

Budget and Performance Panel

Museums 6th February 2018

Report of the Chief Officer Regeneration and Planning

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Budget and Performance Panel on recent developments and early progress in relation to the City Council's Museums Service.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That Budget and Performance Panel notes the content of this report.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The City Council has three museums; the City Museum in Market Square; the Maritime Museum at St George's Quay; the Cottage Museum on Castle Hill. Since 2003 the museums have been managed by Lancashire County Council under the Museums Service Partnership Agreement (MSPA) and integrated with the county-wide museums service.
- 1.2 Over the last two to three years a review of the Council's museums has been undertaken and some options for redevelopment tested. The consultants' report at Appendix A provides a summary of findings and some useful illustrations for examples of alternative business models.
- 1.3 Key findings conclude, in summary, that the Museums have the potential to contribute much more to the area's economy; do not match the district's ambitions as an important sub regional centre; are relatively expensive to run; could be better integrated with the district's and the council's wider economic, tourism and cultural activities.
- 1.4 Nevertheless all engagement with partners and stakeholders suggests that the museums are highly valued and are important to the district in terms of its unique heritage and culture, quality of life and place offer.
- 1.5 An ambitious and exciting approach to transforming the museums service is proposed by the consultants, who have worked closely with officers, members and stakeholders. There is clearly broad support for positive change but, at the same time, each and every element of a transformational programme of improvement is complex.
- 1.6 Cabinet has been working with a Museums Cabinet Liaison Group which has considered the proposals at a number of recent meetings and has identified a

number of steps that can be taken to enable some early progress.

- 1.7 As a result of this, at its September 2017 meeting, Council considered and agreed a recommendation that the Council take the museums service back in house. To support this, and the ongoing work of managing and developing the service, a Museums Manager post was also approved (*minute 52 refers*). Notice has now been provided to County Council and the transfer will take place by 30th September 2018. Recruitment for a Museums Manager is about to commence.
- 1.8 Discussions have continued regarding the future of the museums and a further report will be presented to Cabinet in February. The full report is currently being drafted and will be available to Budget and Performance Panel at the time of its meeting. Draft recommendations at the present time reflect the need to effectively transfer the service first and build on the opportunities to make improvements over time, working with staff, stakeholders and communities.

2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 The work undertaken to date has been extremely informative and it is clear that the City Council's museums have the potential for a greater impact, increased presence and profile and, at the same time, to be more sustainable in financial terms. Taking the service back in house is a key early step that is crucial if the Council aspires to deliver a real transformation. However, in itself this early step is fairly major and will involve some complex management issues. The current approach is to get this right first and to create a solid basis for the museums for the future.
- 2.2 The focus of the next few months will therefore be about managing this first important change. As this progresses further discussions and consultation will take place to consider next steps.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

No direct implications as a result of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct implications as a result of this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:

No direct implications as a result of this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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