

## North Hertfordshire District Council

### Minutes of the Heritage & Culture/Museums & Galleries Project Board Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006 (Fifth meeting)

#### 1. Present:

##### Members

Councillor Gary Grindal (GG)  
Councillor Terry Hone (TH)  
Councillor Ian Knighton (IK)  
Councillor Paul Clark (PC)

##### NHDC

John Robinson (JR)  
Patrick Candler (Pca)  
Lynn Saville (LS)  
Ros Allwood (RA)  
Annie Hawkins (HCC)  
Lorrae Hunter (LH) - minutes

#### Apologies:

Councillor Tricia Gibbs (TG)

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2006

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

#### 3. Matters Arising

Item 3 – no responses yet from schools (due to summer holidays) to the letter asking for views of both teachers and children. All North Herts schools, private and state, were included in mailing list.

#### 4. Highlight Report

RA gave an update on the Highlight Report. The tasks have been completed as detailed in the report.

##### Key Issues:

The Forum had taken place on 11<sup>th</sup> July. Julie Massey (HCC Museums Development Officer) made it very clear in her presentation that North Herts Museums would be in danger of 'being left behind' if modernisation improvements to the museums service were not carried out.

Following on from the Forum, five new dedicated project working groups will be set up. Mailing lists for these groups have been created and there has been a good response, with some people/groups asking to attend more than one group. These are not exclusive and other interested parties can be invited to join the groups. It is important to have a broad spectrum of people involved.

The prime focus is on developing the Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy and a date for the first meeting has been agreed – October 4<sup>th</sup>. All other groups will be put on hold until the Strategy has been completed.

No further information to report on the Heritage Foundation Investment Plans.

Baldock Town Hall Feasibility Study is ongoing and due to report

#### Action

PC/RA

to Committee in late September.

PB Comments:

IK expressed his support regarding the invitation to the wider population to attend the working groups, especially children and young people, schools. The meeting with secondary schools had been very informative

JR stated that the implementation plan and communication plan will take this into consideration along with the BMG District Wide Survey.

TH requested that the mailing list should include the organisations that people are representing, as this will assist in finding out which groups are not attending.

Key Actions:

The Highlight Report was noted.

The draft Terms of Reference were agreed for wider consultation at the Strategy working group.

Projects due next stage:

It has been suggested by Julie Massey that a separate North Herts Museums group be formed to improve day to day support and guidance. This would also be helpful for future planning of possible partnership projects such as museum storage. Such a group would be helpful for the joint bids and enable working together.

RA

Production of the new vision brochure has been delayed as it was felt that the working groups may want to contribute and develop their 'ownership'.

An initial meeting between PC/RA with the Heritage Lottery Fund took place on 9 August. HLF do not fund new-build museums and from their perspective, refurbishments of historic or dilapidated existing buildings stand a much greater chance of success. It is proposed that NHDC makes a bid for £50k feasibility funding, followed by applications for larger funding in a year to eighteen months time. However, we do need to be very clear as to what are priorities are – and these will link into the AMH Strategy.

HLF also advised that it was important to look at other partners i.e. tourism, economic development, Herts Prosperity. It was agreed to compile a list of where we can access funding relating to these organisations, eg: through HERN (Herts External Resources Network)

Project Finance

Funding from the Strategic Priorities Fund has been agreed, this will provide RA with 3 dedicated days a week to work on this project.

### Impact of changes

It is too early to assess the full impact of changes made to date. There is a view that the second Forum was more productive and informative than the first, but there remain concerns in some quarters about the whole Museums project. It is important that we do listen to all parties, but also to reflect the direction set out in the FSR.

A balance needs to be struck between those who argue for 'local' issues and those who have a district wide perspective.

The communication plan needs to be used in a positive way.

## **5. Project Documentation**

a) Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy. NHDC has a Leisure & Cultural Strategy (2001-2005) which has a wider remit. This will be revised in the future and the AMHS will be contained within. As part of the revision, the existing policy statements and objectives can be presented to the first meeting of the Strategy Group.

b) Service and Financial Planning

Outline reference was made in the FSR to the anticipated estimates of the Museums review, but until detailed costings are known, no formal bids will be submitted to the SFP process.

c) Gantt chart.

A fully worked up Gantt chart will need to be prepared, but the first draft stage of the Museums Project was presented. The critical issue is the approval of the PID. It will be necessary for clarity on the longer-term dependencies, relationships and timescales.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

6<sup>th</sup> December 2006 at 5pm to be held in Committee Room 3, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth.

## **7. 2007 Meetings**

The following dates were agreed: 7<sup>th</sup> March, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 5<sup>th</sup> December. All to start 5pm and finish at 6pm.