



Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	21 July 2017
Subject:	Portsmouth Museums Annual Update
Report by:	Director of Culture and City Development
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To review the achievements of Portsmouth Museums Service in 2016/17 and to present the service's operational 'Plan on a Page' (PoP) for the current financial year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The review of last year's activity and progress and on the delivery of the council's museums strategy is noted, especially the progress made on Transforming the D-Day Museum.**
- 2.2 Transforming the D-Day Museum continues as planned and as the priority for the museums service.**
- 2.3 The museums service works with its partners to deliver a number of significant externally funded projects should bids for funding be successful.**
- 2.4 Work on the new Butterfly House at Cumberland House is completed and a team of volunteers is recruited and trained to support staff with its ongoing operation.**
- 2.5 The museums service continues to support delivery of the Paulsgrove project 'Capturing the Spirit', working with the project team to showcase the project at Portsmouth Museum.**
- 2.6 The Decorative Art Gallery at Portsmouth is redisplayed and the loan of a Grayson Perry ceramic from the British Crafts Council noted.**

- 2.7 The marketing plan for the council's six museums is implemented and visitor surveys undertaken at Cumberland House and Portsmouth Museum using Audience Finder.**
- 2.8 Collection reviews are carried out on the Vehicle Collection and the Natural Sciences Collection.**
- 2.9 The expectation of increased income through initiatives such as Waterfront Gifts, taking the Portsmouth Museum café in-house and improving small cash donations given by museum visitors is noted.**

3. Background

- 3.1 2016/17 represents the second year of delivery of the Portsmouth Museums Strategy 'unlocking potential, transforming lives'. The strategy strikes a balance between benefits for individuals and communities and benefits for the city as a whole against a backdrop of diminishing public funding.
- 3.2 Our key aims are to:
- Reflect the diversity of the city's culture and communities in our visitors and offer.
 - Provide inspirational opportunities for people to enjoy and learn from the collections.
 - Build the profile and reputation of the Great Waterfront City by showcasing the national and international heritage of the city, and delivering excellent customer care.
 - Ensure sustainability and resilience through an entrepreneurial approach to income generation and partnerships.
 - Create a learning culture across the service to develop and empower staff
 - Develop new audiences using digital technology.
- 3.3 A total of 267,100 visits were made to Portsmouth Museums in 2016/17; 27,450 less than the previous year. Southsea Castle and Dicken's Birthplace were up on the previous year's figures by 15,160 (15%) and 420 (21%) respectively; while the remaining museums were down as follows: Eastney Beam Engine House 780 (74%), Cumberland House 22,440 (32%), Portsmouth Museum 11,760 (22%) and D-Day Museum 8,050 (12%).
- 3.4 The reduction in visits can in part be accounted for by temporary closures;
- Cumberland House to allow for building works and the demolition of the butterfly house (15,140)
 - D-Day Museum to enable the transformation to start (2,800)
 - Eastney Beam Engine House in response to significant H&S issues (780).

Other contributing factors are:

- absence of live butterflies for the whole year at Cumberland House
- The difficulty of maintaining visits when people know major improvements are planned (D-Day Museum)

- 3.5 The reduction in visitor numbers at Portsmouth Museum (by 11,760) is of concern. 2016/17 was the first year of operation following the cessation of the temporary exhibition programme. The closure of the museum café in December 2017 will also have impacted on visits. However on a more positive note, the visitor figure of 42,000 which was achieved in 2016/17 is a very respectable platform on which to build.
- 3.6 Transforming the D-Day Museum remains the service priority. This is a £5 million, 5 year project that ends in 2020/21. Key milestones achieved in 2016/17 were:
- Recruitment of project funded staff - the public participation officer and the first of 3 paid interns - this heralding the start of delivery of the project Activity Plan.
 - Working with members of the Disability Advisory Panel and access specialists Vocaleyes to help shape the facilities and new displays planned for the museum.
 - Developing a new brand for the museum.
 - Working up the storylines for each of the 45 stories to be included in the new displays and finalising all the assets to be included in each - ie objects, images, quotes etc - as well as the audience and 'voice' to be employed.
 - Completing detailed design / RIBA Stage E and procuring the main / base-build contract.
 - Procuring the specialists to conserve the Overlord Embroidery and D-Day Vehicles.
- 3.7 The butterfly house was demolished in early 2017 and the elegant rear elevation of Cumberland House revealed. During the period of closure other repairs and maintenance work was carried out by Property Services and museum staff were able to carry out a refresh of the A-Z exhibition, repainting cases and producing new labels.
- 3.8 The community of Paulsgrove is not represented in the city's museum collections. Capturing the Spirit, an initiative led by the Paulsgrove and Wymering Trust and funded by the HLF offers an opportunity to rectify this. The museums service is represented on the project steering group and has provided guidance on acquiring and care of collections and objects for handling sessions.
- 3.9 A condition report on the Edward King collection was completed in 2015/16 and four works were conserved prior to the opening of the *Edward King A Life in Art* exhibition in February 2016. The HLF declined to fund the £21,000 cost to have the remaining works conserved. However a further 4 works were conserved using funds raised through small cash donations at Portsmouth Museum. We secured the

loan of the painting '*Night Raid on Portsmouth Docks*' from TATE and this went on display in January 2017.

- 3.10 In 2015/16 the service generated £11,000 from visitors to the museum making small cash donations (excluding donations received at the D-Day Museum which are being collected on behalf of the Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust / Transforming the D-Day Museum project). The £18,000 target for 2016/17 was not met, although additional funds were raised to support the Butterfly House project and conservation of Edward King paintings. This target has been carried forward for 2017/18.
- 3.11 *Game Over: The Future of the Past* installation opened at Portsmouth Museum in May 2016. It features the largest single private collection of TV games, home computers and consoles on display in the UK and spans over 40 years of home video gaming. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this exhibition is popular with visitors and has contributed to footfall at the museum.
- 3.12 A Health and Safety audit was completed for the Eastney Beam Engine House site by the H&S team. A significant amount of work has been achieved at the site however much still remains to be done with the support of Property Services.
- 3.13 Other activity included the events programme that focussed on the Edward King exhibition, which entailed:
- A series of three art workshops for adults with artist Simon Cowper was so popular that a fourth was added. Participants used King's paintings as the starting point for their own work in watercolour and mixed media. In one session they literally followed in King's footsteps as they strolled around Old Portsmouth and sketched the buildings and streets that feature in his work. Feedback was very positive.
 - Local writer Denise Bennett led four creative writing workshop for adults. Participants responded to King's work in a mix of poetry and prose and a selection of their work was made available to visitors in a folder in the gallery.
 - Artist Jenny Staff challenged families to *Build your own Portsmouth* inspired by King's street scenes. A fabulous cityscape of cardboard buildings - including three Spinnaker Towers - populated a giant map of Portsmouth and drew gasps of amazement as we closed the blinds and switched on the coloured lights inside the structures.
 - Our annual Home Front Experience for primary schools moved from the D-Day Museum to Portsmouth Museum to take advantage of the Edward King display and the new resources for schools produced by the Learning Officer. Most of the schools had not visited Portsmouth Museum before and many were surprised by how well the children responded to the paintings and by the range of collections on show throughout the building.
 - Edward King spent the last 26 years of his life in St James' Hospital in Portsmouth due to mental ill health. From January to May 2017 award winning poet Maggie Sawkins led a series of *Writing for well-being* workshops targeted at adults who have experienced mental ill health. The group became so intrigued by the life and work of King that they carried out

independent research. They found the sessions challenging but rewarding and produced some high quality poetry and prose. Their confidence increased to such an extent that they are planning to a public performance at the museum in June.

- Two public talks linked to the King display proved so popular that they had to be repeated. John Stedman, one of PCC's archivists, spoke about Portsmouth and the Blitz. Former psychiatric nurse Christine Lawrence talked about Edward King and St James' Hospital.

3.14 Events held at other sites included contributions from a number of partners and other organisations including the City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot, Friends of Cumberland House, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Portsmouth Countryside Service, Portsmouth Reptile and Amphibian Society, Solent Meccano Club, South Downs National Park and the Victory Model Railway Club.

3.15 The Prints and Drawing Room hosted displays featuring:

- The Sickert Collection, including drawings, paintings and prints by Walter Sickert, Térèse Lessore and Sylvia Gosse, and featuring Japanese wood-block prints (*May to September 2016*, 53 works).
- *Dickens: The Art of the Story*, featuring the character illustrations from Dickens books, with original watercolours, prints and ephemera (*Sept 2016 to May 2017*. Included approx.140 collection items).

3.16 An additional 37,930 visits were made to see items from Portsmouth's collections on loan to other museums ie Nottingham Art Gallery (*The Suburban Order*, watercolour by David Jones) and Victoria Art Gallery, Bath (Bloomsbury, hand-painted decorative art objects - *a corner cupboard* by Duncan Grant, *2 room screens*, one by Duncan Grant and one by Vanessa Bell and a *Gramophone* by Dora Carrington).

3.17 A full marketing plan was implemented during the year including the production and distribution of regular event leaflets, a radio campaign in the summer months, digital and social media promotion and a number of group marketing initiatives.

3.18 The percentage increase in Facebook page likes is shown below (and the actual numbers for 2015/16 and 2016/17).

- Charles Dickens' Birthplace Museum: **26.4%** (from 912 to 1,070)
- Cumberland House: **21.5%** (from 605 to 735)
- D-Day Museum: **8.7%** (from 3,968 to 4,316)
- Portsmouth Museum: **26.4%** (from 2,969 to 3,752)
- Southsea Castle: **52.4%** (from 542 to 826)

All sites exceeded the 10% target for increase in social media activity - with the exception of the D-Day Museum. This target will be retained for next year.

3.19 Following the successful introduction of Waterfront Gifts at Southsea Library the range was introduced to Southsea Castle and Portsmouth Museum including a major overhaul of the shop fittings at each site. The Museum Service expects to reap the full benefit of this work in the year ahead.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations are based on the service plan on a page for the year ahead (Appendix 1).
- 4.2 Transforming the D-Day Museum remains the service priority. Following procurement of the main base-build contract and the costings being finalised by the exhibition designers, the project is cost is on target. On the recommendation of the project manager the programme has been adjusted and the planned opening date for the 'new' museum is March 2018. The removal of the collections was completed as planned (May 2017), the Overlord Embroidery was digitised and the Embroidery and Vehicles safely transported to the specialist conservators who will be working on them over the following months. The in-house team are currently commenting on and signing off the graphic designs and case layouts and informing the work of the AV specialists as well as producing final copy. Development of the new website will also be a significant piece of work for the year ahead. The re-opening of the museum in March 2018 will be the key milestone for 2017/18.
- 4.3 The museum service was involved in the preparation of a number of funding bids towards the end of the previous financial year. We supported the National Museum of the Royal Navy with preparation of their funding application to HLF for Landing Craft Tank (LCT) 7074. We prepared an application for Kick the Dust - an HLF initiative aimed at engaging young people with heritage - in partnership with the Active Communities Network and Motiv8 and an application to Arts Council England (ACE) under its National Portfolio Investment Programme. The competition for funding will be fierce and the chance of success small. However, the outcome of all three bids will be known by early July and if successful work would then start on the development phases of the LCT and Kick the Dust projects. The ACE funding would be from April 2018, although in the interim we would need to prepare a more detailed business plan.
- 4.4 Work on the new Butterfly House is now well underway and due to be completed in July with a formal opening in August. This new facility will be operated by museum staff with the support of a team of volunteers recruited and trained in accordance with the Investors in Volunteers Standard. The Stratford Butterfly Farm will provide training, specialist support and a review of the first year of operation. New interpretive panel about butterflies and their conservation will be provided in the entrance area to the new Butterfly House and the video microscopes currently occupying this area will be serviced and relocated to another part of the museum.

- 4.5 An event to showcase Paulsgrove's Capturing the Spirit project will be held at Portsmouth Museum in early 2018. A number of options have been discussed with the project co-ordinator including a pop-up museum type event in the Activity Room and / or an update of an interpretation panel in the room setting displays which looks at 'Prefabs' to incorporate information generated by the project. We also need to prepare for receiving the project archive including resources to catalogue and make it accessible for future projects, research etc.
- 4.6 The decorative art gallery has remained unchanged since 1992. The re-display will provide the opportunity to highlight other key works that are currently in storage and provide a new gallery experience for visitors. The loan of a vase by Grayson Perry into the re-display will endorse the 'made in Portsmouth' element whilst raising the profile of the city's decorative art collection.
- 4.7 A full marketing plan for the year has been drawn up including event fliers, radio, web, social media and group marketing including attendance at Trade Fairs and new Group E Newsletters. Charles Dickens Birthplace and Southsea Castle are both included in the destination London Underground campaign in July. In addition a full marketing and launch plan for the new D-Day Story is being drawn up - to add to and compliment current activity.
- 4.8 The council holds a collection of vehicles relating to the city of Portsmouth including, for example public transport vehicles and a fire engine. It is stored across a number of locations including with the City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot, some items are on long term loan and only three are on public display at the Milestones Museum in Basingstoke. The collection which was acquired when the council had plans to create a transport museum, is becoming increasingly costly to store and maintain and access is limited. An external specialist will be contracted to assess the collection and make recommendations for its future care and use.
- 4.9 Undertaking an assessment of the Natural History Collection is an outstanding item, necessary so we can understand its scientific importance and plan for its future use and development. The assessment will be undertaken by external specialists and external funding will be needed. The aim for 2017/18 is to obtain costs and secure the funding for the study.
- 4.10 Significant changes over the last year offer an opportunity to increase income in gift shop sales, visitor donations and through bringing the Portsmouth Museum café in house. A programme of staff training, the introduction of retail champions for the service, continuous development of the retail and café range and increased promotion are all key to ensuring income does increase. By utilising a member of the front of house team to operate the in house café we are assured of an increase in income - in the first two months of 2017/18 this income has exceeded what we received in rent annually from the previous operator.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 5.1 A preliminary EIA is completed and is attached (Appendix 2).

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report other than the exceptions outlined below.
- 6.3 Under Part 2, Section 3 of the City's Council Constitution (responsibilities of the Cabinet and further in accordance with the Schedule of Delegations at Appendix A of the Executive Procedure Rules in Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport has authority to approve the recommendations in this report.
- 6.4 A Local Authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do under the general power of competence Section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011. The proposals recommended are consistent with this power.

7. Director of Finance comments

- 7.1 The 2016/17 activities of the Museum Service have been funded primarily from the service's approved budget. Opportunities for income generation and external grants and contributions are continually being explored to supplement this.
- 7.2 Contributions have been received from other PCC services to achieve shared outcomes, the re-provision of the Butterfly House being an example of this.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices: **Appendix 1** - Portsmouth Museums, Operational Plan on a Page 2016/17
 Appendix 2 - Preliminary EIA form

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

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport