

Museums and Galleries Strategy 2013 – 2017

Our Vision, Our Values, Our Strategic Objectives

Our Vision

To be East Kent's gateway to art, culture and heritage making a major contribution to the international significance of the area reflecting its past and shaping its future.

Our Values

We believe in the power of museums, recognising their transformative nature, promoting good and active citizenship, supporting the wellbeing of individuals and communities, shaping the distinctiveness of the Canterbury district as a place

We believe that museums are about learning. They are places for ideas, dialogue and creativity, that use collections to inspire people

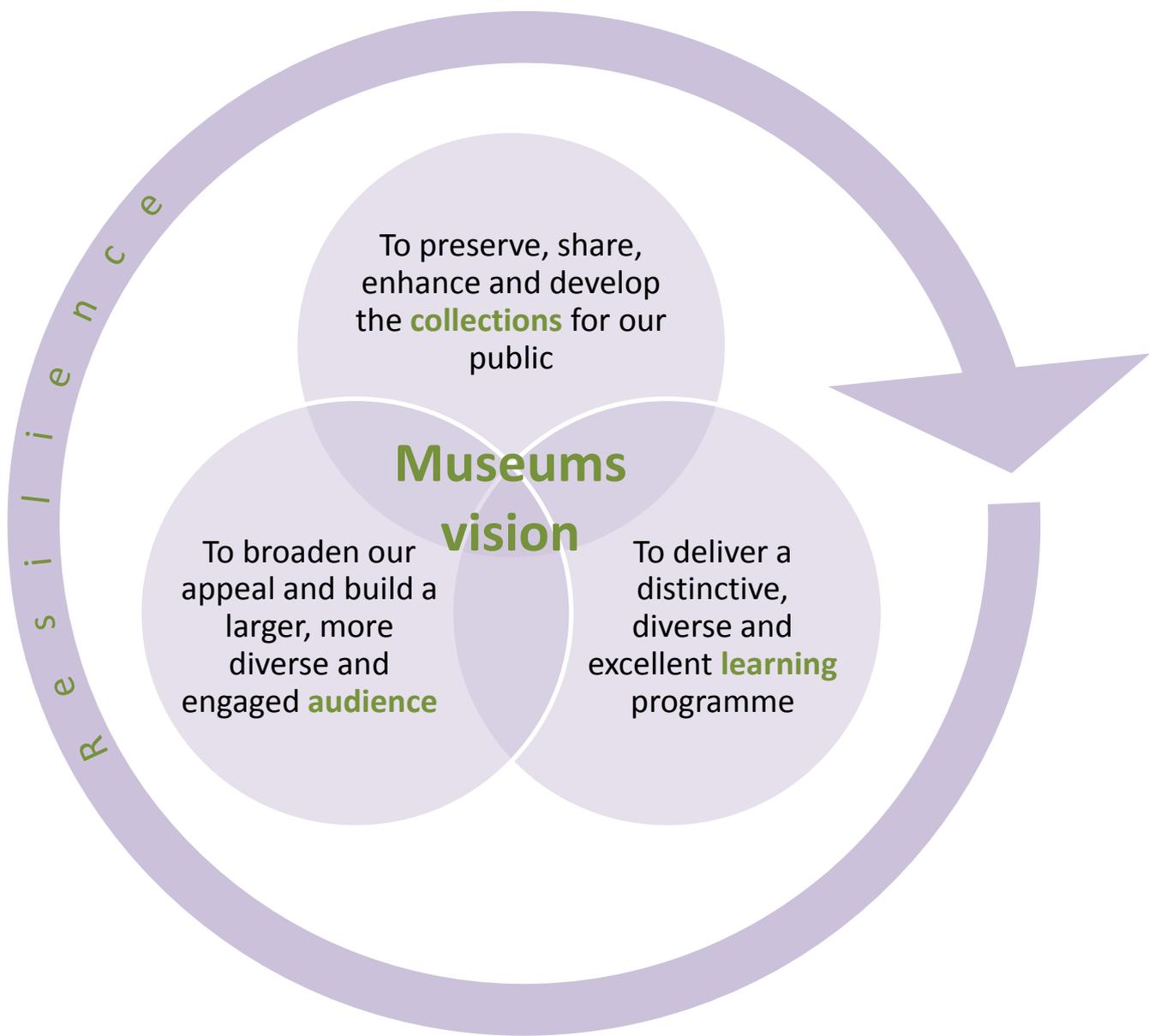
We believe in innovation, we will be brave about trying new things and see experimentation with ideas and technology as essential to developing our museums

We believe in inclusion, encouraging access for all and targeting diverse and under-represented audiences to engage in our museums

We believe in collaboration and will work proactively with our communities and our partners, engaging in strategic partnerships for long-term positive impacts

Our Strategic Objectives

1. To preserve, share, enhance and develop the **collections** for our public
2. To deliver a distinctive, diverse and excellent **learning** programme
3. To broaden our appeal and build a larger, more diverse and engaged **audience**
4. To make the best use of available resources to develop a **resilient museums service**



R
e
s
i
l
i
e
n
c
e

To preserve, share, enhance and develop the **collections** for our public

Museums vision

To broaden our appeal and build a larger, more diverse and engaged **audience**

To deliver a distinctive, diverse and excellent **learning** programme

1. To preserve, share, enhance and develop the collections for our public

Unique collections relating to the art and heritage of East Kent and their impact upon people are at the heart of our work. Our eclectic collections cover a broad spectrum of material encompassing art, Roman Canterbury (which is highly significant to Canterbury's World Heritage status) (footnote) world collections brought to Canterbury by intrepid explorers and collectors, the natural world and the rich historical culture of Canterbury and East Kent.

Our collections will be accessible to as many people as possible and presented in imaginative and absorbing ways. They will be available as resources for enrichment to our communities and provide opportunities for them to be used for wonder, learning and creativity. The future development and enhancement of the collections through targeted acquisitions will ensure that our museums and collections are thriving and dynamic.

In order to preserve, share, enhance and develop our collections we will:

1.1 Care for the collection

We know that the preservation of our collections underpins our work. We will ensure that we fulfil our obligations as custodian of the collections.

We will preserve these collections for use by future generations and we will share them in the present day. Each museum and gallery in our portfolio will be Accredited by Arts Council England, meeting national standards for the management of museums and collections.

1.2 Refine the current collections

We recognise that collections need updating and refining. We will ensure that this is undertaken within the context of what is significant to Canterbury and East Kent.

We will review our collections, identifying strengths and gaps, gathering information, assessing significance and identifying potential use and relevance. We will make robust and ethical decisions about rationalising the collections which do not fit our Collections Development Policy

1.3 Enable as many people as possible to use our collections

We recognise that our collections are a repository of ideas, stories, inspiration, creativity and learning. Collections which have been underused will be unlocked through interpretation, programmes and displays. We will release their potential in order to provide wide access, increasing people's usage of and interaction with them. They will be used to deepen our collaborative work with the local community and to provide the starting point for creativity and learning.

We will work in partnership with other organisations, including the local universities, to foster research in order to explore the context and meaning of collections to provide insights and to enhance knowledge and understanding.

We will create a museum without walls enabling more of the stored collections to be displayed and used outside of traditional museum buildings within local community settings.

Making more of our collection available digitally, including online and through social media and through will be a priority enabling us to reach a wider audience.

1.4 Develop meaningful collections for the future

We recognise that the collections are key to the experience we offer our visitors; they stimulate curiosity, learning and creativity.

We will enhance existing collections through new acquisitions. Going forwards we will be astute about what we collect recognising what to acquire and identifying which new acquisitions will become the star exhibits of the future for their resonance and meaning.

Supporting Policies & Plans

- Collections Development
- Acquisitions and Disposals

2. To deliver a distinctive, diverse and excellent *learning* programme

Learning is at the heart of what we do and we should be ensuring our museums are inspiring places for formal and informal learning.

We have a key role to play in increasing aspiration and opportunity across Canterbury district to enhance attainment and creative potential, to develop skills, increase employability and to provide opportunities for lifelong learning. In addition, every child in the district should have access to museums and collections that support their understanding of where they live and who they are

Our learning programmes will be pioneering, providing demonstrable benefits to the education and wellbeing of our residents and visitors. We will be recognised as a leading provider of out-of-classroom education in East Kent, inspiring new generations to be interested in art and heritage

In order to deliver a distinctive, diverse and excellent learning programme we will:

2.1 Develop our museums as centres for knowledge and understanding

We know that learning may not be the primary instigator for a visit to our museums, but we will ensure that these informal learning experiences are capitalised on, and that learning is at the heart of everything we do.

We want every person that uses our museums to feel inspired; to feel informed and engaged with the collections, buildings and experiences that we share; to have informal learning experiences that encourages future exploration of our collections through personal interest and discovery.

2.2 Create learning opportunities that are valued by both teachers and students

We know that learning outside of the classroom is essential to putting context into the learning experience. We want to be an active part of the National Curriculum, providing targeted and valued resources to teachers, in interesting and inspiring environments for their students.

We will continue to provide resources, activities and opportunities that support students at all levels of the Curriculum and those in Further and Higher Education.

We will continue to work with colleagues and other providers of formal learning experiences across the district and county to ensure that what we offer is of value and offers value.

2.3 Ensure our collections, interpretation and resources are accessible to users of all ages, backgrounds and academic levels

We recognise that people have different learning styles and needs, and we will ensure that our museums reflect the personalised learning approach needed to engage and inspire our users. We will further integrate the museum experience with the learning experience, removing barriers between the two.

We will maximise the opportunities to engage people in meaningful and immersive learning experiences through the museum experience, our varied events and activities, and through engagement with our staff.

2.4 Provide volunteering opportunities and experiences that add value to the volunteer whether professionally, academically or personally

We recognise that volunteering plays an important role in the delivery of our museums offer, but that theirs is as much a learning and development experience as it is a work experience.

Our museums will adopt a 'can do' attitude to volunteering, recognising that those experiences can shape a person's future career path. We will ensure that volunteers are recruited in a professional manner and managed, monitored and evaluated throughout their time with us. We will establish each volunteer's personal development requirements, creating the right environments for them to achieve their personal aims – whether that is regaining confidence in the workplace, or putting academic theory into professional practice.

Supporting Policies and Plans:

- Learning & Access
- Volunteering

3. To broaden our appeal and build a larger, more diverse and engaged audience

Audiences, existing and new, are key to the success of our museums, and we fundamentally believe in providing enriching and empowering experiences to the widest possible spectrum of society.

Our approach to public engagement will be dynamic, responding to the ways people exchange knowledge and ideas. Through partnership and commissioning, we will develop richer content and make it available across a wider range of media.

Our visitors will have transformational experiences and their visits will be enjoyable and inspiring. More people, from diverse backgrounds, will develop lasting relationships with our museums and public-facing activities.

We will promote our museums: what we are; what we do; what we value, to the widest possible audience, seeing the visitor experience in its entirety and valuing the customer journey, power of consumer voice and importance of targeted marketing in furthering the objectives of the service.

In order to broaden our appeal and build a larger, more diverse and engaged audience we will:

3.1 Build effective, positive and proactive relationships with local people and communities.

We know that effective community engagement increases awareness and appreciation of CMAG and what we offer, and our understanding and ability to respond to audience needs and expectations.

We will continue to partner with our communities to engender trust, build an enhanced profile and networks and to leverage additional resources. These community engagement activities also reflect our role as custodians of public buildings and collections.

3.2 Achieve the widest possible access to all of our buildings, collections, facilities and services.

We know that there exist many barriers to accessing our museums and services, and that there persists a notion that museums are not inclusive places.

Our service is a democratic; we will eradicate perceptions of exclusivity and elitism, remove these barriers and actively target under-represented audiences. We will reach out and engage with people who suffer from disadvantage or discrimination, be that economic, social or personal, and ensure that our facilities reflect the needs of our users. We will take our collections to our publics, guaranteeing that the process of interaction with the service is multi-directional.

3.3 Develop our museums' potential as lively cultural resources through innovative, inclusive programming.

We know that museums are places for ideas and dialogues that use collections to inspire people.

We will use collections to give information on contemporary issues, and continually seek outward looking and innovative ways of working to ensure our offer remains fresh and inspiring to our audiences. Our users will be at the heart of participative programming and we will be informed by their views to remain focused and significant, ensuring that our activity reflects the diversity of our rich cultural offer. We will keep the programme fresh, value-based, accessible and relevant to audiences to encourage repeat use and engagement.

3.4 Act as a catalyst for social change, contributing to the quality of people's lives and the wellbeing of local communities.

We know that museums have the power to help promote good and active citizenship, and that we can play a significant role in supporting our users' health and mental wellbeing as well as enhancing creative ability and academic performance.

We see social investment as a key part of our activity, and we will use our collections and programmes to stimulate and facilitate debate on pertinent issues for our communities. We aim to make a positive difference to the lives of our users through influencing public knowledge, attitudes and behaviour and empowering our citizens.

Supporting Policies and Plans:

- Visual Arts Programming
- Community Engagement
- Marketing & Communications
- Audience Development

4. To make the best use of available resources to develop a resilient museums service

Underpinning our ability to deliver the other strategic objectives, will be the requirement to make the best use of our resources to build a secure future for our museums.

We will focus on making the most effective use of our assets through managing our finances, developing our staff, focusing on entrepreneurial activities, and engaging with current and potential funders, stakeholders and individual givers.

In order to make the best use of available resources to develop a resilient museum service we will:

4.1 Secure a long term and diverse balance of funding and investment

We recognise that our museums have a mixed economy of funding. This is designed to both increase our resilience and to fund growth. We will therefore seek to secure more funding through grant income and donations and become more sustainable through investment in our portfolio and commercial activity.

We will cultivate and sustain our relationships with individuals, trusts, foundations and companies. We will ensure income is maximised and all spend is responsible. We will effectively manage the museum's property portfolio, maximising development potential to improve the quality and impact of our museums. We will adopt an agile and innovative approach to commercial activity utilising opportunities for increasing income.

We will understand the impact and value of our investment and ensure all funding, whether self-generated or given, is targeted towards achieving our vision and strategic objectives.

4.2 Develop a professional, versatile and capable team

We know that good management and a motivated and talented workforce are key to delivering the museum's vision. We are committed to developing skills and improving how work gets done across the organisation. Our people will be one professional, versatile, efficient and effective team that works together towards this shared vision of the future. They will be positive advocates for our museums, taking pride in the contribution they make to our success.

We will ensure through our development programmes that people get the right support, our managers are skilled and able to motivate, coach and lead. People will be supported by effective processes and an appropriate organisational structure.

4.3 Advocate the important role Museums play and the impact they can have on social and economic regeneration

We recognise that museums can have a positive transformative effect on individuals, communities and the economic prosperity of a local area. Museums have the potential to truly become of their communities.

We will build on the distinctiveness of our museums offer and build a reputation, locally, nationally and internationally for delivering pioneering and innovative experiences for, and with, our users.

Supporting Policies and Plans:

- Commercial
- Fundraising
- Asset Management
- Visitor Services