

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 15 September 2020

Museums and Galleries – Report on Extended Opening Hours

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	46

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee notes:
- 1.1.1 the success of opening Museum venues seven days a week and the positive impact this had on visitor numbers, income and reputation pre-Covid-19; and
 - 1.1.2 the success of the externally funded schools programme at the City Art Centre.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Frank Little, Museums and Galleries Manager

E-mail: frank.little@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 3994

Report

Museums and Galleries – Report on Extended Opening Hours

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In 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 Following a review of opening hours the Culture and Communities Committee agreed on [20 March 2018](#) to extend opening hours to seven days a week, 10.00am – 5.00pm from 1 June 2018 for a one year pilot.
- 2.3 A progress report was submitted to the Committee on [29 January 2019](#) for review after six months of operation and agreed the continuation of seven days a week opening.
- 2.4 The following report summarises the positive impact of seven days a week opening for the period 2019-2020 before the Covid-19 pandemic

3. Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The report submitted to the Culture and Communities Committee on [30 January 2018](#) outlined the impact of the changes. 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
- 3.3 The Committee agreed to convene two review meetings with member and officer representation to consider options for the future opening hours across the museums and galleries service.
- 3.4 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

- 3.5 Extending opening hours has allowed the service to maximise income opportunities from its major city centre venues.
- 3.6 Operating the venues seven days a week has also allowed an increase in projects with Edinburgh community groups and school groups.

4. Main report

- 4.1 A progress report was submitted to the Committee on 29 January 2019 for review after six months of operation and agreed the continuation of seven days a week opening.
- 4.2 By way of comparison the six month period between 1 June and 1 November 2019 visitor numbers across the city centre museum venues increased by 40%, from 219,542 in 2017 to 307,744 in 2019. The overall increase of 40% in visitor numbers over two years is significant, and the City Art Centre has doubled its visitor numbers.
- 4.3 Museums Galleries Edinburgh are currently demonstrating a larger rise in visitor numbers than current trends. For example, the National Museums and Galleries have annual visitor number targets of a 5-8% increase on an annual basis. Every city centre venue has achieved increased visitor numbers.

Visitor Numbers*	June to November 2017	June to November 2018	June to November 2019	% Increase from (2018) 2017- 2019
City Art Centre	23,337	31,161	48,743	(34%) 108%
Museum of Edinburgh	48,393	65,322	67,321	(35%) 39%
People's Story	30,109	25,056	42,146	(13%) 40%
Museum of Childhood	79,708	112,340 (Opening of new Gallery)	96,619	(41%) 17%
Writer's Museum	35,288	47,933	49,739	(35%) 40%
Queensferry Museum	2,707	3,881	3,176	(42%) 17%
ALL	219,542	286,693	307,744	(31%) 40%

*Other venues across the service contribute further visitor numbers, achieving an overall higher visitor number. The venues listed above are the core venues affected by the changes to opening hours. The % increase is calculated using visitor numbers from comparable time periods reflecting the visitor/tourist high season for museums and galleries

- 4.4 To illustrate further the improvement in visitor numbers, the annual visitor figures for the six venues across the financial years 2017/18 to 2019/20 are:

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 – to January 2020
360,623	512,355	476,929

- 4.5 The change to seven days a week has also impacted positively on the visitor experience. Previously venues were closed on different days from others, and visitors found it difficult to understand when a venue was open. Complaints from visitors were frequent, particularly during peak times. Now that all venues are open at the same time seven days a week, this is no longer the case.
- 4.6 Access is now available throughout the week for school and community groups and the venues are available when these groups want to use the service.
- 4.7 Front of House staff have welcomed the change which has had a positive impact on morale and in turn, the visitor experience.
- 4.8 The changes bring the service in line with all major museums and visitor attractions and meets the expectations of both residents and visitors to the city.
- 4.9 Income across the six museum venues has also increased from 2017/18 to 2019/20:

Income Stream	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 to January
Donations	24,336	14,089	21,420
Retail sales	152,223	273,625	327,258
Rent	62,333	55,207	96,739
Total	238,895	342,921	445,417

- 4.10 The income generated from retail sales, venue hire and donations at the six venues has almost doubled since 2017/18. In meeting targets, this income is supplemented through a combination of other revenue sources, including ticket sales at the Scott and Nelson monuments, venue hire and donations across the Museums and Galleries other venues. The increase in income has supported the costs of the seven day a week operation as well as meeting the service's overall income targets.
- 4.11 The service meets the needs and expectations of residents and visitors to the city by providing access seven days a week while achieving the income target to continue operating seven days a week, 10.00am – 5.00pm throughout the year beyond the year one pilot.

- 4.12 Operating a seven days opening service has meant an increase in projects with Edinburgh community groups and school groups. For example, £25,000 was successfully sourced from the KPE4 Charitable Trust to deliver art workshops with schools in hard to reach communities. Over 1000 children participated in this programme at the City Art Centre during the *Victoria Crowe – 50 Years of Painting* (18 May – 13 October 2019) exhibition. Some of the children who participated in the workshops had never visited central Edinburgh or an art gallery before. Offering seven days a week access to venues makes funding applications more likely to be successful.
- 4.13 Building on the success of the schools programme at the City Art Centre an additional £200,000 has been secured from the Trust to fund a three year education programme.
- 4.14 Working with young people in Leith, Niddrie, Muirhouse, Pilton, Craigmillar, Sighthill, Wester Hailes and Gracemount, the aim of the programme is to build meaningful relationships and develop exciting and diverse programmes across our museum venues.
- 4.15 The implementation of seven days opening has had a positive impact on visitor figures, income, reputation and engagement with local communities.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The museums and gallery service is currently closed to the public due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff at home are currently engaged in research, exhibition and public programme development, enquiries, training, marketing and promotion, and all aspects of collection management.
- 5.2 Plans are in place to re-open on a phased basis in line with the Scottish Government's phase 3 and phase 4 route map. It is proposed to open the City Art Centre first and reopen other venues by the end of 2020. The historic buildings which house a number of our museum collections present a challenge to reopen using current social distancing guidance. Reopening the City Art Centre will enable us to test social distancing measures within a cultural venue, give us valuable feedback from our visitors, and will provide income opportunities through the gallery shop, venue hire and café.
- 5.3 Museums Galleries Edinburgh will continue to build on the success of the current opening hours by improving the visitor experience and maximising income opportunities. However, it is anticipated that it will be some time before visitor numbers return to pre-Covid numbers.
- 5.4 Develop a three year education programme with communities across Edinburgh.
- 5.5 The Museums and Galleries Edinburgh Service Plan 2019-2023 sets out a number of operational and strategic aims and actions, including key performance indicators See appendix 1.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The additional staffing costs were contained within the revenue budget and met through income and external funding.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

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

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Museums and Galleries Edinburgh Service Plan 2019-2023.



Museums & Galleries Edinburgh

Service Plan 2019 - 2023

Museums & Galleries Edinburgh Service Plan 2019 - 2023

This document reviews the objectives of the 2013 - 2018 Service Plan and sets out the strategic and operational objectives for the next four years. It summarizes what has been achieved against the targets set and highlights operational goals that remain a priority. It is informed by and aligns with Council's Change Strategy 2019 - 2023 which details the Council's budget and service priorities.

Executive Summary of 2013 - 2018 Service Plan

The Service Plan 2013 - 2018 set out the vision and aspirations for the services we provide to our diverse communities and visitors, and the role we play in supporting wider health and well-being, tourism and economic development agendas. The Service Plan provided staff, colleagues, stakeholders and users with a new outcome-focused action framework for the service, developed through a process of consultation, and matched against staff responsibilities and anticipated resources.

The Plan also provided contextual information about the venues we manage and the strategic context in which we operate, locally and nationally. Our priorities were mapped against the aims of other policy and strategy documents that informed changes and improvements within Edinburgh and the museum sector.

Our Vision: To inspire, enthuse and provoke through a shared passion for Edinburgh, art and history.

Our Mission: Museums & Galleries Edinburgh enables people to connect with the city, its many histories and its role in presenting art from around the world. We do this through our collections, temporary exhibitions and public programmes, both physical and digital. We balance our responsibility to preserve, display and interpret collections with our mission to encourage debate, interaction, reflection and exploration.

Aim 1: Deliver a world-class capital city museums and galleries service

- Raise the profile of our services, collections and venues
- Promote our service through new technologies and electronic media
- Provide a dynamic range of exhibitions and public programmes
- Improve physical, sensory and intellectual access to our buildings and services
- Provide more efficient, flexible and modern facilities suitable for use by all

- Lead or participate in national and international programmes and initiatives

Aim 2: Transform how we use and present our museums, galleries and monuments

- Develop and implement a capital project plan to refurbish the Museum of Childhood
- Deliver the refurbishment of the City Observatory and Dome in partnership with the Collective Gallery
- Explore partnership opportunities to transform the People's Story Museum
- Advance Phase 2 plans for the Museum of Edinburgh
- Refurbish Tron Kirk in partnership with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust
- Maintain high quality provision across our venues, monuments and services
- Invest in the fabric of buildings across our estate

Aim 3: Place people and participation at the heart of what we do

- Provide opportunities for new and existing audiences to participate through archaeology, exhibitions and public programmes
- Encourage the sharing of ideas and exchange of knowledge
- Engage local communities in the development and delivery of our services
- Prioritise learning and volunteering opportunities in projects and work programmes
- Expand our use of social media and new technologies to widen access to our collections and services

Aim 4: Achieve excellence in the development, use and care of collections

- Create policies and plans for how we manage, develop and care for our collections
- Develop options for long term collections storage
- Explore opportunities for collections research
- Address documentation backlog issues strategically
- Refine our collecting practice to ensure we are actively collecting in defined areas
- Provide high quality interpretation in various media

Aim 5: Work efficiently and effectively for maximum impact

- Explore creative opportunities for effective partnership working
- Foster cross-team and cross-Council working

- Improve internal staff communications
- Identify and address succession planning issues
- Provide staff with learning, development and networking opportunities

Aim 6: Become ever more resourceful, resilient and sustainable

- Explore creative opportunities for effective partnership working
- Explore opportunities to develop marketing support
- Increase income through growth and diversification of existing streams
- Reduce environmental impact service-wide
- Maximise commercial use of monuments, museums and galleries
- Invest in the IT infrastructure of all venues and monuments

Review of Achievements

In 2013 our aims and aspirations were ambitious and challenging. We had an overarching commitment to work creatively by adopting new approaches and partnerships to ensure that we were able to deliver a sustainable, high quality, vibrant and relevant museum service. The service aimed to not only meet the expectations of our visitors but also contribute to the well-being and quality of life for our diverse communities across Edinburgh. This has been possible due in large part to our highly committed, knowledgeable and adaptable workforce and the enthusiasm and dedication of our volunteers and friends.

However, despite having the key elements for success in place, we have undergone unprecedented change in the last five years. Faced with the greatest financial challenge in over 30 years, the service has had to adapt, restructure and transform to ensure that we have continued to provide the best in exhibitions, public programmes, archaeology, outreach, collections care, customer care and audience participation.

In 2016, as a response to the Council's budget pressures, the service underwent a restructure and staffing reductions were implemented. The immediate impact was the closure of our city centre venues from six and seven days a week to five days a week. This had a negative impact on visitor numbers, income and our reputation. Advocacy with elected members along with feedback from visitors enabled a successful case to be made for additional financial support. In June 2018 our venues were opened seven days a week for the first time in our history. Since the introduction of extended opening hours visitor numbers have increased by 31% and income by 38%. It has also ensured greater access to the collections both for visitors and residents. The continued importance of Accreditation and Recognition status is essential to making the case for investment in the service.

Despite these challenges - and the ever changing financial and political landscape - much has been achieved. Highlights have included the redisplay and upgrading of the ground floor of the Museum of Childhood, the refurbishment of the City Observatory in partnership with the Collective Gallery, redispays at the Museum of Edinburgh, the Writers' Museum and the Nelson Monument, a permanent collections gallery at the City Art Centre, the establishment of the South East of Scotland Archaeology Partnership, new social media and digital presence and seven day a week opening across our city centre venues.

The following is a summary of the achievements against our six aims:

Aim 1: Deliver a world-class capital city museum and galleries service

Achievements

- Implemented digital sales and marketing strategy
- Delivered a new web site
- Formed partnership with Marketing Edinburgh to assist publicity and promotion of the service
- Teamed up with external PR agency *Cornershop PR* to enhance PR visibility
- Updated and improved use of social media across the service
- Delivered a service-wide temporary exhibitions programme
- Delivered an annual Travelling Gallery programme that has brought cutting edge contemporary art to every part of Scotland
- Delivered restoration of city WW1 War memorials and took part in Government VC paving stone scheme
- Participated in City Wide Festivals including the Edinburgh Art Festival, The Edinburgh International Science Festival, and The Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe, The Edinburgh Jazz Festival, The Edinburgh Student Art Festival, the International Storytelling Festival, and the History Festival
- Participated in National Programmes such as UNESCO City of Literature, Commonwealth Games 2014, Festival of Museums, The Burns Partnership, The National Collecting Scheme for Scotland, Scottish Government Focus Years programme, Art UK and the First World War Centenary Partnership
- Managed and oversaw c.400 archaeological excavations and consulted on and responded to over 2000 planning applications
- Established the South East of Scotland Archaeological Partnership

Aim 2: Transform how we use and present our museums, galleries and monuments

Achievements

- Delivered phase one of the redevelopment of the Museum of Childhood
- Delivered the restoration of the City Observatory complex on Calton Hill

- Produced Calton Hill management plan in partnership with Services for Communities and external stakeholders
- Delivered refurbishment of Museum of Edinburgh courtyards, entrance hall and courtyard gallery
- Upgraded displays in the Museum of Edinburgh including costume, Haig and glass galleries
- Transformed the entrance hall of the Writers' Museum to include a multi-purpose space and enhanced shop
- Upgraded the exhibition displays at the Nelson Monument and delivered a new garden alongside
- Developed business case for future use of Tron Kirk
- Completed the 12 Monuments Project in partnership with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust
- Improved on Visit Scotland gradings across several venues
- Installed a new energy efficient lighting system at the City Art Centre
- Converted Floor -1 of the City Art Centre into a permanent gallery for our Fine Art Collection

Aim 3: Place people and participation at the heart of what we do

Achievements

- Improved access for socially excluded individuals and groups through partnership working
- Developed and implemented an Outreach Strategy for the Service
- Produced a volunteer policy, guidelines and toolkit
- Formalised procedures for learning and volunteering opportunities to all planned projects
- Developed full and varied public programmes around temporary exhibitions across the service, in conjunction with external partners
- Developed a community archaeology project at Cammo Estate and worked with Cramond Heritage Trust and Cramond Association to enhance the interpretation of the Cramond Roman Fort

Aim 4: Achieve excellence in the development, use and care of collections

Achievements

- Undertook a full collections and buildings review of venue security
- Prepared and implemented a Care and Conservation Policy and Plan
- Revised our Collections Development Policy
- Revised the Jean F. Watson Bequest Collection strategy for Fine and Applied Art Collections
- Identified options for increasing storage capacity

- Identified options for a new Costume store
- Undertook a full review of our Printing Press Collection and relocated it to better storage facilities at Murrayburn
- Upgraded our Albion Road store, and relocated part of our archaeology and social history collections
- Introduced new web-based collections management system KE-Emu
- Introduced a new environmental monitoring system across our service
- Prioritised collecting contemporary material
- Instituted a service wide housekeeping programme across the service
- Installed new blinds at Lauriston Castle to reduce the harmful effects of sunlight, and devoted each February to a deep clean of the property
- Continue to support the loan of collections to museums and galleries nationwide and internationally to increase access to the collections and enhance Edinburgh's international reputation

Aim 5: Work efficiently and effectively for maximum impact

Achievements

- Delivered an exhibition to showcase all the Museums and Galleries Collections at the City Art Centre
- Ensured staff participation in cross-service working groups
- Completed and evaluated Monument Fellowship initiative
- Undertook regular team meetings and one to ones
- Promoted participation in relevant subject area online forums
- Promoted Continuous Professional Development
- Promoted sector-wide learning and development opportunities
- Encouraged staff uptake of CECIL and sector self-directed learning courses
- Introduced new archaeological archiving procedures to inform Treasure Trove

Aim 6: Become ever more resourceful, resilient and sustainable

Achievements

- Logged external funding secured in support of projects and programmes
- Identified and applied to full range of available funding streams
- Explored ways of using existing Trusts (Lauriston Castle and Friends of City Art Centre and Museums) as mechanisms to attract additional funding

- Developed relationships with Royal Mile attractions and business groups
- Undertook an assessment of catering provision service-wide, and delivered a new franchise for the City Art Centre and Lauriston Castle
- Identified ways of raising additional income through public programmes
- Produced a retail plan for the service
- Undertook an environmental audit of all sites and created an action plan
- Connected museum and gallery venues to the Metropolitan Area Network
- Introduced Wi-Fi at key venues (City Art Centre, Museum of Edinburgh, Museum of Childhood and Lauriston Castle)
- Secured funding for the East of Scotland Museums Partnership for a temporary Marketing Officer

Museums & Galleries Edinburgh Service Plan 2019 - 2023: Strategic Focus

The service will contribute to the Council's review of the Culture, Life-Long Learning and Leisure and adapt to any proposed change in governance, management arrangements or service delivery model. This may impact on the strategic and operational priorities set out in this plan but the focus for Museums & Galleries Edinburgh will be to build on the achievements of the previous five years and continue to realise our vision to inspire, enthuse and provoke through a shared passion for Edinburgh, art and history.

1. Collections Inventory and Condition Review

A three-year project to undertake a detailed inventory and condition review of the museum and galleries collections currently held at nine separate council premises and subsequently amalgamate these stored collections into one single new storage location.

Immediate benefits are:

- Full digitised database of all collection holdings meeting accreditation standards
- All items with a correct location, allowing quick retrieval
- Significant reduction in long term damage sustained by inadequate packing and packaging
- Highlighting objects at risk of further deterioration and resources required for stabilisation
- Object photographs of a suitable quality to go online on a collections search website
- Opportunities for wider public engagement during the inventory and review project
- Increased public access, both physical and digital, to the collections and collections information

- A holistic overview of the collections identifying items falling out with the Collections Development Policy, and therefore potential candidates for disposal (within Museums Association Disposal guidelines and Code of Ethics for Museums)
- Objects photographs of a suitable quality to develop additional merchandise for Museums and Galleries shops

Long term benefits are:

- Enhanced understanding of hazards and risks within the collections resulting in improved risk management and health and safety for collection users
- An informed rationalisation programme, leading to more adequate storage for existing items
- Enhanced retrieval of records on our database leading to previously unknown items being placed on display, with the opportunity to vary exhibits in temporary exhibitions and thereby improving long-term preservation
- More accurate valuations of collections leading to a likely increase in the monetary worth of the collections overall
- Raised profile of extent and scope of the collections for use by researchers, community groups etc
- Increased footfall to our museums and galleries leading to income generation
- Introduce an integrated electronic booking, point of sale, online retail and customer relationship management system

2. Service Redesign

The development of a collections and service led redesign by investigating the feasibility of the potential to create a new museums and galleries service of international quality, appropriate to Edinburgh as Scotland's capital city. This would allow much needed additional physical, educational and digital access to our nationally significant collections.

Long term benefits:

- A refocused, more sustainable, and cost-effective Museums and Galleries service of international standard
- Reposition the service alongside, complementary to and distinct from the National institutions to allow the story of Edinburgh in all its richness and diversity to be told for the very first time
- Improve the customer and visitor experience, provide opportunities for commercial development/maximise income, and enhance the city's reputation as a world class cultural destination
- Increased community engagement

- The potential for fewer buildings may result in lower running cost

Museums & Galleries Edinburgh Business Plan 2019 - 2023: Operational Focus

1. We will provide the best visitor experience for both local residents and international visitors

- Deliver a temporary exhibitions programme and associated educational events at the City Art Centre
- Refurbish the Scott Monument Museum Room
- Redesign a new front entrance for the City Art Centre
- Upgrade the displays at the Nelson Monument
- Undertake an upgrade of the visitor facilities at Lauriston Castle and in partnership with the *Forget Me Not Trust* refurbish the gate lodge
- Support the development of archaeology and widen access to the collections through publications, exhibitions and community engagement
- Seek funding to publish the archaeological backlog projects
- Maintain a housekeeping programme across the service
- Re-purpose the ground floor of Acheson House for community and commercial purposes
- Produce a four-year digital strategy and identify resources to support digital development
- Undertake audience research to inform a long-term vision for the service
- Produce a customer experience strategy
- Prepare and implement a city's monuments strategy
- Support workforce development and training to meet service objectives

2. Work in partnership to develop opportunities for community participation to enhance community cohesion, health and wellbeing

- Develop schools programme and projects with higher and further education providers
- Identify opportunities for individual and community input to collections development/ knowledge
- Expand commercial opportunities with artistic communities within Edinburgh and surrounding areas
- Identify partnership opportunities for developing sustainable smart technology to widen access to our service, venues, and collections
- Secure resources to develop and improve the archaeology service and work with partners to deliver annual regional conferences as part of the South East Scotland Archaeological Partnership

3. Develop opportunities for income maximisation and commercial development

- Revise pricing policy at Scott and Nelson Monuments to maximise income
- Explore possible funding sources for Business Development support
- Identify commercial sponsors for exhibitions and events
- Identify product development opportunities relating directly to our collections across retail spaces
- Identify potential funding opportunities for carbon reduction
- Undertake an audit of current spaces, hire charges and equipment
- Explore joint marketing support with Usher Hall/ Assembly Rooms for service-wide provision
- Secure support from the Council's Business Development section to help maximise the business opportunities for the service
- Produce service wide fundraising strategy
- Produce a range of promotional materials for venue hire
- Introduce contactless donation system

4. Performance Indicators

- Visitor Numbers – 750,000 visitors across all venues with an annual 3% increase
- Income target – £1,015,125 with an annual 3% increase
- Trip Advisor – Maintain a minimum 4-star rating for venues across the service
- Visit Scotland – Improve star rating by one star at four of our venues
- Maintain Accreditation and Recognised status