

Tameside Museums Forward Plan (2023-2028)

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 This Forward Plan reflects the changes in the way the Council provides its services to meet the needs of its residents and visitors as well as Government policies influencing the Museums and Galleries sector.
- 1.2 The Museum Service was established in 1975. Prior to that date there was only one art gallery in the Borough, the Astley Cheetham Art Gallery. All services are operated directly by Tameside MBC. The council is also custodian of the Manchester Regiment collection.
- 1.3 The Service includes:
 - Portland Basin Museum (Ashton-under-Lyne)
 - Astley Cheetham Art Gallery (Stalybridge)
 - The Manchester Regiment collection

2. AIM OF THE FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 The aim of this Forward Plan is to provide a policy context for the work of Tameside Museums and Galleries Service for the period 2023-2028. It outlines the main work areas proposed during this time and how the service will be delivered.
- 2.2 The proposals in the Forward Plan will help to:
 - Increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the Borough's museums and galleries and their collections.
 - Ensure equality of opportunity for people to visit, enjoy and engage with the museums, galleries and collections managed by Tameside Museums and Galleries Service.
 - Safeguard and preserve the collections for future generations of Tameside residents and visitors.
 - Drive improvement within the service and enable development.

3. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 3.1 Tameside Museums and Galleries aim to be:

A dynamic, engaging and responsive Museum Service that celebrates the people and places of Tameside, ensuring a meaningful and enjoyable experience for all.

4. BOROUGH DEMOGRAPHICS

- 4.1 The borough of Tameside consists of nine towns in a mainly urban area east of Manchester. It stretches from the city of Manchester to the Peak District and shares borders with Stockport, Oldham, Manchester and the borough of High Peak. Tameside is well connected to the region and beyond by the M60 and M67 motorways and by rail links to Manchester and Yorkshire.

- 4.2 The population of Tameside is around 231,100 and the population is anticipated to grow in coming years. In the 2021 census, Tameside saw the North West's third largest percentage-point rise in the share of lone parent households (from 12.8% in 2011 to 13.8% in 2021). The median age is 40. Of the 316 Local Authority areas in England, Tameside is the 37th most income-deprived. 17.5% of Tameside residents live in income-deprived households. Of the 141 neighbourhoods in Tameside, 54 were among the 20 percent most income-deprived in England. Conversely, 8 neighbourhoods were in the 20 percent least income-deprived in England. Ethnicity across the borough is 85.5% white, 9.2% Asian, 2.3% black, 2.1% mixed and 0.8% other. By religion, 47.8% are Christian, 38% have no religion, 7.3% are Muslim, 1.3% are Hindu and 0.8% are another religion.
- 4.3 The implications for the Museums and Galleries Service are to ensure that we continue to provide services that are enjoyable and accessible to our changing communities in addition to providing a family friendly environment at our sites. We must ensure that the service caters for the cultural heritage of diverse communities and all ages, and offer value for money.

5. THE COUNCIL: POLITICAL AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

- 5.1 The council has an Executive Cabinet as part of its constitution. Each member of the Cabinet has a portfolio setting out their role and responsibilities. There are eleven members of the Cabinet, which is chaired by the Executive Leader. Museums and Galleries come under the portfolio of the Executive Member for Towns and Communities.
- 5.2 Tameside Council is led by a Chief Executive. The Chief Executive and nine Directors make up the Single Leadership Team. The Directors are supported by fifteen Assistant Directors/Consultants, who together form the Senior Management Team.
- 5.3 The Museum and Galleries Service sits within Cultural and Customer Services, which is under Operations and Neighbourhoods service area within the Place directorate.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SERVICE

- 6.1 The Museums Manager has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the service, drafting policy, budgets, marketing and exhibitions/events management.
- 6.2 The Curator and Assistant Curator support the Museums Manager and are in charge of collections management and interpreting the collections across the Museums and Galleries sites.
- 6.3 The Operations and Business Manager manages the day-to-day financial running and health and safety of the Museums and Galleries, as well as other services within Cultural and Customer Services. The Visitor Services Manager oversees the day-to-day running of the Museums and Galleries and manages the Front of House staff. The Technician maintains the sites, assists with collections care and supports the exhibitions programme.
- 6.4 There are nine part time front-of-house posts (equivalent to four full time posts) responsible for visitor services across the museums and galleries. Front-of-house staff also deal with some visitor enquiries, shop management and some workshop activity.
- 6.5 Colleagues from across Cultural Services also assist the Museum Service in a range of discrete areas such as events management and educational provision.

7. THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 7.1 Arts Council England supports and develops museums as part of their functions. Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. They support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries - from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.
- 7.2 The Accreditation Scheme, managed by ACE, sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. The Standard supports museums in identifying opportunities for further improvement and development. There are currently over 1,700 museums participating in the Scheme, demonstrating their commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment of our communities.
- 7.3 Arts Council England has published its strategy for 2020-30, Let's Create, setting out its funding priorities and areas for development. It supports outcomes that develop creative people, cultural communities and a creative and cultural country. It also places emphasis on ambition and quality, inclusivity and relevance, and dynamism and environmental sustainability. The Museums Service will seek to link into these priorities where appropriate and these will help steer funding bids and future projects.
- 7.4 Arts Council England also supports a programme of museum development support for non-National museums. Tameside Museums and Galleries work closely with Museum Development North and benefit greatly from their support. Staff have attended many free training days on a variety of subjects including marketing, social media, collections care, and subject specialist events. The Museum Service has also participated in several funded projects including the Family Friendly Programme (2018-19), Collections Care and Management (2018-19), Banish the Backlog (2018-2020), Covid Recovery (2020) and Audience Champions (2020-2022).
- 7.5 The Museums Association is a membership organisation for everyone working in museums, galleries and heritage. Established in 1889 they are the oldest museums association in the world. Their mission is "Inspiring museums to change lives". Their vision is "Inclusive, participatory and socially engaged museums at the heart of their communities." Tameside Museums Service is a member of the Museums Association. In 2019 the Museums Association published their latest collections report *Empowering Collections*, based on findings from their Collections 2030 project. The report sets out the Museums Associations strategic aims for collections, stating that over the next decade museums need their collections to be Empowering, Relevant and Dynamic. The ideas expressed in this report have a direct impact on the strategic decisions we make within the museum service to ensure that in future years we are fit for purpose.
- 7.6 Tameside Museums and Galleries Service is an active participant in the wider museum sector within the region. The service is part of or engaged with several organisations:
- Greater Manchester Museums Group (GMMG)
 - North West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries (NWFED)
 - Northern Military Curators Group
 - Northern Art Forum

Each of these bodies enables us to contribute to the development of the wider museum sector within the region and nationally. Moreover, involvement within each group brings specific and measurable benefits to the Museum Service via its staff, visitors, collections and organisational reputation.

7.7 The cultural sector has been identified as a significant partner in regeneration linking to areas such as employment, health, social change and neighbourhood renewal. In Tameside the Museums and Galleries form a central part of the cultural activity within the borough. They engender a sense of civic pride and express the local distinctiveness of the area. However we must ensure that the facilities and services provided at our sites reflect the cultural background of all citizens. The service must ensure that the product and service we offer is of a standard that can realistically compete with other leisure and tourism attractions in the region.

8. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

8.1 There are various local programmes, priorities and strategies that link to our work in Museums and Galleries and help to provide a policy context. We work to support these plans and strategies including:

- Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy (2019-2024). *Grown in Greater Manchester. Known Around The World* – identifies areas of strategic opportunity across the city-region. It also sets out a clear plan of how all 10 Greater Manchester districts will work together to target resources that will develop, celebrate, protect and promote the significant culture and heritage assets of Greater Manchester.
- Tameside Cultural Services are currently working on a Cultural Strategy, funded by Arts Council England and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This will set out the vision for Culture in Tameside and how both external and internal partners can work collaboratively to support the cultural sector in Tameside. The Strategy will focus on skills development and seek to ensure Tameside residents have access to participate and create high quality cultural experiences and opportunities on their doorstep. It is expected that the strategy will be live by March 2024.
- The Museum Service actively participates in further Council wide plans and strategies that are developed within and across departments, and are aimed at meeting the goals identified in the Corporate Plan.
- ‘*Our People Our Place Our Plan*’: The Corporate Plan for Tameside Council (2019). Tameside Council’s corporate plan outlines the aims and aspirations for the borough and its people, and the commitment to work for everyone, every day. This Museum Forward Plan aims to ensure the Museum Service contributes towards achieving the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan:

Tameside Council’s Corporate Plan	Museums and Galleries key contributions
Very best start in life where children are ready to learn and encouraged to thrive and develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide engaging facilities and activities for young people. • Work with other Council departments to support school readiness and encourage a love of learning. • Working with external organisations to support the best start in life and to reach other groups within Borough.
Aspiration and hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide formal and informal educational opportunities for lifelong learning. • Develop and improve education provision for Tameside schools. • Use the ‘Arts Mark’ and ‘Arts Award’ initiative to create exciting and enjoyable learning experiences within all

	<p>Museum and Gallery sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer outreach and loan material for schools and community groups based on the collections. • Engendering a sense of ownership of the local heritage. • Ensuring high quality visitor services, attracting tourism into the borough, which in turn will attract new business investment and residents.
Resilient families and supportive networks to protect and grow our young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a welcoming and inspiring environment for all visitors. • Ensure that all sites are well maintained and sign posted. • Hosting a variety of network and hub events within our sites, from our SEND school arts hub to our Creative Arts teacher network
Opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a high profile within the borough, developing the sense of public ownership of the museums and galleries. • Offer opportunities for people to work and volunteer. • Provide opportunities for lifelong learning. • Work with community and voluntary groups. • Having a joined up approach within TMBC to work across service areas where possible and suitable.
Modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all sites meet high health and safety standards and are well maintained. • Ensure that all visitors feel happy, welcome and safe within Museums and Galleries. • Review and address access requirements both intellectual and physical to ensure all visitors can enjoy facilities provided by the service. • Carry out exhibitions and activities in an environmentally sustainable way. • Museums and Galleries bring tourism into the borough and help support the local economy.
Nurturing our communities and having pride in our people, our place and our shared heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participation in cultural events through ensuring the highest quality and the range of exhibitions and activities within all sites. • Actively collecting and documenting the heritage of the whole community. • Embrace health and wellbeing strategies in work we undertake. • Offer culturally inspired opportunities that facilitate improved health and wellbeing for visitors. • Developing a sense of pride and ownership of the Museums and Galleries and encourage communities to value the places they live. • Working with other services to provide events and facilities that promote understanding and good relations between different communities.
Longer and healthier lives with good mental health through better choices and reducing inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support projects that enhance wellbeing and also promote cultural activities as having a positive effect on wellbeing. • Allowing staff to point visitors in the right direction for additional services that could improve their health and

	<p>wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote physical activity within and around our venues. • Working with a range of local groups. • Having an outdoor education offer available to schools from our sites.
Independence and activity in older age, and dignity and choice at the end of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide safe, welcoming and accessible spaces for people to meet. • Provide lifelong learning experiences. • Museum loan boxes and reminiscing sessions both on site and as outreach. • Support groups, networks and initiatives that foster independence in old age.

8.2 As well as providing great cultural benefits for local residents, Tameside’s museums and galleries bring significant economic benefits to the local area. As part of an annual nationwide survey of museums, the economic impact of museums has been calculated using the [Association of Independent Museums calculator](#). During 2021/22 visitors to Portland Basin Museum in Ashton and Astley Cheetham Art Gallery in Stalybridge contributed £715,254 to the local Tameside economy, through people visiting the venues and then spending their money in our local shops and cafés. This impact is especially good given that Covid restrictions were still in place at the time and visitor numbers were a fraction of what they are in an average year. This demonstrates the positive financial return our cultural attractions have on the Tameside economy, which continues to increase as visitor numbers bounce back after the pandemic.

9. THE CURRENT SITUATION

9.1 The Museums and Galleries visitor figures for 2017 - 2023 are as follows:

2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
131,390	119,962	114,250	1,563	41,478	97,151

Visitor figures are recorded through electronic door counters at Portland Basin Museum and through a head count at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery.

9.2 Visitor numbers are lower in 2020/21 onwards due to the Covid pandemic.

9.3 The Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the museum service as a whole during 2020-22. Sites were closed in March 2020 due to government guidance, and local restrictions remained in place in Greater Manchester once national restrictions had been lifted. Staff switched to working from home during the first lockdown, which was easier for office based staff than for front of house staff. Staff helped across other council departments, such as Covid testing centres, the crematorium, greenspace sites and litter picking. Some front of house staff took early retirement as we came out of the pandemic, which led to several rounds of recruitment. School visits were unable to take place, no activities or events could be held, and more activity took place online. We created online exhibitions, online craft activities, held Zoom workshops, and engaged people with our collections via social media. Many of the plans and priorities from our previous Forward Plan were put on hold while new priorities took over. The pandemic meant we had to be flexible, adapt to new circumstances and continually rethink our audiences’ needs.

9.4 In March 2021, the council secured £96,156 of government Culture Recovery Fund money, which primarily focused on museum education and online activity. With this funding we worked with our regular freelancers to revamp our education offer and developed new Museum in a Box loan boxes. We worked with consultants to create a new website for cultural activity in Tameside www.intameside.co.uk which also showcases our venues and our education offer and is supported by new branding. We also commissioned local makers to create a range of products to sell in our museum shop. All of this work is reflected in the review of our previous Forward Plan.

9.5 **Portland Basin Museum**

9.5.1 Portland Basin Museum has the highest profile within the Museums and Galleries Service and attracts the highest proportion of visitors, averaging around 110,000 visitors per year.

9.5.2 The museum was redeveloped and opened to the public in 1999. It is located in a former canal warehouse and celebrates Tameside's social and industrial history. The attractive location of the museum, combined with its unique ambience, makes this a very popular amenity within the region. It is exciting and family friendly and is fully accessible to the public. The Ground Floor consists of a temporary exhibition area, the 1920's street, the Tales of Tameside gallery and museum shop. The Lower Ground Floor explores the local industries of the area with many interactive exhibits appealing to all ages, including a play area for pre-school aged children. School workshops are held within the street sets and in the industrial history gallery.

9.5.3 Portland Basin Museum is well loved in the community. Customer feedback has revealed that visitors particularly enjoy exploring the 1920's street and the various interactives on the ground floor. The many interactives and the ability to touch things within the museum ensure that there are plenty of fun things to do. The displays and changing exhibitions generate plenty of local interest and the museum encourages self-directed learning. School holiday craft activities, a changing programme of events and activities, plus free entry ensure a high number of repeat visits. The museum is the number one attraction in Tameside on Trip Advisor and has achieved their 'Certificate of Excellence' each year since 2012.

9.5.4 The museum is recognised as a prime site for families learning together and has the added appeal of free parking, a free picnic area and a reasonably priced gift shop. During the summer holidays and on Bank Holidays visitors can enjoy a canal boat trip from the museum wharf, organised by voluntary groups such as Tameside Canal Boat Trust. The museum is completely accessible and an Access Audit is available for the public to view on the website.

9.5.5 The museum is part of Visit England's Visitor Assurance Quality Assessment Scheme. This scheme involves an annual assessment and allows the museum to display the Visit England logo, showing that it provides a quality visitor experience. Between 2018 and 2023 the museum achieved scores of 79% (2018), 80% (2019), 80% (2021), 78% (2022) and 79% (2023) following the annual mystery shop. The quality of the attraction and its displays, the high level of customer care and the overall cleanliness are highlighted as strengths.

9.5.6 The museum's collection includes a large collection of domestic items, items of local history, archaeology, industrial history, civic silverware and natural history.

9.5.7 Exhibitions often have a focus on community involvement, with visitors encouraged to contribute their memories and ephemera to the exhibition. This approach creates a sense of ownership and interest for the duration of the show. Exhibitions change twice-yearly at Portland Basin Museum and over the past few years have included 'Toy Box Tales', 'Step

Back in Time' and 'Natures Wonders', 'Exhibitions draw on the strengths of the reserve collection and often have a family-friendly focus. Other exhibitions, such as 'If You Go Down to the Woods Today' were made up entirely of objects loaned in from the public, in this instance, teddy bears, and this has proved a very popular way of engaging with audiences. Exhibitions have also been created with local schools, for example 'Unravelled' showcased industrial townscape artworks created by three local schools as part of a long-term project between Tameside Cultural Services and Z-arts. During the closure of the museum due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the museum's curators created several online exhibitions on a range of topics such as natural history, Florence Nightingale and D-Day.

- 9.5.8 Over the past few years we have broadened our circle of community partnerships and built relationships with the broader arts sector. Supported by the Council's Arts and Engagement team, we have hosted a far wider range of events and activities at the museum and have been part of long term projects with community partners. Events have been created with Scallywags Theatre Company, 2 Boards and a Passion theatre company, Z-arts, Mad Science and Safari Phil, amongst many others. For example, to celebrate the museum's 20th birthday in March 2019, we worked with Z-arts to create the 'Big Birthday Bash'. This event was attended by 1,300 people and saw the museum filled with costumed characters, musicians and a magician who interacted with visitors and the museum's displays as part of a big birthday party. We partnered with London-based Sainsbury Archive on their Food for Talk veterans project and with Peoplescape Theatre on an immersive education project with our local SEND schools.
- 9.5.9 The building in which Portland Basin Museum is housed is not owned by the council, but by an independent landlord, Sanctuary Housing. The museum is maintained by Robertson on behalf of Tameside Council. Bridge View Café is owned and run by a private contractor who lease the café space directly from Sanctuary Housing, meaning the café is completely independent of the museum. We maintain a good working relationship with the café operators, which helps to support the whole visitor experience. We also have no control over the boats which are moored and operated from the wharf. Tameside Canal Boat Trust, The Wooden Canal Boat Society and East Manchester Community Boat Project all operate from Portland Basin. We maintain good relationships with these organisations and support the promotion of their work and services to museum visitors where feasible, and welcome opportunities to work with them.
- 9.5.10 The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact in the museum and staff. Due to national and local restrictions, the museum remained closed for most of 2020/21. When the museum reopened in July 2021 it was with restricted visitor numbers, online pre-booking, a one way system that required extra staff to invigilate, reduced opening hours to allow the extra staffing on open days, hand sanitizer and compulsory face masks. No activities or events were held at the museum until spring 2022. Visitor numbers were affected and there were no school visits.

9.6 Astley Cheetham Art Gallery

- 9.6.1 Astley Cheetham Art Gallery is located on Trinity Street in Stalybridge, above Stalybridge library.
- 9.6.2 Astley Cheetham Art Gallery opened in 1932, following a donation of money for the building of a library and art gallery in 1889 by the Cheetham family of Stalybridge and the subsequent receipt of the Cheetham family bequest of paintings. The original collection has since been added to and now comprises over 500 paintings and illustrations. It is widely acknowledged as being one of the finest small regional collections.
- 9.6.3 Between 2013 and February 2019, the gallery was open for two Saturdays per month and every Saturday in August. Following the closure of Central Art Gallery in Ashton-under-

Lyne in February 2019, the opening hours of Astley Cheetham Art Gallery increased to 17 hours per week.

- 9.6.4 Exhibitions are changed at the gallery around three or four times a year and have mainly showcased the Astley Cheetham art collection. Exhibitions have tied in with national anniversaries, for example 'Art Treasures' in 2018 celebrated 250 years of the Royal Academy with a display of artworks from the collection. In 2019, the 'Open Art' exhibition returned to the gallery following the closure of Central Art Gallery, giving members of the public the chance to have their artworks on display. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, a special 'ApArt' exhibition showcased artwork created by the local community during the lockdowns. The gallery has also hosted local artists' exhibitions in a range of media, including in 2021 a textile exhibition called 'Stitchworks'. In 2022, collaboration with Glossop-based organization, Local, and a photography exchange between artists in Stalybridge and Sweden resulted in a photography exhibition, 'Local//Lokal'.
- 9.6.5 A display case on the first landing of the staircase is used as a changing display space. Over the past few years there have been displays of objects from the social history collection, quilts made by Stalybridge Patchwork and Quilters Group, artworks by local artists and textiles by the local branch of the Embroiderers' Guild.
- 9.6.6 The gallery also displays some other items from the Museums and Galleries collection, including a small collection of Ancient Egypt artefacts and items of natural history, all of which were originally donated to the gallery in the 1930s.
- 9.6.7 There is always a craft activity available for family visitors and there is a selection of children's art books for children to read and be inspired by. There is often a trail to accompany an exhibition, such as an I-Spy trail of things to spot in the artworks. The Arts and Engagement team regularly programme children's theatre performances at the gallery during the school holidays.
- 9.6.8 The gallery is part of Visit England's Visitor Assurance Quality Assessment Scheme. This includes an annual assessment and allows the gallery to display the Visit England logo, showing that it provides a quality visitor experience. Between 2019 and 2023 the museum achieved scores of 73% (2019), 70% (2021), 71% (2022) and 74% (2023). The quality of the exhibitions, the impressiveness of the art collection and the high level of customer care were highlighted as strengths.
- 9.6.9 It is proposed to redevelop the art gallery and make it an attractive, engaging, must-see destination which attracts both a local audience and tourists to the town. There are a number of improvements which will need to be implemented to the fabric of the building to achieve this aim, some of which will require Listed Building Consent as the building is Grade II listed. These repairs are included in the council's Stalybridge Capital Regeneration Funding awarded by central government.
- 9.6.10 The gallery is accessible only via a staircase from the library. Plans have been drawn up and costed to install a lift up to the gallery from the library, which will be funded as part of the Stalybridge Capital Investment Funding. Works are due to take place in 2024 meaning the gallery will be closed for a period of time. Funding bids had previously been submitted unsuccessfully to MEND, MEND2 and LIF. An Accessibility Audit of the gallery is available for the public to view on the website.
- 9.6.10 In January 2023, repair works to the damaged plasterwork on the staircase took place.

9.7 Manchester Regiment collection

- 9.7.1 The collection is managed by the Museum Service. The collection belongs to the Duke of Lancasters' Regiment and is on long term loan to Tameside Council, who manage it on behalf of the regiment.
- 9.7.2 The regimental collection covers the history of the Regiment from the foundation of the 63rd Regiment in 1758 to the eventual amalgamation with the King's Regiment in 1958, and up to today as part of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. The Manchester Regiment was formed in 1881 and had its headquarters in Ladysmith Barracks in Ashton-under-Lyne and as a result the majority of its recruits came from the surrounding towns that now make up Tameside. The Manchester Regiment saw active service in the First World War and the famous war poet Wilfred Owen was serving with the regiment when he was killed in action in 1918.
- 9.7.3 The collection consists of medals (including six Victoria Crosses), uniforms, weapons, equipment, silverware, memorials and personal souvenirs.
- 9.7.4 The Museum Service continues to care for the collection and accept offers of objects. The Curators have responded to many requests from family members to view relatives' medals and other items, which we have assisted with where possible. We also continue to respond to family history enquiries relating to soldiers who served in the Manchester Regiment and the Local Studies and Archives Centre continue to accept offers of paper items.
- 9.7.5 We continue to promote Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre as the depository for paper items related to the Manchester Regiment and as the first point of call for family research.
- 9.7.6 There have been several displays of Manchester Regiment objects at Portland Basin Museum, including for the centenary of the Somme, the centenary of the battle of Manchester Hill, the anniversary of the start of the Boer War. In 2022, the main temporary exhibition at Portland Basin Museum was 'Soldiers' Stories: The Men of the Manchesters' which showcased highlights from the collection alongside new acquisitions. During the Covid-19 pandemic online exhibitions about D-Day, the Crimean War and Wilfred Owen were created to mark anniversaries.
- 9.7.7 The 'Meet Tommy Atkins' sessions, where visitors can meet a costumed First World War character, have been held at Portland Basin Museum. Outreach sessions using the Tommy Atkins character continue to be offered and taken up by schools. The Manchester Regiment 1914-18 group have hosted two larger events at the museum, giving visitors opportunity to handle kit and equipment.
- 9.7.8 In 2013 we completed a major project, The Men Behind the Medals, funded by Esme Fairbairn. Over 800 men were comprehensively researched and a 9 volume compendium of their life and times published alongside a new website. This work has been widely celebrated among other UK Regimental and Corps Museums and the wider museum sector. The project has provided a lasting legacy to deal with future donations and a wealth of personal soldiers' stories that can be interpreted in the new museum. In 2021, with funding from Army Museums Ogilby Trust, the histories behind new medals acquired since 2013 have been researched and added to the website.
- 9.7.9 Another small pot of funding was secured from Army Museums Ogilby Trust in 2021 to create educational resources using the Manchester Regiment collection. These are available on the new *In Tameside* website for teachers to use. The funding also enabled us to photograph key objects from the collection to use in the resources and on social media.

9.8 Education and Learning

Number of pupils (aged 4 to 16 years) visiting all sites in organised school groups. (2018-2023)

Year	All Sites Total
2017/2018	3,521
2018/2019	3,606
2019/2020	2,744
2020/2021	0*
2021/2022	1,301
2022/2023	2,660

*All sites were closed during the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 and school visits were restricted 2020-2022.

- 9.8.1 A museum or gallery is a unique resource as it is based on first hand experience of 'real' objects. The service is in the valuable position of bringing history and the visual arts to life, with the museums providing access to the past and the galleries offering an insight into the artistic processes, giving greater understanding of the social and economic place of art within the community.
- 9.8.2 For a long time the service has believed that the learning experiences within the museums and galleries extend far beyond formal education. We aim to create special moments of inspiration and excitement for all our visitors no matter what their age.
- 9.8.3 All facilitated art and history sessions are delivered by freelance facilitators, booked as and when needed.
- 9.8.4 History workshops offered by the service include 'Home and Hearth', 'Victorian Toys', 'Upstairs Downstairs' and 'Tameside Transport'. Art workshops offered include 'Local Artists', 'Tameside Architecture' and printing workshops linked to Tameside's industries. Opportunities for linked visits with the Outdoor Learning sessions offered by the Arts and Engagement service are also promoted to schools and some outdoor workshops are delivered from Portland Basin Museum.
- 9.8.5 Workshops are marketed via the *In Tameside* website, regular e-newsletters to schools and also a promotional leaflet. The marketing resources were reviewed and rebranded in 2022 and given a consistent look and feel across Museums and Galleries, Tameside Local Studies and Archives and the Outdoor Learning offer. Evaluation forms are filled in by teachers following their visits and help inform improvements to the service.
- 9.8.6 Tameside Cultural Services embeds Arts Award in our working practices and as a result has been awarded the status of good practice centre for Arts Award delivery by Trinity College. Arts Award is a national qualification and arts programme for children and young people aged 5 to 25 and is supported by Arts Council England and managed by Trinity College. It provides a learning pathway in arts and culture and has become a major success for Tameside as a whole. The Cultural Services team support the programme in schools, colleges, community settings and with harder-to-reach groups through training and development days for leaders and advisers, and also by providing bespoke learning logs. We plan to continue to support Arts Award in our schools offer.

- 9.8.7 In addition to formal schools education we also provide a series of adult 'I Made It' masterclass workshops where participants can learn a range of skills such as crochet, screen printing, painting and willow weaving. An out of schools workshop programme, museum trails and worksheets are also offered.
- 9.8.8 The Museum Service offers a comprehensive loan box service, with boxes on a wide range of topics, including First World War, National Service, Domestic Life, Toys, Victorian Schoolroom, Local Artists and Seaside Holidays. The boxes provide income for the service. Several of the boxes were redeveloped in 2022 and continue to be well used. A new 'Wellbeing' themed box was launched in 2023.
- 9.8.9 The provision of family friendly events across all sites is now seen as an established part of our work. In 2018 the service successfully applied to be part of Museum Development North West's Family Friendly programme. This included support and advice from organisations including *Kids in Museum* and *Family Arts Standard*, feedback from family visitors and a small grant to develop new trail sheets for Portland Basin Museum. The Covid-19 pandemic led to this work going on hold, but we plan to build on this work over the next few years and add more resources for families at our sites and online.
- 9.8.10 Education and learning provision is at the heart of our aims and ambitions. Learning is considered in the planning of all displays, exhibitions and interpretation. We consider how exhibitions and permanent displays relate to the school curriculum and the general interest of the visiting public.
- 9.8.11 The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on our education work. Like museums and galleries, schools also closed during the first and second lockdowns and school visits were restricted until 2022. Outreach into schools was affected and Arts Award delivery put on hold. The pause gave us time to revamp our education offer, and thanks to Culture Recovery Fund money we revamped all our history and art offer. We worked with Interference Art, 2 Boards and a Passion, Jack Doyle and Born and Bread Theatre as well as local schools to review and refresh our workshop content and marketing. To help support our schools during the lockdowns we also created online resources (films, worksheets, craft activities) connected to the curriculum.

9.9 Audience Development

- 9.9.1 From observation and audience feedback via surveys, comments books, conversations and social media, we know that the key audiences at Portland Basin Museum are families, schools, older visitors often visiting on a coach tour, special needs groups, and local history / industrial history enthusiasts. Our programme of events, exhibitions, interpretation and the permanent displays aim to cater for the needs of these different audiences. An electronic visitor survey has been in place since 2022.
- 9.9.2 Less information has been collected about the motivations behind visitors to Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and this is an area for development during this Forward Plan.
- 9.9.3 There has been a strong focus on developing the family offer at Portland Basin Museum over the past few years and families will continue to be a key target audience. Encouraging more families to visit Astley Cheetham Art Gallery will follow on from this, as well as encouraging more schools to visit the gallery. Pandemic recovery remains a priority as visitors to museums nationally remain below pre-pandemic levels. Audiences are returning to our venues and this is what we intend to build on.
- 9.9.4 Feedback from non-visitors to our sites shows that one of the reasons people have not visited is that they did not know the museums and galleries existed. An important part of our audience development plans is to create six-monthly marketing plans that will enable us

to best use our resources to reach our target audiences, both within Tameside and further afield.

- 9.9.5 We were part of Museum Development North West's Audience Champions programme 2020-2022. In partnership with Audience Agency this programme gave us insight into audience development, audience segmentation and electronic visitor surveys and gave us access to the Audience Agency's many online tools. Unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic meant this programme could not run as initially intended. Building on the learning from this programme will be key for the museum service as we rebuild our audiences post-pandemic.
- 9.9.6 The museum service also benefited from mentoring from marketing expert Marge Ainsley (funded by Museum Development North West). Held online during 2021, the sessions focused on pandemic recovery and tips for reconnecting with our audiences.

9.10 Museum and Gallery Storage and Collections Management

- 9.10.1 Collections are held in trust for public enjoyment, inspiration and learning. We support and strive to achieve national standards in collections care, set out in the Museum Accreditation scheme, to ensure the preservation and appropriate acquisition of collections for the benefit of future generations.
- 9.10.2 The reserve collection of any museum is a vitally important part of the service offered to the public. It acts as a repository for the heritage of the region and plays a key part in long-term preservation of collections.
- 9.10.3 The Local Studies and Archives Centre in Ashton-under-Lyne stores, cares for and makes accessible the borough's paper-based heritage. The Museums and Galleries care for objects and artworks. There is much cross over between our collections, and the collecting priorities of the Local Studies and Archives Centre are referenced in our Collections Development Plan.
- 9.10.4 When not on display, the museum and art collections are stored off site, where they are catalogued and cared for by the Curator and Assistant Curator. Environmental monitoring at the off-site stores is carried out quarterly.
- 9.10.5 The stores were subject to flooding in 2018 when lead was stolen off part of the roof. Vulnerable parts of the collection were moved to safety and there was no damage to the collection. However a large number of archival boxes in which the collection is stored have needed replacement and the stores remained inaccessible for several months, which delayed work on the actions of the Documentation Plan.
- 9.10.6 The stores were inaccessible for several months in 2020 due to the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has impacted on the work to tackle the documentation back-log. In 2022, a six month Kickstart post was funded for a young person to focus on inventory work in the stores. The post-holder checked, photographed and repacked over 60 boxes of objects. Since reopening our venues other priorities for our curators have meant the collections work has taken a back seat but it is planned to restart regular stores work with the help of a volunteer.
- 9.10.7 A Sustainable Improvement Fund grant from Museum Development North West in 2018 has helped fund more archival boxes, acid free tissue, object marking equipment, accession registers and other items related to collections management and storage. This material continues to be utilized.

9.11 Conservation

- 9.11.1 The Museum Service's Care and Conservation Policy sets out the approach taken to collections care and conservation, including environmental monitoring and adherence to museum sector standards.
- 9.11.2 The Museum Service's Care and Conservation Plan details the artefacts that have been treated in recent years and the sources of funding acquired. It also prioritises areas for conservation treatment moving forward.

9.12 Documentation

- 9.12.1 In the past few years a great deal of work has gone into rectifying our documentation backlog. The collection is catalogued on MODES, which was upgraded to the most up-to-date version, MODES Complete, in 2014. Our Documentation Policy and Collections Development Policy set out in detail what we collect, why we collect and areas for collection development.
- 9.12.2 In 2018, we successfully applied to be part of Museum Development North West's Banish the Backlog programme. There is a small backlog in the social history collection and military history collection and this programme is aimed at helping tackle these backlogs in an achievable and sustainable way. Under the mentorship of the Collections Trust, the Curator and Assistant Curator have created a schedule of work over the next few years to address the outstanding issues. This plan is outlined in detail in our Documentation Plan and forms an objective of this Forward Plan.

9.13 Environmental Sustainability

- 9.13.1 We are committed to working towards the goals of environmental sustainability. We recognise our responsibility in trying to reduce our impact on the environment and the opportunities we have to influence suppliers, contractors and visitors, and we recognise the contribution we can make towards the regeneration and sustainability of our local communities.

- 9.13.2 We will look to improve our commitment by:

- Seeking to achieve sustainability targets set by government and the Council.
- Working with partners in the implementation of energy saving measures.
- Minimising waste through the reduction, re-use and recycling of materials and by using reconditioned and recycled products where such alternatives are available.
- Encourage staff awareness through communication and training and recognise that staff engagement is an important and key factor for success. All staff to work in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.
- Engage with visitors and partners to share our vision and to raise awareness of sustainability issues.
- Introduce green workplace initiatives to lead to reductions in energy usage.
- Ensure consideration is given to the impact on the environment and sustainability before committing expenditure or beginning any new projects.

- Conserve energy, water, fuel and products from natural resources whenever possible.
- To commit to involvement and support for green initiatives set by the Council.
- Supporting sustainable and ethical suppliers in our museum shop and reducing use of single use plastic.

9.14 SWOT analysis

We asked museum staff to contribute to a SWOT analysis of our current offer:

Portland Basin Museum:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad range of audiences • Friendly welcome • Creative/Committed Staff • Varied collections • Venue is well maintained • Free venue and free car park – good in cost of living crisis • Good range of exhibitions, events and workshops • Strong reputation with visitors and internally in the council • Café and shop are added attractions • Flexibility and adaptability to last minute changes • Good for school visits • Increasingly seen as a venue for others to hold events and launches 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of learning staff based at museum • Lack of staff capacity • Lack of control over aspects of Portland Basin site eg café, boat trips, canal boats moored, building maintenance from landlord • Not as much for older children to do • Some maintenance of displays needed – new sounds, new film, • Displays not inclusive of all Tameside communities
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working across the Council • Marketing opportunities to explore across all sites • More community involvement • Make better use of waterwheel and wharf space • Make more of 'selfie' opportunities around the museum for promotion • Maximise In Tameside website • Better use of social media 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council funding reductions could impact us • Failure to be relevant to wider socio-economic agendas • Any loss of café facility at Portland Basin would impact on museum • Reduction in site maintenance levels • Landlord maintenance issues

Astley Cheetham Art Gallery:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality art collection • Free venue • Creative/Committed Staff • Amazing space - people say 'wow' when they walk in for the first time • Children's theatre events are popular • High quality exhibitions • Visit England score is improving • Good relationship with library staff 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low visitor numbers • Lack of learning staff based at gallery • Poor capacity (lack of staff/time) • Low school visits • No parking • No advertising on building exterior • Maintenance of building – roof and brickwork need repair • People don't know about gallery or exhibitions • Lack of signage in library entrance
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of the gallery – new lighting track, flooring, redecoration - to exhibit more collection and attract new audiences • Moveable walls would mean more display space • Capitalise on Town of Culture legacy • Potential for shop space in the gallery to sell local makers' work • Partnership working to create exhibitions and events • Marketing opportunities to explore across all sites • More link up for events with library • Links with colleges and universities for exhibitions 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for council funding reductions • Lack of lift means some people cannot access gallery • Failure to be relevant to wider socio-economic agendas • Maintenance issues could cause problems if not addressed

Manchester Regiment collection:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong collection • Creative staff who are committed to keeping the profile of the collection up • Success with small funding pots to keep working with collection • Good links with Archive centre for answering enquiries etc • Building up good photography of the collection for marketing use • Enquiries remain high • Good relationship with the 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No permanent display of the collection currently • Lack of public awareness as to what is happening with the collection
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regiment and other museums	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More displays at Portland Basin Museum • More online exhibitions • Promote collections on social media 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No funding currently available for a new museum or permanent display

9.15 Review of the previous Forward Plan

9.15.1 The following table sets out how we have met the aims and objectives set out in the previous Forward Plan 2019-24.

Objective 1: Ensure physical and intellectual access for all visitors to museums and galleries sites and services.

Action	Activity completed
1.1 Create permanent display of the Manchester Regiment collection	Not completed - action rolled over to new Forward Plan to continue use of the collection.
1.2 Increase capacity to display artworks at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery	Not completed – action rolled over to new Forward Plan.
1.3 Complete health and safety audits for each site and risk assessments for all activities and events	Completed. Audit of museums by TMBC's Health & Safety team completed April 2023.
1.4 Maintain access audits online for each site	Completed and checked annually. These are available on our websites.
1.5 Maintain VAQAS (Visit England Quality Assurance Scheme) for all sites	Completed. Action plans for improvements are created from the feedback from the assessments.

Objective 2: Ensure that all sites demonstrate the highest levels of customer care.

Action	Activity completed
2.1 Ensure all Council-wide online training is completed by all staff	Completed as required.
2.2 Complete annual development reviews and	Completed. Annual Development Reviews are completed annually and training needs are reported to TMBC's

progress agreed training	Workforce Development.
2.3 Ensure Casual register is maintained in relation service needs	Completed. Recruitment to the Casual register took place in 2021 to support programming across Cultural Services.
2.4 Monitor absence levels	Completed. Absence levels are monitored and reported to HR monthly. TMBC's Managing Attendance procedure is adhered to.
2.5 Monitor feedback from visitors and VAQAS regarding the visitor welcome	Completed. Feedback from visitors via comments cards, Trip Advisor, Google reviews, conversations and the VAQAS reports are monitored and action taken through team briefings.
2.6 Respond to comments on Trip Advisor	Completed. Comments are monitored and responded to.
2.7 Ensure all Front of House staff have a tour of the museums stores and the Local Studies and Archives Centre to be able to promote the service	Completed. Staff have commented on how helpful this has been to their work and the service they provide to our visitors.

Objective 3: Embed learning from the Family Friendly Programme across all sites

Action	Activity completed
3.1 Create a families page on the website outlining what is on offer across the sites for families	Not completed – action rolled over to new Forward Plan.
3.2 Create an 'Introduction' wall at Portland Basin Museum highlighting what is on today, children's trails, maps of the museum, etc	Not completed – action rolled over to new Forward Plan.
3.3 Work with the Council's autism lead to create online pre-visit resources for families with autistic children	Part completed. A 'social story' for Portland Basin Museum was created with input from the council's autism lead. A social story for Astley Cheetham Art Gallery is an action for the new Forward Plan.
3.4 Create a Family Friendly manifesto using <i>Kids in Museums</i> resources	Not fully completed. Family Friendly activities and trails have been created.
3.5 Include family friendly activities and interactives at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery	Completed. There is a permanent family craft table at the gallery with activities changed to suit the theme of the exhibition. Family theatre events are programmed at the gallery most school holidays.
3.6 Include family friendly activities and interactives at the Museum of the Manchester Regiment	Not completed – redevelopment on hold.
3.7 Programme a range of exhibitions, events and activities to appeal to family	Completed. A wide range of events have taken place at Portland Basin Museum and Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, including artist-led craft activities, free storytelling

audiences	sessions, trails, 'Meet Father Christmas' events, family theatre. Exhibitions at both venues always include some hands-on or craft elements for families. We created online craft activities for families during the lockdowns.
3.8 Create activity backpacks for families	Part completed. Craft bags for families were created post lockdown for when we reopened but could not deliver activities. 100 craft bags were also distributed to the community for free via food banks. Creating sensory backpacks is rolled forward as an action for the new Forward Plan.

Objective 4: Ensure the sustainability of the Museums and Galleries through improving opportunities for income generation.

Action	Activity completed
4.1 Improve the display space in the shop at Portland Basin Museum	Completed. The new welcome desk was installed 2019, along with a new point of sale unit for pocket money and branded toys. A retail review of the shop took place in summer 2021 funded by a £1000 grant from Museum Development North West. New stockists and lines of stock have been added based on the review.
4.2 Include a retail offer at the new Museum of the Manchester Regiment	Not completed.
4.3 Increase loan boxes bookings through prominent display at Portland Basin Museum and the creation of a leaflet to promote them	Completed. Loan boxes are now displayed behind the reception desk. A promotional leaflet with a QR code linking to the 'Museum in a Box' pages on the In Tameside website has been produced. Several loan boxes have been revamped. Bookings to schools have increased.
4.4 Review marketing of the reminiscence sessions available and link them with marketing of the museum loan boxes	Completed. Covid impacted on our delivery of reminiscence sessions as we were unable to go into care homes. Focusing is now on our reminiscence loan boxes instead and an action of our new Forward Plan is to develop and promote these to care homes and groups.
4.5 Review schools marketing to schools both inside and outside the borough	Completed. Our new In Tameside website includes all the information in one place, in an easy to view format. Flyers have been produced with QR codes linking to the website. E-newsletter to schools has been revamped. Marketing to schools out of borough is an action on the new Forward Plan.
4.6 Maintain existing school offer, making sure links to both national curriculum and local heritage are clear to understand	Completed. School offer reviewed and revamped using Culture Recovery Funding, in consultation with schools and with local education practitioners. Our new In Tameside website features curriculum links and how the sessions link to local heritage.
4.7 Through marketing encourage more cross site visits within Cultural Services, for example a school visit to Local Studies and Archives Centre and to Portland Basin Museum –	Completed. This is promoted on the In Tameside website and in marketing literature. The difficulties in scheduling and coach travel still make this logistically hard for schools.

giving a full day experience with linked activities at both sites	
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Objective 5: Support a sustainable environment

Action	Activity completed
5.1 Investigate opportunities to recycle waste, such as school packed lunches	Part completed. Waste is sorted by museum staff and recycled where possible.
5.2 Reduce the use of single-use plastic in the shop and stock sustainable products	Completed. We are using several sustainable suppliers suggested in our 2021 retail review. Paper bags are used in the shop.
5.3 Promote environmental sustainability through the Natural History Adventures (Dippy the Dinosaur) exhibitions and fringe events	This was impacted by the Covid pandemic. We created a Natures Wonders exhibition online and also a physical exhibition when we reopened in late 2020.
5.4 Maintain cycling and walking leaflets to promote exercise around Portland Basin Museum	Completed. Leaflets have been available for visitors to the museum. The information is also available online and promoted on the In Tameside website.
5.5 Use the wharf at Portland Basin Museum to encourage environmental awareness through new signage, planting more bee friendly plants and investigating the feasibility of growing vegetables with community partners	<p>Meetings with a mentor from the RHS (funded by Museum Development North West) took place 2019 and plans were started for a wharf garden project, subject to funding.</p> <p>Museum Manager attended Carbon Literacy Training by Manchester Museum in 2019. Online Carbon Literacy training is mandatory for all council staff in 2023.</p> <p>Plants to Dye For school workshop run by Arts and Engagement team takes place on the wharf space.</p> <p>Plans to reinvigorate the wharf area were put on hold due to the pandemic and other priorities taking over, but this will be carried over to our new Forward Plan.</p>

Objective 6: Improve marketing of the Museums and Galleries

Action	Activity completed
6.1 Create a marketing Strategy	Completed. Mentoring sessions with marketing expert Marge Ainsley took place 2021 (funded by Museum Development North West). A template for 6 monthly market plan was devised and is updated every 6 months. The museum was part of Museum Development North West's Audience Champions programme, which focussed on audiences, marketing and creating an audience development plan.
6.2 Create a new electronic	An electronic visitor survey with Audience Agency has

survey for use across all sites	been in place at Portland Basin Museum for the past year, as part of the Audience Champions project which covered the museum only.
6.3 Work with the Council's communication team to ensure high visibility for exhibitions and events through press releases and social media posts	Completed. The communications team continue to support us with press releases for exhibitions and events, and with regular meetings to promote and develop the In Tameside website and social media channels.
6.4 Improve signage across the sites, including banners on the front of buildings	Not completed. A meeting with TMBC planners in 2019 highlighted issues with placing banners on either Portland Basin Museum (due to being in a conservation area) or Astley Cheetham Art Gallery (due to being a listed building).
6.5 Ensure we have posters/flyers for all events and activities across sites that are distributed and displayed widely within the borough	Completed. We have made a deliberate move away from printed material and now promote activities on our In Tameside website instead of a printed Events booklet – this makes it easier to keep it up-to-date and reduces costs and paper usage. Posters continue to be produced to promote exhibitions and some activities. Promotional material, including printed and social media, aims to drive traffic to the In Tameside website.

Objective 7: Reach non-visiting audiences

Action	Activity completed
7.1 Create an audience development plan, to link to a marketing strategy	Completed. As part of the Audience Champions project, this has been created and will continue to be worked on and updated.
7.2 Work with colleagues across Cultural Services to develop and promote a programme of exhibitions in the Market Gallery in Ashton Market	Completed. The first exhibitions were installed October 2019 and new exhibitions continue to be displayed every 2-3 months. There is a waiting list of artists wanting to exhibit and the gallery is popular with market visitors and stall holders.
7.3 Work with colleagues across the council to engage communities with the Museums and Galleries, such as the Youth Service through co-creating exhibitions	Completed. Tandem Theatre, working with the Youth Service held a music themed event day at Portland Basin Museum in 2022. Other co-created activities at the museum include: hosting a calendar launch with TMBC Communications team; working with Peoplescape Theatre on two projects with SEND schools; hosting the Tameside Reporter's 120th birthday event; hosting a Greenspace volunteers' thank you day; Car SOS filmed a TV show in January 2021 which aired on National Geographic – this was filmed during a Covid lockdown so required close work with the H&S team. Co-created activities at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery include: library activities held in gallery; Arts and Engagement events held in gallery, school art workshops as part of the Town of Culture programme and Heritage Action Zone projects; dancing, knitting and theatre events held as part of Town of Culture.

7.4 Investigate creating a focus group of users and non-users	Part completed. As part of our school workshop and loan boxes revamps we set up a focus group of teachers. This remains an action for non-schools audiences. A bid was submitted to Museum Development in March 2023 to work with a marketing professional to understand more about our non-users.
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Objective 8: Increase visitors to Astley Cheetham Art Gallery.

Action	Activity completed
8.1 Redevelop Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, subject to Listed Building Consent, to improve the visitor experience	Some work completed - repair work and redecoration to the staircase walls completed in 2023, creating a lighter, brighter welcome. Several unsuccessful bids submitted to Arts Council England for building maintenance and to install a lift. In 2023 funding was awarded by Stalybridge Capital Regeneration Fund for maintenance work and the lift.
8.2 Improve signage at the gallery, both outside the building and in the library entrance	Part completed. New opening hours signage was installed November 2022. New internal signage still required and will be an action in the new Forward Plan.
8.3 Work more closely with colleagues in the library to cross promote activities and visitor information	Completed. Library events held in the gallery and closer links with staff there have been developed.
8.4 Make contacts with local / regional artists and college / university art course tutors to create a changing programme of exhibitions	Part completed. Several regional artists have exhibited at the gallery (including Swedish artists, textile artist Nikki Parmenter), plus local artists as part of Open Art. Contact with college and universities will be an action in the new Forward Plan, with an exhibition planned with Tameside College students for early 2024.
8.5 Change exhibitions every 4 months instead of every 6 months	Completed. Aside from Covid closures, exhibitions are now every 3-4 months.
8.6 Link to council initiatives in the town, such as Christmas lantern parade and town improvements	Completed. Lantern making workshops were held at the gallery in the lead up to the 2019 lantern parade in Stalybridge. Several activities were held at the gallery during the Town of Culture year 2022. Activities and exhibitions have been co-created with the Bridge consortium in Stalybridge.
8.7 Engage with local media and venues in the town to promote the gallery and encourage visitors to the town	In Tameside website promotes activities at the gallery. The gallery was part of Town of Culture initiatives. There is more potential to link up with the library downstairs to co-host events.
8.8 Create more self-guided elements to the space to encourage free visits	Completed. A permanent family craft table includes prompts for activities children can do in the gallery. We have created trails linked to some exhibitions eg things to

	spot in the Stitchworks exhibition.
8.8 Through our varied marketing channels increase awareness to local schools that they can visit for either a facilitated or self-guided visit	Part completed. Education art offer was revamped in 2021. Freelancer practitioners Interference-art engaged with teachers in Stalybridge on our behalf to understand the barriers to visiting. There is still more work to do on this action.

Objective 9: Nurture our communities so that Museums and Galleries are seen as safe and welcoming places

Action	Activity completed
9.1 Ensure the sites are Dementia Friendly and new staff have attended Dementia Friendly sessions	Ongoing. Staff turnover means we need to renew Dementia Friendly training, so this will be an action in the new Forward Plan.
9.2 Work with the Council's autism lead to promote the site as autism friendly	Part completed. A site visit to Portland Basin Museum took place from the council's autism lead and a social story created. He also delivered training to staff in 2019. Training for new staff and a creating a social story for Astley Cheetham Art Gallery will be actions on the new Forward Plan.
9.3 Support existing groups and networks (eg Quilting Bee, Young Carers, Tameside Local History Forum) and develop links with new groups	Completed. Young Carers continue to be supported by us through art workshops on a weekly basis. Tameside Local History Forum exhibitions and events have been held at Portland Basin Museum in 2021 and 2022. Staff have advised Hyde War Memorial Trust in how to catalogue their artefacts in 2022. Tameside Archaeological Society have run finds days at the museum and a display of finds in 2022.
9.4 Link with Age Friendly initiatives to support activity in older age	Part completed. Work began in 2019 on an Older Person's toolkit with the Population Health Team. The pandemic impacted the completion of this. In 2022 Museums supported Population Health on a photography display in Ashton Market showcasing of older people participating in sports.
9.5 Investigate opportunities to support health and wellbeing through externally funded projects or with local partners	Completed. We created a Wellbeing 'Museum in a Box' loan box for schools to aid pandemic recovery. We support Tameside Canal Boat Trust and East Manchester Community Boat Project to promote their boat trips from Portland Basin. We got funding from Museum Development North West for a mindfulness practitioner to deliver a mindfulness session to staff in 2022. We incorporated learning from this into a nature-themed exhibition at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery. We commissioned Interference-art to create social media posts promoting the 5 Ways to Wellbeing during the first pandemic lockdown.
9.6 Create exhibitions that appeal to diverse audiences and celebrate diversity	Part completed. We created a wide range of exhibitions at both venues to appeal to broad audiences. We created a pilot project, Common Strands, at Portland Basin Museum,

	exploring black history, slavery and the cotton industry with a local school – this is something we intend to building in our new Forward Plan.
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Objective 10: Provide opportunities for early years learning across the sites to support the best start in life

Action	Activity completed
10.1 Continue the weekly term-time Little Hands sessions at Portland Basin Museum	Part completed. Little Hands continued until March 2020 but the closure of the museum due to the Covid pandemic meant we had to pause it. Budget and the logistics of running the sessions whilst also delivering schools workshops meant we took the decision to discontinue the sessions.
10.2 Redevelop the under 5s play area at Portland Basin Museum	Completed. A new sit-in model train and a dedicated reading corner was added in 2019. The space is continually reviewed and resources replenished when required.
10.3 Programme events for pre-schoolers at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery	Completed. Family theatre events are programmed at the gallery during school holidays and occasional one off events held.
10.4 Incorporate hands on activities to engage young people with art across the galleries	Part completed. A permanent craft table of activities is in place, prompts for activities, a child's easel, art books for children and trails for some exhibitions are available. We are always looking to add more hands-on activities.
10.5 Increase targeted marketing of our offer to early years audiences eg distribute Little Hands flyers to nurseries, soft play centres.	Not completed. This will be an action in the new Forward Plan.
10.6 Support visits to sites for vulnerable groups	Completed. Portland Basin Museum has worked with Peoplescape Theatre on two theatre projects to bring SEND schools to the museum. The schools have since visited independently of the projects taking place. Portland Basin Museum regularly records exhibition tours with the National Talking Express website for people who are blind or visual impaired.
10.7 Develop activity sheets for early years across all sites	Completed. 3 trail sheets were created at Portland Basin Museum, funded by MDNW Family Friendly Programme – one aimed at early years, one at primary age and one is drawing based.
10.8 Have a selection of books focused on early years and an area for storytelling and reading. Where possible have puppets and objects linked to the books	Completed. Portland Basin Museum's play area has a selection of early year's books available in a dedicated reading corner. A selection of art books aimed at different ages of children are available at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery.

Objective 11: Increase school bookings across all sites

Action	Activity completed
11.1 Ensure the Manchester Regiment collection is used to suit the needs of schools, through liaising with teachers and continuing the Mini Museum Makers project	We have successfully applied for several small pots of funding from the Army Museums Ogilby Trust which have enabled us to create learning resources and films available to teachers via our In Tameside website.
11.2 Promote Arts Award participation alongside school bookings	Completed. Arts Award uptake is high and continues to be supported by colleagues.
11.3 Maintain database of schools and head teachers inside and outside the borough for marketing our offer	Part completed, ongoing.
11.4 Continue to update our education workshop outlines in line with the national curriculum, develop new workshops and share this information with local schools	Completed. School workshop were revamped in 2021-22. A brand new history workshop, Tameside Time Travellers launched and others were refreshed based on the curriculum. New art workshops were created by two creative practitioners. These are all shared on the In Tameside website and communicated to schools through half termly e-newsletters and flyers. During the pandemic we created online resources, including films, lesson plans and art activity ideas, which now feature on our In Tameside website.
11.5 Host or support termly teacher network events and SEND networking events to promote our service and encourage collaborative approach to learning	Completed. Creative Arts Network meetings in conjunction with Tameside Music Service are held regularly at Portland Basin Museum (and held online during the pandemic).
11.6 Encourage cross site visits within Cultural Services through schools booking process and marketing to schools	Completed. The new In Tameside website encourages cross promotion – for the first time our offer is all in one place across museums, galleries, outdoors and archives.
11.7 Develop a new workshop to sit across various sites: linked to literacy, the outdoors, visual arts and environmental issues	Part completed. We consulted with teachers as part of our education revamp. Outdoor sessions are now offered from Portland Basin Museum and can be combined with any history or art workshop.

Objective 12: Provide opportunities for people to fulfil their potential

Action	Activity completed
12.1 Offer adult <i>I Made It</i> masterclasses, supporting a range of creative skills	Completed. These were paused due to Covid and restarted May 2022. Bookings have been hit and miss so a shorter format is being devised.
12.2 Provide opportunities for volunteering	Completed. Volunteers have helped with Men Behind the Medals research, exhibitions research, collections work,

	trails, cataloguing archaeology collections.
12.3 Continue to provide the annual Open Art exhibition to provide Tameside residents with a platform to showcase their art work	Completed. Open Art was paused in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. In 2021 the gallery held two community exhibitions; ApArt, which enabled people showcase artwork they had created during the lockdowns, and Isolation, which featured art work by 5 local people who had been affected by cancer.
12.4 Provide opportunities for local schools to display their work at our sites	Part completed. Open Art is open to all ages. The Unravalled exhibition at Portland Basin Museum featured artwork by 3 local schools. The Common Strands pilot project resulted in a piece of artwork created in collaboration with pupils from Great Ashton Academy.
12.5 Continue to offer Arts Award for people aged 5-25 alongside our school workshops and as part of special projects	Completed. Arts Award continues to be offered and supported as part of projects across the service.

Objective 13: Maintain and improve facilities at Portland Basin Museum

Action	Activity completed
13.1 Revise the use of the wall space in the Learning Space and improve the appearance and functionality of the space	Part completed. The space was repainted during the Covid closure period, but there is still work to do to improve the space.
13.2 Improve facilities for recycling for school groups	Part completed. Staff sort recycling and take home due to having no black recycling bin onsite.
13.3 Change the film in the cinema area	Not completed. This will be carried forward to the new Forward Plan
13.4 Investigate funding opportunities to redevelop the Learning Space and surrounding agriculture and coal mining displays to better support education and events	Part completed. Plans have been drawn up by 24 Design as to how we could reuse the whole space. The next step is to explore funding options.
13.5 Investigate funding to conserve the waterwheel and improve the appearance of the wharf space	Not completed due to having to prioritise other tasks during the pandemic. It is a project that remains a priority for us and we plan to progress this and explore funding options over the next 3 years.

Objective 14: Maintain Accreditation for all sites

Action	Activity completed
14.1 Review this Forward Plan	Completed. The Forward Plan covered the period 2019-24. The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on our plans and priorities. In addition the Accreditation scheme was paused, delaying our invitation to reapply by 3 years. The new plan covers 2024-28.
14.2 Review all policies by	Completed and ongoing. The process of reviewing all

their specified review dates and gain appropriate approval	policies and achieving governance for all policies is being followed.
14.3 Ensure the Documentation Procedures Manual and other working plans are kept up to date	Completed and ongoing
14.4 Process all new acquisitions within 28 days	Completed.

Objective 15: Progress the work of Banish the Backlog

Action	Activity completed
15.1 Progress the actions set out in the Documentation Plan	Part completed. The impact of the pandemic closures and working from home has meant we have been able to complete as much collections work as planned. Work is ongoing on this and curators spend approximately one day per week in stores.
15.2 Seek additional funding to conserve objects identified in the Care and Conservation Plan	Not completed – this will be an action in the new Forward Plan.
15.3 Recruit volunteers to assist with documentation work	Completed (and ongoing). As part of the Kickstart scheme, we had a funded Museum Assistant for 6 months whose main focus was assisting with documentation. The contents of around 70 boxes in stores were checked, photographed and objects re-boxed, as well as many other tasks. We also have a regular weekly volunteer who is helping with documentation tasks, among other things.

Objective 16: Use the museum's collections in engaging ways.

Action	Activity completed
16.1 Create a programme of exhibitions across all sites, projecting 18 months ahead	<p>Completed. Exhibitions have been delivered at both Portland Basin Museum and Astley Cheetham Art Gallery to appeal to a range of audiences. Exhibitions are planned for 12 -18 months ahead.</p> <p>Portland Basin Museum exhibitions mainly utilise the reserve collection with the aim of getting more objects out on public view, including the Manchester Regiment collection. Exhibitions have included Food Glorious Food; Soldiers' Stories; Toybox Tales and Step Back in Time.</p> <p>Astley Cheetham Art Gallery has settled into a cycle of 3-4 exhibitions a year; one collections-based; one Open Art and one or two local artists.</p> <p>We have also delivered outreach exhibitions. A display of Austin Hopkinson objects is at Ryecroft Hall in Audenshaw. The Cap and Dove project saw Chartist's House by Harry Rutherford displayed in Ashton town centre for a day.</p>
16.2 Use the natural history collections in exhibitions and	Completed. The collection features in an online exhibition on our TMBC website.

events as part of the Natural History Adventures fringe events	<p>Nature's Wonders exhibition opened at Portland Basin Museum in October 2020 to coincide with our reopening after Covid and remained on display for much of the following year due to subsequent regional restrictions and closures.</p> <p>The 'At One With Nature' exhibition at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery includes items from the natural history collection.</p>
16.3 Maximise the number of artworks on display at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery through use of moveable walls and investigate the feasibility of displaying artworks on the stairs	Part completed. A temporary wall was installed for the Local//Lokal photography exhibition. This wall was not moveable however and demonstrated the need for flexibility in future installations.
16.4 Investigate funding opportunities to work with partners / artists to use the museum and art collections to engage audiences	Part completed. Makers' commissions as part of our 2022 retail project were inspired by collections and the landscapes of the borough.
16.5 Ensure the continued use of the collections within our access and learning programme	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The Common Strands project drew inspiration from our ABC Wax collections.</p> <p>Peoplescape Theatre used museum objects as part of their workshops and performances with SEND schools.</p> <p>History workshops are set within the museum displays and make use of handling collections. A new 'History Mystery' box containing objects from the museum collections is available for schools to explore on site visits.</p> <p>Recipe book project with celebrity chef Adam Reed – our collection of recipe books were used as research for his local dish.</p> <p>School workshops link directly to artworks and objects in our collections where possible eg Harry Rutherford, Simeon Stafford, ABC Wax fabrics.</p>

Objective 17: Ensure the safety of the collections

Action	Activity completed
17.1 Implement recommendations from the security reviews	Part completed. There are still some
17.2 Investigate funding for more display cases at Portland Basin Museum	Part completed. A new large Click Netherfield case was installed in 2019. Display cases would be included as part of a potential funding bid to revamp the agriculture displays.
17.3 Review emergency plans for each site annually	Completed. These have been reviewed and continue to be reviewed periodically. Several staff have attended training sessions by Harwell both online and in person.
17.4 Monitor environmental	Completed and carried out quarterly.

conditions across all sites and stores	
17.5 Undertake collections reviews of the social history collection	Ongoing
17.6 Undertake valuations for the required parts of the collection every 5 years	Not completed. This has been delayed due to the pandemic and difficulties of getting companies onsite to quote. This will be an action on the new Forward Plan.

10 CONSULTATION AND ANALYSIS OF VIEWS

- 10.1 Our main consultation tool at Portland Basin Museum is an Audience Agency visitor survey. At Astley Cheetham Art Gallery there is a paper survey. Both are designed to find out who visits our sites and what they think of their visit, as well as understanding our audience demographics.
- 10.2 We listen to the comments made by our visitors about our sites and the services we offer, both through informal conversations with visitors and through visitor comments books.
- 10.3 Portland Basin Museum in particular attracts much positive feedback via Trip Advisor and we respond to these comments. We have received their Certificate of Excellence each year since 2012, meaning visitors have rated us an average of 4.5 out of 5. For this consistent achievement, we are in Trip Advisor's Hall of Fame. The museum is also consistently rated 'excellent' on Google reviews. We aim to raise the profile of Astley Cheetham Art Gallery on Trip Advisor and encourage more visitor reviews.
- 10.4 We make use of social media as a way of interacting with the public and promoting our activities. We regularly appear on the council's Facebook page and in 2022 we launched our 'In Tameside' Facebook and Instagram accounts. We regularly check mentions about our sites on-line through Google alerts.
- 10.5 The Council has undertaken consultation with the public to inform this Forward Plan via a survey available both on-line on the Council's website and off-line in printed format at Portland Basin Museum, Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, Tameside Local Studies Centre and posted out on request. We publicised this via social media, on the website, and via our In Tameside blog. The survey included questions asking respondents to say whether they had visited the museum, gallery and archive sites, what kind of activities and exhibitions they would like to see in the sites, and their priorities for our future work. There were 163 responses.
- 10.6 The table below summarises the consultation results:

Question	Responses
1. Have you visited the following museums or galleries?	Portland Basin Museum (91%) Astley Cheetham Art Gallery (45%) Tameside Local Studies and Archives (50%) None of the above (4%)
2. If you have never visited the museums or galleries, what is the reason for this?	I didn't know they existed (40%) I'm not interested in them (5%) I know about them but haven't got round to visiting yet (17%) I can't get there easily (7%)

	Other (17%)
3. What motivates you to visit a museum or art gallery?	<p>A place to learn about my local heritage (70%)</p> <p>Finding out about my family history (31%)</p> <p>A fun trip out (58%)</p> <p>A social place to meet with friends / family (38%)</p> <p>Education and learning (64%)</p> <p>To be inspired creatively (18%)</p> <p>Passing the time (21%)</p> <p>Researching my house or local area (25%)</p> <p>To find out more about the past generally (59%)</p> <p>Other (11%)</p>
4. What do you think the priorities should be for the next 3-5 years?	<p>Create a new Museum of the Manchester Regiment (40%)</p> <p>Make improvements to Astley Cheetham Art Gallery (25%)</p> <p>Make improvements to Portland Basin Museum (43%)</p> <p>Work more closely with communities (38%)</p> <p>Improve marketing of Tameside Museums and Galleries (48%)</p> <p>Increase events and activities at Tameside Museums and Galleries (58%)</p> <p>Other (18%)</p>
5. What would attract you to visit museums and galleries in the future?	<p>Changing exhibitions (60%)</p> <p>Local people's stories and community involvement (50%)</p> <p>Special events (50%)</p> <p>Activities for children (35%)</p> <p>Social space to meet (23%)</p> <p>Workshops for adults (38%)</p> <p>Other (15%)</p>
6. What exhibitions would you be interested in visiting?	<p>More exhibitions based on the borough's museum and art collections (58%)</p> <p>Local artists' work (46%)</p> <p>Manchester Regiment exhibitions (40%)</p> <p>Community-led exhibitions (39%)</p> <p>Exhibitions focussing on local history (70%)</p> <p>Exhibitions that tie in with national events (36%)</p> <p>Other (11%)</p>
7. What events would you be interested in attending?	<p>Local history themed events (67%)</p> <p>Learning a skill eg painting, crochet, screen printing (37%)</p> <p>Events aimed at children (35%)</p> <p>Drama events eg theatre performances, costumed characters (44%)</p> <p>Events linked to learning about the museum collections or artworks (52%)</p> <p>Other (9%)</p>
8. Would you like to see the following issues reflected in the work of Tameside Museums and Galleries?	<p>Environmental sustainability (44%)</p> <p>Community cohesion (42%)</p> <p>Celebrating diversity (29%)</p> <p>Health and wellbeing (44%)</p> <p>Armed forces and veterans (34%)</p> <p>The borough's identity (64%)</p>

9. How do you find out about exhibitions and events in Tameside's Museums and Galleries?	Tameside Council's website (23%) In Tameside website (15%) Social media (60%) Leaflets / posters (31%) E-news (6%) Local newspapers (26%) Word of mouth (46%) Other (11%)
Any other comments?	There were a variety of comments, some praising the current offer and others offering suggestions for improvements. Comments included: "Tameside's museums are a joy, wonderful places for our residents to visit." "Portland basin and Local Studies and Archives are services Tameside can be proud of- keep up the good work." "It feels to me that Tameside doesn't really prioritise culture, which is a real shame as it makes a big difference as to how residents feel about the council and their community." "I don't think exhibitions and events are advertised well enough". "Local museums are a great source of history and education for children" "Why do we visit an area? It's usually for its culture, more money needs putting into this department to bring people here, cos they're not coming for the shops anymore."

10.8 People felt the priorities for the service for the next 3-5 years should be to increase events and activities and to improve the marketing of the venues and events. People want to see exhibitions that focus on local history and that are based on the borough's museum and art collections. They are interested in seeing more of a focus on the borough's identity, as well as environmental and health and wellbeing. The most popular way people find out about our museums and galleries is via social media, followed by word of mouth, and leaflets and posters.

10.9 The Forward Plan has also been developed with staff across the service. A Front of House training day included asking staff about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the service and what they would like to see happen across the sites. These views have informed the SWOT analysis and have fed into the action plans. The ideas and inputs of other staff across the service have also been included following staff meetings and planning sessions.

11 RESOURCE PLAN

11.1 Financial resources

11.1.1 We draw in funding from various external sources to deliver programmes of work while the core budget from Tameside Council covers staffing and other costs. It is anticipated that this trend will increase in the future.

11.1.2 Since 2019, we have successfully obtained over £122,000 of external funding. Funders have included Arts Council England, Museum Development North West and AMOT. We plan to build on this and continue to seek new funding to enable us to deliver exciting and innovative projects at all of our sites and in the local community.

11.1.3 We have partnered with several external organisations since 2019, such as Peoplescape Theatre and interference-art, and we have benefitted from being named partners on their funding bids. These have enabled us to further our own audience development aims at no financial cost to the council.

11.1.4 As part of Tameside Cultural Services, we work closely with the Arts and Engagement team who work extensively on generating income through external grant applications and commissioning works. We benefit from this connection in many ways, such as the programming of events and children's theatre in museum and gallery venues.

11.1.5 The table below shows the Museums and Galleries revenue budget for 2023/24.

Staffing Costs	£340,850
Exhibitions, interpretation and marketing	£14,870
Events, activities and education facilitators	£13,500
Maintenance costs, travel, telephones, licences, subscriptions (NB heating, lighting, improvement works come from a different council department budget)	£6,970
Income target from education, activities and donations	-£17,220
Total	£358,970

11.1.6 The table below shows the Museum Trading Account (museum shop) budget for 2023/24

Budget	£10,000
Income target	-£21,330
Total	-£11,330

11.2 Staffing resources

11.2.1 The table below summarises the staff working at across the Museums and Galleries as at August 2023.

Staffing Resource	Hours per week
Museums Manager	29 hours
Operations and Business Manager	36 hours (works across Cultural Services)
Curator	36 hours
Assistant Curator	36 hours
Technician	36 hours
Visitor Services Manager	36 hours
Front of House attendants x 9	Part time hours totalling 4 full time equivalents
Education Manager (part of Arts and	30 hours (allocating approx. 7 hours per week

Engagement service)	for Museums and Galleries work)
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12 SERVICE AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS FOR 2023-2028

12.1 Our key aims are to provide:

- a) **Access to Services:** Ensure that all our sites are accessible, sustainable and friendly, with the highest standards of customer care.
- b) **Access to the Community:** Respond to the needs and demands of the local community and to participate in the life of Tameside, contributing to the cultural, social and economic activity of the borough.
- c) **Access to Learning:** Offer visitors enjoyable, inspirational and educational experiences.
- d) **Access to Collections:** Care for, document and develop the borough's collections and interpret them in imaginative and engaging ways.

12.2 Key Objectives

12.2.1 We have sixteen objectives that fall under the themes of our key aims. These objectives and the actions to achieve them are set out in our Action Plans – **see Appendix 1**.

12.3 Action Plans

12.3.1 Certain assumptions have been made in costing the following activities; that the museums revenue budget will be maintained at 2023/24 levels, that staffing will remain at 2023/24 levels and that the staffing structure will be unchanged. Work will be funded using revenue funding unless otherwise specified ie capital funding has been requested or grant funding will be sought.

12.3.2 We are also required to meet actions set out in the Operations and Neighbourhoods Business Plan and annual KPIs, which are reported to the Council quarterly and reviewed annually. These actions are included in the action plans below.

12.3.3 Several of the actions are carried over from the previous Forward Plan, as they could not be completed in the timeframe due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

13 MONITORING AND REVIEW

13.1 The Forward Plan will be the basis for the next five years for developing new programmes for work and for bidding for new sources of income. The proposals in the plan will be monitored annually, and the full plan reviewed in 2028.

Appendix 1: Tameside Museum Service: Forward Plan action plans

Key Aim 1: Access to Services: Ensure that all our sites are accessible, sustainable and friendly, with the highest standards of customer care

Objectives	Actions	Lead Person	Estimated Cost	Source of Funding	Timescale	Performance Measurement
1. Ensure access for all visitors to museums and galleries sites and services	Continue to support the Manchester Regiment collection	Museums Manager	£	Museum budget and external funding bids	Ongoing	Collection is accessible
	Support the installation of a lift at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery	Museums Manager	£	Stalybridge Capital Regeneration funding	By 2025	A lift is installed
	Maximise opportunities to work with external and internal partners to bring additional activity into the museums and galleries	Museums Manager	£	Museum budget or external funding as opportunities arise	Ongoing	New events and activities are programmed
	Increase accessibility for diverse audiences as set out in our Access Action Plan	Museums Manager, Curators	£	Museum budget or external funding	By end 2025	Access Action Plan is completed
	Maintain VAQAS for all sites	Museums Manager	£500	Museum budget	Annually	Both sites pass VAQAS assessments
2. Ensure that all sites demonstrate the highest levels of customer care	Ensure council-wide online training is completed by all staff	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	By deadlines set	Online learning is all completed
	Complete annual development reviews and	All managers	£0	Staff time	Annually	ADRs are completed for all

	progress agreed training					staff
	Ensure Casual register is maintained in relation to service needs	Museums Manager	£	Museum budget	As required	Museum have sufficient Casual staff to call upon
	Monitor absence levels	Operations and Business Manager	£0	Staff time	Weekly	Absence levels are at a minimum
	Respond to comments on Trip Advisor	Visitor Services Manager	£0	Staff time	Weekly	All comments are responded to and action taken as required
	Monitor feedback from visitors and VAQAS regarding the visitor welcome	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Action taken as required
	Provide training for staff to support a wide range of visitors (including Dementia Friends training, I'm a Teenager, Autism and neurodiversity awareness training)	All managers	£500	Museum budget	By end 2024	Staff are trained and feel confident interacting with visitors
3. Create opportunities for income generation	Continue to seek new suppliers and review stock at Portland Basin Museum to ensure retail income targets are met	Operations and Business Manager	£10,000	Museum Trading account budget	Ongoing	Museum shop sells a popular range of stock and our income target is met
	Explore options for income generation through events, activities and venue hire	Museums Manager	£	Staff time	Ongoing	Museums and galleries are financially

	Create a retail space with new till at ACAG as part of redevelopment	Museums Manager	£3000 – fit out, till system, stock	External funding / museum budget	End 2025	sustainable The gallery is a destination to buy unique art
	Increase revenue generated through Art UK shop sales by increased marketing, blog posts on ArtUK and look into copyright of more works	Curators	£0	Staff time	End 2024	More income is generated via ArtUK
	Increase targeted marketing of loan boxes to schools, care homes and groups	Museums Manager	£100 – printing of leaflet	Museum budget	Mid 2024	Increase in bookings
	Add podcast recordings to loan boxes to act as guides to the objects to increase bookings to care homes	Curators	£3000 – freelancer costs	External funding	End 2025	Podcasts are recorded, edited and part of boxes
	Research the options for card and contactless donations boxes at PB and ACAG	Museums Manager	£500 per year contract fee	Museum budget	End 2025	Sites have contactless donation points and donations increase
	Quarterly budget monitoring meetings with finance to make sure on track with income and expenditure	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Museum income and expenditure is within budget

Key Aim 2: Access for the Community: Respond to the needs and demands of the local community and to participate in the life of Tameside, contributing to the cultural, social and economic activity of the borough.

Objectives	Actions	Lead Person	Estimated Cost	Source of Funding	Timescale	Performance Measurement
4. Support a sustainable environment	Develop the Wharf Garden to create a community nature and wellbeing space	Curators	£10,000	External funding	End 2027	Wharf space is turned into a useable space
	Provide opportunities for recycling around the museum	Museums Manager	£200	Council departments	End 2023	Waste material is recycled
	Promote cycling and walking routes around Portland Basin – promote via QR codes on posters	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	End 2023 and ongoing	Visitors are aware of cycling and walking routes
	Continue to be a litter hub at Portland Basin and support local tidy up initiatives	Museums Manager	£50	Staff time	Ongoing	Portland Basin vicinity is cleaner and more welcoming
	Reduce plastic items for sale in the museum shop	Business and Operations Manager	£0	Museum trading account	Ongoing	There are less plastic items in the shop and stock is from sustainable suppliers
	Reuse and repurpose materials around the museum and gallery where possible	Technician	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	There is less waste produced in exhibitions and displays
	Keep repainting of gallery walls to a minimum	Technician	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Walls are only painted where necessary so less toxins from paint

						plus cost saving
5. Improve marketing of the Museums and Galleries	Continue to create and deliver a six-monthly marketing plan	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	Every 6 months	Marketing plan actions are completed
	Install publicity for our venues on our building exteriors, subject to planning consent	Museums Manager	£2,000	Museum budget	End 2027	Banners or A boards are installed
	Build on In Tameside website including improving event search function	All staff	£5,000	External funding	End 2026	Website is expanded
	Review TMBC website pages and integrate better with In Tameside website	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	End 2023	Visitor experience of finding out information is enhanced
	Create selfie opportunities around the museum using In Tameside branding to promote web and social media channels	Curators	£200	Museum budget	Summer 2024	More web visits and social media followers
	Increase social media followers by reviewing and implementing our social media planner	Curators	£0	Staff time	Quarterly and ongoing	More social media followers on Facebook and Instagram
6. Reach non-visiting audiences	Progress actions set out in our Audience Development Plan	Museums Manager	£various projects	Museum budget / external funding	Ongoing	Action plans are completed and reviewed
	Use results from audience surveys to highlight non-	Museums Manager	£	Staff time	Annually	Non-visitors are identified and

	visiting audiences					used to inform Audience Development Plan updates
	Create heritage trail from Ashton centre to Portland Basin and Local Studies based on museum collections	Curators	£9,000	UKSPF	By end March 2024	Increase in visitors to museum from town centre
	Create promotional museum and gallery leaflet to direct-mail to schools, care homes and other settings out of borough	Museums Manager	£800 – leaflets	Museum budget or part of a funded project	By end 2024	Increase in new visitors to sites
	Create pop-up displays in non-museum venues in the borough	Museums Manager	£1,500	Part of a funded project	By end 2026	Pop-up exhibitions have been created
	Continue to support on Ashton Market Gallery exhibitions with Arts and Engagement team	Curators	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Market Gallery exhibitions are installed
	Create a focus group of visitors and non-visitors	Museums Manager	£1,000 - £5,000 depending on parameters	Funded project / museum budget	By end 2026	Feedback is obtained to help inform Audience Development Plan
7. Increase visitors to Astley Cheetham Art Gallery	Refurbish the gallery, improve lighting and increase display space	Museums Manager	£costed by FM	Stalybridge Capital Regeneration funding	By end 2026	Gallery refurbished and visitor numbers increase

	Support the development of a cultural quarter in Stalybridge including the library and gallery with new lift installed	Museums Manager	£	Stalybridge Capital Regeneration funding	By end 2026	Gallery is at the heart of marketing and signage
	Maximise opportunities for events and activities at the gallery with Arts and Engagement team and other council initiatives in the town	Museums Manager	£0 – 1,000	Internal budgets / external funding	Ongoing	A varied programme of activities are held attracting new audiences
	Build up the Trip Advisor page and encourage reviews	Visitor Services Manager	£0	Staff time	By 2025 (depending on gallery refurb)	The gallery becomes top place to visit in the town
	Create a programme of exhibitions including collections, local and regional artists and local students	Curators	£500 - 1000 annually	Museum budget	Ongoing	Visitor numbers increase
8. Ensure that our Museums and Galleries are seen as safe, inclusive and welcoming places for all	Complete Health and Safety audits for each site and risk assessments for all activities and events	Operations and Business Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Risk assessments and audits are up to date
	Make improvements to accessibility information on our websites using the Vocal Eyes guidance	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	By summer 2024	Websites contain information to aid visitors
	Apply for funding to develop Common Strands project	Curators	£20,000	External funding	By mid 2024	Project continues and toolkit is

	around black history to create toolkit of resources for schools to use and add interpretation around Portland Basin Museum					produced for schools
	Review interpretation relating to the industrial gallery to reflect the impact and legacy of the slave trade and empire	Curators	£1000 new text panels	Museum budget	By mid 2024	New text panels are created for the cotton displays
	Create a visual story for Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and publish online	Education Manager	£0	Staff time	By 2026 (following refurbishment)	A visual story is published online
	Create trails for adults, highlighting objects around Portland Basin Museum	Education Manager	£500 design and print	Museum budget	By end 2024	Trails are produced
	Create a welcome wall at Portland Basin Museum	Museums Manager	£800	Museum budget	By end 2024	Welcome wall is created

Key Aim 3: Access to Learning: offer visitors enjoyable, inspirational and educational experiences.

Objectives	Actions	Lead Person	Estimated Cost	Source of Funding	Timescale	Performance Measurement
9. Provide opportunities for early years and children across the sites to support the best start in life	Increase hand-on opportunities for visitors to engage with collections on display through interactives eg objects to handle, smells, etc	Curators	£1,000	Museum budget	By end 2024	Feedback from visitors that museum is engaging for children
	Maintain under 5s play area	Technician	£200 paint and	Museum budget	Ongoing	Area is well

	at Portland Basin Museum		new toys			maintained and well used
	Support Young Carers by organising an artist for their weekly sessions	Education Manager	Income generating	Museum budget	Ongoing	An artist delivers regular workshops to Young Carers
	Increase targeting marketing of our offer to early years audiences eg nurseries, soft play centres	Museums Manager	£100 posters	Museum budget	By mid 2024	Increase in visitor numbers
	Build links with local colleges to deliver joint projects to raise profile of cultural services	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time / museum budget / external funding	Ongoing	Projects with colleges are completed
10. Support school visits across all sites	Add pre- and post-visit ideas to the schools workshop outlines on the In Tameside website	Education Manager	£0	Staff time	By mid 2024	Resources are available for schools online
	Create a SEND education webpage – liaise with schools to find out what they need from us	Education Manager / Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	By end 2024	A webpage is created
	Create sensory, tactile, hands-on resources for SEND schools	Education Manager	£500	External funding	By end 2024	Resources are available
	Seek funding to redevelop agriculture and coal mine area at Portland Basin Museum to create a bigger more flexible learning space	Museums Manager	£100,000	External funding	By end 2027	The learning space area is redeveloped

	for schools and events					
	Host teacher network meetings and events	Education Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Teacher network events are held and well attended
	Continue termly e-newsletter to schools in Tameside and extend to non-Tameside schools	Education Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Newsletters are sent out termly
	Create self-led gallery resources to support self-led school visits	Education Manager	£500	Museum budget	By end 2027 (gallery revamp)	Increase in visitor numbers
11. Provide opportunities for people to fulfil their potential and for supporting activity in older age	Programme I Made It adult art classes throughout the year	Education Manager	£1,200	Museum budget	Ongoing	Classes are programmed and generate income
	Offer Open Art exhibition each year and other artist opportunities to display works	Curators	£500	Museum budget	Annually	A range of exhibitions are held
	Create reminiscence 'backpack' style resources to help support people with dementia on museum visits	Museums Manager	£5000 (including artist time and resources)	External funding	End 2025	Backpacks are created
	Support volunteers and placements where possible	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	The museum supports a regular volunteer and has 1-2 placements per year
12. Maintain and improve facilities	Work with Tameside College students to create a	Curators	£1000 (cost of new projector)	External funding	End 2023	A new film is produced

at Portland Basin Museum	new film in the cinema area					
	Create new sounds and voiceovers on the 1920s street	Museums Manager	£6000 (including artist time and resources)	External funding	End 2025	New audio is available on the 1920s street
	Add more sensory additions to the displays eg smells and interactives	Museums Manager	£5000	External funding	End 2025	The displays are more interactive for all ages
	Upgrade the toilet sanitary ware, taps and flooring	Museums Manager	£££	Sanctuary Housing	End 2028	Facilities are modernised

Key Aim 4: Access to Collections: Care for, document and develop the borough's collections and interpret them in imaginative and engaging ways.

Objectives	Actions	Lead Person	Estimated Cost	Source of Funding	Timescale	Performance Measurement
13. Maintain Museum Accreditation for all sites	Review the Forward Plan and other policies by their review dates and gain appropriate approval	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Governance for policies is on place
	Ensure the Documentation Procedures Manual and other working plans are kept up to date	Museums Manager	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Policies and plans are reviewed by their review dates
	Process new acquisitions within 28 days	Curators	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Collections are well managed and no new backlogs are built up

14. Progress collections development work	Progress the actions set out in the Documentation Plan	Curators	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Collections are well managed
	Seek additional funding to conserve objects identified in the Care and Conservation Plan	Curators	Cost varies per object	External funding	Ongoing	Condition of the collection is improved and more items are able to be displayed
15. Use the museum's collections in engaging ways	Create a programme of exhibitions across all sites, projecting 18 months ahead	Curators	£2000	Museum budget	Ongoing	Exhibitions are planned and delivered
	Get the Portland Basin waterwheel working again as part of wharf garden plans	Curators, Museums Manager	£25,000	External funding	End 2027	Waterwheel is working again
	Add more collections information to the website, with QR codes links displayed on the 1920s street eg for objects in the pawnbroker's window	Curators	£200	Museum budget, staff time	End 2024	Visitors can find out more information about objects on 1920s street
	Seek funding for more display cases at Portland Basin Museum to enable safe access to more collections	Museums Manager	£80,000	External funding	End 2027	More and varied collections are on display eg natural history, military
	Start object handling sessions led by Front of House	Visitor Services Manager, Curators	£0	Staff time	Summer 2024	Object handling sessions take place

	Apply for funding to conserve Sidley painting as part of arts project and exhibition at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery	Curators	£15,000	External funding	End 2027- after gallery building work complete	Sidley portrait is conserved and hung in gallery and arts project done
	Create displays of the Manchester Regiment collection at Portland Basin Museum and online	Curators	£0	Staff time	Ongoing	Manchester Regiment collection remains visible
	Apply for funding for a new 'Men behind the Medals' website with more modern design, better search facilities and the ability to edit it ourselves	Curators	£15,000	External funding	By end 2027	New website launches with better search facility and updated information
16. Ensure the safety of the collections	Implement findings from the security reviews	Museums Manager	£to be costed	Museum budget	Depends on other council departments	Action plan is completed
	Undertake updates to the valuations of the collection	Museums Manager	£8,000	Museum budget	By end 2025	Collection valuations are up to date
	Review emergency plans for each site annually and test out emergency plans	Museums Manager	£600 for Harwell training day	Museum budget	By end 2023 and review annually	Emergency plans are up to date and staff are trained
	Monitor environmental conditions across all sites and stores	Technician	£0	Staff time	Quarterly, ongoing	Environmental conditions are monitored and stable
	Monitor pests in sites and	Curators	£200	Museum budget	Monthly,	Collections are

	stores			and staff time	ongoing	kept free from harmful pests
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