

Committee:	Cabinet	Date: Tuesday, 11 January 2022
Title:	Report to approve a new Forward Plan 2022 – 2026 for Saffron Walden Museum	
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Alex Armstrong, Portfolio Holder for Sport, Leisure and the Arts	
Report Author:	Carolyn Wingfield, Curator cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk 01799 510640	Key decision: No

Summary

1. This report accompanies the Forward Plan 2022-26 for Saffron Walden Museum which sets out proposals to improve the Museum and its long-term sustainability. It is subject to funding being raised from external sources and by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd. Approval of the Forward Plan is requested and is necessary before the Museum's next Arts Council England Accreditation review and further applications for National Lottery funding in 2022.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Forward Plan 2022-26 for Saffron Walden Museum.
2. It is recommended that the Forward Plan is reviewed and updated annually, as the Museum's development plans progress in conjunction with grant applications and other fund-raising activity.

Financial Implications

3. There are no financial implications directly resulting from the approval of the Museum's Forward Plan. The development project outlined in the Forward Plan will be financed by external grants and funds raised by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd. The plans will only proceed when successful grant applications are made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other organisations.
4. Failure to keep the Forward Plan up-to-date could impact on the Museum's eligibility for Accredited status with Arts Council England, which could in turn impact on eligibility for funding from the National Lottery and other sources.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Forward Plan 2022-26 (circulated with this report)

Options for Saffron Walden Museum Final Report Fourth Street, June 2020

Saffron Walden Museum Audience Development Study
Julia Holberry Associates December 2020

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd and its Museum Development Committee have been consulted and involved in the production of this Forward Plan. The Forward Plan has been informed by the findings and recommendations of the Audience Development Study by Julia Holberry Associates, which involved widespread consultation across the district.
Community Safety	There are no Community Safety implications.
Equalities	There are no Equalities implications.
Health and Safety	There are no Health & Safety implications.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There are no Human Rights/Legal implications.
Sustainability	The development proposals set out in the Forward Plan aim to make the Museum more sustainable by increasing income, number and range of users of the service and community support.
Ward-specific impacts	There are no ward-specific impacts.
Workforce/Workplace	There are no workplace / workforce specific impacts.

Situation

7. Saffron Walden Museum Interim Forward Plan 2021-22 set out the Museum's proposed course of action to develop the Museum building, displays and services in order to become more sustainable and maximise the public benefit of its collections, services and the historic site which it occupies with Walden Castle. The preparatory work, a Resilient Heritage Project titled 'Preparing for Transformation' was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund 2019-21 and was completed successfully, despite the Covid pandemic. This project has provided considered and detailed reports from consultants (referred to in the Background Papers) and the process has helped the Museum to develop its plans and fund-raising strategy with Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd. The Society has responsibility under the Museum Management Agreement for raising matching funding for Museum projects.
8. The new Forward Plan 2022-26 continues this process, which now focuses on the Museum's intention to apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for a major two-stage Heritage Grant. The Museum has recently obtained permission from the NLHF to apply for a Stage 1 Development Heritage Grant in 2022.
9. Development plans will only proceed if and when sufficient funding is raised from the NLHF and other sources. Approval of the Forward Plan does not commit the Council to any expenditure.
10. There will be much more detailed work on plans, costs and fund-raising for the development project over the next two years, and the timetable may also change depending on funding applications and other circumstances. Therefore it is intended that the Forward Plan should be reviewed and updated no later than 2026.

Risk Analysis

11. There will be risks if the Forward Plan is not adopted.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Without a clear strategic plan to improve visitor figures, income and community involvement, and modernise facilities and displays, the Museum will gradually decline and become less sustainable in the long-run.	3	4	The Forward Plan addresses this with a development plan for the Museum, dependent on applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other sources.
Museum does not have an up-to-date and approved Forward Plan for its next Arts Council Accreditation Review (anticipated 2022),	3	3	Approval of the Forward Plan 2022-26 will resolve this.

resulting in down-grading of its Accredited status and eligibility for external funding.			
Potential funding organisations may not support the Museum if it does not have a clearly stated strategic plan, backed by the Council and Museum Society.	3	3	Approval of the Forward Plan 2022-26 with resolve this.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.