



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

**LANCASTER MUSEUMS STUDY
FUTURE SCOPE AND BENEFITS**

JUNE 2016

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL'S MUSEUM STUDY PROJECT

Prepared for

Lancaster City Council
Economic Development, Regeneration and Planning

June 2016

Contact: Robert Aitken

Museum Design
Robert Aitken BA (Hons)
18 Park Street
Bare, Morecambe LA4 6BN.

Telephone: +44 (0)1524 406 153
Email: robertaitken@museumdesign.me.uk
Web site: www.museumdesign.eu

and

Prince+Pearce Ltd
David Prince PhD FRGS
Simon Pearce RIBA FRSA

Web site: www.princeandpearce.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Robert Aitken Museum Design and Prince+Pearce Ltd (AP+P) acknowledge with thanks all those who have made a contribution to this report. In particular, we are grateful to Anne Marie Harrison and Paul Rogers of the Economic Development, Regeneration and Planning Department of the City Council.

Status of Document

© 2016 Robert Aitken Museum Design and Prince+Pearce Ltd (AP+P).

This document is prepared for the sole and exclusive use of Lancaster City Council. Robert Aitken Museum Design and Prince+Pearce Ltd cannot accept any responsibility for its content if it is made available to any other party without our consent. Whilst AP+P have used reasonable endeavours in the preparation of this document, and whilst any projections or indications referred to herein are held bona fide, no warranty is made that such projections or indications will be achieved.

CONTENTS

1	The Brief	4
2	The Changing Role of Museums	8
3	The Current Climate	11
4	Successful Museums	13
5	The Museums in Lancaster District.....	17
6	Headline Options for the Museum Service.....	20
7	The Museums Service – Strategic Options	24
7.1	Recommendation 1 – Consolidating the Collections into a new Collections Store.....	24
7.2	Recommendation 2 – Redevelopment of the City Museum in the Old Town Hall	27
7.3	Recommendation 3 – Disposal of the Maritime Museum and Customs House	32
7.4	Recommendation 4 – Disposal of the Cottage Museum	33
7.5	Recommendation 5 – A new Development on the Morecambe Seafront	33
8	The Development Model – Components	38
9	Capital and Revenue Funding	42
10	Governance, Management and Staffing	46
11	Next Steps	48
	A Summary of Primary Questions, Issues and Recommendations.....	49

1 THE BRIEF

Lancaster City Council is considering options to review, rationalise and improve its museums offer in order to create a focused service that will:

- appeal to a wide range of audiences;
- protect and develop the collections;
- strongly support the development of the visitor economy;
- develop the District's attractiveness as a place to live and work;
- become financially more efficient and sustainable;
- maintain and enhance professional standards.

Aitken, Prince + Pearce (AP+P) have been asked to review their earlier recommendations set out in an options appraisal for Lancaster City Museum prepared in 2012, and to address the new brief by producing further options for the District museums service for the Council's consideration.

The detailed brief, issued by Lancaster City Council in December 2015, called for consideration of the following issues, all of which relate to the future of the District's Museum Service:

- value for money assessments;
- current and potential use of existing buildings and spaces;
- strengths and limitations of the current collections;
- requirements relating to management, storage and display of the current collections;
- audience development opportunities;
- collaborative opportunities with other organisations;
- links to other locations including Morecambe;

- investment requirements to deliver options;
- funding opportunities;
- future management requirements, including critical skills;
- marketing and promotional opportunities and requirements;
- impact of options on wider visitor economy-economic impact, visitor number and spend, jobs;
- impact of options on visitor numbers/audiences;
- impact of options on educational and community benefits;
- impact of options on income generation potential;
- impact of options on management and property costs;
- further consultation recommendations;
- success factors for potential future arrangements.

Following discussion, these eighteen issues were distilled into three overarching concerns:

- what will be the future Lancaster City Council's museums offer?
- what is the likely impact on revenue costs and income, reinvestment and funding requirements?
- ... and ... what are the audience development and funding opportunities?

The concerns can be further described as:

- what's good for Lancaster City and District?
- how can it protect and best use its collections?
- how can it use these assets to contribute to the future development and well-being of the local economy?
- how can it achieve the above with minimum opposition and

maximum acceptance?

This report addresses these concerns and presents a clear and coherent way forward for the Museum Service as a whole.

In so-doing it:

- takes on board the previous work undertaken by AP+P together with a consideration of all pertinent background documents and discussions;
- takes into account the prevailing budgetary constraint for local authorities;
- considers all the current, and potential, assets held by the City regarding its heritage and cultural past;
- presents a unified and coherent way forward that preserves the collections and makes best use of them in terms of their role as both a visitor attraction and local community resource;
- comments on the potential economic impact for the City and District.

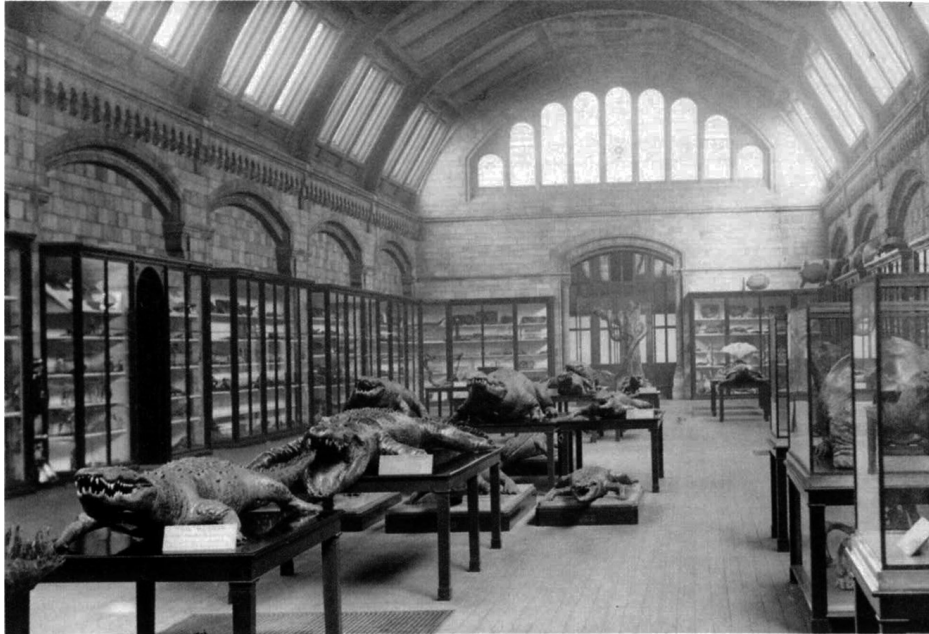
The report also makes the following assumptions:

- that the scope of this stage of the museums study is an appraisal of a number of options, all of which will need to be tested and verified by subsequent feasibility and other studies before they become firm recommendations;
- that the scope of this options appraisal is limited to the City Museum, the Maritime Museum and the Cottage Museum, albeit within the context of the broader cultural offer of Lancaster, Morecambe and the District.

Approaching this review from a District-wide perspective will be critical to its success as the geographical, socio-economic and cultural relationship between Lancaster and Morecambe is unparalleled in the UK and contributes significantly to its appeal as a place in which to live and visit.

The historic city of Lancaster, on the river Lune, and the unique natural environment of Morecambe and the Bay, as one conurbation, constitutes an attractive and diverse cultural offer with traffic-free cycle paths (the Lancaster–Morecambe Greenway) and walkways linking the two centres. Adopting a cohesive outreach policy which initiates and supports complementary cultural elements across the District will build on this interdependence whilst improving the efficiency of the service.

2 THE CHANGING ROLE OF MUSEUMS



The Natural History Museum in the 19th Century

Over the years museums have changed their roles, the ways in which they present the material they hold and the ways in which they engage with their public.

For nearly 300 years since the mid 18thC to the early 1970s museums acted, essentially, as 'cabinets of curiosity' in which highly academic interpretations were given to restricted audiences seen as being capable of appreciating the objects on display. 'Public engagement' was actively discouraged. The long-established norm for displays was as a work of scholarship that barely communicated anything of relevance or understanding to the general visitor.

From the early 1970s to, roughly, the end of the 20thC museums (lead by the British Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum) began to be more user-friendly in terms of their exhibitions, often using social history collections as a way of engaging visitors and adopting 'hands-on' methods of interpreting scientific and technical subjects. The emphasis was on telling a story through lucid interpretation, communication and interaction: essentially, getting the visitor involved. As a result, attendances shot up and museums became a popular destination for families and friends. During this period many museums went in for large-scale redisplays of their collections, often enabled by Heritage Lottery funding. The primary purpose remained the display of material for, essentially, educational purposes: they remained object-led.

Whilst retaining a permanent presence in existing buildings, things had to change. New displays had to adapt to the technological advances and be flexible enough to allow changes to keep up with these advances.



The new Central Court at the British Museum created to provide a modern social and retail space for the visitor.

They had to have the ability to quickly renew displays to retain continuing interest in the venue. The venues themselves had to widen their appeal through the introduction of other leisure and retail attractions as part of the overall package, again to create a communal space, increase visitor levels and provide financial benefits.

Over the last twenty or so years the most successful museums have re-invented themselves as places of social interaction by combining constantly-changing exhibitions with a mix of leisure, retail and catering opportunities that have attracted and sustained new audiences and created new opportunities for generating income. (The Great Court at the British Museum, completed in 2000, is a prime example, albeit on a national scale).

Latterly came the realisation that as well as visitors actually visiting the venues, to increase visitor numbers and penetration, the museum had to 'go out to the people' through modern media and physically sharing their collections through travelling exhibitions. This activity, 'outreach', has become one of the most important factors in the success of numerous museums around the country in increasing visitors and in generating revenue for their respective hosts.

The emphasis is thus now on managing and encouraging change, both in terms of exhibitions (on average, most UK museums attract well over half their visitors to special or temporary exhibitions) and in using outreach programmes to take the museum to where the public actually is. The modern realisation is that museums do not need to be exclusively in buildings to satisfy their cultural ambitions.

The present financial climate is demanding change in all aspects of Local Authority activity, with museums being no exception. The District now has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to re-invent its museums offer in ways that are fit-for-purpose in the 21stC and which sit alongside the District's Cultural Heritage Strategy, adopted as policy in 2011, which recognises the key links between the arts, retail and the heritage assets as part of the District's overall visitor offer.

3 THE CURRENT CLIMATE

Recent and continuing cuts to public sector spending, particularly since 2010, are having a major impact on cultural services in Lancashire and specifically those attractions that are either owned or managed by the County in Lancaster. However, and despite this, Lancaster City Council's outlook remains positive with respect to the District's visitor economy and there is a strong will to both consolidate and improve the cultural offer in the Lancaster and Morecambe District in the face of this adversity.

It is thus important to recognise at the outset that any new developments in the District will find themselves subject to the overarching pressures that are affecting cultural planners, in the widest sense, in the UK as a whole. These are rooted in the unprecedented cuts to Government expenditure across nearly all sectors, including Local Authorities which have experienced a 40% cut in funds since 2010 with a further 30% to be delivered by 2017.

Councils up and down the country are looking at ways to reduce expenditure whilst striving to ensure that services remain relevant and fit-for-purpose. In these circumstances it is likely that many so-called 'non-essential' services – of which museums and other cultural offers are examples – will need to redefine their relationship with the publics they serve in order to survive and continue to offer a valuable service.

Such circumstances present local authorities, such as Lancaster, with the opportunity to look across-the-board at their museum offer, to see where operational synergies can be realised and to

realign delivery on facilities that offer real value-for-money and contribute demonstrably to the local economy, both directly and indirectly.

The days when local authorities ran museums because they were ‘a good thing’ are over: they must now be part – and be seen to be a part – of a new model for local authorities in which delivery adds to the ‘economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area’ (Local Government Act, 2000). Thus, every new proposal must be viewed with caution against a rigorous appraisal of investment, viability and sustainability.

The current museums offer exhibits strengths but also weaknesses. Its strengths lie in the collections it holds, the prime location of the City Museum and the fact that it has a District-wide remit.

Its weaknesses – which are addressed in this report – are that the permanent exhibitions are in urgent need of refreshment, physical access is poor (particularly to the City Museum), visitor numbers are low, collections storage is inadequate and opportunities for outreach programmes and community involvement are not being taken up sufficiently.

4 SUCCESSFUL MUSEUMS

Whilst every museum is unique, the successful ones (in terms of finance, motivated staff and public use and appreciation) share characteristics which help to define the future direction for Lancaster District. They:

- focus on the public they wish to attract and serve rather than the objects in their possession;
- use their collections in various ways and for various ends;
- use their buildings and other assets in the most appropriate ways for the benefit of the public rather than simply 'because they are there';
- have long-term strategies that see museums not as collections or assemblages of buildings but as usable and re-usable resources;
- respond to changes of public mood, perception and need;
- are flexible, versatile and dynamic;
- seek new audiences by going out to the public rather than expecting the public to come to them.

In addition, successful museums have acted, and continue to act, as drivers of the local economy, both as attractions in their own right and as part of a larger, wider cultural or heritage offer.

Historically, the ability of cultural ventures to enhance, and be seen to enhance, the local economy (and, through this, to aid their own self-sufficiency and long-term support) is generally regarded as being related to a number of broad factors, all of which help to set the development framework for Lancaster:

- the nature and demonstrable appropriateness of any new

development in the context of the wider economy and, particularly, the sectors in which it will operate – economic development, leisure, tourism, education, conservation;

- its ability to attract inward investment for both development capital and revenue support;
- its ability to penetrate, year-on-year, the tourism and day-trip catchment markets, bearing in mind the level of local and regional competition within a (generally) static overall market;
- its ability to create new jobs and to provide new services which then energise other initiatives.

In the UK, several cultural developments have been cited as economic regenerators through their direct contribution to tourism and through the ways in which they act as catalysts for subsequent commercial development and other inward investment.

These include Ironbridge (Telford), Beamish (Durham), Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Tate of the North, Albert Dock (Liverpool), Wigan Pier (Wigan), the National Museum of Film and Photography (Bradford), and the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry (Manchester). Whilst very different in scale, all these developments display similar characteristics with implications for the development of the offer in Lancaster:

- capital investment involving partnerships between local authorities economic development agency support and the private sector;
- commitment to ongoing revenue and professional support from a 'parent' or lead organisation;
- major efforts by the management boards (or trustees) to ensure

- continued fund raising and visitor development campaigns;
- they occupy sites of considerable and acknowledged historical importance or are prominent sites capable of being an attraction in their own right;
- they have benefited from being close to, or part of, sites characterised by large scale development work and infrastructure improvements for access, the cost of which has (usually) been borne by others;
- locations near large centres of population and/or large tourism markets;
- carefully structured admission policies to maximise gain from the tourism market whilst minimising the impact on the local community.

Looking at Lancaster District, these factors are in place, either actually or potentially:

FACTOR	LANCASTER DISTRICT
capital investment involving partnerships	the potential exists if a unified development case can be presented with specific funding opportunities identified
commitment to ongoing revenue and professional support	the District is potentially committed to long-term support if value-for-money benefits can be clearly demonstrated

FACTOR	LANCASTER DISTRICT
major efforts by management boards/trustees to continued fund raising	the District is committed to long-term support if value-for-money benefits can be clearly demonstrated
they occupy sites of considerable and acknowledged historical importance or prominent sites capable of being attractions in their own right	self-evident in both Lancaster and Morecambe
close to, or part of, sites characterised by large scale development work and infrastructure investment by others	large-scale transport infrastructure works (Link Road) are in hand for both Lancaster and Morecambe, other initiatives (such as Square Routes) are on-going
locations near large centres of population and/or large tourism markets	7.2 million visits made to Lancaster, Morecambe and the District each year
carefully-structured admission policies	should form part of any future feasibility study

5 THE MUSEUMS IN LANCASTER DISTRICT

Currently, Lancaster City Council's museum collections reside in:

- the City Museum located in the Old Town Hall in the Market Square;
- the Cottage Museum adjacent to the Castle;
- the Maritime Museum in the Port of Lancaster Custom House and adjacent Warehouse on St George's Quay;
- an out-of-District store in Preston.

The three museums (the City, the Cottage and the Maritime) are managed by Lancashire County Council under an agreement with the City although the buildings and the objects (with the sole exception of those of the King's Own Regimental Museum which occupies space within the City Museum) remain the property of the City Council.

The material in the City Museum relates the history and heritage of Lancaster and the District from the Neolithic to 1937, the year in which Lancaster achieved city status. The interpretation currently ends over three generations ago, and is thus in need of bringing up-to-date urgently.

¹ The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, formed in 2006 by the amalgamation of the King's Own Royal Border Regiment, the King's Regiment and the Queen's Lancashire Regiment has its HQ in Fulwood Barracks, Preston, a possible esprit-de-corps location for the material currently on display at the City Museum.

The Regimental Museum represents the history of the Army in Lancaster¹. The material in the regimental museum would be better curated and exhibited elsewhere in the City. In all, that museum's collections cover 120 separate units, including the 59 battalions formed by the antecedent Lancashire regiments and all associated Militia, Rifle Volunteers, Territorials, Home Guard and Cadet units. The museum's displays include uniforms, weapons, medals, regalia, paintings, silver, musical instruments, flags and photographs and is thus an ideal venue for the King's Own material.

Whilst both the City and Regimental museums' exhibitions are worthy they do not in themselves constitute a significant attraction for today's visitor and need urgent renewal and a renewed sense of purpose.

The collections in the Maritime Museum tell the history of the Port of Lancaster, the fishing industry, the Lancaster Canal and the ecology of Morecambe Bay.

Knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage of the district continues to evolve with archaeological excavations, currently underway, revealing fresh evidence of the Roman port of Calunium and yielding new material for interpretation.

The consolidation of these collections and the rationalisation of the District's museum offer will embrace opportunities as well as offering operational efficiencies and new business and funding possibilities.

Notwithstanding the cohesive, District-wide approach proposed above, Lancaster and Morecambe each have their own individual identities, derived from their inherent cultural strengths and capabilities on the one hand and the particular geography of the District on the other.

These differences create the opportunity to establish two distinct (Lancaster and Morecambe) conceptual frameworks for sustainable development with cultural heritage, and the museum collections in particular, providing an inspirational gateway.

During the financial year 2015-2016 the three museums recorded the following visitor numbers (as supplied and verified by Lancashire County Council):

The City Museum	46,620	includes the KORR
The Cottage Museum	4,800	
The Maritime Museum	8,038	closed since Oct 2015

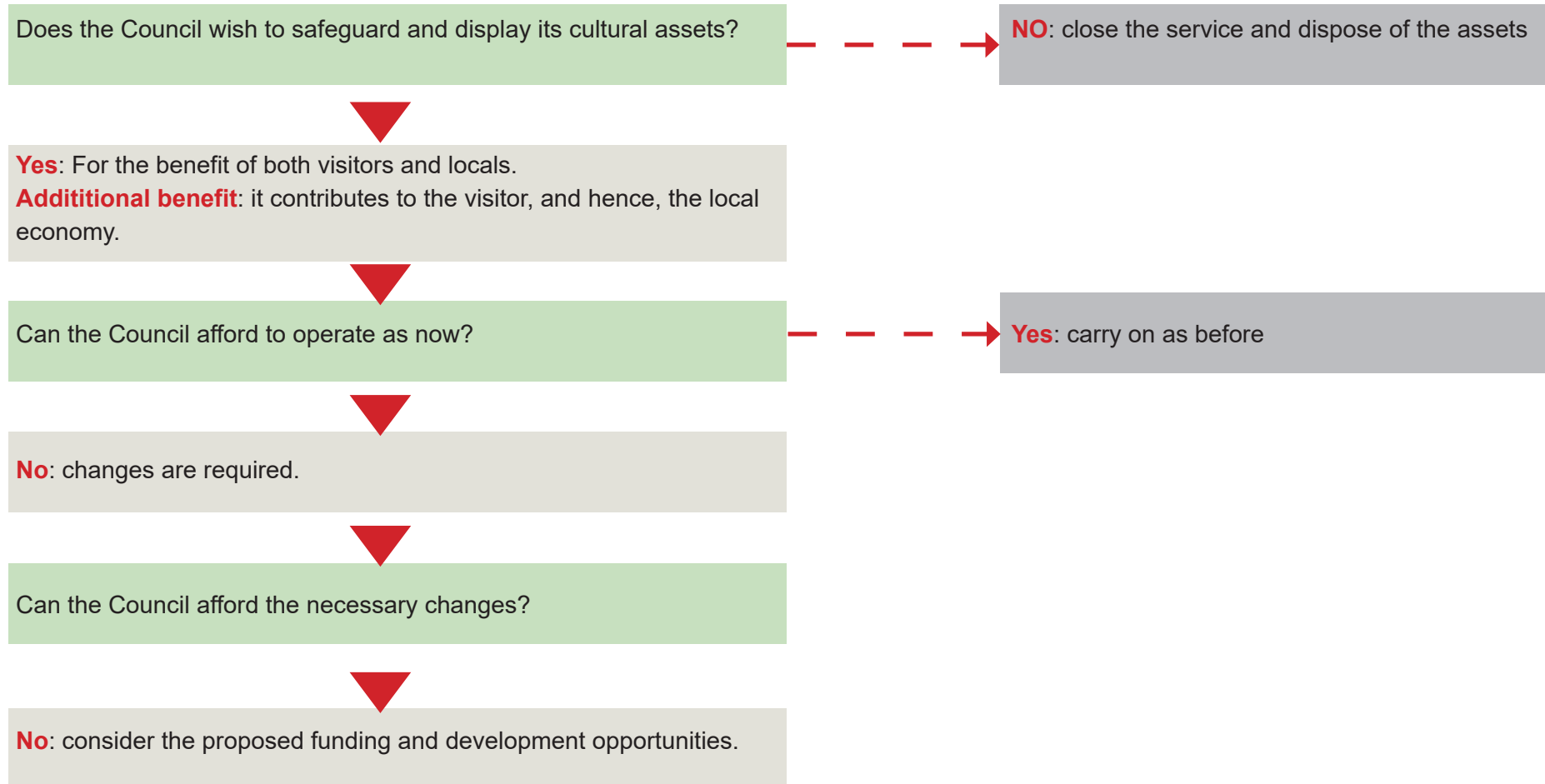
6 HEADLINE OPTIONS FOR THE MUSEUMS SERVICE

The headline options for the District in terms of its future museums offer are fourfold:

OPTIONS	OUTCOME AND RISK	RECOMMENDED
Close all the Museums	Immediate operational savings; potential capital returns from the sale of buildings and collections; loss of goodwill and face both locally and nationally; is at odds with the notion of an ‘National Heritage City’; a once-and-for-all abandonment of the District’s aspirations in terms of its physical cultural heritage	No
Do nothing/ the status quo	Continued decline in performance across-the-board; fewer visitors; unmotivated staff; compounded lack of relevance; lack of a Lancaster District-wide focus; reduced and reducing contribution to the economic well-being of the District; a downward spiral	No

OPTIONS	OUTCOME AND RISK	RECOMMENDED
Individual, small-scale changes	Easy to do, easy to understand, but cosmetic and knee-jerk at best and lacking an overall concept of the role of the District's cultural resources in its economic and developmental future at worst; an edge-chipping solution that will eventually lead to moribund decline	No
A New Way	A bold vision; the use of heritage assets in the real world to solve real world problems; underlines the very notion of an 'England Heritage City'; is aspirational and forward-looking; sees cultural heritage as a positive contributor to the local economy – a prime mover not an afterthought; requires visionary management and a highly motivated workforce; the keys are a realistic view of the assets to hand and their effective, long-term, management	Yes

These previous four options are rooted in the following logic:



2. Alongside Bath, Cambridge, Carlisle, Chester, Durham, Greenwich, Lincoln, Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon and York, and produced as a marketing exercise by the Tourist Authorities of the places involved under the banner 'Heritage Cities Group'.

Hence, if Lancaster is serious about (a) the role of its museums as part of a wider cultural-tourism offer that chimes with both economic development and social well-being, and (b) it wishes to maintain its position as one of 'England's Heritage Cities'², then the last option (A New Way) is the only one that makes sense in terms of its ability to deliver what is needed.

Thus, a new operational, development and funding model is required across the entire Service covering all aspects – capital, revenue, facilities, staffing and delivery – the purpose of which is to use the cultural and heritage assets currently held by the Council for the future well-being of the local community by way of it making a significant and demonstrable impact on the visitor economy.

If this is accepted as a guiding principle, then a way forward can be envisaged, rooted in the twin aspirations of 'City of Heritage' and the 'City of Great Outdoors' encapsulated by the strap-line 'Small City Big Story', one of the main outcomes of a recently-completed, major re-branding and communication exercise for both Lancaster and Morecambe Bay ... and a progressive museums service must be part of this forward-looking initiative that is firmly part of the consumer economy.

All cities, local authorities and national bodies are grappling with similar problems: Lancaster is not unique. Cities – and local authorities – live and work in a highly competitive world where assets must be used for maximum benefit against minimum risk.

The key question for Lancaster is therefore how it can most effectively use its historic assets and museum estate as a central contributor to the continuing economic development of the District for the long-term well-being of its citizens.

7 THE MUSEUMS SERVICE - STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The strategic options for the District's museum offer, as set out in Section 5 (page 16), lead to a series of conclusions and recommendations for the future of the service as a whole. These are explored in the remainder of this report which sets out a new way forward for the entire museum estate in Lancaster District. A phased approach is recommended, with each phase being underpinned by secured finance.

As a crucial first step, decanting the various collections into a new, consolidated storage facility will enable the existing museum buildings to be refurbished, converted or disposed of, whilst the collections themselves are re-evaluated, a conservation programme is instigated, new acquisitions and disposal policies are drafted, and future governance and management options are considered.

7.1 RECOMMENDATION 1 - CONSOLIDATION OF THE COLLECTIONS INTO A NEW COLLECTIONS STORE

Centralising museum collections in a single storage facility, generally in a suburban or semi industrial location where property values are relatively low, is a strategy common to many of the UK's national and regional museums where access to these collections, under mainly supervised means, is actively encouraged as part of the wider 'cultural entitlement' agenda ³.

As well as making economic sense, there are a number of benefits and efficiencies to adopting this policy, particularly in the over-arching recognition that the collections are not the primary purpose of maintaining

³ See, for example, the Collections of the Future report by The Museums Association (2005).

museums – engaging with the public, wherever they are, certainly is.

The advantages and opportunities presented can be summarised as offering:

- a complete review and analysis of the collections and their relevance to the conceptual development framework options for Lancaster and Morecambe;
- the opportunity to re-evaluate and plan the cultural offer of the District;
- an opportunity to fully catalogue the collections using a modern digital data base such as ADLib software;
- the detailed examination of individual objects in the collection for conservation work;
- an opportunity to rearrange and classify the collections on a more accessible curatorial basis;
- the disposal and acquisition of items in accordance with new disposal and acquisition procedures;
- the possible provision of ‘visible storage’ by providing accessible, supervised public areas for research purposes by students, organised educational groups and occasional planned open days for visits by the public by appointment. This policy would go a long way towards filling the cultural gap between the closing of the existing venues and the opening of new ones. It would also increase the chances of attracting Heritage Lottery funding;
- greater flexibility whilst opening up the opportunity for servicing the various cultural venues around the District with permanent displays, visiting exhibitions as stand-alone attractions or supporting local events.

In the past, historic buildings have been used for such stores.

Of those under the District's control the Maritime Museum (Warehouse), the Customs House, the Cottage and Old Town Hall have been considered. However, locating the collection store in any of these locations is highly undesirable as their development would add significant and unnecessary cost due to the fact that:

- floor loadings are likely to be inadequate;
- installing the necessary environmental services and controls would be difficult and costly due to the Listed status of the buildings;
- internal spaces are small and thus object handling and access would be problematic at best, impossible at worst;
- access by large vehicles to all four venues is poor;
- the opportunity cost of using the buildings in this way is huge.

Thus, for ease of access, operation and security purposes an existing light-industrial building on, for example, the White Lund Estate could prove suitable.

Wherever the location, the building would need to be modified internally to achieve recognised standards for the storage of valuable and sensitive objects with the necessary climatic conditions and security measures being established. These are described in the British Standards Institution's PAS 198:2012 'Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections' which set standards for, amongst others, conservation, environmental management, long-term storage, preservation, damage prevention and materials handling.

Many of these standards can now be met by automated and/or remotely-



The White Lund Estate provides, geographically, a central location in which to serve the whole district.

monitored systems thereby minimising curatorial costs and thus offering substantial operational savings.

It is recommended that the feasibility of establishing such a store is investigated as an urgent priority since it frees up the District's museum buildings for other uses, of which more below.

7.2 RECOMMENDATION 2 - REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY MUSEUM IN THE OLD TOWN HALL

Lancaster's Old Town Hall, a Grade II* Listed building, creates a strong sense of place in Market Square which is itself a focal point and meeting place at the pedestrianised heart of the city. But the classical façade of the Town Hall currently presents an unwelcoming barrier to the general public and, for many years, the main entrance steps have attracted anti-social behaviour and vandalism which has been a recurring problem for the museum service.

At present, the entire building is given over to museum use with inadequate temporary galleries at ground floor level and permanent exhibitions relating to local history and the King's Own Royal Regiment at first floor level. The King's Own material is owned by the Regiment which operates the museum under a lease arrangement with Lancaster City Council. The roof space serves as an inadequate collections store whilst providing access to the lantern for servicing and viewing purposes. The vaulted basement contains a boiler room and services pipework but is otherwise unused.

A review of the use of the building and the means of access is necessary

to ensure its sustainable future with an enhanced cultural offer and commercial opportunities which will stimulate economic growth.

Proposals for the redevelopment of the Old Town Hall were drawn up by the same consulting team in 2011 under the title Lancaster City Museum Study: Final Report. The bulk of the recommendations made in that report remain valid.

Key issues and opportunities are therefore:

Ground Floor

- permeating the Old Town Hall by opening the West entrance doors will provide level, public access into and through the building at ground floor level. This will not only encourage increased footfall through the building (which at present presents an unattractive and unwelcoming façade) but will also reinforce the pedestrian link and conceptual connection between The Storey and the City Museum, and the Museum and China Street, whilst adding a further element to the Square Routes initiative in Market Square. Such a link could be developed further by a (possibly later) direct, internal connection to the Library;
- the ground floor spaces, essentially two relatively small rooms off the central area, are inadequate for all but the smallest temporary exhibitions. However, these spaces offer prime retail opportunities being at ground floor level and located at the heart one of Lancaster's central, pedestrianised shopping areas;
- we recommend that the VIC is moved from the Storey to the City Museum at ground floor level to reinforce the proposed 'gateway' nature of the venue;
- rental income could be obtained by the District from the



The front entrance to the City Museum

4 A well-run, appropriately-stocked 'museum-type' shop should be capable of generating an annual turnover of approximately £350-£400 per square foot of retail space per year if open to the general public without an entry charge. Some do much better. Unlicensed cafes are approximately half that at, say, £175-£200 per square foot per year. Licensed restaurants are more. Thus, the ground floor of the City Museum in the Old Town Hall (at around 400 ft² net retail space should be capable of (say) an annual turnover of £140,000+ gross as retail and (say) £75,000+ gross as a café. Assuming a headline 'profit' of 25% across-the-board would produce net incomes of around £35,000 and £18,000 respectively for retail and catering. This points to the observation that specialist retail, in association with the VIC, might be the preferred option.



A view of one of the rooms



A view of the Education Room

letting of the non-VIC space to retailers with a combination of appropriate merchandise and good covenants. Whilst CBRE can provide detailed advice on this, examples include Early Learning Centres (now owned by Mothercare and listed on the FTSE SmallCap Index, with their nearest shop in Preston) and specialist heritage and cultural retailers such as The National Trust which operates non-property-based shops throughout England and Wales (but none in Lancashire)⁴. Such high-profile brands would also attract additional, and new, visitors to the building through the increased footfall they would generate;

- such uses would also be entirely compatible with any future proposals link between the Old Town Hall and the Library;
- the ground floor of the adjoining building, currently used as a meeting/education room with ancillary facilities (for which it is manifestly not suited) could be the subject of a self-contained commercial let either for office or retail space, thus providing an additional (and separate) income stream. CBRE can advise on the prospects;
- the installation of a passenger lift is essential if the upper floors are to be used for museum purposes. A design study will be required.

First Floor

- we recommend that a museum presence is maintained in the Old Town Hall to provide an interpretive 'gateway' to the City and its District;
- relocating the KORR collections to another location within the City, will provide the opportunity to reorganise and redisplay the collections in this double-height space with an emphasis on both permanent and temporary (special) exhibitions drawn from



The existing displays in the museum are 'lodged' in the 1980's with visual overload. A problem that deters the visitor from fully absorbing the information placed in front of them. The displays are in need of bringing into the 21st century and giving a new direction.



The roof space which has problems in terms of public access.

- the collections held by the City and currently exhibited in the Old Town Hall and elsewhere;
- the 2011 Report made a number of recommendations (which remain valid) for re-interpretation and re-display and included the possibility of creating three 'interpretive zones' (orientation, narrative, and insight) all using original material from the City's collections and organised in such ways as they provide a 'gateway experience' for Lancaster, Morecambe and the District as a whole;
- the emphasis of the interpretation (which we recommend is free-to-enter) is thus to act as the first port-of-call for visitors to the City and its District whereby, through exposure to the history, ecology and character of the place encourages visits to, for example, Morecambe, the Lune Valley, the Castle, the Roman remains (and quayside) and the District's various nature reserves, parks, gardens and archaeological sites;
- the aim here is to increase dwell-time in the District, thus adding to its overall direct and indirect income-generating potential.

Roof Space

- this floor presents considerable issues relating to access and health and safety;
- the 2011 Report suggested that this floor could be used for 'open storage' and additional exhibition space. However, we have reviewed this recommendation and have come to the settled view that (for development-cost and access purposes) it remains essentially undeveloped with occasional, supervised access to the lantern and clock being made available on a pre-booked basis to interested parties.

Basement

- the basement contains the boiler room and services but is otherwise unused. However, it is accessible by an external



A view of the basement



stairway on the Library-side of the building thus offering, potentially, a self-contained space;

- the space is not suitable for exhibitions due to low ceiling height, small rooms and poor ambient environmental conditions;
- the 2011 Report made the recommendation that this space offers a real possibility for a third-party commercial let and suggested its use as a wine bar with tasting rooms;
- at the time, initial discussions with a local restaurateur indicated keen interest although this remains to be tested in current circumstances. CBRE can advise on the prospects;
- additional advantages are that an out-of-hours presence would be maintained and that a different, and additional, footfall would be attracted to the building;
- the basement's use as, essentially, retail space also accords with the history of the building itself.

External Spaces: The existing Library and Street Presence

- most of the recommendations set out above will add considerably to both the street presence of the Old Town Hall and to its viable economic future;
- however, the building itself needs re-presenting to its public: after all, it occupies a space that has – for at least 800 years – been used for civic assemblies;
- the 2011 Report made a number of recommendations (which remain valid) including using banners to announce what the building contains and what it has to offer, together with an 'outreach programme' in the Market Square (particularly on market days) that by its very presence, invites people into the building;
- a new brand for the entire enterprise should be considered.

- In addition to the above, an opportunity presents itself to capitalise on the physical links to the adjacent Library. This would depend, in addition to other considerations, on a structural survey.

7.3 RECOMMENDATION 3 - DISPOSAL OF THE WAREHOUSE AND CUSTOMS HOUSE

The Maritime Museum occupies the former Port of Lancaster Custom House of 1764, a Grade II* Listed building, designed by Richard Gillow, and the adjacent historic Warehouse on St George's Quay. Both the collections and the narrative in the museum relate to the fishing industry and the ecology of Morecambe Bay as well as the history of the port of Lancaster.

These topics could be dealt with elsewhere, most appropriately on Morecambe Seafront where they could provide the intellectual basis for a new centre for eco-tourism and the wider issues of environmental sustainability and climate change, of which more below. Ancillary material would move to the proposed Collections Store.

A recommendation following the rationalisation process as far as the Maritime Museum is concerned is for the museum as a whole (in both the Warehouse and the Customs House) to close with the buildings disposed of to produce a financial receipt (capital and/or revenue) for the Council.

Additional reasons for this recommendation are that the location of the Maritime Museum is problematic in terms of generating footfall, and hence ancillary income. The buildings themselves will be difficult to develop due to their Listed status and the opportunity cost of using them to store collections rather than for commercial use is unacceptably large.

7.4 RECOMMENDATION 4 - DISPOSAL OF THE COTTAGE MUSEUM

The Cottage Museum offers a collection of, essentially, Victorian material over five floors in a tiny cottage in Castle Hill opposite the Castle itself and a stone's throw away from the Storey and the Judge's Lodgings.

The cost of maintaining the Cottage as a museum is thus an unnecessary burden on the District and hence the recommendation is that it ceases to be a museum and alternative uses – such as a holiday let – are considered. An alternative would be its sale as a private residence. The collections and associated material would be moved to the Collections Store for use in other, perhaps temporary, venues, and elsewhere as appropriate.

7.5 RECOMMENDATION 5 - A NEW DEVELOPMENT ON MORECAMBE SEAFRONT

If the recommendations made in this report for the rationalisation of the District's museums are carried forward, the service's public face will be restricted, in the immediate future, to the City Museum following the proposed closure of both the Maritime Museum and the Cottage Museum. The collections of all the District's museums would be consolidated and conserved in a new store and the City Museum would be redisplayed with new exhibitions on, primarily, the first and ground floors.

This rationalisation creates the opportunity – in the longer term – for the District to consider the development of a new, purpose-built, multi-use facility on Morecambe Seafront to augment the Council's policies as set out in the Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP). The MAAP, adopted in December 2014, sets out a vision for the future of central Morecambe and creates a framework for the development, conservation and change



Two extremely successful 'seaside' museums. The Turner Museum in Margate at the top and the Tate in St Ives below. Each with a local association with its subject matter but which also has a nation-wide appeal. Morecambe could consider a similar approach with maybe, comedy to attract a wider spectrum of visitors to the resort.

needed to secure lasting regeneration gains for the town. This report argues that the type of development described in the remainder of this Section would add considerable value to these plans as well as underlining the District's long-term commitment to providing a forward-looking museum service.

Morecambe Bay is the largest multi-estuary (of the rivers Leven, Kent and Lune) expanse of intertidal mudflats and sands in the UK and is now part of Britain's Energy Coast. Much of it is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or as a Ramsar (wetland) site. It therefore comprises a wildlife habitat of recognised and significant international importance and covers an area of some 120 square miles.

A range of informal recreational activities takes place in the Bay including casual walking, angling (both boat and shore), windsurfing, bird watching and the 'Cross-Bay Walks' led by the Queen's Guide to the Sands.

The Bay also exhibits significant examples of renewable energy projects: the off-shore, West of Duddon Sands Wind Farm and the two advanced gas-cooled nuclear reactors (Heysham 1 and 2), both of which have been earmarked by the Government for future expansion, are examples.

The combination of the District's social and economic history, advanced energy-sourcing and environmental quality affords Morecambe a unique opportunity to create a visitor experience which, whilst rooted in some of the material currently exhibited at the Maritime Museum, is focused on eco-systems, climate change and their combined effect on the future well-being of the local economy. Of the five threats emerging from a considered and settled view of climate change related to the UK (and

reported recently by the BBC and others), all have relevance to the District and each of which can be used as a focal point for interpretation: heavier rainfall, hotter weather, rising sea levels, threats to wildlife and long-term health challenges for the population as a whole.

The key with this proposal in Morecambe is to use the artefacts from a previous age as both the anchor and the springboard for new interpretations relevant to the choices to be made for the future well-being of both the natural environment and the people who will be exposed to it. Whilst this may present a considerable challenge in terms of design, the potential attractiveness of the venue, and its impact on both locals and visitors, is one that should be embraced.

In addition to the general population and Lancaster City Council as a corporate body, many organisations have a legitimate and long-term interest in the future of the Bay including Associated British Ports, Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, English Nature, the Environment Agency, Heysham Port Authority, the Lake District National Park Authority, Lancashire County Council, the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee, South Lakeland District Council, United Utilities, Wyre Borough Council and the Morecambe Bay Partnership. In addition, Morecambe Bay Nature is a network of over 100 local businesses passionate about nature that is establishing Morecambe Bay as one of the UK's top places to experience wildlife.

These organisations, and others, can form the underlying fabric for a re-development model that accounts for all (as far as they are relevant) 'cultural heritage' assets in the District.

The seafront at Morecambe provides an excellent, potential location for a mixed cultural and commercial development based around the following

elements:

- the non-traditional re-display of the maritime collection from the museum on St George's Quay to act as the focus of a social history- based interpretation of the District's seafaring and trading heritage;
- the use of the same collections to underpin an interpretation of the ecology of Morecambe Bay and the way this ecology has (a) changed over the centuries, (b) what the future holds by way of global warming etc and (c) what can be done to offset the predictions evolved from 'b';
- the use of created external spaces as part of the interpretation;
- the creation of internal space to Government-indemnity standards for temporary and special exhibitions on a variety of themes and topics;
- the creation of multi-use educational and community space with possible revenue-return opportunities;
- the creation of commercial space (retail and licensed catering) leased to third parties under commercial agreements to underwrite part of the revenue costs;
- the potential for the creation of a performance (comedy) space or similar venture (operated by a third party under a commercial lease to underwrite part of the revenue costs) evolved from the comedy and performance history of Morecambe;
- the potential future opportunity to use the old lifeboat station as an interpreted bird watching facility, although it is recognised that, at present, the station is operating a rigid two-man lifeboat from there, together with an RNLi shop;
- build upon the many local initiatives such as the RSPB's Morecambe Bay Futurescapes, which aims to benefit the

environment, wildlife and the local economy in south Cumbria and north Lancashire.

The key underlying principles of such a development are that it should:

- add demonstrably to the visitor and tourist economy of the District;
- at worst, be cost-neutral to the District;
- add a new Lancaster-Morecambe link in the eyes of both locals and visitors;
- provide a new and much-needed venue and resource for visitors to Morecambe;
- provide a new opportunity for private sector investment in the MAAP project.

8 THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL - COMPONENTS

In overview, the key to all this is to present a coherent package of development works that 'solve' the cultural, curatorial and custodial issues currently faced by the Council over the entire District.

These issues include:

- the under-use of the collections as part of the wider 'cultural entitlement' agenda which encapsulates the belief that everyone – locals, visitors and tourists – has the right to a level of professional cultural provision;
- inadequate and dispersed collections storage, with some material out-of-District;
- the lack of a complete catalogue of the collected material, plus an assessment of their conservation needs;
- unsuitable access arrangements, particularly to the City Museum;
- the inefficient use of premium, potential income-generating spaces, particularly in the City Museum and the Warehouse;
- the unnecessary separation of the VIC (in the Storey) from the proposed 'gateway' facility in the City Museum;
- the under-use of the Storey's excellent exhibition facilities as special and temporary exhibition spaces for use by the museums service;
- the under-use of the New Town Hall in Dalton Square as a place for interpretation, guided tours and temporary exhibitions;
- the lack of a landmark venue within the District for museum-related activity.

A piecemeal approach would, in our view, not only be problematic but might actually increase the pressure on the Council's finances, particularly

in the short and medium terms.

What is required is a considered, justified and – above all – bold statement of intent that recognises the importance of the collections and the way in which they can be used for the future benefit of locals and visitors, and hence the economy of the District.

Heritage, in this very real and important sense, is thus used as the backdrop, as the scene-setter for a new way forward. The collections and their associated museum material are thus not an end in themselves: they must contribute, and be seen to contribute, to the growth of the visitor economy and hence to the quality of economic life of the District.

The diagram overpage shows the key components of the plan.

Those facilities shown in **blue** boxes are the primary focus of the current brief, specifically the City Museum in the Old Town Hall, the Cottage Museum, the Warehouse and the Customs House.

Those in **green** show two new development opportunities, specifically the Collections Store and the development of Morecambe Seafront.

Those in **yellow** show ancillary facilities that will, or might, have an impact or bearing on the development of the proposals either because of their proximity (such as the Library) or because they offer potential interpretive space (such as the Castle, the Platform and the Storey) to enhance the wider cultural offer

Clearly, these developments (if approved in principle) will take time to (a) determine their feasibility, (b) to fund, and (c) to implement.

What the diagram overage does not show is the order in which these physical developments should, ideally, take place.

The order is:

ORDER DEVELOPMENT

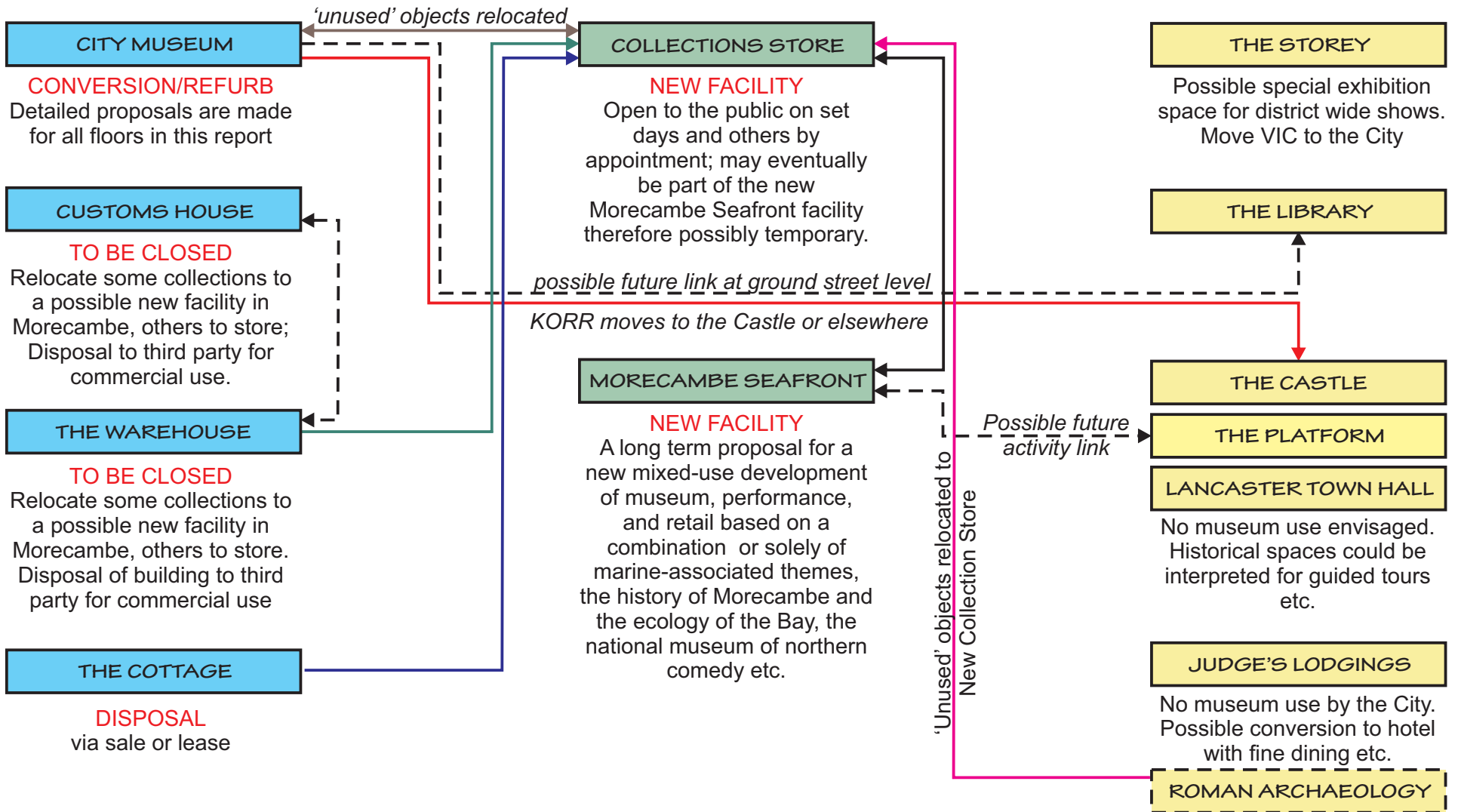
- 1a the Collections Store.
- 1b the disposal of the Maritime Museum (Customs House and Warehouse) and the disposal of the Cottage Museum.
- 1c the conversion of the Old Town Hall, including the refurbishment and redisplay of the City Museum
- 2 the development of the proposed new facility on Morecambe seafront

Items 1a to 1c inclusive should be the subject of a single feasibility study.

THE FOCUS OF THE BRIEF

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

ANCILLARY FACILITIES THAT WILL AFFECT THE PROPOSALS



9 CAPITAL AND REVENUE FUNDING

The diagram overpage sets out the areas in which capital receipts can be obtained [£c], where capital expenditure is required [£c], and from where capital and where revenue income can be anticipated [£r].

In summary these are:

Capital Receipts [£CR] can be made, depending on end-use, from:

- the Maritime Museum (Warehouse and Customs House);
- the Cottage Museum.

Capital Expenditure [£CE], at levels to be determined, is needed for:

- the proposed Collections Store;
- the conversion of the Old Town Hall City Museum;
- the Roman quayside excavations (shown in broken outline because the extent of any finds remains unknown);
- the proposed development on Morecambe Seafront, at a later date.

Revenue Receipts [£RR], at levels to be determined, can be anticipated from:

- the City Museum;
- the proposed Collections Store;
- the Roman quayside excavations;
- the Morecambe Seafront development.

Depending on the policy(ies) to be adopted by the Council, the underlying principles and assumptions of the funds-flow model are that:

- net receipts from the disposal of the assets identified above are nominally assigned to the development of the overall 'cultural offer' for the District to act as match-funding for grant and other third-party capital funding;
- hence, overall capital expenditure on any new item or set of items (such as refit, redisplay, new build etc.) should be at a net zero cost to the Council and thus funded on a project-finance basis;
- the net revenue cost to the Council across the entire model should offer a saving on current revenue expenditure whilst offering demonstrably enhanced services.

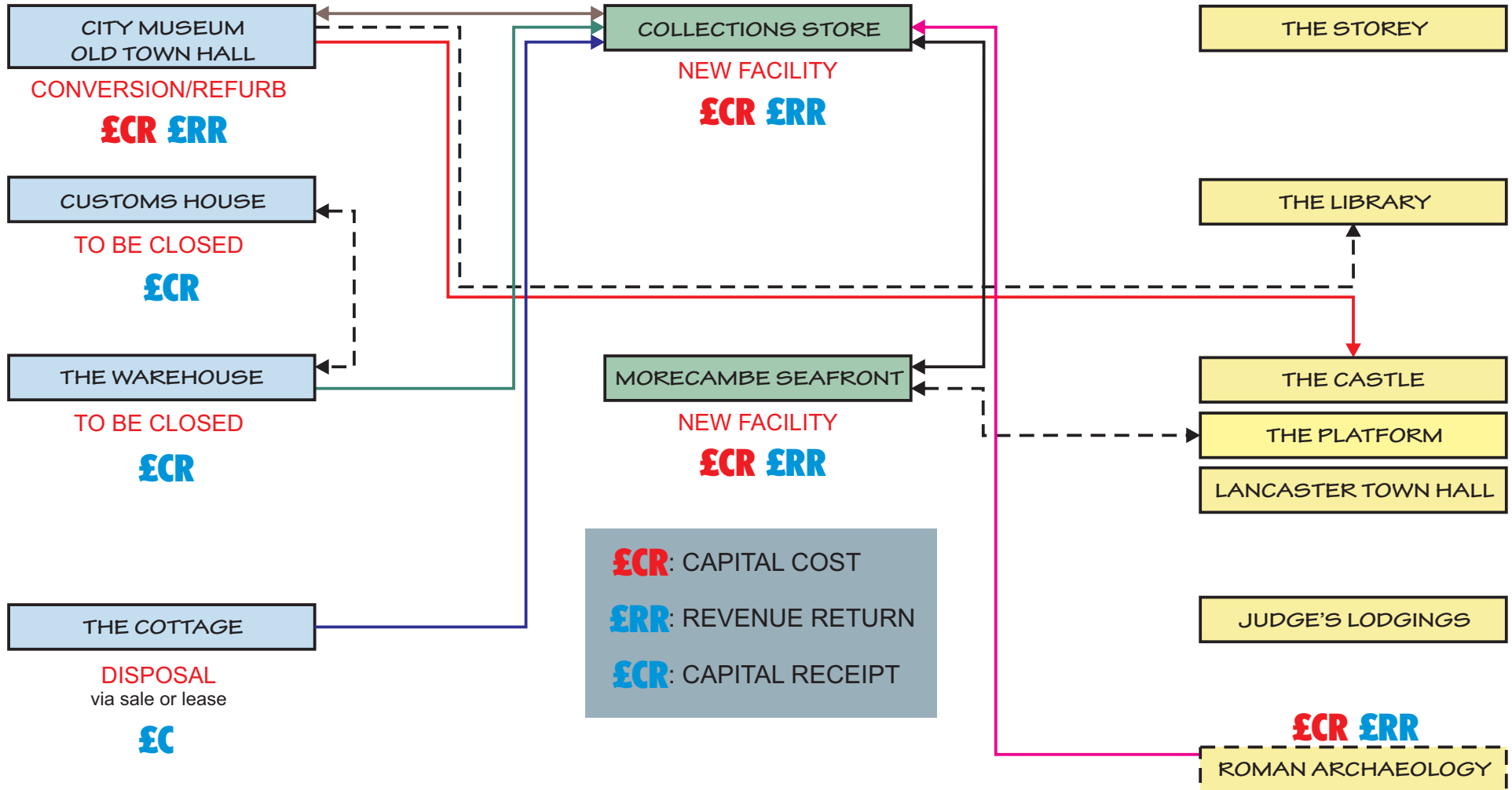
The initiatives in this report call for capital expenditure on a number of either new or refurbished items. Such capital funds could be secured from a variety of sources including, but not restricted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and commercial sponsorship by way of the various international (and £-multi-billion) companies operating in the area such as EDF Energy, Scottish Power/Iberdrola, E.On/Masdar based in Abu Dhabi.

Depending on the detailed nature of the commercial offer in the context of what will eventually be proposed for the various developments, we are convinced that a joint public and private project-finance deal could be assembled either as a collective development or as individual projects to cover at least the capital cost with a possible retention for some of the operational costs.

THE FOCUS OF THE BRIEF

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

ANCILLARY FACILITIES THAT WILL AFFECT THE PROPOSALS



One element of the proposals as far as being able to secure capital funding and generate operational revenue is scale. The project as a whole needs to be sufficiently large and high-profile to:

- attract interest from potential capital funders from the private sector by way of sponsorship and inward investment;
- offer a year-long footfall of tourists and locals large enough to make commercial leases for part of the operation (retail and catering, for example) viable;
- offer a range of both indoor and outdoor experiences (bike hire, bird watching, rambling) that reduce individual operational risk; balanced against
- the need to create a facility which will not be an additional burden on the District's revenue budget; and
- be capable of attracting grants from the HLF and others.

We recommend that this overall approach should be the subject of a detailed market and financial feasibility study since it underpins much of the way forward, at least in capital terms.

For example, it may be that by offering a 'complete package', third party private funders may be attracted since they can buy into an integrated, overall cultural/environmental offer as opposed to a series of one-off developments. This, for example, raises the possibility of branding such sponsors as 'cultural' or 'environmental benefactors', or some such phrase. A number of potential, comparator models exist. The up-front requirement is the buy-in by the Council to a set of development and partnership-funding principles with which they are, in a very real sense, prepared to go to market.

10 GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

The proposals set out in this report call for a radical re-appraisal of the cultural offer in the District, not just physically but in terms of the way(s) in which the proposed facilities are to be governed, managed and staffed. The ways in which wider partnerships, such as with the university and volunteer and community-involvement sectors need to be explored.

The over-arching message is that the 'new service' must be (a) customer-facing and (b) income-focused whilst maintaining (c) the highest professional standards of museum practice set in the context of the role of museums as not only guardians of the past but as engines of future change.

These opportunities already exist, the key is to recognise them and to act on them.

There are many ways in which the service can be delivered, governed and managed in the future, ranging from (a) in-house (City-delivered), (b) under a management contract (such as that which currently exists with Lancashire County Council), or (c) via a trust either created specifically for the purpose or via one already in existence.

All these arrangements have advantages, disadvantages and risks associated with them.

Earlier reports by AP+P rehearsed the possibility of a trust or similar vehicle being established that would operate at arms-length from the local authority to manage the District's cultural assets. Further work is required in this area. Some trusts have been successful, some less so with the Local Authority being put in the position of 'funder of last resort'.

It is clear, however, that, taken together, the proposals set out in this report create the opportunity to re-assess the skill-sets needed of the staff to develop and manage the rejuvenated facilities.

With an emphasis on outreach, fast-changing exhibitions and an eye for revenue income a re-appraisal of the staffing needs of the new facilities is needed. This may be easier given the fact that the proposals call, in effect, for the rolling closure of all the current museum assets as the developments come on stream.

Clearly, a study into this aspect is needed, culminating in the production of specifications and job descriptions for the staff required.

11 NEXT STEPS

This report has made a number of high-level recommendations for the future development and well-being of the District's Museum Service as an income-generator in a time of severe financial constraint.

A number of areas require further work, all of which relate to the key issues of financial viability and sustainability.

In essence, the voracity of the Development Model, as described, needs to be tested through an integrated and coordinated feasibility study.

Because the central proposal around which the others orbit is the creation of a consolidated Collections Store this should be the focus of the first part of the study.

Hence, it is suggested that the following feasibility study is urgently needed from which District-wide decisions can be made:

- 1 the feasibility of developing the Collections Store (including conceptual, financial and design appraisals);
- 2 the feasibility of closing and disposing of the Maritime Museum (including the Warehouse and the Customs House) and the Cottage Museum;
- 3 the feasibility of developing the proposals for the rejuvenation of the City Museum in the Old Town Hall (including conceptual, financial and design appraisals);
- 4 consideration of future long-term governance and management options for the Service, and their associated staffing requirements.

Initial work has already been undertaken by AP+P on items 3 and 4 and has been reported formally to the Council.

A SUMMARY OF PRIMARY QUESTIONS, ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PAGE 3

- appeal to a wide range of audiences;
- protect and develop the collections;
- strongly support the development of the visitor economy;
- develop the District's attractiveness as a place to live and work;
- become financially more efficient and sustainable;
- maintain and enhance professional standards.

PAGE 7

Approaching this review from a District-wide perspective will be critical to its success as the geographical, socio-economic and cultural relationship between Lancaster and Morecambe is unparalleled in the UK and contributes significantly to its appeal as a place in which to live and visit.

PAGE 10

The present financial climate is demanding change in all aspects of Local Authority activity, with museums being no exception. The District now has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to re-invent its museums offer in ways that are fit-for-purpose in the 21stC and which sit alongside the District's Cultural Heritage Strategy, adopted as policy in 2011, which recognises the key links between the arts, retail and the heritage assets as part of the District's overall visitor offer.

PAGE 12

Its present weaknesses – which are addressed in this report – are that the permanent exhibitions are in urgent need of refreshment, physical access is poor (particularly to the City Museum), visitor numbers are low, collections storage is inadequate and opportunities for outreach programmes and community involvement are not being taken up sufficiently.

- PAGE 13 In addition, successful museums have acted, and continue to act, as drivers of the local economy, both as attractions in their own right and as part of a larger, wider cultural or heritage offer.
- PAGE 23 Hence, if Lancaster is serious about (a) the role of its museums as part of a wider cultural-tourism offer that chimes with both economic development and social well-being, and (b) it wishes to maintain its position as one of 'England's Heritage Cities', then the last option (A New Way) is the only one that makes sense in terms of its ability to deliver what is needed.
- PAGE 23 The key question for Lancaster is how it can most effectively use its historic assets and museum estate as a central contributor to the continuing economic development of the District for the long-term well-being of its citizens.
- PAGE 24 As a crucial first step, decanting the various collections into a new, consolidated storage facility will enable the existing museum buildings to be refurbished, converted or disposed of, whilst the collections themselves are re-evaluated, a conservation programme is instigated, new acquisitions and disposal policies are drafted, and future governance and management options are considered.
- PAGE 27 It is recommended that the feasibility of establishing such a store is investigated as an urgent priority since it frees up the District's museum buildings for other uses.
- PAGE 32 A recommendation following the rationalisation process as far as the Maritime Museum is for the museum as a whole (in both the Warehouse and the Customs House) to close with the buildings disposed of to produce a financial receipt (capital and/or revenue) for the Council.

PAGE 33

The cost of maintaining the Cottage as a museum is an unnecessary burden on the District and hence the recommendation is that it ceases to be a museum and alternative uses – such as a holiday let – are considered. An alternative would be its sale as a private residence. The collections and associated material would be moved to the Collections Store for use in other, perhaps temporary, venues, and elsewhere as appropriate.

PAGE 39

What is required is a considered, justified and – above all – bold statement of intent that recognises the importance of the collections and the way in which they can be used for the future benefit of locals and visitors, and hence the economy of the District.

PAGE 48

In essence, the voracity of the Development Model, as described, needs to be tested through an integrated and coordinated feasibility study.

PAGE 48
NEXT STEPS

- 1 the feasibility of developing the Collections Store (including conceptual, financial and design appraisals);
- 2 the feasibility of closing and disposing of the Maritime Museum (including the Warehouse and the Customs House) and the Cottage Museum;
- 3 the feasibility of developing the proposals for the rejuvenation of the City Museum in the Old Town Hall (including conceptual, financial and design appraisals);
- 4 consideration of future long-term governance and management options for the Service, and their associated staffing requirements.