

From: Basil Greenwood
Sent: 15 August 2014 17:36
To: Scrutiny
Subject: Priorities and Resources Committee review

Dear Sir/madam

Please find attached:

- Interim Summary project delivery - Aug 2014 v5. This references the remaining attached Annexes.
- Annex A - Options Appraisal Vs2 April 2013 – scrutiny
- Annex B - Torbay Museums Final Report 2013-10-29 v2 2
- Annex C - Reporting FM Project Q1 2014-15 v1mb
- Annex D DRAFT Savings TQM v3
- Annex 2 - FM Governance change Timeline 2014-15 v4 pdf form

Please will you take the above documents and the note below into consideration as part of the Priorities and Resources Committee review of the reduction proposed for Torquay and Brixham Museum Grants. Brixham Museum has already sent a commentary to you and the following text relates principally to Torquay Museum.

Torquay Museum is an independent registered charity that receives an annual grant from Torbay Council, which constitutes a significant percentage of its income, the rest of which it generates from visitor admissions and trading.

Although the Museum sympathises with the difficult financial choices that Torbay Council has to make in the coming years, their proposed cut to Torquay Museum's grant of 42% for 2015/16 will have a dramatic negative effect on the Museum. There is a real possibility that the Museum will be forced to close its doors after 140 years, which would be an enormous cultural loss to the English Riviera's residents and holidaymakers.

Despite seeing our visitor numbers increase by 35% over the past five years through a lot of hard work and innovation, Torquay Museum has struggled with the rising costs of caring for its internationally important collections in an ageing building that is very expensive to maintain, and a significant drop in other income. The Museum has already made deep cuts to staff costs and other overheads, but are walking a financial tightrope. These proposed cuts in Torbay Council's grant to Torquay Museum are likely to result in the Museum having to shed so many of its paid staff as to make the running of the Museum unviable.

Torquay Museum, Torre Abbey and Brixham Heritage Museum have received funding over the past two years from Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund to restructure themselves and share resources and management in order to reduce costs further. Whilst good progress has been made such significant restructuring takes time and the Museum is not yet in a position to substantially reduce costs any further. The Museum needs more time to complete this restructuring, and unfortunately Torbay Council's proposed substantial grant cut will kill Torquay Museum before we are able to put ourselves on a secure financial footing for the future.

Torquay Museum provides an invaluable learning resource for local schools, and a place of wonder and enjoyment for tens of thousands of local residents and holidaymakers every year. The Museum is the home to Northwest Europe's oldest human remains, thousands of artefacts from Kents Cavern (one of Britain's most important archaeological sites), Britain's only Agatha Christie gallery, an

enviable collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, and a huge natural history collection. It would be very sad to lose such an asset after almost one-and-a-half centuries.

The recent questionnaire about the proposed cuts to the Museum grant has resulted in many hundreds of response from locals and visitors alike all of whom support the maintenance of the current grant. In addition notable academics and researchers engaged in studying the collections have all expressed their concern at the proposed cut in the Museum grant.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Basil Greenwood

Basil Greenwood
Project Manager
Future Museums Project
Torquay Museum, Torre Abbey & Brixham Heritage Museum working in partnership