



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny
Date:	21 September 2021
Subject:	Future of the Heritage Service in Lincolnshire

Summary:

This report is an update on the actions undertaken in regard to the recommendations relating to the future of the council's heritage service approved by Executive on 3 September 2019.

The report updates on changes to the portfolio of heritage sites operated by the Culture Service, including the future of the Usher Gallery.

These changes ensure a sustainable future for every aspect of the service offer and for the whole of the county, enabling an innovative approach to showcasing the county's rich heritage within a demand led, audience focused cultural enterprise model delivered on site, online and in our community.

Actions Required:

Approval of continued work towards delivering against the recommendations approved by Executive in September 2019.

1. Background

This report is an update on the actions undertaken in regard to the recommendations relating to the future of the Council's Culture Service approved by Executive on 3 September 2019. These changes include the move to a Cultural Enterprise and Supersite Model that delivers culture-based products and services to generate a surplus which is then used to ensure the service's long-term sustainability and development.

The recommendations also include changes to the operation of Gainsborough Old Hall, The Collection Museum and Usher Gallery, Discover Stamford and Burgh le Marsh, Alford and Ellis windmills.

2. Update on actions undertaken in regard to the Heritage Service

Following the service of notice on English Heritage to terminate the lease of Gainsborough Old Hall, operation and management of the attraction was handed back to English Heritage on the 31st of October 2020.

English Heritage reopened the Old Hall to the public in the July of this year and a number of the staff who previously worked at Gainsborough have been successful in securing positions with English Heritage.

A number of the proposals approved by Executive in September 2019 relate to the Usher Gallery and the Collections Management Agreement relating to collections owned by the City of Lincoln Council and cared for by Lincolnshire County Council since 1974.

Following discussions between the County Council and the City of Lincoln Council, it was announced on the 15th of July this year that, subject to formal agreements being made, the Usher Art Gallery will remain open, and Lincoln's museum and art collections will remain in Lincolnshire.

As a result of the new arrangement, as well as continuing to run the Usher Gallery as an art gallery, we will now be able to use the space more flexibly, with the gallery being used for community, cultural and creative industry use including but not limited to income-generating activity through third party hire including cultural talks and tours, weddings, ceremonial celebrations, educational and children's activities. It will be a much-improved solution – bringing more visitors to the site, for more reasons and more often.

The two authorities will also work together to explore external funding bids to invest in transforming both The Collection building and Usher Gallery and, in doing so, create a sense of one location across the two sites.

With regards to the operation of Discover Stamford, Ellis Windmill, Burgh le Marsh Windmill and Alford Windmill, whilst progress has been hampered by the impact of Covid, there have been a number of developments this year.

External funding has been applied for to address the works required at Alford Mill to return the site to full operation, which will allow us to enter into the next stage of discussions with local bodies looking to take on responsibility for operating the mill and engaging the public with its stories.

Ellis Mill is due to partially open to the public for one of the Heritage Open Days weekends in September and we are taking the opportunity to gauge and generate interest in attracting more volunteers to help tell the stories of the mill.

We are hopeful that works to the ancillary buildings at Burgh le Marsh will commence soon and once complete this will provide the local volunteers with the space to engage with public.

Conversations have resumed with a third party interested in taking on additional responsibility for engaging people with the rich heritage of Stamford, with that organisation looking at achieving national accreditation status. The ambitions of the third party are to make a provisional accreditation application this year, which will enable us to further explore the detailed next steps in the transfer process. Encouragingly, their ambitions are to increase access to the collections in scope for transfer as well as developing a wider programme of cultural activities across the local community working with wider stakeholders.

3. Consultation

No consultation was undertaken to inform this report; however, extensive public consultation was undertaken between February and April 2019 to inform the business case and recommendations made to Executive in September 2019.

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Will Mason, Head of Culture, who can be contacted at william.mason@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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