

## Leeds Museums & Galleries Strategy 2022-27

Date: 16 March 2022

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### What is this report about?

- This report relates to the new Leeds Museums & Galleries (LMG) Strategy, *Deepening Connections, Widening Impact*, which covers the period 2022-27.
- The aim of the strategy is to set out a vision for LMG. This vision is articulated via six key outcomes, with six objectives per outcome. Once approved, delivery will be via service-wide, site, and team plans.
- LMG manages nine sites in and around Leeds with a collection of some 1.3 million objects. It is the largest local authority run collection outside of London with four designated collections of national significance: decorative art, fine art, natural sciences, and industrial collections. Pre-Covid the nine venues (Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds City Museum, Leeds Discovery Centre, Leeds Industrial Museum, Thwaite Watermill, Kirkstall Abbey, Abbey House Museum, Lotherton Hall, and Temple Newsam House) welcomed almost 1.7 million visitors and over 49,000 schoolchildren. The service's websites attract over 3.5 million page views per annum, and LMG have 300,000 followers on social media. The service contributes at least £24 million a year to the local economy.
- The strategy focuses on how these sites and collections will be managed in order to support the Best City Ambition as well as Leeds City Council Culture Strategy, Let's Create, Arts Council England (ACE)'s 10-year strategy. As a Band 3 National Portfolio Organisation, LMG currently receives £1.6million from ACE and a clear strategy is crucial to safeguard that funding particularly as LMG applies for another 3-year period in April 2022.
- LMG has built a strong reputation in the museums sector as a leader particularly in cultural learning, socially-engaged practice, and environmental sustainability. This new strategy seeks to deepen and diversify existing areas of excellence while widening the impact of LMG's work across all communities in Leeds, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- The strategy is the result of consultation with staff and key stakeholders, including the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education, over a six-month period.

## Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The draft Best City Ambition and Leeds City Council Culture Strategy were key documents in forming the new LMG strategy.
- The strategy opens with an articulation of the service's commitment to caring for the city through its work with people and collections, and as a compassionate, committed member of Team Leeds.
- The values of the council were also very much at the forefront of the development of the strategy, with Working with communities, Treating people fairly, and Spending money wisely relating directly to the priorities set out in it.
- *Deepening Connections, Widening Impact* supports the City's ambition to tackle poverty and reduce inequality through the pillars of inclusive economic growth and being a net carbon zero city by 2030 especially in Outcome 1 ('We will be more sustainable and responsible financially and environmentally') and Outcome 3 ('We will continue to be a leader in collaborative, sustainable, accessible cultural learning and creative skills development'). The third pillar, on health and wellbeing, is supported across all six outcomes, particularly in Outcome 2 ('We will provide higher quality audience engagement and experiences, both physically and digitally').
- As a result, we believe that the implementation of the strategy and continuing investment in the service will make a significant contribution to delivering on the emerging Best City Ambition.

## Recommendations

- It is requested that Executive Board approve the new Leeds Museums & Galleries Strategy and delegate responsibility for implementation of the strategy via the Director of City Development to the Head of Service, Leeds Museums & Galleries, from March 2022.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. Leeds' has one of the largest culture services in the UK. This is testament to the Council's commitment to culture and its understanding of cultural value. As a key part of our cultural offer, Leeds Museums & Galleries manage nine sites in and around Leeds, showcasing the civic collection of 1.3 million objects (including four collections designated as being of national significance) and iconic historic sites such as Kirkstall Abbey, Thwaite Watermill, Temple Newsam House, and Lotherton Hall. These sites welcome almost 1.7 million visitors and over 49,000 schoolchildren annually.<sup>1</sup>
2. There are multiple benefits to having a flourishing museum offer in the city. The use of museum collections in cultural learning (through schools programmes or less formally through exhibitions) is proven to improve life chances, heritage sites and collections have been shown to promote placemaking and community cohesion, and extensive research has pointed to the health and wellbeing benefits of museum visitation. Through learning, direct

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<sup>1</sup> 2019-20

and indirect employment (196 staff and 90 external support jobs (£2.9m) + 11,000 volunteer hours), and as driver for tourism and inward investment, Leeds Museums & Galleries generates at least £24 million for the Leeds economy, £1 for every £4 invested by the city.

3. The aim of the Leeds Museums & Galleries Strategy is to set out a vision for the Service over the next 5 years. Once approved, it will be delivered via a service-wide action plan, site plans, and team plans.
4. This vision is articulated via six key outcomes, with six objectives per outcome. There are outcomes about financial and environmental sustainability, audience experience and engagement, learning, the use and management of collections and heritage assets, diversity, and international working.
5. By producing and implementing the strategy, we believe the Museums & Galleries service will be better able to manage its resources for maximum public benefit, and to secure funding for its work from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation.
6. The strategy will contribute to the delivery of the *Best Council Ambition* and is consistent with (and supportive of) other council strategies and plans such as *Leeds Culture Strategy*, Leeds City Council People Strategy (2020-25) and Arts Council England's 10-year strategy, *Let's Create*.
7. The strategy will also equip the service to fully participate in our year of culture, LEEDS 2023, and to play a key role in the legacy of 2023.

#### What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards Affected:**

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

8. The Museums & Galleries service contributes to the council strategies of Inclusive Growth (visitor attraction, education and skills development), Health and Wellbeing (community engagement etc.) and Climate Emergency (sustainability work).
9. For example, the service's Careers for All programme empowers and equips young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with the confidence and skills to enter the workplace despite the multiple barriers they typically face. Community groups such as the Preservative Party (a young curators' group for 14-24 year olds) and the 1152 club (for older residents in the Kirkstall area) improve mental health and wellbeing for these individuals as well as the 330 local volunteers who work with the service, and LMG's innovative climate action and sustainability work impacts across the Council and is lauded by the sector.
10. In 2021, The Preservative Party was awarded joint winners of the Marsh Award for Volunteering for the Yorkshire Region - [Young curators make history with another top award win \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#) and in the same year the LMG's Learning Team won the Museum & Heritage Award (for the third year running) for their work assisting local schoolteachers – particularly those in areas of multiple deprivation - in the Recovery Curriculum.

11. The service's strategy will also impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues. In particular, Outcome 3 on cultural learning aims to bring about greater equality of opportunity to widen the benefits of cultural learning. Outcome 4 on diversity of audiences and the LMG workforce is intended to positively impact on access to opportunities for those who currently experience multiple barriers. An ECDI screening form is included in Appendix

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

12. Consultation has taken place over six months with staff and key stakeholders, including the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education.

13. Key stakeholders included Arts Council England, Leeds 2023, Leeds Art Fund, Culture 24, the Henry Moore Foundation, as well as heads of service in Culture & Economy team, and the Chief Officer for Parks & Countryside.

14. Six working groups made up of LMG staff and other colleagues from across the Council were set up to develop each of the outcomes.

15. Drafts of the strategy were then sent to staff and key stakeholders for comment.

### **What are the resource implications?**

16. This strategy will ensure LMG is well placed to retain its National Portfolio Organisation status (and the £1.6million annually) from Arts Council England when it reappplies in April 2022.

17. The strategy will also allow decisions to be made on the allocation of resources across the service, but particularly in relation to financial and environmental sustainability (outcome 1). Better reporting will allow the service to make more informed decisions about how it uses key resources such as staff time and funding.

18. The service will continue to explore opportunities for LMG to generate funds to help achieve the aims of the strategy through enterprises such as shops, cafés, commercial events and sponsorship (whilst being mindful of the other priorities set out in the strategy). A key piece of work in this regard will be the commissioning of a commercial strategy in spring 2022.

19. As a key part of the strategy, the fundraising potential of the service will be transformed by the proposal to set up a development foundation (subject to separate approval), both through applications for large capital projects and through individual giving.

### **What are the legal implications?**

20. There are no legal implications arising from the adoption of this strategy.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

21. There is a risk that the strategy does not appeal to funders. Way of managing: consultation has already taken place with Arts Council England

22. There is also a risk that the strategy is not 'owned' by those implementing it. Way of managing: staff have been closely involved in creating the strategy and will be consulted extensively in drawing-up implementation plans.
23. There is a risk that the strategy is not financially sustainable. Way of managing: close attention has been paid to financial sustainability (Outcome 1) and a commercial strategy is being commissioned in February 2022 to create an action plan.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

24. Yes, the strategy does support the 3 key pillars.

#### 25. Inclusive Growth

26. The strategy contains several elements that will contribute to the council's inclusive growth priority.

27. The service's nine sites provide direct employment for 196 (FTE) staff and at least £24 million for the local economy, with plans in the strategy to build on and improve this position. Added to this, the service's commitment to diversity in its workforce and in audiences and users mean that this form of growth will be inclusive.

28. Museums & Galleries Service is supported by hundreds of volunteers each year (in a range of community programmes and through our Friends organisation) many of whom gain valuable skills and work experience which can help them into work and better jobs. The strategy proposes that the service continues to prioritise 'working with communities' in this way.

29. By being more internationally facing, the service intends to increase the City's profile through its cultural assets which, in turn, will drive more footfall and investment to Leeds.

30. The killing of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020 and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on black and ethnic minority people, have intensified LMG and Leeds City Council efforts to take further action to oppose racism (historic and present day) in all its forms and ensure that our practise truly reflects the diversity of the society we serve.

31. The strategy includes a proposal to set up a development foundation to increase fundraising for capital projects which will in turn be invested in local people and local facilities.

#### 32. Health and Wellbeing

33. As outlined in the strategy document, there is now a great deal of evidence showing that museum visitation and cultural learning has considerable benefits for peoples' mental and physical health.

34. During the Covid-19 pandemic, LMG continued to engage individuals and groups checking in on some of the most vulnerable people in our communities during a period of disconnection.

35. With the exception of our city centre sites, all others (such as Temple Newsam, Kirkstall Abbey, Leeds Industrial Museum, Thwaite Watermill, and Lotherton) have green spaces which became havens for people during lockdowns and have continued to be popular as restrictions ease.
36. As a result, we believe that the Museums & Galleries service can make a significant contribution to the council's aim of 'supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles'.
37. Climate Emergency
38. The museum service has and will continue to play a key role in influencing behaviour change in response to the climate emergency.
39. The service will diversify its work in improving its own environmental sustainability through a variety of green initiatives as well as better reporting, and play a regional and national role in advising on this for the museums sector.
40. The strategy identifies engaging audiences and using collections in an educational role to inspire and support behaviour change to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

41. The option of continuing to implement the current strategy was considered but dismissed because it is out of date, for example, in terms of the Best City Plan (now Best City Ambition) and Arts Council England's Let's Create Strategy.
42. The option of not having a plan was also dismissed since the clarity and confidence it provides is essential to make best use of limited resources and to attract funding from existing and potential funders.
43. In terms of options for direction, the strategy is the result of a process where a large number of other possibilities were considered and then refined to produce six outcomes.

### **How will success be measured?**

44. The strategy is intended to realise the service's vision 'to create deeper connections with the people we serve using the collections and sites we care for, and to widen our impact on the world'.
45. The realisation of this single vision will be through six outcomes, each with its own measures of success (expressed as key performance indicators in the implementation plans).
46. Overall, the service will undertake research to track whether it is achieving its overarching ambition of deepening connections with its users, and widening its impact.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

47. The planned timetable is outlined below:

16 March 2022: Executive Board  
1 April 2022: Design strategy document  
15 April 2022: Submit strategy to ACE as part of NPO application  
1 June 2022: Public launch of strategy  
2022 – 2027: Implementation of the strategy

## **Appendices**

48. Appendix 1 - LMG Strategy 2022-27

49. Appendix 2 – EDCI screening form

## **Background Documents**

50. None.