



**Title of meeting:** Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 29 July 2022

**Subject:** Museums Annual Review and Forward Plan

**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 review achievements of Portsmouth Museums in 2021/22 and to present the service priorities for the current financial year (Plan on a page, Appendix 1).

**2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

**2.1 The achievements of 2021/22 are noted.**

**2.2 Activity to achieve museum sector and other standards is pursued.**

**2.3 Funding is sought to establish a robust and sustainable model for the operation of Eastney Beam Engine House.**

**2.4 The range of partners including funders contributing to museum activity is noted.**

**2.5 The D-Day Story develops the group offer, building on the investment in the museum and the arrival of Landing Craft Tank 7074.**

**2.6 Proposals for the exhibitions at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery, including what follows Silver City -on the themes of the seashore (opening 2023) and costume (opening 2024)- are noted.**

**2.7 Proposals for the development of the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Advisory Board are pursued and the need to improve provision for users at the museum store in support of the NPO bid is noted.**



### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The purpose of Portsmouth Museums is to give local communities and individuals the opportunity to engage with the city's amazing heritage and people, to tell their story, be inspired, learn new things, gain new skills and feel happier and more optimistic about the future.
- 3.2 By fulfilling this purpose Museums will make a significant contribution to the City Vision for Portsmouth as a happy, healthy city, rich in culture and creativity, with a thriving economy, where everyone has opportunities for lifelong learning and land and marine environments are protected and enhanced for future generations.
- 3.3 The full list of actions to be carried out in 2022/23 is shown at Appendix 1, the plan on a page. This shows indicative costs and key milestones. The actions are listed under the three strategic objectives for Portsmouth Museums. These are:
- Be more relevant to all our residents
  - Be more in the thick of it
  - Be more environmentally sustainable and resilient

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

- 4.1 Significant achievements in 2020/21 include the reopening of the majority of the council's museums in May and June following the end of the coronavirus pandemic with precautionary measures -such as one-way routes- still in place. An award from the Culture Recovery Fund helped to facilitate this, paying for additional staff for example. Visitor numbers, at just under 200,000, were pleasing in view of the late opening (and loss of visits at Easter). Ticketed visits at The D-Day Story were comparable to those of 2018/19 (ie 34,812 vs 38,149) mostly due to the interest generated by Landing Craft Tank (LCT) 7074 and the investment in the events programme and new audio guide; developments that have grown the experience, giving people a reason to revisit.
- 4.2 The service completed the Museums Strategy 2022-2026 as planned, continued preparation for the council's re-application for Accreditation -producing an Access Policy for example- produced a new Business Plan for The D-Day Story incorporating LCT 7074 to help ensure the viability of the museum and continued to prepare our application for National Portfolio Organisation status. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure funding to carry out the research to investigate barriers to access although we were encouraged by The Audience Agency report for The D-Day Story which notes 'the success of the museum in attracting and engaging with medium and lower culturally engaged [audience] segments'.



- 4.3 With the support of a range of partners -including lenders and funders and specialists -museum staff continued to work on the Silver City exhibition which showcases the city's remarkable civic silver collection and provides insight into what makes the city and its people special. Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery also successfully contributed to the council's Holiday Activity and Food programme providing activities and hot, nutritious food for participants.
- 4.4 Other highlights of the year include giving young people the opportunity to join the museum team through the Government-funded Kickstart scheme. We employed over 20 young people through this initiative (20 posts). We have also recruited and trained new volunteers to join The DDS team working on Landing Craft Tank 7074.
- 4.5 The flooding of the basement at Eastney Beam Engine House in (January 2022) is also worthy of mention here - especially in light of the council's recent investment in this site. A report to investigate the reasons for the flood -and to better understand the movement of water throughout the site- was commissioned by Southern Water but this has yet to be shared.

Looking forward to the year ahead:

- 4.6 **Standards** This a theme running through our work this year, with the invitation to re-apply for Accreditation (the national benchmark for museums in England, covering all museum activity) expected in July 2022. Much of the preparatory work has been undertaken -with various key policies reviewed and formally approved. However, revision of a number of plans is still outstanding. In addition:
- The Zoo License for the Butterfly House is due for renewal. The inspection visit took place in May and the recommendations for improvement received. These are not too onerous and are already underway.
  - The Historic Environment Record (HER) is being audited by Historic England (HE). The process looks at nationally agreed requirements for HERs including content, data standards and access. HE will produce a report and action plan to help develop and enhance the HER over the next five years.
  - Our commitment to Welcome Host training for all members of the museum team continues and this year our VAQAS assessment is due. We await the findings following mystery shopper visits in June.
- 4.7 **Volunteers** Following the successful introduction of volunteers at The D-Day Story to run LCT 7074 and the work of the Gas Engine House Volunteers at Eastney, we will pursue funding to establish a robust and sustainable operational model for the Beam Engine House. This will be based on established good practice at other steam engine sites. We also plan to work with volunteers to provide access to the lighthouse at Southsea Castle although this project will also include capital works. In addition, Portsmouth Museums will proactively support the Library Service ACE-funded projects -'Volunteering Futures' and 'The Detectives'. We will also develop a standard work placement



offer for school and college aged children based at Portsmouth Museum & Art Gallery. This should enable us to offer a quality experience for a number of young people interested in working in the heritage / creative sector.

- 4.8 **Partnerships** Portsmouth Museums is involved in a number of externally funded projects and partnerships.
- An immersive digital project with the University of Portsmouth.
  - An #iwill, social impact project working with young people (funded by the Dulverton Trust)
  - The Flora Explorer project funded by the Headley Trust that will enhance access to the HLF Guermonprez Herbarium and the biological records it contains
  - The summer HAF programme which we will deliver this year in partnership with Aspex
  - Working with freelance specialists and creatives from across the city in delivery of our programmes
  - Working in dialogue with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Museum of the Royal Navy to prepare the final reports for the Transforming The D-Day Story and Resurrecting A D-Day Hero / Landing Craft Tank projects
- 4.9 **Commercial** - At The D-Day Story the focus will be on developing the group market, building on the investment in the site and the opportunities offered by LCT 7074 to develop the group offer. This will include contributions from specialist staff and volunteers and will include developing joint group offers with attractions such as the Spinnaker Tower. Working with colleagues from Destination Marketing we will also continue to explore joint ticketing opportunities. At Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery, the introduction of a stretch tent in the museum garden will enable us to develop the café and weddings offer and provide a venue for 'museum lates' and other events.
- 4.10 **Programming** - Following the opening of Silver City at the end of May, the emphasis will now be on the complementary programming, marketing and evaluation and the recruitment of volunteers -including a young peoples' panel- and the paid digital engagement post. As well as on social media platforms, the Silver City programme will take place both within communities and in the museum (approaching 30 different events are planned).
- 4.11 A Collections Workshop will be introduced at Portsmouth Museum & Art Gallery on the second floor, designed and programmed to enable visitors to view work taking place on the collections. As part of this we are relocating and refreshing the Football in the city gallery to incorporate recent work produced by the Pompey History Society.
- 4.12 Silver City is due to end in February 2023. We are therefore planning and developing the exhibition that will follow it. This will be on the theme of the seashore and will enable us to show items from a range of collections - social to



natural history as well as human impact on the coast. The exhibition will open in April 2023 (before Easter). Due to the tight lead-in there is almost no time to fundraise/commission content so we will work within existing (and modest due to the spend on Silver City) museum budgets. In order to maximise opportunities for fundraising and consultation with visitors we are therefore also planning for the exhibition that will follow Seashore (ie opening in 2024). This will be themed around costume. Portsmouth has an extensive collection of costume - much of it associated with work- that has not been displayed as an entity before and this is an accessible subject that we all have a stake in.

- 4.13 **National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) application** The NPO application was submitted in May. Should it be successful we will hear in October and the three-year programme of activity would start in April 2023. In the intervening period the funding agreement with Arts Council England (ACE) would be agreed. ACE requires that local authorities have an advisory board or steering group in place to oversee delivery of the NPO activity. We currently have two shadow NPO Advisory Board members in place and from now until October we need to further develop the board - drafting terms and conditions for example and deciding what skills and experience Board Members require and how we ensure they reflect the diversity of the city. To support the community engagement aspirations of the NPO application, work is needed to improve the facilities at the museum store to improve access for groups of people working with the museum collections.
- 4.14 Please remember that what is described above takes place against a backdrop of ongoing activity; the daily operation, management and maintenance of buildings, the recruitment, training and supervision of staff and volunteers, responding to enquiries from the public.

## 5. **Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 Integrated Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 2.

## 6. **Legal implications**

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

## 7. **Director of Finance's comments**

- 7.1 The recommendations contained in this report will be implemented within the existing approved budget resources of the Museums Service.

.....

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

**Appendices:**  
 Appendix 1 - Museums Business Plan on a Page 2022/2023

**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 Economic Development**