



**Herefordshire Museum Service  
Business Plan 2024-27**



Name of service: Herefordshire Museum Service

Name of governing body: Herefordshire Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: April 2024

Policy review procedure: This policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every three years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2027

Approved by: Service Director, Community Wellbeing

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Background .....	4
3. Business Plan 2024-27.....	5
4. Statement of Purpose.....	5
5. Mission, Vision and Values.....	6
5.1. Mission .....	6
5.2. Vision .....	6
5.3. Values .....	6
6. Strategic Priorities .....	6
7. Equality, diversity and inclusion .....	6
8. Climate Emergency .....	7
9. Outcomes by 2027 .....	7
10. Current Position.....	8
10.1. Key Strengths.....	10
10.2. Areas of Weakness / For Development.....	10
11. Resources .....	10
11.1. Human.....	10
11.2. Physical.....	12
12. Audiences .....	12
12.1. Target Audiences .....	12
13. Finance .....	13
13.1. Financial Management .....	13
13.2. Income Generation, Fees and Charges .....	13
14. Risk Analysis .....	13
15. Monitoring and Evaluation .....	15

## **1. Introduction**

This business plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for the next three years for Herefordshire Museum Service. The service has a powerful strategic role to play in delivering cultural heritage to a wider audience and supporting the aspirations of Herefordshire Council. This business plan provides a working document detailing how the service can transform into a centre of excellence in community-led programming and cultural engagement with an improved approach to commerciality and income generation.

The redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery has been the catalyst for the transformation of the service. As the flagship project of delivering a cultural renaissance for Herefordshire its significance cannot be under-estimated. Herefordshire Museum Service has a critical role to play in raising Herefordshire's national profile and galvanising cultural action within the county between partners in and without the cultural sector.

This business plan is ambitious. It outlines a strategic direction that puts inclusivity and community involvement at the heart of our decision making. It aims to create the environment needed for the systemic change required to embrace participative practice. It introduces our first service-focused response to the climate emergency and challenges us to change our current ways of working. This is a bold business plan for creating a service fit for the future. It aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan and if successful will deliver a service to help improve the communities we serve.

## **2. Background**

A local authority museum service has operated in Herefordshire since 1871. Over the years it has seen a number of changes and iterations. The first service was a partnership between Hereford City Council and the Woolhope Field Naturalists Club, culminating in the opening of Hereford Free Library and Museum in 1874. The museum acted as the county museum of Herefordshire during this time. The gift of the Black and White House to the city and county of Hereford in 1928, led to the creation of a second council operated museum site in 1929. In 1966, Churchill House Museum was opened as a costume museum and, in 1973, the Hatton Gallery was added as an extension.

Between 1974 and 1998 in the period of a combined county of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the museums in Hereford were operated by the City Council and mainly worked to a city remit. A combined county museum service was established in Worcestershire in 1974. Malvern Hills and South Herefordshire District councils set up heritage centres in Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross on Wye during this period, as did local history societies in Weobley, Kington and Leominster and the Civic Society in Ledbury. A number of other independent museums were also established.

In 1998, with local government re-organisation, Herefordshire became a unitary authority. Responsibility for Hereford museums and a number of heritage centres reverted to the county authority. The countywide service was re-established. In 2002, the service was re-named Herefordshire Heritage Service and also moved out of Churchill House Museum. The Bromyard Heritage Centre was closed around the same time. Since 2012 the service has been known as Herefordshire Museum Service. In 2013 and 2014 the Ledbury Heritage Centre and the Market House Heritage Centre in Ross-on-Wye, were transferred out of the ownership of Herefordshire Council.

Since 2021 the service has been working towards redeveloping Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, part of that approach has been a revitalisation of the service. Today the service operates three sites in Hereford:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hereford Museum and Art Gallery</b></p> <p>One of the smallest county museum's in England, it is housed in a purpose-built Victorian library and museum with Edwardian Art Gallery. It regularly attracts around 10,000 visitors each year. The museum is closed for redevelopment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Black and White House Museum</b></p> <p>This magnificent grade 1 listed Jacobean era house gives an insight into daily life in 1600s. It is furnished in period style with an internationally important collection of English oak furniture with hands-on activities for children including replica clothing and puzzles.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Museum Resource and Learning Centre</b></p> <p>A former British Telecom exchange the building was converted and extended in 2008 with Heritage Lottery Funding to house the county's art, archaeology, costumes, social history and natural science collections that are not on public display.</p>
---	---	---

The collection contains around 180,000 objects which tell the history and stories of Herefordshire and its people. These collections are owned predominately by Herefordshire Council with a small number of items on loan: about 0.1%. They are divided into social history, furniture arms and armour, ethnographic material, fine art, decorative arts, photographs, archaeology, numismatic, costume and textiles, natural and geology. The service has a focus on working with families, be they traditional, blended, same sex, single parent, chosen or combinations thereof, people living in rural isolation, community wellbeing and the climate emergency.

### 3. Business Plan 2024-27

At the heart of this business plan is the aim to create systemic change in how the service operates to make it fit for the 21st century. Over the next three years we will begin to expand who we work with, change the way we work and reconnect with the communities of Herefordshire. We will work with council colleagues to introduce a new governance model which includes community representatives and ensure a spread of representation from ward councillors. We will also introduce a community programming board to involve local people and organisations in programming and project decisions. The actions in this business plan are underpinned by both The Power to the People framework (Museums Association 2019) and Spectrum of Audience Engagement (Morris, Hargreaves and McIntyre 2015) as well as studies into the asset-based approaches to improving health, strengthening resilience, social cohesion and equity through community participation.

### 4. Statement of Purpose

Herefordshire Museum Service connects people with the county's rich artistic, cultural and natural heritage to explore contemporary issues and inspire enjoyment, curiosity and wonder.

We do this by

- Collecting, caring for and interpreting objects with a connection to Herefordshire
- Celebrating and sharing the county's diverse cultural heritage
- Stimulating creativity, curiosity and enjoyment
- Fostering a sense of place and community

- Promoting life-long learning, participation and wellbeing
- Involving local people in our work and decision making process.

## **5. Mission, Vision and Values**

Our mission, vision and values have grown out of Herefordshire Council’s County Plan vision: “Delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do.” They have also drawn on the ideas that underpin the ambition and purpose of the redevelopment for Hereford Museum and Art Gallery.

### **5.1. Mission**

To inspire and connect the people of Herefordshire with issues that matter through access to world-class arts, culture and heritage.

### **5.2. Vision**

For Herefordshire to be a centre of excellence in community-led programming and cultural engagement where diversity is celebrated, creativity fostered and curiosity sparked.

### **5.3. Values**

- *Democratic* – we are committed to community engagement and partnership working.
- *Caring* – we are committed to high standards of service and collections care.
- *Creative* – we promote lifelong learning through high-quality experiences and programmes.
- *Inclusive* – we ensure equality and promote diversity in our service.
- *Resilient* - we are forward thinking and promote the economic regeneration of the county.

## **6. Strategic Priorities**

Our strategic priorities will direct our work over the next three years. They are underpinned and supported by our Equality and Climate Emergency Action Plans. Our priorities are:

1. To involve people in our work and bring economic, social and wellbeing benefits to the county and region.
2. To be entrepreneurial and improve income generation, reduce costs and increase grant funding.
3. To manage the collections and realise the potential of our venues as homes of world-class art, culture and heritage.
4. To increase our resilience and sustainability by improving governance, decision making and processes.

This business plan will be delivered through the implementation of an annual Action Plan (Appendix 1) agreed each year alongside our Equality and Climate Emergency Action Plans.

## **7. Equality, diversity and inclusion**

We are committed to achieving increasing opportunity and fairness for our communities through greater access to the museum service’s physical and intellectual resources. Our vision is to be a centre of excellence in community-led programming and cultural engagement rooted in

participatory practice and inclusivity. We are starting this journey after a period of retrenchment and decline. Over the life of this business plan we aim to embed inclusive practice in our day-to-day work and effect long-term institutional change. We will diversify our programming, promote co-production and reduce the representation gap within our collections through our work over the next three years.

Our equality strands are:

- Governance and leadership: to develop a confident, inclusive and welcoming service with participatory practice embedded throughout the organisation
- Workforce and volunteers: to have a core team supported by volunteers who are more representative of the diverse communities of Herefordshire
- Audience development: for our work to be more accessible and have programmes and services which are relevant and representative of the people of Herefordshire.

The work required to deliver our aspirations are outlined in our Equality Action Plan (appendix 2). As part of our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, we have developed an Access Plan (appendix 3) to address barriers identified through audits and feedback. This plan outlines specific actions to improve physical, intellectual, social, and financial access to the museum's services, collections, and programming.

## **8. Climate Emergency**

The climate emergency is the most significant challenge facing society today. We have a responsibility to reduce our own carbon footprint and take what actions we can to effect change. We will work in partnership to make sure our actions and activities minimise our own carbon footprint across the operation of the service and not only in the redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery.

Our climate emergency strands are to:

- Reduce: to reduce our carbon emissions and energy use in all aspects of our work.
- Partnership: to work with cultural partners and communities to take action.
- Development: to deliver the redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery project using EnerPHit approaches.

The work required to deliver our aspirations are outlined in our Climate Emergency Action Plan (appendix 3).

## **9. Outcomes by 2027**

By 2027, we will be on our journey to be a centre of excellence in community-led programming and cultural engagement. Local people will have been involved in the redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery and will increasingly be involved in the work of the museum service. A new governance model will have been introduced and new community representatives will have a say in decision-making. Our relationships with a wide range of communities across the county will be continuing. We will be working with them to deliver high-quality and meaningful co-developed projects to address contemporary issues and connect people to cultural and natural heritage of Herefordshire.

1. To involve people in our work and bring economic, social and wellbeing benefits to the county and region.

- We will have raised the profile of the service and forged links with a range of community partners including social care providers.
  - We will have reduced the barriers stopping people taking part and improved our programme of events, activities and exhibitions so that they benefit the local economy, support lifelong learning and improve people's wellbeing.
  - Engagement programmes will be more representative of the people of Herefordshire, showing a greater range of the collection and covering a broader range of themes and topics.
2. To be entrepreneurial and improve income generation, reduce costs and increase grant funding.
    - We will have diversified our income streams and increased the level of earned income across all sites.
    - We will have developed new fundraising and sponsorship streams that align with the council and service values.
    - Collaborative planning between service areas will be reducing operational costs and promoting financially and environmentally sustainable approaches to managing the service's venues and resources.
  3. To manage the collections and realise the potential of our venues as homes of world-class art, culture and heritage.
    - Collections care, display and access standards will have improved and Museum Accreditation will have been retained across all sites.
    - Our venues will be accessible to more people through physical improvements to buildings and intellectual improvements to digital, collections and on-site information.
    - Evaluation will be embedded throughout our work and used to create impactful and inclusive experiences, blend physical and digital engagement and improve permanent displays to ensure they are high quality, engaging and relevant.
  4. To increase our resilience and sustainability by improving governance, decision making and processes.
    - Community partners will have an active say in decision-making with new structures in place to allow them to do so.
    - We will have embedded participatory practice throughout our processes.
    - Our volunteering programme will be robust and support all areas of the service's work
    - We will be activity working with partners across the country to support our communities and schools to develop skills and provide opportunities for lifelong learning to a wide range of people.

## **10. Current Position**

We are part of Herefordshire Council's Community Wellbeing Directorate. This business plan has been developed in line with the council's plans and policies along with those of strategic organisations supporting culture, regeneration, tourism and wellbeing:



CULTURE	Let's Create Arts Council England	Herefordshire Cultural Strategy
REGENERATION	County Plan 2020-2024	Town Investment Plan Stronger Hereford
TOURISM	Herefordshire Sustainable Destination Management Plan	Hereford City & Rural Herefordshire Destination Management Plan
WELLBEING	Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Plan	Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Plan

Herefordshire is a beautiful, historic county located in the heart of the Marches on the border with Wales. We are one of the most rural and sparsely populated counties in England with a wealth of unspoilt countryside, distinctive heritage, and lively and attractive market towns. In recent years Herefordshire undergone a renaissance, with a growing cultural scene, wide range of things to do, and delicious food and drink offer there is a lot going on here when you scratch under the surface. The county has good rail and road links into Wales and the Midlands. Hereford is easily reach by car, bus and train from many major towns and cities including Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff amongst others.

However, Herefordshire is not without its problems, including:

- 40% of the population live in the most rural parts of the county
- A very high, and increasing, number of people aged 65 and over living in the county
- 38% of residents have at least one long term health condition
- Higher than average difficulty getting housing and accessing services
- Areas with high levels of deprivation in south Hereford, Leominster Bromyard and Ross-on-Wye
- Low wage levels of those in employment and fewer fulltime jobs than regionally and nationally
- A high number of children living in poverty in the county.

## **10.1. Key Strengths**

- A professional and committed staff across all roles in the service
- The redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery
- A committed group of volunteers in collections and front of house
- The Herefordshire Hoard and wide range of collections
- A strong tradition of creative community projects that engage different groups deeply with the stories and objects the museum holds.
- A close and mutually beneficial working relationship with Hereford College of Arts and a growing one with NMITE.
- There is a good deal of local support for the museum; a feeling that the redeveloped museum is a long time coming and will be a source of local pride and become a local cultural hub.

## **10.2. Areas of Weakness / For Development**

- The impact of the pandemic and condition of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery building limiting visitor numbers
- A greater focus on how all staff can contribute to generating additional income and the training and development this will require. Reductions to local government funding means the museum must generate more of its own income for future resilience small number of staff to deliver programme
- Governance of the service results in little buy-in from decision makers and strategic partners
- Embedding participatory practice across this service as well as into decision making.

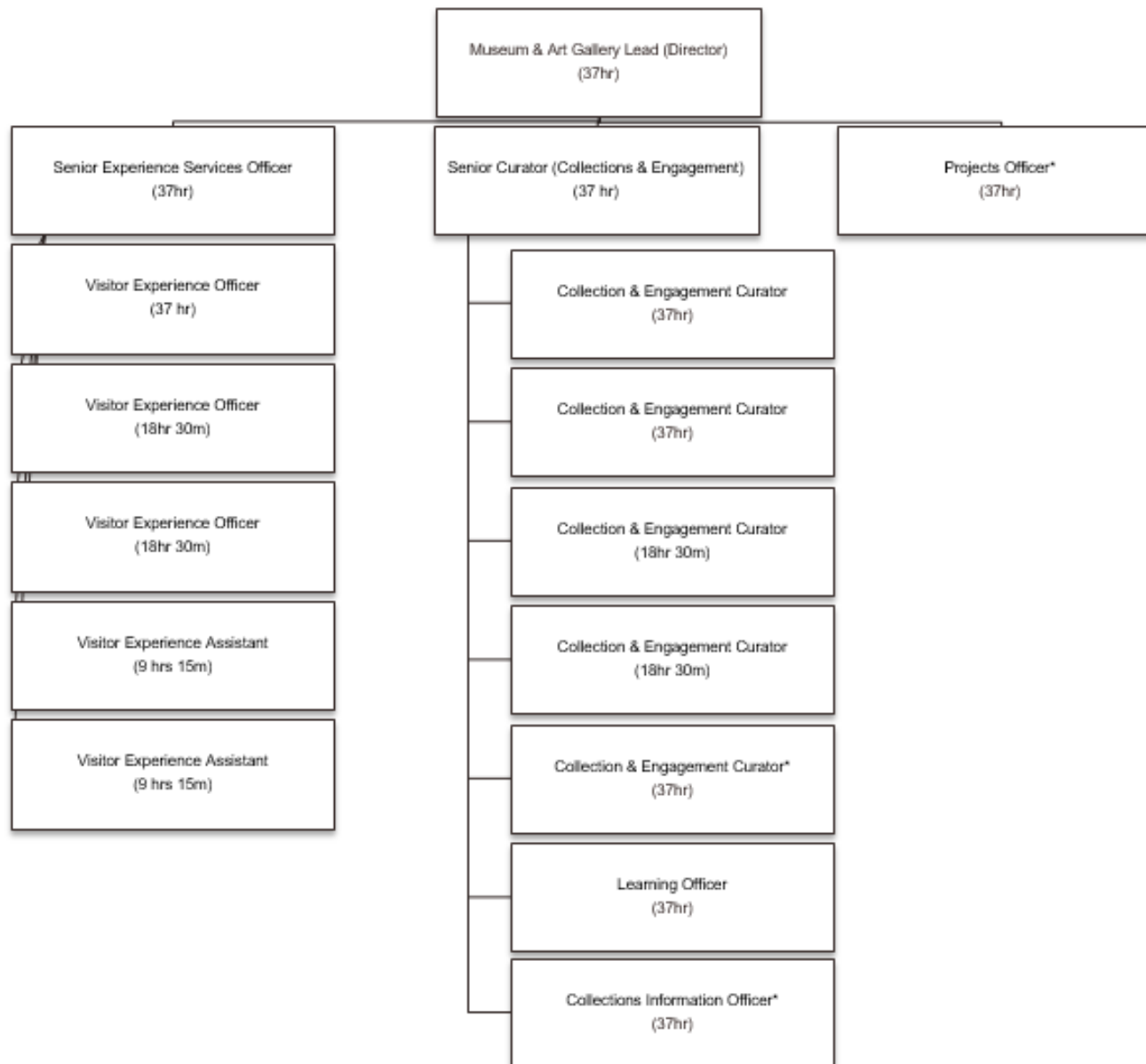
## **11. Resources**

### **11.1. Human**

Prior to the introduction of this business plan the service's staffing has undergone a fundamental reorganisation. The impetus for the reorganisation was the redevelopment of Herefordshire Museum and Art Gallery. This opportunity sets the stage for re-designing the museum service and for it to transition into a vibrant socially engaged service with a focused social purpose to improve the lives of the people and communities it serves.

For Herefordshire to be a centre of excellence in community-led programming and cultural engagement where diversity is celebrated, creativity fostered and curiosity sparked. To realise this ambition and deliver the redevelopment new staff structures were needed. The service will be increasing staffing levels over the duration of this business plan from 5.09FTE to 12.5FTE. This represents a significant investment in the service by the council.

The service's human resources, both paid and volunteer, are central to achieving the aims of this business plan. We are committed to continuing to develop our volunteer programme. We aim to increase the diversity of our volunteers and build connections with new groups and communities over and beyond the life of the business plan. We will regularly review staff structures and our volunteer offer and make improvements as necessary to help in the delivery of the service.



## **11.2. Physical**

The service benefits from a broad range of collections and venues with significant potential to help support delivery of our strategic priorities. We are committed to making incremental improvements to our facilities, displays and visibility of the museum from core budgets and in line with our equality and climate emergency ambitions.

The buildings are operated under a corporate landlord model by Herefordshire Council. They are regularly monitored with works logged through the council's reporting procedures. As with any historic buildings, issues arise which require action. The service is in a position to fundraise for projects that improve the fabric of the buildings in partnership with property services. This business plan includes actions to test and develop retail and catering opportunities, improve facilities for schools and upgrade the display and improve our public programmes as well as diversity income generation opportunities.

The service's identity is new and needs to evolve so that it is recognised across the region. The museum already has a presence on social media, which provides the museum with a good platform to engage with audiences. We are focused on developing a joined-up marketing strategy with colleagues to commercially promote the museum. The redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery gives us a strong platform from which to launch much of this work.

We are also keen to make improvements to our collections and the information we hold about them in partnership with volunteers and local people. We will work in partnership with Hoople colleagues to develop our IT infrastructure as part of the development plans

## **12. Audiences**

We recognise that understanding and growing our audiences is a key action for us. The general visitor trends to all of our venues have remained static or declined over the recent years. Over the course of this business plan we aim to increase the number of people visiting our sites, attending events and taking part in community programmes. The redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery will have a transformational impact on attendance figures and on activity around the county in communities. As our audiences increase it will become ever more importance to collect and analyse visitor data to create programmes that are of interest to people and deliver the on the service's priorities.

### **12.1. Target Audiences**

Over the course of this business plan we will develop an improved understanding of our visitors throughout the duration of this business plan by accurately counting and recording visitors to our venues, taking part in events, collecting postcodes, using evaluation forms for exhibitions, events and learning sessions. We will also work with evaluation specialists on externally-funded projects. Our audience segmentation recognises that to effectively serve our communities requires a range of programmes, exhibitions and activities. Our target audiences have been developed by evaluating existing audience data and work undertaken in the development phase of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery redevelopment projects. We have also used Audience Segments, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's Covid Audience Mindsets and Digital Visitor's New COVID Consumer Segments to understand our audiences and the effect of the pandemic on their behaviours.

#### *Core Audiences*

- Culturally keen adults
- Tourists & day-trippers
  
- Primary Schools

#### *Developmental Audiences*

- Families with young children
- Young people (16-24), including disadvantaged young people
- People living with dementia and their carers
- Higher and Further education students
- People living in rural isolation
- People with additional needs
- Lifelong learners

### **13. Finance**

The service is not immune to the ongoing pressure on Local Government budgets. We are very mindful of this and are committed to supporting the council by generating more earned income where possible. As such the service has engaged proactively with how it can support future budget challenges while retaining ambitious plans. There can be no guarantee that future budget pressures will not impact on service delivery. The service will work to increase income generation and sustainability to grow to deliver the priorities in this business plan. The service's budget will be confirmed annually through the council's budget setting process.

#### **13.1. Financial Management**

Herefordshire Council has robust systems and controls for monitoring the movement of monies through internal processes and external audits. A summary of the income and expenditure is reported annually and published with the council's accounts.

#### **13.2. Income Generation, Fees and Charges**

The service's schedule of fees and charges is reviewed annually as part of the council's budget setting process and updated accordingly. The business plan includes actions to increase spend per visitor and develop new income streams with the aim of improving the level of revenue generated.

### **14. Risk Analysis**

The aims of this business plan will be achieved through the identification, evaluation, monitoring of risks across all processes. The responsibility to manage risk rests with all officers and elected members, the risks to the services will be reviewed and updated annually.

	Very Low 1	Low 2	Medium 3	High 4	Very High 5
Probability	<10%	10 - 25%	25 - 50%	50 - 75%	>75%
Impact	Minimal No interruption to service delivery	Minor Temporary disruption to service delivery	Significant Interruption to part of the service	Severe Full interruption to service delivery	Catastrophic Complete service failure

Minimum Score = 1  
Maximum Score = 25

Low Risk = 1-4

Medium Risk = 5-11

High Risk = 12-25

No	Risk	Consequence	Control	Risk Level	Change
1.	Unable to implement proposed governance changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in funding opportunities from strategic funders</li> <li>Representation gap is perpetuated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency in governance discussions</li> <li>Effective communications around changes</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> Very High (P) Severe (I)	New
2.	Funding for the service reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency in budget setting and management process</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> Medium (P) Severe (I)	New
3.	Unforeseen problems occur which require financial input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in service</li> <li>Cessation of service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular engagement with property services.</li> <li>Regular inspection and maintenance regime</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> Medium (P) Severe (I)	New
4.	Natural or other disaster affecting the service buildings and/or collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary disruption to service</li> <li>Complete service failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaster Recovery Plan is in place outlining all the actions to be undertaken in case of emergencies occurring.</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> Medium (P) Catastrophic (I)	New
5.	Revenue income lower than anticipated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget does not balance</li> <li>Decrease in service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidate existing provision.</li> <li>Review costs and charges</li> <li>Identify income generating opportunities</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b> Medium (P) Minor (I)	New
6.	Loss of key members of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary disruption to service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation and recording procedures in place</li> <li>Handover periods agreed</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b> Medium (P) Low (I)	New

No	Risk	Consequence	Control	Risk Level	Change
7.	Failure to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, volunteers and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary disruption to service</li> <li>• Complete service failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All statutory H&amp;S legislation followed</li> <li>• Comprehensive Insurances is in place</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b> Low (P) Catastrophic (I)	New
8.	Loss or damage to the collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary disruption to service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation and recording procedures in place</li> <li>• Handover periods agreed</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b> Medium (P) Low (I)	New

### 15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The service recognises the performance and achievements of its staff is best supported by encouraging reflective practice and evaluation. Regular staff reviews will identify individual and team development needs to deliver this plan in line with the council's HR policies. The Museum and Art Gallery Lead is responsible for the delivery of this business plan. Annual audits and internal reviews are carried out across the service, as part of the council's corporate practice. We will measure our performance against the objectives of this business plan and meeting our Key Performance Indicators.