

Executive Member Response To Museum Review

Date Recommendations agreed by Development and Scrutiny Committee:

Children, Young People, Culture, Sport & Leisure Development and Scrutiny Committee, Tuesday 20 November 2012 (circulated 22 November 2012)

Date responses should be made by:

Executive responses should be received by Friday 18 January 2013

Recommendations:	Executive Response: Jan 2013	Update Nov 2014
1. That Officers be requested to investigate matters relating to the website and IT support as detailed in the report at paragraphs 3.2.3 and 3.5.1 to 3.5.5 and to provide a response to the issues Members have raised.	Improved data is now available for website visits.	In July 2011 the Council commenced using a more effective data collection tool for counting web usage. Please see attached reports.

	<p>We will review with the I.T department the potential for improved presence on Google for searches for” Hertfordshire Museums”.</p> <p>The web page has changed and now includes all publications available to download, the new Manager\Curator will continually look for ways to improve it within the framework of the SBC website.</p> <p>To host an external dedicated website is costly and would not be viable for the small team of Staff to manage on a daily basis.</p> <p>New ICT equipment has been installed for back office functions this included laptops, professional scanning hardware and software, a quicker solution for data storage and access,</p>	<p>The Communications Team will continue to work with the Museum to increase to opportunities for an improved online presence.</p> <p>There is now a new blog to share recent research and highlights from the collection: http://stevenagemuseum.wordpress.com/.</p> <p>To host an external dedicated website is costly and would not be viable for the small team of Staff to manage on a daily basis.</p> <p>As part of the Wi-Fi and network review projects in the new year I.T will look at ways that scanning can be done more effectively at the Museum.</p>
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	<p>new photo and video manipulation software and larger PC screens.</p> <p>Other items soon to be installed include, wireless projector and laptop in the Lecture Room, new touch screens and PC's for the public galleries plus a new operating platform with 2010 Microsoft office packages.</p>	<p>The Lecture Room I.T projector has now been successfully completed</p> <p>The only outstanding item is the transition to the new hosted desk top solution which includes Windows 7 and Office 2010.</p> <p>There are a number of areas within both councils that have not yet transitioned to the new hosted desk top. These areas are being reprioritised based on business need and the Museum is expected to complete within the next 3 – 6 months.</p>
<p>2. That Officers be requested to inform the members of the Children, Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure Development and Scrutiny Committee of progress of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid process.</p>	<p>A new Museum\Curator was appointed on 01.06.13 and is currently recruiting the HLF Project Officer, we expect the new appointee to be in place by August 2013.</p>	<p>The HLF Project Officer has been appointed; the Talking New Towns website will go live in February 2015. The website content is being uploaded over the next four months by teams of volunteers and paid staff at each partner organisation.</p>

<p>3. That Officers be requested to respond to the issues highlighted in paragraph 3.6.1 of the report regarding School Visits to compare the current service with those recommended by the “critical friend” witness.</p>	<p>The Manager\Curator will be reviewing the existing arrangements regarding School visits to compare the current service with those described by the “critical friend” witness as described at 3.6.1 in the report.</p>	<p>The Education officer has been building relationships with individual teachers and has joined a group of education officers from around the county to devise and test new workshops to address the new curriculum. Staff have also worked with the Stevenage Education Trust (SET) to deliver teacher training to promote the work of the museum to schools and share best practise. The Education Officer is working very nearly at capacity with at least two schools a week using the service for the majority of the term.</p>
<p>4. That Officers be requested to approach the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust regarding the refurbishment of the Natural History corner of the Museum.</p>	<p>The new Manager\Curator in post will be contacting Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and looking for potential funding to refurbish the Natural History Area.</p>	<p>The Manager\Curator in post will be contacting Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and looking for potential funding to refurbish the Natural History Area. This is scheduled for 2015 as two other HLF funded projects took priority in 2014: one a partner project across Hertfordshire and Suffolk called Saving the '70s and another in</p>

		<p>partnership with Knebworth House, the National Army Museum and Stevenage Education Trust to commemorate the contribution of local people to the First World War.</p>
<p>5. That Officers be requested to investigate the tools for improved marketing and publicity as suggested by the “critical friend” witness and as described at paragraph 3.4.1 in the report.</p>	<p>The Museum Manager\Curator will meet with the Communications Team on a monthly basis, a marketing and publicity forward plan has been agreed and used to manage the forward planning of marketing for the facility.</p> <p>A new general brochure and Children’s Party package are currently being finalised and the “What’s on Guide” is being produced every three months.</p> <p>A range of press releases have been used to successfully publicise events and courses.</p>	<p>The Museum Manager\Curator were meeting with the Communications Team on a monthly basis until May of this year, a marketing and publicity forward plan has been agreed and used to manage the forward planning of marketing for the facility.</p> <p>A new general brochure has been produced and circulated via Get Smart distribution. The children’s party package has been added to the website and the “What’s on Guide” is being produced every four months.</p> <p>A range of press releases have been used to successfully publicise events and courses.</p>

<p>6. That Officers be requested to investigate the ideas suggested for enhancing small revenue streams as described in paragraphs 3.8.1 to 3.8.3 in the report.</p>	<p>A new Point of Sale system has been installed, which is user friendly, quick plus the system is far more flexible in dealing with transactions for retail and admissions The system has a range of back office functions to facilitate easier and concise stock management as well being able to generate reports for retail and admission trends.</p> <p>The New Manager\Curator is working with the I.T department at methods to provide the opportunity for the sale of photographs over the internet.</p>	<p>A new Point of Sale system has been installed, which is user friendly, quick plus the system is far more flexible in dealing with transactions for retail and admissions.</p> <p>The card payment system was withdrawn due economic reasons due to an inability to meet required Payment Card Industry (PCI) protocols.</p> <p>Some investigation has taken place and at this time no economic solution that meets (PCI) compliance has been identified. I.T and Finance will keep this under review.</p> <p>The SBC website does not have facilities for online payments. The sale of photographs will require digital asset management software. At this stage there are not any plans to resolve either of these issues as the costs appear to be prohibitive.</p>
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	<p>New free public access WIFI is available to visitors throughout the Museum.</p> <p>The Café area has partially been refurbished with the addition of new seating, large screen TV (showing information about the Museum) with a quality hot drinks machine.</p> <p>Further works will include a refresh of the Café\Lobby area.</p>	<p>A WIFI system has been in place for some time. In addition increased bandwidth may become available following the Wi-Fi and network review projects taking place in the new year.</p> <p>Further to the initial works the floor was refurbished in January 2014 and the foyer was redecorated. A new case was installed in September 2014. Still outstanding is a new children's area for toddler activity packs and quizzes. A successful grant application to Herts Museums in November 2014 will fund this latter part of the refurbishment and be completed by March 2015.</p>
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	<p>Given the new I.T Facilities in the Lecture Room, the Museum\Curator is looking at opportunities to attract a new market of users to the room for training and conferencing.</p> <p>A new automatic internal entrance door will replace the existing manual doors to allow greater access for senior citizens, wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs.</p>	<p>The new IT facilities in the Lecture Room have provided, the Museum\Curator with opportunities to attract a new market of users to the room for training and conferencing. For example a course is currently being run by Viewpoint, a mental health charity, on Tuesdays from 11 November until 16 December. The Museum also hosts Shopwatch meetings and has been hired by a couple of local groups (a dance school and a toddler group for young mums).</p> <p>An initial survey was undertaken by a specialist contractor, due to the size and unique design of the entrance to the Museum the solution has proved to be more challenging than expected. Further options are currently being looked at.</p>
<p>7. That Officers be requested to consider the suggestion made at paragraph 3.9.1 in the report concerning the relationship of the Museum with any “Friends Of” groups.</p>	<p>The Manager\Curator will be reviewing the existing arrangements and making recommendations based</p>	<p>The Manager\Curator put a bid in to the Arts Council resilience fund in November 2104. The bid is in partnership with North Herts</p>

	upon the review.	Museum and The British Schools Museum, Hitchin to examine and promote the role of volunteers and friends' groups. If successful, staff will be notified in March 2015 and recruit a volunteer development officer for one year.
8. That Officers investigate the suggestion made at paragraph 3.9.2 in the report regarding the Museum exploiting its sixtieth anniversary in 2014 with sponsorship from local firms towards a series of related events.	The Manager\Curator in conjunction with Communications Team will investigate opportunities to celebrate the anniversary and funding to celebrate the Museum anniversary.	The Manager\Curator in conjunction with Communications Team has promoted the 60 th anniversary of the museum, including radio interviews and a party on 28 June 2014 attended by over 600 people.

These recommendations have been sent to the Head of Leisure, Community and Children's Services for a response on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Culture, Sport & Leisure.