

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 20 March 2015

Subject: Portsmouth Museums Strategy

Report by: Head of City Development and Cultural Services

Wards affected: ALL

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The report presents Portsmouth Museums Strategy - 'Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives' - with the changes made following consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the amended Portsmouth Museums Strategy is approved, incorporating the amendments described in paragraphs 4.4 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 of the report.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Museums Strategy provides a blueprint for the development of the service over the next five years enabling staff to prioritise and plan more effectively. Recent, externally funded projects such as the *Dickens Community Archive*, *D-Day+Youth* and *Lest We Forget* projects have demonstrated the potential of museums and the collections they hold to change lives. A key issue for the service therefore is what its future role should be - from inspiring innovation and creativity to literacy and numeracy to health and wellbeing - in the context of the city's wider museum offer especially that of the Historic dockyard and against the backdrop of the current financial environment.
- 3.2 Consultation on the draft strategy took place over a three week period (from 15 February to 1 March 2015, including a 7 day extension). The main medium was an online survey. The survey was promoted on the council website, museums' face book pages and via A4 posters located in community centres, libraries and museums across the city. A hardcopy of the strategy and survey was also provided at these locations. A number of key stakeholder organisations were invited by email to contribute their views including national, regional and local organisations.

3.3 Over 100 responses were received, 91 of these online (noting that a small number of responses either using a hardcopy of the survey or received by email closely following the layout of the survey were manually added to the online survey). Email responses were received from Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund, Brighton, Hampshire and Southampton Museum Services, the Overlord Embroidery Trust, the Dickens Fellowship, Friends of Cumberland House and staff & volunteers supporting work on the Conan-Doyle Collection.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 The responses received online were positive; agreeing that the council should use its museums and collections to benefit people directly (89% agree/strongly agree) and as visitor attractions (93% agree/strongly agree). 59% of respondents agreed with the vision (agree/strongly agree) with only 13% of respondents disagreeing (disagree/strongly disagree) and 28% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

4.2 Respondents were similarly positive about the six key aims. Each key aim was endorsed by at least 80% of respondents (ie agree/strongly agree). The key aims receiving the most enthusiastic response (both with 61% of respondents strongly agreeing) are the learning aim (*'provide inspirational opportunities*') and the Great Waterfront City aim (*'build the profile and reputation ...'*).

4.3 Respondents were asked to identify what they see as the main challenges and opportunities for the Museums Service. The most frequently mentioned challenges related to the museums' offer, marketing and funding. The most frequently mentioned opportunities related to the museums' offer, marketing and partnerships. Details of which are below:

- Comments about the offer were very varied and used words, for example, such as: change, more interesting, relevant, current, broader appeal and included a range of comments on facilities (cafes, baby facilities, seating and parking) and access for people with disabilities.
- Comments about marketing used words such as: awareness, advertising, attract local people, attract tourists, social media, more visitors, diversity of audience, school visits. Links with major events and anniversaries was also identified by a number of respondents as both a marketing opportunity and an opportunity to develop new exhibitions.
- Comments about funding used words such as: sustainability, less funding, survive, budgets cut, maintain and develop despite diminishing resources, generating income, sponsorship.
- Comments about partnerships generally endorsed the principle and in some cases identified partners: Historic Dockyard museums, local museums and attractions, University of Portsmouth, creative sector, local groups and societies.

4.4 The comments received are wide ranging and very varied and cover all aspects of the service. The challenges and opportunities mentioned most often by respondents are reflected in the strategy - with the offer in terms of programming included under ongoing work for example. However some respondents comment particularly on the tension between our aspirations and how they will be paid for in

view of the continuing (unspecified) level of cuts. Preparation of an Action Plan is advised and seen as a way of testing the deliverability of the strategy. An Action Plan has therefore been drafted with indicative costs (Appendix 2).

4.5 The online survey also asked people where they would like the Museums Service to be in five years. The responses are hugely varied in scale and ambition:

- *'be in the top 10 museums outside of London'*
- *'to still be there'*
- *'greater community involvement'*
- *'open longer hours'*
- *'get Sherlock Holmes Collection displayed in a dedicated space'*
- *'get every resident in Portsmouth to visit at least one museum'*
- *'look after your staff, invest in them and you will get the positive rewards this city deserves'*
- *'searchable databases of collections for public access and research'*

4.6 The Strategy has also been revisited in the context of the requirements for Accreditation and two amendments suggested:

- Under key aim 1 ('reflect the diversity..) add: Ensure our services are as accessible as possible to all of our visitors, including regular access assessments and making improvements in line with recommendations received (In accordance with the council's Equality and Diversity Strategy and relevant legal regulations)
- Under ongoing work add: Ensuring the security of museum collections through regular internal and external assessments

4.7 A number of the stakeholders responding by email suggested a range of corrections and amendments, including a note to explain the fall in visitor numbers at Cumberland House in 2013/14 and mention by name of some of the local organisations supporting the museum service (in addition to volunteers and regional partners).

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

5.1 The breadth of the Museum strategy is so wide reaching completing an Equality Impact assessment (EIA) on the whole strategy would not produce any meaningful results, however when each scheme is brought forward an EIA will be completed on the individual elements. The Museum strategy as a whole will not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010 as it will promote inclusivity of all the equality groups.

6. Legal comments

6.1 The proposed strategy furthers the use by the Council of its discretionary power to provide Museums and similar institutions and as such is within its legal authority.

7. Financial comments

7.1 The consultation period for the Portsmouth Museum Strategy ended on the 1st March 2015. The strategy has been amended following responses received during the consultation. This report is recommending that the amended strategy be adopted.

7.2 The strategy now includes an action plan that includes estimates of the costs of the proposed activities. Where possible any costs arising from this action plan will be funded from existing cash limited budgets.

7.3 In cases where existing budgets are not sufficient to fund the proposed activity, alternative budget sources will need to be identified.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of City Development and Cultural Services

Appendices: Appendix 1 Draft Museum Strategy
Appendix 2 Action Plan

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 Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 20 March 2015.

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport