

Subject:	Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust Annual Report 2021-22		
Date of Meeting:	11th March 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The city council's museums service was transferred to The Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust on 1st October 2020. The museum buildings, collections and staff were transferred to this independent organisation to enable them to attract additional funding and operate on a commercial footing.
- 1.2 The Trust are obliged to provide an annual plan for approval by the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee (TECC) each year. Attached to this report is the first plan produced during an unprecedented time for the Trust.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Councillors note the difficult circumstances facing the Trust as it moves forward into 2021/22 as a result of successive lockdowns and visitor restrictions over the course of the past year.
- 2.2 That Councillors approve the annual service plan for 2021/22.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee agreed to the transfer of the Royal Pavilion and Museums on 5th December 2019. This was due to take place on 1st April 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic. It was also agreed that the TECC Committee would consider an Annual Plan at the beginning of each calendar year for the term of the services contract between the city council and the Trust.
- 3.2 The Policy and Resources Committee approved a revised financial offer to the Trust on 30th July 2020 which enabled the assets to transfer on 1st October.
- 3.3 Hedley Swain the new Chief Executive Officer began on Monday 2nd November 2020 and since then the Trust has had to cope with limited trading conditions and

a lockdown from 27th December, which is still in place. This means all of the museum buildings are closed and 145 staff remain on furlough.

- 3.4 The continuing uncertainty linked to re-opening has greatly limited the ability of the Trust to plan ahead, in terms of major public events and exhibitions during 2021-22. Their programme can take many months to assemble and other institutions also have key staff on furlough, so the ability to collaborate is limited.
- 3.5 The Trust have reached agreement on retaining key items from the Royal Collection in the Pavilion and they will have the David Bowie exhibition in Brighton Museum until the end of 2021. These highlights will help to drive visitor numbers as soon as the buildings can re-open.
- 3.6 Through 2020-21 new web content produced has been used by about 50,000 people. Online content continues to be used by between 2-3000 people a month. Examples of microsites / specific campaigns include:
 - **100 First Women / Ocrea Blues / Queer the Pier / Fashioning Africa** - were collectively viewed by 22,000 unique users from 1 April 2020 to date, through 30,000 visits.
 - **Bite-size content**
The Discover section of the RPMT website (where most of the online engagement sits) had 98,000 users from 1 April 2020 until the date of this report, with over 124,000 visits. Traffic comes from Google searches picking up old evergreen content.
- 3.7 The total number of visitors across all museum sites in 2019/20 was 426,422. In contrast, the anticipated total visitor numbers for 2020/21 figure is 36,800. At 9% of the previous year, this indicates a great reduction in physical access to buildings and collections.
- 3.8 In terms of earned income, in 2019/20 this was £4.094M compared with the anticipated 2020/21 total of £0.49M. This steep drop is caused by loss of visitor entry fees combined with low ancillary income.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The city council's museum assets and staff have been transferred to Trust and the new organisation is preparing to optimise use of all resources to generate income.
- 4.2 The plan in Appendix 1 outlines the approach the Trust propose to take during the next year to ensure their future is secure. The alternative option is that the buildings and collections come back to the city council, which is not considered reasonable. Despite the tremendous uncertainty and financial challenges faced by the Trust, it remains the case that the assets are best placed in an independent organisation which is supported by the city council.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The transfer of the museums took place five months ago. Prior to this the city council undertook extensive consultation with staff and communities on whether the proposed transfer was best for the future of the service. The focus of the Trust is on service development and driving income to reduce its financial losses and to enable longer term planning. Although the Trust requires to have an internal focus over the course of 2021/22, as a major heritage organisation in the city, they will be an active community partner and stakeholder as they plot a course through the next twelve months. Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the annual service plan covers the steps proposed for 2021/22 to ensure that the Trust is a socially-just organisation.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Trust has faced unprecedented circumstances in terms of loss of income and closure of buildings, since the transfer of the Royal Pavilion and Museums on 1st October 2020.
- 6.2 This first annual plan reflects the uncertainty faced by the Trust in relation to re-opening, likely visitor numbers and all associated areas of community and commercial activity. The plan provides the best prediction possible for the 2021-22 year at this early stage.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The council has approved a £4.0m cash flow facility with the Trust as part of the transfer agreement to support financial resilience. It is anticipated this facility will be used in part during 2021/22 in recognition of the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic. The agreement includes repayment of this loan facility over a ten-year period.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 17/02/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Services Agreement between the Council and the RPMT requires the Trust to produce an Annual Service Plan in an agreed form for approval by the Council. The Council's TECC Committee is the appropriate committee to grant this approval.

Lawyer Consulted:

Alice Rowland

Date: 12/02/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 There are no specific equalities implications arising. All staff transferred from the city council to the Trust continue to be employed on pre-existing terms and conditions. Before and after transfer, large numbers of staff have been on furlough. Since the transfer the Trust have arranged staff meetings and the new CEO has sought to meet many people online, but it has not been possible to

meet everyone. The reopening of museums over the course of 2021 will enable staff to return to work.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The museum buildings are historic and high maintenance. They consume energy through environmental management systems and also inefficient building structures which were not designed to retain heat. However, the Trust is fully committed to environmental sustainability and doing all it can to minimise its carbon footprint. As an Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation the Trust submits a sustainability action plan annually as part of their funding agreement. Examples of work to-date include:
- A new Environmental Sustainability Policy was written for the Trust in September 2020.
 - Royal Pavilion & Museums is zero waste to landfill - all non-recyclable waste is sent to the Energy Recovery Facility in Newhaven.
 - A 'Green Team' of environmental champions have been appointed to encourage best practices and share ideas across the organisation.
 - Energy consumption is regularly checked to identify potential issues and savings. e.g. by not turning gallery lights on until opening. This has reduced hours of lighting by up to three hours a day for some sites.
 - LED lights are installed when suitable and an audit of all lighting to identify remaining opportunities is planned.
 - Sustainable and organic principles are applied in the Royal Pavilion garden.
 - Consideration is given to the environmental impact when discussing overseas loans and initial research has been done into adopting carbon offsetting for loans. Consideration to be given to the requirements (and environmental impact) of current and future care when discussing potential new acquisitions.
 - The Booth Museum shop was used in 2019 as a pilot for transitioning to sustainable product ranges which the Trust aims to replicate across all retail outlets once we reopen.
 - The amount of retail stock produced in-house and by local traders to improve sustainability, environmental footprint and Fairtrade issues is being increased.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.5 There are no direct Brexit implications.

Any Other Significant Implications: None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 There are no crime and disorder implications.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 Risk and opportunity management is laid out in the Annual Plan 2021-22 provided as Appendix 1.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 There are no Public Health implications

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 Brighton and Hove is a major UK tourism destination and the upcoming summer season may see substantial visitor numbers for all of the attractions in the city. The Royal Pavilion and Brighton Museum both successfully managed to re-open last year in a COVID-safe way. In the period from Easter 2021, if allowed by government, these venues could again welcome visitors and have a reasonable summer season, supporting the local economy and Brighton's reputation as a cultural city.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust Annual Plan 2021-22

