

Thinktank Plans Win Heritage Lottery Fund Support

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Having been awarded a Development Grant of £105,000 to work up plans for the full award, the project will create a new exhibition celebrating ingenuity and innovation in Birmingham. The exciting new interactive exhibition will reveal the hidden science behind Birmingham's manufacturing heritage. It will explore the links between past local technological innovations in areas such as aluminium and plastics, and inventiveness and creativity in the universities and businesses of today.

Dr. Nick Winterbotham, Chief Executive of Thinktank and Millennium Point, comments: "This news represents a significant step forward for Thinktank, and presents a great opportunity to profile better the City's outstanding scientific and technological achievements. Thinktank welcomes over 250,000 visitors each year and the kind of support offered by the HLF and other organisations is imperative for us to ensure that our visitor experience remains fresh and relevant. With over 75,000 schoolchildren and twice as many families taking part in learning programmes at Thinktank annually, the museum makes a significant contribution to science learning and in developing scientific literacy. We are thrilled that the HLF have agreed to support Birmingham's unique scientific heritage in this way."

The funding will support the creation of a major new hands-on science exhibition which will feature around 1,200 objects from the museum collections, introduce contemporary products made or designed in Birmingham and showcase the region's research to reduce, manage, and minimise our waste. Divided into four themes, the exhibition will examine Birmingham's role in making metal goods for the world, precious possessions from the Jewellery Quarter, packaging for food and drink, and a vast range of inventions from everyday life.

The new exhibition will take visitors on a journey from raw materials to finished products, showing the relevance of the past to everyday life, and using Birmingham's past and present achievements to inspire the scientists of tomorrow. Developing the exhibition will also enable Thinktank to build further links with universities and local industries.

The funding will also allow Thinktank to develop a range of learning and participatory activities linked to the new exhibition. A new 'Volunteer Manager' will enable many more local people to become involved in the museum's work, engaging with visitors and helping to care for the collections. There will also be new laboratory and classroom materials, science sessions, and hands-on activities for all visitors, in particular families.

Anne Jenkins, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the West Midlands, said: "This project will take Thinktank to new heights and is excellent news for Birmingham. We look forward to working further with the Trust while they develop their exciting plans for the new galleries and its audiences."

This round one support from the Heritage Lottery Fund enables the team at Thinktank to develop detailed plans and designs for the project. The second round (and final) application will be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund in September, which if successful will mean that the new exhibition will open in December 2012. The exhibition is also supported by SITA Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

[For more information about Thinktank.](#)

Notes to editors

Thinktank, Birmingham's award-winning science museum has over 200 hands-on exhibits throughout four floors. Thinktank examines the past, investigates the present, explores what the future may bring and helps visitors to understand how science and technology shape our lives. www.thinktank.ac

Millennium Point is England's largest landmark Millennium Project outside of London. It opened in September 2001 on time and within budget (total cost £114 million, including £50 million of Millennium Commission lottery funding and £25.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund).

Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £317million to projects in the West Midlands region alone.

Further information

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