1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to Final Report

1.1.1 The Heritage Services Best Value Review carried out an in depth review of Museum Services with a brief to recommend improvements working within existing service budgets and a strategic, thematic review of Heritage aspects of all business units scoped into it (as most of these services have already had a full Review or are due to have one). The table below shows how these services contribute to Heritage and the years of their Reviews. (For full descriptions see **Appendix 2**).

Heritage running through all activities	Heritage as part of wider portfolio	Present day expressions of Heritage	Support services for Heritage provision
Museums: exhibitions, events, education activities, stewardship of heritage Best Value Review Year 3	**Education:Standards and Effectiveness Division** (usage of heritage as resource for schools) Best Value Review Year 4	**Sports** (heritage element) Best Value Review Year 2	**Communications & Promotions** Best Value Review Year 1
Arts and Cultural Services (e.g. Cultural Heritage, Public Art) Best Value Review Year 1	**Education: Lifelong Learning Division** (Adult & Community; Funded Voluntary Sector groups; Youth Service) Best Value Review in Year 4	**Registration** (Births, Marriages, Deaths) Best Value Review Year 3	**Property Services**: Asset Management, Building Conservation Best Value Review Year 4
Urban Design Group: Riverside & Ecology Best Value Review Year 4	**Libraries & Information Services** (Archives, Community History) Best Value Review in Year 2	**Lord Mayor/ Civic Provision Best Value Review Year 4**	**Urban Design Group**: Development areas; Disabled access Best Value Review Year 4
Parks and Open Spaces (e.g. listed buildings and sites, environment, cemeteries/crematoria) Best Value Review Year 3	**Urban Regeneration** (e.g. Regeneration areas) Best Value Review in year 3	**Voluntary project funding**	**Urban Design Group**: Conservation & Enhancement Best Value Review Year 4

Table 1

1.1.2 The Review's **Interim Report** (May 2002) adopted the following definition of "heritage", based on English Heritage's definition in *Power of Place*, 1999:

"Those things inherited from the past that people wish to pass on to the future"

It further identified the **Principle of the Review** as being:

"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."

1.1.3 This **Final Report** of the Best Value Review of Heritage Services develops, and further explores the issues identified in the **Interim Report** (May 2002). The following issues were identified as the key areas, which would be reviewed in more depth:

- Whether there is a more coherent way of delivering heritage services across the City Council
- Whether there are options for service delivery of museums other than through the present six museums
- What could be done about lack of investment in the large number of historic buildings managed by the Museums service
- How could the Service's capacity be improved, to maximise income levels and access external funding
- How could heritage services sustain and improve customer uptake against the background of the changing demography of Leicester.

1.1.4 The structure of the Best Value Review has been formulated around the issues identified above. Although the specifically museums and the specifically heritage elements were given equal importance, and heritage is a cross-departmental theme whereas museums are just one service area, one section of the final report relates to heritage and two to museums:

- Heritage Framework
- Increasing Usage and Participation in Museums
- Creating a More Sustainable Museums Service

This is because the wider heritage issues, and their solutions, are relatively simple and clear cut. The issues for museums are complex, do not have easy answers, and fall into two key themes. These are interrelated and so both need to be dealt with fully.

Moreover, it must be remembered that museums are not an end in themselves, but a vital way of accessing heritage, and one of the main vehicles for the city and its communities to express their heritage. The key issue for this review is that much of Leicester's heritage is literally locked away in its museums and this outstandingly rich and little known resource must be made more accessible to people.

1.2   Heritage Framework

In order to make "the heritages of the city and all its communities available for everyone to share and enjoy", heritage services need to coordinate what they do to make better use of resources and develop a collective voice to promote heritage as a resource for regeneration and social change.

Heritage services are currently delivered across four departments within the City Council. This in itself is not a problem; however, it is clear from the review that the different business units to a large degree tend to work in isolation, resulting in confused perceptions, inefficiency and piecemeal service delivery. Although heritage is fundamental to the Cultural Strategy many of the services are not following it in a formal way. The Structures and Property Task Group's detailed analysis has been used to inform this section, and their full reports can be accessed via the Museums Service Head Quarters, New Walk Centre.

1.3   Increasing Usage and Participation in Museums

The museum service will truly have made "the heritages of the city and all its communities available for everyone to share and enjoy" when most Leicester residents feel it is important and relevant to them and want to make use of what it has to offer.

The Service has top quartile performance for visits in person and other types of usage, but market research shows that about 70% of citizens do not use it in any meaningful way. (Mori 2001). Usage is not representative of the diverse communities of Leicester, and previous market research (Heart of England Tourist Board User Survey, 1999) has indicated that users are largely from socio-economic groups AB and C1. In addition, demographic trends indicate that the city's population is due to change further, resulting

in a majority Asian population. MORI findings also show that whilst satisfaction levels are above average for most museums, they fall short of the top quartile and perceptions of their importance are very low. It is imperative that this issue is addressed, and that recent good practice such as the successful Elements of Asia programme, which commenced in June 2002, are built upon and further developed.

Four out of the six museums are city centre based, and the remaining two sites also have a citywide focus. The Revitalising Neighbourhoods programme demonstrates a need to provide services at a neighbourhood level to make them accessible to all citizens. This Review considers ways to respond to this agenda. The review has identified two main challenges in terms of increasing usage and participation in Museums. These are:

- Increasing usage by ethnic minority communities;
- Increasing usage by socially excluded communities

The Neighbourhood Renewal and Equalities Task Groups considered these issues. Detailed analysis by these groups has been used to inform this section, and the full reports can be accessed via the Museums Service Headquarters, New Walk Centre.

1.4   Creating a Sustainable Museums Service

In order to make "the heritages of the city and all its communities available for everyone to share and enjoy", the museum service needs to be a more robust and sustainable organisation, capable of delivering the changes necessary to meet the city's agenda.

Renaissance in the Regions: a New Vision for England's Museums (Resource, 2001), showed that across the country, regional museums and galleries are under funded, and steps need to be taken to improve their ability to deliver the services that modern customers want. Leicester's situation is complicated because it has a comparatively high number of museums and very large collections for a city of its size. Therefore whilst the overall spend is higher than GLLAM comparators (Group for Larger Local Authority Museums), the spend per museum is 20% lower than the average. This has resulted in the provision of a minimum level of collection care; limited outreach work

being undertaken, poor standards of facilities and declining standards of maintenance across all sites. This Report identifies solutions to this unsustainable situation.

The Capacity/Structural Assessment and the Museums Operational Task Groups considered this issue. The detailed analysis carried out by these groups has been used to inform this section, and the full reports can be accessed via the Museums Service Headquarters, New Walk Centre.