

# The Roman Baths Museum Forward Plan 2015-18

**Name of museum:** The Roman Baths

**Name of governing body:** Bath & North Somerset Council

**Date on which the policy was approved by governing body:** February 2015

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** 3 years from date above

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## **Introduction**

The Roman Baths is a museum owned and operated by Bath & North East Somerset Council which is a small to medium sized unitary authority. The Council's power to operate the museum derives from the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

It is managed as part of the Council's Heritage Services Division, together with the Fashion Museum and The Victoria Art Gallery which are also Accredited Museums. The Service also includes:

The Bath Record Office

The Council's World Heritage Management office

Listed buildings, notably the Pump Room, Assembly Rooms, No. 4 The Circus Georgian Garden

The old Bath City Laundry properties together with a number of other smaller properties in Bath that house support services.

This document is one of a series that set out the future direction for the Roman Baths. It is site specific and supplements other documents that are Service wide in their remit, including the existing Heritage Services Business Plan (2013 – 18) and the Heritage Services Service Plan (2014-15). The Roman Baths has seen significant development in recent years as the Council has invested large sums to deliver better conservation of buildings and collections, improved access, better interpretation and also improvements in earned income. This has resulted in improved feedback from visitors and also an increase in their number.

Preparing this document has usefully presented us with the opportunity to reflect on this process and create a new vision for the Roman Baths.

The Plan is for a period of three years which will allow the creation of its successor to dovetail with the next Accreditation Review round that we have been advised by Arts Council England will take place in 2018.

## **1. Statement of Purpose**

The Roman Baths is here to enrich people's lives by preserving, developing and making accessible the ancient monument, historic building and Designated collection held in trust by the Council. It also contributes positively to cultural life, learning and the local and regional economy by making available a nationally significant resource to a very wide range of audiences in an inspiring and sustainable way.

## **2. Review of the Previous Plan**

The most recent previous forward planning instrument for the Roman Baths was known as the Roman Baths Development and focused its attention very much on re-developing the site to improve access, visitor services and resilience. The last major project within that portfolio of developments will be completed in February 2015 when the activation of a fourth new lift will provide access for wheelchair users throughout the site.

That programme of work was structured as a series of mini-projects which delivered:

A new step-free visitor route through the site.

Access for wheelchair users to the below ground ancient monument and museum collections.

Access for all to a host of other accessible adaptations to improve both physical and intellectual access.

New interpretation and re-fitted gallery spaces throughout the site.

A five-fold increase in the number of objects on display.

Conservation of the historic fabric of the ancient monument and of all objects on display on an 'as required' basis.

Re-furbishment of on-site shops.

A new off-site catering facility – known as 'The Roman Baths Kitchen'.

A 10% increase in visitor numbers to record levels.

A 25% increase in income.

The programme attracted a number of awards including:

South West Tourism Excellence Awards 2015 Finalist (final result to be announced in February 2015).

Trip Adviser Awards 2014. Third in UK and fifteenth in Europe.

Visit England National Tourism Excellence Award for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year 2013 – Silver

European Museum of the Year 2012 – Finalist

Visit England Tourism Excellence Award for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year (South West) 2012 – Gold

Art Fund Prize (2012) - Finalist

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (South West) 2011 - Winner

Museums & Heritage Classic Award 2010 - Winner

## **3. Development of this Plan**

Consultations on the statement of purpose, aims and objectives of the Plan were carried out with the Roman Baths Focus Group in September 2014 and further consultation on the developing detail of the Plan took place in January 2015.

Councillor engagement included a broadcast interview on BBC radio about the Plan by the portfolio Cabinet Member in November 2014. The Plan will be submitted for approval to the Council's Cabinet in February 2015 as an appendix to the Heritage Services Business Plan 2015 – 20.

The general public, including both users and non-users, were invited to attend a consultation meeting in November 2014. Publicity was carried out via a press release distributed to local and regional media. The release gave full contact details for anyone wishing to make personal representations. Holders of 20,000 Discovery Cards – which give free admission to the Roman Baths for local people – were also invited through their e-newsletter to attend the public consultation meeting.

A staff consultation meeting to which all staff were invited took place on 4 December 2014.

#### **4. Monitoring this Plan**

Progress towards the actions identified in this plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis with an update report being prepared for the Head of Heritage Services in April 2016. Milestones will be set for each of the objectives to assist with progress monitoring. A full review of the plan will be undertaken at the end of February 2018 and a successor plan brought forward for consideration by the Council. Implementation of this Plan will be the responsibility of the Roman Baths & Pump Room Manager overseen and approved by the Head of Heritage Services.

#### **5. Current Situation**

##### **a. Organisation Structure**

The Roman Baths is part of the Heritage Services division of Bath & North East Somerset Council, which also includes the Victoria Art Gallery, the Fashion Museum and the Bath Record Office. The work of the division is governed by a Business Plan and Service Plan as well as site-specific Forward Plans, all these documents having received Council approval. The Heritage Services division is part of the Community Regeneration directorate of the Council.

Heritage Services operates under a rolling Business Plan aiming for ongoing sustainability in three interdependent areas:

- Conservation – preserving the heritage for present and future generations to enjoy;
- Customer Care – meeting the needs of all audiences, customers, and guests;
- Commercial success – maintaining the Service’s positive contribution to the Council’s budget.

**b. Public Opening**

The Roman Baths is open every day except 25 and 26 December. Opening hours vary seasonally and are currently

November to February: 9.30 – 17.30

March to June & September to October: 9.00 – 18.00

July & August: 9.00 – 22.00

This is supplemented by occasional public late openings for special events such as Museums at Night, Party in the City and Science Week.

**c. Staffing**

The Roman Baths has 69.3 FTE staff most of whom are employed in front-of-house and operational support roles. Three staff have curatorial responsibilities and a professional Learning service is provided on a cross-service basis by a Learning Co-ordinator and a team of Learning Workshop leaders. Marketing, retail, business support, catering and hospitality services are also provided on a cross-service basis. There is one person providing administrative support. Catering, security and costumed interpretation services are provided through contracted suppliers. The Council provides internal HR and IT support through corporate centralized services. The Roman Baths is also able to draw on centrally provided Council services for property management and project delivery on an ‘as and when required’ basis and also has access to central financial support services that provide insurance, VAT and financial planning advice.

In 2013/14 Roman Baths staff were assisted by up to 36 volunteers working mainly with collections and at public events in support roles for learning and curatorial staff.

The Roman Baths also provides jobs for 3 apprentices who take NVQs in Visitor Attraction and Heritage Operations whilst working in a range of roles throughout the service.

Opportunities for local young people in formal school education are provided through work experience placements ( 40 last year). Work experience opportunities for students in higher education through established arrangements with some universities providing museum and heritage related courses at graduate and post-graduate level (currently Leicester, Bradford and Bath Spa) are also provided.

At this point in time another opportunity is provided through the Curators for the Future programme in which the Roman Baths provides a place for a trainee in partnership with the British Museum and Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

#### **d. Audience**

The Roman Baths collects information about its visitors from ticket sales information and through visitor research. It also collects thousands of visitor comments each year which are analysed to see what issues are important to visitors. Some information is also gleaned through non-visitor research carried out through the Council's Voicebox scheme.

There are approximately 1,000,000 visitors a year. Research provides segmented information on that audience including profiles relating to some of the 8 protected characteristics in the Equalities Act 2010, such as age, gender, and ethnicity.

Approximately 75% of visitors speak English. Foreign language interpretation is provided through a further 7 languages on an audio guide and 32 other languages in the form of a free leaflet.

#### **e. Access**

The Roman Baths has just completed a five year development programme one of the two aims of which was to transform the accessibility of the site and its collections.

This development included the following measures to improve both intellectual and physical access:

- Introduction of audio description commentaries on the audio tour
- Introduction of a British Sign Language tour on a mobile device
- A re-write of the main audio tour to improve interpretation of the collection

- Expansion of the main audio tour into eight languages from six – to reach a wider audience
- Introduction of French and German versions to the children's audio tour
- Installation of 4 lifts to provide wheelchair access through the site
- Removal of several flights of steps and associated redesign of gallery spaces to provide level walkways
- Re-design of hand rails throughout the site
- Provision of additional seating throughout to improve the visit for people with limited mobility
- Installation of tactile models of key artefacts
- Use of projection, film and animation to improve interpretation through better visualization
- Introduction of a person-led interpretation scheme throughout the site
- Retention of personal guided tours delivered by front-of-house staff at hourly intervals with no additional charge
- Provision of 3D models and interactives
- Re-designed reception desk to improve accessibility
- Provision of a specially designed site plan for people with visual impairment.
- Introduction of signs in braille for key artefacts.
- Expansion of 1<sup>st</sup> person costumed interpretation and development of new characters.
- Welcome All training for staff.
- Specialist training for staff tailored to the specific needs of the organisation.

An Access Statement is published on the website and is displayed near the entrance.

## f. Environmental Sustainability

In December 2014 Bath & North East Somerset Council was awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award for its work in Environmental Sustainability.

The Council has developed a Sustainable Community Strategy through the Local Strategic Partnership. This has been formally approved by Councillors and sits at the top of a pyramid of other strategic policies and plans to guide the development of the Council and its constituent parts such as the Roman Baths.

Current good practice includes the application of a Sustainable Procurement Code which is underpinned by the following principles:

- a Banning the use of products that damage the environment when an alternative is available.
- b Promoting the use of the least environmentally-damaging products.
- c 'Awarding contracts for environmental alternatives based on whole life costing - this means paying higher up-front costs based on the anticipated lifetime savings that more environmentally sustainable purchasing can achieve (eg through reduced energy consumption, reduce waste disposal costs etc). (See 6.1 for more detail))
- d Understanding that buying environmentally is part of a process of continuous improvement.
- e Considering running costs when evaluating tenders.

Within the context of this wider strategic and policy framework the Roman Baths has a local site-specific Environmental Sustainability Plan and an Environmental Sustainability Statement on the use of resources in the operation of the Roman Baths is published on the website. <http://www.romanbaths.co.uk/sustainability>. This includes:

Using heat from the Hot Spring to help heat the building in winter

Using high efficiency boilers to heat the parts that Spa Water cannot reach!

Water saving measures in the toilets

Using low energy hand driers

Using low energy display lighting systems

Use locally sourced ingredients in our menus

Providing recycled carrier bags in our shops

Recycling food waste from our restaurants

Recycling waste materials and used electrical equipment from all our operations and staff areas



Using local Scrapstores to supply our events and activities programmes

Participating in Museum Freecycle - the world's first industry freecycle group

<https://groups.freecycle.org/group/MuseumFreecycleUK/posts/all>

#### **g. Finance**

The Roman Baths is managed as part of the Heritage Services Division. Business Planning and back office finance support is provided at divisional level and for some aspects at Directorate level.

Income currently exceeds expenditure with the surplus used by the Council to underwrite negative balances in other parts of Heritage Services and beyond that to subsidise its other activities.

#### **h. Collection**

The entire collection is Designated by Arts Council England (ACE), the national agency for museums. This means the collection is deemed to be of national significance, although held in a non-national museum.

*'The Roman curse tablets from Bath – Britain's earliest prayers'* have a special status in their own right as they have been added to the UK Register of the Memory of the World by UNESCO. As such they have their own personalised collection management plan.

The collections are managed by professionally trained curatorial staff and consist of approximately 100,000 objects. They consist primarily of archaeological and local historical material from the local area ranging in date from the Palaeolithic to the present.

The collections are managed through a series of policies and plans including:

- Collection Development Policy
- Care and Conservation Policy
- Documentation Policy
- Documentation Plan
- Care and Management Plan

#### **i. Security**

A professional Security and Operations Manager is employed to oversee security operations and manage security staff. Specialist security staff are provided through a security contract.

The most recent advisory visit by the National Security Adviser took place in 2013.

**j. Tourism**

The Roman Baths is a significant component in the local tourism industry and has by far the largest number of visitors of any museum or visitor attraction in the area.

It is unusual in attracting a large number of overseas visitors – approximately 45% - which includes as many long haul as European visitors.

The majority of visitors are day visitors to Bath and many visitors – around 33% - arrive by coach.

Good relations are maintained with the local tourism industry through Bath Tourism Plus and occasional familiarization or consultation events to which representatives of the local tourism industry are invited.

Moderating the environmental impact of tourism is promoted through travel advice on the Roman Baths website.

Business tourism is significant and the Roman Baths contributes to this by providing an exciting and unusual venue for private and corporate events.

A long term objective of the local tourism industry has been to increase out-of-season business and the Roman Baths has supported this by providing a year-round service and directing marketing initiatives to the shoulder months. At a national level the Roman Baths is a member of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) and some senior staff are members of The Tourism Society.

**k. SWOT/PESTLE Analysis**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Is a scheduled ancient monument and grade I Listed Building as well as a museum collection.	Vulnerability to overseas events, particularly those which may affect international long haul markets.
Britain’s only hot springs rise on site.	Reliance on a high proportion of coach borne visitors makes the Roman Baths vulnerable to problems with the national road network.
Positioned at the heart of the World Heritage site.	Accommodation provided for schools and formal learning is weak.
High quality collections with Designated status.	City centre location imposes constraints on simple operational activities such as deliveries and
Good community links with free admission for local residents.	

<p>Has good access to a range of professional support services within the wider Council.</p> <p>Has a culture of partnership working with others to realise projects.</p>	<p>parking.</p> <p>As the Roman Baths is part of a local authority some grant awarding organisations will not support it financially.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>The Roman Baths is now close to full physical accessibility.</p> <p>Recent addition of Roman Curse Tablets to UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register.</p> <p>New website provides a better platform for mobile friendly communication.</p> <p>Development grant awarded by HLF for Archway Centre proposal creates an opportunity to address weaknesses in learning provision.</p> <p>There is currently an opportunity to make better use of energy derived from spa water.</p> <p>Recent approval for the creation of a Roman Baths Foundation will improve the potential for fund-raising.</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Terrorism. As an attraction with a national and international profile the Roman Baths is particularly susceptible to security risks, and also the consequences of shutdowns prompted by events elsewhere.</p> <p>A risk to the integrity of the spa water supply from geotechnical interventions. i.e. fracking.</p> <p>A downturn in tourism for any reason, at either a national or local level, will impact on the Roman Baths.</p>

## 6. Vision

The Council's vision is for Bath and North East Somerset to be an area where everyone fulfils their potential, with lively and active communities, and with unique places and beautiful surroundings.

There are three objectives to realise that vision:

- (1) Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone;
- (2) creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live, and
- (3) sustainable growth.

Heritage Services contributes towards that vision, and those three objectives, through the following statement of purpose:

*Heritage Services, For Learning, Inspiration and Enjoyment.*

The Roman Baths vision is a sub-set within and complements the vision articulated for the larger entities of which it constitutes a part. It is:

*To contribute positively to cultural life, learning and the local and regional economy by making available a nationally significant resource to a very wide range of audiences in an inspiring and sustainable way.*

## 7. Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives for the Roman Baths Museum follow on from the aims and objectives of the Heritage Services division and the Council. These are shown below:

### Aims

<b>Council aims &gt;</b>	<b>Heritage Services aims &gt;</b>	<b>Roman Baths aims</b>
Making Bath & North East Somerset a place ... .. where everyone fulfils their potential.	To enhance the quality of life for residents of Bath and North East Somerset.	Help to maintain and improve the quality of life locally by contributing to the Council's health and well-being agenda
.. with lively, active communities.	To maximise public enjoyment of the Council's world-class heritage.  To promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures	Educate and inspire a wide range of audiences by providing high quality interpretation and delivering learning and public engagement opportunities

<p>.. with unique places and beautiful surroundings.</p>	<p>To enable people to learn from the activities and achievements of past and present societies.</p> <p>To contribute to the district’s economic prosperity through the Heritage Services Business Plan</p>	<p>Maintain its position as a major cultural resource and leading visitor attraction, supporting the significance and public appeal of the World Heritage site and making Bath and North East Somerset a place where people are proud to live.</p> <p>Care for the Designated collections, the scheduled ancient monument and the hot spring rising within it.</p> <p>Maximise income-generating potential in a sustainable manner, contributing to the support of other valued services in Heritage Services and the Council more generally</p>
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## Objectives

Council objectives >	HS objectives >	RB objectives >
<p>Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone</p>	<p>To work in partnership with others wherever appropriate.</p> <p>To consult widely with users and stakeholders on an on-going basis.</p> <p>To use information technology in</p>	<p>Help to maintain and improve the quality of life, by making buildings and collections accessible and easy to engage with, and involving volunteers and other organisations in the delivery of services and community projects.</p>

	accessible and imaginative ways.	
Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live	<p>To protect and develop the Council's unique historic collections and public buildings.</p> <p>To interpret the collections and public buildings through displays, study facilities, learning programmes and special events.</p> <p>To mount the best available exhibitions from other regional and national collections.</p>	<p>To maintain it's position as a major resource for public benefit within the World Heritage site.</p> <p>To educate and inspire a wide range of audiences</p>
Building a stronger economy	<p>To plan for and invest in the collections and public buildings sustainability.</p> <p>To train and develop staff to realise their full potential</p> <p>To sell high quality merchandise to complement the services that are offered.</p> <p>To hire out historic venues for a wide range of events and activities.</p>	<p>To maximise income-generating potential through sustainable growth</p> <p>To support the training needs of staff.</p>

## 8. Action Plan Years 1 – 3

Key Actions to fulfill the Roman Baths Objectives in 2015-18 are:

Roman Baths objectives	Action	Year 1 (2015-16)	Year 2 (2016-17)	Year 3 (2017-18)
<b>Objective 1</b>				
Maintain its position as a major resource for public benefit within the World Heritage Site.	Maintain and enhance displays and interpretation, and conserve the fabric of the archaeological site and building complex.	√	√	√
	Carry out a major conservation and interpretation project in the East Baths in 2015-17.	√	√	
	Create the Archway Centre as a major new venue for co-located World Heritage interpretation and Roman Baths learning in 2015-18.	√	√	√
<b>Objective 2</b>				
Help to maintain and improve the quality of life by making buildings and collections accessible and easy to engage with and involving	Create an enhanced public engagement programme with a brief to develop new and additional users of the site and collections as part of the Archway	√	√	√



volunteers and other organisations in the delivery of services and community projects.	Centre development in 2016 – 18.			
	Support the Council's Well-being agenda with appropriately designed programmes.	√	√	√
	Maintain free admission for local residents to the Roman Baths.	√	√	√
<b>Objective 3</b>				
Educate and inspire a wide range of audiences.	Submit a round 2 application to HLF for the Archway Centre, which includes a new learning centre for the Roman Baths designed to deliver learning outcomes to both existing and new audiences.	√		
	Trial an out-of-season activity-based programme as part of the core offer to weekend visitors.	√		
	Provide a programme of public lectures.	√	√	√
<b>Objective 4</b>				
Making buildings and collections accessible and easy to engage with.	Assimilate the recently transferred Keynsham collection into the Roman Baths collection documentation system.	√	√	
	Complete backlog cataloguing of the existing collection by March 2018.	√	√	√

	Publish the Beau Street Hoard academic publication in 2015.	√		
	Publish a popular publication of The Roman Curse Tablets from Bath in 2016.		√	
	Re-organise collection storage to reduce the number of off-site storage locations and so improve their accessibility and improve efficiency of management 2015-17.	√	√	
<b>Objective 5</b>				
Maximise income-generating potential through sustainable growth.	Develop a collaborative project with Bath Abbey to improve the existing heat reclaim scheme from Spa water.	√	√	
	Develop a charitable arm, to be known as The Roman Baths Foundation, to support fund-raising initiatives.	√		
	Trial a new combined saver ticket with the Victoria Art Gallery.	√		
	Provide additional incentives for people to visit outside peak visiting times,	√		

	including reviewing opening hours.			
	Re-invest some income in additional marketing and fund raising support.	√	√	√

## 9. Resources

A 3-year finance plan is shown below.

<b>Summary: Financial position of the Roman Baths &amp; Pump Room site on a full cost basis:</b>				
<i>(Illustration of the operating income and costs of the site and contribution to overhead)</i>				
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	Budget	Projected	Projected	Projected
	£	£	£	£
<b>Turnover</b>				
Admission charges	9,907,230	10,909,486	11,647,416	12,025,133
Sales	1,609,630	1,792,049	1,845,611	1,882,422
Room Hire	197,160	201,122	205,145	209,248
Catering	633,230	633,202	660,649	685,286
Other	149,980	243,965	56,026	56,612
Internal charges	53,980	55,060	56,161	57,284
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>12,551,210</b>	<b>13,834,884</b>	<b>14,471,008</b>	<b>14,915,984</b>
<b>Operating costs of site</b>				
<i>(Includes building maintenance; revenue investment and rates)</i>				
Employee costs	1,612,391	1,787,435	1,825,505	1,871,143
Premises	521,080	568,104	548,187	525,127
Transport	3,700	3,774	3,849	3,926
Supplies, Services and other expenses(incl. telephones)	304,869	440,741	284,590	307,156
Purchases for resale	745,060	828,433	853,155	870,171
Voluntary Sector Support	0	0	0	0
Contracts (incl. Wands)	315,520	496,709	626,592	631,516
Planned Revenue Investment, net of grants	447,430	453,444	490,788	513,915
Building maintenance, planned & responsive+ dilapidations	479,227	479,914	503,888	549,933
Responsive building maintenance - site only	18,070	4,920	5,018	5,119
Vacancy management & other planned savings	0	0	0	0
Savings achieved	0	0	0	0
Premises : Rates	383,789	395,389	416,382	435,323
Insurance	106,520	107,386	109,533	111,724
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	0	0	0
Finance & debt charges	491,930	512,778	553,259	588,205
<b>Total operating costs</b>	<b>5,429,587</b>	<b>6,079,026</b>	<b>6,220,747</b>	<b>6,413,258</b>
<b>Contribution to overhead</b>	<b>7,121,623</b>	<b>7,755,858</b>	<b>8,250,262</b>	<b>8,502,726</b>
<b>Overheads</b>				
Heritage Services managerial, marketing and support overheads and corporate overheads (from 13/1)	1,553,178	1,604,613	1,659,857	1,703,467
<i>(Including retail managerial overhead and marketing, etc)</i>				
Corporate Overheads (allocation)	0	0	0	0
	<b>1,553,178</b>	<b>1,604,613</b>	<b>1,659,857</b>	<b>1,703,467</b>
<b>Full Cost Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>5,568,445</b>	<b>6,151,245</b>	<b>6,590,405</b>	<b>6,799,259</b>