



REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
DATE:	19 th December 2023
SUBJECT:	Guildhall Action Plan
PURPOSE:	To provide a work programme of activity designed to support service delivery at the Guildhall, Boston
KEY DECISION:	No
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Sarah Sharpe, Portfolio Holder for Culture
REPORT OF:	John Leach, Deputy Chief Executive - Communities
REPORT AUTHOR:	Phil Perry, Assistant Director Leisure and Culture
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

The Guildhall is owned and maintained by Boston Borough Council. It has international, national and local significance. The building itself dates back to the 1390's and is a testament to the wealth and influence of the Guild of St Mary at a time when Boston's power as a centre of trade was second only to London.

The Leisure and Culture Division within the Communities Directorate is responsible for developing and delivering the museum service that is offered through the Guildhall.

Noting the importance of the building to the borough of Boston and the need to deliver an efficient service an action plan has been developed that is built around four themes:-

- a) Sustainability and Improving Financial Resilience
- b) Historic Site and Collection
- c) Exhibition and Event Programming
- d) Promotion and Marketing

The thematic areas within the plan are supported by key strategic objectives which are linked to 21 actions.

Committee Members are asked to comment on and consider the action plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To consider the report and its appendix and provide feedback on the action plan.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Guildhall is an important Council asset which is managed within the Leisure and Culture Division of the Communities Directorate. The proposed action plan for the Guildhall has been developed to support economic, efficient and effective service delivery.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

1. To continue operating the facility within current arrangements utilising the Council's generic policies and procedures for staff and facilities management but without a tailored action plan to further assist the targeting of resources against strategic objectives.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Built in the 1390's the Guildhall in Boston is a testament to the wealth and influence of the Guild of St Mary at a time when Boston's power as a centre of trade was second only to London. This wonderfully preserved building, with a wealth of original features, has survived the centuries and is to be enjoyed as one of Boston's finest visitor attractions.
- 1.2 A wealth of stories, secrets and experiences are told and shared throughout the building including the history of the Guild of St Mary, international trade with the Hanseatic League, the foundation of the Corporation of Boston and the very famous trial and imprisonment of the Pilgrims.
- 1.3 Boston Guildhall Museum is free to visit and is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10:30am to 3:30pm.
- 1.4 The Guildhall is owned and maintained by Boston Borough Council. The budget in 2023/24 is £230,275.99. Last year the service achieved an income of £14,559.82 (largely achieved from weddings and room hire). The premises benefits from a full-time manager for the venue and two part time staff (5.5 hours and 19.25 hours). There are currently two vacant posts within the service (a Collections Officer post at 29.6 hours and assistant officer post at 19.25 hours).
- 1.5 Noting the importance of the building to the borough of Boston and the need to deliver an efficient service an action plan has been developed as presented in appendix 1 of this report and discussed in section 2.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The action plan in appendix 1 has been developed around four themes, each supporting a number of key strategic objectives as referenced on the next page: -

(A) Sustainability and Improving Financial Resilience

Strategic objectives within this theme:-

- Seek to improve resilience in the service
- Seek the most efficient service delivery model for the Guildhall
- Seek to maximize income.

(B) Historic Site and Collection

Strategic objectives within this theme:-

- Retain museum accreditation
- Repair and maintain the Guildhall
- Curate and contribute to historical research

(C) Exhibition and Event Programming

Strategic objectives within this theme:-

- Increase income and support for a wider cultural/tourism offer
- Seek external funding opportunities for events and exhibitions
- Maximise the opportunity of National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status
- Delivery of an annual exhibition programme
- Increase accessibility to collections through exhibitions
- Increase joint and partnership event and exhibition programming

(D) Promotion and Marketing

Strategic objectives within this theme:-

- Maximise promotion of the Guildhall offer to a range of audiences
- Seek to increase reach through marketing
- Increase engagement with Schools

2.2 Actions with timescales have been developed to seek to deliver against the strategic objectives.

2.3 The plan has been developed through engagement with the Portfolio Holder, Lead Officers and Partners and seeks to focus on: -

- maximising the opportunity presented by Arts Council England funding that has awarded the Partnership National Portfolio Organisation status.
- profiling the cultural and international, national and local heritage offer provided by this historic building and its collections
- exploring opportunities for an alternative operating model
- increasing income through private hire events and improving financial resilience
- capitalising on funding opportunities
- delivering more events and exhibitions to draw in increased visitors to the venue and the borough of Boston
- increasing marketing activity

- 2.4 Monitoring of the actions will be reported on at Portfolio Holder Briefings, Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings as appropriate.

The current lead officers to ensure delivery against the plan are:-

- Venue Manager
- Interim Cultural Services Manager
- Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Guildhall Action Plan has been developed as a “live document” to be continually developed in order to support accountability within the service to strategically and operationally deliver what is required from this important borough asset.

- 3.2 The action plan has been developed to facilitate residents and visitors in deriving as much benefit as possible from the Guildhall whilst achieving this through an approach that supports the most economic, efficient, effective working practices possible.

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

4.1 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 **SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS’ PARTNERSHIP-** No key implications to be reported within this report. There is the opportunity to enhance the synergy between the Guildhall and other heritage/cultural assets within the Partnership area which is to be further explored through the action plan.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The proposed strategy aligns to the following Sub-Regional South and East Lincolnshire Council Partnership priorities:-

Priority 1: Growth and Prosperity

Priority 2: Healthy Lives

Priority 3: Safe and Resilient Communities

Priority 4: Environment

Corporate Priority: Efficiency and Effectiveness

6. STAFFING

- 6.1 The action plan includes an action to seek to improve resilience in the service through a remodelling of staffing arrangements, including the use of volunteers.

7. WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The remodelling of staffing arrangements referenced in point 6.1 includes consideration of the capacity for the workforce to deliver the required service.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no constitutional or legal implications directly associated with this report. Where relevant such matters would be dealt with as appropriate through consideration of each current or future action.

9. DATA PROTECTION

9.1 There are no specific data protection implications to report as a consequence of the development of the action plan. Where projects/actions relate to matters that have implications for data protection, the appropriate information governance safeguards will be considered and applied as appropriate.

10. FINANCIAL

10.1 The budget in 2023/24 is £230,275.99. Last year the service achieved income of £14,559.82 (largely achieved from weddings and room hire).

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 There are no key risks to report as a consequence of the development of the action plan.

12. STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

12.1 The action plan has been developed following engagement work with the Portfolio Holder, Lead Officers and Partners.

13. REPUTATION

13.1 The action plan supports work to uphold the reputation of the Council by promoting an efficient and effective service that safeguards the appropriate use of the Guildhall for present and future generations.

14. CONTRACTS

14.1 The action plan includes an action to test the market for an alternative provider. It does not commit the Council to entering into a contract. Should the Council wish to do this a report will be provided for consideration through the appropriate democratic channels.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER

15.1 There are no key implications relating to crime and disorder as a consequence of this report. It may be that actions to further support the preservation of the building and its collections are included in the action plan as it developed, noting it is a live document.

16. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

16.1 An equality impact assessment will be provided to support the action plan.

17. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

17.1 There are no key implications with respect to Health and Well-Being to consider regarding the development of the action plan. The positive use of the Guildhall by the public helps support matters relating to community cohesion and health and wellbeing.

18. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

18.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications.

19. LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS	
This paper contributes to the following Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.	
Pride in Place	By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Wellbeing	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

20. ACRONYMS

BBC – Boston Borough Council

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

NPO – National Portfolio Organisation

SMG&BM – St Mary's Guildhall & Boston Museum

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Draft Guildhall Action Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

Document title	Where the document can be viewed

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

This is the first publication of this report.

Name of body	Date

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Phil Perry, Assistant Director Culture and Leisure
Signed off by:	John Leach, Deputy Chief Executive (Communities)
Approved for publication:	