

The New Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Project

Update for Swindon Borough Council's Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Director of the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust - March 2017

In December 2016, the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust unveiled its architectural concept for the New Museum and Art Gallery. This statement building, in the town's centre and planned to open during 2021, constitutes the first phase in the development of the Cultural Quarter which will, through substantially increased footfall, drive the regeneration and diversification of both the local day- and night-time economies and act as a catalyst for an uplift in the quality and associated value of the surrounding built environment. The delivery of the New Museum and Art Gallery is also the first step toward Swindon achieving UK City of Culture status, and the associated development funds, during the late 2020s.

The New Museum and Art Gallery and its external realm will quickly establish itself as a beacon of civic pride and a major tourist attraction in the region by showcasing Swindon's significant holdings of Modern and Contemporary British Art, telling the Story of Swindon from Prehistory to the Modern Day, promoting learning in STEM subjects through a highly interactive science and technology zone and presenting a programme of high-quality touring and temporary exhibitions. The offer will be further augmented by outreach and engagement programmes and by working in close partnership with National providers such as the Science Museum Group, The British Museum and TATE.

Substantial commitments to the capital costs have already been made by Swindon Borough Council (£5M), the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (£1.35M) and the Board of the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust (£250,000+). A wider fundraising campaign has also been launched. This initiative concentrates upon Corporate Sponsors, small to medium sized Trusts and Foundations and High Net Worth Individuals. In tandem with these activities, major capital bids will be made to Arts Council England (c. £1M) and, in November 2017, the Heritage Lottery Fund (c. £10M). In preparation for these submissions, detailed planning is currently underway to hone the architectural concept and develop detailed interpretation and learning strategies and audience development and content plans.

Detailed business planning is also underway on the capital project (c. £22.5M) itself but also on on-going revenue models. The need to demonstrate cultural but also, and more importantly, economic sustainability into the future underpins this work and will be essential in achieving the support of major funders, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. The design of the building will ensure its efficiency and longevity. Building methods will be 'tried and tested', materials will high-quality and durable and environmental conditions will, except in the case of the temporary exhibition space, be managed passively or locally. The balance between core and project sponsored staff, interns and volunteers will be key to delivering a cost-efficient operating model. The New Museum and Art Gallery, although an accessible public space for Swindon and its residents, will be an essentially commercially savvy organization. Revenue streams will be maximized through provision of a carefully managed programme of free, paid for and sponsored events and activities, the destination cafe, restaurant/bar and shop, attractive and appropriately priced membership packages and associated benefits, corporate and private hire income. Work continues to prepare these detailed budgets in preparation for the submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund in November 2017.

Swindon Borough Council has, in addition to its commitment to the capital costs of the project, undertaken to transfer the running costs of the current Museum and Art Gallery to the new facility on an on-going basis. Further discussions remain to be had regarding the future monetization of the

economic benefit reaped by the town for the benefit of the New Museum and Art Gallery and the further development of the wider Cultural Quarter.