

**Agenda Item No:** 12

**Report to:** Museums Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 3 December 2012

**Report Title:** Update on Old Town Hall Group

**Report By:** Cathy Walling  
Museum Curator

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**Purpose of Report**

to update members on the progress of meetings held by the Old Town Hall Group

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**Recommendation(s)**

- 1. the report is for noting**

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**Reasons for Recommendations**

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## Introduction

1. An operational review of the Old Town Hall began in December 2010. The original proposal was to consider the impact of the operation of the Tourist Information Centre following the first summer season of operation. The review was widened to consider options for the future delivery of services at the Old Town Hall Museum (OTH).
2. A report was brought to Museums Committee in February 2011 with the results of the public consultation. The three most important services offered at the OTH were found to be the permanent displays on the history of the town, a fully accessible building and a museum shop. The least important were the sale of railway tickets, accommodation booking and the East Sussex County Council information kiosk.
3. The first meeting of the group of interested parties was held in April 2011. The group consists of elected members, HBC officers, and representatives from the Museum Association, OHPS, HOTRA and Clive Vale Residents Association. There have now been 6 meetings in total.
4. Actions following on from these meetings have included:
  - The Head of Amenities and Leisure Services presented a paper providing a preliminary assessment of the possibility of transferring all or part of the museums service to a charitable trust.
  - The redesign and redisplay of both floors of the Museum.
  - The relocation of the Stanhope Printing Press and redisplay of the shop.
  - The opening up of the windows to High Street.
  - A visit by a marketing consultant.
  - New touch-screen archive films.
  - Donation Box purchased by the Museum Association.
  - School half-term and holiday activities.
  - Talks during Old Town Week.
  - Project with Sussex Coast College students.
5. Visitor Figures have increased from a total of 16,800 in 2009-10 to 31,373 in 2011-12
6. Shop income has increased from an average of 10.5p spend per head in 2009-10, to 20.1p in 2012-13. This compares with an estimated average 14p per head generated by retail provision in medium-sized Local Authority museums. This figure is from research carried out in 2012 by Birmingham University.

7. The Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure presented a report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November on the work of the review group and future options for the Museum. This report is attached.
8. The OTH Group will meet once more in January to review next year's budget proposals and consider plans for 2013.

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**Wards Affected**

Old Hastings

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**Area(s) Affected**

East Hastings

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**Policy Implications**

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	Yes

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**Background Information**

Update on OTH Review Group: report to O&S 22 November 2012

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**Officer to Contact**

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