

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	12th March 2026	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3681
TITLE:	Heritage Services Business Plan 2026 - 2031	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix A - Heritage Services Business Plan Appendix B - Heritage Services Sustainability Action Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This is the update of the Heritage Services Business Plan 2026-2031. It covers the five financial years from 2026/27 to 2030/31 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 2026 – 2031

3 THE REPORT

The Heritage Services Business Plan 2026-2031 outlines the Service's strategic vision and mission as we adapt to a challenging economic landscape and continue to deliver key Council corporate priorities.

The Service anticipates continued growth in visitors at the Roman Baths in the 2026/27 financial year. This will lead to increases in income and profit. Heritage Services is projected to deliver a financial surplus of £13.261 million in 2026/27.

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. There will be two main strands to drive footfall at the

Roman Baths. The first is to focus on attracting more international visitors through marketing and relationship building within the travel trade market. The second is to increased domestic visitation by improving the value of a visit to the Baths when compared to competing attractions. This will include considering new pricing options, introducing new programming and making the depth of experience available at the site more central to our communications.

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. These activities will centre on the continued use of our dedicated learning and community engagement spaces at the Victoria Art Gallery and Clore Learning Centre as hubs for learning and participation in the heart of Bath. We will also continue to invest in and grow our successful volunteer programme.

2026/27 will also see us strengthen our approach to supporter engagement. Primarily this will be through the ongoing 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 the Service within the Council. Focus will increasingly be placed on environmental sustainability, and this report is accompanied by the Service's first ever Environmental Action Plan. As always, the Service will focus on the safety, security and conservation of the buildings and collections in our care. This was demonstrated in 2025 when a proportion of the Bath Record Office collection was re-located to more suitable storage. In 2026 we will move the majority of our reserve collections associated with the Roman Baths to a more suitable location also.

The relocation of the Fashion Museum to the Old Post Office remains the Service's flagship capital project. The Museum's departure from Bath's historic Assembly Rooms in 2022 created a rare opportunity to establish a bold, pioneering museum that reflects the significance of one of the world's leading fashion collections. This development exemplifies the Service's priorities—audience engagement, research excellence, collections care, social value, and financial sustainability. In 2026, the project will focus on securing substantial funding, alongside obtaining planning permission and listed building consent.

The Service's current strategy period ends in 2027. Cast in 2022 in the immediate post-covid world much has now changed. As such, the Service will begin to consider its strategy for the period 2028 – 2033 in the 2026/27 financial year. This will take into account the changing context that the Service operates in and look forward to the opening of the Fashion Museum in 2030.

We are proud to be a Service that is part of Bath and North East Somerset Council and everything we do is dedicated to delivering on the purpose, principles, commitments and priorities of the Council. This is evident throughout the content of this plan.

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 Services' [EDI strategy](#).

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 Policy Development 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	