

Subject:	Contract Review – Rossendale Museum, Whitaker Park	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	28 th November 2012
Report of:	Head of Health Housing & Regeneration	Portfolio Holder:	Regeneration Tourism & Leisure
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes	Attached: Yes – September 2012 Cabinet
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That the contents of this report be noted.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To update Members on the progress of the discussion to explore options for the management and operation of Rossendale Museum.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **A clean and green Rossendale** – creating a better environment for all.
 - **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy.
 - **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 In June 2012 Cabinet approved a process to begin work to consider the current management arrangements for Rossendale Museum and to develop options for potential cost savings.
- 5.2 Whitaker Park Museum currently opens to the public for 17.5 hours per week Tues-Thurs, Sat, Sun 1300-1630 and is managed by Lancashire County Council's Museum Service and is budgeted at an annual cost of £106,930.
- 5.3 Officers have met with both officers from Lancashire County Council who provide the services on behalf of Rossendale Borough Council and members of the Friends of Whitaker Park Museum to begin discussions about potential areas for cost savings, how the future options may be developed, who would be included in the consultation stages and how the consultation would be undertaken.

5.4 Consultation has been carried out with Rossendale's Citizens Panel which asked the following questions:

Currently, Rossendale Museum, at Whitaker Park in Rawtenstall, is open 17.5 hours, over 5 days per week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday) throughout the year.

Q: Have you ever visited Rossendale Museum?

3.9% *Yes, more than once a month*

19.0% *Yes, more than once a year*

10.6% *Yes, once a year*

8.3% *Yes, less than once a year*

31.9% *Yes, once in the last few years*

26.4% *No, I have never visited Rossendale Museum*

Q: If you have visited the Museum, what was the nature of your visit?

87.8% *Personal visit out of interest*

7.9% *Visit as part of an organised group*

14.2% *Visit for an organised event*

The Museum is managed by Lancashire County Council (LCC) but Rossendale Council pays for the service. LCC have confirmed that in order to reduce costs, they would need to reduce the opening times of the Museum. We think that we can save between £10,000 and £50,000 by doing this.

Q: Do you agree or disagree that we should consider options for reducing the opening times of the Museum in order to save money?

59.9% *Agree*

28.6% *Disagree*

11.5% *Don't know*

Q: We are also considering the option of inviting any other interested parties to run the Museum, at their expense. Do you agree or disagree that we should consider this option?

71.6% *Agree*

17.1% *Disagree*

11.3% *Don't know*

5.5 Formal notice has been served upon Lancashire County Council as the current managers and operators of the Museum to end the Management Agreement with effect from 31st March 2013. This is in accordance with the requirements of the Management Agreement which stipulated that minimum of 6 months notice should be given ending on the 31st March in any one year.

5.6 Serving notice allows both parties to enter into formal negotiations relating to the Management Agreement to explore the options to reduce the costs of the contract. It also may allow for the notice period to be extended but this will be subject to formal negotiations with Lancashire County Council. At this moment it is understood that Lancashire County Council would expect any extension of the notice to be for a period of not less than 12 months. Lancashire County Council have also indicated that they consider that TUPE would apply to posts associated with the staffing of the museum.

5.7 In order to ensure that all options are considered, the Council will be issuing a notice seeking expressions of interest from organisations who may wish to submit proposals to manage and operate the museum.

5.8 It is anticipated that expressions will be received by the end of January 2013.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Financial matters are noted in the report.

6.2 Members are aware that as part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy, Council has to reduce its annual net expenditure by in excess of £1.3m

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 No additional comments to add

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

8.1 The Equality Act 2012 requires the Council to have due regard in the exercising of its functions to three considerations. The need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The amount of regard that is “due” is set out in the Act and will depend on the circumstances of the case.

Under the general equality duty there is a requirement to engage with people with protected characteristics and to have an adequate evidence base for Council decision-making.

The Council is under a Duty to consult representatives of a wide range of local people, this should include local voluntary and community organisations and small businesses in such consultation

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

9.1 Lancashire County Council, Friends of Whitaker Park Museum, Citizens Panel, Portfolio holder, Rossendale Museum Advisory Group

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Whilst the museum is a valued asset for the Borough there remains scope to review the operational costs to achieve savings to contribute to the requirements of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.