

Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision meeting
Date of meeting:	23 March 2012
Subject:	Development Plan for Cumberland House
Report by:	Head of Cultural Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report presents the Development Plan for Cumberland House Natural History Museum.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report is noted and that officers implement the Development Plan as described in Appendix 1.**
- 2.2 That the £50,000 allocated to Cumberland House is utilised without pursuing additional external funding at the present time.**
- 2.3 That the funding is carried forward to enable the work to be completed as planned during 2012.**

3. Background

- 3.1** The Development Plan for Cumberland House has emerged from the work of the Cumberland House Working Group, which met over a period of 9 months from June 2010. The group involved a number of external stakeholders – notably representatives of the museum’s two Friends groups (Friends of Cumberland House and Portsmouth Museums & Records Society) as well as colleagues from Community Centres and Parks. The group focused on a strategy for the museum (identifying a Mission Statement, Aims and Actions) with the key recommendation that a study was undertaken to assess the feasibility of transferring the operation of Cumberland House to the 3rd Sector. This is now underway.

- 3.2** In more recent months plans for a major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for improvements to the public amenities in the Canoe Lake area have emerged. This will impact on the timing of any major redevelopment plans for Cumberland House reliant on HLF funding (to minimise the risk of competing bids and reflecting the availability of match-funding from council budgets). In addition, it also provides an opportunity to review, with stakeholders, the role of Cumberland House Natural History Museum in the context of the wider plans for the Canoe Lake area. It is therefore proposed that the £50,000 allocated to Cumberland House is not treated as match-funding for a larger bid for external funding, as was originally envisaged, but is utilised for the redisplay of one gallery and to undertake the Feasibility Study described in the development plan. (An alternative would be to retain the £50,000 less the £5,000 allocated to the Feasibility Study, to support a future bid aligned to the plans for Canoe Lake Park).
- 3.3** The Development Plan covers the next 12 to 18 month period. This respects the CHWG wishes regarding the potential transfer to 3rd Sector without pre-judging the outcome and allows some flexibility with regard to emerging plans for the Canoe Lake Park. The plan reflects the strategic aims of the Learning & Access Strategy for the Portsmouth Museums & Records Service - i.e. access, learning and participation.
- 3.4** The Friends of Cumberland House have been invited to comment on the report. Their comments provide an update on progress and indicate areas where they would require more information before becoming involved. No changes have been requested.
- 4. Reasons for recommendations**
- 4.1** The Development Plan provides a template for the development and enhancement of Cumberland House which will guide the work of museums and records staff and key stakeholders. It builds on the work of the Cumberland House Working Group and takes account of more recent developments involving Parks.
- 5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**
- 5.1** An EIA will be undertaken on the proposal for the redisplay of one of the galleries made accessible as part of the Equalities Act.
- 6. Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments**
- 6.1** As work is ongoing on the feasibility study and authorisations, there is no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report.
- 7. Head of Finance's comments**
- 7.1** The objectives to be delivered in the forward plan in the next 12-18 months are fully funded.

The PCC match funding capital contribution towards the HLF bid was approved by Full Council on 8 February, 2011.

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 Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of Service

Appendices: Appendix A Cumberland House Natural History Museum Development Plan 2011 – 2012.

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
Cumberland House Feasibility Study	CLS Cabinet Member Report 5 August 2011
Report of the work of Cumberland House Working Group by Chris Richards	MRS Manager Office
CH NHM Access Audit by AMS	MRS Managers Office
Email from Friends of Cumberland House (LH) dated 6 March.	MRS Managers Email files

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet member for Culture, Leisure & Sport on the 23 March 2012.

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 Signed by:
Cabinet member for Culture, Leisure & Sport

Appendix A

Cumberland House Natural History Museum Development Plan

1. Background

Cumberland House is the city's natural history museum and a major attraction for families with young children, many of whom visit regularly (Visitor Survey (VS) 2010). The main attraction is the Butterfly House but other elements of the museum also have their following – the wildlife of Portsdown Hill, for example, and Emily the dinosaur (VS 2010). Part of the appeal of the museum – especially for younger visitors - relates to its intimate scale, hidden corners and general quirkiness (VS 2010). The community has a strong and emotional attachment to Cumberland House and people who visited as children now visit with their grandchildren. The Museum is part of the Canoe Lake area offer, which is very popular with families with young children, which itself forms part of the Seafront.

Key issues for the museum include:

- Poor physical access (although current DDA work introduces some major improvements)
- Limited facilities – toilets, shop, café
- Overcrowding in the summer / butterfly months
- Under-use in the winter months
- Tired looking displays (although some great individual specimens on show)
- Less than ideal environment for natural history collections

In spite of its limitations, Cumberland House remains popular and attracted a staggering 70,000 visits in 2010/11.

A number of improvements were made in 2011. Notably work to improve access for wheelchair users and people with mobility issues. This will enable wheelchair users to enter the museum and to visit the Butterfly House and much of the ground floor for the first time. Improvements also include a fully accessible toilet. We have also created a Buggy Park in the stable block which has relieved congestion in the main museum building. The enthusiasm of the Friends of Cumberland House has provided much of the impetus and some of the funding for these works.

During 2011 the Museums and Records Service also went through a procurement process for its catering concessions at the D-Day and City Museums. As part of this, expressions of interest were sought for developing a café at Cumberland House. Three were received. These have yet to be pursued and there is an ongoing dialogue about the need for a café in the Museum and, if needed, where it should be located. The dialogue will be informed by an outline feasibility study to be completed shortly (March 2012).

In addition the Cumberland House Working Group (CHWG) met during 2010 and 2011 to explore some of the issues affecting the museum. The working group

included members of both friends groups (Friends of Cumberland House and Portsmouth Museums and Records Society) as well as council representatives – Community Services, Museums, Parks and Children’s Centres – and met 8 times from June 2010. In its final report, the CHWG identified a mission statement for Cumberland House, a number of aims and actions.

The aims focus on learning, stimulating interest in, love of and raising awareness of the local environment, natural history and wildlife sites and the impact of human activity. The need for access for all and inclusive services is recognised as well as the need for operational effectiveness and financial sustainability. The report makes a number of recommendations notably that a feasibility study is undertaken on options for the future operation of the museum and that an external consultant is appointed to lead the process. A feasibility Study to investigate transfer to the 3rd Sector is underway.

2. The Natural History Collection

Portsmouth holds a regionally significant natural history collection which documents the natural history of the area over a 100 year period. We need to raise public understanding and awareness of the collection; its significance and why it is still relevant today. This was the motivation for the temporary exhibition, *Birds, Beasts and Bugs* which featured the HLF Guermonprez Collection, held at City Museum this year (July 2011 – January 2012). We also need to promote greater recognition for the collection within the wider scientific community. To inform the future development and use of the natural history collection a formal assessment of its significance is needed.

It is taken as a given that the stewardship and preservation of the collection will be taken into consideration when preparing plans for redisplay and other forms of access.

3. Other Initiatives and Developments

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Bid

PCC will be applying for a "Parks for People" Grant from the HLF in 2012, to enable improvements to be made to Canoe Lake Park. There are two stages to the grant process, each of which is competitive. The Council hopes to secure a £1M grant, and will match fund this with £100k from its capital programme for the seafront this year. If successful, the Council could potentially start works on the ground in late 2014, making improvements to Lumps Fort & the Rose Gardens, the Cumberland House garden and general play and infrastructure in the park. The grant is very much about local people, so it will be with their involvement that decisions will be made on what to prioritise for improvement. Initial proposals for the project draw on the draft Seafront Masterplan, which will be available for public consultation this year.

Cumberland House Garden

Initial works will focus on redesign of the central flower beds and will include the use of more sustainable planting. Additional improvements may form part of the HLF bid and could include enhancement of garden with perennial and shrub planting in the borders to attract more butterflies, improved seating and paths. The Friends of Cumberland House are active partners in this project, working with the Parks Service .

Access Audit

A report presenting the findings of a physical access audit recently undertaken by Asset Management has recently been completed (Jan 2012). This identifies a range of improvements to raise standards and meet the requirements of The Equality Act (October 2010). One of the key recommendations is that the ground floor is made fully accessible and developed as the main exhibition area for the museum.

4. Learning and Access Strategy

The three Strategic Aims of the Museum & Records Service Learning and Access Strategy are:

SA1 Access ensure collections and the information and knowledge they contain can be readily accessed to benefit a wide range of people.

SA2 Learning provide learning opportunities – both within and without museum buildings – to engage a range of learners of different ages, with different learning styles, learning individually or together in family, school and other groups.

SA3 Participation empower people to be more actively involved in the work of the service, undertaking a range of roles and helping to shape its future.

Nine objectives support delivery of the strategic aims. Of particular relevance to Cumberland House is the emphasis on families (Objective (O) 1), the need to involve users in the interpretation of sites (O2), extending volunteering opportunities (O4) and providing a balanced learning programme (O8).

5. Vision

If the museum is to thrive it needs to capitalise on the community commitment and ties to Cumberland House. This needs to be in both practical and financial terms. It also needs to recognise and value its core audience – families with young children - and ensure that the museum works especially well for them. This is of paramount importance if we want to engender a lifelong interest in the natural world. Increasing access – in its broadest sense - to the collection and the city's wildlife and wildlife sites to a target audience of families with young children - and a commitment to involving the same families in the daily operation of the museum –

will be an interesting proposition for potential funders. It is proposed therefore that the overarching aspiration for the museum is to:

*Re-connect the children of the city with the natural world
and Inspire the next generation of naturalists*

6. Aims

The aims for Cumberland House Natural History Museum are to:

1. Inspire, excite and stimulate a lifelong interest in the natural world.
2. Provide an offer that works especially well for families with young children.
3. Signpost visitors to habitats and wildlife sites within the city.
4. Enable users and stakeholders to be involved through volunteering and consultation.
5. Deliver services as cost-effectively as possible seeking opportunities to reduce costs.

7. Action Plan

In view of the potential transfer of Cumberland House to the 3rd Sector, the forward plan will initially address the next 12 to 18 months. Major projects and decisions such as the redisplay of the gallery and the development of a café for example will await completion of the study. This is to give any new governing body the opportunity to direct the future direction and development of Cumberland House. The main objectives to be delivered during this period will therefore be:

- Complete the Feasibility Study for Transfer to 3rd Sector.
- Continue to work with partners to deliver the museum's activity and other programmes.
- Convene a family panel to inform how we take the museum forward (in terms of what we display, how we persuade people to become involved and to help identify the key messages we want to share with our audience.
- Redisplay one of the galleries made accessible as a result of DDA works.
- Support the Parks Service bid to the HLF for Canoe Lake Park.

Details are summarised in the matrix below:

Action	Lead (support)	Timetable Complete by	Budget £
Undertake feasibility study for transfer to 3 rd sector.	External specialist (MRS, FoCH, PMRS)	June 2012	£10,000
Deliver events programme	Friends of CH and Museums & Records Service	Ongoing	£300
Recruit a family panel to inform development.	Museums & Records Service	May 2012	Nominal (hospitality / expenses)
Preliminary assessment of feasibility of café	External specialist	March 2012	£2,100
Redisplay gallery made accessible by DDA works - identify themes / content - clear & make good - develop, produce and install new displays (tested by family panel)	Museums & Records Service (Family Panel, FoCH, PMRS)	March 2013	Up to £40,000
HLF bid - submit round 1 bid - development phase - submit round 2 bid	Parks are Client. AMS Landscape Architects are preparing bid.	R1 August 2012.	PCC 100,000 HLF £900,000 Total if bid is successful £1m
Garden - Initial improvements to central planting. - Additional improvements may form part of HLF bid.	Parks (FoCH)	May 2012	PCC £4,270
Undertake specialist assessment of the NH collection	Museums & Records Service	August 2012	£15,000 tbc (subject to funding)

Abbreviations:

FoCH – Friends of Cumberland House

MRS – Museums & Records Service

PMRS – Portsmouth Museums & Records Society

AMS – Asset Management Service, Portsmouth City Council