

Rutland County Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Scoping Document: Museum Task and Finish Group

1. Topic

1.1 To consider the future of the Cultural offer in Rutland. This, however, is a very large piece of work and phase one, which is herein scoped, relates to the Museum operations.

2. Purpose

2.1 With the background of worsening financial pressure, to consider the scope of Museum services and recommend opportunities to the Cabinet for a reduction in the net cost of the operation through cost reductions, income enhancement while recognising the need for very significant capital investment in the Museum buildings.

2.2 To consider the issues raised in Para 8 below

3. Members (Identify Chairperson)

TBA

4. Portfolio holders

- Councillor Marc Oxley

5. Officers

- Robert Clayton, Head of Culture and Registration
- Penny Sharp, Director of Places

6. Rationale

6.1 What does the Review hope to achieve?

With significant financial pressures affecting the Council, every cost centre will be considered in order to achieve net operational savings. The objective of this review will be to provide Cabinet with well-researched ideas to reduce net costs and/or operating models having considered all the options open to the Council

6.2 What is the community importance and benefit?

Legally local authorities are obliged to store historic articles of importance – the collection and provide access to the public

6.3 How does it fit in with the Council's corporate priorities/scrutiny priorities?

The approved Corporate Plan states at Priority 1 – *A Special Place – Objective 4 - We will enable a thriving, diverse, sustainable heritage and cultural offer with increased community leadership.* The work of the Scrutiny Committee will assist Cabinet and Officers to complete the service review to manage heritage assets and future service delivery, including community led (*sic*)

6.4 What opportunities are there to make a distinctive impact?

To understand where the £2.5m bid to the Levelling Up Fund come into the equation and ensuring that the Council meets its objective Objective 21 to take further action to ensure the council lives within its financial means.

7. Background

7.1 Is the review looking at existing policy or a new policy?

The review will consider existing policies and make recommendations for new or amended policies as the evidence may demonstrate.

7.2 How does it relate to existing policy?

An analysis of existing policies will be considered by the Scrutiny e.g. Collections policy and requirements for Museum Accreditation

7.3 Has the need for the review come about from an issue arising from national or local events?

The continuing pressures on finance and lack of national funding will impact the ability of the Council to deliver a full range of front-line services. With the discovery of two significant finds in the County, there will be further pressure on those finances.

7.4 Are there any relevant community views to refer to? (e.g. previous consultations)

There is significant interest from the community in all aspects of the service and especially the Friends of the Museum and Arts4Rutland. In the Future Rutland Conversation in 2021, residents were clear that they valued the cultural offer and the role which the Museum and its facilities provided in that offer.

8. Issues to be considered

The following aspects of the Museum's activities may wish to be considered in no particular order

8.1 What should the Museum service deliver?

8.2 What is the Museum service required to deliver by law e.g. storage of materials of interest and access by the public?

8.3 Consideration of the current collections policy and whether it is relevant for today and the future and

would this result in any disposals including sales of items

- 8.4** What are the operational alternatives? Partnering with other bodies such as the Rutland Agricultural Society, local private sector owners of farm machinery (Ellis, Knight and Hinch) or other local authorities.
Consideration of options such as different operating models including a Charitable Trust, closure of part of the site, expansion due to Levelling Up Fund bid, etc
- 8.5** Are there alternative revenue funding streams?
- 8.6** Are there examples of other small Museums operating with nil local authority revenue support or outsourcing, both good (?) and not so good (Peterborough)?
- 8.7** Where else could the collection be stored? LCC have in the past considered building a warehouse at Glenfield. Currently the collection is stored on site at the Museum or in South Street and some of the paper archives in LCC store at Wigston.
- 8.8** What might be the impact of the Levelling Up Bid, if successful, on future revenue streams both positive and negative?
- 8.9** Is the space being used to its best in terms of exhibitions, collection storage and office accommodation?
- 8.10** What might be the impact of the Asset Review and works required to bring the buildings up to an acceptable and useable standard?

9. Timetable

9.1 Key deadlines -TBA

9.2 Length of review - Fixed end date to be identified

10. Methodology/Approach

What method of enquiry will be most suitable for the review?

This document is not being prescriptive and would propose that the members consider how they might gather the evidence efficiently which might include some of the following:

- Desk-based review of papers
- Site visits / observations
- Comparisons with other authorities
- Workshops / Focus Groups
- Interview officers
- Calling witnesses to give evidence

11. Evidence Sources

What are the key lines of enquiry?

Consider some of the following:

- Mendoza Report – An independent review of Museums in England (2017) copy attached
- Government guidance, NPPF and legislation
- Service plans
- Performance Indicators- comparison of costs for similar sized museums operated by private organisations and other local authorities
- Evidence from other reviews
- Independent research articles and papers
- Are there any stakeholders or interest groups the Task and Finish Group wants to hear from in addition to inviting them to meeting?
- Consider other models (e.g. Brighton and Hove City Council transfer of operations to Charitable Trust April 2018)

12. Witnesses

Who would the Group wish to invite to its meetings?

A potential witness list to be decided by members might include:

- Service users
- Stakeholders / Interest Groups
- Cabinet Members
- External partners
- Charities and other organisations
- Professional experts

13. Other considerations

- Is there scope for site visits?
- Which officers will be influential in review process?
Robert Clayton
- Any obstacles to review outcomes?
- Opportunity for members to better understand the issues of Museum when considering budgets in future years