

Update on Museum 20 Year Plan

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| Final Decision-Maker | Queens Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum Trust |
| Lead Head of Service/Lead Director | John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Victoria Barlow – Museum Director |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust Committee is asked to review the progress of the Museum's 20 year plan and provide any feedback on proposals for the future.

This report makes the following recommendations to Queens Own Royal West Kent Regimental Trust Committee

1. To note the progress of the Museum Twenty Year Plan
2. To provide any feedback on proposals for the future of the Queens Own gallery and military display in general.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|----------------|-------------|
| QORWKRMT | 8/2/2019 |
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Update on Museum 20 Year Plan

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2016, the Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee approved a 20 Year Plan to transform Maidstone's Museums and the service provided.
- 1.2 The first phase of this plan was the refurbishment and redisplay of Maidstone Museum.
- 1.3 The museum displays are currently dated and difficult to follow logically and the building does not provide suitable options for the kind of activities and experiences demanded by 21st century audiences

The work carried out so far.

- 1.4 A specification has been written for the appointment of a Project Manager to assist the museum project team with the master-planning of the new museum. They will advise on the construction elements as well as acting as liaison with external bodies such as Planning, Conservation and Historic England. The project manager will also assist in the preparation of accurate costings for the whole project. It is hoped to appoint in the next 6-8 weeks.
- 1.5 Consultation with members of the public has been carried out both in the museum, online and at events in 6 different parts of the borough. This is being collated by the Consultation Team and will allow us to see what residents want and expect to see in a local museum.
- 1.6 Internally, museum officers have been working on storylines for galleries and the beginnings of a floor plan. These take a great deal of time as officers must ensure that any changes to the museum will provide solutions to current issues of storage, visitor flow and physical access with no realistic chance of being able to increase the current floor space available.
- 1.7 In very general terms, it has been agreed that the story of the town of Maidstone will be told in the ground floor galleries. It is hoped that some spaces may be opened up to provide a more free-flowing route through the museum but the opportunities are limited due to the museum's age and listed status.

Representing the Queens Own

- 1.8 Currently the Queens Own Museum occupies a room at the entrance to the museum. It is the first gallery visitors see. It is currently well-liked and frequently mentioned in feedback as a popular attraction.
- 1.9 The downside to the current gallery is that it does not place the Queens Own in the context of the borough's entire military history. No mention is made of the Royal Engineers or the Gurkhas and their military legacy in Maidstone.

1.10 A new gallery will look at the history of military involvement from the Battle of Newbury through the World Wars and the legacy of the Cold War. It will look at experiences of both soldiers and military families living and working in Maidstone. However, the largest focus, in terms of both space taken in displays and level of detail, will be on the history and relevance of the Queens Own.

What's next?

1.11 Project teams for areas such as research, access, communications or collections, are currently being established and will be beginning work on their individual action plans in the next 4-6 weeks. It should be remembered that capacity is reliant on staff balancing this work with their normal duties.

1.12 Initial conversations will begin with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in February. This has not happened previously as the HLF had suspended their funding programmes for a year while a review of their activities was carried out. It is likely that fewer grants for lesser sums will be awarded in future.

1.13 Once the project manager is appointed, we will begin work with the relevant partners on planning and tracking what changes, improvements and updates are possible within the building. This will, in turn, inform the layout of galleries.

2. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note this report and forward to the Museum Director any comments, feedback or ideas on the presentation of the history of the Queens Own in the transformed Museum.

3. RISK

This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.

4 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. | Victoria Barlow |

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| | <p>However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3</p> | |
| Risk Management | <p>This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.</p> | <p>Victoria Barlow</p> |
| Financial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. | <p>[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]</p> |
| Staffing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. | <p>John Foster</p> |
| Legal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers. | <p>[Legal Team]</p> |
| Privacy and Data Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no privacy and data protection implications | <p>[Legal Team]</p> |
| Equalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment | <p>[Policy & Information Manager]</p> |
| Public Health | <p>We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.</p> | <p>Victoria Barlow</p> |

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| Crime and Disorder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will have no impact on Crime and Disorder. | Victoria Barlow |
| Procurement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No procurement is required | [Head of Service & Section 151 Officer] |

3. **REPORT APPENDICES - None**

4. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Museum 20 Year plan available at www.maidstonemuseum.org