

<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>Award of Grant to Banbury Museum Trust</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee</b>	7 October 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities, Councillor Rob Pattenden
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	13 August 2025
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing, Nicola Riley

## **Purpose of report**

Cherwell District Council is the principal funder of The Banbury Museum Trust. This report sets out the reasoning for an award of grant funding until March 2027.

### **1. Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To award Banbury Museum Trust a grant for their continued operation until 31 March 2027

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1 Banbury Museum Trust have managed the Museum and Gallery since the Council approved the establishment of an independent trust in 2013.
- 2.2 The Council agreed a funding plan at the establishment of the Trust to sustain the service. That funding plan completed in April 2025.
- 2.3 In line with the savings agreed by successive Council budget plans over the last three years, a new grant agreement has been negotiated with Banbury Museum.
- 2.4 The grant is at a level that requires Executive approval.
- 2.5 The Council has a representative on the Museum Trust Board as a point of connection and officers meet to ensure that the Museum fulfils their development plan.
- 2.6 The Museum provides a free entry gallery that celebrates the history of Banbury since the Civil War and draws upon the role it has played in the region as an industrious, growing town and its importance as a market town. Banbury continues to be the largest market town in Oxfordshire, and the Museum has developed a

reputation for temporary exhibitions drawing audiences into the Town from all over the region.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		The proposed grant agreement is in line with the budgetary assumptions included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved by Council in February 2025. To deviate from this would cause a pressure to the Council and require additional savings to be identified from services elsewhere. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), 28 August 2025		
<b>Legal</b>		Legal Services have prepared a draft funding agreement which is being put in place to secure the proposed grant and provide advice on the content of the same to protect the Council's interests. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 11 September 2025		
<b>Risk Management</b>		Reducing the Council's funding for Banbury Museum Trust could pose a greater challenge for the Museum to keep running all its current services. Although the Trust has been good at raising money from other sources, there's a risk they might not get enough to fill the gap. The Council will continue to have a representative on the Museum's Board to help keep things on track. Also, a decline on the Museum's services could affect the community and reflect poorly on the Council. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 27 August 2025		
<b>Impact Assessments</b>		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>		x		
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could			x	
		Banbury Museum provides an opportunity to access cultural activities to our communities, including those within the protected characteristics. As such, supporting its operations has a positive impact. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 27 August 2025.		

impact on inequality?				
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>		X		
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>		x		
<b>Data Impact</b>		x		
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>		x		
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Healthy resilient and engaged communities Banbury Museum is a foundational organisation in the delivery of the Councils cultural offer. Continuing funding supports that delivery.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	Extensive negotiations have been concluded with the Museum Trustees			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Banbury Museum and Gallery occupies a purpose-built facility, spanning the Banbury Canal with its shop in a prominent position within Castle Quay. Funded by the Council and Heritage Lottery Fund the Museum opened in 2002 in the current building.
- 3.2 A Museum has operated in Banbury since the 1940's and the Banbury Historical society, which has been active in the Town since 1958 meets at the Museum and their library is housed there.
- 3.3 Banbury Museum & Gallery is accredited with Arts Council England. The Trustees support the importance of full accreditation, which ensures the Museum meets the national standard expected by its audiences and stakeholders. Maintaining accreditation is a key requirement of continuing funding.

- 3.4 An independent trust was established to continue the development of the Museum and Gallery programme and facilitate improved fundraising from trusts and foundations.
- 3.5 The Trust has been successful in fundraising for a shop refit and several important exhibitions. They have recently successfully applied for an Arts Council Grant to continue their development.
- 3.6 Alongside the free to enter galleries, the museum also operates an award-winning reminiscence group, offers an engaging schools' programme and is a key member of the Banbury Quays consortium.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 Banbury Museum is a key partner in delivering the cultural aspirations of the Council.
- 4.2 Cherwell District Council has a history of supporting arts and culture and considers it important that individuals have an opportunity to access cultural opportunities for their improved wellbeing. Goal five of The Councils Wellbeing Strategy underlines this approach
- 4.3 The Council provided a great deal of stability with a long-term funding plan for the museum. This ended in April this year. Negotiations over the new funding agreement have taken several months to conclude as the level of funding for the Museum is set to reduce by £145,000 over the term of this proposed agreement to align with the agreed budget position.
- 4.4 The proposed grant will be £332,552 in 2025/26 and £257,552 in 2026/27 financial years.
- 4.5 Banbury Museum and Gallery will continue to run the programme as it currently stands and during the term of this funding agreement will work with the council to secure its future operation.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To fund the museum at the previous level and not achieve budget savings as approved

Rejected; The Council must balance its budget and continue to drive efficiencies in its own and funded operations.

Option 2: To not fund the Museum

Rejected; This would result in immediate closure and run counter to the Councils current agreed policies

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The continued funding of Banbury Museum and Gallery is in line with approved budget plans and maintains the Councils commitment to providing high quality opportunities to participate in cultural activity locally for residents.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes Financial threshold met and community threshold met.
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	None
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	Banbury Museum and Gallery Funding agreement 2025 - 2027 Everyone's Wellbeing - Cherwell District Council Wellbeing strategy
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<b>Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Monitoring Officer request for report 12/08/2025 Corporate Director for Communities 26/09/25