

Birmingham Museums Trust Ten-Year Strategy

To reflect Birmingham to
the world and the world
to Birmingham

2018–2027



Birmingham
Museums
Trust



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Where we are

Birmingham Museums Trust was set up in 2012 as an independent charity to manage the city's museum collection and venues on behalf of Birmingham City Council. We earn over 60% of our turnover from a range of sources: admission fees, membership subscriptions, trading and fundraising income. Our two main sources of public funding are Birmingham City Council and Arts Council England.

Birmingham Museums Trust has achieved its original aims over the first five years. Our visitor numbers are growing – up by over 10% to 1.1m. Our audiences are becoming more diverse. Our trading company's performance has improved. It now yields a return of 25% on turnover of over £2m, making a substantial contribution to the Trust and reducing its dependence on public funding.

Beyond this, Birmingham Museums Trust has delivered and continues to deliver a range of notably successful projects and activities. The Collecting Birmingham project, the Changemakers programme,

the Faith in Birmingham gallery and other co-curated displays and exhibitions have expanded the reach of our engagement to many more of the communities of this super-diverse city. The Arts Council Collection National Partners Programme, New Art West Midlands and other exhibitions have strengthened Birmingham Museums Trust's profile as a venue for contemporary art. We have delivered the first year of a joint MA in Museum Leadership in partnership with Birmingham City University, and from 2018 onwards we will be touring a major exhibition to eight venues in North America, raising the profile of Birmingham and its museums. Fundraising for the new MiniBrum gallery for under-eights at Thinktank is near completion. Across all our venues, our dedicated teams are delivering more vibrant public programming and improving levels of customer service, as our Visit England scores show. Above all, we have forged lasting partnerships that we can build on for the future. All this has been achieved in interesting times.



Birmingham Museums Trust has ambitious plans for the next ten years. In order to achieve them, we will need to find new sources of funding, growing our existing trading activities, looking for new areas of business, implementing our fundraising strategy and seeking new forms of investment.

The next ten years



Our plans include three major capital projects – the creation of a new store and headquarters that is also a cultural and community hub, the reimagining of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery for the super-diverse city of the 21st century, and the creation of a new Birmingham Museum of Science & Industry that showcases the city's great industrial history and its place at the cutting edge of innovation. These projects will be transformational, not only in terms of buildings and displays but as catalysts for organisational change, providing the chance to introduce radically new ways of working with audiences, using the collection and doing business.

Few major industrial cities have a portfolio of important historic buildings that can compare with Birmingham's Heritage Sites. Their survival is something to be celebrated. The closure of the Museum & Art Gallery for redevelopment offers an opportunity to focus on innovative programming at the heritage properties, raising their profile, rewarding the loyalty of regular visitors and attracting new ones.

As investment becomes available we will upgrade the buildings and grounds.

Our aspiration is that our audiences and our workforce should reflect the city we serve. Birmingham Museums Trust's commitment to diversity, co-curation and community engagement is supported by partnerships with other cultural organisations locally, nationally and internationally. We will develop the collection to make it more accessible physically, digitally and intellectually, and explore dynamic ways of using and managing it for public programming, academic research and income generation. Our temporary exhibition programme will give our audiences the chance to see the best of other collections. Our international touring exhibitions will provide a platform for raising the profile of the city and Birmingham Museums overseas.

By the end of ten years Birmingham Museums Trust will be financially sustainable, with an international reputation for excellence in audience engagement and visitor experience, a researched, accessible collection and a well-maintained and presented estate.

To reflect Birmingham
to the world and the
world to Birmingham

Our vision

Birmingham Museums Trust and Birmingham City Council have a shared understanding of the vision and future strategy of Birmingham Museums for the next hundred years that will include:

- Reflecting Birmingham to the world, and the world to Birmingham, contributing to place-making and local identity
- Caring for and developing the collection, balancing the demands of public access in the present with the need to preserve the collection for future generations
- Documenting and researching the collection to support the creation of engaging and stimulating content
- Embedding community engagement and participatory practice
- Delivering learning, inspiration and enjoyment through varied public programming, including displays, exhibitions, workshops, courses, publications and digital media
- Attracting growing and increasingly diverse audiences of residents and visitors to the city, enhancing its reputation as a cultural destination
- Playing a leadership role among the city's and region's cultural organisations, maximising the potential of a great multidisciplinary collection
- Working with international partners to position the city's cultural profile on a global scale
- Maintaining and presenting buildings to provide first-class visitor experiences
- Fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, creating a more varied income base through fundraising and commercial development
- Developing a diverse and highly trained workforce



Core purpose of Birmingham Museums Trust

To showcase our outstanding collection and venues to inspire learning, creativity and enjoyment for the people of Birmingham and visitors to the region.

Education is part of our charitable object and lies at the heart of our activity. Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery was set up in 1885 with the explicit aim of teaching the artisans of Birmingham to improve its manufactures by showing them the best in art and design. The focus may have changed, but making real objects accessible to the widest possible range of audiences for learning, inspiration and enjoyment remains our core business. Museums enable people to learn from the past to understand the present and foresee the future. They provide spaces where people can explain their differences to each other. We use the city's collection to reflect what is unique about the culture and heritage of Birmingham within a global context. We promote Birmingham to local, national and international audiences, and we use our venues to showcase new ideas from the rest of the world. We make the collection physically, digitally, intellectually and emotionally accessible to all our audiences, pushing the boundaries of traditional museum practice.

Birmingham City Council has entrusted Birmingham Museums Trust with the responsibility of caring for its collection and the buildings in which it is stored and displayed. The City of Birmingham's museum holdings represent one of the three great historic regional collections of the United Kingdom. The collection consists of around 1 million objects, covering almost every subject across the four main disciplines of fine and decorative art, human history, natural science, and science and industry. Most of the collection is Designated as being of national significance. Six of our nine venues are Listed Buildings and one is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. We are the stewards of this extraordinary range of public assets. We will use them to realise our vision, and manage them dynamically so that we can hand them on to the next generation.

Inclusivity Excellence Working Together Sustainable Trust

Our work
is guided
by *five*
principles

Inclusivity

Birmingham Museums Trust
is for everyone

Excellence

We strive to be leaders and
innovators, offering great
experiences to our customers

Working Together

We work in partnership and
support each other to achieve
more for our audiences

Sustainable

We are entrepreneurial and
put sustainability at the core
of our practices

Trust

Birmingham Museums Trust
can be trusted to deliver on
our promises and plans



Collaborating with others is fundamental to the sustainability of Birmingham Museums Trust.

Strategic partnerships

We work with many organisations across all areas of the business, including arts and culture, over 200 community groups and individuals, higher education, funding and media, commercial and trading, international sector and collection partners, and our Friends, Patrons and volunteers.

Over the next ten years we will build on our existing partnerships and seek new partners who meet our criteria for joint working:

- **Contributes to the common good of Birmingham**
- **Expands engagement and diversifies audiences**
- **Enhances resources and surplus income**
- **Develops both organisations**

Key areas for partnership development are:

- Key funding partners: Birmingham City Council, Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), Millennium Point Trust
- Cultural sector: Culture Central, English Civic Museums Network, South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive, National Museum Directors Council, Arts Council Collection, British Museum, Science Museum Group, Historic England, Legacy WM, National Trust, New Art West Midlands, Beatfrecks, Friction Arts, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Museum Development networks
- Trusts and foundations including Clore Duffield Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Wellcome Trust and public funders such as Big Lottery Fund
- Educational institutions: local schools and colleges, Birmingham City University, the University of Birmingham, Aston University, University College London, Arts Connect WM
- Communities (however defined), groups and individual supporters: Birmingham Central Mosque, Nishkam Centre, Wassifa Heritage Foundation, Birmingham LGBT, Birmingham Irish Association
- Local businesses: Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Colmore BID, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Tourism, media, digital and engagement: Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA), BBC, Heart of England Attractions, West Midlands Growth Company, Visit England
- Health sector and disability groups: Autism West Midlands, NHS, Project Aspie, RNIB, Dementia Action Alliance, Birmingham Mind



Strategic aims

How we are going to get there

AIM 1 Leading in excellence

AIM 2 Developing the collection and venues

AIM 3 Growing and diversifying audiences

AIM 4 Building a sustainable business

AIM 5 Investing in people

We will fulfil our purpose and vision by taking forward detailed actions that meet five key strategic aims. These will be supported by priorities outlining actions that drive forward the strategy and make a fundamental difference to the future success of Birmingham Museums Trust.

AIM 1 / Leading in excellence

- Teaching and supporting the next generation of museum professionals
- Training, consultancy and publishing best-practice resources for the sector
- Leading and participating in cultural networks and festivals
- Influencing the future of the sector

- Positioning Birmingham Museums as a focal point for contemporary art
- Supporting national health, wellbeing and education policies
- National and international initiatives that contribute to the common good of Birmingham

AIM 2 / Developing the collection and venues

- Capital projects that deliver our purpose at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, the Big Store and Thinktank
- A masterplan for each of the Heritage Sites
- A research framework for the collection
- Improving digital and physical access to the collection

AIM 4 / Building a sustainable business

- An audit to determine the full costs and benefits of areas of Birmingham Museums Trust's operations and a plan to build sustainability
- Entrepreneurial culture and innovative approach at all levels of the business
- Support services that enable managers to take the necessary decisions to deliver our charitable aim
- Create a sustainable environment for our collection and buildings

AIM 3 / Growing and diversifying audiences

- Putting visitors at the centre of our business
- New approaches to collecting, programming, digital engagement and communications to reach the people and communities of the city and region

AIM 5 / Investing in people

- Sound governance structures and continuous Board, staff and volunteer development
- A diverse and highly trained workforce
- A framework of career preparation activities for young people

AIM 1 / Leading in excellence

Over 130 years of public and private investment in museums in Birmingham has created an outstanding collection, one of the great regional collections of the United Kingdom that reflects Birmingham's historic status as the second city of the British Empire.

This collection is one of the city and region's greatest assets. Maximising the potential of this asset for community cohesion, education, regeneration and tourism can only be achieved through working with others. We will create new opportunities for collaboration, teaching and developing the next generation of museum professionals, offering our expertise through consultancy and disseminating what we learn to the sector.

Birmingham Museums Trust is a member of Culture Central, the cultural development agency for Birmingham, and we are working to develop a new cultural strategy with them for the region. As a founder of the English Civic Museums Network, we support our fellow museum leaders in exploring new models for civic museums to survive and thrive in the current economic climate. Our partnership with Birmingham City University is bearing fruit in the form of a Masters degree and we are working on a number of projects with the University of Birmingham.

We play an active leadership role in the development of cultural education in the city through our role on the steering group of Birmingham's Cultural Education Partnership, our membership of the steering group of the Bridge organisation's (Arts Connect West Midlands) Leadership Development Programme, and through acting as a lead partner with Birmingham Education Partnership to initiate a Secondary Art and Design teacher support network.

Birmingham Museums Trust is recognised by Arts Council England as 'outstanding' for our commitment to the Creative Case for Diversity. Diversity is embedded in our strategic planning and decisions about how we develop.

We work in partnership with others to achieve more with our communities through creative programming.

We deliver excellence through our educational programmes, our conservation services, and by initiating specialist networks, including New Art West Midlands – a network of universities, galleries, artists and curators.

New relationships with communities are informing the future of the museum service – how we collect, what we collect, and how we interpret it. We increasingly deliver displays, exhibitions and public programmes through co-curation and engagement, decolonising the museum. We will experiment with new approaches to engage with communities and audiences, taking the collection out beyond the walls of the museum to audiences who do not or cannot visit our venues. We will work with other arts, heritage and science organisations to innovate and improve our service.

AIM 2 / Developing the collection and venues

The world has changed since the Museum & Art Gallery was opened in 1885 as a public service for the edification of local artisans. Public funding is in decline. Demographic changes have shrunk the professional middle classes who traditionally formed the core audience for museums. Museums are competing with many other leisure choices. Today's audiences are still interested in the unique offer of museums – real objects as sources for learning, inspiration and entertainment – but what they want is less hushed reverence, more social experience.

Birmingham Museums Trust needs to redefine how we use the city's historic cultural assets in order to engage modern audiences. Birmingham now has one of the most diverse and youngest populations of any city in Europe. We need to know more about our collection and our communities so that we can

improve our services to attract new audiences and increase our capacity for generating income. Key to this process is improving digital access. This means not merely creating digital images of collection objects, but providing digital access to the records and archives that contain the priceless contextual information on how, when, where, why and by whom objects were made, used, collected, found and acquired. This is a long-term project, but without it we will never be able to recognise the links between different objects and collecting areas, and hence realise the collection's full value as a resource for teaching, research and creativity.

We will complete the Survey of Significance of the collection, which will for the first time provide a map of all the areas of the collection and associated records, including an assessment of their condition, quality and context. This will form the basis for planning digitisation, movement and storage of the collection as part of the capital projects. Combined with our continued learning from community engagement and consultation, it will inform the dynamic management of the collection in future, including areas for rationalisation and acquisition.

AIM 3 / Growing and diversifying audiences

Birmingham is a young, energetic, super-diverse city of many nationalities, faiths, languages, ethnicities and cultures. Birmingham Museums is uniquely placed to experiment with rethinking a great, historic, encyclopaedic collection for a new future, using co-production and community engagement to produce fresh, attractive displays. We know from research that visitors and non-visitors want museums to be safe social spaces where they can exchange views, sometimes on difficult subjects, and learn about each other. And for those who are unable to visit in person, we will seek funding to create outreach services and digital access. The results will shape

Birmingham's museums and collection for a century to come, and are likely to attract international interest.

Birmingham Museums engages more schoolchildren than any other cultural organisation in the city. We are committed to supporting the educational, cultural and social development of children and young people in the areas of the city where they need it most, and to supporting schools that are trying to improve. We offer educational studies in history (local and global), art, science, engineering, maths and geography, aligning with national and local strategies for community cohesion.

Our health and wellbeing programmes will expand so that more of Birmingham's most vulnerable groups, including the elderly, can develop skills and self-confidence regardless of their health needs and abilities.

Marketing and communications strategies will grow visitor numbers and audience diversity, develop deeper relationships with audiences and supporters, underpin income generation, and enhance the reputation of Birmingham Museums regionally, nationally and internationally.

Birmingham has a long history as a great international city, and our national and international programming increasingly reflects this. We will work with Culture Central to raise the city's international profile and develop it as an international cultural destination for domestic and international tourism and group travel. Our programming will bring new collections and ideas to venues and audiences in the city, working with other arts organisations to develop vibrant arts programming that reflects Birmingham's young, digital and diverse communities.



AIM 4 / Building a sustainable business

Most major museums worldwide derive their income from a combination of public funding, endowments, philanthropic giving, sponsorship, fundraising and earned income. For museums in the UK, the changes in public funding have been as dramatic as they were unforeseen, and the period of adjustment continues. Managing a major public collection represents a substantial overhead for the business operation of a museum, and it is reasonable to expect that this cost should continue to be publicly funded. It takes time to build an endowment, and Birmingham Museums Trust has begun to do so with a major legacy for acquisitions. Philanthropic giving and sponsorship in England outside London are notoriously problematic, and fundraising from trusts and foundations is generally project-based. We will explore all possible sources of funding, but earned income is the most obvious way of replacing the core or unrestricted income previously represented by public funding.

We plan to explore ways of realising the income generation potential represented by the buildings, the collection and our people. Through innovation and investment, we will increase the profit that the trading company generates. We will look for areas of new business, growing the proportion of trading income that is not directly dependent on visitor numbers. We will explore ways of trading beyond our current estate, including pop-up units and e-commerce.

We will continue to grow income from our existing operations, building on what we are good at. One of our priorities is to develop strong brand identities for each of our cafés, learning from the success of the Edwardian Tearooms. Investment in equipment and staffing in 2018 will allow us to take more of our food production in-house, with a focus on our Heritage Sites. This will increase our gross profit and allow us to develop a food and beverage operation that responds to market trends. Our ambition is to develop award-winning, sector-leading cafés and restaurants across the business and perhaps beyond.

In retail, we will focus on developing bespoke products inspired by the city and the collection. We will follow our tried and tested product development process to test the market and create fast-moving, profitable new product ranges that appeal to our visitors and the wider market. As we build our bespoke product ranges we will explore the potential to sell to other museums through our programme of touring exhibitions, and to other retailers outside the sector. We have identified three specific key areas for product development investment from 2018–20; high-end products, the Sarehole Mill flour and baking brand, and jewellery inspired by the city's Jewellery Quarter and our own collection.

Conference and banqueting will continue to be a core area of our business and as we grow our turnover we will experiment with hire opportunities that relate more closely to our exhibition programming. Before the Museum & Art Gallery closes for redevelopment, we will maximise income from our new city centre wedding venue, the Waterhall.

We have great expertise and experience among our staff team in community engagement, co-curation and learning. One new business strand will explore how we can grow income from sharing this with other organisations.

Arts Council England National Portfolio Funding (NPO) is pivotal to the success of Birmingham Museums Trust's strategy, both as direct income and in enhancing our ability to secure funding from other sources. NPO funding will support the redevelopment of the Museum & Art Gallery and delivery of the new Store though a number of key work strands from 2018–22. It will also support audience development, learning and young people's programmes, income generation, workforce development and volunteering.

Fundraising for investment to support growth is essential and our strategy aims to build a varied and sustainable portfolio of income streams so that we are no longer dependent on a small number of major sources. Our fundraising priorities are to raise the profile of Birmingham

Museums Trust as a charity and increase individual giving and corporate support at all levels, particularly from Midlands and Birmingham-based supporters who we hope will become patrons, advocates and donors. In the medium to long term Birmingham Museums Trust aims to create an unrestricted endowment fund and will explore establishing a US charity, building on the relationships we develop through our international touring programme.

Our major capital development plans for the Museum & Art Gallery, the new Store and the Birmingham Museum of Science & Industry, as well as smaller-scale developments at the Heritage Sites, will require fundraising from existing and new sources including public funds, trusts and foundations, and corporate and individual donors. The scale of fundraising required is unprecedented in Birmingham Museums' history of funding campaigns. We will develop an ambitious fundraising strategy to ensure that successful campaigns for these major capital developments will evolve into long-term donor relationships to ensure the future sustainability of Birmingham Museums Trust. While we need to attract major donors and powerful advocates, it is important to attract large numbers of small regular donations and grassroots supporters. We want all our donors to feel that they can make a difference to their museums.

AIM 5 / Investing in people

Birmingham Museums Trust has a growing reputation as an exciting and innovative place to work, with staff going on to senior roles in other organisations. In future, Birmingham Museums Trust will be the organisation everyone wants on their CV. People who work for us will have the chance to learn new ways of working collaboratively, entrepreneurially and creatively. We will identify the skills we need to deliver this ten-year plan and find them through recruitment, training and development. Our NPO-supported workforce development programme will cultivate rounded individuals, focusing on the highest standards of customer service,

opportunities to diversify experience and skills, leadership and management development programmes at all levels, and business-oriented behaviours.

Our Board members, staff and volunteers make an essential contribution to Birmingham Museums Trust, and we will find new ways of recognising and celebrating this. We will reward staff at a fair level according to our available resources. We will encourage and acknowledge new ideas, initiative and creativity to advance our strategic objectives. We will work actively through training and recruitment to create a diverse workforce and plan for career progression.

We will deliver our equality and diversity action plan, focusing on workforce composition, recruitment, team-building, training and development. It introduces a framework of career preparation activities including rollout of the successful Career Ladder scheme to venues beyond Thinktank, volunteering, work placements, traineeships and apprenticeships. Staff surveys will monitor the engagement of staff and volunteers with the organisation.

Our volunteer programme supports the sustainability of Birmingham Museums Trust by delivering activities that would otherwise not be possible. We will focus on developing this valued team of over 900 diverse volunteers through roles that benefit each individual and Birmingham Museums.

Birmingham Museums Trust is committed to supporting people working in the museums and cultural sector through staff acting as mentors for Museum Accreditation, Associateship of the Museums Association and the Leadership Development Programme run by Arts Connect West Midlands, the regional Bridge organisation.



We have identified the following key projects. Each contributes to one or more of the priorities. They have been planned with SMART targets: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. Together they represent an extremely innovative and exciting programme that will grow visitor numbers, develop the collection, increase trading income and consolidate Birmingham Museums Trust's national and international reputation.

Signature projects



The Museum for Birmingham: redevelopment of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

The Museum for Birmingham will be the first project in the world to reinvent a major traditional collection as the common, shared heritage of a young, multicultural city. The Museum will explore the city's artistic, scientific and industrial heritage using objects, social oral histories, images and aspects of intangible cultural heritage that tell stories – sometimes painful and controversial stories – about why and how people came to Birmingham, and their experiences of growing up, living and working in the city.

Through NPO investment in five curatorial and conservator posts (including specialisms in Birmingham history, Middle East and South Asia) we will use our great, multidisciplinary collection to tell stories that explain the history of Birmingham and the region, their products and people. We will explore the city's role in the history of British Empire, and its impact on the British and on those who were colonised. New interpretation will be supported by academic research developed through our research framework with higher education partners. Community consultation and co-production will underpin the development of new stories that decolonise the collection and connect with Birmingham's diverse communities.

The redevelopment will deliver better access, improved visitor facilities and around 25% more display space. All objects will be conserved for display. The building will be more sustainable, with greater energy efficiency and more commercial space. Birmingham Museums Trust will work with Birmingham City Council on a transformational and ambitious redevelopment of the Museum & Art Gallery to create a venue of international stature that delivers improvements across:

- visitor experience
- displays and interpretation
- public access to collections
- collections care
- back of house facilities
- operational costs
- income generation

The capital programme will start in 2019, with part of the Museum & Art Gallery reopening in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2022 and fully opening in 2024.

The Big Store

Birmingham Museums Trust and Birmingham Royal Ballet propose a project that will bring them together to create a new type of cultural facility. Sited on a brownfield site in East Birmingham owned by Birmingham City Council, in a diverse area of multiple deprivation, the Big Store will be the spearhead of social and economic regeneration.

Both partners have collections of international significance. The city's museum collection is one of the three great civic collections of the UK, alongside Liverpool and Glasgow. It consists of around 1 million items, currently stored and displayed in nine venues, including the finest public collection of Pre-Raphaelite art in the world, the early history of the Industrial Revolution, and the unique Staffordshire Hoard. Around 1% of the collection is on display. The rest is stored in the Museum & Art Gallery and in a converted warehouse adjacent to the route of HS2. The redevelopment of the Museum & Art Gallery as part of a wider programme of work on the Council House Complex offers the chance to move Birmingham Museums' back of house functions off-site, freeing space for commercial development.

Birmingham Royal Ballet's production archive dates back to the founding of the Vic Wells ballet in the 1930s. The archive is a physical history of the company, tracing the design and creation of one of the largest accumulated repertoires in the world. The collection includes productions created by important designers and artists from Pablo Picasso to Jasper Conran. It is stored in two warehouses whose leases are about to expire. The Ballet has workshops and technical spaces at its base in the Hippodrome complex. The use of space is poor and as part of this project Birmingham Royal Ballet intends to relocate its workshops to the same site as its storage.

The first phase of the proposed facility will house Birmingham Museums' curatorial, conservation and technical functions and the 40,000 oil paintings and works on paper currently stored in the Museum & Art Gallery. This will make the collection publicly accessible for the first time. Birmingham Museums Trust will build on its track record of community engagement and audience diversification to create a vibrant public programme including guided tours, digital labs, community exhibitions, schools learning, outreach, study sessions, workshops and other formal and informal learning activities, catering to audiences from parents and toddlers to academics. The visitor facilities will include a café, play area, and flexible learning/performance/exhibition spaces, generating income and contributing to Birmingham Museums Trust's sustainability. In addition the new store will become the headquarters for our developing e-commerce operations. Birmingham Museums has over a decade of experience of career development for young people from diverse backgrounds, including in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects. We will work with educational partners to expand on this to provide apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering opportunities, creating a hub for skills development. A second phase of the store will accommodate the rest of the collection at a later date.

As part of Phase 1, Birmingham Royal Ballet will relocate its collections and some back of house functions. The new site will offer opportunities to develop the use of the collection beyond performances as a research archive, for exhibitions or as a living resource for learning, based around the talent, skills and knowledge that create and realise the theatrical spectacle of large-scale ballet. Birmingham Royal Ballet has an important heritage and its legacy, specialist skills and knowledge should be preserved, developed and shared as a specialist and a public resource.

Bringing the two collections together creates scope to offer professional services and consultancy to each other and to other organisations. Birmingham Museums' leadership in collections care and management and its expertise in engaging diverse audiences are widely recognised, while the Ballet brings its heritage of performance and artistic excellence.

Other partners who have expressed interest in taking part in the project include the South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive (SADAA), the South Asian dance company SAMPAD, Friction Arts, Beatfreeds, Birmingham City University and the University of Birmingham.

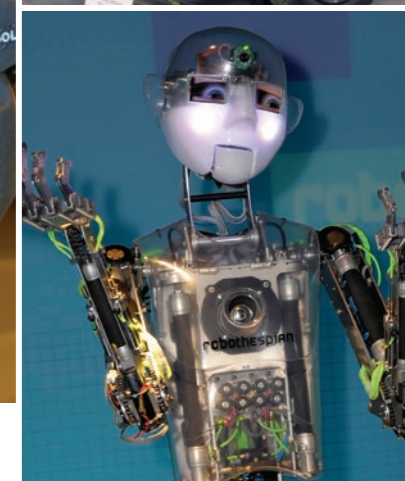
The co-location of the two collections will create a unique and completely new type of cultural offer, combining heritage, visual arts and performing arts with community engagement and skills development. We know of no other cultural facility of comparable scale, scope or ambition in the UK or internationally. The nearest comparators are the Royal Opera House facility at Thurrock and the redevelopment of Kelvin Hall in Glasgow.



Birmingham Museum of Science & Industry

We will develop plans for a new Birmingham Museum of Science & Industry to replace Thinktank as a regional centre for engagement with STEM. The museum will tell stories not only about scientific and engineering discoveries and industrial processes, but about their impact on human cultures and individuals – about the people who made the discoveries, applied them or lived with the consequences. In showing how the city and region's past shaped the world today the new museum will make a major contribution to place-making and international profile.

The new museum will include outdoor spaces for demonstrations, events and activities, as well as better gallery spaces. It will display more of the astonishing breadth of Birmingham's internationally-significant science and industry and natural science collection, much of which is currently in store. Working closely with higher education partners, the Science Museum Group and local businesses, the museum will tell the story of Birmingham's place in the history of scientific, medical and industrial innovation, and provide a showcase for the latest discoveries and inventions. It will be an essential learning resource for schools, further and higher education, inspiring future generations of scientists and engineers. It will be the museum where grandparents take their grandchildren to show them how Birmingham makes things.



Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum

While we are planning for a new Museum of Science & Industry, we will continue to deliver an ambitious programme of major redisplay and improvements at Thinktank to increase visitors and income. This will ensure Thinktank's resilience and sustainability during the period of disruption caused by adjacent HS2 activities. Thinktank's development programme aims to secure its position as a leading centre for STEM engagement in the UK, growing science capital in the city and region. Our partners will include Millennium Point Trust, Birmingham City University, University of Birmingham, Aston University, local businesses, HS2, STEAMhouse, Wellcome Trust, the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Science Museum Group, and the Association of Science and Discovery Centres.

The development programme aims to distinguish Thinktank from other UK science museums and raise its profile, drawing on Birmingham's internationally-important collection, its innovation in science, technology and engineering – past, present and future – and the city's young and diverse communities, who will play a central role in the co-production of new displays and programmes. An accompanying four-year programme of research into our science collection will inform the content for new displays. Thinktank's development programme will consist of the following strands:

1. MiniBrum: a £2.1 million, 1000m² interactive gallery delivering STEM learning for preschool and early years foundation stage children. One of the first successful projects in the UK to receive Inspiring Science funding (Wellcome Trust), the gallery will be co-produced with children, families and teachers, exploring three themes: creating a future city, children's lives and wellbeing in the city, and biodiversity in the city. The gallery will open in 2019.
2. New NPO-funded natural science, trades & industries displays drawing on research from our Birmingham

manufactures and NPO-funded science collection research programmes.

3. Digital planetarium upgrade and related displays, including improved corporate and public hire spaces.
4. New LEGO® Education Innovation Studio, growing the educational offer: new programmes for early years and for engaging more young people and adults, and new displays coproduced with higher education partners to showcase innovation in science, technology and engineering in Birmingham.
5. Relocation of main entrance, shop and café to improve visitor access/orientation and grow business, exploring commercial opportunities with partners including Millennium Point and Birmingham City University's Conservatoire.

Collection development, documentation, research and rationalisation

Birmingham's great civic collection consists of around 1 million objects covering almost every possible collection area across the four main disciplines of art and decorative arts, human history, natural science, and science and industry. The art, decorative art, Birmingham history, science and industry and Pinto collections have been Designated as being of national importance. With the exception of the Pre-Raphaelite art, very little of the collection has been systematically researched and published. In addition to the existing Designated areas of the collection, there are undoubtedly other areas of national and international significance, such as the Staffordshire Hoard and Ancient Near East. The current state of documentation is a barrier to access to, and use of, the collection by staff, the public and academic researchers for collections care and management, public programming, income generation, personal study and academic research.

The proposed capital projects provide an opportunity not only to improve the physical care of, and access to,

the collection, but to upgrade and digitise the supporting documentation. As part of the essential process of inventory before moving the collection, we will reconcile each object with its accession record, object file and other documentation, and digitise it. This means not merely creating digital images of the objects themselves, but developing a system that will provide digital access to the records and archives, which contain essential contextual information. In many cases object files include primary material, such as autograph letters or photographs, which are valuable in their own right and should be actively curated. It will be necessary to explore the potential of the collection database to support this data and the best data structures and platform for exporting it to a publicly-accessible database. NPO funding will enable us to commence this programme, starting with the Designated works on paper and topographical views collections, transforming online public access to these collections and recruiting community volunteers with specialist backgrounds and interests to help research and document works.

As part of this programme, NPO investment in science collections research and curatorial posts working with academic partners (the Natural History Museum and Science Museum Group), will enable detailed surveys of significance of the science & industry and natural science collections. We will engage special interest groups and volunteers to research and catalogue 25,000 items by 2022, targeting groups such as natural history societies, transport enthusiasts, trade unions and retired industrial workers. These surveys will inform planning for documentation upgrade and digitisation, collection rationalisation and future acquisition.

We will complete the Survey of Significance of the collection, which will for the first time provide a map of all the areas of the collection and associated records, including an assessment of their condition, quality and context. This will form the basis for planning the staged digitisation, movement and storage of

the collection as part of each capital project. Combined with our continued learning from community engagement and consultation, this process will inform the dynamic management of the collection in future, including areas for rationalisation and acquisition.

Digital lab

Alongside the digitisation of the collection, we will promote our digital assets to reach the widest possible audience, making them freely available through open licences. Moving from digital publishers to digital enablers, we will work in partnership to deliver a programme of 'digital lab' experiences, experimenting with different ways of engaging people with the collection and our programmes through digital technologies. We will invite audiences and partners to contribute to this work and invest in the infrastructure to support this way of working.

Only 2.5% of the collection has been digitised and we have no accessible, user-friendly interface for online engagement. We will explore the best way of exporting data from our collection database to our website, releasing images and other data into the public domain under an open licence as modelled by the Rijksmuseum. We will investigate different ways to support collection searches by non-specialists, including geographical referencing and greater access to supporting documentation. This will provide unprecedented levels of online access to our collection and reach local, national and international audiences. Online engagement with the collection will grow at a point when the Museum & Art Gallery is closed for redevelopment. By making the stored collection more accessible online we will promote a wider sense of ownership and understanding of that collection.



Heritage Sites

Development Masterplan

We are currently finalising our Heritage Site masterplans. These will enable us to seek investment for the care of the historic fabric and setting, grow visitor numbers and improve financial sustainability. We will build on each venue’s strengths and individuality to broaden the offer, invest NPO funds in the sites with the greatest income generation potential, use resources most wisely and position the sites in relation to other museums, heritage sites and visitor attractions in the region.



Aston Hall is a Grade 1 Listed Jacobean mansion in a public park in the north of Birmingham. We will improve and enrich the customer experience to increase dwell time and secondary spend.

Visitors will learn the stories of the Hall’s complex past and the part it played in the country’s history through a living history approach. Innovative interpretation and animation of the site with costumed character volunteers will support this aim. By improving the care and interpretation of the grounds and excavated outbuildings we will give visitors more to see and do. We will explore future uses for the gatehouses and more imaginative use of space internally. In May 2018 work will begin on a two-year, NPO-supported project to improve the interpretation and animation of the space, making connections with local heritage and establishing Aston Hall as a ‘must see’ historic house in the region. As visitor numbers grow we will create a higher quality, higher turnover café, contributing to improved visitor experience, longer dwell time

and increased profitability. With the support of NPO funding, all core food and beverage ranges will be delivered in-house from August 2018 and the café will develop its own unique identity in line with successes at our other properties.

Public programming will focus on large-scale events, building on successes to date, diversifying visitors and increasing income. These will include our successful Fright Nights and large-scale collaborative festivals.

Outside visiting hours, Aston Hall will continue to grow as a luxury wedding venue and unique conference space.



The Museum of the Jewellery Quarter is a perfectly preserved traditional jewellery workshop that offers lively, award-winning factory tours all year round. We will promote the museum to tourists and the group travel market to increase visitors and income. We will offer new themed tours, commercial art exhibitions, and a boutique shopping experience to encourage regular and repeat visitors.

The Smith & Pepper Tea Room will attract tourists visiting the city’s famous Jewellery Quarter. We will continue to work with local jewellers and artists to develop bespoke ranges and create an interactive gift shop with makers-in-residence. We will continue to showcase selling exhibitions in our gallery space with a focus on local artists and makers. This will encourage local residents to make more use of the site while

adding value for visiting tourists. This commercial gallery space creates an additional income stream for the site and innovative thinking around the use of our event space will further diversify our income.

To increase the number of visitors taking a tour of the site, we will use NPO funding to transform the visitor centre in 2019. We will create a more aesthetically pleasing and functional reception space which will improve the customer journey. It will also increase conversion by offering visitors a glimpse of the factory they are about to explore.



Blakesley Hall is a traditional timber-framed Tudor farmhouse, one of the oldest standing buildings in Birmingham. At Blakesley, we will increase engagement with local families in particular. The gardens will host an events programme based on play and outdoor activity. In the Hall we will create a new room for families, to encourage this audience to visit the historic house itself, and not just the grounds. We will develop this space in consultation with local residents during 2018 with project delivery in 2019. We will use our collection to tell the story of the house and local area and we will refresh interpretation in the Hall and visitor centre, again with a family audience in mind. We will also promote Blakesley Hall to local businesses as an ideal venue for lunch breaks and a great location for corporate volunteering and away-days.



Soho House in Handsworth was the home of 18th-century Birmingham industrialist and entrepreneur Matthew Boulton and a regular meeting place of the Lunar Society. The restored Georgian house features period room interiors. We will develop Soho House with a strong community focus, offering space-sharing opportunities for partners and community exhibition areas. We will explore alternative ways of interpreting the history of the house and area and new uses for spaces in the house, working with local historians and young people.

Our ambition is to broaden local interest in this important historic site and ensure it becomes part of local community heritage. The Soho Coffee House in the visitor centre will become a popular community café and we will encourage more regular use of the site for community events and venue hire. We will raise local awareness of Soho House and encourage local residents to take advantage of its facilities. We will grow venue hire income by targeting local and regional businesses and couples seeking a unique wedding venue on a domestic scale.



Sarehole Mill was the childhood playground of author JRR Tolkien who cited it and nearby Moseley Bog as inspiration for scenes in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. We will position the Mill as a venue where everyone can enjoy the outdoors and learn about artisan milling through hands-on demonstrations. In addition to our volunteer Millers, we will bring the museum to life by employing a baker in 2020. This, alongside additional NPO-funded investment in equipment and interpretation, will enable us to demonstrate the full process of turning grain into bread, not to mention cakes and pizzas! Visiting Sarehole Mill will become a more immersive, educational and edible experience. We will sell local and 'baked on site' food products in our café and shop, complimented by a bespoke retail range, aiming to increase

trading income at this site and better cater for local walkers and residents. We will continue to develop our events programme around popular and relevant themes for the site such as Middle Earth Weekend and our Baking Experience Days. Our ambitions for Sarehole Mill include development of the grounds to give better access to the green space around the mill pond and provide more for visitors to see and enjoy when they visit the site. Over the next ten years we will develop plans for an engaging art walk around the pond, increasing dwell time and providing an even broader facility for learning and inspiration.



Weoley Castle includes the ruins of a 700-year-old moated medieval manor house belonging to the Dudley family, and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as well as a visitor centre offering activities and events for families. We will seek funding for community archaeology projects to engage multiple generations of local residents with the history of the site and area. We will develop a local volunteer programme to enable us to open the site more frequently for local residents, community groups and schools.

Contemporary art programmes of national significance

Birmingham Museums Trust will deliver a programme of high profile contemporary art projects to further develop its profile as a centre for contemporary art.

We will deliver the final year of the Arts Council Collection National Partners Programme, our largest and most ambitious programme of modern and contemporary art to date. Through a dynamic programme of critically acclaimed exhibitions, commissions and artist interventions we will showcase the Arts Council Collection alongside the city’s collection across four of our venues and through touring exhibitions. We will develop an ambitious and experimental accompanying learning programme demonstrating best practice in engaging young and diverse audiences with contemporary art.

Through a partnership with the South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive, Culture Central and the British Council, we will deliver a three-year project during 2018–21 re-presenting and re-imagining contemporary combined arts practice between Birmingham, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Through artist residencies and collaborations the project aims to connect Birmingham’s South Asian diaspora and wider communities with the cultural and artistic heritage of South Asia, helping to position Birmingham as the UK’s lead city for contemporary South Asian arts.

Alongside the closure, development and reopening of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Birmingham Museums will develop a programme of high profile art commissions by leading contemporary artists, in response to the city, the collection and the Grade II* Listed Building. The commissions will bring world-class artists to Birmingham,

reinforcing Birmingham Museums Trust’s position as a cultural leader within the city and region, helping to attract new, younger audiences to the transformed Museum & Art Gallery. We will work with New Art West Midlands and its partners to continue to promote and support artistic talent from the region.

Touring exhibitions

We plan a rolling programme of national and international touring exhibitions, raising the profile of Birmingham’s civic museum collection and generating new income. They include Victorian Radicals, Birmingham Museums’ most ambitious international touring exhibition to date. It will show 2D and 3D art by the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers at eight venues across North America in 2018–21, co-organised with the American Federation of Arts.

Birmingham Museums will contribute to a major exhibition in Japan in 2019–21, based on works by Turner, Ruskin, Rossetti, Morris and Burne-Jones. We are exploring the potential for international touring with the English Civic Museums Network, sharing expertise, raising the profile of English regional collections and generating income. We are exploring a potential tour with a performing arts partner, using the ACE Strategic Touring fund.

In tandem with our plans to digitise our nationally-significant works on paper collection, we will use NPO funding to commission a guest curator to research and develop an exhibition drawn from our major 19th-century British watercolours collection, targeting potential touring exhibition agencies in Japan and East Asia. We will tour from 2022 to a target six venues, publishing the research, generating around £150k income and incorporating the exhibition content into displays in the new Museum & Art Gallery.

Museum in Residence Outreach Programme

Museum in Residence will be a new outreach programme that takes the collection out beyond the walls of our museums to nurseries, schools, libraries, health centres, prisons, care homes and community venues in diverse areas of multiple deprivation within Birmingham. The programme will focus on providing enrichment and wellbeing activities for children, young people and isolated adults in marginalised communities, seeking to include not only those with protected characteristics, but people who are excluded by class and geography. The outputs of a Museum in Residence project for participants will include a range of cultural activities, the creation of their own work in a variety of media, or co-curated displays in community settings. The outreach programme will be timed to maximise opportunities to engage vulnerable people during the period of redevelopment of the Museum & Art Gallery and the creation of the Big Store.

Groups and travel trade

We will create a project to attract a new offer for groups and the travel trade. This will market the experiences offered by Birmingham’s museums as special ‘behind the scenes’ exclusives, giving a sense of enhanced value. The project will include the creation of a central booking system and sales procedures, and an account management approach to our relationships with travel trade customers. A tactical marketing plan will be designed to increase awareness of Birmingham Museums’ groups offer, grow tourist visits and increase income.

Cultural strategy for Birmingham

Birmingham Museums Trust will work with Culture Central to create a new cultural strategy for Birmingham that will establish the city’s position as the biggest centre of cultural provision in the UK outside London. We will ensure that heritage and science are acknowledged in the strategy as vital components of human culture. The strategy will include a vibrant programme of cultural festivals including a biennial Heritage Week, and will specify external targets to aspire to, such as attracting the Turner Prize or City of Culture.

Taught courses and degrees

The nature of museums is changing and there is a need for creative and innovative leaders in museum practice. In 2016, Birmingham City University and Birmingham Museums Trust jointly launched a unique, practice-based postgraduate course which responds to the growing need for museum professionals to be multiskilled and commercially aware, offering project experience and skills development in real museum roles. We will look for ways of expanding taught courses, attracting more international students and providing a valuable, annual cohort of students undertaking project placements which further support Birmingham Museums Trust’s strategic programmes. We will explore how we can use existing course content for wider, income generating programmes including summer schools and national/ international consultancy.

We will promote the use of Birmingham’s internationally-significant collection as a resource for research leading to peer-reviewed publication, including collaborative doctorates.



Exhibitions and tours



2018 May – Sept

Dippy on Tour exhibition, Museum & Art Gallery

2019 Feb

MiniBrum opens at Thinktank

2019 Jan – May

Final Arts Council Collection exhibition, Museum & Art Gallery

2019 Feb – May

Exhibition of drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Museum & Art Gallery

2019 Jun – Sept

Home of Metal exhibition, Museum & Art Gallery

2019 Oct

Museum & Art Gallery closes for refurbishment

2019 – 2020

James Watt Bicentenary redisplays, Thinktank, Aston Hall, Soho House

2018 – 2021

Victorian Radicals touring exhibition, eight venue North American tour

2019 – 2021

Parabola of Pre-Raphaelitism touring exhibition, three venue Japan tour

2020 – 2022

Nature Explorers and *Manufactures* redisplays, Thinktank

2022

Museum & Art Gallery reopens (Council House galleries)

2020 – 2023

Treasures exhibition during Museum & Art Gallery closure, Aston Hall (tbc)

2024

Museum & Art Gallery reopens (Feeney galleries)

External events

2022

Commonwealth Games

2026

HS2 Curzon Street Station opens

For more information visit
birminghammuseums.org.uk

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Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) is a UK registered charity (charity registration number: 1147014), with charitable objectives; to advance education by the operation, maintenance, development and promotion of museums, galleries and libraries in Birmingham, together with associated facilities and related programmes of outreach and research; fostering knowledge and understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts, history, science and technology by residents and visitors to the City of Birmingham.