

Partnership Working

The development of the detailed proposals cannot be undertaken by everyone meeting in a large-scale Forum. Interested individuals together with representatives from a wide range of heritage and cultural organisations have been meeting to discuss the Strategy to assist NHDC in developing its plans. These were then presented to the Forum for wider discussion and consideration. Because it was not possible to present the final draft strategy document to the Forum due to the large number of comments received, a deadline date of 12th February for further comments was agreed at the Forum.

What next?

A revised draft strategy will be circulated to everyone who attended the Forum. The Strategy will also be on the Council's website.

There is still time to sign up for one of the working groups to discuss the Museums' Resource Centre; Museum Loans Service; Digitisation; Museum Facilities.

Thank you to those who have already signed up for one or more of the groups. Dates and times of future working group meetings will be sent out to those on the mailing list for each group in due course. If you would like to participate, but have not signed up, please contact Lorrae Hunter.

The next meeting of the Forum is planned for 9th July 2007, venue to be confirmed.

If you have any additional comments or views, please contact::

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ARTS, MUSEUMS & HERITAGE FORUM

The third meeting of the **ARTS, MUSEUMS & HERITAGE FORUM** was held on the 5th February 2007 at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth. Once again, the meeting was well attended by people representing a broad range of local groups and organisations.

This newsletter format has been designed to allow everyone who is interested to keep up to date as future plans are developed. The newsletter will be available in both hard (paper) copy and also in electronic format. If you require any further copies please contact Lorrae Hunter 01462 474528 or by email lorrae.hunter@north-herts.gov.uk.

If you require copies of the presentations and documents referred to at the Forum, these can also be obtained by contacting Lorrae Hunter.

The Council also has a web-site page for the Museums Service at www.north-herts.gov.uk, under 'Discover North Herts.'

To everyone who attended - thank you for your time

All the comments you provided at the Forum will help inform our thinking on how we can take forward our broader arts, culture and heritage agenda, as well as the more specific plans for improving our Museums Service.

Overleaf is a short summary of what was discussed.

Forum Summary

Dr. Patrick Candler opened the meeting and gave a presentation on behalf of 'Living East', the cultural consortium for the East of England. It's report, 'A Better Life', sets out the cultural context in which NHDC and partners have to operate.

Ros Allwood then gave a presentation on draft two of the Arts Museums & Heritage Strategy and thanked everyone who has returned their Inventory forms. The strategy aims to improve awareness of and access to arts, museums and heritage in North Herts, to audit existing provision to identify local needs, and to provide plans for the development of new arts activities.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS RAISED

Why has this review spread to the whole of the East of England rather than just the 'local' area?	One outcome from the Best Value Review of the Museum Services was to put a wider arts & heritage strategy in place. It is important that this strategy takes account of county and regional priorities if we are going to secure additional funding.
There is no place in Hitchin for a new museum and we would like to see a refurbishment of the old museum	Patrick Candler explained that the working groups would be looking at details such as this. The next phase of working groups will begin their work in late April 2007 once the strategy has been agreed
Concern was raised that one museum would not 'suit' all	This point has been well made. However, it is important to find a very clear balance between local needs and aspirations and the broader views across North Herts. Again, the details will be considered on the specialist working groups.

The Visual Arts Forum welcomed the report and was grateful that 'Open Studios had been raised'	Currently there is a shortage of studio space for young artists, Objective 1 highlights the need to provide more studio space in North Herts.

A REMINDER OF OUR PLANS

<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy. <p>(Once the AMH Strategy has been agreed, then more detailed considerations of various projects can be continued).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest new resources in our excellent Museums and Galleries Service. Use Information Technology (IT) to help digitise collections and to allow improved access. Extend the benefits of the schools loan service to other heritage providers and museums of the district. Improve the storage and research facilities for items not on display, and allow the other museums of our district to benefit from this investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in either one refurbished or a new build museum to act as a central hub for the NHDC service. Work with Letchworth Heritage Foundation, which has expressed a desire to develop a new museum in Letchworth. Work in greater partnership with the voluntary, not for profit sector, to improve access to all North Hertfordshire museums and their services. <p>Please remember that NHDC is at the beginning of a long process of improving the Museums Service. Both Hitchin and Letchworth Museums will continue in their current form for the next few years.</p>
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