

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at the SCHOOL ROOM, SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 6pm on 7 DECEMBER 2011

Present: Councillor K Eden – Chairman.
Councillors D Morson and H Rolfe (Uttlesford Members).
J Bullen, P Salvidge and A Watson (Museum Society Limited).

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services),
M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), A Webb (Director of Corporate Services), C Wingfield (Curator) and N Whitlam (ICT Manager).

MM7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Chambers, and D Laing.

MM8 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2011 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

MM9 GOVERNANCE ARRANGMENTS

The working group discussed the arrangements for taking forward the projects to provide the museum storage facility at the Council's depot in Newport and to submit a new bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund ('HLF') for improvements to the Museum.

In terms of governance arrangements, although the Council had moved to a Cabinet system, this did not effect the operation of this group. The foundation was the agreement between the Council and the Museum Society. Any significant decisions would be taken to the Cabinet and to the Museum Board.

Further to discussions at the last meeting, it was now felt that it was not necessary to appoint a sub group to take the projects forward. It was agreed that decisions could be taken by the working group as long as there was at least one member of UDC and one member of the Museum Society present at the meeting. It was also agreed that the working group would receive monthly email progress reports.

MM10 **REPLACEMENT STORE - UPDATE**

The Director of Corporate Services circulated the latest drawings for the replacement store, which now comprised two smaller buildings rather than one larger building. The Museum store building would be built first, the Museum items then moved into the new building before the building of the housing store.

The store would be a significant size compared to the existing facility. The original estimate for the build was around 150k for the one building and it was not expected to be significantly different for the two units. A further sum had been allowed for internal conversions to the building to make it suitable for storing the Museum artefacts.

The planning application would be submitted as soon as the Planning Department and the Environment Agency had agreed the best way to address the concerns about flooding of the site.

MM11 **MUSEUM IMPROVMENTS UPDATE**

The Curator circulated reports in relation to the planned improvements to the Museum. This included Museum's wish list/main priorities, the functional relationships and a summary of matters to be taken to be taken to the HLF. The application to the HLF would be made before the completion of the store building and the group was informed the 3 stage process to apply for a bid and the likely timescales

- Pre application (6 weeks)
- Formal application (where the bulk of the work was done) (10/11 weeks).
- 2nd round (90 days for the decision).

In answer to members questions, it was explained that the initial cost incurred would be in submitting the application and for some professional advice but these costs could be met from within existing budgets.

MM12 **PROJECT TIMETABLE**

The working group considered an initial timetable for implementing the projects. It aimed to dovetail the 2 projects so that the new store building was ready for occupancy a month before the bid was made to the HLF. There would be key moments where a decision would be required and it was important that the process was kept on track. The role of Project Manager had been assigned to Nicola Whitman IT Manager UDC, who was currently seconded to the Corporate support Team.

MM13 **CONSULTATION**

The Assistant Director Corporate Services gave details of the upcoming consultation on the Museum Service. Most people would be directed to submit their comments on line although paper copies would be available. He outlined the wide range of people that would be contacted including, Museum Society members, schools, the Citizens Panel and local groups with an interest in the history of the Museum. There would also be a press release and details on the website for the general public to respond.

The questionnaire had been expanded to include questions that would assist with planning the future operation of the museum service.

MM14 **MUSEUM BUDGET 2012/13**

The Director of Corporate Services gave details of the draft Museum budget for 2012/13 and the projected budget for future years as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. In the light of the reduced funding that would be available the future work of the group would need to consider options for ensuring the long term sustainability of the Museum Service.

Member were advised that legal advice had confirmed that the Museum Society could apply for business rate relief on the Newport store. It was AGREED that the Museum Society would apply for this relief from 1 April 2012.

MM15 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Rolfe asked for thought to be given to displaying some of the Museum artefacts including pictures and the historic carts.

MM16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 13 February at 6.30pm at the Council offices Saffron Walden.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.