

Request

We are seeking clarification with your response to FOI 17248 which asked:

"...under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the Haigh Hall project and its management under the terms of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Specifically, I am seeking details on actions taken by Wigan Council in response to the withdrawal of the Major family's £200 million art collection from the project."

Point 2 asked:

2. DLUHC Correspondence and Approval:

• Any correspondence between Wigan Council and DLUHC regarding the withdrawal of the Major family's art collection.

The Council's response:

2. There is no correspondence as the artwork was not linked to or part of DHLUC funding

Please may you clarify, using the Leveling up application form as shared in response to foi 18088, the following:

* by page 16 of the form, the Major family / collection has been referred to at least 8 times - how many times does a collection need to be referred to before you consider the artwork to be "linked" to the funding? This form is the "apply to the levelling up fund round 2" - the title specifically states "fund" yet you claim there is no correspondence linking the the Major family to the funding.

* on page 3, under the "short description", at the first opportunity, you link the Major family with this nationally significant cultural visitor centre as being "supported by a contribution, for display, of £200 million of artworks from the Major family estate..." - again, please explain how you can state the Major family "was not linked to or part of DHLUC funding" when clearly it was?

* on page 4 you state "The transformation is underpinned by a contribution, for display, of £200 million of art treasures from the Major family estate" - how does this not link the Major family artwork to the funding? How is something that underpins the transformation not linked to the funding?

Definition of underpinned - support, justify, or form the basis for. "form the basis for". We look forward to your definition of "underpinned".

* on page 16 you state "The project will make available the valuable art collection of Theodore Major with an estimated value of £200,000,000. Whilst the collection ownership is retained within the family, the ability to use the collection to secure the loan of exhibits from other institutions has been secured, providing leverage to the cultural attraction to establish a strong temporary exhibition programme." This raises several questions / observations?

- again, how does this not link the Major collection to the funding application?
- what do you now have to use as "leverage"?
- What do you now have to "use...to secure the loan of exhibits for other institutions"?
- You refer establishing "a strong temporary exhibition programme" as being "secured", yet you no longer have the aforementioned "leverage" - what do you plan to use now to 'secure' this?

Response

Whilst reference to loaning the artwork of Theodore Major is made within the Levelling Up application, funding was awarded based on a broad range of objectives set out in relation to culture and heritage. These objectives included the following:

- Restore and sustain for the long-term Haigh Hall as a primary Heritage Asset within the town and region
- To utilise Haigh Hall and its historic environment to create a national visitor destination offering heritage, culture and events alongside park and woodland experiences
- Increase engagement with heritage and culture through a diverse programme of events, activities, and outreach programmes
- To expand the impact Haigh Hall has on the communities it serves notably those in areas of deprivation and greatest need of levelling up
- Re-establish Haigh Hall as a focus for improved cultural engagement for residents
- Support the regional tourism economy through a variety of uses within the redevelopment and the connections to regional cultural institutions
- Maximise the educational value of the heritage and culture within the Hall and Park through

As stated in our previous FOI response securing the loan of the art work was not a requirement for Levelling Up funding. Both the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Arts Council England are aware of the situation and have not expressed any concerns.

There are a wide range of exciting opportunities for us to display world class artwork at Haigh Hall and this remains the plan. We are in the process of developing our Cultural Programme for Haigh.