

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
ALL WARDS (CORPORATE ISSUE)

Cabinet
Arts, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Committee

10 March 2003
2 April 2003

Final Report for Heritage Services Best Value Review

Report of the Lead Officer – Head of Museums & Heritage Services

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This presents the final report of a cross-thematic Best Value Review, which looks at all Heritage Services strategically and Museum Services in depth. The report summarises the findings of the review and recommends strategic directions for both these areas, together with a detailed improvement plan.

1.2 The three external consultees' reports are also appended.

2. Summary

2.1 The Report makes a wide range of recommendations, which enable the principle of the review to be delivered:

In order to reflect cultural diversity and achieve social inclusion, the heritages of the city and all its communities should be available for everyone to share and enjoy. If everyone is to feel included, it is vital to make heritage available through services that reach out to all of Leicester's neighbourhoods and communities.

2.2 The recommendations are intended to:

- I. Improve co-ordination of heritage services across directorates to make better use of the city's heritage resources by developing a collective voice to promote heritage as a resource for regeneration and social change
- II. Create a more robust and sustainable museum service capable of delivering a more customer-focused service that Leicester residents feel is important and relevant to them.

3. Best Value Review Report Format

3.1 The recommendations were developed using the four C's framework, through task groups, consultation, a challenge workshop, questionnaires and visits, and through external consultants' reports. This report only considers improvements within the existing budgets of the service.

3.2 The report includes a proposed improvement plan. Timescales and actions in the plan will be finalised once the Review has been approved.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are recommended to agree the strategic principles directing this report :

- I. The need for strategic co-ordination of heritage issues across the Council.
- II. The need to engage all the communities of Leicester in museums and heritage and to increase visitor numbers and participation, particularly by traditionally excluded groups.
- III. The need to deliver a more customer orientated service.
- IV. The delivery of a focused service, prioritising relevance to and engagement with the communities of Leicester.
- V. The requirement for the service to identify a 2% efficiency saving and the investment of that saving.

4.2 And :

Agree the detailed implementation proposals in the supporting information, which are subject to the outcome of the Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal Department's revenue strategy in Spring 2003

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The establishment of a Heritage Framework will cost approximately £30,000. Subject to the outcomes of the Departmental revenue strategy, officers recommend that the Heritage Framework could be funded from within the budgets of Directorates providing Heritage Services.

5.2 The estimated cost of the recommended improvements to the Museum Service is £153,000. Some options for funding these costs are included in the report, but final recommendations will be dependant on the Departments revenue strategy and the further exploration of additional funding through external sources.

5.3 The report recommends the reinvestment of the 2% efficiency savings identified as part of the Review (£43,000).

6. Legal Implications

6.1 None of the legal implications preclude acceptance of the report. Legal Services have been sent a copy for comment.

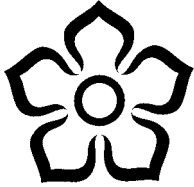
7 Report Author/Officer to contact:

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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Citywide impact on communities
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



[City-wide]

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Summary of Recommendations of the Heritage Services Best Value Review

Heritage:

Recommendation 1 A strategic lead and senior structure for heritage issues

- Implement a clear structure for Heritage, led by the Corporate Director, Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal, in conjunction with the Corporate Property Officer.

Recommendation 2 Regeneration initiatives should take heritage into account

- The Service Director Regeneration should be responsible for ensuring that Heritage is integral to the regeneration agenda, and that the agenda supports the Cultural Strategy.

Recommendation 3 A clear framework for heritage services

- Finalise the Draft Heritage Strategy with full ownership by all heritage and related services, to reflect the review's recommendations;
- Consider holding an annual conference focusing on supporting neighbourhood renewal through Leicester's Heritage;
- Develop and deliver a neighbourhood heritage assets mapping database;
- Develop a cross departmental approach to heritage education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4 Improved management of heritage assets

- Establish a heritage sub group on the City's Asset Management Plan Implementation Team (AMPIT) and categorise heritage buildings separately within this plan. An agreed level of care and a development plan to be agreed as part of the overall strategy for managing the council's heritage buildings. Consider setting up a regeneration focused building preservation trust to facilitate renovation and appropriate use of heritage buildings, and consider the role such a trust could play in supporting the maintenance and development of the service's other historic buildings.

Museums:

Recommendation 5 Improve the service's engagement with communities

- Develop the use of the community gallery at New Walk Museum
- Develop a service-wide interpretation strategy to deliver customer-orientated exhibitions, a proactive approach to visitors and collections related information focusing on Leicester's diverse communities.
- Develop an outreach programme that includes a travelling exhibition, development of resources such as handling boxes, reminiscence work with elderly groups, specific work with disabled groups and at least 1 project in each neighbourhood.
- Provide assistance to local groups with grant applications relevant to museums.

Recommendation 6 Provide higher quality and more accessible facilities

- Maintain a quality standard of facilities across all sites.
- Carry out recommendations of the DDA access audits conducted in 2001/02.
- Introduce identification road shows in order to make the service more accessible to Leicester's citizens.
- Provide enhanced information on services available both at sites and in communities.
- Provide introductory text panels in each museum with translation sheets in major languages.
- Provide transport to bring socially excluded groups into museums.

Recommendation 7 Develop education provision

- Develop early years play areas at all sites
- Develop new sessions for Key Stage 1 and 2 and develop a programme for secondary schools
- Develop a handling collection and family activity sheets and resources in all museums
- Develop sessions for early years groups in all museums.

Recommendation 8 Museum Service's staffing profile more reflective of city

- Improve representation of diversity within the workforce
- Conduct outreach work to raise awareness of the variety of careers in museums with schools, colleges and universities

Recommendation 9 Develop collections to reflect the 20th and 21st centuries

- Research "hidden histories" so that existing collections as well as contemporary collecting can contribute to projects reflective of diversity
- Review Collections strategy and improve the speed and effectiveness of collections disposal within the Museum Association's code of ethics if items are not relevant to strategy.

Recommendation 10 Increase access to and use of collections in stores

- Improve access to collections through better access to stores and digitisation projects

Recommendation 11 Improve the marketing of the service

Working with the newly created marketing team, develop a programme of research, consultation, service targeting and promotion to better meet the needs of Leicester's citizens.

Recommendation 12 Make collections accessible via electronic means

- Panels from selected exhibitions to be added to the museums web site – at least 1 per year.
- Develop and deliver ICT and digitisation strategies for museums.

Recommendation 13 Increase income generating potential

- Improve the infrastructure of facilities to encourage sponsorship, lettings and other commercial activities
- Develop a greater number of Grant applications and seek partnership revenue or capital funding.
- Work with Property services to identify match funding for projects within existing landlord maintenance budgets.

Recommendation 14 Improve retail profits

- Complete implementation of retail strategy
- Retail cost centre to be replaced with a business unit allowing annual profits to be rolled over
- Investigating outsourcing or partnership options for New Walk Museum shop.

Recommendation 15 Deliver a more strategically compact service:

A sustainable service is ultimately one which meets the needs of its communities. The above recommendations will support the delivery of this. The following section examines ways in which we can reprioritise our existing resources to deliver this.

- **Refocus activities at Jewry Wall Museum**

Concentrate on archaeological activities with an outreach and education focus, enabling enhanced access to collections through an appointment only service to the building. Enhanced external interpretation of the site will be carried out. Create a base for education, outreach and collections access.

- **Refocus activities at Belgrave Hall**

Make the best use of the neighbourhood base of this facility by creating an education, heritage, environmental and arts focused cultural facility for the primary benefit of local schools and communities. A Space for Sports and Arts Grant is already secured for Cross Corners House and an ERDF objective 2 bid has been submitted to extend the project to the whole site.

- **Provide six day opening at all sites all year**

Introduce six day opening at all sites all year round. This is not only in line with the Space Centre and the City Gallery, but also in line with world wide major museum practice.

- **Maximise income opportunities at all premises**

Investigate the opportunities for increasing existing income streams or developing new income streams at all Museum and Heritage properties.

Recommendation 16 Identify Financial Support for heritage Framework

Recommendation 17 Note Museum Service's major projects plan

GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

1 Heritage Framework Implications

1.1 The review identified a significant lack of understanding of and engagement in heritage issues across all Directorates. Good work is done, but it tends to be in isolation. There is no single co-ordination point for heritage issues in the city. The Regional Director of English Heritage has recently expressed his concerns about Leicester's performance in a formal letter to Rodney Green.

1.2 Implications for the Council in adopting the Heritage framework

Departments need to work corporately and share resources for the proposals in respect of the heritage framework to work successfully.

1.3 Implications of not adopting the framework

This would be a missed opportunity to significantly improve the council's service to the public, and lever in external funding

2. Museum Implications

2.1 The Museum Service's resources are spread too thinly for it to deliver the outcomes identified as necessary by the Best Value Review. These include: becoming a more relevant and customer focussed service, with appropriate standards of facilities and presentation, and playing a more meaningful role in the development of neighbourhoods and the overall regeneration of Leicester. The Recommendations would enable the Service to become more important to more local people.

In order to improve the situation, the Review recommends doing less of some things in order to do more of others. Reprioritising and re-focusing existing resources could release £153,000 for improvements.

2.2 Implications for the Council and the Heritage Service in adopting the Best Value proposals

2.2.1 Changes to Service at Jewry Wall Museum

By focusing on five museums as visitor attractions open regularly to the public, we can provide a more sustainable and effective service than if we continue to operate six sites of this nature.

Refocusing Jewry Wall Museum on collections access, outreach and education would enable the archaeology of neighbourhoods to be more effectively promoted.

Some members of the public may campaign against the change to the nature of service at Jewry Wall Museum, but others may support it. (This situation would be addressed through a consultation plan)

2.2.2 Six day opening

This would bring the museums service in line with many other visitor attractions including the City Gallery and the National Space Centre.

It would enable front line staff to spend time on outreach and collections access work, which would enhance their service to the public when the museum was open.

There would be loss of a proportion of visitors who would have come on the closed day, but not all. However service users would be gained through increased in outreach work and better quality of service overall.

2.2.3 Increased income from Wygston's House

The current use of Wygston's House would have no effect on core services. Loss of training opportunities would be compensated for by resources saved, plus increased ability for staff to directly work with communities.

Services delivered by the current occupants would be affected whilst they relocated to other premises. The Workers Educational Association could continue to operate from other museum sites.

The building would be advertised on the open market. However an expression of interest has been received in the building and adjoining site from Leicester Grammar School. If they do not secure this site they may relocate out of Leicester.

2.3 Implications of not adopting the Best Value proposals

We would not be able to redirect these resources towards service improvements, including outreach and collections access, becoming more customer-focused and relevant to modern communities. The service would continue to be overstretched, and we would not have the resources to regularly update all six museums to modern standards.

2.3.1 Changes to Service at Jewry Wall Museum

Jewry Wall Museum would remain open to regular public access, but the quality of its service would continue to fall below modern standards.

There would continue to be criticism of the council for the quality of its museum service.

2.3.2 Six day opening

Front-line staff would not have the opportunity to improve their public service through increased involvement in outreach and collections work.

There may be a loss of visitors because of lack of investment in modern presentation and facilities and lack of outreach work.

2.3.3 Increased income from Wygston's House

Leicester Grammar School would lose the opportunity to secure the site and this could have wider consequences for Leicester's regeneration.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

1. Financial Implications

The Report recommends refocusing the museums service's activities in order to deliver increased education and outreach work, and access to collections, and to improve public facilities at sites at a cost of £153,000. **(See p. 54, para. 6.3 recommendation 15.)**

The 2% savings to be identified under Leicester's Best Value Review process, £43,000, are included in this figure. If Members decide to reduce the overall budget by 2% to invest in other services, then the museum reinvestment plan would need to be scaled down by that amount. **(See p. 54, para. 6.4.)**

The Report recommends identifying £30,000, either as a growth bid or as a contribution from all heritage services, to support the staff and operational costs involved in the proposed heritage framework. **(See p. 54, para. 6.3 recommendation 16.)**

The report recommends confirming and/or approving the museum service's major projects plan and giving in principle approval for capital partnership funding for it to be prioritised in the next capital funding round. **(See p. 54, para. 6.3 recommendation 17.)**

2. Legal Implications

The review identified a number of issues that have legal implications: One key area is in the management of built, buried and natural heritage assets, including the planning process and regeneration issues. The proposed heritage framework will enhance efficiency in this area and will reduce the possibility of legal challenges for both council owned and non-council owned assets. **(See pp 41-2, para. 6.2 recommendations 1-4.)**

The report supports the delivery of the Asset Management Plan and other council-requirements that may have legal implications (See all recommendations)

The report recommends the establishment of a new Building Preservation Trust specifically for Leicester **(See p. 42, para. 6.2 recommendation 4.)**

The final report has been circulated to the Legal Services Section for further comments.

3. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	This is fundamental to the whole report which is based on the principle of developing equal opportunities to access heritage
Policy	Yes	Recommendations 1-4 (pp 41-42) which deal with the heritage framework will have implications for policy in that it creates a “voice for heritage” which will need to be taken into account in future policy and strategy development for the city
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	Recommendations 1-4 (pp 41-42) set up a heritage framework which will support sustainability for the built, buried and natural environment. Recommendations 4-17 are designed to ensure the long term sustainability of the museums service.
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	The whole report is based on the principle of developing equal opportunities to access heritage, and will have benefits for all socially excluded groups

4. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Heritage Services Best Value Review: Scoping Document and Interim Report 2002

Considerable background research for these is available also. A full bibliography could be made available if necessary

5. Consultations

Extensive consultation and market research has been carried out as part of the review process (See section 2.4, p 9 and Appendix 5). This has informed the recommendations in the final report.

Because of the nature of the recommendations, it was not appropriate to circulate them publicly before they have the endorsement of Cabinet. Once Cabinet has approved them in principle, these recommendations need to be circulated to stakeholders who have been involved in the process for further comment, and the results of consultation built into the improvement plan.

Some recommendations have significant staffing implications. Although the Organisation and Staffing Change Protocol is probably not necessary the detailed implementation issues will need to be finalised in consultation with staff and trade unions through a similar process.

6. Report Author

Sarah Levitt, Head of Museums and Heritage Services.

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Report by Parbinder Singh, Nottingham City Council Community Services Department

As one of the Independent Consultee of this Review, I have found the process highly efficient and very effective in light of the amount of information generated for this review. This vast amount of information produced has assisted with the 'scoping' and challenging of the service.

The starting point of what the service is for had opened a number of issues in developing the Best Value Review. For example, Who's Heritage is the City catering for, is it for *all* citizens of the City; is it for the employees working in the Heritage industry and so on. This starting point was very helpful in developing a clear purpose of the Museums Service. Furthermore, this was also helpful in looking towards the future especially in light of the challenges of the demographic change in the population of the City of Leicester.

This clear purpose of the service needs to be accepted by all staff in the climate of 'change'. There is an important need to re-educate and train all staff in meeting this new challenge. This needs to be done positively as they all have a role to play in the well-being of *all* citizens. This re-education/training needs to state clearly what is the Museums service mission statements? Who the service is for? Who are the current users? and the need to change emphasis in reflecting Leicester City's vision.

The use of the Museums by the citizens of the City needs addressing as this is an important area to develop in the take-up of the services but also how is it relevant to the citizens, what are the connections! It is not only about access.

It seems that the Museums service is somehow separate from the existing cultural strategy for the City. There needs to be a joint understanding of both strategies i.e. they need to complement each

other. Cultural strategies must celebrate the heritage of a city, and the roots and shared identities of the people who live and work there. Therefore, the need for a lead member of the City Council to voice and campaign for the service is very much welcomed via the 'Champion'.

The Museums Service workforce composition in reflecting the make-up of the citizens of the City is one of disappointment. There is an urgent need to develop pro-active schemes and projects which assists in overcoming some of the barriers associated and most importantly to have significant impact in delivery of the services to *all* citizens.

There is a need to develop networks with other departments on the importance of the Museums services. For example, joint projects with outside agencies such as Primary Care Trust (PCT) on themes such as Health – the connections with the Past. These developments will need creating partnership working.

The Museums service is currently under-resourced and needs investment of people and capital. The challenge in securing the investment is beyond my role as an Independent Consultee. It is this investment which will reflect what the service is for and begin to respond to *all* citizens of the City.

On concluding the Museums services is undergoing a period of change. There has being tremendous work carried out in the Past and now needs to reposition itself in meeting the challenges which the City of Leicester can be proud of itself.

Parbinder Singh

Leicester City Council Heritage Services Best Value Review

Report of external consultee David Fraser Service Manager, Derby City Council Museums Service

Led by Leicester City Council's Museums Service, this Review set out to cover all the heritage-related services provided by the Council. In this sense, it is a cross-cutting review involving not only museums, but also arts, education, urban design, Property Services, libraries and other operations whose contribution to heritage provision was linked to this Review. This is an important feature of the Review, which should be commended, given the observation at the outset that these different business units tend to work in isolation and in an inefficient, piecemeal manner (Final Report p.2.) Stakeholders from all of these related areas were involved in the Review in one way or another.

Following on from the above, five Task Groups were set up for the Review, examining a range of issues from museum-specific operations to wider crosscutting issues of Neighbourhood Renewal and Equalities. Thus the process considered both practical operational matters and broader issues of social and political significance to the service, the Council, the citizens of Leicester, and central government.

I feel therefore that the Review has been approached and structured in a sound and balanced way, to address all the relevant areas and issues facing the service, operational and strategic. The work was shared out sensibly to the Task Groups, enabling a wide range of people to contribute, and reflecting the interests of all the heritage stakeholders. An Interim Report was produced in May, presenting a wealth of evidence and background material for an assessment of the service, and setting out key issues to be addressed in the second phase of the review process.

Two specific aspects of the Fundamental Challenge are worthy of special mention.

Firstly, Leicester's museums and heritage services face a problem currently being experienced by many services across the country – how to sustain and improve their services at a time when resources are diminishing (there is no such thing as a standstill position – if you're not going forward, you're going backwards). The Review offers the Council a way forward by maintaining its current level of investment in a 'more strategically compact' service, i.e. by reducing the number of sites/operations and re-considering how they are used, and using the resources to achieve improvement in the new framework. Costed options are presented, with details of potential savings and how these could be re-invested (Final Report pp.38, 39). At the same time, another section of the Report examines how income and external funding can be increased. These are valuable pieces of work, which should enable the Council to consider the hard business options in a positive light and take decisions without extensive further research.

Secondly, under the Challenge section, the final Report mentions that options for service delivery (Trust, private organisation, etc.) are being considered separately as a result of previous Reviews in the area of Cultural Services. The current moves to

set up new regional museum structures or 'Regional Hubs' are pertinent here. The 'Renaissance in the Regions' report (DCMS, October 2001), which proposes these new structures, also suggests some form of new governance arrangements for hub museums services, such as Trust status, or joint management committee of the hub authorities. Leicester is one of the partners in the proposed East Midlands Museums Hub, so the hub issue is directly relevant to any discussion about different methods of service delivery.

Even without any change of governance arrangements, regional hubs offer potential for partnership working across authorities on a regional basis, sharing skills and resources in new ways, and this in itself will put service delivery on a new footing. However, the DCMS final decision to endorse and fund these new regional arrangements had still to be announced at the time this Review was finalised and presented.

Consultation for the Review was wide-ranging in its coverage of service users and stakeholders, and varied in the methods of consultation. Ethnic communities and disabled people figure in the lists of people and groups consulted, and their interests are of vital significance to the delivery of an inclusive service that meets the needs of the City, the Council, and central government. In fact, increasing usage by ethnic minorities and socially excluded people figures prominently in the section of the Final Report devoted to usage and participation.

In terms of comparing Leicester's museums service to others, there is a recognition that the service performs well in terms of overall visitor numbers – a key Best Value Performance Indicator. However, the Review goes deeper beneath the surface here, exploring the make-up of visitors and users, the relationship of existing visitors to the City's demographics and to the composition of the City's population. The Review then focuses on ways to make the service more relevant to Leicester's diverse communities and social groupings – a significant issue for museums and councils nationally.

When competitiveness was assessed, the Review team drew both on in-house expertise and commissioned research from experienced external consultants. It is noted that, even during the period when the Review was under way, savings were made by out-sourcing nighttime security arrangements. The conclusions of the investigation into in-house exhibition provision are interesting – I don't know of anyone else who has evaluated this aspect of museum work. The information in this section is valuable and useful for any museums service looking to assess value-for-money and delivering effective and efficient services in the most economic way.

Generally speaking, there is a strong, healthy customer focus throughout the Review and its findings. This is noticeable, not just in obvious areas like outreach and audience development, but also in the traditionally more technical and inward-looking area of collections management. A new Mission Statement is also proposed, which reflects this outward-looking emphasis and the wish to meet the needs of the City and its communities both now and in the future.

To sum up, I feel that this Review would be a very useful model for other services undertaking similar reviews. The approach to the work involved was sensibly structured around key themes and areas, shared out amongst a wide range of staff

and other stakeholders, spreading ownership as widely as possible. These key themes and areas are balanced between operational issues and more policy- and strategy-related issues that are priorities for local authorities and their service units, and for central government, such as social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. At the same time, the Review confronts the difficult issues and challenges of sustainability and offers genuine, thought-through, costed options for the Council to consider. Consultation was wide-ranging and varied, and there is a strong customer, and user, focus throughout.

Finally, I would say that both the Interim and Final Reports are very readable, well structured and accessible. It's easy to find your way around them, and there is a wealth of useful supporting evidence and material in the appendices, which would be of interest and value to other museums.

I found it stimulating and informative to be involved in the Review process, and I'm sure I will be referring to the Reports in the course of my own work in future.

David Fraser

24 September 2002

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

HERITAGE SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW

Evaluation

1. We have reviewed the Final Report of the Best Value Review of the City Council's heritage services.
2. It seems to us that the Review has covered in a comprehensive and thorough manner all the areas that might be expected of such an exercise, adopting throughout the Best Value Review principles of challenge, compare, consult and compete.
3. The analysis in the report demonstrates the current absence of, and the benefits of, a broad corporate approach to heritage throughout the City Council, and confirms that the Council's current level of funding is inadequate to deliver a museum service of the breadth and scope that might be expected of a city such as Leicester, especially given the aspirations of the city's cultural strategy.
4. The report's seventeen recommendations provide a sound basis for addressing these issues, with the additional costs being met by redirection of existing resources from within the museum service, and contributions from elsewhere within the City Council. The only outstanding issue is whether the current capacity of the museum service is sufficient to lead the developments identified in the review, even was the recommended reinforcement of the current arrangements to be implemented.
5. The review leaves several issues outstanding for further consideration, including the desirability or otherwise of alternative management options for delivering Leicester's arts and leisure services. We would encourage that such consideration should take into account the museum service's special issues and needs, which were not fully considered in the report by Leonie Cowan and Associates, but on which we have commented as part of the work we undertook for the City Council in connection with the Best Value review.
6. In conclusion, we endorse the Review's general approach and believe that, if implemented, the recommendations would lead to substantial improvement in performance during the next five years.

Adrian Babbidge
10 October 2002

(Adrian Babbidge was Director of the East Midlands Museums Service until April 2002)