

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Planning, Housing & Economic Development Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	Tuesday 8th May 2018	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE
TITLE:	Museums Forward Plans 2018-2021	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1: Fashion Museum Forward Plan 2018-2021		
Appendix 2: Roman Baths Museum Forward Plan 2018-2021		
Appendix 3: Victoria Art Gallery Forward Plan 2018-2021		
Appendix 4: Local talks given and events attended by Heritage Services staff 2015-2018		
Appendix 5: Participating museums, attractions and places of historic or cultural interest in Bath and North East Somerset in 2017		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The report introduces the 3-year forward plans for the Fashion Museum, Roman Baths Museum and Victoria Art Gallery necessary to attain Full Accreditation status with Arts Council England (ACE). The Government's Accreditation scheme requires governing body approval and the forward plans will go forward for formal adoption by single member decision in June 2018.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the forward plans for the Fashion Museum, Roman Baths Museum and Victoria Art Gallery.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The forward plans will be delivered within existing resources and no new funds are sought. The museum forward plans will be delivered within the Service's cash limits as adopted by the Council in the Heritage Services 5-year rolling Business Plan.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The provision of museum services by local authorities is a discretionary rather than statutory service. This authority has important museum collections which are used to deliver much-valued services to residents and visitors alike. The basis for the proposal is that the authority would wish to continue to observe best practice in the management of its museum collections and the services delivered using them.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 The Council holds important collections of historic material in its museums. Two of these collections, at the Roman Baths Museum and Fashion Museum, have been 'Designated' by Government as nationally / internationally important collections held in non-national institutions.

5.2 The Council last adopted its museum forward plans in May 2014 (Fashion Museum) and February 2015 (Roman Baths Museum and Victoria Art Gallery). The timing of those applications was set by ACE who have since indicated that, to simplify matters, it will in future harmonise the date it requires the Council's three museums to update their Accreditation status. The next ACE Accreditation Review will probably take place in 2019.

5.3 The museum forward plans will contribute to Heritage Services' Service Aims, which are:

- to enhance the quality of life for residents of Bath & North East Somerset;
- to maximise public enjoyment of the Council's world class heritage;
- to enable people to learn from the activities and achievements of past and present societies;
- to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures;
- to contribute to the district's economic prosperity through our Business Plan.

5.4 The museum forward plans have been drafted to a common formula recognised by ACE. They include a statement of purpose, a description of the museum's collection, its staffing arrangements, opening hours and audiences, organisational structure, finances and building and a review of the previous plan. The forward-looking sections concern each museum's aims and objectives, future priorities and an action plan. In summary the key issues are:

5.5 Fashion Museum:

- secure sustainable future premises for the Museum;
- raise and to maintain the profile of the Fashion Museum and its world-class collection, particularly with local and global audiences;
- maintain the Museum's reputation as a key lender to major exhibitions at the world's leading museums;
- locate all objects on the documentation database to improve public access to the collection, through display, engagement, on-line and on-tour activities;
- maintain pest management, emergency response, salvage and insurance valuations programmes.

5.6 Roman Baths Museum:

- complete the Archway Project as a major capital scheme;
- prepare a scheme of improvements in conservation, public access and interpretation in the West Baths;
- install a new energy capture scheme in the King's Spring to heat the Pump Room & Roman Baths complex, replacing the former equipment install in 1992;

- re-purpose the existing learning space in the museum for informal learning activities for all daytime visitors;
- improve accessibility and environmental standards for collections in store;
- work with other Council services and city-centre agencies to improve the quality of the public realm in the vicinity of the Pump Room & Roman Baths complex.

5.7 Victoria Art Gallery:

- bring forward capital proposal to extend the Gallery into the void between it, the Market and the Guildhall to improve public service delivery and become more financially sustainable;
- prepare business cases for all major exhibitions to improve financial performance;
- replace the air-conditioning plant by March 2019 to retain the conditions for prestigious loans from national collections;
- improve efficiency of storage systems and bring forward proposals for disposal of non-relevant items via the agreed procedure.

6 MUSEUM PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Bath and North East Somerset has a wide range of museums and heritage attractions, offering plenty of scope for partnership working and joint ventures. These may be conceived locally or be part of a wider national programme of activities. Organised events involving some or all of the districts museums and attractions include:

- **April – World Heritage Day:** always on the Sunday closest to 18th April; in recent years it has been held on Kingston Parade, Royal Crescent lawn, at Prior Park Landscape Garden, Sydney Gardens, the Assembly Rooms and in Parade Gardens.
- **May – Museums @ Night:** a national celebration run by Culture 24 and timed locally to coincide with Party in the City.
- **July – Festival of Archaeology:** a national event organised by the Council for British Archaeology until 2017. In 2018 Heritage Services is participating in a nationwide project run by Cambridge University to identify continuously-occupied medieval settlements. A series of three events in Midsomer Norton (February, July, September) involves local residents in digging a 1m² test pit in their garden and brings them together to identify and record what they find.
- **September – Heritage Open Days:** a national four-day event offering free access to places that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission; it is a once-a-year chance to discover architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities that bring local history and culture to life.
- **October – Museums Week:** around twenty venues organise 120+ events over the nine days of the half-term holiday, with a range of activities including talks, tours, object-handling sessions, late night events and family trails and activities. Around 20,000 residents take part in Museums Week each year.

6.2 **Local Museum Partnerships:** the B&NES Museums Group meets regularly as a subset of the South Western Federation of Museums & Art Galleries. Planning for the events listed above takes place at the Group's meetings. In recent years the Group has also been successful in attracting Arts Council England funding for co-operative

marketing initiatives such as the 'Gorgeous Georgians' campaign and the 'Marvellous Museums' map, promoted through Visit Bath.

6.3 Local engagement: Heritage Services engages with local individuals and communities in a number of ways.

- Volunteering: all three museums and Bath Record Office offer opportunities for local people to participate in activities such as collections care, planning displays and running public. There is also a long-term project in Keynsham in which, under the guidance of curators from the Roman Baths Museum, local volunteers are engaged in the care and documentation of the archaeological collections from Durley Hill Roman Villa, the Somerdale Roman building and Keynsham Abbey site.
- Radstock Museum: the Service has purchased a secure display case which is located in Radstock Museum so that locally-discovered archaeological finds can be exhibited there.
- Local societies and community events: each year Heritage Services provides speakers for local organisations' lecture programmes and, where possible, takes stands at community events across the district. A list of these audiences and events over the last three years is shown in Appendix 4.

6.4 The Residents' Discovery Card enables residents to enjoy free admission or a concession to 19 museums and attractions in the district. The card is available free of charge and can be obtained at Roman Baths Reception, Lewis House one-stop-shop, The Hollies Midsomer Norton and Keynsham Civic Centre. It is valid for three years and there are currently c.25,000 Discovery Cards in circulation. Its popularity has caught the eye of attractions in neighbouring districts and B&NES residents with Discovery Cards are also given concessions at Avon Valley Railway, Bitton; Farleigh Hungerford Castle; Stonebury Learning Outdoor Centre, Warmley; and the Bishop's Palace, Wells.

6.5 Participation by local museums, attractions and places of historic interest in the Discovery Card scheme, Heritage Open Days and Museums Week is shown in the table at Appendix 5.

7 RATIONALE

7.1 The Council has a good reputation for managing its museums to high professional standards. The museum forward plans will maintain this reputation for best practice and will have positive implications for public access to the Council's museum collections and the information they contain.

7.2 The museum forward plans are important for demonstrating that the Council's museums are important contributors to the quality of life of Bath and North East Somerset residents and to the cultural 'offer' of the district.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 Users at all three sites are consulted on an ongoing basis and issues that arise are incorporated into work plans to improve the services delivered. The Heritage Services Focus Group has also been consulted. A public consultation meeting is being held in May 2018 and holders of 20,000+ Discovery Cards have also been invited to attend through their e-newsletter.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services 01225 477750
Background papers	<i>E2663 Heritage Services Business Update and Fashion Museum Forward Plan</i> , Cabinet, May 2014 <i>E2745 Heritage Services Business Plan 2015-2020 and Museum Forward Plans</i> , Cabinet, February 2015
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