

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services - Monday, 28 July 2014

Statement of Decision

Present:

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services

Officers: Karen Warren, Carol Anderson and Julie Dean (Chief Executive's office)

Also in attendance:

Other Members: Cllr Susanna Pressel

Museum Service Forward Plan

Documentation considered:

Report Museum Service Forward Plan

A copy is attached to the signed copy of this decision.

Questions from County Councillors

From Councillor Susanna Pressel to Cabinet Member

'We can all be very proud of the fantastic work that our Museums Service does in Oxfordshire, and this "Forward Plan" is full of good things.

I do, however, have a concern about the fact that Woodstock is quite a difficult place to get to from some parts of the County. Because of this, I would like to see even more emphasis given to touring exhibitions, loans and above all outreach, especially to schools. We do need to collaborate with our partners to find out if there are schools, particularly in areas of deprivation, where some of the children are not yet "enjoying the museum experience", so please can you ensure that this data is collected, collated and reviewed on an annual basis? If there are schools that are missing out, we would need to discuss how to tackle this.'

Answer

I am grateful to Councillor Pressell for her question and for her praise of the Museum Service. The Service aims to make its collections accessible to as wide an audience as possible, through publishing information about our collections on the web; by lending material to be displayed at museums and other venues across the County; and through the delivery of learning sessions and object loans to schools and community groups county-wide. These activities are undertaken in partnership with the University Museums and other museums across the county to ensure the most

effective use of finite resources and maximise countywide access to museum collections.

Through the Arts Council England (ACE) funded County Collections Project the museums service has been able to continue to produce a high quality annual exhibition which is available to tour to other museums in the County. Loans are also regularly provided to museums across the county to create or compliment locally generated exhibitions of material with a particular relevance to that locality. I would like to reassure Councillor Pressell that the Service is alert to any funding opportunities which would allow it to extend the number and range of touring exhibitions.

We will confirm what data, in addition to that collected by the Museums service, is currently available through our ASPIRE partnership with Oxford University Museums in respect of schools use of museums and their resources. We will review how that might be used to ensure that all Oxfordshire schools are being offered an opportunity to give their pupils access to museum collections. I will ask Carol Anderson, the Museum Service Manager to make sure that the outcomes from this exercise are reported back to you and that any actions that we can take will be incorporated into the work of the Learning and Access team.

Supplementary Question (asked at the meeting)

Will there be scope for more data to be collected from partners on topics such as the level of use that individual schools, and even particular subject groups, have made of the museums and their resources?

Response

Data on the use by schools in the south east region of the museum resources is collected on an annual basis. From it, it is possible to establish which schools have not made as much use of the resources in the last year. An update will be provided shortly. Last year's report flagged up no problems in this area and in 2011 every primary school in Oxford City, for example, used the Museums Service.

Follow up work is carried out on a collective basis, that is, via the County Museums Outreach service in liaison with the Oxford University museums, in order to avoid duplication. With regard to the level of use, currently this data is not captured on an annual basis as there are not the resources to do it. However, we will, in partnership with ASPIRE be reviewing data when it is available, to establish if there are any gaps over the previous year or two. A significant amount of resources have already been put into the development of targeted data, for example in areas of high deprivation or for children with special needs. The results of this are being monitored.

Cabinet Member's Comments

Cllr Lindsay-Gale congratulated the officers on the Plan and declared her satisfaction with it. At her request, Carol Anderson gave an update on the accreditation process.

Decision

Having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before me, the representations made to me and the further considerations set out above, I confirm my decisions on this matter as follows:

to approve the Museum Service’s Strategic Forward Plan 2014 – 2018.

Signed
Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services

Date