

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	10 March 2016
Title of report:	Museum and archive services
Report by:	Assistant director communities

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates and it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To consider initial options for future operation of the museum and archive service.

Recommendations

THAT:

- (a) the savings and income plan (outlined in paragraphs 17 to 29 of the report) is implemented;**
- (b) £80k is invested in improvements to the Old House, stock and marketing as outlined at paragraph 44;**
- (c) a further report on longer term options for future sustainable delivery of the service be developed to include exploration of trust, transfer and shared service arrangements with suitable heritage partners; and**
- (d) the principles of allocating library and museum support fund (outlined at paragraphs 30/31 of the report) are agreed.**

Alternative options

- 1 To reduce or cease operation of the services. This is not recommended given the value placed on these services by residents and visitors, and the potential for the services to develop alternative delivery arrangements over time.

- 2 To maintain existing service provision. This is not recommended given the need to deliver savings and to improve the heritage offer to residents and visitors to the county.

Reasons for recommendations

- 3 The council has considerable budget challenges based on a reduced government grant and the requirement to meet the care and safeguarding requirements of residents in the county. The archive and museum service plays a contributing role in supporting the visitor economy; has responsibility for the care of historic collections for future generations; and along with other museum/heritage providers in the county gives a sense of identity and place. The report and recommendations propose ways of reducing the council's revenue costs whilst retaining elements of the service. The recommendations support the services in becoming more commercial to raise income and looking at full cost recovery when charging for services.
- 4 The report addresses the first two years of revenue budget reductions; a further report on longer term options will be developed.

Key considerations

- 5 The delivery of the archive and museum services should be seen in the context of the wider contribution to the county's heritage offer made by the voluntary, secular and private sector. Herefordshire has a rich heritage well preserved through its landscape, architecture and town/city formations, castles and churches, and the nature of its employment sector through farming, land based industry, crafts and manufacturing traditions.
- 6 There are 33 museum/heritage attractions in the county¹ and 5.5 million² visitors to Herefordshire. Herefordshire Council directly operates the Old House museum (High Town, Hereford), Hereford Museum and Art Gallery (Broad Street, Hereford), the Museum Resource and Learning Centre (MRLC) (Friar Street, Hereford), and the Hereford Archive and Collection Centre (HARC) (Holme Lacy Road, Hereford). Ledbury Heritage Centre and Ross Heritage Centre were part of community asset transfers in 2015 and are now run locally. In addition educational outreach services are offered including 'museum on the move' which takes themed elements of the collection to schools, care homes and community groups.
- 7 The figures below illustrate the visits to the centres:

Sites / Services	Visitor numbers 2012-13	Visitor numbers 2013-14	Visitor numbers 2014-15
Hereford Museum and Art Gallery	28,726	23,467	14,077
The Old House	34,762	26,656	16,080
Herefordshire Archive and Record Centre*	3,160	1,372	Closed
Museum, Resource and Learning Centre (open to the public by appointment)	2,179	1,593	1,193

*note: figures for Record Office influenced by the relocation: open 1 day a week in 2013/14, closed from June during 2014-5; August – January 2015/16 figures: 1,734.

- 8 The figures show a decrease in use of the facilities. This is likely to be due in large part to the reduction in opening times from 41 (summer) and 35 (winter) to 20 hours for the

¹ Review of Museums and Archives, Hilary McGowan with Alastair Stevenson and Lancaster Parr, February 2016

² STEAM report 2012

Museum and Art Gallery and the Old House from 41 (summer) and 35 (winter) to 20 hours a week to deliver financial savings, and reduction in staffing at the museum sites from 14 FTE to 6.2 FTE. However, this reduction in visitor numbers may also in part be reflective of the offer which has been largely unchanged for a number of years, combined with changes to how people access heritage through a multi-channel environment (e.g. increase in digital information making reach and access to collections different).

- 9 Though the centres are based in Hereford they have a countywide function in terms of the collections' presentation, conservation, store and access, plus advice to the voluntary sector. The budget for the service is outlined below:

	Employee costs	Goods and services	Income	Net delegated budget	Centralised premises costs	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Archive / HARC	389	18	(10)	397	224*	621
Sub-total archive service	389	18	(10)	397	224	621
Hereford Broad Street	22	2	0	21	36	57
Hereford Museum Resource and Learning Centre Friar Street	178	10	(3)	188	71	259
Old House	22	2	(3)	21	16	37
Sub-Total museum service	222	14	(6)	230	123	353
Total	611	32	(16)	627	347	974

*Note: premises cost support the services of Archaeology, Historic Environment Record, Biological Records Centre and Archive Service.
Front of Housing staffing between the museum sites is interchangeable.

- 10 The council commissioned a review of the museum and archive services to consider the reduction of the subsidy to the services in light of the wider budget challenge of the authority. The study found a number of opportunities for income generation and savings (see appendix 1 of this report for response to recommendations and appendix 2 for the summary of the review report).
- 11 The report identified key options for savings and income generation as:
- Closure of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery
 - Car parking charges at HARC
 - Expand learning and outreach offer with additional charge
 - Commercial charging for conservation and collections advice/activity
 - Increase lettings of HARC and MRLC
 - Renting of conservation bench space at HARC
 - Charging for conservation work relating to archives
 - Promote licensing of images to generate an income
 - Income from retail and events linked to the Brian Hatton centenary exhibition and pop-up tour
 - Develop retail sales at the Old House based on locally made crafts
 - Reduction of hours at HARC
 - Use of space at HARC for other council services
 - Amalgamation of services with other local authorities / joint provision
- 12 The report does not recommend the closure of other facilities because of the duty to care for the collections, the cost to close, as well as needing to consider the obligations

linked to the funding of MRLC. Also, the report points out that archives have a statutory framework based on the relevant provisions (see legal implications below).

- 13 The report also identified a number of investment areas including:
- New displays and “pop-up” exhibitions
 - Appointment of a commercial manager
 - Appointment of a marketing manager
- 14 The findings of the report have been reviewed and the opportunities assessed with a view to:
- Creating a return on investment and business case (income to cover costs in the first instance then generating income to reduce the revenue costs)
 - Supporting the long term sustainability of the service rather than a one off income generation
 - Proposals are in line with the core intentions of the service to care for the collections and make them accessible to residents and visitors.
- 15 There are a number of drivers for change in how museum and archives operate – specifically councils across the country are finding it a challenge to maintain their current level of service given reducing resources; also the methods of accessing and interpreting history have shifted with an increase of interactive and digital information (though the experience will be different in nature).
- 16 The focus going forward is therefore proposed to be:
- Developing the Old House, as part of the tourism offer for Hereford and the wider county
 - For the museum offer to be part of the wider interpretation of Hereford’s heritage, working with a range of organisations on a co-ordinated view of the city’s historic features
 - For the HARC and MRLC to continue to be centres of heritage collections whilst maximising the use of the venues
 - To increase the opportunity for participation and involvement in history interpretation
 - To be part of the community led scheme to develop Hereford Library, and Hereford Museum and Art Gallery
 - Explore avenues for income generation and merchandise to sustain the service
 - To review the collections policy in light of reduced capacity.
- 17 The table below is an illustration of areas of savings and income generation for years 2017/18 and 2018/19.

	2017/18 ‘000	2018/19 ‘000	Total added to the base budget ‘000
Charging at the Old House	30	30	60
Merchandise for museums	10	6	16
Review of learning offer (saving or additional income)	30		30
HARC review of charging / hire fees	7	3	10
Archives conservation charging	7		7
On-line charges for archives	2	5	7
Hire charges for MRLC	5	2	7

Staff savings on fixed term post at HARC		35	35
Staff savings on museum staff through rationalising different functions		35	35
Savings in operating Broad Street museum	15		15
Total	106	116	222

- 18 **The Old House** – the Old House is an iconic feature of Hereford and the wider county. There is potential to make more of the museum as a key tourism and heritage offer. The proposal is to enhance the visitor experience with improvements to the site. To have additional opening hours offset with an introduction of charging –consultations conducted with visitors between October 2014 and December 2015 has indicated that a charge of £2.50 per adults and £1.50 per child would be reasonable. Improvements to the Old House will be in two phases: 1 – enhance layout and interpretation; 2 – development of the basement rooms and attic spaces, as “hidden treasure” with interpretation and increased interaction supported by a Heritage Lottery bid.

12.28%	21.05%	40.79%	33.37%	2.63%	0.88%
£0 - £1	£1 - £2	£2 - £3	£3 - £4	£4 -£5	£5+

Note: totals 111% as some visitors ticked more than one option

- 19 **Hereford Museum and Art Gallery** – based on the proposals made by Hereford Library Users Group, the museum offer at Broad Street would be part of a new development of the site (this includes Woolhope Club retaining its presence on site (184,434 visits to Hereford Library; 14,000 visits to the Museum and Art Gallery). These proposals will be subject to a further report.
- 20 **Part of tourism in Hereford** – The city has a wonderfully preserved heritage aspect with the layout and feel retaining its rich history. The Old House can be a key part of the offer with the intention to improve the external appeal as part of the High Town improvements. The intention is to also work with the BID team on the wider heritage offer in Hereford including interpretation of key places and spaces of interest. To also use external funding to make the most of digital technology in interpreting heritage.
- 21 **Education and events** – “hands on history” is increasingly part of heritage interpretation and a proactive way of engaging a wider range of interests (not just children) with classes, workshops, activities and interactive displays. The schools offer will be evaluated for its full cost recovery, including Museum on the Move as both Shropshire and now Staffordshire have withdrawn from the partnership to deliver this with Herefordshire the remaining participant. Also, there is potential for income generation through an enhanced package for visitors (e.g. behind the scenes experience) and chargeable events.
- 22 **Merchandise** – there is believed to be a merchandise opportunity at the Old House offering bespoke locally made items for sale to visitors and residents.
- 23 **Marketing and branding** – The promotion of the Old House will aim to increase visitor numbers linked to special events to foster repeat visitors. Also to create a bespoke brand for the Old House, MRLC and HARC to support the promotion and marketing of the facilities. It is proposed that a member of staff within the communications team is aligned to work on marketing and branding for museum and archive services. To also rename MRLC to be more appealing and user friendly.
- 24 **Property** – The Museum, Resource and Learning Centre (MRLC) is an attractive but underused resource. There is potential to use the office space for other services or tenants, and the meeting rooms promoted as hire spaces (the savings generated from this would be part of a second phase - although the shortage of car parking space is an

ongoing issue for hirers). It is also proposed that the MRLC has wifi access so it has greater flexibility with conferencing/hire opportunity and service use. Capacity at HARC (office and storage) will be supported by the creation of a Land and Property Search Centre based at the building supporting both historic and modern land, deed, property and planning searches. This would create a benefit for customers who make requests for these items (create a one stop shop) and increases the footfall at HARC.

- 25 **Charging** – the Review of Museums and Archives Services presented a number of income generation ideas based at HARC. It is proposed that these opportunities are reviewed in consultation with the Friends of Herefordshire Record Office.
- 26 **Charging for Conservation** – The Archive service has expertise in the conservation of documents. Whilst there has been a focus on the collection held by the local authority as part of the relocation there is potential to charge external clients for conservation services recognising this would be balanced with internal conservation requirements.
- 27 **Staff reductions** – a key cost of the service is staffing. Along with all other services in the authority a review of roles and tasks to take place creating a saving on employee costs.
- 28 **Use of volunteers** – over 2,000 hours per year of volunteer time supports the conservation aspects of the museum collections, and between 30-35 volunteers support the work of the records office. As a rewarding experience, there is potential to increase the range of volunteer programmes at each of the sites and services. This includes digital access of records and objects that can help in access to the collections but also create an income for downloaded items.
- 29 **Fundraising** – to increase opportunity for fundraising for specific improvements.

Library and Museum Support Fund

- 30 At Council, on the 5 February 2016, an amendment to the budget was agreed providing £60k for - “one off funding for community groups and schemes to support feasibility studies to facilitate delivery of self-financing delivery models for museum and heritage services, and different options for funding library services to include fundraising, joint funding by partners and income generation”. Such a fund could support the delivery of key schemes that address the long term viability of the library and museum sector.
- 31 It is proposed that the fund be accessed via an open bidding process, with applications based on costed proposals coming from the voluntary or public sectors or partnership schemes. As with other schemes of this nature the grant scheme would be managed by the delegated grants team. The fund would need to meet the key criteria of:
- For schemes that lead to the sustainability or alternative delivery of local authority funded archives and museums, and libraries
 - Can include invest to save schemes, kick start investment, marketing, project management or feasibility
 - Need to directly correlate to reduced revenue or income generation of local authority funding of museum / archive services, and libraries
 - Schemes linked to delivery of the corporate plan ambitions, particularly the priority for adults and child wellbeing and economic development.

Community impact

- 32 The museum and archive service provides a number of community benefits. These include:
- Economically supports the county through tourism
 - Education and learning on the history of the area
 - Local pride and local identity by providing a sense of place and heritage
 - Provides ability to research family and local history
 - Opportunities for volunteering
 - Support for voluntary and community museums and heritage centres
 - Specific projects involve target groups
 - Supports “Fives Ways to Well Being” – social connections; being active; being curious; learning something; helping others.
- 33 The recommendations in the report support the council’s corporate plan priority to secure better services, quality of life and value for money, and to support the growth of our economy by improving the quality of the service whilst delivering savings.

Equality and human rights

- 34 The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine ‘protected characteristics’ (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have ‘due regard’ to the Public Sector Equality Duty when taking any decisions on service changes.
- 35 Where a decision is likely to result in detrimental impact on any group with a protected characteristic, it must be justified objectively. This means that attempts to mitigate the harm need to be explored. If the harm cannot be avoided, the decision maker must balance this detrimental impact against the strength of legitimate public need to pursue the service remodelling to deliver savings.
- 36 There is little local (or national) information on the profile of people who reflect protected characteristics that use museums.
- 37 Museum on the Move users will tend to be children through visits to schools, and the older people and dementia sufferers through visits to care homes, with these age groups affected if there was a reduction of service without an alternative. The effect will be assessed as part of the review of the learning programme for the museum service.
- 38 Also on the characteristic of age, many of the volunteers are of an older age. With the link to wellbeing and volunteering, any withdrawal of opportunity to volunteer could negatively affect this group.
- 39 The Old House, by its nature of a historic building, is not fully accessible for wheelchair users and people with reduced mobility. This has an effect on the protected characteristic of disability.
- 40 Poverty is not a protected characteristic, though a consideration when introducing and increasing charges for services.
- 41 National research as part of the Taking Part Survey 2013/14 (Department of Culture, Media and Sport), highlighted the below points when considering protected characteristics relating to museums:
- 69% of disabled people (including those with a long term limiting illness) visited a heritage site compared to 74% for non-disabled people. Whilst 48% disabled people

attended a museum or art gallery compared to 55% for non-disabled people.

- 35.4% of those aged 75 or over had visited a museum or gallery, compared with the other age groups where the rate varied between 45.4% for 16-24 year olds and 57.1% for those aged 45-64 years.
- In the 12 months prior to being interviewed, adults from BME groups were less likely to have visited a heritage site (57.4% compared to 74.4% for white groups).

42 Summary of mitigation actions:

- Increase the opportunity for volunteering, including instigating a volunteer campaign, to support the increased offer of the service as well as support individual wellbeing.
- Consider the protected characteristic of age when reviewing the learning offer of the museum service to ensure there is an opportunity for children to learn about local heritage and the older people to engage with their own history.
- Consider the protected characteristic of disability when designing the layout of The Old House with accompanying interpretation material on the ground floor.
- Hold free entry days each season to enable people on low incomes to be able to visit The Old House.

Financial implications

43 The impact of the savings on existing budgets would be as follows:

	2016/17 Delegated Budget £000	Saving 2017/18 £000	2017/18 Delegated Budget £000	Saving 2018/19 £000	2018/19 Delegated Budget £000
Archive	397	(16)	381	(43)	338
Museum	230	(90)	140	(73)	67

44 The service is looking to invest £80k from within existing budgets to support delivery of the savings plan; this covers:

- Stock for merchandise
- Improvements to The Old House
- Marketing material and publicity campaign

45 Future opportunities for savings and income generation are being considered. The medium term financial strategy assumes future (2019/20) savings target of £278,000 from these services, with proposals yet to be defined. The shortfall will be subject to future decision following an assessment of future options especially regarding the use of the properties in relation to a “space review” of council premises and use of property.

46 To support future savings the review report also suggests the establishment of a development trust to run in parallel to the service, with the long term potential of operating the service as an independent body. Additionally, the report suggests shared service across counties – this can be revisited as a year three option to create savings. The Arts Council has invited the council to apply to the Museum Resilience Fund to conduct some of the longer term development work. The operation of the service by a third party was tested through a procurement route in 2012 – with one potential partner who later withdrew. Though the climate of providers has not necessarily changed this route can be explored again.

47 Benchmarking work will also be conducted to compare costs and practices with other

like authorities who provide museum and archive services.

Legal implications

- 48 In relation to the museums, the provisions of section 12 Public Library and Museums Act 1964, the council may provide and maintain museums and art galleries within the county.
- 49 In relation to archives and records, there is a statutory framework that governs such documentation namely:
- (i) the Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967 provides for access to certain classes of government records held by local authority record offices.
 - (ii) section 1 Local Government (Records) Act, 1962 empowers the council to do all that is necessary to enable use to be made of records in its control, in particular to provide access. This is primarily intended for historical records.
 - (iii) section 224 Local Government Act, 1972 requires that the council make proper arrangements for their records (current and historic) and section 228 provides for access by certain categories of users to minutes, accounts and abstracts of accounts.
 - (iv) the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 provides for a wider right of access to current documentation, e.g. background papers to committee reports.
 - (v) the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 contains the presumption that records are open to inspection unless otherwise exempted, together with procedures for handling enquiries and complaints.

Risk management

- 50 Generation of income: if the income targets are not achieved then there is a shortfall in the revenue budget. Mitigation: well costed and researched schemes otherwise resort to alternative option.
- 51 Further savings: if further savings are required then there would need to be a cut in service. Mitigation: consider other income ideas and closure of sites as a last resort.
- 52 Staffing resources to implement the changes: If there is not the current staffing capacity to implement the changes in services then the schemes will fail to materialise. Mitigation: that priority is giving to address service changes to support the development of long term sustainability.

Consultees

- 53 The review report itself, mentioned in paragraph 10 above sets out who was consulted in the development of the options.
- 54 The following bodies have also be consulted and their views have informed the development of the recommendations on this report:
- Arts Council of England
 - The National Archives
 - Friends of Herefordshire Record Office
 - Hereford Museum Support Group
- 55 In addition briefing scheduled with Heritage Lottery on the 8 March 2016.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Response to Recommendations in Review of Museums and Archives Services

Appendix 2: Summary of the Review of Museums and Archives Services

Background papers

- Review of Museums and Archives Services Report