

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Arts and Museums Facility Recovery Plan</b>
<b>Report Submitted To:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> August 2020
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Decision

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Director / Head of Community & Culture

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	Contained within report
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES</b>
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	Arts/Museums
Staffing Costs	n/a

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date: August 2016 (CAH strategy, of which this project forms a part)
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	Date: n/a
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes	Date: 2019
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes	Date: 2019
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed Arts and Museums Facility Recovery Plan and seek direction and approval for the timing of re-opening Council's Arts and Museums venues.

At the last Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July Members were presented with a timeline for the reopening of all Leisure & Development facilities. Following this meeting, Leisure and Development held a Members Workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> July to present three recovery options and the relative affordability of each in terms of the annual revenue budget for 2020/21. The preferred option emerging from this discussion was the 'Reduced Service Resumption' with the re-opening of facilities from the 1st September 2020.

This preferred option aligns services with affordability and maximises the permanent staff complement with reduced opening hours for activities which best reflect peak demand periods and compliance with current Covid 19 restrictions.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the additional detail requested by Members on the Reduced Services and to request approval for the phased recovery plan for the reopening of Cultural facilities from 1<sup>st</sup> September.

## **2.0 Background/Context**

The following venues are included within the scope of this paper:

- Flowerfield Arts Centre.
- Roe Valley Arts & Cultural Centre, inc. museum gallery.
- Ballymoney Museum (in Ballymoney Town Hall).
- Coleraine Museum (temporary exhibition space, Coleraine Town Hall).
- Ballycastle Museum (seasonal).
- Green Lane (seasonal).

Arts & Museums venues closed following Government advice in March, creating loss of income for independent arts venues and local authority owned venues. This had an immediate impact on practitioners with an increase of unemployment within the sector through tutor roles, workshop facilitators, within arts management and administration roles and a loss of income for artists as venues represented a primary outlet for sales, performances, exhibitions, workshops etc. There has been an immediate loss of access to arts/cultural heritage events and activities for general public, particularly at a time of increased mental health issues and anxiety related conditions

The cultural landscape of the Borough may be severely affected in the longer term, due to loss of some voluntary arts organisations and cultural businesses. This has crippling impact on tourism/economic and community development council objectives (e.g. arts/music festivals stopping; community arts groups no longer existent, damaging to borough-wide arts and cultural development).

As a short term measure in response to these issues, and in an effort to support the creative sector, including local artists, cultural services have been planning (programme budget allowing), bespoke online activities which will commission local arts practitioners/organisations, sharing local cultural initiatives and profiling local arts providers via social media platforms. Additionally teams have been researching funding opportunities/good practice to enable partnership project delivery and hosting online visual arts exhibitions promoting and connecting borough-based creative practitioners.

As centres remain closed to the general public, cultural services as a whole has moved its focus to delivery of online activities. These include a broad range of activities from online daily children's activities and competitions, on line challenges for adults, virtual exhibitions

for the creative sector and community groupings, digital museum projects, promotion of local producers, mental wellbeing activities etc.

On line activities, including a significant social media presence have proved to be very successful with over 80,700 individuals engaging in 116 on line activities for the arts and 17,329 engaging in 53 online activities for museums, both locally and from across the globe and has created a more accessible service for all. Additionally Museums have distributed information/articles through traditional media to circa 80,000 individuals.

Flowerfield is being used as the location of the COVID 19 community hub, while also working in partnership with CRUN to produce PPE (visors) for health and social care.

These approaches will continue with the expectation that guided by Council's decisions and NI Executive's recovery plan, cultural venues will re-open with a blend of distance based learning, events and activities and smaller scale centre based activities, with appropriate social distancing measures in place (reduced numbers and increased Health & safety regimes).

### **3.0 Guiding Principles for Recovery**

#### **NI Executive Guidance**

The NI Executive's 5 step recovery plan states that Galleries may effectively re-open from 3<sup>rd</sup> July (step 3 of the recovery plan), while a date for museums are still to be determined and arts centres/venues are considered within step 5 of the recovery plan (dates to be determined).

The guidance provided by the Department for Communities 'Culture & Heritage Destination Venues, Guidance for a phased return' has formed the basis of the proposed approach to phasing the reopening of Council's Arts Centres and Museums, *alongside council's affordability options/considerations*.

The guidance, issued in June 2020, offers high-level guidance for organisations in Northern Ireland that manage culture and heritage destinations and venues that are open to the public. These include museums, art galleries, libraries, archives, historic buildings, historic gardens, historic monuments, cinemas, concert halls, art centres and theatres. This guidance has been adapted and laid out below as a framework for opening safely. (Annex A).

#### **Leisure & Development's proposed approach**

The following approach, alongside NI Executive's guidance is considered, provides options by which to proceed. Based on the approach below, options have been provided in the section below which consider:

- Financial Position/implications Arts Service & Museums.
- Programming/service provision impact.
- Staffing impact.

#### **The options are based (using the L&D criteria below) on**

- Centres remaining closed for the entire year.
- Normal/immediate (within current restrictions) opening of services in July/August.
- Affordability options of opening in September or January.

*Options are considered further in the section below*

### **4.0 The Financial Approach During Recovery**

The Council agreed net budget position for each directorate and service area remains as the 2020/21 annual target budgetary position. Furthermore budget management is allowing the

corporate body to rebuild General Reserves. To offset the loss of income (and include contingency savings) an estimated £2.5m reduction in expenditure is necessary. Therefore stringent financial analysis and cost control are an absolute necessity as outlined below:

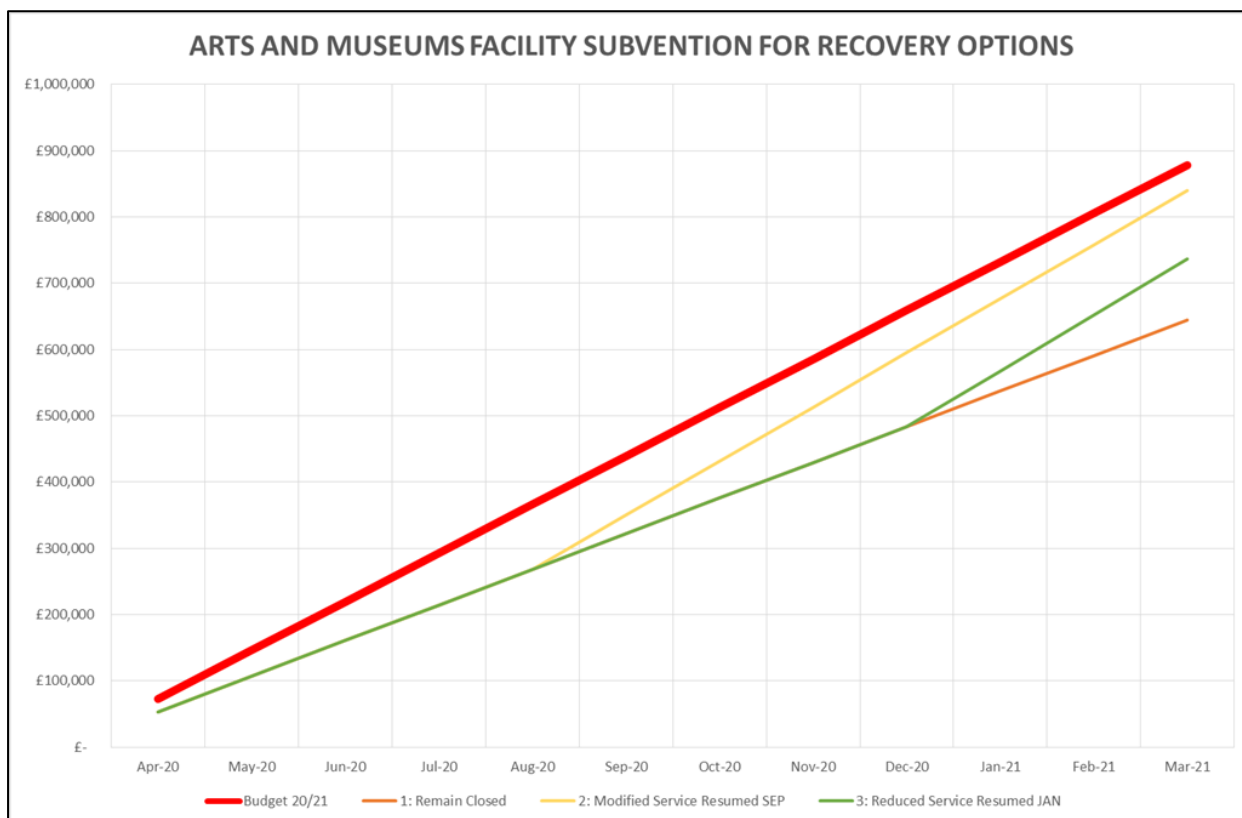
1. **Financial Analysis and Planning** - accurately understand the net budgetary shortfall by Directorate, Head of Service Area, Tier 4 Service Area and Programme/Project/Activity.
2. **The Reinstatement of Services** - no services, activities and programmes beyond those currently on-going during the Lockdown Period, are to be reinstated unless with the agreement of the Director / Council decision.
3. **Service Prioritisation** - the reinstatement of services, activities and programmes is based upon prioritised recovery themes.
4. **Pathway to Recovery** - the financial and practical planning necessary to allow for the considered reinstatement of facilities and activities based upon affordability and the basic essential functions to allow safe public use. Affordability options to be presented:
  - a. Option 1 - Closure. Remain closed for the entire year i.e. 'hibernation', calculating the net estimated position based upon:
    - i. 12 month loss of all income.
    - ii. Costs reduced to the essential minimum.
  - b. Option 2 - Normal Services Resume. Open the facility from a given date, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
    - i. 'Baseline' operating costs.
    - ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid 19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
    - iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
    - iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.
  - c. Option 3 - Services Aligned to Affordability. Consider the option of opening a facility based upon a reduced service to meet the target net annual revenue budget, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
    - i. A reduced service resulting in reduced operating costs to provide basic functionality.
    - ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid 19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
    - iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
    - iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.

## 5.0 Affordability Analysis

On the basis of the corporate direction outlined above, Community & Culture has appraised the three options:

- Option 1: Remain closed.
- Option 2: Reduced Service, Covid 19 restrictions resumed September.
- Option 3: Reduced service, Covid 19 restrictions resumed January.

The preferred option emerging from the Members Workshop is a 'Reduced Services resumed from 1<sup>st</sup> September. This option for direct facility costs is depicted by the yellow line in the graph below which requires an annual subvention of £839,426 for museums and arts facilities combined, representing an underspend of £39k against the annual budget of £878,604 (excluding costs not attributed to venues of an additional £221,423\*).



### Budget Re opening Cultural services venues

Budget Options re: re-opening Cultural Venues

	Arts	Variance	Museums	Variance
<b>Baseline Budget</b>	*605,231		**273,373	
<b>Option 1 Closure Apr - March</b>	414,401	190,830	230,058	43,315
<b>Option 2 affordability (Sept 20)</b>	561,792	43,439	277,634	-4,261
<b>Option 3 affordability (Jan 21)</b>	484,705	120,526	251,553	21,820

**Note:**

\* Excludes Riverside Theatre £107,500 and Arts engagement/outreach provision, outreach classes and community grants £103,761 (total Arts service budget including all venue and non-venue related costs = £816,492)

\*\* Excludes museums storage costs, Garvagh Museum grant costs £10,162 (total museums service budget including all venue and non-venue related costs = £283,535)

**5.0 Reduced Service Resumed**

It is recognised that a phased approach to opening will be required to ensure control measures can be put in place to manage the risk of Covid-19. In terms of affordability the management of phased opening will give Officers the flexibility to remain within budget.

It is proposed to resume with reduced service provision for cultural facilities (arts and museum venues) to comply with COVID 19 safety measures in place as follows:

- In the initial four month re-opening period, venues will host arts/crafts and heritage exhibitions alongside workshops/courses (within arts venues), in conjunction with continued online/digital initiatives increasing access and inclusion for both arts and museums services.
- Exhibitions will also be featured online (continuing the success of online access during lockdown) alongside downloadable educational activity sheets and information where possible. No 'touch' or object handling exhibitions will be permitted where feasible. Curation and placement of exhibitions will take visitor 'flow' into consideration, avoiding congestion at particular spots within gallery spaces.
- All workshops/courses for arts centres will feature reduced participant numbers and the financial viability of our creative learning programme will be considered.
- Venues will strategically focus on community partnership initiatives, supporting community mental health and well-being initiatives and utilising venue spaces and online potential.
- Live events within the arts venues will be postponed until such time as they become economically viable although performances will continue via online programmes such as 'Northern Lights'. Small bespoke events may be programmed according to financial viability and if so, risk assessments must be carried out in conjunction with touring organisation/facilitator.
- Venue hire will be facilitated with limitations in place to comply with Covid 19 spatial restrictions (30-40% room capacity) and appropriate compliance with amended booking conditions for 3<sup>rd</sup> party groups
- Ballymoney accredited Museum will operate restricted access to visitors, including reduced opening hours to public *and opening of this facility will be dependent on opening schedule within the town hall in Ballymoney*) and will require additional temporary staffing cover to supervise such.
- Programming will be restricted to permanent exhibitions in Ballymoney with no access to interactive/touch displays and no first floor access.
- Coleraine accredited museum (within Coleraine Town hall) will operate with restricted access to visitors when exhibitions are in place, including reduced opening hours to public *(and is dependent on opening schedule of the town hall in Coleraine)* and will require additional temporary staffing cover to supervise such
- Ballycastle museum and Green Lane (accredited) will remain closed as seasonal facilities

Arts Centres opening hours (to be reviewed in line with COVID 19 guidance) - Proposed that each venue opens Wednesday and Thursday 10am-4pm and 7-9pm; Friday 10am-3pm; Saturday 10am-

1pm. This allows for public access 4 days per week, including two evenings permitting continuation of popular evening recreational courses on restricted basis and venue hire activities

Ballymoney Museum - open on reduced opening hours (to be reviewed in line with COVID 19 guidance) - Proposed that Ballymoney museum opens Wednesday and Thursday 10am-4pm; Friday 10am-3pm; Saturday 10am-1pm. This allows for public access 4 days per week – subject to Town Hall opening

Coleraine Town Hall – to be reviewed according to programming (part time only when exhibitions are in situ)

Ballycastle Museum - not open due to restricted space 20 sqm of floor space available, impacting on ability for exhibitions, staff unsupervised - *by appointment only*. Potential to programme temporary community based exhibition/pop up museum.

The Phased Recovery Plan is summarised in the following Table 1.

FACILITIES	CLOSED	REDUCED SERVICE: 1 SEPTEMBER - 31 MARCH		OPEN	
		PHASE 1	PHASE 2		
Arts Centres:					
Gallery/Exhibitions	On line/digital experience, learning opportunities & access to resources for the customer  Research and development for 20/21 projects, particular focus for museums  Digital programming for schools, communities  Sales/marketing promotion ongoing digitally for creative sector/artists  Community cultural projects continue, including community partnership projects	Restricted Access / Bookings Only	Potential for increased Access if restrictions relax	All facilities returned to 'normal use' subject to ongoing review against Covid-19 restrictions	
Courses/Workshops		Reduced numbers by 30-40%	Potential for increased numbers if restrictions relax		
Digital/Online Programme		On line Live events/digital educational activity	On line Live events/digital educational activity		
Partnership Projects		Mental health/wellbeing in venue & off-site	Mental health/wellbeing in venue & off-site		
External Hire		Booked with numbers limited to 30-40% room capacity	Potential for increased numbers if restrictions relax		
Auditorium Events		Not viable with 15-25% occupancy	Phased in small scale live events / cabaret style initially		
Museums:					
Access to Facilities		Restricted access to Ballymoney/Coleraine Only - Dependent on Town Hall opening/access	Ballycastle/Green Lane access by appointment or potential 'pop-up' museum/exhibition		
Programming Exhibitions		Permanent Exhibitions Only	Permanent Exhibitions Only		
Interactive Displays		No access to touch displays	Restricted access to touch displays (depending on Govt change in guidance)		
Digital/Online Programme	On line/digital projects continued	On line/digital projects continued			
Partnership Projects	Community heritage projects off-site	Community heritage projects off-site			
Opening Hours:					
Arts Centres	Closed	Wed & Thurs: 10:00-16:00 and 19:00-21:00 / Fri: 10:00-15:00 / Sat: 10:00-13:00 (public access 4 days per week and 2 evenings)	Normal Hours		
Museums	Closed	Wed & Thurs: 10:00-16:00 and 19:00-21:00 / Fri: 10:00-15:00 / Sat: 10:00-13:00 / Sun: closed	Normal Hours		

The recovery phase is currently 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and is therefore seen as short term interim measure requiring no permanent changes to structure or staffing requirements. The planning assumptions for next year will be kept under review and Council advised accordingly.

An exact timeframe cannot be projected for each phase. The timeframe between phases may be short, but will ultimately be driven by the lifting of restrictions (avoiding local 'lock downs' / possible second wave), evidence of compliance and the facilities and staffing capacities to manage potential increased footfall and adhere to Covid-19 Operating Procedures.

Critically, management require the flexibility to increase or reduce the level of service according to local demands and facility constraints.

## 6.0 Action Plan for Re-opening Cultural Facilities

Governance	Lead	Timeline
1. Members Workshop on Recovery Options 2. Full Council ratification on Reduced Service Resumption	L&D Director	22 July 4 August
Affordability		
3. Initial analysis of 3 options to make recommendation 4. Ongoing review against management accounts and phased review points	L&D Director (support of Finance)	22 July As required
Staffing		
5. Return of permanent staff and capacity across venues 6. Return of agency staff as required 7. Updates/training/induction and staff welfare	Head of Service/Arts & Museums Service Managers (support of HR)	August
Operational		
8. Government (DFC) and industry guidelines 9. Reception and physical restriction of designated areas 10. Cleaning regime / PPE sourcing / COVID-19 procedures	General Manager/ Arts & Museums Service Managers	August
Marketing		
11. Client Communications 12. General promotion activities	Arts & Museums Service Managers	August/September
Business Support		
13. Booking systems 14. Contact and Trace compliance 15. Financial procedures	Arts & Museums Service Managers	August/September
Estates/Premises		
16. Facility adaptations 17. Essential maintenance	Head of Service / Arts & Museums Service Managers (support of Estates)	August/September
Programming		
18. Programming (on site, community partnerships and digital/online)	Arts & Museums Service Managers & officers	Ongoing



## **7.0 Recommendation**

On the basis of the additional analysis and detail provided above, 'Reduced Service' resumed on 1<sup>st</sup> September is the preferred option for recommendation to Council.

This option allows Council to deliver venue based cultural services with a projected underspend of 39k against the annual net budget.

Given the uncertain operating environment it is also recommended that the Recovery Plan is implemented in two phases with ongoing performance monitoring and review points at the end of each phase.