



APPENDIX 1

BOSTON GUILDHALL – DRAFT ACTION PLAN

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1.0 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 this document.

The Focus of the Action Plan

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

- maximising the opportunity presented by Arts Council England funding that has awarded the Guildhall National Portfolio status.
- profile the cultural and international, national and local heritage offer provided by this historic building and its collections
- explore 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 audiences to the venue and the borough of Boston
- increasing marketing activity

2.0 Approach to the Action Plan

The following four themes have been developed, each supporting key strategic objectives.

1. 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.

2. Historic Site and Collection

Strategic objectives within this theme:-

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

3. 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

4. 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

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

2.1 Resources

This plan contains an action to review the structure for operational management of the Guildhall with completion by April 2024. This review will be part of a wider review within the Leisure and Culture Division that will be following the same timeline. An ambition included within this is to grow the volunteer base for the service recognising the importance of community identity and interest in safeguarding our past for the benefit of future generations.

It is important to recognise that the operation of the venue is Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10.30am to 3.30pm. A Full time Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer is employed for 37 hours a week and two assistants (5.5 hours and 19.25 hours). Whilst the Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer does have wider cultural responsibilities their focus is on the facility. Events staff within the Culture and Leisure Division also offer further support and resilience as appropriate.

The Action Plan includes seeking out funding opportunities to further develop the Guildhall offer whilst living within the Council's own assigned budget for the facility.

2.2 Monitoring and Governance

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

The current lead officers are:-

- Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer
- Interim Cultural Services Manager
- Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture

3.0 Sustainability and Improving Financial Resilience



<u>Reference Number</u>	<u>Strategic Objective/s</u>	<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Current / Proposed Action</u>	<u>Detail including comments to support delivery (eg resources required etc)</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Timescale for Delivery</u>
Sustainability and Improving Financial Resilience Actions: 1-8						
1	Seek to improve resilience in the service	Leisure and Culture	Short Term Proposed Action: Seek to improve resilience in the service through a remodelling of staffing arrangements, including the use of volunteers.	The Guildhall currently runs on a lean staffing structure. It is proposed that the Leisure and Cultural Services (L&CS) Review within the L&CS	Assistant Director Leisure and Culture	April 2024

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				Division remodels the staffing arrangements and seeks to improve resilience within the service through the use of volunteers. This work is to also consider synergies with similar assets ie Ayscoughfee Hall in Spalding.		
2	Seek the most efficient service delivery model for the Guildhall	Transformation	<u>Current Proposed Action:</u> Explore commissioning models with external providers	Outcome to be compared to the cost of the current provision.	Head of Special Projects	24/25
3	Seek to maximize income.	Cultural Services	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Maximise appropriate levels of wedding and meeting hire by developing a new wedding promotion package for the Guildhall.	The Guildhall presents as a fantastic wedding venue but requires further promotional activity in order to maximize the opportunity to use it for these purposes.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	April 2024
4	Seek to maximize income.	St Mary's Guildhall & Boston Museum (SMG&BM)	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Improve retail area with installation of Book sales retail	Work to enhance the retail experience. (Local History material and memorabilia are the most	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	2024/25 (Subject to capital bid)

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		NPO Team Place Team	furniture (limited improvements possible through current year exhibition and display budgets). Increase local history resale stock and commission production of Boston Memorabilia (possible through reallocation of access budgets into stock budget)	commonly requested items and book sales are of particular importance in our retail.) Develop and implement retail diversification into specialist retail sales in Local and regional History Publications as well as St Mary's Guildhall, American and Boston relevant memorabilia.		
5	Seek to maximize income.	Culture	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Provide a refreshed programme of revenue generating events appropriate to the venue including specialist talks and other events	Provide a refreshed programme of Guildhall related events that offer synergy with other events in the town and key historical dates that offer alignment with the venue. Work to seek to include NPO resource to help boost capacity in order to deliver a fulsome programme of events.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	April 2024

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6	Seek to maximize income.	SMG&BMM ICT Finance	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Installation of a card payment machine.	On site cashless payments would help improve revenue / income received by the venue. This action will also improve on site financial security.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	ASAP
7	Seek to maximize income	SMG&BM ICT Finance	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Develop a proposal for an online sales portal and progress subject to funding and access to the required technical support.	Evaluation of current models to enable these sales needs to be undertaken. Resources within the directorate and with PSPSL in ICT and Finance should be investigated to enable a proposal for this to be developed	Interim Cultural Services Manager Finance ICT	2024/25
8	Seek to maximize income	Culture	<u>Short Term proposed Action:</u> Develop a donations and Guildhall Funding Policy	The Guildhall has a limited budget which could be further supported through charitable donations. This action is suggested to support the opportunity for visitors to voluntarily contribute to the upkeep of the venue.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	April 2024

4.0 Historic Site & Collections



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Historic Site & Collections Actions: 9 – 12						
9	Retain museum accreditation	St Mary's Guildhall & Boston Museum (SMG&BM)	Short Term Proposed Action: Identify and prioritise specific actions and areas of work to site and collections required to meet accreditation standard.	The Accreditation Scheme is run by Arts Council England and offers nationally agreed standards to ensure all museums are sustainable, focused and trusted, inspiring the confidence of the public	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	24/25

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				and funding and governing bodies.		
10	Retain museum accreditation	SMG&BM	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Deliver actions identified in Accreditation review in collections backlog and documentation backlog and allied works. Action and review points and deadlines for activities identified	Document progress and new aims and objectives added accordingly.	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	24/25
11	Repair and maintain the Guildhall	SMG&BM + Property Services	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Establish essential Repairs and Maintenance schedule for St Marys Guildhall (both urgent and non-urgent). Review 2023 Quinquennial survey with Property Services to prioritise works for both in house capital project consideration and for external funding bids.	SMG&BM + Property Services to conduct review of Quinquennial Survey to identify financial requirements prior to investigation of funding sources. Venue Manager and Interim Cultural Services Manager to develop a capital bid for submission into 2024/2025 budget consideration.	Assistant Director Leisure and Culture with Assistant Director Assets	First review date 7 th November 2023. Further reviews and requests to capital fund and external bids to be considered subsequently. Capital bid to be developed

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						by December 2023 A position on funding to be detailed by February 2024.
12	Curate and contribute to historical research	SMG&BM	<p><u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Curate and deliver historical research into our site, collection and wider influence to inform audience engagement programmes and to inform potential bids defining a compelling case for investment. Explore opportunities for specific research initiatives contextual with the site and collections and with the allied histories that sit with Boston and across the partnership areas.</p>	Development of a research brief to be proposed for consideration of funding sources.	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	June 2024

5. Exhibition and Event Programming



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Exhibition & Event Programming Actions: 13 – 18						
13	Increase income and support for a wider cultural/ tourism offer	Culture	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Provide a refreshed programme of revenue generating events appropriate to the venue including specialist talks and other events	See also action 5. Provide a refreshed programme of Guildhall related events that offer synergy with other events in the town and key historical	Interim Cultural Services Manager	April 2024

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				dates that offer alignment with the venue. Work to seek to include NPO resource to help boost capacity in order to deliver a fulsome programme of events.		
14	Seek external funding opportunities for events and exhibitions	Culture	<u>Short Term Proposed Action</u> Identify funding streams and bid for appropriate funding to deliver quality events and improve exhibitions in the Guildhall.	Various funders offer opportunities for funding to the Guildhall. This project will seek out those opportunities and pull together bids working with partners and officers in the Council as appropriate.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing
15	Maximise the opportunity of National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status	SMG&BM NPO Team	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Actively work with the new NPO team to initiate, develop and deliver appropriate and relevant programmes.	Engage with the NPO and curatorially inform its programme delivery to maximise relevance and legacy of its actions and activities.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing
16	Delivery of an annual exhibition programme	SMG&BM	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Develop and implement an annual exhibition programming cycle	Develop a planning cycle with forecast budgets for delivery linking in with the Events and NPO Team.	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	April 2024

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17	Increase accessibility to collections through exhibitions .	SMG&BMM	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Establish a refreshed display area/s and implement the installation of items	Review items within the collection that can easily be brought out of storage that also critically fit with the ambitions to increase audience engagement. Progress subject to the availability of funding.	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	July 2024
18	Increase joint and partnership event and exhibition programming	SMG&BM	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Increase joint and partnership event and exhibition programming with Cultural Quarter sites and Heritage Partners including Ayscoughfee and Spalding Gentleman's Society.	Build on the successful existing initiatives including Model Fairground Show, Boston History and Book Festivals, Boston Tea Party Planning, Halloween and other events with input through our new planning cycle and initiatives of the NPO and Transported. Encourage fostering of relationships of all parties through the Cultural Quarter group and local opportunities as well as developing partnership wide projects with heritage partners.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing

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				NPO and Transported can be directed to these areas as well as work undertaken directly.		

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6.0 Promotion and Marketing



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Promotion and Marketing Actions: 19 – 21						
19	Maximise promotion of the Guildhall offer to a range of audiences	SMG&BM	<u>Short Term Proposed Action</u> Develop and propose a rebrand of the site. Looking to clarify the full offer of the Guildhall as a significant Historic Building and Museum as well as a	Improve the promotion, presentation and brand of St Mary's Guildhall and Boston Museum as a site to better communicate our offer. Construct a proposal based on proposals in the Forward Development Plan.	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	Initial proposal and discussions with designers, to inform next steps complete by April 2024

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			potential hire venue. Within this consider developing the venues own website and opportunities for improving signage. .	Engage with the design partners used in the development of the Boston historic and corporate brand, delivered by this service, to gain an indicative cost of representing the Guildhall which is coherent and consistent with the wider town branding we have already developed.		
20	Seek to increase reach through marketing	Culture	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Develop and implement a marketing strategy in line with brand considerations. Implement a considered programme of marketing for the site including advertising, social media and printed literature to promote the newly established programmes of exhibitions, events and NPO activity.	Work within forecast budgets to plan where advertising will be most effective at increasing our reach and engagement. Work with Place and the NPO in this regard.	Interim Cultural Services Manager	June 2024

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21	Increase engagement with Schools	SMG&BMM	<u>Short Term Proposed Action:</u> Develop a portfolio offer for Schools in order to increase the engagement of schools/young people.	The engagement of young people in the Guildhall offer is vital to support their educational and community needs.	Principle Museum, Arts & Heritage Officer	June 2024

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