

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2nd FEBRUARY 2005

FUTURE MUSEUM SOUTH WEST

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To notify the committee of the Arts and Museums Service's success in securing funding from the Scottish Executive through the Scottish Museums Council to the value of £300,000 over three years for the Future Museum project and seek approval for the employment of a Digitisation Assistant to support the project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Future Museum project is a creative web based collaboration between the museum services of the South West of Scotland. It aims to maximise access to collections and deepen people's understanding of the rich history of the region.
- 2.2 The project targets the needs of lifelong learners and those interested in our region, whether resident or visitor. It has a collection-driven theme, which is built around the key areas that make the region so distinctive from the rest of Scotland. These themes will grow as the project grows and be supported by thought provoking interactives and resources aimed at lifelong learners.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The project has a direct correlation to the community plans of East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway areas and links to the development plans of South and North Ayrshire Councils, and will help to create a sense of region and shared history. In addition, the project provides an opportunity to develop the working partnerships between the local authority and independent museums within the region.
- 3.2 The project is linked directly to the future plans of each authority and defines a new way of working that will provide greater access to our collections around the various themes explored. A key aspect of the project is to create a sustainable future for this type of collections management and interpretation and to this end, training of current staff plays a significant role in future sustainability.

- 3.3 East Ayrshire Council is the lead organisation and will manage the project through its existing staff teams
- 3.4 Future Museum will play an extremely important part in achieving Community Plan objectives and in particular help us to Promote Community Learning in a dynamic and innovative way that will allow people to explore our collections on-line.
- 3.5 The project requires the Council to employ a Digitisation Assistant for three-years. The cost of this post and any related expenditure will be met from the external funds.
- 3.6 The project will help increase access and audience to our museum facilities and have set targets of 40,000 visits to the site on the first year of operation with this rising to 60,000 by year three.
- 3.7 East Ayrshire Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council have agreed to support the running costs of the website for three further years after the initial funding period. This will be met from existing resources. North and South Ayrshire Councils are still considering this matter.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications to the council. The grant of £300,000 will cover all additional costs associated with the project.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Future Museum will enable the Arts + Museums service to more effectively meet the objectives of the Community Plan particularly with regard to Promoting Community Learning Aim 2: To encourage individuals to access learning opportunities and improve the quality of their lives.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Future Museum is the type of project the Council is now better able to deliver as a result of the recent restructure. The project allows East Ayrshire Council to position itself as one of the most innovative museums services in Scotland and will allow greater access to collections for both local people and those outside the area.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:-

- i) refer this matter to Corporate Governance Committee in respect of their interest; and
- ii) note the contents of the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/KH
12TH January 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Future Museum Business Plan

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 576264 and ask for John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services.

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