

## 1. Summary

### 1.1. The new Guildford Museum

The vision for the new Museum will be to:

- celebrate the story of Guildford and its regional, national and global impact on site and online
- be a focus for community engagement and outreach into the Borough and County
- be a place for learning and creativity
- be a cultural hub for Guildford and the County.

To meet the vision, the project will deliver the following components:

- a new-build extension in the Museum's courtyard garden, linking the Museum to the Castle Gardens. The new extension will house the Museum displays, a special exhibition space, a multi-purpose activity space, a café and a shop
- Castle Arch House will be refurbished and provide further museum display space
- Museum offices will remain in an adjacent building
- a vibrant activity and exhibition programme to animate the galleries
- a sustainable business plan.

### 1.2. Surprising heritage

Guildford is a picture postcard market town, and its long and interesting history is written into its buildings. Anyone visiting the High Street, just by looking around, can see that it is a historic town. What is not evident is that Guildford is home to 70 gaming companies and to high tech industries, such as Surrey Satellite Technology, whose satellite that removes space junk received worldwide press publicity earlier this year. It is a surprising contrast, but is the latest manifestation of creativity and innovation that can be traced back to its earliest history.

Guildford Museum was founded by the Surrey Archaeological Society in 1898, when they moved their collections and library to Castle Arch House. Initially there for its members, the Society allowed the public in free for one afternoon a week. The Corporation (as the Borough Council was then) began collecting its own objects alongside those of the Society and the Museum grew as a joint venture, now numbering about 100,000 items. The Museum has some truly remarkable archaeological objects of international significance – one of their type world-wide – and important collections of objects, photographs, prints and maps

that tell the story of Guildford's development as a town and its focal position in Surrey.

The Museum has been in decline for over 30 years and, through lack of investment, visitor numbers have dwindled from over 30,000 to 13,000. The new project offers the opportunity to rethink the Museum, create a new narrative and tell that story in an engaging and exciting way that it deserves.

The public were very clear about what they wanted. They want to know the story of Guildford, how and why it developed and about its famous sons and daughters; they want the Museum to connect with the town – for them to be able to walk onto the High Street and know something about the historic streets and buildings. Local people are most interested in tangible history and want to see history in the Museum that they or their parents or grandparents can remember and tell stories about. But they also know about Guildford's hidden history:

*Because gaming is a big thing in Guildford you could have a whole section about it... and whilst you're taking them through, you're educating and inspiring them and saying 'did you know that this business is two miles up the road?'*

Focus group participant, 55 – 70 years

The Museum's collections are very patchy after 1945. People's interest in 20<sup>th</sup> century history and Guildford's contemporary story gives the Museum a fantastic opportunity to actively collect objects and memories for the new displays, engaging the community in the development, bringing the story bang up to date and, with the help of the high tech and gaming industries, looking to the future.

### **1.3. Testing the ideas**

Consultation was undertaken with three non-user focus groups and four community groups. 15 primary and secondary school teachers were consulted, plus the University of Surrey and other local learning organisations.

There was very low awareness of Guildford Museum – most people did not know that they had one. When toured around the Museum, people thought the Museum was old fashioned and dull "full of words", feeling that there was not enough for them and their children to see and do. They all recognised the difficulty of access in Castle Arch House, with changing levels and small rooms.

However, people are interested in their local history. They want to know more about the story of Guildford, how and why it grew as a town, and the people who have lived there. The built heritage and landscape of Guildford is also of interest - people want to link what they see in the Museum with what they can see on streets around them.

People want to celebrate Guildford's recent past, as well its future. They want to share their memories and have conversations about recent history, and they want to be inspired by Guildford's technology and gaming industries and to discover where they could take Guildford in the future.

A café will draw visitors to the new Museum and would make a visit longer and 'more of a day out'. Any café should reflect the quirky nature of the Museum - it should have displays about Guildford and be a venue for Museum activities.

People need a reason to visit the Museum, particularly more than once. Small and large scale events in the Museum and Castle Grounds, family activities and high quality temporary exhibitions will help to encourage repeat visits.

Primary and secondary schools also had very low awareness of the Museum's offer and, when they were taken around the Museum, felt that the displays would not engage their children. They wanted interactivity, the opportunity to meet experts and stressed the importance of storytelling. Everything had to link back to the curriculum.

When asked about the future of displays and activities, for primary school teachers four main themes emerged – more interactivity, a more obvious and accessible approach to local history, the need to focus on local people, and the power of costumed interpretation to engage children.

Teachers are aware of the local links to gaming and the technology industry and that children live in a digital world. Teachers felt a combination of experiences would be useful, such as utilising technology to show how things have changed, e.g. using virtual reality or augmented reality technologies to bring the history of Guildford to life, but also having 'low tech' hands-on activities.

Teachers were keen to be involved in shaping the Museum, e.g. as an advisory group, and were also enthusiastic about piloting content and activities.

There is the opportunity to work with organisations in Guildford, such as Surrey SATRO and Halow on activities involving young people and the University is keen to work in partnership on projects and work experience for students.

## **1.4. Engaging audiences**

The activity programme is shaped by the consultation and is ranged around five key themes that support the vision:

1. Engaging new audiences
2. Co-creating our story
3. Going digital
4. Dynamic collections
5. Upskilling and learning.

A sixth theme looks at resources needed to support the programme.

The Museum will be a hub not only for Guildford's heritage, connecting people to the wider heritage of the town through guided tours and digital trails, but will also signpost visitors to the rich heritage offer and outdoor leisure in the Borough and its hinterland.



## **Engaging new audiences**

Outreach programmes in to the Borough and County, reminiscence projects for older, isolated people, intergenerational projects, days when children take over the running of the Museum, opening the Museum late for young people and events for people with dementia and autism are all examples of the ways in which the new Museum will tailor its events and activities to engage people who would not normally think to visit or get involved.

## **Co-creating our story**

There will be plenty of opportunity to involve people in the development of the new galleries. People will help to test the themes and storylines and co-create some of the displays and special exhibitions. Volunteers will prepare the Museum's collections for display and research new storylines. The Museum will collect objects and memories from people to populate the displays, bringing the stories up to date and providing new perspectives on Guildford's history. Local creative industries will help the Museum develop ideas for the new storylines and innovative ways of telling the story.

## **Going digital**

Digital will be at the heart of the new museum, in the ways in which we tell the stories in the galleries and on the street and the way in which will communicate with people about what we do. We want to showcase Guildford's creative and tech industries and use their skills and imagination to tell our stories. We will have a residency for a gaming professional, work with University students to produce a new game for Guildford and hold workshops where companies test their work and share their thinking.

## **Dynamic collections**

Guildford's collections are at the heart of the project and form the inspiration for the events, talks, short courses and workshops. The Museum wants to bring the story right up to date and will actively collect objects and memories from Guildford people to populate the new displays.

## **Upskilling and learning**

There will be work experience opportunities for young people, apprenticeships and student interns and projects for the University to develop and showcase their work in the live environment of the Museum. Up to 80 new volunteers will support the new Museum as welcomers, researchers, collectors of oral history, marketers and social media gurus. The Museum will reach out to schools and there will be projects for schoolchildren focusing on the modern creative industries, an annual STEM problem solving challenge, online resources and loans boxes.

## **1.5. Resources to support the project**

### **1.5.1. Staffing**

The project will see the appointment of a Community Engagement Officer, full-time for three years from January 2022 to drive the community engagement and outreach programme.

A full-time Learning Officer will be appointed for three years from January 2022 to drive the formal learning programme.

A full-time Volunteering and Training Officer will be appointed for three years from January 2022 to drive the volunteering and training programmes that will support the activity programme.

These three members of staff will be managed by the Exhibitions and Audience Development Manager and it is anticipated that at least 50% of their costs will be met by external funding

The Museum will also see the appointment of a part-time Fundraiser from Year 1 (opening year) to ensure that the Museum secures regular external funding and a part-time Marketing Officer to promote the new Museum. The consultation revealed that lack of awareness of the current Museum was the most significant barrier to engagement.

### **1.5.2. Volunteering**

There are currently 31 volunteers supporting the Museum. The project offers the opportunity to:

- increase the number of volunteers
- broaden the range of volunteering opportunities
- train and invest in the volunteers
- review the existing policies and practices
- actively promote volunteering and its benefits
- diversify the type of people volunteering.

The new Museum will provide an additional 80 volunteering opportunities, which is likely to translate into 60 new volunteers as many people double up on roles.

The principal aims of the new programme will be to increase the number of volunteers, broaden the range of volunteering opportunities, diversify the volunteer team and to train and invest in volunteers, to upskill them to deliver the activity programme and, where appropriate, for their future careers.

Existing roles that will be enhanced are:

- Welcomers and explainers, in the galleries but also at special events such as the 'lates' programme
- supporting informal and formal learning activities.

New roles will include:

- researching new displays, special exhibitions, experience trails and leisure and learning online resources
- working with communities to produce co-created exhibitions
- collecting oral memories
- supporting marketing and the website
- promoting the Museum through social media
- evaluation of the programmes.

The volunteering programme will be developed and managed by the full-time Volunteering and Training Officer.

The Volunteering Plan is in Appendix 2.

### 1.5.3. Training

The Training Plan in Appendix 3 details 24 training and skills development opportunities:

1. Volunteer management
2. Welcome host/customer care
3. Storytelling
4. Public speaking
5. Delivering formal and informal learning activities
6. Arts Award training
7. Co-creating exhibitions
8. Introduction to the history of Guildford
9. Object handling
10. Oral history skills
11. Research for exhibitions and trails
12. Research for learning and engagement resources
13. Evaluation of displays, events and activities
14. E-marketing and social media skills
15. Website development skills
16. Equality and diversity
17. Disability awareness
18. Visual impairment awareness
19. Dementia awareness
20. Autism awareness

21. Introduction to safeguarding
22. Work experience
23. Duke of Edinburgh volunteers
24. Training for local primary school teachers.

The training programme will be developed and managed by the Volunteering and Training Officer.

#### 1.5.4. Spatial implications

The activity programme and target audiences selected do have implications for the design of the building and the galleries.

- There needs to be a flexible learning space within the new build. Ideally 100m<sup>2</sup>, it will have excellent storage and facilities for wet and dry activities.
- The new project will potentially have 13 full-time equivalent posts (16 people) devoted to the new museum, whilst many of those can be based elsewhere within other Heritage Services venues, certain staff, such as front of house staff, the Learning Officer and Community Engagement Officer need office accommodation and a staff room on site.
- Potentially, the Museum will have over 90 volunteers. Not all of these will be regular or on site at the same time, but the Museum will need to provide desk space and working room for them and a volunteer 'mess' room.
- Primary schools will use the flexible learning space, and will require separate toilets and storage space for their belongings.
- Plenty of places to sit down and rest will be important to some of the target audiences, as will wifi throughout the building. Family audiences will need a buggy park and baby change.
- The building will need to be accessible throughout and include a Changing Places toilet. A hearing loop will be important for the flexible learning space. During RIBA 2 and 3, the Museum will consult with people with disabilities (including visually impaired people) and dementia and autism groups to ascertain their particular requirements.

#### 1.5.5. Partnerships and collaboration

The activity programme will collaborate with a range of organisations for their expertise and to enrich the Museum's own practice and programming. Key partnerships will be:

- University of Surrey for project work, work experience and volunteering
- the Surrey Infantry Museum, whose collections will form part of the new interpretation and displays
- the Town Guides, for development of new walks to complement the new service



- local organisations, such as the Guildford School of Acting to support interpretation in the galleries and on the streets
- local businesses, for development of the Museum’s interpretation and supporting events and projects
- local community groups and organisations that work with audiences that the Museum wishes to reach, such as Halow, day centres, Dementia Care Units, the Alzheimer’s Society, National Autistic Society
- Surrey Museums Partnership and the area Museum Development Officer to support the Museum’s County role.

### 1.5.6. Expenditure

The costs of the activity programme over three years, including staffing is £892,600.

Table 1: Revenue implications summary

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>3 year programme cost</b>
1	Celebrating the story of Guildford	£ 121,000.00
2	Co-creating our story	£ 7,300.00
3	Going digital	£ 50,750.00
4	Dynamic collections	£ 57,500.00
5	Upskilling and learning	£ 108,300.00
6	Resources and networking	£ 547,750.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 892,600.00</b>

## 1.6. Sustainability

The development of the full three-year activity programme is dependent on securing external funding. If external funding is secured, then the posts of Community Engagement Officer, Learning Officer and Volunteer and Training Officer can be appointed at least 18 months before opening in the summer of 2023 and will continue 18 months beyond. The full activity programme could be implemented for three years.

Once the external funding has ended the Business Plan has the three posts 50% funded by Guildford Borough Council and assumes that the other 50% would be funded by external funding. The activity programme would be scaled back to consist of events that would be cost neutral or generate income, with £12,500 per annum allocated to formal and informal learning activities per annum, supplemented by external funding.

If external funding is not secured, the Business Plan has budgeted for the three posts to be 50% funded by Guildford Borough Council from the year of opening. It assumed that the remaining 50% will be made up from external funding. There would be no activity programme prior to opening. Those posts will deliver a cost neutral or revenue generating activity programme, with the same amount of £12,500 per annum allocated to audience development and learning activities.