

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ASSET AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT,
SPORT, LEISURE AND CULTURE
CABINET MEMBER**

SUNDAY OPENING – NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE MUSEUM

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 To consider whether or not the North Lincolnshire Museum should close on Sundays from 1 April 2012.

1.2 The key points in this report are:

- We are due to begin closing the North Lincolnshire Museum on Sundays with effect from 1 April 2012.
- The council agreed this closure as part of the four-year budget plan approved in February 2011.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 When the council agreed its budget in February 2011 it included a saving target of £10,000 in the four-year budget plan for Sport, Leisure and Culture. The aim was to achieve this by closing the North Lincolnshire Museum on Sundays.

2.2 We are due to implement this decision on 1 April 2012.

2.3 We have increased our visitor numbers by 25% over the last five years. We have achieved this by providing better exhibitions, family activities and events. If we close on Sundays it would likely mean a loss of visitors.

2.4 For 2010-11 the number of visitors per day were as follows. This shows that Sunday is the least popular day for museum visits by some margin.

Tuesdays	3848
Wednesdays	3628
Thursdays	4245
Fridays	3691
Saturdays	5304
Sundays	2548

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 **Option 1** – Close on Sundays with effect from 1 April 2012.
- 3.2 **Option 2** – Continue to open on Sundays but make the £10,000 saving from elsewhere within the Museum Service budget.
- 3.3 **Option 3** – Close on a weekday but remain open on Sundays.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 **Option 1** – we might lose around 2,500 visitors each year, although of course some customers may decide to still visit the museum on an alternative day. This goes against recent successes in getting more people to use the museum. Sunday closing has a very high level of impact for the saving each year.
- 4.2 Remaining open on Sundays would allow us to build on the success we have had with our programme of family activities. These new activities have helped to increase our visitor numbers. Weekend days are an obvious time when families in particular are looking for ways to spend their leisure time.
- 4.3 **Option 2** would increase the pressure on the budget at the North Lincolnshire Museum. However, officers believe that the saving is achievable via other methods from within the Museum's budget.
- 4.4 **Option 3** would not result in any budget saving. Front of house staff still have to come in to open the building and to evacuate the building in an emergency. Closing on a weekday would also have an adverse impact on schools and we might lose income from school visits.
- 4.5 We have already made visitors aware of plans to close on Sundays from 1 April 2012. This may have a detrimental impact on visitor numbers. We will have to undertake a marketing campaign to make sure the public are aware that we are no longer closing on Sundays if either Option 2 or 3 is chosen.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 The Museum Service is required to achieve a £10,000 reduction in spending to achieve approved budget targets. We propose meeting this from the equipment budgets if it is decided not to close on Sundays. We have had some success in securing external funding to purchase collections care equipment, rather than using core budgets.
- 5.2 Staffing implication – Museum employees are contracted to work Saturdays only with effect from 1 April 2012. We will need to issue revised contracts.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 None

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 We have taken the comments of our visitors into account. These comments show how much they value Sunday opening.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves Option 2 to keep the Museum open on Sundays.

8.2 That the £10,000 saving be found from elsewhere within the Museum Service budget.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

None