



<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	16 March 2018
<b>Subject:</b>	Portsmouth Museums Annual Update
<b>Report by:</b>	Director of Culture and City Development
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To review the achievements of Portsmouth Museums Service in 2017/18 and to present the service's operational 'Plan on a Page' (PoP) for the next financial year.

**2. Recommendations that:**

- 2.1 The review of last year's activity is noted, especially the progress made on Transforming the D-Day Museum.**
- 2.2 Transforming the D-Day Museum remains a service priority with the focus on successful delivery of Activity and Business Plans, including preparing for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day in 2019.**
- 2.3 Delivery of the Landing Craft Tank project continues in partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy.**
- 2.4 The museums service continues to support delivery of the Paulsgrove project Capturing the Spirit and showcases the project at Portsmouth Museum.**
- 2.5 Access to the city's natural history collection is enhanced through the appointment of a curator of natural history.**
- 2.6 A series of exhibitions and events are held at Portsmouth Museum reflecting city priorities and anniversaries including the new Conan Doyle exhibition.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 2017/18 represents the third 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 The Transforming the D-Day Museum project has been the service priority over the past year and the museum is poised to reopen as The D-Day Story in March 2018. Highlights of the year have included:
- The Pop-up D-Day Museum that attended city and community events over the past 12 months supported by an ever-increasing number of volunteers.
  - Support of the Disability Advisory Forum to help ensure that the facilities and new displays can be enjoyed by a broad and diverse audience.
  - A partnership project, involving one of the project interns, with three local military museums to explore the relationships between our D-Day collections.
  - Creation of a modern and spacious reception area that accommodates both the shop and café.
  - The return of some of the large objects from conservation and seeing the new exhibition galleries taking shape.
  - Development of striking marketing materials, a new website, souvenir guide and merchandising that uses the new D-Day Story branding.

A series of soft-openings will take place towards the end of March with the museum open to the public in time for the Easter holiday.

- 3.3 In addition, following the successful outcome of our round 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, we have also started work in partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) on the development phase of the Landing Craft Tank (LCT project (subject of a separate report).
- 3.4 The new butterfly house at the natural history museum, opened in August, was enthusiastically received by visitors with some 13,000 people visiting in the first four weeks of opening. Museum staff and volunteers have received guidance and training from specialists at the Stratford Butterfly Farm. The number of butterflies on the wing, the presence of older (more tatty and worn looking!) butterflies and the evidence of breeding on site (eggs, caterpillars and pupae) are all testimony to the improvements that the new accommodation has provided.
- 3.5 The museums service has continued to support the Paulsgrove Capturing the Spirit project as a member of the project steering group and by sharing specialist knowledge with members of the project team. We also worked with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust on the development of their Secrets of the Solent bid and a project that will take place at the natural history museum at Cumberland House (subject to a successful outcome of their HLF bid).
- 3.6 The museums service secured the loan of a Grayson Perry ceramic from the British Crafts Council and this forms the centrepiece of the redisplayed decorative art gallery at Portsmouth Museum. As a result of a study day, The Decorative Arts Society has advised that the city's collection of ceramics is of even greater quality and significance than we had previously understood and the Society has provided a

small grant to enable us to employ a specialist photographer to take high quality photographs of items from the collection.

- 3.7 Due to the Transforming the D-Day Museum project we have yet to undertake the reviews of the vehicle and natural history collections. We have been in dialogue with the Heritage Lottery Fund however, with regard to the latter and as a result developed the project to include greater public participation and submitted an application for funding in November.
- 3.8 The Waterfront Gifts initiative has resulted in the museums service achieving its income targets for retailing. Taking the Portsmouth Museum Café in-house has also resulted in an additional albeit modest income stream. Income received from small cash donations at all museum sites (excluding the D-Day Museum) stands at £10,750 (to January), with Cumberland House performing particularly well (£5,525).
- 3.9 A full marketing plan was implemented during the year including the production and distribution of regular event leaflets, limited print advertising, a radio campaign in the summer months, digital and social media promotion and a number of group marketing initiatives. In addition work began to promote the D-Day Story by attendance at trade shows and international marketing events.
- 3.10 The percentage increase in Facebook page likes is shown below (and the actual numbers for 2016/17 and 2017/18).
- Charles Dickens' Birthplace Museum: **16.4%** (from 1,033 to 1,202)
  - Cumberland House: **37.8%** (from 724 to 998)
  - D-Day Museum: **8.8%** (from 4,208 to 4,580)
  - Portsmouth Museum: **13.9%** (from 3,569 to 4,065)
  - Southsea Castle: **60.3%** (from 730 to 1,170)

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

- 3.11 If allowances are made for the D-Day Museum being closed to the public, visitor numbers are set to exceed the total for last year. At the end of December (Q3) visits totalled 213,175, up by 10% (18,680) on the previous year. Figures are up for all sites.
- 3.13 Just under 60,000 visits were made to see items from Portsmouth's collections on loan to other museums - *Entrance to Portsmouth Harbour* by JMW Turner, on display at Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Japan from November to January 2018 and *Boys Swimming with Shark* by Charles Saul, on display at London Art Fair, Islington Design Centre, London from 17-21 January 2018.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 The recommendations are based on the service plan on a page for the year ahead (Appendix 1). Planned activities are listed under the six key aims for the service.

- 4.2 April 2018 sees the start of the first full year of operation of The D-Day Story. To ensure that visitor and income targets are met (including the additional management and maintenance costs at £30,000 per annum for five years which form part of the match funding for the HLF project), a new post of Manager has been introduced and recruitment in progress. A comprehensive events programme has been finalised and training of staff and volunteers is underway. A full marketing plan is being implemented including an 'Away from Home' campaign on train routes to London and on the London Underground plus local poster sites, a regional radio campaign, digital campaign including new website launch and a PR campaign focussing on the opening and the anniversary in June.
- 4.3 Once the new museum is up and running the priority will be finalising plans for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019. The project Activity Plan includes a range of initiatives to engage communities locally as well as nationally and plans for an international D-Day Conference in Portsmouth. In addition and as part of the project the city's D-Day/WW2 reference collections will also be reviewed in terms of provenance and relevance.
- 4.4 Work on the Landing Craft Tank (LCT) project will continue to progress, with the round 2 bid to the HLF due for submission in June. The plan is for the LCT to be operated as part of the D-Day Story, the museums service is therefore leading on the Activity and Business Planning elements of the project and will be closely involved with the development of the Interpretation Plan.
- 4.4 An exhibition to showcase the Paulsgrove Capturing the Spirit project will be held at Portsmouth Museum in early 2018. This will showcase some of the photographs uncovered by the project. In addition we will continue to support the project via the steering group, to ensure the aspirations of Capturing the Spirit are met and the community is actively involved in the all the processes involved in documenting and recording its history.
- 4.6 Funding has been identified to enable the museums service to appoint a member of staff to enhance access to the city's natural history collections. However, rather than appoint immediately, we have submitted an application to the HLF to increase the level of funding available. If successful as well as a new post, we will have funding for an assessment of the significance of the natural history collection (necessary to inform its future use and development), as well as budgets to support essential work on the collection involving volunteers and for a programme of events and activities.
- 4.7 In addition the application includes funding to enable the museums service to involve the city's communities in determining priorities for the collection and plans for the redisplay of Cumberland House (although noting that funding for redisplay is not included in this bid). Work on this collection is also essential if we are to retain full accreditation for the natural history museum at Cumberland House with Arts Council England.
- 4.8 A number of new exhibitions and displays are planned for the year ahead; most notably the opening of a new exhibition featuring the Conan Doyle Collection. At

Portsmouth Museum displays linked to anniversaries are planned for works by Royal Academy artists (200 years of the RA) and Sir Alec Rose's single-handed circumnavigation of the globe in Lively Lady (50 years ago). The Mary Rose Trust will be working with us on the redisplay of The Keep at Southsea Castle. We also plan to work with the community to elicit their views on how we develop the gallery currently occupied by the original Doyle exhibition A Study in Scarlet.

- 4.9 Subject to funding the museums service also plans to complete the review of the vehicle collection (outstanding from last year). It is stored across a number of locations and is becoming increasingly costly to store and maintain and access is limited. In addition a condition report on the beam engines at Eastney will be obtained from a specialist conservator as a pre-requisite for getting the engines up and running and in steam this year.
- 4.10 The work described for the forthcoming year will deliver a range of outcomes for people, communities and heritage (delivering against the key aims of the museums strategy, council priorities and the priorities of one of our main funders The Heritage Lottery Fund). For example:
- The heritage of a community underrepresented in the city's collections (Paulsgrove) will have been captured as measured by the amount of material added to the city's collection and the number of people contributing to the project.
  - Through contributing to the Transforming the D-Day Museum and Wild About Portsmouth projects - as interns, volunteers and participants - people will have learned about the city's heritage, gained new skills, a new confidence and enhanced sense of wellbeing. This will be captured through ongoing evaluation and dialogue with those involved and formally reported to the HLF. Maintaining the Investors in Volunteers standard will be an additional measure of success.
  - Transforming the D-Day has provided funding for the conservation of objects such as large vehicles from the city's collection as well as the Overlord Embroidery.
  - Audience research will demonstrate the close relationship between the city's demographic and that of visitors to Cumberland House and Portsmouth Museum demonstrating the inclusive nature of our venues and offer.

## 5. **Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

- 5.1 A preliminary EIA has been completed and is attached as appendix 2

## 6. **Legal comments**

- 6.1. There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

**7. Director of Finance comments**

- 7.1 As a result of the D Day Museum closure due to refurbishment works, no entrance or booking fee income has been received in this financial year. This has caused a pressure for the service which has been almost fully mitigated through the cost savings associated with the museum being closed and income generated at other sites.
- 7.2 The activities of the Museum Service will continue to be delivered within approved budgets with specific projects supported by additional grant funding.

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Signed by:  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture and City Development**

**Appendices:**           **Appendix 1 - Portsmouth Museums, Operational Plan on a Page 2018/19**  
                                  **Appendix 2 - EIA**

**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 .....

.....  
Signed by:  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**