

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	8 February 2022
Subject:	Silver Exhibition Progress Report
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Wards affected:	ALL
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide a report on progress developing the Silver Exhibition to take place at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery from May 2022 until February 2023.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That progress developing the exhibition and securing of funding is noted**
- 2.2 **That preparations developing the exhibition and programme continue**

3. Background

- 3.1 Portsmouth has long been recognised as having one the most significant collections of Civic Silver in Britain outside of London. The oldest object, the Bodkin Cup, dates from the 1520s and predates the sinking of the Mary Rose.
- 3.2 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 provides an opportunity to showcase the collection publicly and an exhibition of Portsmouth's Civic Silver is in development, to open in late May 2022. The exhibition will explore 500 years of Portsmouth's history including its links with the crown, the armed forces and the wider world.
- 3.3 The exhibition is being co-curated by James Daly (Cultural Development and Projects Officer) and Susan Ward (Curator of Art), with support from the wider Museums team and the Lord Mayors team.
- 3.4 The exhibition will also include a number of loans from the Royal Navy Trophy Fund, which reflect Portsmouth's long and close association with the Royal Navy as well as the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands War. Other loans will include Charles

II's marriage certificate on loan from Portsmouth Cathedral, and the Seymour Salt from the Company of Goldsmiths, which was presented to Charles II's wife Catherine of Braganza by the Corporation of Portsmouth in 1662.

- 3.5 The project has so far attracted £27,450 of funding from four different sources:
- £2,000 from the Silver Society to fund professional photography and digitisation of the collection
 - £5,000 from the Decorative Art Society for a new high specification display case
 - £5,000 from the Company of Goldsmiths for gallery workshops
 - £15,450 from the Paul Mellon Centre for a new publication, a one-day conference, specialist talks and a significance assessment of the collection
- 3.6 A funding application is also being prepared to submit to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This application is for £34,500 and would include a part time Digital Engagement Officer, a resident Play Practitioner, a tactile interactive, replica Lord Mayors and Town Crier's robe for children to try on and staff training. We also submitted an Expression of Interest to Portsmouth Cultural Education Partnership to fund digital learning materials.
- 3.7 The content development process for the exhibition has identified six storylines for the exhibition:
- Tudor and Stuart Portsmouth - a group of objects from around 1540 to 1640 which tell the story of the early development of modern Portsmouth
 - Civic Pride - the collection has many objects related to the development of Portsmouth during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries
 - Armed Forces - objects donated to the city by naval and military units
 - International links - objects donated to the city by some of our Twin and Sister cities
 - Royal Navy - objects on loan from the Royal Navy Trophy Fund
 - People and Silver - objects mainly from the city's museum collections that tell the story of how people have used silver in their lives over thousands of years
- 3.8 The whole Civic Silver collection has been professionally photographed. These images will be used in the new publication but will also be available for other uses, for example by the Lord Mayor or for retail. The images of the collection will also be made available online.
- 3.9 Storylines have been developed and objects chosen, including silver objects and other supporting material such as paintings, photographs, film and archive material. The interpretation for the exhibition will be engaging, accessible and relevant, building on lessons developed during the content development process for The D-Day Story. Stories will be aimed at either children, young people or families.
- 3.10 A Marketing Plan is currently in development aimed at local audiences and specialist audiences further afield. The project will also include a social media plan and a variety of outdoor media, print in specialist magazines, digital marketing and

promotion of the events and activities programme. We have arranged a media launch for March 2022.

- 3.11 The exhibition will be supported by a rich and varied programme aimed at a wide range of audiences, drawing not only on the silver objects but also the themes that they represent and the wider stories that they tell. We have received funding from the Company of Goldsmiths to support gallery workshops and as part of this we anticipate working with local silversmiths to showcase Portsmouth's contemporary creative sector.
- 3.12 The project has enabled us to develop partnerships with sector bodies, including the Silver Society and the Company of Goldsmiths. We have also been liaising closely with the Royal Navy Trophy Fund and colleagues at the University of Portsmouth. Our engagement with partners and stakeholders suggests that the exhibition will be of great interest to both local communities and specialists further afield. The Co-Curators have been invited to give a lecture on the exhibition to the Silver Society at the Society of Antiquaries in March 2022, and we have already received bookings for specialist groups to visit the exhibition.
- 3.13 The project has also enabled us to carry out new research on both the civic silver collection and our museum collections and has identified new information about a number of the objects, as well as supporting information. The collection has been inspected by the President of the Silver Society, Timothy Schroder, who is one of the country's leading silver historians.
- 3.14 The exhibition is due to open in late May 2022 with a media launch in March 2022. Work will continue developing the content and interpretation, writing and editing the new publication, developing the programme and marketing and installing the exhibition.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The exhibition and accompanying programming will be an opportunity for residents and visitors to explore the theme of 'Portsmouthness' as outlined in the draft Museums Strategy.
- 4.2 The exhibition will share an important collection with residents and visitors. The Civic Silver collection has not been on public display for many years. It is of national significance and provides an excellent platform for programming and partnerships.
- 4.3 The exhibition is part of the city's wider Platinum Jubilee offer and will encourage residents and visitors to explore Portsmouth's relationship with the crown, the armed forces and the world.
- 4.4 The exhibition will also contribute to the City Council's and our partners wider aspirations for culture and creativity in the city by showcasing Portsmouth's heritage, culture and contemporary creatives.

5. Integrated impact assessment

5.1 IIA attached at appendix 1

6. Legal implications

6.1 There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. However, it is anticipated that the loan of items and the award of grant funding to the Council related to the exhibition will be subject to specific terms and conditions which will need to be noted and complied with.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 Recommendations and costs associated with the Silver Exhibition will be met from grant funding and existing cash limits.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment

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 Economic Development