

APPENDIX TEN

ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF MUSEUMS

The full range of services provided by Museums is indicated in **Appendix Two** (A2.1). There is a mature market place for aspects of museum services and selected areas of these are analysed here: deployment of Museum Assistants, retail, collections care and conservation, exhibition design and schools education provision.

A10.1 Analysis of deployment of Museum Assistants

An analysis of deployment of Museums Assistants was carried out for the purposes of this Review by Egeria heritage consultants. The following is a summary of their report.

Until 1999 the Museum Assistants' primary roles were in security, shop, reception and cleaning duties. However in that year there was a fundamental change in their duties intended to integrate them fully in the work of each museum site and enable them to contribute to a wider range of visitor services. These activities are:

- To organise and deliver events, of which there is a growing programme
- To lead guided tours and give introductory talks
- To support educational activities, collections management and exhibition development

Although there has been a 12% reduction in museum opening hours since 1997/8, Museum Assistants' contracted hours have been reduced by almost 30%. This pattern of increasing responsibilities and reducing capacity has put real pressure on current arrangements. This is evidenced by an analysis of the basic requirement for Museum Assistants to open museums to visitors and provide a safe and clean environment. The following table identifies a total core requirement of 35,279 hours per year, broken down as follows:

Task	Hours per year
Museum invigilation and reception duties	30,400
Cleaning and housekeeping	3,442
Lock-up and closure	1,428
Total core requirement	35,270

Total Museum Assistant hours available to be deployed (net of leave entitlement) is 41,710 pa, leaving a balance of approximately 8,234, or about 27 hours per site per week to undertake the following activities:

- staff development and training
- supervision of out-of-hours activities
- providing access to contractors and alarm cover
- special openings at satellite sites covered from Guildhall and Newarke Houses
- events and educational activities.

This is probably just sufficient, subject to the full complement being available. However, because of Museum Assistant absences due to sickness, estimated by managers to lose around 2,300 hours per year including a number of Museum

Assistants on long-term sick-leave, reducing the unallocated balance per site to around 19 hours.

The table below provides indicative impact figures for each site:

Museum	Contracted Hours available pa	Leave pa	Sickness pa	Balance pa	Operating Need	Balance
New Walk	16,422	1,557	1,320	13,565	10,070	3,495
Newarke Houses	7,497	720	165	6,612	5,040	1,572
Jewry Wall	5,686	555	396	4,735	5,040	(305)
Guildhall	4,386	433	99	3,854	5,040	1,186
Abbey Pumping Station/ Belgrave Hall	12,138	1,149	914	10,075	10,080	(5)
TOTALS	46,129	4,414	2,894	38,841	35,270	5,943

Long-term absences in the recent past at Jewry Wall and Abbey Pumping Station have meant that these sites have had virtually no spare capacity. However, even at sites with proportionately greater capacity, there are additional issues that need to be taken into account. The Guildhall has proportionately the greatest number of unallocated hours, but this is the site with the largest responsibility for non-operating satellite sites. New Walk Museum has the largest commitment to out-of-hours activities and large-scale events with concomitant additional housekeeping requirements. It is hard to see how this can be achieved within 69 hours unallocated hours per week. Moreover it has been suggested that staffing is in danger of dropping below that required for the Government Indemnity Scheme with implications for temporary exhibitions and loans from the national collections.

Current arrangements place considerable pressure on staff. This is mitigated by willingness of senior managers in the museum service to perform duties that would otherwise be performed by Museum Assistants. This has benefits in ensuring that all staff have regular front-line experience; but that benefit is offset by the amount of time it diverts from their core duties.

It is important to realise that although volunteers provide invaluable support in many museum situations, volunteer support should never substitute for paid employees. Volunteers might have a role to play in developing activities that might, after cost-benefit analysis, be deemed inappropriate to engage Museum Assistant's time, but this would be adding value rather than replacing the Museum Assistant's role.

Improvements are difficult to make within the constraints of the present resource base. Shorter opening hours would release staff from invigilation duties to perform other duties but this can only be possible if the reduced access has a marginal impact. There are some advantages in organising Museum Assistants in a central pool. They might lose detailed site knowledge, but could develop operational specialisms such as security, education, events organisation, packing and handling. This approach would represent a major change and demand common processes and technology across all sites, which would itself require investment, but might lead to increased efficiency long-term.

Recommendations based on the foregoing are as follows:

- More active management of sickness levels
- Consider a single central pool of Museum Assistants
- Consider reallocating satellite sites to Newarke Houses or
- Creating a single 12 hour 'travelling caretaker' post
- Track visitor numbers on daily/hourly basis to assess opportunities to reduce opening hours without compromising the level of public service
- Fully cost Museum Assistant time commitment to activities other than their core security and housekeeping roles
- Use cost-benefit analysis to test whether proposed activities really represent the best use of Museum Assistant resources
- Explore possibility of outsourcing security and cleaning duties to private sector firms, while retaining a smaller number of Museum Assistants in a supervisory role to manage sites and organise activities

A10.2 Analysis of retail activities

Leicester City Museums retail operation aims to make a profit or (at worst) break even, therefore not costing the service anything for retail staff, stock or equipment. The cost to the Museum is the space given to the shops, which is minimal at most sites, and the electricity used for the tills. The service element for customers is in the more specialist books relating to the collections. Customers also benefit from being able to buy tickets for Museum concerts at New Walk Museum and the Guildhall, and to make wedding and room hire payments in the New Walk Museum shop. The Guildhall shop sells a range of Leicester Cathedral stock as a service to the Cathedral. These activities earn little or no profit for the retail operation.

Why have a shop?

- Shopping regarded as a leisure activity
- Visitors expect a shop and are frequently heard commenting at New Walk Museum that 'we have spent more time in the shop than in the museum'.
- Stock supports the curriculum, parents come to Museums to buy items for school project work.

Stocking policy

- Affordable prices in accordance with Equality and Diversity policies
- Wide range of stock to reflect the Museum's collections and the history and diverse nature of the City of Leicester.

The variety of stock and prices we are able to accommodate in a Museum setting would not be viable or sensible in other retail environments

Who should run Leicester City Museums shops?

The only site which would be a viable proposition as a business at present would be the New Walk Museum shop. Losing this site would leave the other 5 sites in a difficult position as New Walk Museum does 72% of the total retail business. This enables us to buy larger amounts of stock at cheaper prices.

Options for who should run Leicester City Museums' shops

1. Established retailer to run New Walk Museum shop as a branch of its business renting the space from the Museum

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>New Walk Museum charges rent and gets a guaranteed income from the space, with no risk attached.</p> <p>Possible increase in visitors if the retailer invests in regular advertising.</p> <p>The remaining sites could be treated as a service to the visitor.</p>	<p>No control over the type of stock sold.</p> <p>The retailer would not have to take into account the Council's priorities.</p> <p>May lose the facility to sell Museum concert tickets and take wedding and room hire payments over the counter.</p> <p>The other 5 sites would have to reduce the variety of stock they carry.</p>

2. Each site has a retail budget, does its own buying.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Museum assistants would get complete ownership of their shops.</p> <p>Stock might be more appropriate to the site.</p>	<p>6 people would have to do the job currently done by 1 person.</p> <p>Costs to the council would increase.</p> <p>The smaller sites would lose the advantage of being able to order in larger quantities for more discount.</p>

3. Existing arrangement continues, but with a much greater level of consultation and exchange of ideas with other 'Hub Services' retail staff and our own site based staff

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>The Museum Service keeps control of stock and prices.</p> <p>The retail operation is able to build on what has been learned leading to an increase in income.</p> <p>All Sites benefit from a wider range of stock as one operation.</p>	<p>The Museum Service carries all the risk.</p> <p>Possibility that the retail operation stagnates, and does not grow or move forward due to a lack of investment and fresh ideas.</p> <p>Some sites may have a wider range of stock than necessary.</p>

Comparator museums in the East Midlands:

Museum Service	Turnover 2001/02	Full-time equivalent posts paid from retail cost centre	Average turnover per staff member	Net profit	Average profit per staff member
Lincolnshire County Council Education and Cultural Services 14 sites	£228,870	0			
Nottingham 8 sites	£213,716	10	£21,372	£21,629	£2,163
Leicestershire 4 sites	£156,657	2.7	£58,021	£8,567	£5,459
Leicester 6 sites	£81,273	2.25	£36,121	£4,344	£1,930
Derby Museum & Art Gallery 1 site	£46,000	0			

Lincolnshire and Derby see Museum shops as a service to the public and do not impose staff or equipment costs on the retail cost centre. Nottingham takes the

opposite view - retail pays its staff and some building costs. Leicestershire appears to see retail as part profit making and part service, paying some staff from a different budget.

Leicester is a combination of these approaches - all staff and equipment costs are met by retail; but one site makes a profit while the other five are part of the service to our visitors. At present Leicester makes a small profit from retail, we provide a service to our visitors at no additional cost to the service. The profit does not come back to retail, in effect we start a new business each year. This problem can be addressed by setting Museums shops up as a trading organisation with a rolling code (see **Improvement Plan**).

Only New Walk Museum has sufficient turn-over and profit for out-sourcing to be an option. One site is expected to make a profit whilst the other five are part of the service to our visitors. Through the relationship between retail and curatorial staff, shops in all six museums are able to have stock relevant to their temporary exhibitions and events programmes. People trust Museums shops regarding the honesty of stock, for example replicas are clearly marked as such and genuine fossils are really genuine.

The alternative to existing practice would be to out-source the New Walk shop and to cease providing the service at the other museums. However if these are to be successfully re-branded as Community Museums, a shop is regarded by visitors as part of the range of facilities that they would expect. Leicester City Museums shops are run according to an ethical **retail policy**. Companies that would consider running the shop at New Walk would be unlikely to agreed to ethical rules regarding stocking diverse items, stocking items relevant to collections. They would be concerned about the uncertainties of the city council environment e.g. changes in opening hours, temporary closure due to gallery work. This is reflected in Museums experience of difficulties finding a franchisee for the coffee cart facility at New Walk Museum and for a proposed café at the Guildhall.

A10.3 Collections care

Drawing on *Benchmarks in Collections Care* (Resource, 2002) the following critical areas of collections care were selected:

- Collections Care policy
- Storage
- Handling and use of collections
- Environmental monitoring and control
- Conservation
- Emergency Preparedness

The following policy documents relevant to Collections Care are in place:

Collections Policy (Acquisitions & Disposals)

Assessment of storage priorities

Security/risk policy

- City of Leicester Museum Trust Purchasing Policy 2000-4
- Exhibitions Policy and Programme 2001-4

- Documentation Policy 2001-5
- Pest Control Strategy for New Walk Museum 2002
- Collections documentation manual: sections on entry records
 - location and movement control
 - accessioning
 - risk, emergency and disaster
 - exit control

However a major gap is the current absence of an overarching Collections Management Policy and strategy and other documents (emergency plan, conservation plan, collections documentation manual sections on inward loans, exhibition and conservation records). There is also no Museums ICT and digitisation policy and plan (see **Improvement Plan**).

A full survey of storage, handling and use of collections, environmental monitoring, conservation and emergency preparedness was undertaken, summarised below:

	Basic/Good/Best practice?	Summary of actions needed to bring to basic practice level
Storage	Just below Basic In all areas (except for existence of recent storage assessment)	Problems almost entirely due to lack of space. However need to train people to use storage that we have properly
Handling/use of collections	Ranges from Basic to Good in parts	Needs to be better communication between conservators and design / exhibition curators
Environmental monitoring & control	Ranges from Good to Best	Extend regular monitoring to Abbey Pumping Station This would reach Best practice if a programme of collating environmental data was established and if light levels were monitored systematically
Housekeeping	Basic to Good	Curators need to let the conservators see all incoming material and acquisitions before putting them in store
Conservation	Good to Best	If conservation records were produced to archival standards, and also held / updated on the database this would reach Best practice
Emergency preparedness	Just below Basic	Tighten up lines of command and communication

In theory there is potential to out-source conservation services. For instance, routine cleaning of storage areas could be managed by two strategic conservators who would also manage contracts for additional work. However this approach would mean that the enormous educational potential and added value of the work carried out by technical and conservation staff work would be lost. Such staff contribute extensively to exhibitions, events and outreach work. The aims to deliver museum and heritage services to all Leicester's people and to stimulate and inspire interest in Leicester's historic and environmental heritage would be severely compromised. The strategic approach appears to offer a considerable saving on staff, space and money, but attention is drawn to the recent experience of Glasgow museums, where the Best Value process found that on-site conservators were more cost-effective than contracting out technical work.

A10.4 Exhibition design

Advantages of outsourcing design

- Sector awareness; awareness of latest practices, education requirements, target audiences etc.
- Resources can be quickly expanded for fast turnaround
- Options on design and design and build routes in procurement
- Not tied to usual in-house design and production methods
- Highly flexible
- Work to a fixed design fee negotiated at the beginning of each project

Disadvantages of outsourcing design

- Need for more formal methods of producing a brief with known finances and timescale (but in-house designers and project managers should do this too)
- Outside consultants do not possess knowledge of the collections/background and necessarily have a less intuitive approach
- Design fees do not include protracted research and interpretation necessary for some exhibitions
- Outside design consultancies charge handling fees for all bought-in aspects
- If design and build option selected, outside design consultancies charge project and contract management fees
- Outside designers cannot take part in talks or events linked to the exhibition
- Increased interpretative design fees

Comparative man hours and costs for the Koelz exhibition: a case-study

- An outside consultancy's design fee for a project of this magnitude would have to be a minimum of 15% for Design and 5% Project Management i.e. a total of 20% of the project budget which would be £4,540 (equating to only c.113 hours of bought-in expertise). In reality the fees would probably have to be 20% + 5% which would be £5,670.
- The Museum spent 740 hours on the project. This would cost approximately £30,000 if the same amount of billable time were to be spent by an outside consultancy (i.e. greater than the project budget itself).
- With £5,670 of professional fees deducted from the interpretative budget of £22,696, this would leave only £17,026 to buy in the exhibition production and installing and commissioning
- At £58.00 per square meter the project budget is extremely good value for money. Current guidelines for a professionally produced art exhibition would be in the region of £800-£1,500 per square meter (dependent on levels of IT, AV, educational material and associated costs etc.).

Comparator museums organise the provision of exhibition design and promotional literature and publications in a variety of ways (**Appendix Six**, A15-16). Exhibition design is both provided in-house, outsourced and, most commonly, with a mixture of

approaches depending on the scale and levels of funding of the project. In-house design and exhibitions teams design promotional literature at Leicester and Derby. It is contracted out at Nottingham, Lincolnshire and Crich. At Birmingham, Northampton and Leicestershire it is done by units located elsewhere in the local authority. Publications are only produced by Leicester, Leicestershire, Crich (all designed in-house); Birmingham and Nottingham (both out-sourced) and Lincolnshire (most outsourced).

The evidence in **Appendix Three** shows how, after morning opening and exhibition budgets were reinstated in March 2001, visitor figures recovered to reach 284,915 in 2001/2002 and continue to climb (against the national trend) in 2002/3 which was a reflection of the additional money for exhibitions. However comparator museums have significantly smaller exhibitions budgets (**Appendix Six**, A15).

APPENDIX 11

Reasons for review recommendations 15a, 15b,15c.

The review identified the minimum funding needed to carry out the improvements. It then looked at options for speedily redeploying the maximum realistic amount of existing resources. Priorities and significances for the whole service were carefully balanced. All the recommendations were selected because they release the maximum resources with least impact on services, but were also selected because a case can be made for them from the point of view of efficiency and effectiveness, and supporting overall service improvement.

11.2 Reasons for six day opening

A lot of resources are locked into maintaining buildings and collections. Front of house staffing costs are therefore the only significant resource that can be rapidly redeployed. This has an effect on the time the service is available to the public but not on its nature.

The disadvantage of reducing public access to museum buildings by one day in seven is felt to be outweighed by the ability to redeploy resources to work in neighbourhoods. Many similar services have daily opening, but Manchester City Art Gallery, the Space Centre and the City Gallery all close on Mondays. This is standard practice for continental museums. Many visitor attractions close for months in winter. Manchester's flagship museum has just reopened after a £35 million redevelopment involving careful market research. If 6 day opening had been an issue they would not have continued with it.

This financial resource represents staff time. The service has developed front of house staff involvement in all activities. The service-wide interpretation strategy emphasises the need for high quality front of house staff playing a crucial role in the visitor experience. The proposed access work could use the same staff time freed by closing for one day per week. Ways of mixing the different work are possible within one post, and this would benefit the visitor experience. This also has the advantage that current jobs could be retained.

11.3 Reason for changing emphasis of services in one museum

Today's museum attractions need to be well maintained, with changing, stimulating displays and a wide range of interpretation. This calls for regular spending on displays, activities, marketing and promotion. All our sites show the effects of years of overstretched resources and under-investment. With five sites operational budgets would go further. Staff time, including marketing and design teams, would be more effectively focused.

In addition to routine spending, visitor attractions should be refurbished every ten years or so. To give an idea of cost, Melton Carnegie Museum has just had a £300,000+ refit. The Royal Leicestershire Regiment Association is developing an HLF bid for displays at Newark Houses for over £500,000, with at least

£50,000 project development costs. Projects like these take staff time and money to develop, and significant partnership funding.

The continuing need for major refurbishment is one of the most important considerations in determining the number of visitor attraction museums that Leicester can afford to maintain, but it is also one of the least appreciated by many people who are not professionally involved in museums.

11.4 Reasons for developing new emphasis for Jewry Wall Museum

All other sites have live major projects or good prospects. Jewry Wall is in the Old Town, but “passing trade” and access will not be improved. The Old Town has identified two priorities, neither is Jewry Wall: Saint Nicholas Square/Guildhall and the Castle/ Newarke Houses. The fact that no opportunities have presented themselves backs up the view that this is the visitor attraction with least potential.

Unlike other sites, which have bucked a national trend and maintained or increased visitors since 1995, general public visitor levels have continued to decline. From 1995/6-1999/00 it usually attracted over 30,000 visits per year, but in 2000/1 and 2001/2 this went down to less than 27,000, with a further drop in 2002/3. There is little “passing trade”. The major user group, schools who come from the entire Midlands as well as Leicester, brings in 30% of all visitors. There is demand to increase schools use, but current facilities are stretched to capacity and further facilities cannot be developed with the current general public access.

Although Jewry Wall Museum has comparatively little potential for external funding as a visitor attraction, there are specific sources of funding for archaeology and education related activities.

11.5 Reasons for retaining the building and some functions

Property reasons: There is no landlord cost implication for the council. Leicester University owns it. Vacating the premises would release an additional c.£20,000, but the capital and revenue cost of doing so would exceed this, because of the collections, office space and education facilities, and the need to supervise the site.

The Jewry Wall site is a Guardianship monument that Leicester City Council is responsible for on behalf of English Heritage. The new heritage framework will enable Property Services and museums to discuss its future care with them. It is internationally important, but minimally interpreted or promoted, and in need of conservation. This should be a focus of the archaeology team’s attention. Some site access could be retained if it was felt necessary, but it might be best to interpret the site from the pavement.

Collection reasons: Some items on display are large, fragile and internationally important such as the Roman rooms with painted walls and mosaics. In the

long term key objects will be displayed at other sites, but for the time being they can remain, where groups and individuals can see them by appointment.

Whilst the proposal will in the short term reduce display space for the service overall, one of the objectives of the review is to provide greater access to stored collections and resources can be concentrated on improving access.

Up to half the entire service collection is archaeology, much of it excavation archives which can be disposed of. Staff need time to do this and free up storage space.

Education reasons: Access by appointment is not a problem. “The Romans” are central to the National Curriculum. School visits need to be developed and increased, including by working in partnership with and supporting the Guru Nanak Sikh Museum next door, that also has many regional school visits. Staff could also work more closely with Vaughan College, which shares the building, to support adult and community education opportunities.

Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration reasons: Even without the imperative to identify existing resources to be reprioritised, the proposal to create an Archaeological collections, education and outreach centre is a good one. Archaeology offers outstanding opportunities for outreach in neighbourhoods.

The museum service runs the city archaeology service, carried out by one officer at Jewry Wall. Full use cannot be made of the sites and monuments database or opportunities that arise, through lack of time and resources. This proposal will enable the service to use this work to support regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.

This proposal reflects the importance of archaeology to Leicester, and would engage far more people than the visitors lost at Jewry Wall Museum. Maintaining public access to Archaeology displays has restricted our ability to support archaeology in the city, both through regeneration and outreach work. The University of Leicester Field Archaeology Service’s recently held an open day at Abbey Park. Our service should better promote the work of ULAS and similar archaeology units. Our service should also be more involved in Abbey Park, Braunstone Park, the Old Town and Cultural Quarter, and the Masterplan generally, not to mention better promoting our own properties- the Castle, Raw Dykes and Jewry Wall itself. It recently scaled down involvement in a young people’s project at Castle Hill thorough lack of staff time.

11.6. Reasons for Wygston’s House proposal

Wygston’s House Learning Exchange is used by two organisations engaged in life-long learning and personal development/capacity building, for in kind payment of training places and courses relating mainly to diversity. The value this input is around £7,000, whilst the potential income from a commercial tenant could be at least £20,000, with £8,200 freed up in staff time and building running costs. These resources are invested in a non-core activity. The original vision for the Learning Exchange included more museum involvement on site, but

this is unlikely to be achieved because it is beyond the resources of the service in its current configuration.

Longer-term development of Applegate and Saint Nicholas Square was taken into account when the Learning partnership was set up in July 2001. The Old Town Partnership is now operational and the most beneficial use of Wygston's House to support economic regeneration needs to be adopted.

The recommendations give museum staff first hand experience of working with communities, for which training is not a substitute. Since the partnership was set up the Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal Directorate has developed its own programme of diversity and equalities development.

Both organisations are delivering term-long programmes of work that support city priorities and involve c.800 users per month. It is possible that one of the organisations can be accommodated in other museum facilities.