

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7TH JANUARY 2009

CLOSURE OF BROMSGROVE MUSEUM

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor
Responsible Head of Service	Phil Street
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On November 12th Council resolved to receive a report at its meeting in January on progress with the closure of the museum. This report is asking that the requested report containing the required details is delayed until February. This request is made owing to there being insufficient opportunity to establish the museum closure advisory group, complete the identification of the costs associated with closure and arranging the meeting with the Friends of the Norton Collection Charitable Trust.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Cabinet recommends that the report to Council on the closure of the museum be delayed until February 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on 12th November the Leader of Council stated that decisions to be taken with regard to the future of the Bromsgrove Museum would be taken by the Council in its capacity as Trustee whereas others would be taken in its capacity as Local Authority. In its role as Trustee the Council had a duty to act in the best interests of the Trust.
- 3.2 It was stated that Cabinet had considered a report on the Future of Bromsgrove Museum which contained five options These had been considered by the Cabinet. However, a further proposal had been received by officers from a newly constituted organisation called the Friends of the Norton Collection Charitable Trust. This proposed that the Council provide the Trust with the opportunity to purchase the Museum building at market value and that the Trust be permitted nine months within which to raise the necessary capital. The Trust would enter into an option to purchase agreement to achieve this end with payment of a fee. If the proposal failed the Trust would lose that fee. As part of this new proposal the Council would transfer the artefacts to the

newly formed Trust and continue to provide storage facilities at the Council's Depot until such time as the Trust secured its own storage facility.

- 3.3 Although Cabinet had adopted option 5 of the report on the Future of Bromsgrove Museum, officers had not yet had the opportunity to advise on the detail and validity of the new proposal offer. With the consent of the meeting, the Leader therefore proposed that recommendation (b) from the Cabinet be altered to read:

“that authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects) to set up a suitable advisory group to report to Council in January 2009 having investigated the viability of the proposal from the Friends of the Norton Collection Charitable Trust and the costs and implications of option 5 (including taking specialist legal advice, specialist advice on removal and storage of the Collection and future management of the Collection) and to report back to Council to request the release of appropriate funding from balances to effect option 5;”

3.4 In pursuit of this recommendation meetings have been arranged with the Friends of the Norton Collection and an advisory group has been convened. However, it has not been possible to collect all the financial information requested and the meeting with the Friends of the Norton Collection requires follow up actions before advice on viability can be provided to Council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Work is being initiated on the costs of the pursuit of Option Five which will include:
- Cost of: completion of cataloguing the museum based collection;
 - Identification of specialist removal company to transfer the artefacts from the museum to storage;
 - Costs associated with amending the existing trust deed and costs of advice when dealing with the Charity Commission;
 - Costs associated with sale of building;
 - Expenditure incurred in ending the watch repairers lease with the museum building;
 - Expenditure associated with transferring the Tourist Information Centre;
 - Costs of any other building associated matters
 - Costs associated with the operating the curriculum boxes for schools.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The closure of the museum or the potential transfer of the museum to the Friends of the Norton Collection will have specialist legal issues surrounding charity law.

5.2 As part of the delayed report these will be detailed and estimated costs presented in the financial implications section of the report.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 The museum does not form part of the Council's priorities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

These will be detailing the report being prepared for February.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The closure of the museum will have a negative impact on the customers who could potentially have visited it however this is felt to be negligible given the low visitor numbers.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The museum is currently inaccessible to those with mobility difficulties and those who use a wheel chair.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By continuing to operate the museum as it was previously the Council would not be demonstrating value for money – visitor numbers were low and as a result the cost per visitor were high. The Museum does not directly contribute towards the achievement of the Council's objectives and priorities and as such doesn't represent value for money. Given this it is felt that Options 5 or 6 operate the best value for money to the Council.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues – Advice on removals and sale of building
Personnel Implications - None
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - None
Policy - None
Environmental - None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Not applicable
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards, but St John's more directly

14. APPENDICES

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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