



**THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

**Title of meeting:** Culture Regeneration and Economic Development Decision Meeting

**Subject:** "Discovering Hampshire's Hidden D-Day Heritage " project with The Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust.

**Date of meeting:** 11 October 2024

**Report by:** Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Steve Pitt

**Wards affected:** All

- 1. Requested by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services**
- 2. Purpose:**
  - 2.1 Summarises the forthcoming "Hidden D-Day" project (working title) in association with The Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). Working with volunteers, the project will survey locations in the Hampshire countryside where troops camped before departing for Normandy, both before and after D-Day. It will also make available to a general audience, information about which troops were based at which camps and when.
- 3. Information Requested**
  - 3.1 Overview**
    - 3.1.1 This project was proposed by The Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust. Museums Service staff led on writing the application to NLHF, and in the discussions on partnerships and project activities that were essential preliminaries to that application, with assistance from Julian Thomas, Funding Manager.
    - 3.1.2 In January NLHF confirmed that the Trust had been successful in its application for a grant of £239,500. The museum team's work connected with the D-Day 80 anniversary meant that the project could not start until later in 2024. Match-funding (required by NLHF) will comprise £12,500 from the Trust, alongside £5,000 from Portsmouth City Council.



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- 3.1.3 The project will run for 18 months. The NLHF grant will be made to the Trust, but the project will be run by the Museums Service. An advisory board including trustees and experts will support the project. The funding includes two project staff who will be managed by the Museums Service: a project manager (full time) and a volunteer manager (4 days per week). These posts should be recruited in autumn 2024.
- 3.1.4 The project will build on previous work by the D-Day Museum / The D-Day Story team over the past ten years in enabling community groups to explore and uncover the history of D-Day in general and relating to their local areas.

### **3.2 Project components**

- 3.2.1 Teams of trained volunteers (both individuals, and groups from partner organisations) led by project staff will carry out field surveys of many of these troop camp locations, which were mostly in the countryside around Portsmouth and Southampton, and in the New Forest. The surveys will record any surviving features (which are often hard to spot, due to the temporary nature of the camps) through photographs and GPS locations, before they are lost due to the passage of time and activities such as forestry work. This information will be added to the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER), and - with the agreement of the relevant landowner - will be made public. (It is not planned that excavations or metal-detecting will be carried out).
- 3.2.2 Project staff will lead a team of volunteers who will compile a public online database with information about which units of Allied troops were in which camps around the time of D-Day. This information will be primarily derived from records held at the UK National Archives. At present the research to identify which troops were based at a specific camp would be very time-consuming (and probably beyond the skills or inclination of most people). This database will be of interest to a variety of people including those researching units or individual veterans, and those researching local history. Due to wartime secrecy, even at the time local people generally did not know which troops were based in their vicinity.
- 3.2.3 The project will involve contributions from a number of partners and other individuals or organisations, including:
- Organisations who provided letters of support as part of the NLHF application: Veterans Outreach Support (Portsmouth-based), Alabaré Christian Care and Support (works with veterans, vulnerable young people etc.), City of Portsmouth College (will run IT courses through which older people will contribute to the project while learning IT skills), Autek (provides online resources for people with disabilities), Forestry England (landowner of some of the camp locations).



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- Landowners who own the land where these camps are located, ranging from individuals to organisations including local authorities, charities and businesses.
- Organisations such as HIVE who will help with recruiting volunteers.

3.2.4 As part of the NLHF application, we have committed to working with 100 volunteers in total. As well as recording this aspect of history and making it more publicly available, participants will also gain wellbeing benefits and new skills. The two charities working with veterans that we are partnering with, recognised these potential benefits in their letters of support.

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Signed  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services**

**Appendices:** None

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location