

Culture and Communities Committee

2.00pm, Tuesday, 20 March 2018

Museums and Galleries – Alternative Opening Hours

Item number	8.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All
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Executive Summary

Following a review of opening hours across Museums and Galleries considered at the Culture and Communities Committee on [30 January 2018](#), it was agreed to hold two Councillor and officer review meetings to consider alternative opening hours.

The review group recommended that hours should be extended from the existing five days a week to seven days a week, 10.00am – 5.00pm from 1 June 2018 for a one year pilot. This would allow the service to maximise income opportunities while meeting the needs of local residents and visitors to the city.

The funds required for the additional staffing would be met from the additional £95,000 agreed by through the budget process and from additional income achieved through commercial activity and donations.

Museums and Galleries Transformation – Opening Hours

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee approves the extension of the Museums and Galleries opening hours from five days a week to seven days a week, 10.00am – 5.00pm throughout the year from 1 June 2018 for a one year pilot.
- 1.2 That a progress report is brought to this committee for review after six months of operation.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 1 October 2016 the Museums and Galleries Service implemented a change to opening hours to six of its museums and galleries in response to the Council's Transformation programme, moving from a six and seven day a week operation to five days a week throughout the year.
- 2.2 The report submitted to the Culture and Communities Committee on 30 January 2018 outlined the impact of the changes.
- 2.3 Moving to a five day a week service saved a total £166,000 in staffing costs over two financial years. However, there was a significant decline in visitor numbers and a decline in income amounting to £76,598. There were also issues concerning visitor perception and reputational damage. It was also reported that if business as usual was to continue then income, visitor numbers and the service's reputation would continue to be eroded.
- 2.4 The Committee agreed to convene two review meetings with Councillor and officer representation to consider options for the future opening hours across the museums and galleries service.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The review meetings took place on 8 and 26 February chaired by Councillor Donald Wilson with cross party representation and officers from the Culture Service.
- 3.2 A range of options were explored and it was agreed that the best solution for the service was to move to a seven day a week operation, 10.00am to 5.00pm across

the year. This would bring the service in line with all major museums and attractions in the city and meet the needs of local residents and visitors to the city.

- 3.3 Extending opening hours would also allow the service to maximise income opportunities from its major city centre venues.
- 3.4 A business case was presented to the review group detailing the staffing and budget requirements and the forecast additional income.
- 3.5 To extend opening hours from the existing five days a week to seven days would require an additional 11 FTE front line staff, costing an additional £253,000.
- 3.6 The business case detailed the income opportunities and the forecast income based on existing spend and visitor footfall. However, the business case detailed a potential shortfall of £95,000.
- 3.7 £95,000 was identified as part of the budget process to contribute the funding of additional staff. The forecast increase in income and the additional funding will allow the service to operate seven days a week from 1 June 2018 for one year.
- 3.8 The review group agreed to extend the opening hours for one year with a review six months after implementation. If the service is unable to raise sufficient funds to cover additional staffing, the service could revert to shorter hours.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The service operates seven days a week, 10.00am – 5.00pm throughout the year for an initial one year pilot.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The additional staffing costs of £253,000 will be met from an additional £95,000 through the budget process and £158,000 from additional income.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Failure to raise the additional income from commercial activity and donations.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The report's contents are not relevant to the general equality duties of the Equality Act 2010.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties have been considered. The extension of opening hours to Edinburgh Museums and Galleries will continue to help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh by contributing to the city's reputation as a cultural destination. This will benefit residents by contributing to Edinburgh's high quality of life, promote wellbeing, and will also support the city's economy.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation was carried out with stakeholders, competitor attractions and staff for the initial review.
- 9.2 Two review group meetings with cross party representatives and officers from the Culture service.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Report to Culture and Sport Committee, 30 January 2018, ['Update on Museums and Galleries Transformation – Opening Hours'](#)

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11. Appendices

None