

2. METHODOLOGY

Since April 2000 Leicester City Council has been looking at its services in a completely new way, under the duty of Best Value. This requires a local authority to secure continuous improvement in its operations in order to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In each Best Value Review, the Council:

- **Challenges** the purpose and need for the service and the way that it is currently delivered
- **Compares** how the Council is performing over time in relation to its objectives and to other service providers
- **Consults** with relevant stakeholders about the current and future operation of the service
- Uses **competitive** processes, where appropriate, as a means of securing efficient and effective services.

This is the third and the final stage of the Heritage Services Best Value Review. The Review process commenced in January 2002, when a scoping report was produced outlining the services to be included within its remit (see Table 1 in the introductory section). The next stage was the Interim Report, which was produced in May 2002, and outlined the strategic case for the services under review; a description of the services currently provided; how they compare with similar services, meet stakeholder needs at present and the objectives set for them by the council. It also identified the key issues that the review itself needs to address. This resulted in the decision to concentrate on the three key themes identified in Chapter 1; namely Heritage Framework; Increasing Usage and Participation in Museums and Creating a Sustainable Museums Service.

2.1 Task Groups

5 Task Groups were set up to explore the questions raised in the Interim Report. The Task Groups were :-

- Structures and Property
- Capacity / Structural Assessment
- Museums Operational
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Equalities

Each task group was made up of relevant representatives from the business units scoped into the review, and other appropriate representatives. Questions addressed by each Task Group are listed in (**Appendix 1 A2.1**). Each task group also produced a detailed report outlining key recommendations. This information has been fed into this report, and also will be fed into next year's business plan and strategies for museums and heritage. Full copies of the task group reports are available from the Museum Service Headquarters, New Walk Centre.

2.2 Challenge

The review challenged the service:

- By addressing all of the issues identified in the Interim Report.
- Through stakeholder consultation meetings and interviews, and a challenge workshop
- Through staff questionnaires and matrices, which challenged the level of collections. (The questions considered are listed in (**Appendix 1 A2.1**), and are further analysed within Chapters 3 – 6.)

As part of the challenge process we also reviewed the report *Confirmation of Core Brief* submitted by Focus consultants (2001) and their work to develop the service's capital strategy. Focus carried out a major review of the museum service, analysing all its activities and resources, and carrying out options appraisals on key buildings to establish priorities. The work has supported delivery of:

- £200,000 increase in revenue budget in 2001/2
- Development of Heritage Lottery Fund applications for New Walk Museum and Newarke Houses
- A major development project for Cross Corners House, which is about to commence
- Submission of a linked ERDF objective 2 application

2.3 Compare

2.3.1. The review compared the service by referencing the relevant national performance indicators for museums provision:

- BV113 Number of pupils visiting in organised school groups
- BV119C % Residents satisfied with museums/galleries
- BV119UM % Users satisfied with museums/galleries
- BV119NUM % Non-users satisfied with museums/galleries
- BV 169A Number of museums operated/supported by the authority
- BV170A Number of visits to/usages per 1,000 population
- BV170B Number of those visits that were in person
- AC15 Net cost per visit/usage

The key issues identified through these performance indicators were:

- The number of museums maintained in the city (Interim report page 39).
- The ability of the service to raise new sources of income (**Interim report** page 39).

2.3.2. The review carried out further comparative exercises with other museums services in the East Midlands region, asking questions about how heritage and museums services are provided across other similar authorities. A follow up telephone call was made to ensure that all relevant information was obtained in the most accurate way possible. A full copy of the survey, along with the responses obtained from the respondents can be found in **Appendix Six**.

2.3.3. The same questions were put to Birmingham City Museums as part of a visit to the service. This was because Birmingham has a similar demographic profile to Leicester.

The key issues identified through this exercise were:

- The need to develop outreach work
- The possibilities for more integrated working with other heritage services

2.4 Consult

The Review draws upon a wide range of consultation carried out across all stakeholders of the Museums service. This consists of both consultation carried out during the 2 years prior to the Review, and consultation undertaken during the Review. The groups that we consulted as part of the review were:

- External Consultees and Critical Friends
- Schools
- Cultural Strategy Partnership
- Museum Supporters Group
- Citizens Panel
- Non-Users
- Relevant Staff
- Trade Unions
- Elected members
- Black Workers Groups
- English Heritage
- Technology Trust Committee
- East Midlands Oral History Archive

A mixed methodology was used for consultation including a telephone survey, questionnaires and focus group meetings. For details of the specific consultation undertaken, please see **Appendix Five**. This also contains a comprehensive list of all the issues raised as part of this wide-ranging consultation. Due to the time constraints of this Review, we are currently only dealing with those issues that fall within the remit of the Review, i.e. that make a contribution to each of the 3 main issues.

2.5 Compete

The review examined compete issues through:

- Report by Leonie Cowen & Associates Consultants who were commissioned in 2001 to carry out a strategic review of alternative management options for Leicester's Arts & Leisure Services. The report was recently finalised and is currently being considered by the Departmental Management Team.
- Report by Hayley Sharpe Ltd., an external design company (2001) commissioned to analyse a major museums exhibition to determine whether the in house provision was competitive and cost effective when compared with external private sector provision.
- Task group 3 (Museums Operational) looked at issues relating to outsourcing education and conservation.
- Report by Egeria consultants considering the issues of outsourcing museum assistants.
- Internal report on key-holding arrangements considered in 2001 to determine the most cost effective means of provision. As a result of the review it was outsourced to a private company.

The results of each of these exercises are outlined in Chapter 5 under the Creating a Sustainable Museum Service section.

2.6 Chapters 3-5

Now look at the analysis of the 3 key issues using the 4 C's framework.