



**Report to: Joint Museums Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Report of: Museums Learning Manager**

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**Subject: SOCIAL IMPACT DEVELOPMENT WORK**

**1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 **That the Joint Committee note the progress in developing programmes that support the health and wellbeing needs in local communities.**

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Museums Worcestershire has a track record of providing high quality programming for its communities that makes a real difference. Historically, this has focussed on outreach or project work. The learning team are looking to extend and embed the benefits achieved so far into museum core programming. This will strengthen our sites as community assets making social impact, in particular at the County Museum.
- 2.2 At the Joint Museums Committee in March 2021 a new performance indicator was adopted to measure improvement in wellbeing for museum visitors and participants. This wellbeing PI had been trialled through the Volunteers at Home programme and the Creative Wellbeing programme during lockdown. Since being adopted, participants taking part in activities with measured sessions have seen an average of 13% improved wellbeing in 2021-22 quarter one, and 17% increase in quarter two.
- 2.3 While we have been able to evidence improvement in wellbeing just from a normal museum visit, areas of programming working with specific participants have demonstrated deeper social impact:

**Suitcase Stories:** The third iteration of this county-wide programme using museum objects to spark reminiscence for those living with dementia and their carers, took place over 2021. This project was adjusted from previous iterations in order to deliver flexibly both during and after lockdown and has generated new learning for museums. Linking nine schools and nine care homes, Suitcase Stories 3 worked with students in Worcestershire to create drama performances inspired by the memories of people living with dementia in Worcestershire care homes. This work improved the wellbeing of care home residents and developed the skills of care home staff, educated school children about dementia, museums and drama. The evaluation from this work will be used to shape future onsite dementia programming.

**Volunteers:** Museums Worcestershire has an established reputation for providing meaningful volunteer opportunities. Work over the past three years has strengthened this programme, developing new policies and procedures, creating new work experience resources for young people, and enabling volunteers to take part from home during lockdown. Our volunteers show improved confidence and connections with other people, as well as the learning of new skills.

**Make Time:** Funded by the Cultural Recovery Fund, in July 2021 the County Museum trialled an informal community drop-in programme to offer opportunities for local people to connect through our museum and use creativity to spark conversation. We've seen the impacts for participants of improved confidence and connections with others.

**Holiday Activities and Food programme:** The Commandery was funded by Worcestershire Children First to run a summer programme for children and young people eligible for free school meals and offered 360 places for the local area. This was successfully delivered with excellent feedback from participants.

### 3 **Information**

3.1 Utilising the knowledge, expertise and evaluation data from the work completed so far, Museums Worcestershire will use secured Culture Recovery Funding and programme funding over the next 12 months to trial how community programmes could evolve from project-funded temporary offers into longer term, commission-ready programmes.

3.2 **County Museum:** From November 2021 through to September 2022, we will focus on trialling three programmes where the sensory experience of museum objects is used to improve health:

- **Informal community offer:** with a focus on improving loneliness and isolation, we will continue to trial Make Time to inform funding models and improve links to the social prescribing network.
- **On site dementia programme:** we will utilise knowledge gained from our Suitcase Stories outreach programme and our partnership network to trial onsite programming for people living with dementia both in early onset and later stages.
- **Learning disabilities programme:** working with SpeakEasy NOW's user-led forum, we will share the stories and learning team expertise in a consultation exercise to see how we can support people with learning disabilities in Worcestershire through the County Museum.

3.3 **City Museums:** From November 2021 we will also look at the social impact of:

- **Holiday Activities and Food programme:** We have been successful in our funding request to run this for 180 children and young people over Christmas. We will evaluate the programme's impact in order to develop the long-term possibilities of this work for future funding models.
- **Embedded early years offer:** At the Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum we are working with the Early Years and Childcare Strategic Manager at Worcestershire County Council to trial a new programme of activity that addresses the County's specific needs of young children and their parents.
- **Sight Concern:** Development and evaluation of a year-long programme to develop resources and workshops for visually-impaired local people.

3.4 **Skills programmes:** All sites will support research into:

- An assessment of need and opportunities to develop learning and work experience programmes provide training, skills development and apprenticeships.
- Training and developing our volunteer roles, with new opportunities and further evaluation of benefits for participants.

3.5 This phase of research and development will collate data and evaluation as well as extend to a wider network of partnerships. This will inform business planning to seek funding models for the museums to integrate social impact for our communities into the core service long-term. Business models for this work will form part of the options planning for County Museum development to be considered by the committee at upcoming meetings.

**Ward(s):** All wards  
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**Background Papers:** none