



Service Design Proposal

Heritage

1 What is the recommendation?

The Council should retain the Heritage Service in-house and implement an improvement programme to increase visitor numbers, income and volunteering whilst reducing operational costs.

2 Why is this proposal recommended?

Heritage is a relatively small service area with a net budget of c. £869k (inclusive of depreciation and internal support service costs). The Heritage Service, including its archives and collections, comprise unique local assets that can play a key role in place shaping and community cohesion. Although other providers could deliver the service, the financial and service advantages would be limited.

The commercial opportunities are restricted by the limitations of the assets which the Council manages, principally Valence House Museum and Eastbury Manor House.

The Council is tied into Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) agreements and a full repairing lease for Eastbury Manor House with the National Trust to 2038, which is a property liability that the Council is unlikely to be able to transfer to any other party.

Although the Council's heritage ambition is still developing, it includes the potential development of an East London Industrial Heritage Museum, a Feminist Museum and the improvement of the Abbey Ruins and Abbey area. If these schemes are determined as viable proposals and are to be progressed, they would need to utilise internal expertise with additional external capacity to ensure there is an integrated heritage offer for the borough.

3 What does the future service look like?

The scope of the service will remain as is - Valence House Museum (including the Archive & Local Studies Library) and Eastbury Manor House. It will continue to source external funding opportunities wherever possible. However, there will be a concerted effort to drive up visitor numbers and maximise commercial opportunities, in part supported by HLF Transition funding the "Sustaining Eastbury" project. In addition, there will be a programme to increase volunteering opportunities as part of the proposed "service growth"; currently approximately .85% of the controllable budget is employee-related expenditure.

The draft Heritage Strategy sets out some of the objectives and outcomes for the service, focussing upon increased engagement, visitor numbers, community cohesion, volunteering and commercial income.

By 2020 the Heritage Service will increase visitor numbers from c. 53,000 to 92,000 principally by increasing visits to Eastbury Manor House through the "Sustaining Eastbury" initiative. Increasing digital access to the collections will raise awareness and profile, broadening the service user base and support additional interest, visits and income opportunities. Securing Arts Council "designation" for the Fanshawe collection will open up additional funding opportunities.

Whilst there are limitations to commercial opportunities, by 2020 it is anticipated that commercial income will have increased by c. £65k. The service will continue to develop its schools and intergenerational learning and volunteering opportunities to support positive health and well-being community outcomes.

There is potential for the Heritage offer to expand considerably subject to the viability of proposals currently being considered as described in section 2 above.

4 What will the service deliver?

Heritage Services will continue to manage the sites at Valence House Museum (including the Archive & Local Studies Library) and Eastbury Manor House. The service will continue to promote and make accessible the historical and cultural heritage of the borough, safeguarding, maintaining and preserving the sites and collections and raising the profile of the borough's heritage sites locally, regionally and nationally.

The education service for schools and intergenerational learning, in addition to the Heritage volunteering programme, across the two sites will continue to be developed.

5 What are the constituent parts?

The scope of the service consists of:

- Archive & Local Studies Library (at Valence House)
- Eastbury Manor House
- Valence House Museum

6 What will be different for the customer?

Increased digital access, additional programmes and opportunities to engage with and/or volunteer in Heritage related activity. As customer insight is improved, product development and more targeted marketing can be introduced.

7 What will need to change in the service(s)?

The Heritage Service will need to be more innovative in its approach to engagement and broadening the service offer as reflected in the draft Heritage Strategy. A balance will need to be struck between retaining the integrity of an accessible heritage offer alongside exploiting commercial opportunities to help sustain the service.

Whilst there may be some opportunities to reduce employee costs through changes to terms and conditions, such as removing weekend enhancements, the scale of the service is such that this could only realistically be managed as part of a wider corporate initiative.

8 What will be the impact on the workforce?

There would be no immediate impact on the workforce, although this will need to be reviewed once the viability of the heritage ambition is confirmed; there is also a programme to increase volunteering capacity to meet service growth.

9 When will the changes take effect?

If the recommendation to retain the service in-house and adopt the draft Heritage Strategy is approved in March 2016, the improvement programme could commence immediately.

Year	2016/17			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Strategy approval	●			
Improvement programme	■			

10 When will customer outcomes be seen?

The improvement programme would commence once the proposal and strategy are approved, customer outcomes would be rolled out incrementally from mid 2016.

11 What savings will be made from the changes?

Better promotion of the heritage attractions in the borough will boost its reputation as a place to live and visit. This will generate an additional income of £65k. An additional £11k savings will be realised through changes to terms and conditions.

12 When will the savings be realised?

Savings will be realised from 2016/17 rising incrementally year on year to 2020/21.

