

Beacon receives £900,993 grant

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Plans to expand the Beacon Museum are a step closer today (January 26) thanks to the Coastal Community Fund grant of £900,993 being awarded to the museum and visitor centre.

The grant, together with the £400,000 received from Copeland community Fund last year provides the funding to create a new fourth floor gallery space and conference/visitor centre.

The expansion of the Beacon is part of the business plan to secure the future of the iconic building. The new purpose built gallery will be constructed to the highest standard possible to achieve government indemnity, creating a secure and safe place to host exhibitions and loans from the national collections. Alongside this, on land adjoining the building, a new conference/learning suite will provide businesses and community groups with a new, much needed, venue for events.

Leader of Copeland Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Nuclear Policy, Cllr Elaine Woodburn said: "This is great news not only for Copeland but for the whole of Cumbria.

"This grant, together with the £400,000 we received from Copeland Community Fund last year was vital for us to develop the Beacon to secure the future of this important museum and visitor attraction and help us move forwards with the regeneration and improvements of the harbour side.

"To achieve the business goal of making the Beacon self-sustainable, we needed more gallery and event space to create the revenue to sustain this important building and Museum service. Now we can put our development plans into action, and will be able to offer more prestigious, significant and diverse exhibitions which will attract more visitors to Copeland, helping to further boost the local economy.

"The council have been working with Sellafield Ltd since December 2012 on a collaborative business plan for the Beacon. In December 2013 we agreed our collaboration arrangements and in March 2014 signed off a five year commercially driven business plan. Now less than 12 months on, we are delighted to have been awarded this grant which will ensure the future of this unique museum which brings together our culture and heritage with science and technology.

"The Beacon is already providing a great learning resource for schools, locals and visitors, however with this expansion the formal and informal learning opportunities will be enhanced for all."

An application for planning permission to expand the beacon has been submitted and work could be completed by autumn this year (2015).

Ends

Notes for editors

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