

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>10 March 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Museum Development Plan 2021 - 2026</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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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Museum of Gloucester Development Plan 2021 - 2026</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present the Museum of Gloucester Development Plan 2021 – 2026.

### 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the report be welcomed and that the plan be adopted.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 The Museum of Gloucester is the county's premiere museum and art gallery, housing the collections and artefacts that hold the tangible heritage and collective memories of the city of Gloucester and the area. It is accredited by the Arts Council England Museum Accreditation Scheme which is the professionally recognised standard for museums in the UK. The benefits of accreditation means that the council and its partners can be confident that its management of collections is strong and it also provides opportunities for applying for funding that non-accredited museums may not be eligible for. It is operated by the council's Cultural Services team with dedicated staff from cultural development and visitor experience departments.

### 3.2 The need for a development plan

Gloucester is changing, and with it, so are the ambitions of organisations and residents - and the Museum needs to keep up with this pace of change. In line with the ambitions of the city's Cultural Strategy, Gloucester needs and deserves a high-quality museum that engages residents and meets the expectations of visitors to the city. Without having significant investment into the displays for over 10 years, the displays have become dated and audience figures had begun to plateau prior to 2019.

Since the Together Gloucester review in 2016, the museum has relied upon paying the Cheltenham Trust for specialist curatorial staff from the Wilson Museum and Art Gallery to support collections decisions, exhibitions and interpretation. In addition, the service has benefitted from a partnership with Bristol City Council and SW Museum Development team to provide a Museum Development Officer that has supported other museums in the region. Whilst this has been manageable over the short-term, dedicated staff with collections and audience engagement expertise have been identified as being needed to drive forward the development of the Museum across these areas. As a result, dedicated Collections and Engagement roles have been introduced to support the existing Events & Marketing team placing the right staffing structure in place ready to take forward more ambitious plans.

### **3.3 Audiences**

Audiences expectations of museums have also shifted and have higher standards of city museums. A previous model of charged entrance was removed in early 2019 resulting in an increase in audiences from April 2019 to March 2020, but with audiences dropping off in 2020 owing to enforced closure as a result of the covid pandemic. The past 2 years has also seen the integration of the Tourist Information Centre with the Museum to create a welcoming, informative cohesive Visitor Experience team. This has resulted in a consolidation of functions of providing a welcome to the city and to the museum in one location, which also had the benefit of reducing costs.

### **3.4. Within 5 years**

Over the next 5 years, the aim is to deliver fundamental transformations in the museum service that will raise the quality of the Museum to the level that a city like Gloucester, with its unique history, heritage and communities, deserves. This plan outlines the projects to be delivered over a 5-year period and gives more detail on the specific objectives for the next 12 months, Year 1 of the plan. The scale of work to be delivered cannot be underestimated, so it is important to hold a shared ambition that the council and its stakeholders can buy-into and support. The Museum team are connected with Gloucestershire Archives, other museums and heritage organisations across the city through their active participation in the Gloucester Heritage Forum and will continue to work closely with these partners, particularly the Civic Trust in relation to the Folk of Gloucester – to keep a focus on the transition of collections and supporting them to develop their plans to complement those of the Museum of Gloucester.

### **3.5 Key areas of focus**

There are 4 key priorities that will set the overarching development plan and actions over the next 5 years to focus on Collections, Public Programming, Audiences and Sustainability as part of a wider Museum Transformation programme. In the next year this will include; completing work began in auditing the collections and creating a clear audience development plan; identifying audiences that are not currently engaging with the museum and seeking ways to address this; an analysis of the current limitations of the museum and exploring the opportunity to connect with the Library through a shared entrance; implementing new donation strategy and facilities, improving our retail and commercial offer; developing longer term fundraising and business plan to

support the longer term transformation; implementing ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

#### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

- 4.1 Audience development is key to the success of the Museum Development Plan – to ensure that citizens of Gloucester feel represented and reflected in the museum displays. One of the key areas of focus will be to widen the reach of the Museum to ensure greater representation from Gloucester’s diverse communities. This will be addressed through the detailed actions and the overall focus on Audiences – as one of the 4 priorities.
- 4.2 Museums need to engage with local communities around the topic of decolonisation – so as part of the audience development programme there are detailed actions relating to ensure that the development takes on board recommendations of the Racial Equality Commission and section. Project numbers 5,13,14 in the 2021-22 action plan describes the ways in which the service will focus on developing under-represented audiences and diversify our volunteer workforce.

#### **5.0 Environmental Implications**

- 5.1 In the recent CLS report and Climate Change Strategy (which was presented to Cabinet on 9 Dec 2020) Museum of Gloucester is identified as being rated as inefficient terms of energy use. The museum is a grade 2 listed building. Unsurprisingly, it has a low DEC rating of G 165. The Museum Development Plan will identify steps that can be taken by the team as well as working with other departments to address these inefficiencies where possible and support the city’s ambition to reduce its carbon footprint.
- 5.2 Sustainability is identified as a priority and this includes environmental as well as financial sustainability so this will remain a key focus and goal of the transformation of the Museum of Gloucester. Actions 9,11, 12 and 17 in the 2021-22 plan details how sustainability will be progressed.

#### **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 6.1 None.

#### **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Museum of Gloucester is the city’s main museum and art gallery, housing important collections and is the shop window to the city’s visitors. It requires focus in terms of planning on how to use the resources to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up to the standards expected by visitors to museums today and in the future.
- 7.2 In keeping with the city’s Cultural Strategy, Gloucester needs to continue to invest and seek additional investment into the Museum of Gloucester to ensure it places Culture at the heart of the city for the good of all.

7.3 Having a clear and ambitious plan for the city will allow for opportunities for applying for additional funding and give confidence to stakeholders and funding bodies to partner and invest in Gloucester and raise the profile of Gloucester's museums.

## **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

8.1 Deliver the actions identified in year 1.

8.2 Progress discussions with Gloucestershire County Council libraries to see whether the plans to develop shared entrance are feasible and progress if these are.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

9.1 The city commits budget towards the provision of a museum service in terms of staffing and programming budget. With this investment many of the actions can be progressed within existing budgets.

9.2 Some of the longer-term ambitions articulated in the plan for greater transformation will require additional funding. This will be sought from external sources and make use of the bequest funds where relevant to progress activity that benefit the collections.

9.3 Applications to funding bodies will be more likely to succeed with a clear Museum Development Plan in place.

9.4 Progress against the plan will be monitored and a more detailed fundraising plan and business plan will be created.

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 A shared entrance of the Museum and Library may require a legal agreement to be entered into documenting those rights between the City and County Councils. It is noted that the Brunswick Buildings are the subject of registration with the Charities Commission and this will be a consideration when discussing shared access arrangements with the County Council.

10.2 A number of the actions will require the engagement of external providers, e.g. undertaking works or ICT for the proposed digitisation. The Council's contract rules will need to be followed when carrying out procurements.

10.3 Officers will need to follow the approvals process in the constitution before applying for external grant funding and ask One Legal to review the grant terms and conditions. Due to legislation covering the Council's ability to charge fees and raise income, legal advice should be sought before preparing a funding strategy.

10.4 The Museum of Gloucester had the benefit of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the terms of the grant agreement apply until July 2024. The conditions of the grant will need to be reviewed to check whether any of the proposals contained in the Development Plan require consent.

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

## **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 Risks associated are detailed in the plan.

## **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **13.0 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 None

## **14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

14.1 None

### **Background Documents:**

Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016 – 2026

<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1372/cultural-strategy.pdf>