

OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE

‘CHESHIRE ARCHIVES – A STORY SHARED’

CHERHUB recently posted on several Facebook groups that Cheshire East Council are set to spend a WHOPPING £6,433,000 of taxpayer’s money in 2025/26 on a Brand New Historical Archive Centre in Crewe, despite the loss of essential services to both Middleswich and Bollington.

Some residents were quick to point out that it was their understanding that the Archive project was being funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Whilst it is accurate that the project is being “supported” by the Heritage Fund, media releases in relation to this claim have been somewhat misleading and we felt that it was important to provide the evidence to support our claim.

We have extracted information from the National Lottery, Economy and Growth Committee meetings, Cheshire East Council media releases and the Service Budget for 2025/26 that we believe should clarify the position.

September 2019

National Lottery Grants for Heritage awarded to Cheshire West and Chester Council

National Lottery Grants for Heritage – £250,000 to £5million	
	Date awarded 05/09/2019
	Location Chester City & the Garden Quarter
	Local Authority Cheshire West and Chester
	Applicant Cheshire West & Chester Council
	Award Given £6950000



The National Lottery Heritage Fund

December 7, 2022 · 🌐

 Funding news!

We have awarded £4.5m of #NationalLottery funding to Cheshire East Council and **Cheshire West and Chester Council** towards their ‘Cheshire’s Archives: A Story Shared’ project

National Lottery Heritage Fund – grant increases

Cheshire's archives: a story shared

Applicant: Cheshire West & Chester Council

Decision: Award grant increase of £1,950,000 to make a total grant of £6,405,100

There is certainly some confusion as to exactly how much the National Lottery Heritage Fund have actually awarded Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester but the ‘grant increase’ statement above was announced in July 2024.

30 November 2021

Economy and Growth Committee Meeting – Page 71

5.18 Another exciting project is the History Centre - Design and feasibility work is progressing for the project. The aim being to provide a new building to both accommodate part of the Cheshire archive and a local history facility on the site of the former Crewe Library and adjacent undercroft car park. This project requires a cocktail of funding. Whilst a significant amount has been identified through the Heritage Lottery Fund, FHSF and Towns Fund, it is also dependent on co-funding from the Council. Part of this requirement relates to the cost of demolishing the former Crewe Library and adjoining Civic Centre Car Park. A second stage bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund to support this project is planned for spring/summer 2022.

15 November 2022

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Project Name	Summary Description	Lead/Key Delivery	CEC Budget commitment	Other budgets	Funding Sources	Current forecast completion/operation	Current status	Issues/Risks
History Centre	Demolition of former library and civic centre car park, creation of new history centre including Cheshire archive, with new public realm	CEC / Cheshire West & Cheshire Council	£10m + £1.5m	£10m CWaC, NLHF budget +£1½m FHSF +£¼m TF	CEC, FHSF, TF, NLHF	2024/25	Awaiting NLHF application outcome- due Dec 2022. Planning application for demolition/public realm and History Centre submitted early Nov. Demolition target completion: Late 2023	Cost inflation, estimated time for planning permission to be approved

The above suggests financial support from Future High Streets Fund of £1.5m and Town Fund of £250k

7 December 2022

Cheshire East Council Media Release

Today, it can be announced that [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) has agreed to provide funding to contribute towards the delivery of the new facilities in Chester and Crewe, which will replace the Cheshire Record Office, in Chester, and allow the service to better protect and share the historic records.

Planning applications for the two centres were recently submitted and decisions on the plans are expected to be made before spring.

If they are approved, the grant from the Heritage Fund of £4.45m, which has been made possible through money raised by National Lottery players, would allow for construction of the centres to go ahead.

14 March 2023

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8.2 Finance

8.2.1 The project's Quantity Surveyors' latest cost estimate for the delivery phase of the project is £25.7 million. Each council will provide £10 million, while the Heritage Fund grant is £4.5 million. In addition, Cheshire West and Chester Council's Climate Emergency Fund will provide £0.6 million to enable the centre in Chester to achieve the BREEAM Excellent sustainability standard, while Cheshire East Council's Towns Fund grant will fund £0.4 million of related public realm enhancements in Crewe. The balance of £0.2 million will be sought through a range of trusts and foundations over the lifetime of the project and will fund some of the project's community engagement activities as detailed in its activity plan

8.2.2 Funding to support the delivery stage is within both Councils' capital programmes with £10,250 million currently within CEC's main capital programme. There is also a £380,000 contribution that is in the block allocation for the Crewe Town's Fund. Future revenue implications are included in the council's medium term financial strategy.

Economy & Growth		24/25		25/26			
Culture & Tourism							
Cattle Handling Facility - Oakwood Farm	367	367	0	0	0	0	0
Countryside Vehicles	1,579	700	226	219	217	217	879
Culture & Tourism S106 Schemes	601	91	98	385	5	22	510
**New Archives Premises CTC1	10,256	442	3,141	6,433	240	0	9,814
PROW Capital Works	1,138	1,042	96	0	0	0	96
PROW CMM A6 MARR	100	69	2	29	0	0	31
PROW Flood Damage Investment	72	71	1	0	0	0	1
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	415	113	302	0	0	0	302
**Tatton Park Investment Phase 2	3,280	1,434	436	684	725	0	1,845
Total Committed Schemes	308,219	127,061	40,772	33,237	28,610	78,539	181,158

14 November 2023

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- 51 The Cultural Economy team's work on the bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the shared service 'Archives - A Story Shared' programme, including the building of the new History Centre in Crewe, was successful in achieving a £4.9 million grant, with all funding now secured. Planning permission for sites in Crewe and Chester was secured in March 2023. Infrastructure and Construction company 'Kier' have been contracted to develop both sites and have completed RIBA 4 stage on time and to budget.

1 August 2024 Cheshire East Media Release

1 August 2024

The start date is nearing for construction of two new history centres that will co-host the region's archives.

Cheshire Archives and Local Studies is a shared service of Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. It looks after the county's unique and irreplaceable written and pictorial history, which dates back more than 900 years.

The service's current base, the Record Office in Chester, will close its doors on 8 August so that the whole team, with the help of volunteers, can prepare the thousands of historical records for the move to the two new state-of-the-art history centres that will replace it.

Construction of the new centres – one in Crewe and one in Chester – is set to begin in autumn. The project, called 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared', will transform the way the archives service works and open up the collections to a whole new audience.

The history centres will feature new exhibition and event spaces, new research rooms, workspace for staff and volunteers, as well as environmentally stable storage for the archives.

In Cheshire East, [the history centre will be based next to Memorial Square in Crewe town centre](#). The area around where it will be is currently being revamped to provide an attractive new setting for the facility.

The archives project is supported by funding of £6.4m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, made possible by National Lottery players.

There's further cause for celebration as the project has also been awarded a new £300,000 grant from the Wolfson Foundation.

Service Budgets 2025/26

The Total Approved Budget below shows a total cost still outstanding of £7.115m with £6.433m to be spent in 2025/26.

Economy & Growth			
CAF			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000
Committed Schemes			
Culture & Tourism			
Countryside Vehicles	1,579	790	355
Culture & Tourism S106 Schemes	509	97	385
Green Infrastructure Structures Investment	384	0	271
New Archives Premises CTC1	7,115	442	6,433
PROW CMM A6 MARR	103	74	29
Tatton Park Investment Phase 2	2,843	1,434	684
Total Culture & Tourism Committed Schemes	12,533	2,837	8,157



The Revenue Budget below shows no income to offset the £6,433,000 needed for this project in 2025/26.

Economy and Growth	Revenue Budget			Capital Budget	Total Revenue and Capital Budget
Service Area	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net Budget £000	£000	£000
Directorate	303		303		303
Assets	3,078	-2,587	491	2,250	2,741
Growth and Enterprise Management	147		147		147
Facilities Management	17,702	-270	17,432	5,927	23,359
Farms	437	-785	-348		-348
Economic Development	1,985	-551	1,434	12,854	14,288
Housing	3,996	-414	3,582	6,893	10,475
Rural and Cultural Management	165		165	8,157	8,322
Tatton Park	5,653	-4,445	1,208		1,208
Green Infrastructure	2,124	-302	1,822		1,822
Cultural Economy	1,113		1,113		1,113
Visitor Economy	558	-349	209		209
Pay Inflation	883		883		883
Total Cost of Service	38,144	-9,703	28,441	36,081	64,522

CONCLUSION

Based on the above evidential information and estimated costs, including external funding it would appear that Council Taxpayers ARE funding the balance of this project at an estimated total cost of approximately £7.6M, proving that our claim of £6.33M for 2025/26 IS **INDEED BEING PAID FOR BY THE TAXPAYER!**

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF PROJECT: (page 3)	£25,700,000
LESS FUNDING FROM NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND: (page 1)	£6,405,100
BALANCE:	£19,294,900
TOTAL SPLIT BETWEEN BOTH COUNCILS - CHESHIRE EAST BALANCE: (page 3)	£9,647,450
LESS FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND INVESTMENT: (page 2)	£1,500,000
BALANCE:	£8,147,450
LESS TOWN FUND INVESTMENT: (page 3)	£380,000
BALANCE:	£7,767,450
LESS EQUAL SHARE OF WOLFSON FOUNDATION GRANT: (page 4)	£150,000
ESTIMATED BALANCE TO BE PAID BY CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL TAXPAYERS:	£7,617,450