

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	23 October 2019
Executive Member/Reporting Officer:	Councillor Leanne Feeley (Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage) Emma Varnam (Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods)
Subject:	MUSEUMS FORWARD PLAN
Report Summary:	The Council's Museums and Galleries consist of Portland Basin Museum, the Museum of the Manchester Regiment and Astley Cheetham Art Gallery. The Museums and Galleries are part of Arts Council England's Museum Accreditation scheme, which is the industry standard for museums and galleries. Tameside Museums will be invited to reapply for Accreditation in 2020 and in order to achieve it the service needs to have approved plans and policies in place. This report sets out the Museums Forward Plan, Collections Development Policy, Documentation Policy, Care and Conservation Policy and Access Policy for formal consideration and adoption.
Recommendations:	It is recommended that Executive Cabinet APPROVE the Museums Forward Plan 2019 to 2024 and the associated policies appendices 2 to 5 to support reaccreditation by Arts Council and to enable access to Funding.
Corporate Plan:	Tameside Museums and Galleries significantly add to the borough's communities' sense of pride, our place and shared heritage. They support the very best start in life through activities for children, increase aspiration and hope through life-learning, and are seen as safe, welcoming places to support activity in older age. Museums and galleries can support levels of self-care through a social prescription of cultural participation.
Policy Implications:	It is essential that any proposals demonstrate value for money and make a clear contribution to Council priorities.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	There are no additional cost implications for achieving Accreditation, over and above the museum's core budget of £344,240. The Museum of the Manchester Regiment forms part of a wider scheme for the development of Ashton Town Hall, for which capital funding has been requested. The redevelopment of Astley Cheetham Art Gallery is being funded by underspend from Cultural and Customer Services budgets from previous years. In addition the service is supported through successful funding bids to Museum Development North West, Arts Council England, Arts & Heritage, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Army Museums Ogilby Trust. The service will continue to seek new funding to enable it to deliver exciting and innovative projects at all sites and in the local community.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough	A Forward Plan is a requirement of the Museum Accreditation scheme run by the Arts Council and such accreditation enables

Solicitor)

access to Funding. Cultural activities support the Council's wellbeing strategy to reduce demand on more expensive support intervention services.

Risk Management:

The risks are that the Forward Plan and other policies do not achieve Accreditation – the plans and policies have been devised to ensure they are fit for purpose. There is also reputational damage if the Forward Plan is not delivered throughout its lifetime – the plan will be carefully managed and monitored to ensure its delivery.

Access to Information:

Appendix 1	Museums Forward Plan 2019-24
Appendix 2	Collections Development Policy (formerly the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy)
Appendix 3	Documentation Policy
Appendix 4	Care and Collections Policy
Appendix 5	Access Policy
Appendix 6	full results of the consultation

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer, Rachel Cornes – Museums Manager for Cultural and Customer Services, Operations and Neighbourhoods



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Museums and Galleries service, part of Cultural and Customer Services, comprises:
- Portland Basin Museum (Ashton-under-Lyne)
 - The Museum of the Manchester Regiment (Ashton-under-Lyne)
 - Astley Cheetham Art Gallery (Stalybridge)
 - Off-site storage space (Ashton-under-Lyne)
- 1.2 The service makes a significant contribution to the priorities of the Council by; supporting a cultural offer that attracts people to the borough; improving the wellbeing of residents; increasing educational attainment and skills levels; and generally providing safe and welcoming venues for residents and visitors to the borough to enjoy.
- 1.3 To attract the necessary external funding to maintain and develop the Museums and Galleries offer, the service must be formally accredited by Arts Council England. This report sets out the requirements of Accreditation and seeks approval of the required policies.

2. MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SERVICE

- 2.1 Portland Basin Museum 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 the museum 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 the industrial history gallery.
- 2.2 Temporary exhibitions at the museum are changed every six months. They often have a focus on community involvement with visitors encouraged to contribute their memories and ephemera to the exhibitions. Exhibitions enable different objects from the collection to be displayed and recent exhibitions have included 'Toy Box Tales', 'Accessorise' and 'Goal!'.
- 2.3 The museum has a range of events throughout the year, including artist-led craft activities for children in the school holidays, regular 'Meet Tommy Atkins' First World War soldier sessions, monthly 'I Made It' adult craft masterclasses, weekly 'Little Hands' sessions for pre-schoolers and Bank Holiday Monday event days. The Council's Arts and Engagement Service also programme events at the museum throughout the year, such as Science Week events and children's theatre performances.
- 2.4 Portland Basin Museum is open 6 days a week. In 2018-19 the museum attracted 107,801 visitors. The museum is the number one attraction in Tameside on Trip Advisor and has achieved their 'Certificate of Excellence' each year since 2012. The museum is part of Visit England's Visitor Assurance Quality Assessment Scheme and in 2018 the museum was awarded its highest score yet of 79% following the annual mystery shop.
- 2.5 The Manchester Regiment collection consists of medals, including six Victoria Crosses, uniforms, weapons, equipment, silverware, memorials and personal souvenirs. The famous war poet Wilfred Owen was serving with the regiment when he was killed in 1918. The collection belongs to the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and is on loan to the council.
- 2.6 The Museum of the Manchester Regiment is currently closed for redevelopment. Tameside Museums and Galleries continue to care for and develop the collection during the museum's closure. Some objects from the collection have been displayed at Portland

Basin Museum during the closure and family history enquires continue to be answered and referred to the Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre.

- 2.7 Plans have been drawn up by museum designers to create a new museum in the ground floor space at Ashton Town Hall. The plans also include space for an art gallery to showcase the work of local artists and the borough's art collection.
- 2.8 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. The Cheetham family also bequeathed their art collection, which is widely acknowledged as being one of the finest small regional collections. The art collection has been added to since the original bequest and includes a large collection of works by Hyde artist Harry Rutherford.
- 2.9 Exhibitions at the gallery are changed every four to six months and mostly feature works from the Astley Cheetham collection. Exhibitions have included 'Nature in Art', 'Colour: the Art of Powerful Pigment' and 'Once Upon a Time'.
- 2.10 The gallery has activities for children, including a craft table, trail and books about art. Children's theatre events are regularly programmed at the gallery by the Council's Arts and Engagement Service.
- 2.11 Astley Cheetham Art Gallery was open 26 days per year until February 2019, when the opening hours increased to 17 hours per week. In 2018-19 the gallery attracted 590 visitors. The gallery is part of Visit England's Visitor Assurance Quality assessment Scheme and in 2018 the gallery was awarded its highest score yet of 72% following the annual mystery shop.

3. ACCREDITATION

- 3.1 The Museum Accreditation Scheme is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries. It affirms to everyone involved with a museum that they are doing the right things to help people engage with collections and protect them for the future. The Museum Accreditation scheme achieves this by making sure museums manage their collections properly, engage with visitors and are governed appropriately. Accreditation covers all types and sizes of museums and galleries and there are currently more than 1700 museums participating in the scheme across the UK.
- 3.2 In February 2015 Tameside Museums and Galleries achieved Full Accreditation for all of its sites. In autumn 2018 the Accreditation Scheme was reviewed and relaunched by Arts Council England. All museums are invited to reapply for Accreditation every 5 years, previously this was every 3-4 years. Tameside will be invited to reapply in June 2020 and will be given six months' written notice ahead of this date.
- 3.3 Due to its current closure to the public, the Museums and Galleries Service has applied for temporary Accreditation for the Museum of the Manchester Regiment each year since its closure in 2015. This temporary Accreditation has been granted annually and the Museum of the Manchester Regiment will be included in the full return in 2020.
- 3.4 The Accreditation process involves the development of an approved Forward Plan for the service. The aim of the Forward Plan is to provide policy context for the work of Tameside Museums and Galleries for the period 2019-24. It outlines the main work proposed during this time and how the service will be delivered.
- 3.5 Museum Accreditation also requires the Museums and Galleries to have approved policies in place relating to them management of the historic collections. These policies are a

Collections Development Policy, a Documentation Policy, a Care and Conservation Policy and an Access Policy.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation is important not only to ascertain satisfaction levels but also to aid development of a meaningful and enjoyable experience for future visitors. Consultation is undertaken in various ways and these have all helped inform the content of the Forward Plan and of the other policies and plans:

- Comments books at each site.
- Conversations with visitors at each site.
- Portland Basin Museum has received 417 reviews on Trip Advisor over the past few years and has achieved an 'Excellent' rating for the past eight years.
- Visit England's Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme sends a mystery shopper to review each site annually, followed by a telephone or in-person de-brief and a report to the Museums Manager.
- An electronic visitor survey allowing visitors to rate their satisfaction with aspects of their visit.
- Participation in Museum Development North West programmes that include visitor feedback, such as the Family Friendly Programme and In Your Customers' Shoes.

4.2 In 2018 Museums and Galleries undertook consultation with users and non-users of the Museum of the Manchester Regiment to inform the plans for the redevelopment of the museum. This included an online survey on Tameside Council's website, which attracted over 650 responses; a Mini Museum Makers project over several weeks with two local schools focussed on what school children wanted to see in the new museum; artist-led consultation Portland Basin Museum and at two Tameside libraries.

4.3 To contribute to the development of the Forward Plan, Museums and Galleries undertook public consultation. A survey asked people what they would like to see in Tameside's museums and galleries and was live on the Tameside Council website for four weeks (8 July – 5 August 2019). This was promoted via social media, on the website and via a local newspaper article. Hard copies were available at Portland Basin Museum, Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and on request.

4.4 The consultation received 81 responses. People felt the priorities for the service for the next 3-5 years should be to increase learning opportunities across the sites and to redevelop the Museum of the Manchester Regiment. People want to see exhibitions that focus on local history and exhibitions of local artists' work. People are interested in seeing more of a focus on environmental sustainability issues and health and wellbeing.

4.5 95% of respondents had visited Portland Basin Museum, 49% had visited Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and 59% had visited the Museum of the Manchester Regiment prior to its closure 2015. 2.5% had not visited any of the sites.

4.6 The most popular way people would like to find out about the Museums and Galleries is via social media, followed by the Council's website and leaflets and posters.

4.7 There were a range of comments, some praising the current offer and others offering suggestions for improvements. Comments included:

- "Please get the Museum of the Manchester [Regiment] back up and running",
- "Please look at improving Portland Basin outdoor space around the canal"

- *“It is essential we retain our heritage but ensure it’s suitable for 21st C, interactive, refreshed regularly”*
- *“As a local artist I would love to get more involved with local galleries by having the opportunity to display and sell my work”*
- *“Community space needs to be accounted for”*
- *“Very annoyed that Stalybridge has not been accessible for a number of years”*
- *“I do visit and find them so valuable for the community”*
- *“I would like to see more nature workshops / nature based / recycling / learn more about plants and wildlife and climate change”*
- *“Reach out and showcase young artists”*
- *“More on Tameside’s history”*

4.8 The full results of the consultation can be found at **Appendix 6**.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORWARD PLAN

5.1 The Forward Plan has been developed by staff at the Museums and Galleries and has been informed by public consultation, service requirements and the requirements of Accreditation.

5.2 The service aims, set out in the new Forward Plan, are as follows:

- *Access to services*: ensure that all of our sites are accessible, friendly and have the highest standards of customer care.
- *Access to the community*: respond to the needs and demands of the local community and to participate fully in the life of Tameside, contributing to the cultural, social and economic activity of the borough.
- *Access to learning*: offer visitors enjoyable, inspirational and educational experiences.
- *Access to collections*: ensure that the borough’s museums, galleries and collections are cared for and added to, for future generations.

5.3 The service has 18 objectives that fall under the themes of the service aims. The following are priority actions for the service over the life of the Forward Plan:

- Ensure physical and intellectual access for all visitors to museums and galleries (specifically to create a new Museum of the Manchester Regiment and art gallery space in Ashton Town Hall and to redevelop Astley Cheetham Art Gallery in Stalybridge)
- Ensure the sustainability of the Museums and Galleries through improving opportunities for income generation.
- Support a sustainable environment.

5.4 The full Forward Plan 2019-24 can be found at **Appendix 1**.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES POLICIES

6.1 Under the Accreditation Scheme, museums are required to show that they maintain high levels of collections care, have accountability for their collections, develop their collections in a responsible manner and provide suitable public access to the collections. The following policies have been developed by Tameside Museums and Galleries to meet service requirements and the requirements set out in Accreditation.

6.2 The Collections Development Policy (formerly the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy) provides an overview to the collections and sets the themes and priorities for collecting. It

also provides information about the legal and ethical framework for acquiring and disposing of objects. The policy can be found at **Appendix 2**.

- 6.3 The Documentation Policy sets out how the museum accounts for the collections it holds. It shows that industry standard procedures for documenting the collections are being adhered to. The policy can be found at **Appendix 3**.
- 6.4 The Care and Collections Policy outlines how the museum cares for its collections and how ethical and legal requirements are met. It is designed to ensure the long term preservation of the collection and takes into account recognised museum frameworks and standards. The policy can be found at **Appendix 4**.
- 6.5 The Access Policy sets out how people can see, use and reference the collections and the buildings they are housed in. It shows that a variety of interpretive methods to exhibit the collection are used and that information is provided to the public as to how they can access the collections. The policy can be found at **Appendix 5**.

7. FINANCE

- 7.1 There are no additional cost implications for achieving Accreditation, over and above the museum's core budget of £344,240.
- 7.2 The Museum of the Manchester Regiment forms part of a wider scheme for the development of Ashton Town Hall, for which capital funding has been requested. The redevelopment of Astley Cheetham Art Gallery is being funded by underspend from Cultural and Customer Services budgets from previous years.
- 7.3 In addition the service is supported through successful funding bids to Museum Development North West, Arts Council England, Arts & Heritage, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Army Museums Ogilby Trust. The service will continue to seek new funding to enable it to deliver exciting and innovative projects at all sites and in the local community.

8. RISKS

- 8.1 The risks associated with the Accreditation process are:
- Reputational damage if the Forward Plan is not delivered throughout its life. The Forward Plan will be carefully managed and monitored to ensure its delivery throughout its term.
 - The Forward Plan and other policies do not achieve Accreditation. The plan and policies have been developed with partners to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet current expectations.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Museums and Galleries service continues to improve its offer, which contributes to Council priorities around starting well, living well and ageing well. Service improvements have been delivered in partnership with external funders such as Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- 9.2 In order to attract funding the service must be accredited by Arts Council England. The Accreditation process involves the development of a Forward Plan for the service and policies around its collections that must be adopted by the Council.

9.3 Public consultation has been undertaken to inform the Forward Plan.

9.4 In order to fully deliver on the Forward Plan, financial support will be required from partners and for this to be possible Accreditation must be achieved.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 As set out at the front of the report.