

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

20 January 2016

ROGER BROWN'S MODEL OF VICTORIAN WINCHESTER: UPDATE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES)

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RECENT REFERENCES:

[WTF217](#) – Roger Brown's Model of Victorian Winchester, 11 March 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Members will recall that a working group was created at the instigation of Winchester Town Forum in line with the recommendations of Report [WTF217](#) – Roger Brown's Model of Victorian Winchester, 11 March 2015.

As a result of the group's discussions, the Hampshire Cultural Trust has proposed a new display location for the scale model of Victorian Winchester created by former Hampshire County Council County Planning Officer, Roger Brown in the 1980s.

This Report updates Members on progress and seeks approval to allocate £5,000 from the Winchester Town Account as a contribution to the total costs of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Town Forum:-

- i) supports the proposal to display the Model of Victorian Winchester at City Museum, Winchester, as part of a refurbishment plan for the ground floor;

- ii) agrees to allocate a one-off budget of £5,000 in 2016/17 from the Winchester Town Account as a contribution to the overall project costs, subject to the Council's approval of the Budget and Council Tax for 2016/17.

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#### DETAIL:

##### 1 Introduction

1.1 Following a Report to Town Forum on 11 March 2015, a working group was convened to try and find a venue for the display of Roger Brown's Model of Victorian Winchester ([WTF217](#) – Roger Brown's Model of Victorian Winchester refers).

1.2 The Group included representatives of the City of Winchester Trust, Hampshire Cultural Trust and Winchester City Council. A constructive dialogue led to the identification of two possible 'homes' for the model, at the Tourist Information Centre and at City Museum.

1.3 This Report explains the steering group's rationale for recommending a display in City Museum, and seeks approval for a contribution to the project costs.

##### 2 Consideration of Options

2.1 As has been noted previously, the model needs floor space of at least 25 feet (7.5m) across and probably more to allow for disability access. Having developed a long list of publicly accessible buildings in the city, the working group rapidly established that there were only two realistic options: the ground floor of City Museum in The Square and Winchester Tourist Information Centre.

2.2 Outline floor plans were drawn up for both locations and a simple appraisal of advantages and disadvantages of each carried out as can be seen at Appendix 1.

2.3 Overall, the group felt that City Museum offered the best combination of space, interpretation, staff support and strategic 'fit'.

2.4 Hampshire Cultural Trust have produced preliminary designs for a refurbished ground floor which would accommodate the model and improve the visitor experience to the museum as a whole. Proper lighting and interpretation for the model would be provided, and consideration given to the needs of visitors with disabilities. The refurbishment plans also include improved displays of the highlight objects of the Museum, and extend the new merchandising that has proved very popular in the foyer of the Museum since its introduction over the past year. The proposals are supported by their Trustees.

- 2.5 The Trust would ideally wish to progress the project in the first half of 2016/17 financial year, although seeking to keep disruption to a minimum during the peak summer visitor months. The one challenge to this timescale arises from uncertainty as to the future of the City Museum lift. Following a change in fire regulations and a subsequent review of the museum's fire risk assessment, the lift was taken out of service some months ago. This has caused frustration to visitors with disabilities in particular, and officers are currently in discussion with the Trust about future provision. Any changes to current provision may impact on the layout of the ground floor, and therefore some further certainty will be required before the Trust can commit to any specific designs to accommodate the Roger Brown model.

### 3 Funding the Refurbishment

- 3.1 Hampshire Cultural Trust are keen to progress the refurbishment of the museum for completion in the autumn of 2016 (to avoid peak visitor season). Detailed designs and an interpretation scheme will be developed by the spring, subject to confirmation of funding.
- 3.2 The full refurbishment has been costed at £160,000, and a growth bid of £40,000 will be proposed in the draft General Fund budget for 2016/17 as a contribution from the City Council to the project.
- 3.3 Discussions have been held with Hampshire County Council, who are supportive of the ambition to find a permanent home for the model. Officers are mindful of their ongoing financial commitment in providing year-round storage, repairs, transport and display in the Great Hall each summer, and are looking to make a proportionate contribution to the project.
- 3.4 Hampshire Cultural Trust has identified a contribution of £40,000, and is also proposing to seek a community contribution of £40,000. They would lead on the fundraising activities to generate this. The City of Winchester Trust is very supportive of the project and its trustees will be considering a financial contribution as part of this community target at their meeting on Tuesday 2 February 2016.
- 3.5 Given the leadership role played by Winchester Town Forum in bringing this initiative about, it is proposed that Members consider a contribution of £5,000 to help reach the full funding target.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 4.1 The display of the model of Winchester would support the Community Strategy's economic prosperity outcome by "promoting tourism and the cultural assets of the District".

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The budgetary requirements and approach to partnership funding are set out at section 3. The ability to deliver the project will depend on approval of the General Fund budget by Council in February 2016, and the Trust's success in closing the funding gap with its fundraising activities.
- 5.2 It is proposed that, subject to the Council's approval of the Budget and Council Tax for 2016/17, a £5,000 one-off budget is allocated in 2016/17 and is funded from the Winchester Town Earmarked Reserve.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Analysis of Advantages and Disadvantages

### **Appendix 1: Analysis of Advantages and Disadvantages**

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
City Museum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High profile cultural destination.</li> <li>2. Model will benefit from care of professional curators.</li> <li>3. Model can be displayed with high standard of interpretation, and groups supported by trained education officers.</li> <li>4. Fits with planned refurbishment for museum.</li> <li>5. Synergy with other models already displayed in museum.</li> <li>6. Opportunity to give greater prominence to museum highlights, including Jane Austen artefacts.</li> <li>7. Opportunity to improve merchandising as part of wider development strategy for HCT.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Popular existing features (eg the old shop displays) will need to be removed to make space for model.</li> <li>2. Space available for 5 – 10 years, depending on plans for future refurbishments.</li> <li>3. Uncertainty over the lift which could impact on available space and delivery timescale.</li> </ol>
Tourist Information Centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provides engaging introduction to the city of Winchester for visitors.</li> <li>2. A high profile location, with high level of footfall.</li> <li>3. Venue already staffed by officers with strong knowledge of the city.</li> <li>4. Could increase footfall to the Centre to make best use of existing services/facilities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disruption to customers using Centre for traditional services.</li> <li>2. Space will not be available in the long term if redevelopment of City Offices goes ahead.</li> <li>3. Space will not easily allow for group visits.</li> </ol>