

# Report to Cabinet

**15<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Sandwell Museums – Approval of Forward plan and policies
<b>Cabinet member</b>	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism Councillor Laura Rollins
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Director Borough Economy, Alice Davey
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes Sets Strategic Direction for Museums
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Assistant Director – Libraries, Archives, Information Services, Tourism and Community Hubs Dawn Winter Dawn_winter@sandwell.gov.uk

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to the Director of Borough Economy to approve and adopt Sandwell Museums and Arts Service Forward Plan and Policies as detailed below in order to progress a submission from Sandwell Museums Service towards achieving full accreditation status – as part of Arts Council England’s (ACE) national Museum Accreditation Scheme.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations




- 2.1 Sandwell Museums had full accreditation before 2015 for 3 of sites. But this was downgraded to provisional accreditation status as the Forward Plan and Museum Policies had not been approved and adopted formally by the cabinet.
- 2.2 The current (fourth) Provisional Accreditation status was awarded to enable the Museum service sufficient time to undertake a service review and produce new forward/business plans and associated documents (as



these were last reviewed/updated in 2012) and ensure these were approved and adopted by cabinet. The original deadline for submission was April 2021. However – set against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic this has subsequently been re-extended.

- 2.3** Achieving full Museum Accreditation status supports those involved with a museum/service to deliver high quality services that are open and accessible and help people interact with the collections and protect/conservate them for the future while also ensuring people are at the centre of services and monitoring quality services to communities and users. The Museum Accreditation scheme does this by making sure museums manage their collections properly, engage with visitors/key stakeholders, and are governed appropriately. It also opens-up opportunities for museums such as external funding opportunities and new partnerships – giving reputational confidence to potential donors (collections/funding) and other key supporters.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people -</p> <p>The SMBC Museum and Heritage services seek to engage a broad range of children and young people through the events, collection presentation and educational opportunities offered within the service programmes.</p>
	<p>People live well and age well -</p> <p>The service museums and heritage services seeks to engage across the community both through opportunities to participate and also through opportunities to volunteer within the services.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>The service provision outlined in this report will include opportunities for community engagement through sustaining jobs in the sector, offering communities opportunities to participate and engage in events and services alongside opportunities to volunteer.</p>



## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1** In Autumn 2020 *A Strategic Overview Report of Sandwell Museums and Arts Services* was commissioned/undertaken through appointed consultants, Wafer Hadley in discussion with the Museum staff teams and key stakeholders. The review was tasked with the development/proposals for a new set of strategic aims – that sought to increase the Museums and Arts Services contribution to the *Sandwell Plan* (Council corporate aims) and the Council's long-term ambitions through *Vision 2030*. It also explored (post-COVID) the potential for alternative (operational) delivery models towards future-proofing the services and further built on the work around the launch of the new *Sandwell Cultural Prospectus* from Spring 2020.
- 4.2** Completed by April 2021 the review has been used as the framework for a refresh of the Museums Forward Plan (from 2022 to 2025), which is attached for approval by the cabinet. The approach is centred on a logic model, which ties each piece of museum activity to a specific outcome for Sandwell residents/communities and is summarised across six strategic aims for the Service up to 2025 as outlined below:

1. *Develop a new targeted programme for children, families and young people*
2. *Work with target communities and partners to co-create heritage-based experiences*
3. *Create signature projects in Commonwealth Games hosting, and in place-making*
4. *Improve sustainability of built assets management*
5. *Develop complementary approach for Museums and Libraries in Sandwell*
6. *Develop profile and reputation through external validation and funding*

- 4.3** It is a requirement of the national Museums Accreditation Scheme that all accredited museums have policies established which regulate their collection activities agreed by their governing body. As part of the submission process, the following required policies/documents for Sandwell have been reviewed/revised:

- Collections Management Policy – 2021-2026
- Collections Development Policy – 2021-2026
- Collections Rationalisation Policy – 2018-2026
- Collections Care Policy – 2021-2026
- Documentation Plan – 2018-2028
- Access, Learning & Engagement Policy – 2021-2026
- Forward Plan (new) – 2022-2025



All of the above draft policies and the Forward Plan have been shared with wider Museum staff teams and in addition, collections management documents have been shared with ACE, neighbouring museum services and heritage organisations in the Black Country. The scope of collection activity has been discussed with various Friends' groups. The Museum team have not consulted with local communities about the documents themselves as these policy documents are derived from the extensive consultation carried out with service users through regular surveys which reflect the needs, wants and desires of the Museum's local service users.

- 4.4** There are no strategic resource implications for the adoption of these policies. Acquisitions are made only when appropriate costs can be met from existing resources and/or external funding sources. Collection Management activity is carried out as a core function of the Museums and Arts Services and Policies, procedures and development plans are in place to manage and develop collections and services within the financial parameters established by the Council's annual budget planning process.
- 4.5** There are no legal or statutory implications. The long-term commitments made by the Council in relation to the Policies and Procedures for Collection Management are voluntary and can be altered. In addition, the Policies make it clear that museum collections except in a few instances where there are charges placed on the Council because of the acceptance of gifts and/or funding for purchases are owned by Sandwell MBC, and that the Council has voluntarily accepted policies and procedures concerning the use and disposal of items in and from the collections.
- 4.6** Another key purpose of the Policies is to ensure that SMBC can demonstrate legal title to the Museum collections. The Collections Management Policy/Documentation Plan outlines the Council's legal obligations in relation to issues such as human remains and illicitly traded cultural property (including illegally traded archaeological or geological material or the spoliation of artworks). There are no consequences arising from the recommendation that in adversely affect or interfere with individuals' rights and freedoms – as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998.



## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications of the application for accredited status.

## 6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 Do nothing

The current service is provisionally accredited and there is an option to allow this to elapse and no longer be an accredited service. This is not recommended as there are clear benefits to achieving accreditation including the increased ability to raise external funding to support the service and the potential ability to support recruitment of staff and volunteers and to increase learning from other accredited museum services.

If cabinet do not agree to approve and adopt the Museum and Arts Service Forward Plan and Policies then full accreditation will not be awarded and provisional status will elapse.

## 7 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no direct resourcing implications in terms of staff or budgets associated with the application for accreditation
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The scheme is delivered through ACE and supports governance through the requirement for the service to develop policies to support service management and delivery.
<b>Risk:</b>	A risk assessment has been carried out to identify and assess the risks associated with the decisions being sought. There is a small risk that remaining without accredited status may affect the recruitment of staff and volunteers and reduce learning and external funding potential.
<b>Equality:</b>	An equality impact assessment will be required for the services.



<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The service provision supports health and wellbeing outcomes and accreditation has the potential to improve the quality of service delivery.
<b>Social Value</b>	Social value is supported through the education and life-long learning that this type of service is able to provide along with the opportunity to volunteer.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	No direct impact

## 8. Appendices

- Collections Management Policy – 2021-2026
- Collections Development Policy – 2021-2026
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## 9. Background Papers

None

