

Heritage Services Business Plan 2023–2028

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1. Summary

This is the annual revision of the Heritage Services Business Plan (the Plan). This revision of the Plan sets out the Services' Vision and Mission as it recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, responds to the changing economic situation and its impact on visitor business.

Heritage Services expects to deliver a financial surplus in 2022/23 of £8.2 million.

The Plan sets out the recovery of visitor numbers and financial performance; income is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels next year and to hit 2019/20 profit levels in 2024/25.

The Service will continue to respond to the climate and ecological emergency through a comprehensive baseline study, which will measure its current carbon footprint. The Service will use this to develop a pathway to net zero over the next financial year.

The Service will continue to develop plans for the relocation of the Fashion Museum, within the Milsom Quarter and the creation of a Fashion Collection Archive in Locksbrook. It will complete repairs to the Victoria Art Gallery roof to protect the collection displayed there as well as open a new Community and Education space at the Gallery.

The Service will continue to invest to protect and conserve the Council's heritage assets, improve the visitor experience, enhance commercial performance, and develop its staff to deliver the Plan's outcomes.

2. Service Vision and Mission

During the last year the Service has set a new Vision and Mission. This has been developed through engagement with Service staff and volunteers and ratified through the Council's Senior Leadership team and the Heritage Services Advisory Board, made up of industry experts, senior officers and cabinet members.

A document outlining the Service's new strategy is included as an appendix to this Business Plan.

2.1. Vision

The Service's vision is to: **Learn from the past, understand the present, shape the future**

There are three over-arching aims to achieve between now and 2030:

- Return the Service to pre-COVID profitability;
- Move the Fashion Museum;
- Achieve Net Zero.

2.2. Mission

The Service's Mission is to:

- Create memorable, relevant and emotionally charged experiences for local, national and international audiences;
- Conserve the monuments, buildings and collections in our care;
- Be supporter centric – building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with people who engage with us;
- Act commercially to generate significant income from our activities and work to contribute to the wider economic prosperity of the region;
- Offer an unparalleled customer experience for everyone;
- Be a leader in sustainable and responsible practice in the Museums, Heritage and Archive sector.

2.3. Strategic Priorities

The Service has six strategic priorities which it will deliver on over the course of the Plan:

1. To provide maximum access to our buildings, monuments and collection to as wide an audience as possible to facilitate learning, understanding and emotional connection;
2. To be a supporter focussed organisation;
3. To maximise income;
4. To operation efficiently and effectively as an organisation;
5. To bring benefit to Bath, the South-West and the UK;
6. To act as an environmentally sustainable and responsible organisation in everything we do.

3. Business Strategy

The business strategy is set out below, under the six priorities discussed in section 2.

3.1. Performance Overview

Roman Baths

Visitor numbers at the Roman Baths have exceeded budget through Q3 of 2022/23. The budget was for 60% of 2019/20 visitors. At the end of the Summer, performance was on budget. Since mid-August performance has accelerated. Figure 1 below shows footfall relative to budget, pre-pandemic and prior year.

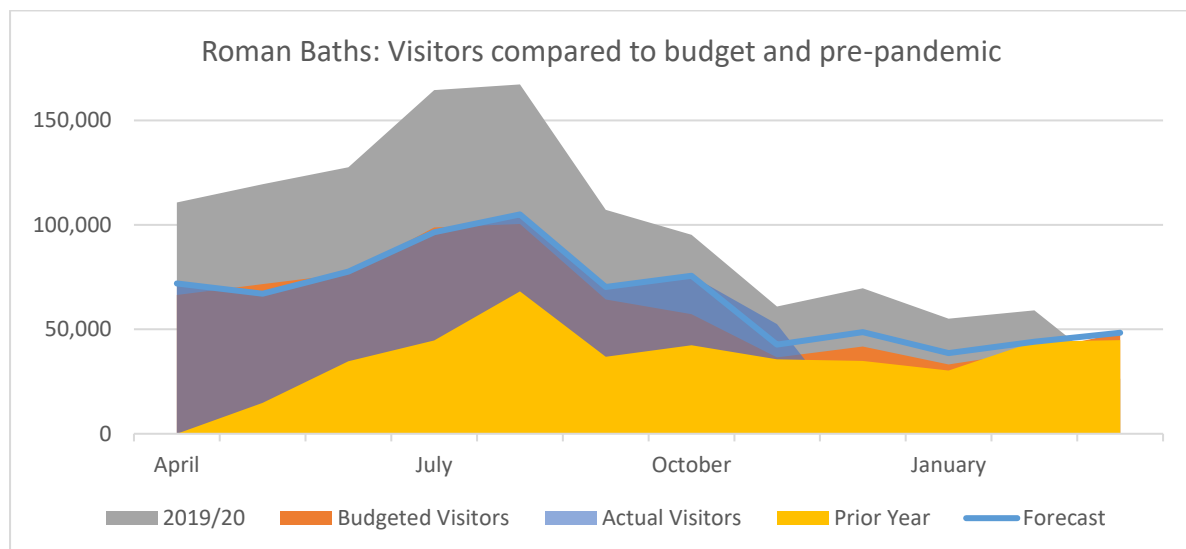


Figure 1: Roman Baths visitor numbers

It's noteworthy that the autumn performance followed the significant changes in the value of the Pound in the autumn, which stimulated an acceleration in the recovery of international tourism.

Secondary spend in retail and in the Pump Room has also been significantly higher than forecast. In part this has been driven by higher than budgeted visitor numbers; however, retail spend per visitor (SPV) has been up has been up over £0.50 visitor through-out this year. Part of the growth in SPV this year has been driven by cost pressures in the supply chain, which have increased cost of sales and therefore the selling price of products. The result in retail is testament to the work of the Retail Team who have had to balance the need to maintain margins, provide value to our visitors and maintain supplier relationships.

The chart below in figure 2 provides a longer-term view of the pandemic’s impact and recovery, shown alongside the visitors to Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) funded museums (chosen as comparators due to their high visitor numbers, national significance and large tourist markets and including: the Science Museum, V&A, Natural History Museum) over the same time period.

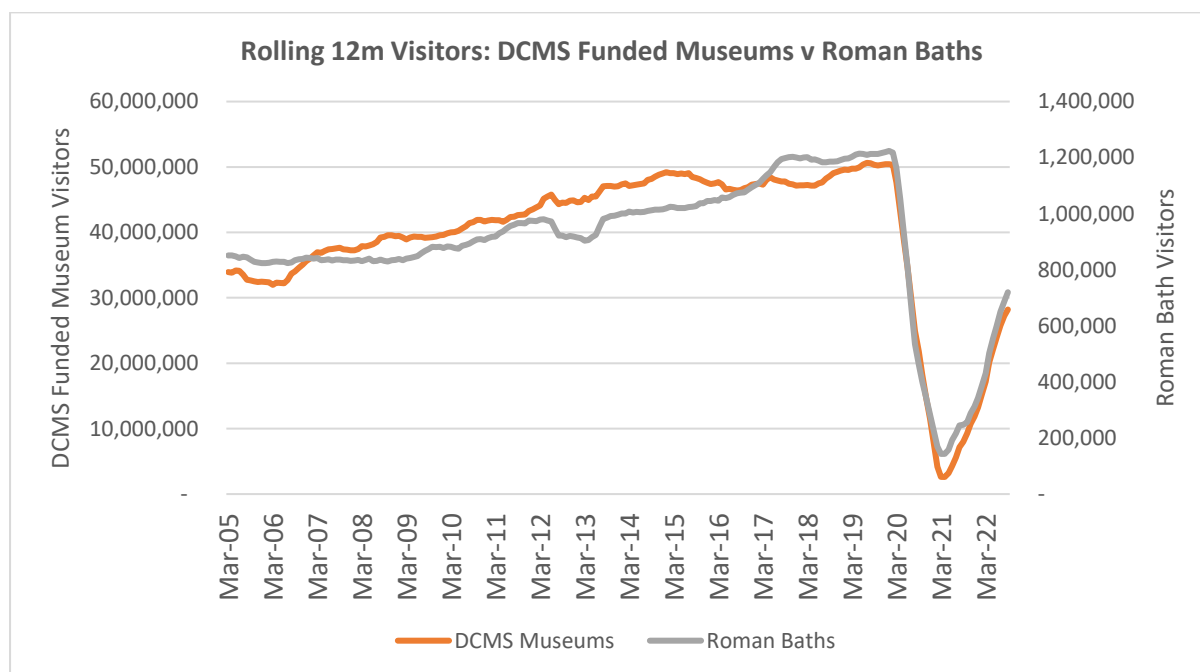


Figure 2: Rolling 12 month DCMS funded museum and Roman Baths visitor numbers

The chart shows that the impact of COVID was even more acutely felt in the (heavily London weighted) based DCMS portfolio; the Roman Baths lost 88% of visitors compared to 95% for the DCMS sites. Our recovery trajectories have been similar although ours slightly steeper since the middle of summer. The Roman Baths had recovered to 59% of pre-COVID total at end Sept, compared to 56% for the DCMS museums.¹ One of the major limiters on the rate of recovery has been the absence of the Chinese market throughout 2022 due to strict COVID restrictions in mainland China that made international travel much more difficult.

¹ More broadly, the chart sets some of the longer-term context for the Roman Baths, in the build up to COVID. The London 2012 Olympic effect, which saw a drop in London museum visitation, was much more acutely felt outside London, as London became the centre for tourist activity that summer. The Brexit referendum (and weakening of GBP) drove a steady increase of visitors to both sets of attractions. The impact of terror attacks in 2017, which saw a switch out of London to “smaller, safer” cities. This chart shows that switch very clearly in May – Aug 2017. Then COVID, which came just after the Roman Baths’ busiest ever year. The fuller impacts of the pandemic have been set out in previous versions of the Plan and are not repeated here.

Fashion Museum

The Fashion Museum closed to the public on the 30th October 2022. The budgeted visitor numbers of 38,000 were just exceeded, with 38,039 people visiting the museum prior to its closure. During the final month in particular, the number of local residents visiting was significantly higher than average.

The plans for relocating the Fashion Museum are discussed in section 3.4 below.

Victoria Art Gallery

Visitor numbers at the Victoria Art Gallery have been below budget through the majority of this financial year. This is due to fewer than anticipated people visiting exhibitions in the early part of the year.

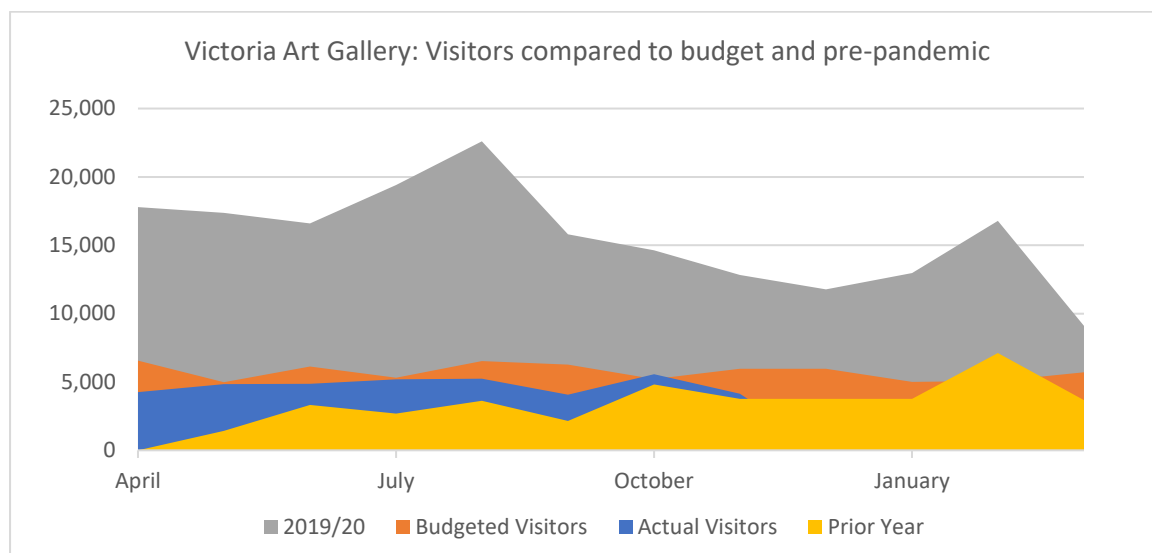


Figure 3: Victoria Art Gallery Visitor Numbers

The Gallery's audience is typically a slightly older audience than the Roman Baths and this section of society have been more cautious about returning to situations where there is an increased level of mixing.

Despite this, retail sales and commission on sales of work have been ahead of expectation. This commercial success has been driven by the Mary Feddon and Peter Brown exhibitions in particular.

3.2. Future targets

The financial summary and key future targets are set out in appendix 1 and 2 respectively, alongside the prior year actuals and current year forecast. Figure 4 below shows the expected recovery of both income and profit.

	2021/22 (actual)	2022/23 (forecast)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
External turnover (£000)	14,347	18,123	21,005	24,054	27,449	28,314	28,926
Net Profit (£000)	4,002	5,623	8,233	10,102	12,940	13,327	13,394
<i>Profit as a % of income</i>	27.9%	31.0%	39.2%	42.0%	47.1%	47.1%	46.3%

Figure 4: Heritage Services income and profit

The Plan projects growth in visitor numbers and visitor-driven income from the current performance outlined above. Heritage Services income will return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023/24 however it will be 2025 before visitor numbers return to the levels seen in 2019.

The financial targets for the Service absorb the anticipated pay award to be agreed by the Council for each year of the plan, as well as other inflation pressures on the cost base. Through the lifetime of the Plan, pay is expected to be the biggest cost pressure facing the Service.

Further to this Heritage Services has agreed with B&NES Council that, in principal, the Service will retain over-achievement on budget surplus, year-on-year, to act as a smoothing reserve to support capital funding requirements going forward. This principal will be reviewed each year as part of the Council's annual budgeting process.

3.3. Action Against Strategic Priorities

3.3.1. To provide maximum access to our buildings, monuments and collections to as wide an audience as possible to facilitate learning, understanding and emotional connection

At the Roman Baths the Service will review and deliver a revised audio-tour, to bring the narrative at the site in-line with the most-up-to-date understanding of Roman Britain. The Service will also create an audience development plan for the Roman Baths and Clore Learning Centre that provides strategic direction to the Service's efforts in engaging with different audiences, including those who we have not traditionally welcomed at our sites.

This engagement plan will ensure that the revised interpretation in the audio-tour reflects the interests of these audience groups. It will also align our engagement endeavours with other Council activities (e.g. with Public Health and the Adult Social Care team).

A programme of temporary exhibitions will continue to be delivered at the Victoria Art Gallery. We will also open a new space in the building dedicated to learning, community engagement and commercial activation.

A new audience development plan for Bath Record Office will be devised so that the archives and local studies can reach wider and more diverse audiences. In turn, this will improve its collecting strategy and ensure its relevance to our communities. We will also look to improve public access to the searchrooms at the Guildhall.

The Re-Fashioning Bath project will be progressed – a fuller explanation of this project is noted in 3.4 below

3.3.2. To be a supporter focussed organisation

Heritage Services will continue the role-out of the Discovery Card to residents across B&NES, particularly focussing on increasing take-up in areas of the population who haven't previously held Discovery Cards.

The Service will conclude a re-structure creating a new Fundraising, Marketing and Supporter Development team. One of focus of this team will be to undertake feasibility on

the implementation of a new audience segmentation approach and Customer Relationship Management system – both vital to us developing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with our audiences.

3.3.3. To Maximise Income

Heritage Services will seek to maximise income generating opportunities across its areas of operation.

Roman Baths

- Continue to maximise revenue through admission income and retail, whilst maintaining value for money scores at their current level.
- Implement the findings of a consultancy review of the Roman Baths retail offer to deliver additional sales and profit.
- Develop products with partners which encourage overnight stays in the region in order to deliver maximum economic benefits from visitors.
- Launch of the children's guidebook, alongside a review of our family offer.
- Ensuring that experience is at the heart of our product offering, using the site and collection as the backdrop against which people can create amazing memories.

Victoria Art Gallery

- Continue to engage loyal repeat visitors and extend this audience through the high quality programme of temporary exhibitions.
- A review of the cross site promotion between the Roman Baths and the Gallery to try and drive more visitors from the Baths to the Gallery.

Cross Service

- Continue to integrate the Council's historic venue hire business – improving the customer proposition, the venue marketing and the pricing of products.

3.3.4. To operate efficiently and effectively as an organisation

At the Roman Baths the Service will deliver a new Conservation Management Plan, which will inform our capital and conservation investment in the future. At the Bath Record Office

the team will progress with implementing digital preservation so that collections in digital format are securely stored and accessible.

Across the Service we will continue to progress a strategic approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by delivering an assessment of our overall operation in this context.

We will continue to improve the management and maintenance of our capital infrastructure. Major projects will include remedial work to the roof of the Victoria Art Gallery and investment in the Building Management Systems of both the Roman Baths and Victoria Art Gallery.

An integral part of the strategy going forward will be ongoing investment in the Service workforce. We will continue to build an even stronger performance culture with staff engagement, wellbeing and development at its heart. Some actions we will explore include:

- The ongoing development and delivery of a comprehensive staff engagement and internal communication plan so that all staff are well informed and also able to contribute to the continuous improvement of the service
- Creating an integrated training plan for staff at all levels of the service
- A review of ways to recognise exceptional performance
- Using the new Clear Review system to ensure all staff have an up-to-date forward job plan, linked explicitly to our strategy, that is reviewed on a regular basis. These plans will also focus on developing staff for the benefit of the Service, our customers and their own personal and professional goals. We will also systematically embed our expectations and actions related to health and Safety, the climate crisis and diversity, equality and inclusion into these plans
- Developing a wellbeing strategy specific to Heritage Services – taking the best of the work undertaken by the council and tailoring it to our specific circumstances
- Encouraging further initiatives which encourage cross site working to break down silos and develop a single service culture

In order to deliver on the Strategic Priorities outlined in this document the Service will also need to increase its staffing complement. The current structure and staffing levels reflect the Service's ability to deliver on its pre-Covid priorities, namely surplus generation at the Roman Baths. With the new strategy promoting a wider emphasis for the Service additional staff will be required. The prospective increases in cost base will be confirmed and enacted

over 23/24 but their potential impact has been taken into account when considering the surplus income figures noted in this Plan.

3.3.5 To bring benefit to Bath, the South West and the UK

Heritage Services will use its platform and influence to:

- Represent B&NES on the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Cultural Compact to deliver on the WECA cultural strategy;
- Represent B&NES as a board member of Visit West and work with Visit West to deliver the destination development plan for the region;
- Represent The Roman Baths and Pump Room as a board member for the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions;
- Work with Bath's Cultural and Creative Ambition Board to establish how the Council can contribute further to the cultural offer across the district;
- Work with other teams within the Council's Sustainable Communities Directorate to contribute to the Economic Strategy and Local Plan to ensure they recognise and include a vision for a sustainable visitor economy within B&NES over the lifespan of those plans.

23/24 will see the World Heritage Management (WHM) function move from Heritage Services to the Planning Service. The WHM team have worked well within Heritage Services and this has coincided with a period when the focus of the Council's efforts in this space have related more to the interpretation and engagement aspects of Bath's inscription – specifically in delivering the new World Heritage Centre and securing the second World Heritage Site Inscription as part of the Great Spas of Europe. Looking forward, the WHM function will be more concerned with the impacts of development, sustainable tourism and green transformation on the Outstanding Universal Values for which Bath is inscribed. This means it will be better situated within the Planning Service – making it more integrated into a wider range of the Council's activities and providing excellent advice and education to colleagues directly grappling with these upcoming issues. As part of this move the Council

will be investing in a dedicated resource to manage the ongoing activity related to the Great Spas of Europe Inscription whilst retaining a full-time position to deliver on issues more specifically related to Bath. These changes demonstrate the Council's commitment to Bath's dual World Heritage Inscription and will help to ensure that the benefits of both are maximised going forward. The Head of Heritage Services will retain his place on the World Heritage Advisory Board and will work closely with the Planning Service on all aspects of WHM related to interpretation and engagement – the strengths of Heritage Services.

3.3.6 To act as an environmentally sustainable and responsible organisation in everything we do

The Service has made progress in some areas in the last 24 months, most significantly in the form of an energy capture scheme, taking the heat from the Kings Spring and converting this to energy to provide heat to the Clore Learning Centre, World Heritage Centre and overall Pump Room building complex.

The relocation of the retail stock warehouse to the outskirts of Bath has removed supplier deliveries from the city centre and the Retail team are awaiting the delivery on an electric van to move stock between the warehouse and the Heritage Services shops, further reducing the impact of the operation.

However, the Service has not yet developed an overall strategy to achieve net zero, in line with the climate emergency declaration made by the Council. Work will be undertaken in order to develop this strategy over the next 12 months. This work will be delivered in four stages and the Service will complete stage 1 and 2 in the 2023/24 financial year.

- Establish baseline of emissions. Heritage Services has commissioned a study to establish a baseline, from which to set and measure carbon reduction targets.
- Develop a pathway to net zero. From the baseline study we will create a pathway to net zero, identifying the priority areas to reduce.
- Create a comprehensive climate action plan. Informed by the pathway to net zero we will develop an action plan to reduce emissions as quickly and efficiently as possible. This will include strategies including asset replacement, procurement and supply chain management, reduced usage and influencing staff and visitor behaviour.

- Measure and report against the climate action plan. This will form a standing agenda item for the Heritage Advisory Board and future iterations of this plan will also report on progress against this objective.

3.4. Re-Fashioning Bath (relocating the Fashion Museum and Collection)

3.4.1. Project overview

The Fashion Museum is one of the world's great museum collections of historical and contemporary fashionable dress and Designated by government as a collection of outstanding significance. The collection contains over 100,000 artefacts and has been exhibited in the Assembly Rooms in Bath, which the Council has leased from the National Trust, since the 1960s. Pre-COVID it attracted 100,000 visitors a year to the city of Bath.

The National Trust have decided to take possession of the building to create a new heritage experience celebrating the Georgian era in Bath and the Fashion Museum closed to the public in October 2022.

Creating one of the most significant cultural infrastructure projects in the country, the Council aims to establish a new Fashion Museum in Bath City Centre and a purpose-built home for the collection in Locksbrook. Both places should play a pivotal role in the economic, cultural and social future of the city, preserving access to one of the world's great museum collections as well as delivering regeneration, economic, skills, placemaking and wellbeing benefits across the region.

The Museum

The Council has acquired the Old Post Office building within the Milsom Quarter of the city. This will be the new home of the Fashion Museum with permanent displays, temporary exhibitions, dedicated learning and community spaces and secondary spend opportunities such as retail, food and beverage and venue hire options.

Initial modelling suggests that the museum should attract 250,000 visitors per year. It will allow audiences not only to consider the beauty and craftsmanship of historic and

contemporary fashion, but to use the collection as a lens to understand themselves and the world around them better. Visitors will be encouraged to engage in issues such as sustainability, identity and social justice.

The Fashion Collection Archive

The intention is for the collection which is not on display to be stored in a purpose-built facility, co-located with Bath Spa University, at a site in Locksbrook. The facility will be built to minimise carbon footprint and should be an exemplar of contemporary museum storage.

The Service will look to renew its memorandum of understanding with Bath Spa University. The Fashion Collection Archive will meet the needs of a diverse range of people, including designers, makers, researchers and film studios, to access and experience the collection for their own purposes.

Tackling Deprivation

The aim is for both facilities to be hubs for inclusive cultural engagement – with programming and activities targeted at those in some of the most deprived communities in B&NES. The Service envisages that the operations of both sites be underpinned by a strong cohort of volunteers, placement and internship opportunities. This may include the use of the collection in skills based courses to target long-term unemployment and the creation of a 'hub and spoke' model to extend programming into deprived communities via pop-ups in vacant units and using existing local infrastructure. We will work in partnership with Council departments and third-party providers to reach those communities who would benefit most from engagement with this project. All Discovery Card holders in B&NES will have free access to both facilities.

3.4.2. Interim storage and engagement

Whilst a new permanent home is created the collection is housed at Dents glovemakers, one of the UK's leading heritage fashion brands. The costs associated with this storage are built into the Plan.

The collection will be as open as possible, with a range of engagement activities during the time it is in temporary accommodation. Heritage Services will run digital engagement and

community consultation workshops for the new Fashion Museum project. This Service will continue to loan objects from the Fashion Museum collection to exhibitions world-wide as well as exploring the opportunity for temporary exhibition opportunities across Bath and the South West.

3.4.3. Project costing and overview

The project costs are estimated at £34m. The funding plan for the project is as follows:

- Funding has already been secured for the acquisition costs of the Old Post Office site and feasibility and design work on both the Locksbrook and Old Post Office sites. This funding will progress the schemes to RIBA stage 3 and planning application.
- A fundraising campaign will contribute to the remaining project costs alongside other funding routes currently under review.
- The aim is for the new museum to open in 27/28, this is dependant on a successful fundraising campaign to enable contracts to be awarded.
- An independent charity will be launched in 2023 to support the project.

4. Risk

There has perhaps never been a greater level of uncertainty when revising the Plan. The recovery following the COVID 19 pandemic is still not fully established, whilst inflationary economic pressures restrict the level of disposable income that potential visitors have to spend on leisure activities.

The Plan assumes that there will be no new impacts as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and projects steady growth back to pre-pandemic visitor numbers in 2025.

The Plan assumes that the trajectory of recovery will not be significantly impacted by the global economic pressure referenced above. The Roman Baths has performed well during previous recessions benefiting from a staycation effect (as domestic audiences chose not to go abroad or not to holiday within the UK, but still undertake day trips). It is also important to note that international tourists benefit from the current low value of the Pound and also tend to represent the more affluent sections of society and are therefore better able to absorb the impact of inflation than other demographics of society.

The Plan assumes that there will be no new adverse impact caused by security, economic or environmental events, but it should be noted that terrorism continues to pose a risk. The proposed city centre counter-terrorism measures are designed to reduce the risk of such an event. Potential further international uncertainty driven by geopolitical incidents also casts a shadow over the future years.

Within the Council's General Reserves via the Robustness of Estimates calculation, a risk of £2.5m was recognised in 2022/23. This was assessed as medium risk; the Plan recommends that this risk provision is maintained.

There are inherent risks to the Fashion Museum relocation project. These principally relate to the funding of the project and the impact that securing funding may have of the timeline of the project. However, the risk noted in the Plan last year, in relation to the temporary storage of the collection has been resolved with the agreement to house the collection with Dents.

The pathway to net zero, discussed above, is currently uncosted and unfunded. The work to establish the interventions required, due to take place in the next twelve months, will inform the budget requirements for this work.

Throughout 2022 the Service has experienced significant staff shortages, particularly in Facilities and Retail staff. Recruitment challenges were exacerbated by the protracted pay negotiations which delayed the 2023 pay award. The staff shortages, coupled with high visitor numbers through the summer placed pressure on staff and increased focus has been paid to mental health wellbeing over 2022 with a focus on staff recognition, improved communication and workload management.

The widened remit of the Service, and the challenges and opportunities presented by the post COVID world, require a review of the staffing structure and complement in the Service. Any increase in cost base will need to be well judged so that it can solidify, and/or grow, the overall surplus to be returned.

Appendix 1: Financial Summary

Heritage Services Business Plan 2023-28

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Business Plan Summary

	Prior Year Actuals		Current Year	2023/24 Financial Year	Plan Years			
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	Budget £'000	Budget £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Admissions	(2,503)	(8,495)	(14,573)	(17,528)	(21,004)	(24,144)	(24,875)	(25,379)
Retail Sales	(238)	(1,155)	(1,657)	(2,283)	(2,009)	(2,261)	(2,362)	(2,447)
Room Hire	(44)	(369)	(742)	(714)	(492)	(502)	(512)	(522)
Catering	(45)	(264)	(373)	(334)	(344)	(354)	(365)	(376)
Other Income	(11)	(378)	(204)	(308)	(181)	(164)	(177)	(178)
Grants/Contributions	(12,668)	(3,687)	(97)	(22)	(25)	(25)	(25)	(25)
Total Income	(15,509)	(14,347)	(17,646)	(21,189)	(24,054)	(27,449)	(28,314)	(28,926)
Employee Costs	4,524	5,003	5,311	5,629	6,176	6,419	6,675	6,938
Premises Costs	1,240	1,277	1,390	1,628	1,789	1,889	1,997	2,111
Transport Costs	40	44	50	30	31	32	33	34
Supplies & Services	1,116	1,936	2,505	3,080	3,080	3,279	3,401	3,517
Other Costs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maintenance	326	386	597	509	539	550	562	574
Investment	396	249	474	495	766	770	750	790
Total Expenditure	7,643	8,895	10,329	11,371	12,383	12,940	13,418	13,964
Internal Income	(2,539)	(2,719)	(3,307)	(3,981)	(4,118)	(4,237)	(4,364)	(4,496)
Recharge codes	4,264	4,170	4,899	5,566	5,709	5,828	5,955	6,087
Internal Recharges	1,725	1,451	1,593	1,585	1,591	1,591	1,591	1,591
(Surplus) / Deficit	(6,141)	(4,002)	(5,725)	(8,233)	(10,081)	(12,918)	(13,305)	(13,371)
Operating Margin	39.6%	27.9%	32.4%	38.9%	41.9%	47.1%	47.0%	46.2%
Operating Margin (pre investme	42.2%	29.6%	35.1%	41.2%	45.1%	49.9%	49.6%	49.0%
Wage %	29.2%	34.9%	30.1%	26.6%	25.7%	23.4%	23.6%	24.0%

Appendix 2: KPI Targets

	2021/22 (actual)	2022/23 (forecast)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Roman Baths visitors (000s)	431	785	888	1,044	1,200	1,236	1,266
Victoria Art Gallery visitors (000s)	40	66	66	71	71	71	71
World Heritage Centre visitors (000s)	0	70	88	104	120	124	127
Roman Baths income per visitor (£)*	21.68	22.08	22.48	22.19	22.13	22.15	22.09
Education visitors at Roman Baths (000s)	4,733	6,745	19,499	20,880	24,000	24,720	25,320
Community Participants	988	19,283**	18,700	19,000	19,300	19,500	19,700
Discovery Cards Issued (000s)	0	23,000	5000	5,500	6000	6,500	30,000***
Social media followers	129,923	194,077	212,191	237,443	262,939	291,678	324,259
Discover Card holder visits (000s)	11,984	11,760	14,208	16,704	19,200	19,776	20,256
Net profit per Council Tax household (£)	47.18	66.31	95.13	119.11	152.58	157.15	157.94
* admission income plus retail sales & other sales and restaurant commission ** includes activities run at the Fashion Museum, which has closed *** Discovery Cards have a 5 year renewal lifecycle meaning those issues in 22/23 will begin to expire in 27/28							