

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>21/06/17</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Gloucester Museums Membership</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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## 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek agreement for amendments to the Gloucester City Museums Pass to increase the charge and amend the member benefits.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the current Gloucester City Museum membership price be increased and the benefits package revised as set out in paragraph 3.13.

## 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 September 2011 free admission to the City's Museums was ended and admission prices and Museum membership were introduced as follows.

Day Ticket		Annual Membership	
Type	Price	Type	Price
Adult	£3	Individuals	£10
Concession	£2	Family	£20

- 3.2 Subsequently a Commercial Review of Cultural Services by 'michael + partners' found that "The current charging model used by the museums is insufficiently clear, is not generally perceived to be of good value and does not distinguish effectively between local residents and visitors/tourists who have differing attitudes to value and repeat visits". They suggested that the City Council should "Implement a new super-simple charging structure based on a single charge that gives 12 months general admission access to both Museums. Capture personal details at point of purchase – ostensibly to enable replacement tickets to be issued, but also allows customer database to be built".

- 3.3 The rationale and benefits included “Simple to market and explain, provides greater benefit/value to locals who are able to make repeat visits during the year, represents improved value versus current arrangements and provides context for driving greater visitor numbers and growing entry fee revenues.
- 3.4 The new membership was launched in April 2015 and came with a number of benefits. See below.

Day Ticket		Annual Membership		Membership Benefits
Type	Price	Type	Price	
Adult	£5	Adult	£5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlimited entry to City Council run Museums</li> <li>- Complimentary access to ‘summer exhibitions’</li> <li>- Unlimited entry to the Eastgate Viewing Chamber and associated tours</li> <li>- 10% off purchases through the gift shop</li> <li>- Unlimited complimentary tickets to Culture Club talks</li> <li>- Unlimited complimentary tickets to art/craft classes at the Museums</li> </ul>
Concession	£3	Concession	£3	
Family	£12	Family	£12	

- 3.5 Anyone visiting the Museums for a day out would automatically become a member as the annual membership is the same price as a day ticket. The changes offered incredible value for money for anyone purchasing a membership, but in practice it limits the City Council’s ability to generate additional income and prevents the consequential costs of providing some of the benefits from being fully recovered.
- 3.6 Gloucester is a historic city that has many unique assets. One popular attraction is the Eastgate Viewing Chamber and the Roman Soldier tour. These tours are delivered in-house and normally cost £5 per adult. Annual membership offers unlimited free access to these tours for the whole year.
- 3.7 In addition, because the tours are delivered in-house by museums staff, it is necessary to bring in additional staff to provide cover, adding to overall costs.
- 3.8 In 2016, the Museums service was stretched by the success of the Robot Exhibition that ran for 6 weeks during the summer. This exhibition brought 55,000 visitors through the doors, many of whom purchased a membership which will also be valid for entry into the 2017 summer exhibition and will limit the income generating potential of this summer’s exhibition.
- 3.9 In addition to the day ticket/Museum membership, the two City Council Museums partner with the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum and National Waterways Museum to offer a city-wide Museums pass. See below.

Annual Membership		Membership Benefits
<b>Type</b>	<b>Price</b>	- Unlimited entry to 4 city Museums
Adult	£10	- Plus all the benefits included in the City Council Museum benefits – see 3.4
Family	£20	

3.10 If this city-wide Museums pass were to be purchased at one of the City Council venues, then the City Council would receive £6.66 per adult membership and £13.33 per family ticket. If these passes are purchased at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum or the National Waterways Museum, then the City Council venues would receive £1.66 per adult membership and £3.33 for a family membership. The rationale behind this was to incentivise the museum that secured the sale with a larger proportion of the income.

Since going live with the new till system in November 2016, the City Council Museums service has received £4114 in income from the City Council Museum membership scheme and £8447 income from the city-wide Museums pass. Numbers of each sold were almost equal indicating that the City Council should continue to be part of the wider Museum pass. Further analysis will be required to ensure that the City Council Museums are receiving maximum benefit when sales are made at the other participating venues.

3.11 There are a number of key issues with the Gloucester City Museums membership scheme.

- The Gloucester City Museums membership prices are excellent value for money for visitors, to the point where we need to challenge both the price and the level of benefits offered.
- The tour of the Eastgate Viewing Chamber is something that is very popular and unique to the city and is a premium service which could be separated from the membership package.
- To deliver the Roman Soldier Eastgate Viewing Chamber Tours, additional resource is required; therefore a better pricing structure is required to ensure that the Council recovers its costs and is not making a loss by providing these tours.

3.12 As part of the Together Gloucester process the new Cultural and Traded Services Team is tasked with delivering a great visitor experience but also being more commercially astute and mindful of opportunities to reduce cost and generate additional income. As a consequence it is necessary and timely to re-evaluate the membership on offer at the Museums.

3.13 Set out below are proposals to amend Museums membership and they are recommended for immediate implementation:

Day Ticket		Annual Membership		Membership Benefits
<b>Type</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Price</b>	- Unlimited entry to City Council run Museums
Adult	£5	Adult	£7.50	- 10% off tickets for events,
Concession	£3	Concession	£4	

Family	£12	Family	£15	workshops and tours - A regular Members' newsletter - Exclusive advanced booking opportunities
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- 3.14 A modest increase in membership will help towards delivering the savings required by the Museums service and will enable the service to continue to build on its successes by developing an exciting programme of events and exhibitions. These new benefits would apply to new members whilst existing members would still receive the benefits that the previous membership offered. The day ticket will price remain the same.
- 3.15 It is proposed that the Roman Soldier tours of the Eastgate Viewing Chamber will remain at £5 per person and will run alongside the Museums membership scheme. Members will be entitled to a 10% discount off the full price as one of their member benefits. Gloucester Civic Trust charge £5 for their guided walks of the city and tours into the Kings Bastion therefore £5 would be a reasonable cost to visitors.
- 3.16 The Council would continue to participate in the City-wide Museums Pass scheme.

#### **4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations**

- 4.1 An appropriately administered membership scheme provides the framework to develop a strong and sustainable friends group or development trust able to support the further development of the museum service, engage a broad range of interested parties in the potential of volunteering and open additional avenues of fundraising.

#### **5.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 5.1 Given the existing limitations on income generation and the unsustainable list of benefits offered under the existing scheme, no change is not considered to be a viable solution.
- 5.2 Reversion to day tickets only would be a backward step which would reduce income and minimise the potential benefits of recent investment in point-of-sale systems which maximise opportunities for membership services, sales and marketing.

#### **6.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 To increase the sustainability of the Museums service and continue to provide an accessible, engaging and exciting experience for visitors and residents, opportunities for income generation need to be maximised.

#### **7.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 7.1 Immediate implementation is essential to maximise the benefits of the summer Dinosaurs Exhibition starting on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Historical/past data is difficult to access which makes it difficult to accurately forecast the likely impact of the proposed changes. The new ticketing and point of sale systems implemented late last year will help data capture in the future and will improve our financial forecasting. However, it is imperative that the Museums move forward with this membership change to maximise the benefits of this this summer's exhibition.

The proposed recommendation is expected to deliver increased income to the museums service and therefore assist in achieving required income targets.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## **9.0 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The power to charge for admission to museums is given by Section 13 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Section 13(2) requires local authorities in determining whether, and in what manner, to exercise its powers to charge, to take into account the need to secure that the museum plays its full part in the promotion of education in the area and shall have particular regard to the interests of children and students.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## **10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 10.1 There may be a reluctance to take a Museum membership due to the modest price increase; however, the day ticket option is still available and this option would be cost neutral.
- 10.2 Feedback has shown that the varying level of ticket/membership options has caused confusion to visitors and requires streamlining. Although the service will still offer a number of ticket/membership options, visitors will have better understanding of each offer and also provides the City Council with the opportunity to improve its marketing material.

## **11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

- 11.1 The increase in Museum membership charges is modest and still provides excellent value for money. The day ticket option will still remain.
- 11.2 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **12.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

- 12.1 Not applicable.

Sustainability

12.2 Not applicable.

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 Not applicable.

Potential Media Interest – media release to be prepared to correspond with release date.

**Background Documents:** None