

Report to: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting: 11th March 2019

Report Title: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2019-2021

Report By: Damian Etherington, Museum and Cultural Development
Manager

Purpose of Report

To gain approval for the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2019-2021, which will deliver a community museum with an improved approach to outreach, commerciality and income generation.

Recommendation(s)

1. To accept this report and recommended approval by Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

The business plan creates the conditions for:

1. A museum that is focused on community engagement, particularly with people from disadvantaged areas, minorities and vulnerable groups.
2. A museum with a strong emphasis on promoting health, well-being, education and lifelong learning.
3. A resilient museum that is positioned to capitalise on funding opportunities.

Introduction

1. Hastings Museum & Art Gallery (HMAG) was established over 120 years ago and has always offered local people and visitors to the town the opportunity to explore its collections of local history, natural sciences, fine and decorative arts, and world cultures. The museum had 43,206 visitors in 2016-17.
2. From 2016-18 the *Finding Our Place* project, funded by the Arts Council England (ACE), reviewed the sustainability of the museum, its collections, programme and organisational health.
3. This work laid the foundations for the next stage of the museum's development:
 - A museum that is focused on community engagement, particularly with groups from disadvantaged areas, minorities and vulnerable groups
 - A museum with a strong emphasis on promoting health, well-being, education and lifelong learning
 - A resilient museum that is positioned to capitalise on funding opportunities.

Business Plan Aims

4. The business plan aims are closely aligned to the council's Culture-Led Regeneration Strategy:
 - Entrepreneurial - Be entrepreneurial, improving the sustainability of the museum and wider sector by promoting careers in the creative and cultural industries and increasing opportunities for income generation and reducing costs
 - Inclusive - Reduce barriers to participation by working with new and diverse audiences. Connect with local communities, including excluded and vulnerable groups, by creating enjoyable, educational and memorable experiences to ensure we have something to offer everyone and that local people feel a sense of ownership and pride in the museum.
 - Educational - Inspire creativity and life-long learning through the innovative use of collections to create fun and thought-provoking formal and informal learning opportunities
 - Connected - Promote a contemporary vision of culture and heritage in Hastings through partnerships and collaboration with local arts and cultural partners
 - Reflective - Embed robust evaluation and analysis into our programme to create consistently high-quality and ambitious exhibitions, events and learning opportunities

- Responsible - To responsibly manage Hastings Borough Council's collection and realise the potential of the building to ensure the Museum prepared for the future.

Staff Organisation

5. The successful delivery of the business plan requires a fundamental reorganisation of staffing at the museum. The purpose of this reorganisation is to create staff structures that enable community-focused working, improve income generation and make the organisation more resilient for the future. HMAG will retain 6.7 full time equivalent (FTE) core-funded posts with an additional 1 FTE post which is externally funded.

5.1 Collections and Engagement Curators

The current curator roles and Museum Learning Officer will be merged into Collections and Engagement Curators, each with their own collection specialism; human history, arts and natural science. This increases the number of experts within the service and will enhance our understanding and care of the collections. The Collections and Engagement Curators responsibilities will include developing exhibitions, events and learning opportunities directly with the local community and partners. They will be focused on sharing their knowledge and working with people; they will no longer be arm's length experts who work only behind the scenes. This approach retains curators as experts at the heart of the museum while removing the silos that traditionally have made it difficult for HMAG to meet the expectations of stakeholders.

5.2 Administration and coordination

The Visitor Services Coordinator role will evolve into the Commercial and Visitor Services Coordinator. This role will focus on maximising income generating activities, increasing spend per visitor, and provide leadership to the Visitor Services team to ensure the delivery of an excellent visitor experience. The Facilities Coordinator will become Operations Coordinator, with responsibility for the day-to-day administration and business support needs of the museum. It also incorporates aspects of collections work and events organisation. The Operations Coordinator will also play a key role in supporting income generation and marketing of the museum.

5.3 Visitor Services

The Visitor Services roles will be refreshed to highlight their uniqueness as front-line collection interpreters and customer care champions. These roles will also include a strong focus on income generation and commerciality.

Community Engagement

6. The staff reorganisation will create the structures to enable community-focused working to meet the targets set out in the business plan.
7. The key to successful community engagement are the Collection and Engagement Curators. The Curators will be responsible for developing community projects in partnership with local groups and organisations. They will oversee advisory panels and collaborate on developing the annual events programme for current and new audiences. They will develop projects, support co-curation activities and cultivate volunteering opportunities to make improvements to our documentation and care of the collections.
8. The Visitor Services team will engage with visitors as front-line collections interpreters. They will encourage local groups and visitors to use museums and the resources we have to offer. They will support increased levels of volunteering as well as facilitate more community use of the building.

Income Generation

9. The restructure is the first step in developing a more income-focused organisation. The restructure introduces roles with clear areas of responsibility for income generation. The proposed 2018-21 business plan includes the ambition to increase spend per head by 43% by 2021.
10. Included within the business plan is the development of new income streams alongside the annual review of existing ones. The museum's Income Generation Group will look at national trends and comparator organisations to identify opportunities to increase earned income. For example, income from school related activities has increased across the sector and can account for as much as one third of museum's budget.
11. The business plan has been developed to ensure the museum is ready to capitalise on the changes to funding priorities by major grant-making organisations through a clear focus on community engagement. The restructure embeds within the museum team a requirement to lead on and support grant applications, which is currently lacking.

Timetable of Next Steps

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
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Approval by CMG	CMG Meeting 12/02/2019	February 2019	AD Regeneration and Culture Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Staff informed of new business plan implications	HR approval of Job Description HR process identified and followed	February 2019 April 2019	Museum and Cultural Development Manager People, Customer and Business Support Team
Hastings and St Leonards Museum Association informed of new business plan	Meeting	February 2019	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Discussion by Museum Committee	Museum Committee	March 2019	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet	April 2019	Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Wards Affected

All wards

Implications

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness Yes

The business plan includes changes to the ways of working by embedding community engagement within the day-to-day work of the museum. The museum's target

audience for 2019-21 includes specific focus on disadvantaged, minority and vulnerable groups.

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17) No

Risk Management Yes

A detailed risk register is included in the business plan.

Environmental Issues No

Economic/Financial Implications No

Human Rights Act No

Organisational Consequences Yes

Implementing the business plan requires staff reorganisation affecting all roles within the HAMG.

Local People's Views Yes

The business plan addresses concerns over lack of access to the stored collections. It includes opportunities for greater involvement of local people and communities within the work of the museum through volunteering, co-curation and linking collections work directly with community-focused projects.

Anti-Poverty No

Additional Information

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan, 2019-2021

Officer to Contact

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