

Heritage & Tourist Information Centre Task & Finish Group introductory meeting Friday 21 June 2024

**Cllrs James Walsh, Bilal Akhtar & Catherine Houston
Officers Kelvin Mills, Assistant Director Commercial Services &
Amanda Hargreaves, Heritage Lead**

Welcome

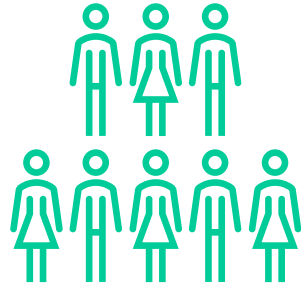
Agenda

1. Background and work to date
2. Role of Task & Finish Group
3. Questions & comments

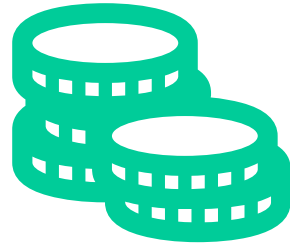
Heritage Service Overview (2022/23)



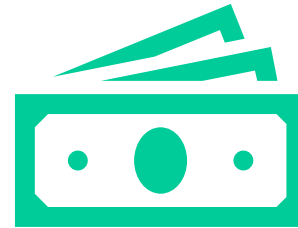
6
Heritage
buildings



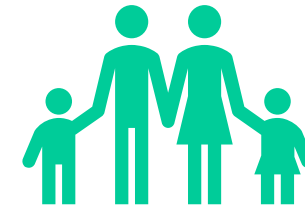
9.7
Full Time
Equivalents



£108k
Income



£1.35m
Cost of
service



29,363
Visitors to
Heritage
attractions*



22,017
Guildhall
event
visitors

*Museum, Castle, Guildford House, Victorian School Room and Undercroft
Excludes the TIC operation

Who we are... what we do...

Heritage Service:

- Looks after and operates our Heritage attractions: Guildhall, Castle, Museum and Guildford House
- Cares for and conserves our collection of over 100,000 objects
- Programmes events, exhibitions, outreach and activities to share our collection and the history of our borough

Tourist Information Centre:

- Promotes and unifies Guildford's cultural, retail, heritage, parks and countryside offerings for the visitor economy
- Provides information, advice and guidance to TIC visitors, actively encouraging engagement with the visitor economy

Work to date...

Jun 2021
Mandate

- Agreed to modernise and deliver selected services in a different way and cease others

Nov 2021
Workshop

- Consolidation and/ or disposal of Museum and Guildford House could be considered
- Use of capital receipt to fund a new location
- No desire to dispose of collection of objects

Dec 2021
Exec Liaison

- Guildford House could be repurposed, not disposed of
- Investigate feasibility of relocating Museum into Guildford House or Library
- Agreed staff structure is not fit for purpose

Work to date...

May 2022
CMB

- Museum move into Guildford House or Library not feasible
- Object storage costs would be too high, issues for documentation project
- Floor loading and environmental conditions unsuitable

Sep 2022
Workshop

- Ranking of attractions and priorities
- Vision difficult, but should include funding/ finding new location
- New location and a longer-term consideration of a trust operating model

Nov 2022
Outcomes

- Relocate museum/ gallery offer into new fit for purpose space using funds from disposal of 3 out of 4 Museum buildings (retain 4th for storage of objects)
- Cease/ sell Victorian School Room offer (done Apr 2024)
- End the lease for the Undercroft (done Feb 2023)

Work to date...

Aug 2023
Exec Liaison

- Improved marketing/ income generation required
- Better utilisation of assets for visitor economy
- Rationalisation of assets could increase sustainability
- Establish where Heritage sits within the GBC remit

Sep 2023
CMB/ Exec
Liaison

- Agreed transfer of Tourist Information Centre team (based in Guildford House) from Customer/ Case into Heritage Service

Current situation

- Financial Recovery Plan asset review confirmed Heritage assets not for disposal. To be reviewed in 2026/27
- Staff structure not fit for purpose
- ‘In limbo’ operation – strategic direction is unclear
- Savings achieved (resources and financial) from Undercroft and Victorian School Room
- Ongoing (long-term) project to document our collection of 100,000 objects
- Project to move object stores (x3) from Woking Road Depot to Weyside Urban Village (outside of business as usual)
- Ongoing maintenance/ redecoration etc. of our listed buildings
- No dedicated marketing resource

A positive outlook

- Arts Council Accredited Museum – awarded December 2023
- Forward Plan and Action Plan 2023-2025 (inc. vision and aims)
- Coordinated exhibition/ event programme and associated activities
- Improved partnership working
- Supportive Friends groups and interested stakeholders
- Well managed directly controlled budgets
- Tourist Information Centre team now part of the Heritage Service
- Ongoing seasonal opening of the Guildhall
- History of Guildford classes in conjunction with Guildford Town Guides

Role of Task & Finish Group

- Review and understand current operation of Heritage Service (HS) and TIC to inform discussions/ outcomes
- Review current HS Forward Plan and how it might inform a future vision for the HS and TIC
- Develop and agree a vision for HS and TIC both for short/ medium term service delivery and a longer-term plan
- Agree aims/ objectives for the HS and TIC and propose key workstreams
- What works well & even better if...

Questions & comments