

RESPONSE TO REVIEW OF THE SUPPORT FOR MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE CENTRES

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CABINET

21ST JUNE, 2007

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To respond to the "Review of the Support for Museums and Heritage Centre" outlining acceptance or otherwise of the recommendations made.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

THAT

- (a) All Museums in the County be encouraged to complete the Museum Associations Accreditation process;
- (b) the Museum Development Officer MDO project should continue through the support of the Hub and the MLA;
- (c) independent museums in the County be reminded that they can apply for Community Grant Funding;
- (d) the possibility of a partnership insurance scheme for the Herefordshire Museums Forum members should be explored. This could be pursued by the Museum Development Officer on the Forum's behalf;
- (e) a small hiring collection be established to loan objects along the lines of the Reading Corporate Loans scheme. (The recommendation to be pursued with an outline scheme presented to the Cabinet Member);
- (f) a formula be developed to measure Heritage's impact on both tourism and to demonstrate its social and economic impact; and
- (g) prevention measures be undertaken to protect Kington Museum from being struck by lorries reversing to a nearby store.

Reasons

During 2006/07 the Community Services Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the support for Museums and Heritage Centres. The Committee visited several sites in and outside the County, including Kington Museum, Butchers Row Museum in Ledbury, the Painted Room in Ledbury and the Judges Lodgings in Presteigne – the latter as an out of County comparison. The recommendations mainly focus on the operation of local authority run facilities and the care of collections. A copy of the final Scrutiny report is attached at Appendix 1. This report assesses each of the recommendations in turn and considers whether or not they should be accepted.

Considerations

Consideration should be given to reverting to the title ‘Museum Services’ to identify the service currently known as Heritage Services;

1. As a point of clarity the statements made in point 13 that “the public never referred to the service as Heritage but always as the Museum Service” is not based on evidence, but a sense from the museum professionals in their day to day contact with the public.
2. However, as reflected in point 14 of the report “Heritage Services” is used to reflect the diversity of services run by the “heritage team”. The service is not purely running museums, but conducting work in schools, projects in the community and significantly the care and store of collections which are not displayed purely in museums.
3. This recommendation not to be accepted.

As Museums, Libraries and Archives are grouped together nationally, it should be considered that the three services should be grouped in the same Council directorate to enable easier cross discipline partnership;

4. Museums and Libraries are currently grouped together within the Council structure. Archives are within the Corporate and Customers Services Directorate decided as a realignment of directorate functions in 2005 to specifically link Archives Services with the wider information functions and Modern Records. At a delivery and operation level the services continue to work together. This linkage has been evident in joint projects but also through the recent Cultural Inspection and Regional Commentary.
5. This recommendation not to be accepted.

All Museums in the County should be encouraged to complete the Museum Associations Accreditation process;

6. This recommendation to be agreed, but acknowledging that many of the museums are run by volunteers and may not have the capacity to meet the accreditation requirements.

Hereford Museum and Art Gallery should research and consider the possibility of going to single entity trust status;

7. The points made in the report from 138 to 145 do not advocate trust status. The points highlight that trust status does not create financial viability and could create additional expenditure for example appointment of Chief Executive; key advantage is

to have a unique selling point and specialist collections with a national context – that Hereford Museum and Art Gallery does not have; and there could be a potential loss of accountability.

8. Considering these points made above and that as a local authority there has been considerable success in raising external funding for heritage, the Scrutiny Review does not present a strong enough argument to pursue trust status for Hereford Museum and Art Gallery.
9. This recommendation not to be accepted, but further consideration given to the externalisation of services along with other functions.

If Hereford Museum and Art Gallery does transfer to a single entity trust then any funding agreement should be long-term;

10. In relation to recommendation (d) this recommendation not to be accepted.

It is to be hoped that the MDO (Museum Development Officer) project will continue through the support of the Hub and the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives);

11. This recommendation to be accepted.

Independent museums in the County to be reminded that they can apply for Community Regeneration Grant Funding;

12. Museums to be reminded that they can apply only for eligible activities that are supported and evidenced as being required by the whole community.
13. This recommendation to be accepted.

It should be made possible for Museums to apply for longer term Community Regeneration Grant Funding than the one year agreements currently available;

14. The Community Regeneration Grant Funding is to ensure voluntary sector organisations deliver the objectives of both Herefordshire Council and the Herefordshire Partnership. This funding can extend more than one year but will not support revenue funding unless the costs are directly associated with the project.
15. The Arts Team operate a SLA process with groups supported for 2 years. This again relates to meeting specific objectives of the Council and the Partnership concerned with project work. These funds are allocated from within the arts service as most of its services are delivered under a “commissioning process”. For Heritage Service to do this, funds would need to be found within their own budget to “contract” services rather than deliver them themselves.
16. This recommendation not to be accepted.

The possibility of a partnership insurance scheme for the Herefordshire Museums Forum members should be explored. This could be pursued by the Museum Development Officer on the Forum’s behalf;

17. The recommendation to be accepted.

A small hiring collection should be established to loan objects along the lines of the Reading Corporate Loans scheme;

18. The recommendation to be pursued with an outline scheme presented to the Cabinet Member.

A formula should be developed to measure Heritage's impact on both tourism and also to demonstrate its social and economic impact.

19. For this recommendation to be accepted along with outcomes measurements linked to the wider Cultural Services outcomes and changes in DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) new guidance.

Prevention measures should be taken to protect Kington Museum from being struck by reversing lorries to a nearby store.

20. This recommendation to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Resources.
21. An issue, without a recommendation, raised in point 134 is that donations made at museums were contributed to an income target for the whole service and that donations should be allocated to the museums they are made at. However, there are a range of functions that contribute to the front facing museum, including conservation of objects, running of venues and marketing that add to the whole experience. If the income budget was to be reduced, with donations a small part, then expenditure would also need to be reduced to ensure a balanced budget.

Risk Management

Closure of museums without ongoing revenue support.

Alternative Options

Recommendations reviewed.

Consultees

Cultural Services Manager
Regeneration Co-ordinator (Grants and Programmes)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Review of the Support of Museums and Heritage Centres

Background Papers

None identified.