

Subject:	Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust Annual Report		
Date of Meeting:	10th March 2022		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Croston	Tel: 01273 292571
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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 more commercial footing.
- 1.2 The Trust are obliged to provide an annual plan and review for approval by the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee (TECC) each year. Attached to this report is the second 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 2022/23 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 2022/23, included as Appendix 1.

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. It was agreed that the TECC Committee would consider an Annual Plan at the beginning of each 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 assumed the role in November 2020 and since then the Trust has coped with limited trading conditions and multiple lockdowns/restrictions which continue to restrict trading and the wider work of the Trust.

- 3.4 The continuing uncertainty linked to re-opening 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 had key staff on furlough, so the ability to collaborate was limited.
- 3.5 The Annual Service Plan sets out the performance of the Trust in detail, how it aligns to the council's priorities and plans for 2022/23. Additionally, performance of the Trust is measured corporately and focuses on key indicators and 2021/22 performance is summarised below. As a result of the successive lockdowns, it is sensible to compare performance with 2019/20 – the last full year of operation.
- 3.6 In 2021/22 there are 173,000 visitors projected to 31st March, which is 252,088 less than 2019/20 numbers. In 2019/20 - the last pre-pandemic year - there were 425,088 visitors. Encouragingly, visitor satisfaction levels are up from 89% to 96% in the current year.
- 3.7 There were 6,500 children and young people in formal learning engaged in the RPMT education programme, compared to 18,784 in 2019/20. With digital engagement ever more important, website sessions remained popular, with 750,000 participants in 2021/22, growing from 700,076 pre pandemic. Of course, earned income has affected all visitor attractions and in 2021/22 this is forecast at £2,200,000 compared with £4,094,569 in 2019/20. There was also a dip in Brighton & Hove residents visiting the venues, from 62,717 to 35,000.

4 Operational Management

- 4.1 Despite the pandemic, key milestones and significant achievements have taken place since the Trust's' formation. The organisation is working to ensure that the workforce are all equipped to operate within a more nimble and responsive operating model. Therefore, main business activity for 2022-23 focuses on the bedding-in of new ways of working and systems developed in 2021-22. This will include a new in-house finance and payroll service; a new website; a new fundraising team and strategy; new organisational structure; new approach to capital and programme planning; new diversity strategy and programme; new community partnerships; new learning strategy and programme; new commercial activity; new approach to managing our open spaces, implementation of a "dynamic collections" programme and a "hybrid" staff working model.
- 4.2 Despite the difficult situation, the annual service plan reflects the expectations set out in the contract with the main programmes for 2022-23 summarised in Section 3 of Appendix 1: RPMT Annual Service Plan 2022/23.
- 4.3 Officers recognise the toll the pandemic has had on museums and visitor attractions across the country. That said, the following specific goals have been achieved:
- Over £1.2m of cultural recovery funding received from Arts Council England and over £250,000 of emergency funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help secure survival through COVID.

- A £390k grant from the James Henry Green Charitable Trust to deliver a “culture change” programme to ensure the service is socially engaged, diverse and equitable in all of its activities.
- A comprehensive £1.4m bid to the Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) grant from the Arts Council England has been submitted to address the failing Georgian roof of the Brighton Museum.
- Commencement of the Development of the Capital Campaign for the Royal Pavilion Garden, primarily funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) as part of a wider masterplan for the whole Royal Pavilion Estate (including the Dome and Corn Exchange).
- Research funding of £20k into the unique collection of 17th and 18th Century Chinese wallpaper from the Paul Mellon trust which is being undertaken by expert conservators led by Amy Junker Heslip.
- Further project funding of over £75k from NLHF and the Esme Fairburn Foundation for projects at Booth and Brighton Museum.
- The Trust reached agreement on retaining key items from the Royal Collection during 2021, which were returned in early 2022. A spectacular loan from Her Majesty The Queen. The culmination of a collaborative venture between Royal Collection Trust and the Royal Pavilion & Museums, over 120 remarkable decorative works of art that were originally commissioned by the Prince Regent, have been relocated from Buckingham Palace and re-united in their previous setting of the Royal Pavilion.

4.4 Forward Planning

As the trust continue to emerge from COVID there are now opportunities to develop new partnerships and high-profile programming, that will attract existing and new audiences. Highlights for 2022/23 include a collaboration with Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club Women’s Football Team to deliver community value linked to the major summer 2022 exhibition, a major collaboration with Sussex University to contribute to a new BA degree in Liberal Arts to be hosted by Hove Museum and Misshapes: The Making of Tatty Devine at Hove Museum.

- 4.5 From March to September, The Regency Wardrobe at the Royal Pavilion has life-size costumes inspired by Regency history tell stories of seafront walking, grand balls, and musical evenings. Each unique piece is created by artist Stephanie Smart, using only paper and thread. A collaboration on Paul Weller: Cover Star will feature at Brighton Museum, April – October 2022.

5 **ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The RPMT Annual plan for 2022/23 set out by the Trust will ensure that the services are focused on providing a modern, relevant and well-run business. A renewed focus on the digital experience will supplement the drive to grow visitor numbers and to grow earned income. The Trust will continue to optimise use of

all resources to generate income, grow footfall, further develop the reputation of Brighton & Hove and provide value for the residents of the city.

- 5.2 The Trust have laid out a forward plan for 2022/23 which their Trustees believe contributes positively to ensuring 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 RPMT it remains the case that the assets are best placed in an independent organisation which is supported by the city council.

6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The focus of the Trust is on service development and driving income to reduce its financial losses and to enable longer term planning. Despite this internal focus over the course of 2022/23, as a major heritage organisation in the city, they will be an active community partner and stakeholder. RPMT include three BHCC councillors as trustees and liaise regularly with BHCC officers. Although the independent status of the trust and the advantages this brings is recognised by all, the Annual Service Plan will ensure their work is closely aligned and delivering to BHCC 2020-23 strategic plan “A Fairer City, a Sustainable future” and its outcomes.

- 6.2 RPMT recognises the importance of co-operative working, both with staff and with communities and the importance of consultation and truly listening. They will continue to support a range of community groups, representatives, and individuals, to contribute to decision making. They will continue to monitor and develop new community links to increase and improve community representation and to advise on programming and developments and key future decisions to ensure that the interests and views of a wide range of citizens are considered. Work will continue with RPMT’s existing community panels, the Access Advisory Group, the Cultural Heritage Network, and the Youth Engagement panel (Museum Collective) and with LGBTQIA communities and networks, including Queer Heritage South. This will be extended to take in a Culture Change external reference group and an internal staff culture change group. We will also see the first year the RPMT staff People and Culture group. The garden restoration project will also see a series of external consultations in 2022-23.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 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. This second annual plan reflects the continued 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 2022-23 year at this early stage. Officers will continue to support and challenge the future direction of the Trust and its plans, building upon the progress made in the challenging environment all services have faced.

8. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 8.1 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. In 2021 The Trust received the first drawdown of £1 million and it is anticipated this facility will be used further during 2022/23 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: 01/02/22

Legal Implications:

- 8.2 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: 28/01/22

Equalities Implications:

- 8.3 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 further reopening of museums over the course of 2022 will enable more staff to return to regular working patterns.

Sustainability Implications:

- 8.4 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.

8.5 RPMT are aligned with BHCCs 'A Sustainable City' goal, and champion and advocate for carbon neutral policies. RPMT recognise the particular challenges that come from managing historic buildings but will develop a strategy that puts the climate emergency at the centre of our thinking and planning. They will use venues and programmes, most especially the Booth Museum of Natural History to raise awareness of climate change and the positive steps taken to combat it.

8.6 The Trust's revised Environmental Strategy demonstrates how they collect and monitor performance, including the carbon footprint of audiences and suppliers, it will set targets and include a series of initiatives that demonstrate sector leadership in this area:

- Use of Julie's Bicycle to monitor performance and to assess with how to engage the wider RPMT team.
- Investigating reducing the carbon footprint for object loans.
- Ensuring ethical and sustainable products for retail as much as possible.
- Successful application to Esmee Fairbairn Collecting Fund for £50k to support developing public engagement and interpretation with current climate change agenda.
- Post-Covid review of Environmental Sustainability Policy and action plan is being undertaken by the Head Gardener with plans to establish a new RPMT Green Team to champion this.

Brexit Implications:

8.7 There are some direct Brexit implications particularly with regards to overseas travel / visas and in particular international school visits. This continues to impact directly on admission numbers and revenues.

Any Other Significant Implications:

8.8 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

8.9 There are no crime and disorder implications.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 8.10 Risk and opportunity management is laid out in the RPMT Annual Plan 2022-23 provided as Appendix 1. These risks are in line with other business sensitive services provided by the council and in line with other arts council portfolio organisations across England. The return of overseas visitors is crucial yet largely uncontrollable – visitor numbers and therefore financial targets remain at risk. The estate continues to be affected by anti-social behaviour which remains a significant risk for the historic buildings and for visitors. The pandemic has required the RPMT workforce to adapt. Their Annual Service Plan describes ongoing training and investment needed to support greater adaptability and a higher level of skills in the workforce. Maintaining a full complement of experienced staff is vital.

Public Health Implications:

- 8.11 There are no Public Health implications.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 8.12 Brighton and Hove is a leading UK tourism destination, and the upcoming summer season may see substantial visitor numbers for all the attractions in the city. The Royal Pavilion and Brighton Museum both successfully managed to re-open last year in a COVID-safe way, again welcoming visitors and enjoyed a reasonable summer season, supporting the local economy and the city's reputation as a major cultural destination.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust Annual Plan 2022-23

