

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member for Culture and Communities

DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday 29th March 2023

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priority: *Increase visitor numbers to museums and attractions*

Update: Middlesbrough Museums and Teesside Archives

1. The successful *Ancient Egyptians: Secrets of the Afterlife* exhibition at the Dorman Museum closed in February. The exhibition was the first part of a partnership between the Dorman and the British Museum (BM), with the BM lending several objects to the exhibition from its own collection.
2. The partnership also included work with two Tees Valley schools under the *British Museum in Your Classroom* project, which culminated in the schools curating their own exhibition. Reaction to the exhibit was overwhelmingly positive, and the British Museum has intimated their desire to continue the partnership in the future.
3. The project has been put forward to the Museum & Heritage Awards via the Tees Valley Museums Group NPO for 'Partnership of the Year'.
4. The Museum team are now preparing for the reopening of the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum on 1 April, and for The Dorman's next exhibition "Titanic", which will include exhibits of items from the fabrication and ill-fated 1912 voyage of RMS *Titanic*.
5. Middlesbrough Museums is currently undergoing a Service Review which aims to increase engagement with and access to our collections. The 45-day consultation period with staff started on 7 March, and the results will be shared with Members after the review is completed.
6. The 2023/24 budget for Teesside Archives was agreed at the Joint Archives Committee on 1 March. The Committee also agreed to a proposal to develop a brief for feasibility work exploring options for the future development of the service, including the feasibility of bringing archive storage back in-house. Conversations have started with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) around potential

funding for this work and to better understand how it fits within the wider heritage framework they are developing for the Tees Valley.

Parks

7. For the Easter holidays, Albert Park has again been awarded funding from the Holiday Activity Fund to deliver holiday programming for children accessing free school meals. Albert Park is working with Breckon Hill, Abingdon and St Joseph's primary schools to signpost children to this opportunity, providing music activities, sport and wildlife education, while also providing a free meal for all children attending. Programmes will take place over four days through the holidays and will be delivered in partnership between Albert Park and the Dorman Museum.
8. Thorntree, Pallister and Albert Parks are nearing completion of their projects funded by the Towns Fund. So far, these projects have seen the delivery of children's play equipment at Pallister Park and Thorntree Park, a lighting scheme at Thorntree Park, a fence around Albert Park's bowls greens and money ring-fenced to contribute to an application to the Football Foundation's 'Playzone' funding for a new multi-use games area at Pallister Park.

Strategic Priority: *Increase tickets sales at town hall performances*

Update:

9. The Town Hall has successfully secured a further 3-years of investment from Arts Council, due to its NPO (National Portfolio Organisation) status. The funding will enable the Town Hall to continue to develop its engagement work with diverse audiences and communities.
10. As a pre-requisite to the new NPO funding period (April 2023-March 2026) we have been reviewing our governance arrangements for the Town Hall, including recruiting new Board members and establishing greater community representation.
11. The Town Hall team have been looking at programming for 2024 when the Main Hall will be out of action for circa 8 months whilst emergency roof repair works will take place. The team hope to mitigate some of the lost income by more fully utilising other spaces including the Crypt, Fire Station and Courthouse.

Strategic Priority: *Work with the voluntary sector to create and promote volunteering opportunities and an increase in volunteers*

Update:

12. Volunteers in many of our Community Hubs have been doing some amazing work for their local areas including volunteers at North Ormesby Hub, who have recently finished renovating the boxing gym, working hard to extend the sparring ring and add rigging to house more punching bags, which have become necessary due to an increase in demand for the space.

13. Residents of Grove Hill & Easterside have been taking part in Community Hub organised litter picks, being ably assisted by children from Lynx and the Thomas More Mini Vinnies, who collected 30 bags of rubbish in total.

HIGHLIGHTS

World Book Day

14. The Middlesbrough Library Service had a full week of World Book Day celebrations reaching over 700 children.
15. Reception classes from Pallister Park Primary School visited the Neptune Library for Little Red Riding Hood themed visits, where they had a story time, went on a Treasure Hunt and explored the library books.
16. Newport Primary School visited Central Library for some Traditional Tales fun and a tour of the Reference Library.
17. St Gerard's Catholic Primary School visited Hemlington Community Hub and Library where they explored Africa using lots of different resources including musical instruments.
18. Acklam Community Hub and Library hosted 40 people at their regular rhyme time session - all the children dressed up and were given World Book Day vouchers to celebrate the occasion.
19. Library staff also popped in to Park End Primary where they carried out whole school assemblies telling the children all about our amazing Middlesbrough libraries - including joining and borrowing books for free, the promotion of reading for pleasure, our popular Lego Clubs, holiday sessions and the Summer Reading



Challenge.



Shop Window Displays

20. As part of the Town Centre Crime and ASB Action Plan, the culture team have put a call out for creatives to express interest in curating a series of empty shop window displays.

21. The programme will start in June and be preceded by a national photographic exhibition in partnership with Historic England. "Images of England's High Streets"- including photographs of Middlesbrough- will be displayed in shop units from 22 March.

Cllr Stephen Hill

16/03/23