

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES  
28 JULY 2014**

**MUSEUMS SERVICE STRATEGIC FORWARD PLAN 2014 - 2018**

**Report by Head of Law and Culture**

**Introduction**

1. The Museums Service Strategic Forward Plan is an essential element in planning the effective future development and delivery of museum services and ensuring that the Service is able to meet the standards required in order to retain its current accredited status within the scheme now administered by the Arts Council England (ACE).
2. The Service is in the process of renewing its accredited status under the revised standard introduced in October 2011. As part of the assessment process the Service is required to regularly review and revise its forward plan and to obtain approval for the revised version from its governing body.

**Scope and Content of the Plan**

3. It is a requirement of Accreditation that a museum must plan effectively for long-term success and to make sure it can adapt in a changing environment in order to survive. A museum's ability to do this is demonstrated through its forward plan. Although ACE does not issue a standard format for forward plans, it does specify the areas to be covered. In content and approach the Museums Service Strategic Forward Plan 2014-18 follows the approach recommended in the detailed guidance issued by ACE in support of museums seeking Accreditation.
4. The Draft Plan (Annex 1) provides a review of the Forward Plan 2011-14 and the current Service provision, including the scope of the collections in its care, the nature and extent of services it provides and sets the direction for the Oxfordshire Museums Service for the period 2014 -18. It describes the aims and objectives of the Service during this period set against the regional and national context of changes in local government funding and the funding and role of museums within their communities...
5. It reaffirms the aim of the Service as being to inspire real meaning to belonging to Oxfordshire through the acquisition, care and creative use of the Museum collections, buildings and sites.

## **Key Objectives for the Service 2014-18**

6. The key objectives for the Museums Service, as set out in the Forward Plan, are to encourage the widest possible engagement with, learning from and enjoyment of the county's collections both in store and on display. The Service will continue to deliver and develop a high quality visitor service at The Oxfordshire Museum. It will seek to enable groups and individuals to engage with the collections in their communities and will strive to broaden its user profile to more closely reflect that of the county as a whole.
7. The Museums Service will continue to deliver a tailored programme of engagement activities for families; school children and older people both at The Oxfordshire Museum and in communities across the county.
8. The Service will seek to use new technology to engage new audiences and enhance interpretation. It will continue to improve the quality and depth of the county's collections from all periods and to preserve them for the understanding and enjoyment of present and future generations. It will continue to increase online access to collections and enhance their interpretation.
9. By implementing the Museum Service Strategic Forward Plan 20114-18 the Service will be better able to ensure that it continues to improve the quality, and relevance to the people of Oxfordshire, of collections in its care and the services it provides by enabling improved public access, enjoyment and understanding to the County's heritage.

## **Accreditation Process**

10. The Oxfordshire Museum Service's application for Re-Accreditation was submitted on 15 April 2014 and is currently going through the assessment process. We have been informed that currently the assessors hope to take our application for a decision by the Review Panel that meets on 24 July.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

11. **The Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services is RECOMMENDED to approve the Museums Service's Strategic Forward Plan 2014- 2018.**

## **PETER CLARK**

Head of Law and Culture

Background papers: none

Contact Officer: Carol Anderson, Museums Services Manager

June 2014