

Agenda Item No: 6

Report to: Museums Committee

Date of Meeting: 25 February 2013

Report Title: Update on Old Town Hall Group

Report By: Cathy Walling
Museum Curator

Purpose of Report

to update members on the progress of the review of the Old Town Hall Museum

Recommendation(s)

1. the report is for noting

Reasons for Recommendations

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. The final meeting of the group of interested parties was held in January 2012. 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 8 meetings in total.
3. The Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure presented a report on the implications for the Old Town Hall Museum of the proposed Hastings Borough Council budget for 2013-14. In preparation for the 2013-14 budget, officers and members of the Old Town Hall Museum (OTH) Group have explored options for increasing the sustainability of the OTH. Attendances have risen as has income. However, the net cost of the OTH remains in the region of £65,000 per annum.
4. The corporate target for the Museums Service for the 2013-14 municipal year is:
 - Provide an exhibition and education programme for visitors to our Museums.
 - Develop proposals for their long-term sustainability in light of financial constraints.
5. Measures:
 - a) Visitor targets achieved.
 - b) Actions from the Cultural Regeneration Strategy implemented.
 - c) Future museum management and funding options assessed, development plan agreed and implemented.
6. The £10,000 annual savings can only be met through a reduction in staffing hours. The proposal is to close the OTH on Mondays throughout the year as is the case at Johns Place. That will provide approximately £5,000 savings annually. The remainder of the savings will be realised by closing the OTHM Tuesdays through Thursdays from November through March. We will maintain Friday openings to allow for school and other group visits. It would still be possible to open for group visits at other times by arrangement and for a small fee.
7. There were 8,900 visitors to the OTH from October 2011 through March 2012. Visitor numbers are slightly down this year with 4,380 visitors in October-December 2012. By contrast, there were 22,000 visitors in Spring and Summer 2011 and 20,553 in Spring and Summer 2012.
8. Proposed actions following the final meeting include meeting with Conservation officers to consider the possibility of hanging banners from the building and including OTH on the proposed heritage trails.

Wards Affected

Old Hastings

Area(s) Affected

East Hastings

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	No

Background Information

Officer to Contact

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