

Report to: Joint Museums Committee, 15th June 2023

Report of: Museums Manager

Subject: MUSEUMS WORCESTERSHIRE ANNUAL REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE IN 2022-23

1. Recommendation

That the Joint Committee

- 1.1 approves the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2022-23; and**
- 1.2 note the information provided regarding performance in 2022-23 compared to previous years.**

2. Background

- 2.1 The Joint Museums Service Agreement requires the presentation of an annual report or review to the Joint Committee at its annual meeting. The proposed Annual Review for 2022-23 is appended to this report as an appendix.
- 2.2 The appended summary of annual performance indicators also gives an account of progress in delivering the work programme against service priorities and targets throughout. This performance data is used by Museums Worcestershire's management team to shape the priorities of upcoming work.

3. Information

- 3.1 The intention is to circulate the Annual Review to the key partners and stakeholders, as well as publishing the review, along with a text-only version for those who prefer it, on the museum service's website www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk. The report will also be circulated to all City and County Councillors.
- 3.2 Some of the key points on performance in 2022-23 to note are:
 - Recovery across the heritage and cultural sector is bouncing back but performance at the Association of Leading Attractions (ALVA) sites shows visitor footfall is still on average 23% lower than in 2019. Audience Agency research this spring found that a third of cultural visitors are attending less than they did before the pandemic, with 60% saying that the cost-of-living increases are reducing their ability to attend cultural offerings. Worcestershire's museums visitor numbers do vary year-on-year depending on the event and exhibition programmes and the level of publicity, but in 22-23 they were 10% up on 2018-19 and 2% up on 2019-20 suggesting that our sites are performing better than the sector as a whole.

As a result, the economic impact of our museums for the local economy has increased from previous years, up nearly £0.5million to £2.4million.

- We continue to learn more about schools' ability to support educational visits and what they most want out of their museums. At the Art Gallery & Museum we have supported schools enjoying self-led visits to the exhibitions this year. Last year we trialled sessions for early years children which were very successful, but these settings do not have budget to continue unless externally funded. These findings are helping us shape the learning offer for the future.
Young people are always the hardest demographic to attract into museums, but our survey during the Canaletto exhibition has given us additional information to support that work.
- This was the second year where we regularly surveyed visitors and event participants using the UCL wellbeing framework to assess the health impact of a museum visit. We use this to support the development of our sessions. In 2021-22 our sessions saw a 14% average increase in positive mental wellbeing, and this increased in 22-23 to a 22% increase.

3.3 Visitor comments continue to be overwhelmingly positive. These are collated regularly and reviewed by the museum management team, feeding into forward planning. The below from Commandery visitors show the success of the increased interpretation added over the last five years:

20/10/2022 – Mightily impressive glimpse into the past thoroughly enjoyed myself, Thank you

15/10/2022 – It was and extremely interesting experience my husband and I enjoyed all the history of the building

03/11/2022 – A wonderful place full of history, I'm from Worcester and had never been before, I was with my partner and his mother. Thank you for keeping a beautiful place still alive.

08/11/2022 – Fantastic. Superb explanations everywhere. Incredible building itself. 2nd visit and will return. So much to see, plenty of information. 5 star!!

16/11/2022 – Very good. Very good wheelchair access.

09/12/2022 – Great! Haven't been since the revamp, love all the new room set ups.

21/02/2023 – It was very enjoyable learning about the history of Worcester and I would like to come again soon.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

Activity highlighted within the Annual Review 2022-23 was funded from the annual agreed core budget alongside £284k of earned income and £158k of work that was externally funded.

4.2 Legal and Governance Implications

There are no legal and governance implications to this report.

- 4.3 Risk Implications
Risks of Museums Worcestershire's work are assessed and monitored using both authorities' risk management procedures and systems.
- 4.4 Corporate/Policy Implications
There are no corporate or policy implications to this report.
- 4.5 Equality Implications
There are no identified equality implications to this report.
- 4.6 Human Resources Implications
There are no human resources implications to this report.
- 4.7 Health and Safety Implications
There are no health and safety implications to this report.
- 4.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications
There are no negative social, environmental and economic implications to the highlighted work. The Annual Review 2022-23 contains information on positive impacts of museums' work.

Ward(s): All wards
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Background papers: Appendix 1: Draft 22-23 Annual Review
Appendix 2: Performance 2022-23