

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	13 th March 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3597
TITLE:	Heritage Services Business Plan 25-30	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Heritage Services Business Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This is the update of the Heritage Services Business Plan 2025-2030. It covers the five financial years from 2025/26 to 2029/2030, and has been prepared following the annual in-depth review of business activity. The revised Plan includes an analysis of the risk involved.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

- 2.1 Approve the Heritage Services Business Plan 2025 – 2030
- 2.2 Fully approve a capital budget of up to £2,135,000 towards the development of detailed designs (RIBA Stage 3) and associated work, to support the future re-development of the Fashion Museum Bath, to be funded from Corporate Supported Borrowing. This is in-line with the activity outlined in the Business Plan and the overall Council commitment to the project, included as part of the Council's Capital Programme and recently approved as part of the Council's budget setting for 25/26.
- 2.3 To delegate approval to the Executive Director Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, S151 Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to accept grant awards and philanthropic contributions made towards the Fashion Museum Bath project in-line with the fundraising strategy identified in the Heritage Services Business Plan.

3 THE REPORT

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 the Council's visitor businesses.

The Service anticipates continued growth in visitors at the Roman Baths in the 25/26 financial year. This will lead to increases in income and profit. Heritage Services is projected to deliver a financial surplus of £12 million in 2024/25, rising to £14.2 million in 2025/26.

This financial success is built on investment in staff and the heritage assets that we care for alongside prudent cost management and entrepreneurial approaches to pricing and revenue generation. To maximise income, plans include increasing visitor numbers and optimising pricing strategies at the Roman Baths, introducing new guided tours, and enhancing the commercial event programme. We anticipate that further successful exhibitions at the Victoria Art Gallery will also continue to boost revenue.

Heritage Services will match this commercial activity with a continued commitment to delivering social value impact across our activities. These are aligned with core Council strategies including the Economic and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Activities include the opening of a new learning and community engagement space at the Victoria Art Gallery and the continued use of the Clore Learning Centre as a hub for learning and participation in the heart of Bath. We will further encourage the take-up of the Discovery Card scheme, fostering deeper community connections. We will also grow our volunteer cohort.

25/26 will also see us strengthen our approach to supporter engagement. Primarily this will be through the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The relationships with the independent charities that support us will be deepened and we will work in partnership with them to ensure we benefit from philanthropic contributions to our activities.

Operational efficiency will be measured through benchmarking within the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) and a review of the governance structure will update the operating arrangements for Service within the Council. Focus will increasingly be placed on environmental sustainability by improving building efficiency, sustainable procurement, and promoting public and active travel. As always, the Service will focus on the safety, security and conservation of the buildings and collections in our care. This was demonstrated in 2024 when the Roman Baths was awarded full accredited status from Arts Council England and the Fashion Museum Collection interim accreditation. In 2025 we will move the majority of our reserve collections, associated with the Roman Baths and Bath Record Office, to new more suitable storage locations.

The relocation of the Fashion Museum to the Old Post Office will continue to be the key capital project for the Service. It serves as a paradigm for the themes outlined above with audiences, research, collections care, social value and financial sustainability at its' heart.

Heritage Services is dedicated to the delivery of Council Corporate priorities via the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of Bath and North East Somerset.

Through strategic investments, innovative initiatives, and a commitment to sustainability, we aim to deliver exceptional visitor experiences and contribute to the region's economic and social prosperity.

In 2025, at the request of the Director of Sustainable Communities, the Service will review its relationship with the Council as set-out in the original Cabinet Decision in 2004 that established the Service as an Independent Business Unit. This will consider the role of the Heritage Advisory Board in providing external quality assurance as part of the yearly budget setting process. This may require a revision to the original Cabinet paper from 2004.

A provisional capital budget was added to the capital programme for the financial years 2025/26 to 2029/30 for the Fashion Museum Bath project. The next key milestone for the project is to achieve RIBA stage 3 (spatial co-ordination) which will link to submission of planning documents. The project will require up to £2m of capital to be fully approved from the capital budget in 2025/26 to complete RIBA stage 3. All decisions to proceed with the project will be managed via the B&NES Gateway process and the approval processes for the provisional and approved capital programme budgets.

Whilst not a main theme of the Business Plan the Service will also be working to create a corporate approach to Culture for B&NES. This will include:

- Ensure Council cultural activity is as targeted as possible to deliver on the Corporate Strategy and other key strategic plans
- Understand and explain how and why the Council will support culture in B&NES
- Demonstrate to funders that the Local Authority is committed in a meaningful way to culture (thereby encouraging funding in Council and 3rd party cultural activities)
- Allow the Council to actively support a vibrant cultural sector in the Authority
- Be responsive and complementary to the regional cultural picture as denoted by the WECA Cultural Compact

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 N/A

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The plan is deliverable within current resource limits. The outer years of the plan will be reviewed year on year to assess any foreseeable resource implication.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 The plans for the Service to make meaningful progress to be more Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive are included in the Plan

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 The plans for the Service to make meaningful progress towards net 0 are included in the Business Plan

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 N/A

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Business Plan has been reviewed and approved at both the Council's Corporate Management Team and Informal Cabinet. It has also been to the PDS Scrutiny panel.

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Background papers	Heritage Services Strategy
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	