

Appendix E

Outcome of staff consultation on proposal for the relocation of the museum exhibitions to Bromley Central Library

For consideration by the Executive on 10th June 2015.

The purpose of this document is to set out the staff response to the consultation on the proposal to relocate the museum exhibitions to Bromley Central Library, as detailed within the main body of this Committee Report.

Trade Union and Departmental Representatives Consultation

No comments were received from the Trade Unions or the Departmental Representatives.

On 29th January 2015 the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee considered the report 'A New Approach for Bromley Museum' which recommended that:

- The Priory Museum was declared surplus to operational requirements with effect from 1 April 2015 and authority was given to offer the property for sale on the open market.
- The Executive commented on the outcome of consultation at the 11th February 2015 meeting of the Executive; and that subject to any issues that may have arisen during consultation endorsed the proposal to close the museum service.
- The Executive approve the allocation of £395k from capital receipts for the relocation of exhibitions, and to add the scheme to the capital programme.

The Committee Report, A New Approach for Bromley Museum was scheduled to be considered by the Executive on the 11th February 2015, but was withdrawn, and officers were instructed to undertake further work and consultation with the community to inform the recommendations on the future of the museum and the Priory.

This Committee Report, Bromley Museum, and the Priory Orpington, is a revised version of the Committee Report withdrawn in February. The recommendations, although rephrased remain: the cessation of the museum service at the Priory; the disposal of the building subject to further investigation; and the allocation of £395k for the installation of new exhibitions in Central Library and associated activity.

Background

The museum service has been identified as a budget cut for 2015/16 in the 14 January 2015 Executive Committee report, as part of the £60million savings that are required to be made within the next four years.

Bromley Council's recent 'Our Budget, Your Views' survey has shown the museum service to be the lowest priority for residents in the context of all other culture, leisure, arts and sport services the Council provides. Heritage and arts is considered to be a higher priority.

These survey findings corroborate with previous consultation results from 2013, which showed that residents consider the current museum service to be weak, but value the borough's heritage and want to have access to related learning and participation opportunities.

Staff consultation

Formal consultation with affected staff and their representatives commenced on 9th January 2015 and ended on 9th February 2015 (noting that further consultation took place between Officers and one member of staff in respect to the staff proposal for the Bromley Museum Education Service as detailed further below).

The affected staff had a formal consultation meeting with the Head of Cultural Business Development, the Community Development Manager and with Human Resources in respect to the Council's proposals. Staff and their representatives, were informed of the consultation process, the proposals as detailed within the Committee Report and the consultation document, the proposed timetable, and staff were encouraged to respond to the consultation document.

There were a number of questions and that came out of the staff discussions at these meetings and these are listed below with management's response. It should be noted that these responses were prepared assuming that the Committee Report would be considered by the Executive on 11th February.

Question:- Why is the school petition being considered on 23 Feb after the Executive consider the Report on 11 Feb?

Management response:- There is a specific procedure for considering the petitions and the timetable for that means it will be considered on 23 Feb when the presenter of the petition is allowed to present and speak to Full Council.

Members of the Executive have been made aware of the petition including Cllr Huntington-Thresher who spoke at the R and R PDS meeting. There were also a significant number of other public questions concerning the proposal for the museum service that were heard at the PDS Committee and additional time was allowed (15 minutes increased to 30) for the questions to be raised and responses received.

Question:- What happens after 31 March?

Management response:- This will depend upon the outcome of the Executive Committee meeting on 11th Feb and the detail of the recommendations that are made. If the decision is to close the Museum the process of closing the

museum down will commence after the decision is ratified, and the process of developing the new exhibitions at the Central Library will commence. In terms of the collections the process of rationalising, and digitising will be undertaken.

Question:- What will happen to the staff?

Management response:- If the recommendations of the report are endorsed, then the two members of staff will be notified of the decision and the process in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Procedure will be followed including identifying any suitable redeployment opportunities.

Question:- What will happen to the education boxes.

Management response:- They will be passed to local studies who may wish to utilise them, if they are surplus to their requirements they would be offered to schools.

Question:- What about education provision at Central library.

Management response:- There is no provision going forward for an Education Officer to work at the Library and no budget to support education staff. The Council will continue to explore zero cost options for education provision at the Library.

Question:- From April 1 will the Museum be 'mothballed'

Management response:- It will not be mothballed – there will be activity on the site in respect to the work required on the collection and ensuring the building is closed in an orderly manner. There will also after that date be security or 'green guardians' on site ensuring the building is not empty whilst Property consider the future options for the building.

Question:- Will this be done under English Heritage Guidelines.

Management response:- Yes Property have the guidelines.

Question:- Will there be monies set aside to allow for the historic and monetary value of the collections to be fully considered.

Management response:- Monies have been allowed to bring in suitable expertise to better understand the collection. It's not envisaged a large amount of the collection will be disposed of, but those items not relevant to Bromley may be.

Question:- What about the Squirt? (A very early example of a mobile firefighting appliance)

Management response:- As it is one of the museum's most interesting objects it is likely it would be part of the display in central library

Question:- Some local 'experts' have their own bias – this needs to be considered in future collection discussions.

Management response:- Noted, and Council will use experts such as Museum of London / LAARC

Question:- Concerns about how the human remains held at museum will be dealt with.

Management response:- LAARC has been in contact about the human remains and it may be that they are taken in to their care.

Question:- What the £115k was to be used for.

Management response: Officers will check the details and confirm. Following discussions Officers can confirm that the £115k is for one off specialist temporary resources required to rationalise the collection, close the existing museum and install new exhibitions in the Central Library. The types of roles it will pay for include an exhibition and graphic designer, specialist historical knowledge, specialist movers and handlers, and specialist project management expertise in implementing new exhibition spaces.

Question: - Will objects on display at Central Library be based on Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) submission proposals

Management response:- The HLF work will be used as a starting point, but there will also be public consultation

Question:- Section 3.20 of the Committee report, staff member does not agree with comments.

Management response: - These comments relate specifically to an individual staff member of staff and have now been dealt with separately.

Question:- What is the deadline for redundancies?

Management response:- Subject to the Executive's decision information about redundancy periods / timescales / process will be provided by HR.

Question:- What about Committee questions from public – there were a lot

Management response:- Additional time will be allowed at PDS (extended from 15 to 30 minutes)

At the end of the consultation meetings between officers and affected staff, the staff were advised by Officers that further consultation meetings could be arranged if requested by the staff. This was followed up by an email to both affected members of staff offering additional consultation meetings.

Proposal for Bromley Museum Education Service

In addition to the feedback received from staff at consultation meetings, Officers also received a proposal from one member of staff on the 9th February 2015 entitled 'A Future for Bromley Museum Education Service'. This proposal from the member of staff was to be considered as part of the Executive Committee on 11th February 2015, however the Committee Report and therefore the proposal, were not considered on that day.

Officers did not agree with the figures contained within the proposal from the member of staff and Officers subsequently met with the member of staff to agree the correct information, and explain Officer's methodology and

calculations. The member of staff acknowledged that their methodology had not taken into account all of the costings and that there were inaccuracies within the figures used in their proposal.

The member of staff subsequently provided an updated education proposal to Cllr Wells, who at the time was the Portfolio Holder for Education. The member of staff has however advised that the updated proposal as sent to Cllr Wells did not form part of the consultation process and therefore it is not detailed within this Appendix. The original proposal from a member of staff is included as part of this Appendix as below, as is the corrected version produced by officers.

The original proposal from a member of staff for a new education service for the Bromley Museum, requires a full time member of staff at an estimated cost to the Council of £18,000 in 2015 -16 and less in subsequent years. The proposal from a member of staff also provides an option for a part time member of staff at an estimated net cost to Bromley of £10,000 in year 1 reducing to £5,000 in year 3. There is no budget breakdown and very little detail of how the supporting figures are calculated within the proposal from a member of staff and as stated in the previous paragraph, Officers did not accept that the figures and methodology within the member of staff proposal were realistic.

Additionally staff were aware that any proposals needed to be developed on a full cost recovery basis if they were likely to receive Member approval as there is no budget provision for an education service going forwards, should the recommendations of the committee Report be agreed. Officers also believe there are significant risks associated with the delivery of the staff proposal as it is untested and it is predicated on significantly higher charges, and usage rates which staff have previously advised would be unachievable.

I would like to thank staff for their contribution to the consultation process during what is a very challenging time.

Colin Brand
Assistant Director, Culture

9th February 2015

A future for Bromley Museum Education Service

This submission is being made to the Executive Committee as part of the staff consultation – as advised by Bromley HR Department.

This report examines the value and financial viability of an education service post the closure of the Priory Museum and the move to Central Library.

We consider the following issues:

1. What is the current (museum) education service?
2. What is its value to schools and community groups?
3. Do the proposals currently before Council compensate for this loss of amenity?
4. Is an ongoing education service financially viable? *We are aware of the need to make savings.*

1. What is the current (museum) education service?

1) Schools

The museum has one full-time education officer who works with 82% of Bromley Borough primary schools. Numerically, in the current academic year we worked with 3140 pupils in the first school term and 1071 in the second school term. Annualised to include the third term, this equates to c5900 pupils. Term two figures are unnaturally low because the imminent museum closure has resulted in limitations placed on the number of appointments. As a figure to be used to predict potential audiences for the future it is a conservative number.

About two-thirds of the visits are outreach.

Typically an outreach school visit lasts up to 1½ hours for each class and a museum school visit 2½ hours – additional hands-on, topic related activities are offered. The session involves an object-focused talk on a national curriculum subject with the opportunity for pupils to handle the artefacts. National curriculum topics include: Pre-history, Romans, Saxons, Tudors, Victorians, WW1 and WW2.

Typically, an outreach session will involve 2-4 sessions with different classes. Schools visiting the museum mostly bring one class.

2) Other community groups

We also offer family activities during school holidays, reminiscence sessions in care homes, talks to local societies. This is largely undertaken by the education officer.

2. What is the value of this service to schools?

The value lies in the richness of the session: an opportunity for the children to handle objects in the context of a discussion about how they were used and what life was like at that time. There is always a local context and children

like this; for example they find it exciting that our woolly mammoth's tooth was found in Green Street Green.

Children engage with the sessions because they are interactive and fun. Teachers value the sessions because of the strong education element that aligns to the requirements of the national curriculum.

This is reflected in teacher evaluations which average 9.2 / 10. Object handling is not an experience the children can access easily and in-depth knowledge of the national curriculum topics is not generally available in schools.

The June 2013 HLF consultation report submitted by Bromley Council acknowledges teachers' appreciation:

'In every case the feedback from teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Teachers said the workshops were hands on, fun, well planned and educational. Teachers frequently said that the most important element of museum education was that it tied in with the curriculum and brought the subject teaching to life. Hands on explorer learning, especially activity that could not be recreated in the classroom, and having the subject expertise of the museum educator were also highlighted as being extremely important. Local understanding and information was consistently highlighted by teachers as something they wanted to see at the museum. The home educating parents felt particularly passionately about the museum's education service.'

It is worth mentioning that for many children whose parents do not or cannot afford to fill their weekends with visits to museums, this will be their only contact with artefacts and their historical context. The catchment for Poverest is in one of Bromley's poorer areas; here is a recent email from Poverest Primary School (Year 3, Anglo-Saxons workshop):

'It was a worthwhile experience, the practical experience really works with fantastic resources and well prepared. For the children, during the day, the Saxon toys was their favourite part but back at school they have not stopped making their friendship bracelets and some have even made their own at home which shows how successful the activities were. Thank you, Maggie for such an excellent well planned morning. I would recommend your workshop to other teachers. Many thanks!'

Arguably, the benefit is even greater for pupils who are that are not in mainstream education:

Two quotes from Marjorie McClure Specialist School:

'A fantastic, hands-on session that gave the children access to a wide variety of interesting artefacts, and the chance to participate in an interesting and relevant practical task. Really well delivered by Maggie at a pace that worked brilliantly for the children – I am bringing another class in March and a third in June and will really look forward to both sessions. Fantastic – thanks again Maggie.'

'The trip to the Museum was fantastic for our special needs students. I have even advised Kensington Palace to look at the day you offered - fun and

interactive! It was geared to the varying levels of students and they absolutely loved it.'

And a quote from a home-educated parent:

I just wanted to thank you for the fantastic home-ed museum sessions my daughter has just attended. The sessions were completely engaging and the hands-on activities were superb. We have been to many museum sessions over the years and these ones were by far the best. Please keep it up! Many thanks, Laura Wiebe

3. Do the proposals currently before Council compensate for this loss of amenity?

The proposal before Council is designed to give an opportunity for the 200,000 visitors to Central Library (each year) to engage with the John Lubbock collection and an exhibition populated with 10 artefacts drawn from the museum collection.

This is an exhibition, not an education service.

Teachers value the education service as it is now because it is highly involving experience that meets their national curriculum objectives. Outreach is popular because it relieves the teachers of the considerable effort of taking 32 highly-energised children half-way across the Borough – they mostly arrive by public transport as the cost of coaches is prohibitive. And where they do visit the museum it is a 2½ hour session – recompense for the stress of their journey!

The proposal offers none of this. It seems highly optimistic to think that schools will visit central library for a self-led exhibition. Indeed advice from Yvette Shepherd, Museum of London Development Officer working with local museums across London is that activities to give depth to the collection and bring the collection to life are required and this can only be done by people with knowledge and expertise.

Although it is not made explicit in the report before Council, the suggestion has been made that an education service could be managed by a mix of library staff and volunteers. Without a significant investment in qualified staff this is unrealistic. There are practical obstacles:

- 1) Staffing requirement: the Local Studies and Archives Library had 110 pupils visit in the last year (6 small classes). This clearly does not replicate the work of the full-time education officer.
- 2) Knowledge: the volume of preparation is more akin to a university module – swotting up for a couple of days before would be wholly inadequate.
- 3) Competency: teaching children is a skill, and a skill that needs to be flexible to different age groups
- 4) Commitment: volunteers mostly want to help, they do not want to make the commitment or take the responsibility of running a workshop session

4. Is an ongoing education service financially viable?

Of the other 31 London Boroughs, 28 have a local museum based education service. At the very high cost end is Croydon, where it would cost a school £267 for 3 outreach sessions across a day. The schools market is price sensitive and this is reflected in the numbers: the Croydon outreach service reaches just 1800 pupils a year. Kingston, by comparison, would charge £90 for 3 outreach classes. Bromley, at just £62 for 3 outreach sessions, is inexpensive.

Issue # 1: Can we put our prices up?

The answer is yes, but probably to £90 rather than £267. This is supported by a consultation undertaken with teachers for the HLF bid, which suggested that £3 per child was an acceptable price.

There will be some impact on numbers, certainly in the very short term: when Bromley first introduced charges for outreach about one-third of schools switched to the free in-museum service and there was an overall decline in numbers.

With a singular focus on building numbers and without the distractions of other museum activities, it is estimated that in the first year we could reach 5000 children with a £3 per head price charge, rising to 6000 in year two and 6500 in year three. This would produce a gross revenue of £15,000 in year one, 18,000 in year two and, with a small increase in cost, £20,000 in year three.

Issue # 2: What about non-school activities?

The museum runs a range of other 'educational' services that range from talks to local history societies, care home reminiscence sessions and quite extensive family activities during school holidays. These are charged for but in our experience it is unlikely that they could ever be self-funding and their continuation would require some form of subsidy for the 'public good'.

Issue # 3: Might external funding be available?

Though it would not be prudent to write it into the revenue stream, recent history suggests that a Bromley Council Education Service would be able to access financial support around specific projects. Here are some of the activities for which we have gained funding over the last few years:

Caring for the Casualties, Bromley's First World War HLF 2014-16

Renaissance London Learning Advisory Visits 2011-12

The Orpington Hospital History Project 2011

BBC Hands on History - 2011

Renaissance London - The Story of London Grants 2010

Renaissance London - Exploring 20th Century London 2010

Darwin at Downe - HLF 2009

Bromley's Hidden History - HLF 2007

Issue # 4: What would be the cost to Bromley?

The cost of a **full time education officer** including NI, pension etc is c £30,000 plus, say, £3000 for marketing, stationery and other activities. This would be mitigated by revenues from the service requiring an estimated contribution of £18,000 in 2015/16 and less in subsequent years. Is it ever likely to be 100% self-funding? Probably not, but this should be weighed

against the social and educational benefit to Bromley children and other citizens.

A **part-time education officer**, working only term times would deliver a saving of c 25% and, based on the estimate of 5000 pupils then this would come very close to being self-funded by year 3. Estimated net cost to Bromley is c£10,000 in year 1 falling to £5,000 by year 3.

A **contracted-out service** set up as a not-for-profit organisation. The burden would fall on the contractor to deliver the service to agreed standards and to make the service work financially. There would clearly have to be a conversation to consider whether a viable agreement could be reached but this would appear to align well with the Council's commitment to contracting out services. We would welcome that discussion.

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20th February 2015 – Officer's response to 'A future for Bromley Museum Education Service'

Museum education service

The museum education service was used in 2013/14 by groups from 44 schools across the borough, almost all Primary schools, who book sessions each year to engage children in local history and bring the national curriculum to life. These school groups really enjoy the sessions and their teachers are overwhelmingly positive about the service. This is in contrast to the museum service in general, which is considered unsatisfactory and is not a budget priority for Bromley residents.

The museum education service costs the Council £34k per annum. This figure comprises of staff costs at £31k, and materials and equipment at £3k. The museum's income from school education sessions in 2013/14 was approximately £2k.

- In 2013/14 groups of children, average size of group 42 pupils, from 44 Bromley schools and four other organisations including the Home Education Group, used the museum education service. There are 106 schools in the borough.
- Between them they took part in 113 museum education sessions. Of these, 70 sessions took place at the museum, and of these 15 sessions were with groups from Perry Hall School. The other 43 sessions were outreach sessions delivered at the schools. In total 4712 pupils attended sessions either at the museum or at school.
- Although less outreach sessions were delivered than museum based sessions, the outreach sessions attracted 27 of the schools and the museum based sessions attracted 25 of the schools. Some schools booked group sessions both at the museum and at school. The museum currently charges £31 to £46 for an outreach session, and sessions at the museum are free. Feedback from schools suggests these prices could be increased.

Budget and costed options appraisal

The museum services' budget is proposed to be cut as part of the Council's requirement to make £60 million revenue savings. Officer's recommendations in the recent museum report were made on the understanding that the budget would be cut. If a revenue budget was made available two possible options are as follows:

- Offer a full time museum education service at a cost of £19k per annum, plus up to an additional £15k dependent on income from schools.
- Offer a part time museum education service (40 weeks per year) at a cost of £12k per annum, plus up to an additional £15k dependent on income from schools.

However, there are independent operators who offer local history workshops to schools, which Bromley schools could book education sessions with, to provide their pupils with similar experiences. Therefore it may not be considered necessary for the Council to offer this service. Instead the Council could support the current Museum Education Officer in setting up an independent offer detached from the Council, by for example providing access to the handling collection through a license agreement.

This new offer would manage its own finances with no revenue from the Council. Given the Officer's contacts and experience, they would be in a strong position to attract school bookings within a competitive market place. This new independent

offer would be able to not only offer in-school outreach sessions but additionally book the small hall at Central Library to run sessions using the new museum exhibitions as a learning tool. The cost of booking the small hall would be £38 for two hours, and could be built in to their pricing structure.

