



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Report to the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Title:	Museum Trust
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Purpose of Agenda Item

Members will review the Trust's current and planned areas of focus and activity to ensure the long term sustainability of the County museum for residents of and visitors to Buckinghamshire. They will consider recent performance of the Trust, audience development and community engagement going forward and the financial sustainability (funding and income generation opportunities) of the Trust.

Background

The transfer of museum operations to the new Buckinghamshire Museum Trust took place on August 1st 2014. An update report was discussed at TEC Select Committee in September 2016, reviewing the first 2 years of operation.

Summary

The Museum Trust actively promotes wider community engagement, usage and interaction with the diverse communities across Bucks and has a key role to play in making Bucks an attractive and thriving place to live and work. Over the last year it has increased overall visitor numbers from 88,874 in 2016/17, to 97,092 in 2017/18, and from 2018 it has developed a four year plan for increased community engagement and audience development.

BCC has a Funding and Management Agreement with the Museum Trust with a term of 20 years. The Management Fee is renegotiated every 5 years. On transfer the management fee was £448k plus £26k transition costs. By the end of the next 5 year funding period the



payment will have reduced to £381k. The plan is for the Trust to become more self-sufficient over the term of the funding, so that the fee paid by BCC can reduce further over subsequent funding periods.

Over the intervening 2 years between the last report to TEC Select Committee and now, the Trust has continued to explore new income streams and areas of service focus, to reduce its reliance on the BCC management fee, and develop as a self-sustaining organisation. These are outlined below:

National Portfolio Organisation status – the Trust was notified in June 2017 of the successful outcome of its application for National Portfolio Organisation status to start from April 2018 until 2022 initially with funding of £100,000 per year. The funding will support the development of a range of community engagement initiatives supporting diverse communities locally, programmes for young people and under 5s and development of volunteering opportunities. The funding supports 3 new part time posts of Community Outreach Officer, Workforce Development and Marketing Officer from April 2018 which will benefit the Trust with more resource and positive outcomes for the local community.

Service Level Agreements – The Museum Trust continues to work in partnership with Milton Keynes Heritage Trust (Milton Keynes Museum and Library from April 2018) caring for the majority of the Milton Keynes owned artefacts at the Halton Resource Centre and supporting events and interpretation in Milton Keynes for £50,000 per year although the amount for the SLA will be £40,000 from April 2018 due to a reduction in funding from Milton Keynes Council.

The Museum Trust signed a new agreement in August 2016 to care for the national Embroiderers' Guild collection and have a permanent showcase at the Museum as part of an SLA worth £89,000 over 5 years from Sept 2016 and secured additional payments for office accommodation at £7500 per year initially and £3500 per year from April 2018. This SLA is in place for 25 years with renegotiation of terms every 5 years. In addition, the Museum Trust signed an agreement in June 2017 with the National Paralympic Heritage Trust to provide curatorial expertise for collecting, storing and displaying Paralympic materials in return for a fee worth £63,000 over the next 5 years with further funding available for purchasing suitable acquisitions for the NPHT and for conservation and display materials.

Commercial development – the Trust has registered the Museum as a wedding venue and launched a new Weddings and Ceremonies business in April 2018 with great support from BCC Registrars department. Income from venue hire in the last financial year has increased by 50% partly due to support from BCC department hires. A new strategy has been implemented over the last financial year of targeting school holiday periods for income generation through family friendly events and exhibitions. The LEGO exhibition in summer

2017 brought in over £20,000 in ticket income alone as a charging exhibition and a larger LEGO Civilisation exhibition is booked for summer 2018. A new Annual Pass has been introduced for the Roald Dahl Children's Gallery from April 2018 for the cost of just less than 3 visits to allow entry all year during opening hours – this will encourage guaranteed income and repeat visits should generate more purchasing for retail and catering. The Museum Trust is planning a Commercial Manager post in 2018 when funding allows to maximise opportunity for income generation.

Commercial sponsorship – The Trust has secured some local corporate sponsorship over the last year, including £200 for an outdoor cinema event, £1,000 from Haines Watts and £500 in kind support from Brewers for set up costs for the new weddings offer and a further £1,000 from Hale Leys towards the costs of the new LEGO exhibition in 2018. Further negotiations are taking place with Friars Square and other local traders to provide support for operational costs of Museum activities in the future.

Donations – a new policy of 'By Donation' rather than free entry as previously was introduced from August 2017 and this has resulted in an increase of donations from £400 per year to over £5,000 by April 2018.

Gift Aid – New Gift Aid systems were put in place from mid- August 2018 with an increase in prices by 10% to include a 10% voluntary gift aided donation and the ability to claim gift aid on the whole amount. This has led to an increase in income for the Dahl Gallery over the financial year and laid the groundwork for an increase in gift aid return income.

Grants – The Museum has successfully applied for 3 grants over the last financial year, including £2,000 from the Arts Council through the Museum Development Programme South East to support the set up of the new Wedding offer, £2,000 from the same source to help with the set up of the new Prehistory schools workshop and a further £4,200 from Heart of Bucks Kop Hill Climb for the Prehistory workshops and community archaeology day for disadvantaged groups in Aylesbury for July 2018. Further applications to grant making trusts are in hand to support learning delivery costs and other projects.

Key issues

Overall visitor numbers have increased by just over 9% in the last year, but the numbers attending schools workshops over the same period have fallen 17% with a corresponding drop in income from schools visits of around 8%. This has provided an opportunity to increase the schools market by targeting provision for key Curriculum areas. The Museum Trust has created a new Prehistory workshop over the last few months to be delivered at Halton Resource Centre from summer 2018 onwards to increase the diversity of offer over two locations and to make best use of the unique prehistory finds at the Resource Centre.

New marketing strategies are also being introduced to target teachers via mailchimp (newsletters) and a new video accessible via the Museum Youtube Channel.

Heritage Lottery Fund Application for development of Church Street Museum site – a bid for £3.2 million to the Heritage Lottery Fund in December 2016 to develop new galleries, catering areas and other new facilities was turned down by HLF in March 2017. New plans and approaches to development include developing a master plan and applying for smaller projects from that master plan to achieve success. The main priority for 2018 -19 will be to refresh the Touch of Bucks Galleries with new displays and to start the process of redesigning a completely new gallery to incorporate the consultation with communities work to collect stories and objects from a range of communities about their contribution to the story of Buckinghamshire.

Trustee recruitment – The Museum Trust board recognises that there is a need for more diverse Trustees with a range of backgrounds including more heritage, education and community engagement experience. Approaches are being made currently to a number of potential Trustees with such backgrounds to help reflect the diverse communities served by the Museum Trust.

Resource implications

In the last financial year, the Trust had total unrestricted income of £745k and carried forward unrestricted funds of £22k. Following Charity Commission recommendations, the Trust is building up a small reserve.

The funding package from BCC over the next 5 year period is as shown below

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
£416,000	£408,000	£399,000	£390,000	£381,000

Next steps

Members are asked to note the significant efforts by the Museum Trust to develop their self-sustainability and the success they have had over the last 2 years. Also to consider the planned areas of focus of museum activity to develop new audiences and increase community engagement.