

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 6 June 2022

Report Title: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2022-25

Report By: Damian Etheraads, Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Key Decision: N

Classification:

Purpose of Report

To outline the museum's business plan for 2022-25 and share the review of the previous business plan.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.**

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The museum requires a business plan to operate effectively.

Introduction

1. The museum's business plan was adopted in 2018 and is now due for review. This report reviews the museum's progress since 2018. It also outlines the museum's next business plan for the period 2022-2025.

Business Plan 2018-21

2. The aim of the 2018-21 business plan was to create a museum:
 - that was focused on community engagement, particularly with groups from disadvantaged areas, minorities and vulnerable groups
 - with a strong emphasis on promoting health, well-being, education and lifelong learning
 - that is resilient and positioned to capitalise on funding opportunities.
3. By the end of 2021 the ambition was for the museum to be delivering high-quality and meaningful community projects, particularly with people from disadvantaged areas, minorities and with vulnerable groups. The museum's work would have a growing emphasis on health, well-being, education and lifelong learning. It would be a more resilient museum, capitalising on funding opportunities from sector funding bodies, and generating increased income through retail, hires and events.
4. The museum has achieved or exceeded the majority of the outcomes:

2018-21 Target	Outcome
<i>Aim One: Entrepreneurial</i>	
The museum will have diversified its income streams and increased the level of earned income	<p>A full review of income opportunities was undertaken. Benchmarked fees and charges, new income streams through ArtUK and shop products were introduced. Prior to Covid-19, up to March 2020, earned income had increased 45% on the 2017-18 baseline figures. Since reopening in May 2021 income has exceeded 2017-18 levels as well. Although income has increased, due to Covid-19, it has not been consistent from year-to-year.</p> <p>Since 2018 the museum has benefited from £168,000 of Museum and Schools Programme funding from Arts Council England and the Department for Education. It has also secured £689,945 of grants (including CRF2) and received £57,850 in-kind support from partner organisations.</p>
The museum will have an established regular programme of high-quality work experience placements for secondary schools, including Special Education Needs, and externally funded placements for higher education providers	<p>The museum's activity programme increased dramatically – there have been over 280 in-person and over 200 digital activities since 2017-18.</p> <p>A new school's work experience programme was introduced, and the museum hosted placements from the Supported Education Department at Sussex Coast College, University of Sussex and University of Leicester. These programmes will resume in 2022.</p>
The museum will have a robust volunteering programme supporting the work of the museum team.	Volunteer numbers have risen from 2 to an average of 15 on a weekly basis. The volunteers have helped support a range of projects and research activities.

<i>Aim Two: Inclusive</i>	
The museum will have reduced barriers to participation and enhanced the quality and reach of projects, events and exhibitions	<p>Barriers have been reduced since 2018. A range of actions have been taken including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of staff received Dementia Friends training from the Alzheimer's society. • A visual storyboard was developed with families of people living with autism to help prepare for visits. • "Rules" for visiting were developed with families and young people. • The on-gallery learning activities were refreshed and updated in all rooms • Free period products and sanitary bins were made available in all public toilets • Home educating, people seeking sanctuary and LGBTQI+ people have been included in projects, co-curated exhibitions and added stories to the collections
The museum will have increased visitor numbers through investment in displays, exhibitions, events and effective marketing to existing and new audiences	Museum visitor figures had increased 47% from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Since reopening visitor have been slow to return. There are likely to be 10,000 visitors in 2021-22.
The museum programme will be shaped by our visitors, partnerships, focus groups and volunteers of community and cultural activity including annual events, youth programmes, community engagement projects.	This target has not been achieved. The museum has increased its work with community groups but has not yet moved beyond this. This remains an area for on-going action.
<i>Aim Three: Educational</i>	
The museum will have increased school visits through investment in resources, formal learning sessions and marketing	<p>Over 7,000 pupils visited the museum from September 2018-March 2020. This is a substantial increase; 500 pupils were recorded as visiting in 2017-18. Covid-19 has greatly impacted on this and virtually stopped all in-person visits.</p> <p>New and refreshed loans boxes and blended learning sessions have been developed during lockdown. The museum's Lego Education Innovation Studio contract has been extended.</p>
The museum will have an established programme of informal learning activities for early years, the seniors and other vulnerable groups	This outcome has been largely achieved. Informal learning for early years and seniors has been a core part of the in-person and digital programmes.
The museum programme will be shaped by our partnerships and we will have reduced barriers to participation and enhanced the quality and reach of our formal and informal education programmes.	As in Aim Two, although barriers have been reduced and more people are involved in the museum, we are not yet working directly with communities to decide on programming or engagement activities.
<i>Aim Four: Connected</i>	
The museum will play a central role in the tourism activities of Hastings and 1066 Country	Marketing and communications remains a challenge for us to deliver. Since 2018 we tested paid-for digital advertising and contracted with a new leaflet distributor covering Brighton, Surrey and Kent. We now make greater use of the 1066 Country website, but we are not doing so consistently or with enough focus.
The museum will have developed a range of cross-arts programmes	We have worked with or supported more than 15 local organisations since 2018. This work has varied from hosting

with partners.	one-off events and pop-up exhibitions to longer-term collaborations through our project working.
<i>Aim Five: Reflective</i>	
The museum will use evaluation analysis and visitor feedback to develop and improve displays, events, learning and the exhibition programme	We now collect a range of visitor information. This is used to inform programming and planning but is not as thoroughly embedded as it could be.
The museum will use Audience Finder and internal evaluation forms to develop targeted marketing to core and target audiences	Audience Finder was introduced in 2020 and has proven successful when combined with online ticket booking. Despite this we still need more responses to create an adequate visitor profile for the museum.
The museum will have increased the number of residents engaged in opportunities and events	Through postcode analysis we can see that the majority of our visitors are local people living within Hastings. We also know that people are now traveling further to visit us and spending longer in the museum than before.
<i>Aim Six: Responsible</i>	
The museum will have submitted a funding application for a capital redevelopment of the site	We have not done this. However, we have made substantial progress on developing plans to meet this aspiration.
The museum will have significantly improved the collection care, display and access standards.	Significant steps forward have been made in collections care including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated pest management has been introduced • The environmental control monitors have been calibrated and better positioned • Additional storage space has been created • Over 3,000 objects have been documented and cleaned since 2018.

Business Plan 2022-25

5. The 2022-25 business plan is more ambitious than before. It is a bold business plan for creating a museum fit for the future. It builds on the work the team have excelled at and embeds this into the very heart of how we operate.
6. It outlines a strategic direction that puts inclusivity and community involvement at the heart of our decision making. It aims to create the environment needed for the systemic change required for truly participatory practice. It introduces our first serious response to the climate emergency and challenges us to change our current ways of working. It is aligned with Council's Cultural Strategy and Corporate Plan.
7. The business plan's strategic aims are:
 - Inclusive - Reduce barriers to participation facing audiences and communities by including them in decision making to create enjoyable, educational and memorable experiences and foster a sense of ownership and pride in the museum.
 - Connected - Promote a contemporary view of the museum through partnerships and collaboration with local people in their communities with partners and cultural organisations.
 - Educational - Inspire creativity and lifelong learning through the innovative use of collections to create fun and thought-provoking learning opportunities.

- Sustainable - To increase museum's resilience by listening to our visitors, taking action to reduce our carbon footprint, care for the collection, manage the building and increase earned income.
8. The targets are supplemented by the museum's first equality and climate emergency action plans. The equality action plan aims to build:
- a team that understands equality and diversity issues and is confident in creating inclusive and welcoming environments
 - our audiences and volunteers to be more representative of the diverse communities of Hastings
 - programmes and services which are relevant and representative of our communities
 - the collection so that is more representative of our communities.
9. The museum's climate emergency priorities are to:
- understand what the climate emergency and what carbon literacy means
 - consider climate change in the planning and delivery of everything we do
 - reduce our carbon emissions and energy use
 - work with cultural partners and communities to take action
 - support biodiversity and the natural environment of the museum's grounds.

Community participation in decision making

10. Including communities in the decision-making process of the museum is the central drive of the 2022-25 business plan. This approach has been developed to maximise the impact of the museum's activities and increase the benefits gains for improving health, strengthening resilience, social cohesion and equity through community participation. It has drawn on research into the real-life impact of cultural engagement on communities. It brings an assets-based approach to help support community resilience and place making.

Options

11. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Timetable of Next Steps

12. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Discussion by Museum Committee	Museum Committee	March 2022	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet	April 2022	Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 34

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	Y
Economic/Financial Implications	N
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	N

Additional Information

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2022-2025

Officer to Contact

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