and the structure will become potentially dangerous.

In April 2003 Cabinet approved a grant offer of up 30% which was estimated to be £12,000 at the time. However costs came in higher and the lowest tender is now £49,342. The Trust have managed to raise significant funding and secured a grant of £7,767 from Hampshire County Council. English Heritage have declined to offer a grant as they are concentrating their funding on Grade I and II* Buildings at Risk. An additional grant of £10,000 (45%, inclusive of £12,000 allocated in 2003) is required to ensure the works are undertaken this year. Realistically this is seen as the only way of saving the listed building.

The works will be undertaken by skilled craftsmen and supervised by a Conservation Architect. The Mausoleum is located in the churchyard of All Saints, which is Grade II* and has a C14 tower and is within the Hursley Conservation Area. The dilapidated condition of the building blights this part of the churchyard.

To adopt a 'do nothing' approach would delay or abort essential repairs and this is likely to lead to deterioration of historic fabric with potential damage to the special interest of these listed buildings. In the case of the Heathcote Mausoleum, the works are urgently necessary as the existing roof has failed.

The Director of Finance has asked what criteria were in place to determine the high level of funding for the Mausoleum grant and whether there was a risk of this providing a disincentive for future fundraising for other grants.

Similar issues were considered by the Planning Grants Informal Scrutiny Group (Environment and Access Performance Improvement Committee) in January 2005 who were satisfied with current arrangements regarding levels of grant-aid and criteria for funding.

On delegated grants up to £5000 the Council normally grant-aids at 20%. On grants above this, it can also grant-aid at up to 20% but the level is normally determined by the importance of the building, how much funding is left the budget, category of grant and how much funding is available from other sources. A grant of 20% provides an incentive to owners to repair their buildings and this at least covers the VAT element charged on repairs (17.5%).

'Buildings at Risk' attract a higher level of funding, normally 30% but up to 50% can be offered depending on degree of risk and the owner's ability to raise funding or put the building to a viable use.

The Heathcote Mausoleum is a 'Building at Risk' (BAR) so the original grant offer in 2003 was for up to 30%. However this has proved insufficient and costs have also risen from the original estimates, so this is why further authorisation is required. The building is in the care of a Trust who has managed to raise nearly £20,000 over the last 2 years and have an offer of £7,000 from the County. The Mausoleum has no economic value as it can not be put to any alternative use. There is currently a support scaffold propping up the roof, so unless the works go ahead there is a danger that the building will be lost and the Principal Conservation Officer is anxious not to delay repairs any further. The HBG budget is targeted at rescuing Buildings at Risk and this is the most deserving case this year and likely to be the last hope for the building.

Public buildings such as churches are usually easier to raise funding for as they serve a social function and the Council's grants provide an incentive for this. If it was not for the Mausolea Trust the only other way to secure the building would be for the Council to CPO the building and do all the works, as part of its functions in respect of safeguarding listed buildings

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

None

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

na

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

na

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor John Beveridge – Portfolio Holder for Planning