

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure & Sport Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 27 January 2017

Subject: The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection

Report by: Director of Culture and City Development

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report sets out to inform and update the Cabinet Member on the progress linked to the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection both in relation to the delivery of the Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) bid in partnership with the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB), the outline Education and Outreach plan for the Collection going forwards and the on-going work to realise a Sherlock Holmes experience in Portsmouth.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To acknowledge the work of the HLF funded project in partnership with the RNIB and especially the ability of the project to be developing such innovative work
- 2.2 To deliver the detailed Education and Outreach programme as detailed in Appendix A and to continue this work into 2017/18.
- 2.3 To continue to work with Tim Rusby of the Visitor Attraction Company to develop feasibility options for the delivery of a Portsmouth based Sherlock Holmes Experience and the need for the development of external funding bids.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection - Lancelyn Green Bequest is the tangible result of Richard Lancelyn Green's lifelong interest in Conan Doyle and his work. The Collection testifies to the worldwide interest in Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes over the last century and to the wide range of Conan Doyle interest.
- 3.2 The Conan Doyle Collection is working in partnership with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) who is the lead partner on an ambitious HLF funded project to help improve access and provide an improved visitor experience for the

blind and partially sighted community (BPS) to heritage, museum and archive collections.

- 3.3 This new project is being directly led by the RNIB in partnership with a number of organisations across the south and south east including Lewes Castle, Royal Pavilion Museums and Oxford Museum of Natural History. The project has been particularly attractive to us as it has enabled us to build on our extensive volunteer base and has allowed them further opportunities to expand their skills to include elements such as audio description and construction of handling collections to compliment exhibitions for the BPS community.
- 3.4 We are currently just over halfway through this project and it has resulted in some very interesting collaborations with both the other partner organisations but also some new ways of us work with the University of Portsmouth. We are currently developing a bespoke exhibition of accessible tactile panels with complimentary handling items which will extend the handling collections from the previous Sharing Sherlock project. Whilst the project will be targeting the BPS community we also hope that we can extend the learning and apply the skills developed by the volunteers to provide sensory access to the Conan Doyle collection for multiple audiences
- 3.5 Core to this development, and a benefit not anticipated at the point of the HLF submission, has been the ability to incorporate new technology into the project through the use of 3-D printers to manufacture tactile elements of the Collection to be used as handling items. This is proving to be an extremely innovative use of new technology and the University of Portsmouth School of Creative Technologies has been keen to use their expertise to help develop this strand of activity.
- 3.6 Portsmouth will be host to the final conference from this project later in 2017 where we hope to be able to showcase the learning from this project and highlight the important contribution the volunteers are giving to this Collection.
- 3.7 The return of Laura Weston, the Collection's Learning and Development officer from maternity leave has resulted in a renewed programme of activity for this important part of the work of the collection. A detailed outline of her proposed work for the next few months is listed within Appendix A and it would be anticipated that this work will be further extended through the next financial year.
- 3.8 As always the work of the volunteers is extremely important to the delivery of the whole collection and whilst some remain committed to the archiving aspects of the Collection there have been new opportunities through the project with the RNIB for volunteers to develop their skills further and we anticipate this will continue going forward.
- 3.9 The role of the volunteers working with the Collection is significant. Through 2016 they contributed a total of 969 hours which equates to a 0.5 of a full time equivalent post and has a monetary value to us as follows:

Volunteer Hours	Living Wage per hour	Basic Pay	Ni/Superann	Total
	£	£	£	£
969	7.85	7,607	1,460	9,067

- 3.10 A new element to the volunteer programme is through new partnership with Adult Social Care where we are now able to offer opportunities to volunteers with learning difficulties. Currently the Collection is able to support one person coming in once a week for a whole day and we are able to help them get relevant experience which supports their strengths whilst enabling them the opportunity to get involved in a supported working environment.
- 3.11 Work has continued around the detailed exploration of options for a Sherlock Holmes Experience based in Portsmouth. This has included discussions with both the Heritage Lottery Fund and also the Arts Council about the strategic importance of the Collection both nationally and internationally and how we can best realise our aspiration to the benefit of Portsmouth and access potential funding streams to enable us to achieve this.
- 3.12 Strategically the link between Sherlock Holmes and Portsmouth is very real as the character was created during Conan Doyle's time in the city. We know that the Collection is internationally a unique gem and we need to initiate this new development to unlock the commercial potential of the Collection. Through this we would also seek to challenge the perception of Portsmouth making Portsmouth's link with Sherlock Holmes a 'legendary connection' in the way in which Stratford-upon-Avon is identified with the link to William Shakespeare.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 It is important to acknowledge the significant input of the volunteers both through the successful Sharing Sherlock project but also to expand on how we intend to further engage with them to support and develop the Conan Doyle Collection going forward.
- 4.2 The opportunity to be involved in the new RNIB led project will result in the development of some key skills for both staff and volunteers in working with communities who can find accessing our heritage collections quite challenging. We hope that this project will provide us with opportunities to pilot new ways of working which can also benefit other communities as well as the BPS community so opening up access to our collections and heritage even further.
- 4.3 The development of both a touring exhibition and a Sherlock Holmes Experience will mark a change in the strategic direction of the Collection enable the collection to be shared with a much wider international audience and potentially provide crucial income into the collection as well as profiling the city on a national and international platform as the birthplace of Sherlock Holmes.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010, as there is no change in policy.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report. However, its recommended that financial due diligence is maintained on the Visitor Attraction Company and legal implications examined as the project develops.

7. Director of Finance comments

- 7.1 The RNIB has been awarded HLF funding for a 'Sensing Culture' project, the aim of which is to make cultural service provision more accessible. The Conan Doyle Collection is one of the four partners in the South East that are taking part and have been allocated £33,360 to make the Conan Doyle collection more accessible to visually impaired people.
- 7.2 The delivery of the Education and Outreach programme and the work to consider options for the future display of the collection will be funded from current financial resources. Additional external funding streams will continue to be explored.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices: **Appendix A: Outline of Education & Outreach work for the Conan Doyle Collection**

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
NII	

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