

**Report to: Joint Museums Committee, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Report of: Museums Manager**

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**Subject: 2023-24 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE**

## **1. Recommendation**

**1.1 The Museums Manager recommends that the performance information for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2023-24 be noted.**

## **2. Background**

2.1 The appended summary of performance indicators gives an account of progress in delivering the work programme against targets in the period April-June 2023 in comparison to previous years. Additional recent narrative feedback from visitors to The Commandery is provided for committee members to support understanding of the quality of the service's performance.

## **3. Information**

3.1 Overall, all sites and all activities continue to perform at pre-Covid levels. It's extremely positive that there is continued growth in the performance activities that support engagement. This reflects ongoing evaluation and improvement of the offer by all teams.

3.2 Income performance remains in line or above inflation levels, reflecting all staff embracing the priority of earning income as part of the service's work. There are some signs of the impact on visitors of the wider increased cost of living, but it's clear that visitors are still prioritising quality social visits within their budget.

3.3 Both visitors and income did dip against targets in May with retail and bookable events particularly not performing to target. However, Q2 performance was strong, so May's hot weather and the additional bank holiday is considered to be the main reasons for this performance decrease. The service will continue to keep costs and uptake of charged activities under close review.

3.4 Benchmarking performance continues to be a challenge, particularly at a quarterly level. The extent and speed with which Worcester puts its museum service performance in the public domain is now extremely unusual, but rightly reflects the pride the Councils have in its performance. Over the next year, museum staff aim to identify some benchmark close comparators and broker information sharing partnerships. Even if this comparative data is considered to have commercial sensitivity, it will be useful for staff to use internally to better understand the service's position.

3.5 The service's annual work plan, approved by this committee at the March 2023 meeting, is all on track. Information regarding the actions in Q1 is below:

<p>Undertake a series of events and programming across sites celebrating the King's Coronation</p>	<p>Both the County Museum and The Commandery used the May Bank Holiday Mondays to celebrate the Kings Coronation with visitors.</p> <p>On the 8<sup>th</sup> May, visitors to the County Museum enjoyed falconry displays and royal activities for families.</p> <p>On May 29<sup>th</sup>, visitors to The Commandery celebrated Oak Apple Day (the restoration to the Crown of Charles II), along with a celebration of the coronation of Charles III.</p> <p>The service promoted its volunteering opportunities with a widely shared film, connecting to the national Big Help Out campaign.</p>
<p>Support Military Museum trusts on the redevelopment of the Worcestershire Soldier display, at The Commandery</p>	<p>The Mercian Regiment (Worcestershire) Museum Trust submitted an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in early July, with Museums Worcestershire and the Worcestershire Yeomanry Museum Trust as partners.</p> <p>This included a learning strategy and compilation of visitor comments, surveys and focus groups, as well as an exhibition plan. A decision is expected in December.</p>
<p>Work with the County's Property team to present options following the ends of lease for both the Collections Centre Store and the County Museum.</p>	<p>A working group undertook the investigation stage of work.</p> <p>Due diligence showed that continuing at the current Collections Centre Store was the most efficient solution, with opportunities to link this more closely with the Tickenhill Collection Trust.</p> <p>The Joint Museums Committee reviewed the options for the County Museum at their last meeting, and this is on the Cabinet agenda in October.</p>
<p>Introduce bespoke merchandise lines at Worcester Art Gallery &amp; Museum</p>	<p>Several lines featuring Worcester's most popular painting <i>Chadding on Mounts Bay</i> by Stanhope Forbes, were launched in the summer, with jigsaws particularly good performers. Additional bespoke lines will be featured at Christmas.</p>

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**Supporting Documents:**

**Appendix: PIs Summary Q1 2023-24**