

**To:** City Executive Board  
**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017  
**Report of:** Head of Community Services  
**Title of Report:** Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Members on the Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project and to request approval to the revised project budget.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Councillor Dee Sinclair, Board Member for Culture and Communities
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Stronger and Active Communities, Vibrant and Sustainable Economy, Efficient and Effective Council, Cleaner Greener Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Culture Strategy 2015-18, Oxford Town Hall Conservation Plan, Oxford City Council Corporate Plan
<b>Recommendation(s): That the City Executive Board resolves to:</b>	
1.	<b>Note</b> the progress made on the Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project;
2.	<b>Recommend</b> to Council the increasing of the projects overall capital budget by £611,754 to £2,842,804 and the Councils capital contribution from £315,000 to £1,340,106 to be financed by prudential borrowing in accordance with paragraph 22 and 25;
3.	<b>Note</b> the increase in the Councils revenue budget in respect of the additional cost of operating the new museum of £30k per annum with effect from 2020/21 which will be raised during the forthcoming budget setting process (paragraph 28).

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Design drawings and artist impression images
Appendix 2	Project benefits
Appendix 3	Project costs and funding sources
Appendix 4	Fundraising- <b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>
Appendix 5	Risk log
Appendix 6	Equalities Impact Assessment

## **Introduction and background**

1. The Council has been committed to the redevelopment of the Museum of Oxford for a number of years to maximise on the opportunity to expand into unused space in the Town Hall to create a *people's museum* for Oxford uncovering more of the City's hidden histories.
2. The Museum of Oxford is located in the front right quarter of the Town Hall. The museum formerly extended into the full front right quarter both within the ground floor and basement, it now only extends into two small rooms called the Explore Oxford Galleries. This was considered as the first phase of the Museums redevelopment and there is an audience demand to increase the space.
3. Since 2015 the Museum team have been working with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) on developing a scheme that would attract significant external funding. The project team have also focused on making sure the project is complementary to the Town Hall. Designs have now been completed along with detailed estimations on how much the project will cost to deliver.
4. The project will see the existing museum triple in size and will enable us to better preserve the Grade II\*-listed Oxford Town Hall. Existing spaces will be connected to create two new gallery spaces on the ground floor with flexible displays and new interpretation using digital media telling the story of the people of Oxford and the rich, fascinating and world-famous history of our City. On the lower ground floor a new state of the art learning space with learning resources for schools will be created as well as a new 'Museum Makers' area so that local diverse community groups can get involved in creating exhibitions. There will also be a new shop and reception desk which together form a much improved welcome area for the Museum, accessible from the entrance of the Town Hall and improved facilities for the museum's 100+ volunteers.
5. The scheme is now fixed. The developed designs have gone through three rounds of value engineering to make sure that they provide value for money and meet the Council's and HLF outcomes. It is the option that represents the best balance of cost and benefit for the Council and public of Oxford and the likelihood of securing HLF external funding.
6. In July 2017 the Museum of Oxford Development Trust was established and received charitable status, the Trusts purpose is to raise funds for the Museum and it is separate from the Council.

## The Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project

7. Our vision is for an inclusive people's museum; a resource for discovering, interpreting, and sharing the rich heritage of Oxford's diverse communities. Our focus will be on individuals, communities and businesses whose stories have sometimes been overwhelmed by Oxford's defining narratives. We will create a transformational experience and visitors who engage with Oxford's hidden histories will see the city in a different and richer light.
8. The project will open up and share the heritage of the city's communities through stories that radiate out from the Town Hall, the historic building at its centre, by:
  - making objects currently in storage accessible; uncover archival records mapping the city's development; and explore Oxford's heritage through academic research and oral histories;
  - building on our strong relationships with the city's communities - including new and emerging communities - to develop dynamic, flexible exhibitions co-curated with those communities;
  - deepening the visitor experience through state of the art, interactive displays; and
  - providing more space, and more flexible use of space to accommodate school, group and tourist visits, community use, and events.

The project is designed to allow Museum of Oxford to meet the requirements of its aims- creating a sustainable Museum that is fit for the future and will enable the Museum to achieve accreditation from Arts Council England.

9. Alongside the capital works will be the delivery of an exciting and inclusive Activity Plan delivered using HLF monies and volunteer hours. This activity plan has been designed to target the following audiences, who have often felt excluded in the past from the existing culture offer in the city:
  - Families with children under 8, living in Barton and Sandhills, Wood Farm;
  - Primary school children attending 2-3 relationship schools within regeneration area;
  - Young people (16-24) from a more diverse range of backgrounds across the City; and
  - Older people, particularly from regeneration areas.

These target audiences have been chosen following thorough market analysis work and to maximise on opportunities to establish new relationships and expand collections and stories.

10. The projects final designs and activity plan builds upon advice and feedback from HLF and from wide consultation with our partners, visitors and non-visitors, volunteers, museum staff, excluded youth and over 50s non-academic research groups. We have looked at other projects, in particular museum re-displays, in order to learn from others' best practice including: Experience Barnsley, Derby Silk Mill and Warrington Museum & Art Gallery. The project designs incorporate advice and feedback from Property Services, the Local Planning Authority Conservation Officer, Historic England and results from building survey work undertaken.

11. Project costs have increased as the project has moved from feasibility stage to developed design stage. This has been due to more work being required than initially forecast following on from the results of detailed building survey work, engagement with IT, requirements from Historic England and advice required from external professionals.

12. The Council has already been successful in securing £142,000 of HLF monies to deliver the project to date. We will be submitting our Round 2 bid of £1,634,710 to HLF for funding for this project at the end of November 2017 and will hear back if our bid has been successful in March 2018. If we are successful in our HLF bid, we will start technical design in May 2018, tenders will be issued in winter 2018, construction will start July 2019 and the new museum will be open in summer 2020.
13. See appendix 1 for the design drawings and artist impression images of how the new Museum will look. Please see background papers for the full set of high resolution original drawings and images, along with a fly through video.

## **Project Benefits**

14. The benefits that will be realised by delivering this project are shown in appendix 2.
15. The project contributes to delivering “a world class city for everyone”- giving voice to the stories of the individuals, communities and businesses who have built our culturally diverse city. Inclusivity is a core principle of this proposed redeveloped museum.
16. The project contributes to delivering “stronger and active communities” by creating new museum space (with improved facilities) to undertake targeted community engagement work with young people in regeneration zones and underrepresented groups as well as space to provide a programme of school age and adult learning. 50 additional volunteers will be recruited.
17. The project contributes to delivering a “vibrant and sustainable economy” allowing the Museum of Oxford to be at the forefront of the emerging new cultural quarter in the city increasing cultural tourism and spend in local economy.
18. The project contributes to the delivery of a “cleaner greener oxford” by installing improved gallery lighting (full LED) using flexible systems which are long term and energy efficient.
19. The project contributes to delivering an “efficient and effective Council” by:
  - a. Enabling the Museum of Oxford to offset 36% of its expenditure by 2025/26 (currently at 19%).
  - b. Increasing the income generation in wider Town Hall by being the first project to enable the delivery of a wider redevelopment vision for the Town Hall ground floor.
  - c. Increasing the income generation per annum for the Council’s Housing Company by enabling the Council to manage the holiday rental of Blue Boar Street Flat in house.
  - d. Removing over £187k of backlog maintenance requirement in the Town Hall.
20. The project contributes to delivering on the Town Hall Conservation Plan by stripping back the disfiguring 1970s accretions, installing improved and efficient mechanical and electrical infrastructure and installing 2 platform lifts allowing Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant access for more of the Town Hall.

## Financial implications

21. Project costs have increased as the project has moved from feasibility stage to developed design stage. This has been due to more work being required than initially forecast following on from the results of detailed building survey work, engagement with IT, requirements from Historic England and advice required from external professionals.
22. Appendix 3 shows the capital and revenue costs of the project together with proposed funding. Delivery of this project is to be funded by Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF), fundraising, Council capital and Council Town Hall maintenance budget. The revised project costs at £2.843 million have risen since the original proposals were prepared by £611,754 (as explained in paragraph 11). If the project is to move forward the Council would need to fund this additional spend increasing its contribution to the project from an original £315,000 to £926,654.
23. The project funding envelop assumes £451,000 is raised from external fundraising (see Appendix 4). The Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project has a detailed fundraising strategy and plan which is currently being delivered to raise the £451,000 with £37,548 been raised to date. In order to provide confidence to HLF about delivery the Council needs to underwrite the balance of this capital contribution of £413,452 in the event that this target is not reached. In the event that these monies are subsequently raised they will be returned to capital resources.
24. Therefore the recommendation to Council is to increase its total contribution for the scheme to £1,340,106 i.e. £926,654 plus £413,452. Any monies subsequently received from fundraising can be returned to the Councils capital resources
25. The additional capital expenditure could be financed from Prudential Borrowing which would carry an additional revenue cost of 2% per annum plus a minimum revenue provision (MRP) charge to revenue for repayment of debt of approximately £45,000 per annum.
26. Whilst this is a significant increase, the project is still leveraging in £1.777m of external funds to be spent on improving a Council owned asset- a ratio of £1.29 external funds for every £1 of OCC funding (45% internal funding; 55% external funding).
27. The museum will remain operational during the build programme which is not likely to be completed until 2020-21. Elements of the new build programme will come on stream during this process, the museums activity plan will be delivered and promotion and publicity of the new facility will also need to take place. The estimated cost of this activity during the 4 year period up to 2020/21 is £362,360 which would be funded in its entirety by monies from the HLF bid.
28. The current net budget for the museum service is £95k per annum. During the build programme there are likely to be variations in this figure as admissions to and activity within the temporary relocated museum vary which will be managed within existing budgets. Once fully operational it is estimated that there will be additional net expenditure of approximately £30k per annum. A budget bid for this additional cost will be made through the forthcoming budget setting process. The opportunity will be taken to review the operational plans for the Museum before it is opened

from the perspective of it being one operation within the wider Town Hall asset. The intention of this will be to maximise on opportunities for the Museum and the wider Town Hall to develop further income generating activities to strengthen the vitality and long term sustainability of this quality asset.

29. There are associated financial benefits with delivering the new Museum for the wider Town Hall which are listed in section 18.

### **Legal issues**

30. Local authorities have the power under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide and maintain museums and galleries' (S12), 'charge for admission to museums and galleries' (S13), contribute to expenses of museums and galleries' (S14) and 'to establish fund for purchase of exhibits' (S15).

31. When delivering this project the Council must adhere to relevant Building control regulations, Listed Building Consent (Grade II\*), security requirements under Town Hall Asset Insurance for all entrance/ exits doors (Blue Boar Street).

32. When spending monies secured externally the Council must adhere to the terms and conditions under which monies have been provided.

### **Level of risk**

33. A Risk log for the project is included in appendix 5.

34. If the Council decided not to increase their capital contribution then this project would stop and we would not submit our Round 2 bid. There is no financial penalty for not submitting Round 2 funding bid after spending HLF Round 1 monies (we received £142k to develop the scheme) as long as all Round 2 output has been delivered. However the impact will be bad publicity for the Council and the Council is unlikely to get this sort of opportunity again with HLF.

35. If the Council was not successful at securing the Round 2 HLF funding then this project would stop and we would be left with the current situation of 2 small Explore Oxford galleries and annexed space on the ground floor and basement. These spaces would still require £187k spent on them in terms of maintenance in the coming years which would need to be funded by Council finances. To bring these annexed spaces into a fit for use function, be it income generating or otherwise, then significant capital investment would be required which is unlikely to attract external funding.

## Equalities impact

36. A full Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2016 on the project and reviewed by Jarlath Brine. See appendix 6 for the full completed Equalities Impact Assessment.
37. There are no perceived problems with the project in relation to Equalities Impact as Oxford's Hidden Histories will make the Museum service more accessible and relevant to more local people and visitors to Oxford.

## Conclusion

38. If the Council wants to have a Museum that is fit for purpose now and for the future this is the best option.

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<b>Background Papers:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Architectural design- As proposed basement plan.pdf</li><li>2. Architectural design- As proposed ground floor plan.pdf</li><li>3. Architectural design- Basement with demolition.pdf</li><li>4. Architectural design- Ground floor with demolition.pdf</li><li>5. Exhibition Design- ground floor 1.pdf</li><li>6. Exhibition Design- ground floor 2.pdf</li><li>7. Exhibition Design- basement 1.pdf</li><li>8. Exhibition Design- basement 2.pdf</li><li>9. Exhibition artist impression- ground floor – accessed here: <a href="https://www.oxfordhiddenhistories.org/info/5/ground_floor_gallery">https://www.oxfordhiddenhistories.org/info/5/ground_floor_gallery</a></li><li>10. Fly through video- architectural design.avi- accessed here: <a href="https://www.oxfordhiddenhistories.org/info/5/ground_floor_gallery">https://www.oxfordhiddenhistories.org/info/5/ground_floor_gallery</a></li></ol>

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