

CREATING A FUTURE FOR CORK'S PAST

Strategic management plan 2019 - 2022

CORK PUBLIC MUSEUM
CORK PUBLIC MUSEUM
MÚSAEM POIBLÍ CHORCAÍ • CORK CITY COUNCIL



Cork
City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

Put together for
Cork Public Museum by
HERITAGEWORKS
hands-on help for your *heritage* project

November 2018

Contents

Executive summary	4
Background and Overview		
	The museum's mission and purpose.....	6
	History.....	6
	Evolution of the mission.....	8
	Sense of urgency.....	9
	Defining our vision, the story so far.....	10
	Our values shining through.....	14
	Starting point to achieving our vision.....	15
	In sum.....	17
Financial Review		
	Overview.....	19
	Income.....	19
	Outgoings.....	20
	Systems.....	21
	Challenges.....	22
	Opportunities.....	23
Stakeholder Research		
	Overview.....	25
	Key Stakeholder research.....	25
	Visitor study.....	36
	Discussion & Conclusion.....	38
Environmental Review		
	SWOT analysis.....	43
	PESTLE analysis.....	50
Our Mission, Vision and Values	55
Market Analysis		
	Overview.....	57
	Current activities at Cork Public Museum.....	57
	Target users and their needs.....	58
	Trends relevant to our museum.....	59
	Opportunities for the museum.....	62
	Communicating with target groups	69
	In sum...	73
Strategic Goals, Objectives and Action Steps 2019 - 2022		
	Overview.....	76
	Strategic goals, objectives and action steps.....	76
3-Year Action Plan	89
Review Procedures		
	Review procedures.....	91
	Performance measures.....	92
Appendices		
	Appendices List.....	94
	Appendix 1: Location of Cork public museum.....	95
	Appendix II: Layout of Cork Public Museum.....	96
	Appendix III: Staff/management structure of Cork Public Museum...	97
	Appendix IV: Note on MSPI accreditation.....	98

Executive Summary

Management at Cork Public Museum has recognised the need for a strategic plan for some time. Participation in the Museum Standards Programme has expedited this need. This plan will enable the museum to reach professional standards in its practices.

This strategic management plan is in-part a reflection on the museum's 108-year story. It has been an opportunity to spend time listening to its stakeholders. Time for considering what the museum is doing and comparing this to what it wants to do and for whom. We have taken into account contemporary approaches to audience engagement. And the important role of marketing in connecting with audiences.

The end product is six strategic goals to work towards over the next three years. The goals break down into objectives and action steps that staff can follow. Management and staff can use the performance measures to track their progress. We can adapt and amend the plan as we grow through it.

In all the research and analyses we carried out, one message came through over and again. As a curator of Cork's rich heritage, the museum could be central to Cork'. This plan is a strategic step towards creating a future for Cork's past.

Background and Overview

The Museum's Mission and Purpose

Cork Public Museum's primary mission is to collect and care for objects relating to the history of Cork city and county. One of its aims is to support learning and research about Cork's history. It is a repository for all the archaeological, social, cultural, military, industrial, civic and political knowledge about Cork.

The museum shares its knowledge with the public through its permanent collections. It interprets and displays objects in engaging ways to attract, educate and entertain visitors. It also commissions new exhibitions on events or social groups that form part of Cork's heritage.

As a 'Designated County Museum', under the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997, the museum can

- hold onto archaeological items of local significance.
- borrow items of national and international importance.

Designated museums typically have a full-time curator and are funded by city and county councils. They are the only museums which can receive loans of objects from the National Museum of Ireland.

History

Fitzgerald Park Municipal Museum

Cork Public Museum (CPM) occupies a building with two parts:

- a Georgian-style building called Shrubbery House,
- a modern museum extension added in 2005.

The museum building is in Fitzgerald's Park on the outskirts of Cork City Centre. You can refer to Appendix I, Location of Cork Public Museum for a simple map. Appendix II, Layout of Cork Public Museum is also attached.

Shrubbery House and grounds were bought with proceeds from the acclaimed Cork International Exhibition of 1902. They were donated to the city to make a museum and public park for the people. Fitzgerald Park was opened in 1904 and the Municipal Museum first opened its doors six years later. Curator John Paul Dalton had a well-documented struggle with Cork Corporation councillors. In vain, he sought approval for his renovation and

layout plans. After two years in his position, Mr. Dalton passed away and was never replaced.

The museum was under-resourced. A record from 1917 shows that Cork Corporation spent more on the park's aviary than the museum's utilities and maintenance. In 1929, the new City Commissioner, Philip Monahan, chose the museum building as his headquarters. The museum was closed down.

Re-opening 1945

In his Cork Town Planning Report of 1941, Manning Robertson called for green spaces and public parks for Cork. He suggested building a museum as it would be 'needed' by the people of Cork.

Shrubbery House, meanwhile, served briefly as the headquarters of the Air Raid Precaution during WWII.

In 1945, a committee of local academics, historians, politicians and laypeople came together. Their aim was to work towards getting a museum for Cork. City management came together with University College Cork. They agreed that Shrubbery House would once more be a museum. UCC would manage it, and Professor M. J. O'Kelly of the archaeology department would curate it. Cork County Council would make an annual contribution to its budget. Professor O'Kelly began the tasks of collecting, cataloguing and exhibiting artefacts that continue today.

This arrangement continued till 1963, when UCC withdrew. Cork City Council took over full responsibility for managing the museum. A close relationship continues with UCC today. Archaeology, history and museum studies students come on work placements and to do research.

New extension

The European Regional Development fund and Cork City Council funded an extension led by Neil Hegarty, City Architect. The large, modern museum extension was opened in 2005. (Cork was crowned European City of Culture a year later.) Since then this extension has housed the entire exhibition. It is currently the only part of the museum open to the public. Shrubbery House is home to some storage, janitorial and office areas. Recently the richness of this old building has been reconsidered. It holds potential for development but there are some concerns about its condition.

Evolution of the mission

Museological trends and Cork Public Museum

The donation of Shrubbery House and gardens for a museum for the people of Cork, was typical of trends of the time. Since the Enlightenment, museums had been

- an opportunity to educate the public
- a civilising influence on the poor
- a place where the state collected and displayed objects to reinforce its sovereignty.

The government created the Museum of Science and Art in Dublin in 1877. In the aftermath of the Cork International Exhibition it naturally extended this ambition to Cork.

Today's museum wants to continue as the reliable custodian of artefacts and a research resource. It also hopes to establish itself as a place of education and recreation for its community and for visitors to Cork.

Designated county museum

As a designated county museum, Cork Public Museum can hold in its care objects which belong to the state. This has enabled the museum to retain some treasures which were found in Cork. Or some which contribute to the story of the origins of Cork. These include many of the collections' highlights.

This status also means that the museum can borrow and display artefacts from the national collections assuming certain conditions of care were met. This is being considered by the museum but requires added resources to execute.

Research

The museum sees itself as a repository for the tangible and intangible heritage of Cork. This includes

- historical artefacts,
- stories about its inhabitants
- details of the city's development through the ages.

The museum offers access to artefacts for research on a case-by-case basis. Availability of space for research is limited. There are also limited human resources for documenting and supervising research access. Thus, the museum has difficulty fulfilling its mission to be a research resource.

Visitor engagement

There have been dramatic changes in how museums conduct their business since Cork Public Museum first opened. Where once visitors were passive receivers of knowledge, they are now actively making meanings. They are collaborators, helping us tell our stories by understanding and interacting in them. The most highly-regarded museums provide as many opportunities for interaction as they can. But this interaction doesn't have to involve technology. It can be as simple as

- feeling a piece of rough cloth
- banging an object to make noise
- starting a reaction by knocking something over
- speaking or writing a message that will be included in the exhibition.

The rewards for this interactive approach? Engaged visitors and continuing relationships. As the museum continues to deliver, it builds trust. It stays relevant. In turn these effects lead to greater sustainability.

Cork Public Museum has the potential to achieve these outcomes. As Cork's designated county museum, it would seem ideally positioned for this kind of success. Yet, while visitor numbers are steady, they could be higher. Some visitors have labelled the exhibition outdated. It relies on forms of display and kinds of learning from a bygone era. The museum has almost no presence online. Anecdotal reports suggest many potential users, even locally, are not aware of its existence. This signifies an urgent need/great opportunity for awareness raising.

Sense of Urgency

How it is succeeding

The museum last year began the process of gathering feedback from visitors via forms provided in the reception area of the museum. These and online reviews yielded useful information about what is working at the museum, and what needs to be improved. Among the key findings were the following:

Examples of things that are working well

- Many visitors commented on the friendliness of the staff.
- The quality and diversity of the artefacts on display was highly valued by visitors, as was the breadth of the subject matter.

- The location in the scenic Fitzgerald's Park, within walking distance of the Cork city centre, was frequently remarked upon.

Examples of things that need improvement

- Visitors observed that there weren't many staff available on the museum floor.
- The display of the artefacts, with minimal interpretation and opportunities for interaction, meant visitors couldn't engage with the exhibition as much as they would like to.
- There were comments about the absence of signage and lack of information about the museum online.

What are the pressing challenges?

It is worth noting that there are far more good reviews of the museum than bad, among those who discover the museum. Management aspires to provide a high-quality museum experience to visitors and they succeed to a great extent. This is despite some serious challenges which we will explore in later sections. Those include a small staff team and a limited budget for implementing change. Cork Public Museum is the main general history museum for Cork, as it holds its most important artefacts. It is also the *only* general history museum in Cork. But is not currently living up to its potential. Our analyses will look into why this is and what we can do about it.

Defining our Vision – the story so far

Since the new extension was opened in 2005, the museum has continued to collect, care for and exhibit its large and diverse collection. Over the last few years there has been an emphasis on bringing up the standards of collections care and documentation. That focus is now turning to improving the visitor experience at the museum.

Who are our stakeholders?

The museum enjoys a steady flow of visitors and positive feedback from the public. A wide array of visitor types and demographics are represented. As the museum has free admission and is in Fitzgerald Park, it is attractive to families seeking a pleasant day out, while overseas visitors travel from the city centre out to the park to see Cork's main museum. The museum features in the main tourist brochures for the city. Despite this, it has been anecdotally reported that many people in Cork and beyond are not aware of the museum and what it does. And so, the visitor numbers are not as high as might be expected for Cork's biggest museum.

A number of local history groups and special interest groups have got involved with the museum over the years. Some have staged, or contributed to, temporary exhibitions. The museum has endeavoured through these groups to represent the interests of cross-sections of the community, and minority groups. For example, a permanent exhibition of Traveller Culture, co-designed with Cork Traveller Women's Network, can be found on the first floor. A new part of the permanent display is dedicated to the Jewish refugees who came from Russia in the late 1800s and created a flourishing community in Cork.

The museum's educational offering has been limited up to now by tight resources. Nonetheless, visiting school groups have been facilitated by the current acting curator. Third-level Museum Studies students are regularly placed in the museum for the practical component of their courses. And teachers attending the nearby Cork Education Support Centre have also accessed the museum, though no formal arrangement exists.

Though UCC's formal involvement in the running of the museum ceased in 1963, the museum continues to enjoy a special relationship with the university. Academics from the Archaeology Department and School of History have been involved with the museum in different ways over the years and it is expected that this relationship will continue. Most recently, an exhibition has been developed in the museum around recent Viking finds in Cork. That collaboration involved the consultant archaeologist responsible for the excavations, and students from UCC, with support from developers BAM and facilitated by Cork Public Museum.

What are our current services?

Much of what is offered currently by the museum is on an ad-hoc basis. Museum tours, while available, must be booked due to low staffing levels and cannot be guaranteed, although almost always are provided. Similarly, for educational groups, services are enthusiastically provided but have not been fully explored or developed and no formal arrangements exist.

The museum does not currently have Community Outreach or Education programmes, although the importance of these for the museum and its stakeholders has been extensively discussed at the museum, particularly considering its status as a designated county museum. There are well over half a million primary school children in Cork, and over 380,000 secondary students who could potentially benefit from an education programme.

It has been recognised, not least by MSPI assessors, that the older building, Shrubbery House is underutilised. There are issues with this building which need to be addressed with

funding before it can be utilised, but it has potential as a facility for talks, seminars and workshops. It is a space which could be used by researchers, educators and conservators.

What processes do we employ?

Since re-opening in 1945, the museum has continued to collect objects related to Cork's past. These vary in type from archaeological artefacts to cultural memorabilia. The process of cataloguing and documenting these objects continues to be taken seriously, with a digital photographer on the museum's staff devoted to the task. The museum has joined the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI), run by the Heritage Council, which requires the museum to apply world-class standards of care to the objects in its collection. This has prompted the current (acting) curator to commission a conservator's review of the condition of the objects currently on display as well as the display and environmental conditions in which they are exhibited. These processes will then be applied to artefacts in storage and storage conditions. Processes for monitoring the conditions of artefacts going forward are now being established, so that conservation becomes an integral part of the museum's activities.

Collections documentation is recognised as equally important in providing adequate guardianship for the museum collections. Again, the MSPI is providing guidance in this regard. Having a rigorous system in place will allow the museum to capitalise on its relationships by giving and taking artefacts on loan from other organisations. This will enable the creation of temporary exhibitions, keeping the museum's offering fresh and interesting for visitors.

The museum has relatively recently begun collecting feedback from visitors. This information will help in the development of future exhibitions and services. Otherwise, systems and processes regarding visitor engagement and the visitor experience are scant. There is an acknowledged need for the museum to develop a closer relationship with its audience. Museums today are places where the visitor is invited on a journey of discovery, and where the visitor has opportunities to relate and even participate in the stories which are being told. To reach this level of engagement, the museum must first 'get to know' its audience, and then develop a relationship with it. One of the most immediate and impactful ways to do this is by developing a persona online. There is a delay in achieving this, as the museum must use Cork City Council's IT services, for which there is competing demand. Request for a website is being processed at the time of writing but has taken some time. Marketing is highly dependent on being online. We live in an increasingly digital world with up to 85% of potential visitors using their smartphones or laptops to book and plan their

activities. Increasingly people want experiences which are easily shareable online. They also want to continue a relationship with attractions and destinations after they have returned home. Traditional marketing methods such as brochures and leaflets are important. But they can in no way match the leverage created by digital marketing. Not having a website, or a presence on social media, puts Cork Public Museum at a significant disadvantage.

Marketing processes are generally dependent on funding and often attached to specific events. No marketing plan or schedule for the museum currently exists. The importance of marketing is recognised, and efforts to develop it are ongoing. Cork City Council has a website dedicated to promoting activities and attractions in Cork, while TEAM are a Council group tasked with promoting tourism and event management in the city. The museum needs to reach potential visitors, or an online audience who might support the museum from afar.

What people or knowledge do we rely on?

The museum's acting curator has been in his position since August 2016, having started in the museum in 2002. He is very committed to developing the museum both as custodian of Cork's heritage, and as a high-quality visitor experience. He is currently taking the museum through a process of accreditation bringing professional museum standards for both collections and visitor care. This carries with it a good deal of useful mentorship and advice. The curator is also networked with curators from the other twelve local authority museums around Ireland.

The special relationship with UCC has meant that the museum has been able to draw upon the expertise of historians and archaeologists. As mentioned, the museum takes several Museum Studies Students (2-4 students) on placement each year. The students fulfil some museum tasks during their time, and often contribute to temporary exhibitions.

The museum is a part of Cork library/archive services which comes under the remit of the division of corporate affairs. Naturally, the museum has strong links to the city and county heritage officers. It is also served by TEAM, which is Cork City Council's Tourism, Events, Arts and Marketing group.

How are our governance and financials set up?

Cork City Council owns the museum outright and those of its collections which aren't on loan.

The museum's acting curator reports to the City Librarian and upwards to the Director of Services in the Corporate Affairs Directorate of Cork City Council. While the acting curator

can make day-to-day operational and budgetary decisions, larger matters must be referred up the decision-making hierarchy.

An annual budget for the museum is agreed at Director-level, based on previous years' expenditure and the estimates of the curator. The finance department of Cork City Council decrees the format for the museum's financial statements. It was suggested by the MSPI assessors that a financial breakdown which showed expenditure or projections under headings relevant to the standards might be useful. This would show clearly the areas in which there was adequate investment or not enough and allow the acting curator to tie these investments to results and outcomes in the different areas. The finance department has said this won't be possible. But it is something the acting curator may implement in his own records.

Our values shining through

Rigorous standards

The acting curator is seeking Heritage Council accreditation for Cork Public Museum. This is challenging and labour-intensive but will lead to professional standards of collections care and documentation, museum management, and visitor care. The standards, once achieved, must be retained with ongoing monitoring, and review.

The museum, of its own accord, is continuing to catalogue and document the collection. This was started in the 1940s by the museum in its role as custodian of Cork's heritage.

Interpretation and engagement

Cork Public Museum has many stories in its display cases and on its walls but is striving to interpret these in more engaging ways. The museum's aim is to ignite the imaginations of its audience and start people on journeys of discovery that might begin with a single object. This year, the museum succeeded in attracting the support of Fáilte Ireland, through its storytelling and interpretation grant scheme, to reimagine and reinterpret its archaeology display.

The museum recognises that contemporary visitors to museums have greater requirements for interactivity and for digital storytelling methods than before. Museums are now competing with mass entertainment and audiences are harder to impress. Many of the 'culturally curious' or 'social energiser' visitors to the museum are looking for likeable,

tweetable and otherwise shareable experiences. What hasn't changed though, is that visitors are looking for the chance to make genuine connections in the places they visit.

Diversity and Inclusion

The museum has a solid reputation for reaching out to groups who might not otherwise have a voice. Minority voices have been included, and highlighted, in the permanent collection, which includes an exhibition about Traveller culture created in collaboration with groups from the Travelling Community. In 2016, a new addition to the permanent exhibition told the story of the arrival of Jewish refugees in Cork from the end of the 19th century. This was celebrated at a gathering in the museum which included members of Cork Hebrew Congregation who had grown up in Cork City. While the 'Ner Tamid', or Eternal Light that once shone in Cork's synagogue had been taken to Dublin, Rabbi Zalman said this exhibition would be the Ner Tamid that would continue to shine in Cork.

Starting point to achieving our vision

Stakeholder Input

This Strategic Management Plan represented a great opportunity to harvest the views and input of current users of the museum. We reached out to

- managers and controllers
- staff and volunteers at the museum
- donors and those who contributed to exhibitions
- experts and academics involved with the museum over the years
- visitors to the museum.

The information we gathered helped us achieve the following goals:

- We underlined what was working in the museum to retain and build on these strengths
- We pinpointed what was not working at the museum, so we could devise a plan for addressing challenges
- We got to know the character of the museum, so we could bring it to the fore,
- We listened to what people wanted from their museum so as to figure out how to provide it.

In these ways the stakeholder input fed naturally into our strategic goals 2019 – 2022.

Accreditation

While the need for this plan was already recognised, the museum's engagement with the Museum Standards programme for Ireland expedited the need to get the planning process underway. There have always been development goals, but this plan will ensure these goals are

- rooted in the needs and wishes of stakeholders
- scheduled in a way that is realistic and achievable
- monitored and reviewed in a way that ensures they are realised, dealing with any potential obstacles along the way.

Programme and Exhibition Development

At any given time, there is an array of worthy options in terms of programmes and exhibitions that a museum might develop. There are usually more options than resources, and it can be challenging to select those in which the museum should invest precious time and funds. The strategic management plan enables us to prioritise developing those programmes and exhibitions which will best help to achieve the overall vision of the museum in the next three years. The activities we choose to invest will say something about us as an institution. We can then harness these messages to strengthen our identity and brand.

New revenue streams

It is common knowledge that funding is an ongoing challenge in the museums sector. Cork Public Museum is in the lucky position of having a regular budget from Cork City Council. But this is limited and is naturally subordinate to other, more critical services the city council must provide. In the strategic management plan, we set the goal of investigating alternative income possibilities and reviewing contemporary approaches to fundraising.

Implementation

One of the benefits of a strategic management plan is that the built-in monitoring and review processes allow an organisation to identify obstacles to achieving its objectives. These obstacles may be inadequate funds or skills, or they can signify deeper cultural issues in the organisation. Revealing obstacles so they can be dealt with gives the organisation the best chance of making progress towards its vision.

In sum...

This review of the organisation in its current state is a starting point for the strategic management planning process. The following sections will analyse the input of stakeholders, the environment, the financial situation and the market in which the museum operates. From this data, we will establish the museums mission and vision, and its core values. This information is then funnelled into a number of strategic goals for Cork Public Museum. These will be broken down into objectives and achievable steps and be accompanied by an action plan and a review process.

Financial Review

Overview

The finances of Cork Public Museum are handled by the Finance Department of Cork City Council, with administration of the day-to-day budget in the hands of the Acting Curator. An annual budget is granted based on

- financial estimates provided by the Acting Curator
- the Council's own budgetary considerations and influencing factors.

The budget is decided by the Director of Corporate and External Affairs and approved by the CE of Cork City Council.

Operational expenditure is overseen by the Acting Curator, but larger expenses, or ad hoc or unexpected expenditure must be approved by the City Librarian, who reports in turn to the Director of Corporate and External Affairs.

Income

Budget

An annual budget is granted to the museum in November of each year for the coming year. This figure is based on factors internal to the museum

- previous years' expenditure
- financial projections forwarded by the Acting Curator

...and factors external to the museum, such as

- Cork City Council's overall budget
- current economic climate.

In future, the museum's budget may also be influenced by the degree to which projected expenditure fits within the museum's strategic management plan.

Other revenue

Apart from its annual budgetary stipend the museum has no other revenue stream .

In 2015, a grant was obtained from the Heritage Council in the amount of €5,000, and in 2018, the museum succeeded in obtaining a grant of €30,000 from Fáilte Ireland, conditional on 25% matched funding from Cork City council. There are plans to apply for appropriate grant funding in the future as it becomes available, in particular to improve the visitor experience and to fund collections care and conservation.

Admission to the museum is free and this is not expected to change in the short term. Some visitors have enquired about how to donate to the museum, as there is currently no easy way to do so. Options for donating have been considered and will be further explored as part of the strategic plan. Fundraising and donations have provided a significant source of revenue for other museums.

Sponsorship is something which the museum has considered briefly but not explored. For this option to be attractive to potential sponsors, the museum needs a high profile and a significant number of visitors. The museum would need to ensure that it only accepted sponsors whose ethos was in keeping with that of the museum and of Cork City Council.

Outgoings

The convention of the Finance Department of Cork City Council is to account for outgoings under the following headings:

- Wages/Salaries
- Non-pay
- Maintenance.

The Acting Curator, prompted by a suggestion from the MSPI assessors, intends to break the non-pay outgoings down further, to :

- Operations/administration expenditure
- Conservation/collections management expenditure
- Exhibitions/education expenditure
- Marketing/communications expenditure.

While this won't be done at department level, it is something which the Acting Curator can do in his own records. This will allow better monitoring and easier planning for these tasks/areas.

Projected expenditure table

The following table shows income and projected expenditure for 2018:

	2018
Income	
Budget from Cork City Council	420,000

External funding		30,000
Total projected income		450,000
Expenditure		
Wages/Salaries		275,000
Non-pay	Operations/administration	65,920
	Conservation/collections management	41,200
	Exhibitions/education	49,440
	Marketing/communications	8240
Maintenance		10,200
Total projected expenditure		450,000

Table 1: Projected expenditure 2018

Projected expenditure 2018

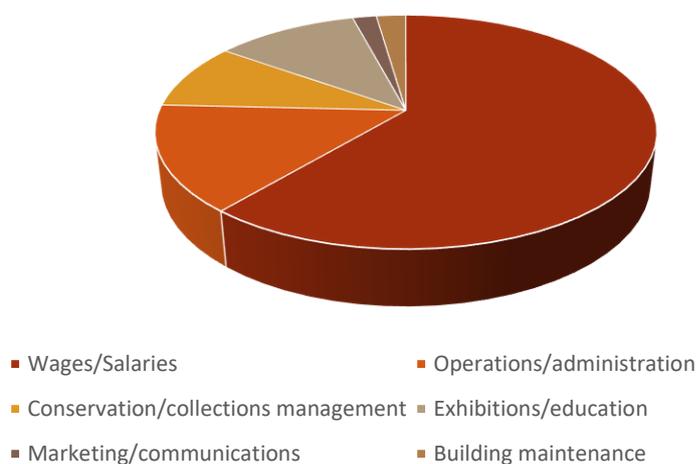


Figure 1: Projected expenditure 2018

Systems

The Acting Curator submits the projected budget by August, and usually receives approval by November. After this he uploads records on a weekly basis of expenditure to Cork City

Council's accounting software, with invoices, receipts etc. The Acting Curator also keeps paper records.

The Acting Curator alone is responsible for spending and recording expenditure.

Breaking finance down under the more detailed headings described above may entail the development of new systems.

Challenges

Budget

As with most county museums, the budget for the museum is limited and this creates some challenges. The staff numbers four, when in fact eight staff members could easily be deployed full-time in the areas of management, maintenance, museum floor/reception, education, outreach and marketing. These areas also require more financial inputs, something which will be explored in the sections that follow.

Sustainability

The regular budget means that Cork Public Museum is unlikely to close its doors. However, the current level of funding is not allowing growth or development. To get into a position to justify more investment from Cork City Council, the museum needs to be achieving greater levels of public engagement, and playing a more significant role in the community, in tourism etc. To increase its role, however, it will require some increase in resources, for example, more staff.

Systems

The current financial systems work easily for the museum as practically all financial accounting is deferred to the Finance Department. However, a need has been recognised for a more nuanced accounting system within the museum which allows better monitoring, control and planning of spending in the different areas of museum operations, for example, in the areas of collections care and management, or exhibition development. These systems could remain in-house and congruent with those of the Finance Department.

Opportunities

Funding

There are numerous potential streams of income that haven't been explored, including but not limited to those mentioned above i.e. donations, grant-funding and sponsorship.

Sustainability

An increase in staff would allow more activities, which would have a knock-on effect on footfall and public engagement levels. This plan will enable the museum to take well-measured and cost-effective steps forward.

Systems

As discussed above, while the conventions employed by the Finance Department must be adhered to, there is scope for creating an accounting subsystem in the museum which reflects the museums activities in more detail. Apart from compliance with MSPI standards, this will facilitate improved strategic financial planning and development in the museum.

Stakeholder Analysis

Overview

We use the term 'stakeholders' to mean people who have an interest, or stake, in the museum's development. Our stakeholders included visitors to the museum, academic historians, local historians, community workers in Cork, professionals from other museums, exhibition designers and contributors, donors to the museum, heritage officers, marketers, architects, archaeologists, volunteers, students on placement, museum staff and Cork City Council officials.

The aim of the stakeholder analysis was to collect input from the museum's key stakeholders. This would then feed into the museum's strategic goals for the next three years.

The Stakeholder Analysis drew on the following two resources:

- Key stakeholders research: Twenty-three key people involved with the museum's activities were asked their views on how the museum is doing and what needs to change. The methodology and findings from this study are detailed below.
- Visitor study: The visitor study was carried out between June and October 2017. Over 170 visitors to Cork Public Museum filled out a survey. We extracted information about what visitors liked, and what they felt needed improvement.

The findings from both pieces were consistent, with similar themes emerging. Their implications for the museum's development are discussed in the final section.

Key stakeholder research

Who we spoke to

The list of key stakeholders was devised by the museum curator based on his experience over the last decade. This was a convenience sample which reflected the diverse organisations and individuals who have been involved with the museum in the course of its activities.

The group of stakeholder respondents is described in Table 1. Respondents could self-identify as belonging to more than one category.

What kind of user are you?

Audience/visitor	6
Historian/enthusiast	3
Community worker	2
Academic/expert	4
Museum volunteer	3
Cork City Official	4
Museum professional	3
Exhibition designer	1
Student placement	3
Archivist	2
Heritage Officer	1
Staff	3
Donor	1

Table 2: Categories of Respondents

How we gathered our data

Stakeholders' views were collected through surveys and telephone interviews, using both closed, rating-style tasks and open-ended questions.

Quantitative method – Ratings scales – Participants were asked to rate the museum on different aspects of its operations. In the first question, participants rated the museum on 'What we do well', and the second was on 'What we need to improve'.

Qualitative method - inductive thematic analysis - The second part of the survey and the telephone interviews consisted of open-ended questions. These centred around three main questions:

What is the museum doing well?

What does it need to improve/what are its challenges?

What should be its priorities over the next three years?

Responses were coded then clustered into themes. The themes emerged from the data, rather than being pre-constructed by the interviewer.

Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis deals with categories and numbers, allowing us to count responses so we can compare them.

The Pareto Chart orders factors in descending frequency and allows us to see which factors are having the greatest impact. The red line indicates cumulative percentage, which helps us judge the contribution of each factor to the total. Run your finger left from the 80% figure to where your finger meets the red line and then down. The columns on the left of this point account for 80% of factors according to stakeholders.

Qualitative analysis

Qualitative methods can explore people's opinions in a deeper way. Typically, findings are organised around topics, trends and themes.

The themes that emerged from the open-ended survey questions and stakeholder interviews, were clustered under the headings 'What the museum is doing well', 'What needs to improve', plus the question 'What should be our priorities over the next three years'.

Themes were coded then clustered under headings such as Exhibition, Education etc. Details of what respondents said are displayed in a table. Themes which were brought up by >70% of respondents were highlighted and recorded as 'Highly prevalent themes'. Ideas and suggestions put forward by respondents were gathered under the heading 'Ideas Pool'.

Findings

What the museum is doing well

According to stakeholders, the Acting Curator, the strength of the collections, the working environment and the staff accounted for at least 80% of the museum's strengths. The museum's work to include minority groups, its relationships with stakeholders, and the physical space and location of the museum made up the rest of the themes which came out, with free admission to the museum making a tiny appearance.

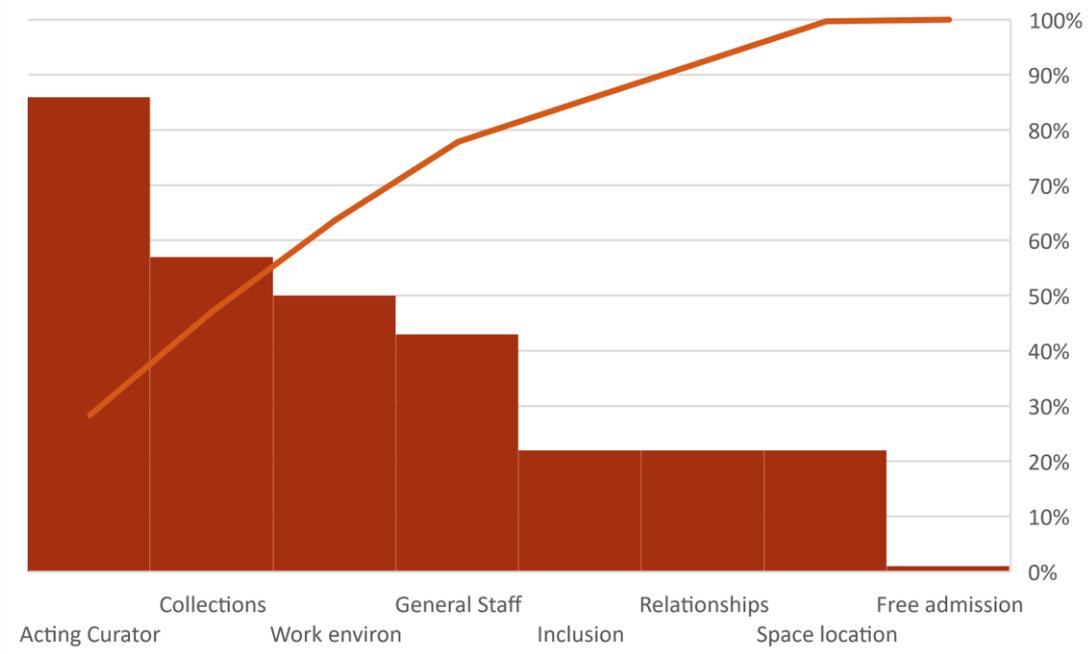


Figure 2: What the museum is doing well

Acting Curator

The museum's curator was commended for achieving a lot with limited resources, being friendly and open to collaborations and new ideas, making progress with specific goals such as accreditation, inclusion, exhibition upgrading and collections care, and for creating a pleasant work environment.

Collections

The quality and range of artefacts was rated highly and frequently commented on as being exceptionally good for a city/county museum.

Temporary and new exhibitions

There was greatest interest in the World War One Trenches temporary exhibition, and in the new Jewish exhibit from the old Cork synagogue. Children, especially, showed great interest in the Traveller barrel-top caravan. These are all relatively new additions to the museum. The War of Independence area also draws a lot of interest as one of Cork's key historic stories.

<i>Working environment</i>	Stakeholders from diverse specialisms and backgrounds commented that they found the museum pleasant to work in
<i>General staff</i>	Staff were rated highly for being friendly and helpful.
<i>Inclusion and multiculturalism</i>	The museum has been strong in creating and promoting exhibitions and activities that give a voice to marginal groups in the community and including those from different cultures. Stakeholders would like to see more of this.
<i>Quality of working relationships</i>	The museum has maintained good relationships with organisations including local historical and community groups, institutions including UCC and individual donors and contributors.
<i>Physical space and location</i>	The spatial and design qualities of both the old and new sections of the museum, as well as its location in the attractive civic space of Fitzgerald Park were cited as among the greatest strengths of the museum.
<i>Free admission</i>	One respondent mentioned this as a positive aspect of the museum

What do we need to improve?

We can see from the Pareto chart that there were many competing responses to the question 'what needs to improve'. There are also some clear priorities, according to stakeholders.

Approximately half of 'what needs to improve' is accounted for under the headings 'exhibition' and 'marketing'. Along with resourcing and collections care, developing the museum space and education, almost 80% of responses are accounted for.

Community outreach, integrating technology, dealing appropriately with the museums archives and storage, and developing better research facilities accounted for the final 20% of what stakeholders felt needs to be improved at the museum

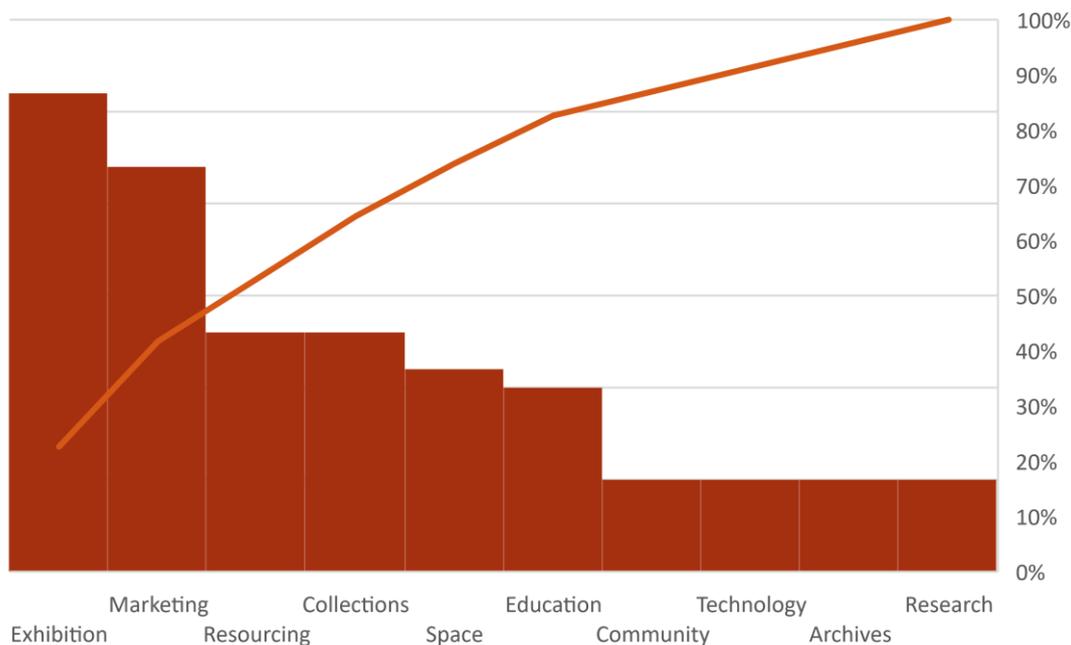


Figure 3: What the museum needs to improve

Exhibition

Display fewer copies; update/modernise permanent displays; include more immersive/interactive exhibits; the exhibition is not innovative; more frequent turnaround of temporary exhibitions needed; exhibits are too far away/can't be seen properly; more background information/explanation on exhibits is needed; reduce text-based exhibits; increases the space available for exhibitions; more child/family friendly exhibits are needed; labelling is difficult to follow.

Marketing

Needs a web presence, social media and digital marketing; develop tourism offering; no gift shop; located in an inappropriate space in the park; café disconnected/invisible to visitors; thoroughway to café should be reopened; located too far from city centre; no signage or easy access from city centre to museum; little or no information in Cork City about the museum; not enough signage within Fitzgerald Park about the museum.

Resourcing

Look at other funding sources for the museum; create new revenue streams; not enough investment in the museum; the museum does

not innovate; extremely understaffed; no resources for outreach/community engagement; restrictive opening hours; not enough staff on the floor for visitors; need for education officer; needs web presence, social media and digital marketing.

Collections

Poor conditions/inadequate security at remote storage facility; need for a collections manager; paper shouldn't be on display for long periods; records should be transferred to archives; lack of catalogue.

Space

Develop old building; the museum must be innovative with its space; needs space for research, community studies, lectures, seminars etc; limited space available for exhibitions.

Education

Lack of schools' programme; lack of education programme; need for an education officer; need space for research, community studies, lectures, seminars etc.

Community

No resources for outreach/community engagement; build greater local connection and sense of ownership.

Technology

Need to integrate new technology; not currently innovative in its storytelling.

What should be the museum's priorities over the next three years?

Marketing and resourcing stood out as the main aspects which stakeholders felt the museum should prioritise over the next three years. After that, improvements to the exhibition, community outreach, developing the museum space and integrating technology into the museum were given similar weight as aspects to be prioritised.

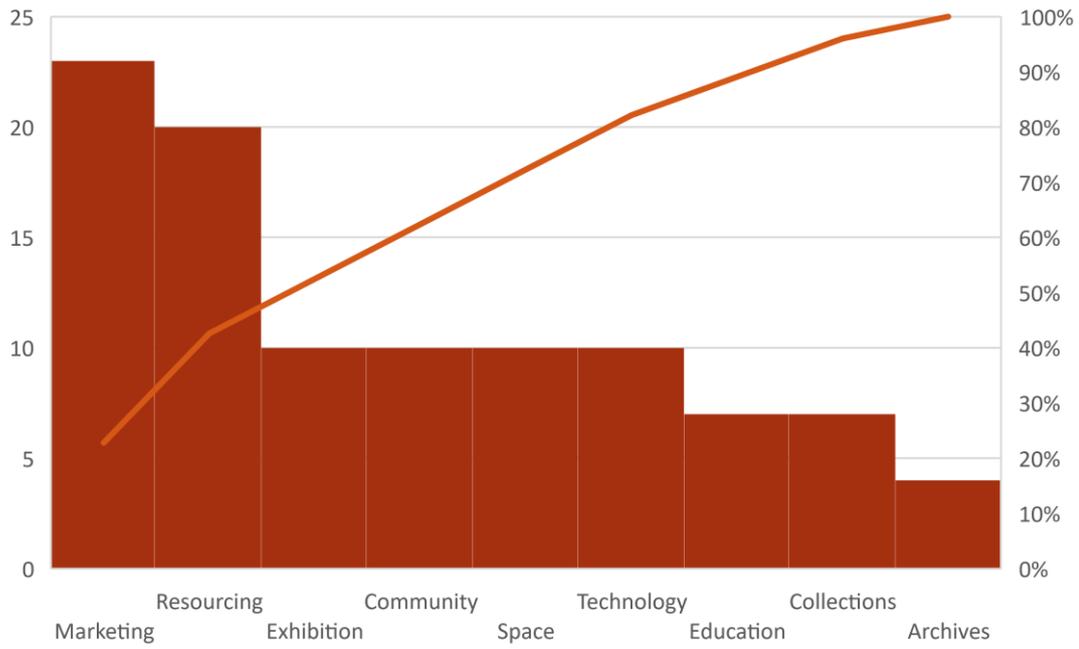


Figure 4: What the museum should prioritise

Marketing

Start marketing the museum online with website, social media etc; send welcoming inclusive message while also celebrating the city and county; provide information on the museum, including how to get there, in the city centre; create a city centre outreach location; develop the tourism offering: increase visitor numbers; expose the museum to new audiences

Resourcing

Get commercial and business stakeholders bought in to city's heritage and culture through sponsorship and donations; hire staff to enable the museum to develop education and community outreach; develop corporate spaces for revenue generation; explore new revenue and funding sources; attain more staffing and investment from Cork City Council; increase visitor numbers;

Exhibition

Update the displays in the permanent collection; provide more child/family friendly exhibits; create a great War of Independence exhibition for the centenary

Community	Expose the museum to new audiences; send welcoming inclusive message while also celebrating the city and county; collaboration and partnerships with a range of new organisations
Space	Develop research facilities; develop the old building; find ways to increase exhibition space;
Technology	Need to integrate new technology; update the displays in the permanent collection; provide more child/family friendly exhibits
Education	Look at creating a lecture/seminar space; develop a schools' programme
Collections	Address storage issues; start a cataloguing project

Highly prevalent themes

The nature of the sample meant that an important issue for the museum might be only raised by a small proportion of respondents (for example regarding archives, or conservation).

Having said that, some points came up over and over again in the interviews because they were regarded as critical issues by many the respondents. Below, we highlight the themes brought up by >70% of respondents.

Staffing	Almost unanimously, respondents discussed extreme understaffing at the museum as a major obstacle to its service-provision and development.
Web presence, social media and digital marketing	The lack of a web presence and marketing was commented on by 92% of respondents, and this was cited as being essential to attract visitors, to build a relationship with its community and to 'sell' the museum. Marketing the museum would also have a ripple effect which would benefit the city and county in terms of tourism and commercial interests.
Resourcing	100% of respondents either commented or at least mentioned that they saw the museum as being under-resourced. Everyone said that moving forward would be impossible without increased resources.

- Child/family-friendly exhibits*** 71% of respondents saw the lack of child/family-friendly exhibits as a problem, given that schools and families make up a large proportion of the audiences of most museums, and that the modern museum is expected to be a place of entertainment as well as education.
- Education officer*** 78% of respondents felt having an education officer is an essential step forward for the museum.
- Acting Curator*** Over 86% of respondents spoke in a positive way about the current Acting Curator, recognising the progress that has been made at the museum despite the constraints of a limited budget and minimal staff.

Key Stakeholders Ideas Pool

Over the course of the interview, some respondents offered ideas for actions and approaches that could help the museum.

- Civic messaging*** Develop the civic messaging of the museum: it should be welcoming and inclusive but also restate Irish/Cork identity.
- Trusted space*** The museum should become a safe space in the community, whether that is for people with special needs like autism or a young couple on their first date.
- Re-interpret function*** What other functions or services can the museum offer apart from collection, conservation and display? Look at how the libraries now offer a range of useful services in the community apart from lending books.
- Develop the experience*** Look at the whole experience of the visitor, from the time they enter the building to when they leave
- Develop an outreach post in the city centre*** To address the issue of the museum's out-of-the-way location, create an outreach location in the city centre. This could be in the form of a small display sample of the collection, with leaflets, directions etc. A location for this could possibly be negotiated in

	the new Beamish-Crawford interpretive centre, in St. Paul's Church or elsewhere.
Corporate	Develop corporate AV/lecture/meeting spaces to rent out and generate new revenue for the museum
Industrial heritage	Develop a narrative about the industrial development of Cork, as this resonates with ordinary people more than things like collections of lace and silver. It could be accompanied by a call for contributions and would be a chance to get people involved.
Focus groups	Run focus groups of visitors/users to see what they would like to see in the museum.
Outreach	Bring objects out of their cabinets, into Fitzgerald Park, into the Mardyke, even into the city centre!
Gift shop	People often want books and mementoes. A small gift shop could be tendered out for a trial run. The museum could get local craftspeople to copy items like beads, pots, the famous Garyduff bird etc.
Social media	Create a Facebook page for the museum.
Family activities	Make small games and educational quizzes for families, include 'find that object'-type games.
Child-friendly signage and information	The current materials are aimed at adults, so a child-friendly alternative could be made available. Make a cartoon avatar for the museum to include on signs and activity sheets.
Activities for children and young people	Run open days with tactile/handling sessions or talks by archaeologists aimed at older children, child-friendly handouts, child-oriented tours.
Archives	Send documents to archives and they can loan back objects of interest, enlist archives to catalogue documents. In the future, could have single search screen on adlib for museum and for archives.
Online exhibits	Put text-based exhibits online

Funding

Increase visitor numbers and engagement with the public and use this to leverage more funding.

Visitor study

The visitor study was carried out by museum students and volunteers over the tourism season in 2017. Visitors were asked to state what appealed to them about the museum and were invited to comment and make suggestions.

We have taken the key findings from this study and used them to answer the questions 'What does the museum do well?', and 'What needs to improve?'.

The visitor study also produced some findings with implications for marketing the museum, which are considered later in the marketing analysis.

Who we spoke to

The self-selected sample numbered 170 respondents who visited the museum between June and October 2017. It included visitors from Ireland and Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas were all represented. There was broad distribution of visitors' ages is illustrated in Figure 6.

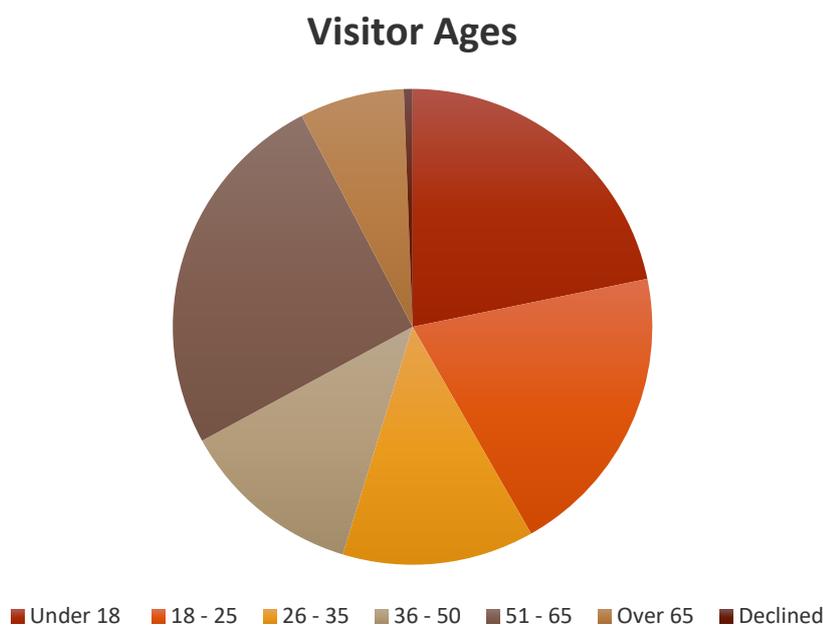


Figure 5: Distribution of visitors' ages

How we collected our data

The paper survey was located in a prominent place in the museum and staff encouraged visitors to fill it out. Visitors were asked to rate different aspects of the museum from one to ten. Museum volunteers and students then manually entered responses into Survey Monkey for analysis.

Findings

What the museum is doing well

- The Collections*** A large majority of visitors – approximately three quarters of visitors surveyed - stated that the historical and archaeological collections were their favourite aspect of the museum.
- The Location*** The museum’s situation in Fitzgerald Park was the most appealing aspect of the museum for 20% of visitors.
- The Café*** The café to the rear of the museum was cited by 18% of visitors as being the best thing about the museum.

What needs to improve

- Child and family offering*** Over 60% of visitors to the museum came with family. Many of these felt that the museum did not have enough child friendly material. Several people mentioned a lack of signage with child-appropriate language, stating that the current information was too difficult to absorb for both adults and children.
- Audio-visual Material*** Several visitors said the audio/visual material was not good enough, with many finding the video volume too low, or the video not available. Some visitors felt that there should be more audio-visual material.
- Local History*** Some visitors asked for information on local areas of interest. Some also expressed a wish to see more in the exhibition about industry, for example, about the city’s relationship to large companies like Ford and Dunlop.

- Interactive Materials*** Visitors commented on the lack of interactive materials in the exhibition. Some asked for the interactive map of Ireland to be brought back.
- Signage*** A frequent complaint was the lack of signage to the museum from various locations around the city, and in the park itself. Some people also found it difficult to find the toilets.
- Seating*** The lack of seating in the museum was highlighted by visitors as a problem.

Visitors Ideas Pool

- Focussed Museum Tours*** Short tours which focus on one particular area of the museum could draw visitors and keep people longer in the museum.
- Café*** Many visitors commented that they enjoyed the café to the rear of the museum, and for a significant number this was the way they discovered the museum. The café is a draw for families and others who use the park, and this could be leveraged to bring more visitors. Previous collaborations have been successful.
- Genealogy*** A large proportion of visitors who completed the survey during June-October 2017 were from the USA, UK and Australia. These are countries with many people with Irish immigrant history, therefore facilities or services related to genealogical research could be a draw for more visitors.

Discussion and Conclusion

What do the findings mean for our museum?

These are the core things upon which the museum can build: excellent collections of artefacts, great staff, a beautifully designed space and a scenic location.

But most of the museum's stakeholders feel the museum's potential isn't being maximised. The museum could be a much greater tourist attraction in Cork and play a deeper and more essential role in civic life.

The museum seems to be caught in a situation whereby, in order to increase its resources, it must prove its worth to the community and in tourism. However, it cannot increase its role in the community or in tourism without...greater resources.



Additional staff could address the three biggest issues pointed out by stakeholders:

The issue of online presence

For a museum not to be online in 2018 is surprising. Arguably worse than not sending any message to potential users, it sends a clear message, true or not, that the museum does not welcome visitors and does not prioritise its community.

With one full-time office staff, the Acting Curator, whose job is to run the museum, achieve accreditation etc, it will be very difficult to keep the museum active online, once it gets there. Creating a social presence and using it to develop relationships with visitors requires the input of an experienced staff. An intern or volunteer cannot satisfy this requirement, as they will not be able to provide the required continuity.

Tourists cannot find the museum online. Many local people do not know the museum exists. Any discussion of sustainability for the museum should address getting the museum online as a priority.

The issue of education

An education officer does not just reach out to schools, although that is an important job. They make the museum more accessible for everybody. Because of their training and experience, education officers have insight into how visitors receive and use information, in other words, how they learn.

In the museum, having a full-time education officer would address many of the issues brought up by stakeholders:

- make the exhibition more engaging for visitors
- make the museum more appealing for children and families
- bring the exhibition to new audiences
- bring schools into the museum
- reach out to the community
- recreate the museum as a trusted social space.

The issue of resources

Stakeholders expressed disappointment and frustration at the lack of resources available to allow the museum to develop as a cultural institution and tourist attraction. They were confused about it given the potentially large payoff in terms of making the city more attractive, not only to tourists but to businesses and commercial investors. There would also be intangible benefits such as:

- increased social capital,
- community cohesion,
- positive community identity, and
- enrichment of the civic experience.

Most, if not all, of the issues facing the museum could be solved by adequate investment. If that investment is not possible, an increase in skilled staff would allow the museum to source or develop alternate sources of income, including:

- funding,
- donations,
- philanthropic giving,
- crowdfunding,
- fundraising,
- events,
- hiring out space, and
- gift shop sales.

The future

Despite its limitations, the museum makes progress. It is making great strides towards reaching national standards in collections care and documentation for its artefacts on display and in storage.

It has started on the path to updating its exhibitions with a new tourism grant to update its archaeology display. This is the beginning of journey towards telling more stories in the exhibition and increasing its human appeal.

There is also a strong desire to forge a relationship with the local community and build links outward.

The market analysis will look in more detail at what the museum is offering and how. Can this be adjusted to better meet the needs of users? And how will we communicate with potential visitors?

Environmental Analysis

SWOT

The SWOT analysis is a well-established tool which we used to examine the museum in its context. It will help us figure out where to focus our resources over the next three years.

This SWOT was based on feedback from staff, volunteers, academics, designers, heritage and museum professionals and visitors.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	<p>Toilet facilities, disability access, friendly and helpful staff, relaxed and friendly working environment, range and quality of artefacts, beautiful recreational location, open and progressive curator, local connection, inclusion of minority voices, quality of relationships and collaborations, spatial and design qualities of the museum, Shrubbery House (the old building), free admission, stable annual budget, strategy awareness good volunteer/student base, designated museum status, competition: no other similar museum.</p>	<p>Lack of child-friendly exhibits, lack of web and social media presence, lack of family activities, lack of education programmes, lack of community outreach, outdated exhibition, no seating in museum, café cut off from museum, location too far from city centre, limited budget lack of alternate sources of income, lack of staff, condition of storage facilities, incomplete collections catalogue overstretched curator must stick to core tasks, insufficient marketing, poor condition of Shrubbery House, poor signage.</p>

	Opportunities	Threats
External	<p>Development as a tourism offering, build on current collaborations and develop new ones,</p> <p>look at new funding sources,</p> <p>redesign permanent display to include greater interpretation and storytelling,</p> <p>increase collaboration with city archives,</p> <p>increase collaboration with park/café,</p> <p>develop relationships with potential and past visitors through social media,</p> <p>redefine function by offering new services,</p> <p>create city centre outpost,</p> <p>become a trusted space,</p> <p>build relationships within commercial/business sector,</p> <p>develop the old building and rent out audio-visual and meeting spaces,</p> <p>source donations and sponsorship from corporate/businesses,</p> <p>develop narrative about Cork's industrial heritage and involve citizens,</p> <p>develop a gift shop,</p> <p>develop the museum as an 'experience',</p> <p>run events for families and young people,</p> <p>access to IAE funding</p> <p>high footfall.</p>	<p>Development of competing attractions in Cork,</p> <p>development of museum/interpretive centre in city centre,</p> <p>increase in parking charges,</p> <p>continued under-resourcing,</p> <p>development of technology beyond the ability to adapt,</p> <p>continued under-staffing,</p> <p>Acting Curator leaves museum,</p> <p>budget cuts</p> <p>continued under-marketing</p> <p>reduced access from city centre to Fitzgerald Park,</p> <p>Change in funding environment,</p> <p>decreased footfall,</p> <p>further deterioration of Shrubbery House.</p>

Strengths

Financial strengths

The museum has a relatively stable budget from Cork City Council which increases every year. Finances are administered by the council's finance department. Its location within Ireland's Ancient East (Fáilte Ireland) means it can access funding for storytelling and interpretation development. There is also ample potential for developing new and diverse revenue streams.

Internal strengths

For those working with the museum there has been a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The quality of relationships with organisations and individuals has been very good. The Acting

Curator has been praised for his collaborative, progressive approach. The museum is in the process of achieving accreditation to national standards.

The museum is the designated county museum and is the only museum of its scope and size in Cork. As such, it is in an excellent position to increase its footfall by offering a high-quality visitor experience.

Environmental strengths

Its location in Fitzgerald Park has brought many visitors to the museum, especially families and café-goers. Many activities happen in the park and it manages to draw people out from the city. The spatial and design qualities of the museum also draw admiration from visitors.

Visitor strengths

There is a strong local connection with Shrubbery House and the museum to build upon. Most visitors come with family. Despite the low level of marketing, the museum has high footfall which is a great basis for developing targeted marketing strategies.

Service strengths

The quality and range of the artefacts in the museum collections is undisputed. Staff are friendly and welcoming. Toilets and disability access have been good for most visitors. The museum has sought to include the voices of those from minority social groups in its programming and exhibitions.

Learning & growth strengths

The museum's management has a good awareness of the need for strategic development for the museum. The museum is a participant in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. The Acting Curator is progressive in that he welcomes opportunities for growth and development. He is currently attempting to implement systems and processes in several areas. The staff are experienced and enthusiastic and bring high standards of customer care.

Weaknesses

Financial weaknesses

The museum has a small budget which limits both the scale and type of activities it can undertake. Limited resources impede the development of the museum on all levels. The museum relies solely on its budget from Cork City Council and has no other source of income.

Internal weaknesses

The museum is understaffed with 2.5 staff to man reception, deal with visitors, and clean and maintain the museum. One full-time Acting Curator deals with all other aspects of management and operations. This means that projects such as community outreach and education, which are outside the museum's core activities of collecting, exhibiting, administration and management of the day-to-day running of the museum, aren't developed. Volunteers and students on placement carry out some projects and activities, overseen by the Acting Curator, but these are short-term and limited in scope.

A full catalogue of the collections needs to be completed, and concerns have been raised about the security and conditions at the museum's offsite storage facility.

Marketing is carried out to some extent by Cork County Council, but stakeholders have complained that the lack of effective digital marketing puts the museum at a serious disadvantage in terms of attracting visitors, attracting investment and support, and carrying out its role in the community, among other issues.

Visitor weaknesses

The visitor survey showed that 60% of visitors had never been to the museum before. If the museum was marketing successfully, we would see more repeat visits, from domestic visitors especially. Without adequate digital marketing and online reach, the museum has no opportunity to build relationships with a community of followers and supporters, which is a key tenet of contemporary marketing and a wasted opportunity.

The survey showed that 60% of visitors came with family. Although we can't assume all these families had young children, it still emphasises the need for child and family-friendly exhibits and experiences to ensure quality service and repeat visits.

Lack of signage and seating shows that we are missing some basic visitor needs. A visitor experience audit might be useful to help address these and related issues.

Environmental weaknesses

The location of the museum presents some problems as some tourists say it can be difficult to find and reach the museum. For drivers, parking near the museum is expensive and limited. While the modern wing of the museum is often complimented, it has limited room for temporary exhibitions, or possibly the way in which the space is being used needs to be reconsidered. The older wing of the museum, Shrubbery House, is in disrepair and disused, although it is recognised as having a lot of potential for storage and exhibition space, and revenue generation.

Having seating in the museum would encourage use of the museum as a social space. Having the door between the museum and café permanently closed, as it is now, represents a missed opportunity for more traffic through the museum.

Service weaknesses

The exhibition displays artefacts in a classic style, in glass cases with minimal interpretation. This is considered outdated by contemporary museum standards. A frequent remark is that the artefacts are hard to see as they are located far away or too high within the case. There is a scarcity of opportunities for visitors to act or interact in the museum or immerse themselves in stories of Cork's past. Stakeholders have also commented on the lack of child and family-friendly attractions, information and activities.

The museum does not have any education programmes or community outreach programmes, which are now the usual thing in well-resourced modern museums. It does not have the resources to offer proper research facilities. It does not have the facilities to offer audio-visual spaces for seminars or lectures.

Learning & growth weaknesses

Without enough programming staff, it is difficult to deliver the kinds of services that have come to be expected of the modern museum. The museum is operating with a skeleton staff and a limited budget, so its ability to grow and develop is restricted.

Opportunities

Financial opportunities

There is an array of options for the museum to explore as alternative sources of income. There is currently no way to collect donations from museum visitors and remedying this would immediately create an income stream. A gift shop, though not generally highly profitable, can bring some income. Its location in Ireland's Ancient East allows the museum to access Fáilte Ireland funding for tourism development and other funds may also be available. Events and activities can earn money in ticket sales. Corporate donations and sponsorship and major gift-giving could be explored, as Cork is home to numerous successful businesses and corporations. Developing audio-visual and conference spaces in the museum for rental could create significant revenue although it would require initial investment. Opportunities to crowdfund specific projects are available via many platforms. These are just some possibilities. A fundraising strategy for the museum could explore revenue-generating opportunities.

Visitor opportunities

Visitors to the museum could almost be seen as a hitherto untapped resource for the museum. By exploring the groups who use the museum, their needs and motivations, targeted activities and services can be designed. Social media would support this targeted programming, helping to build a steady audience who will support the museum by visiting on a repeat basis and spreading the word. Then the museum can begin to identify new groups of users to serve, thus broadening its function and role in the community, and so on.

Environmental opportunities

Numerous stakeholders talked about the activities in the park, and how the museum might participate or collaborate, as the park and the museum have an overlapping audience. The park offers marketing opportunities such as 'get away from the hustle and bustle of the city – while away the afternoon at the park, museum and café'.

The 'old building', Shrubbery House, was mentioned by many of the stakeholders as well as the MSPI assessors, as a source of almost unlimited possibilities if it were repaired and developed. It could be used for storage, office space, meeting, seminar or conference space, community education, exhibition space etc. It could also include spaces which could be rented to corporates and organisations for events and functions, and so on. A feasibility study could explore development possibilities and cost implications of this.

Service opportunities

The museum's permanent exhibition hasn't had an overhaul since 2005 (although there have been some notable improvements and additions). Since then museums have developed as places of entertainment for families, places where stories are told and imaginations are awakened, places where there are novel and hands-on ways of experiencing history, and places which are hubs of identity and expression for communities. With this strategic plan, Cork Public Museum has an opportunity to broaden its mission and reimagine its vision for the coming years.

The museum has opportunities to strengthen the community, contribute to economic regeneration, encourage participation, promote integration of marginalised groups, increase ownership, and grow storytelling and creativity.

Learning & growth opportunities

Participation in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland offers the museum opportunities for learning in multiple areas simultaneously. It has already spurred the

development of more strategic thinking and planning and improvements in collections care, for example.

A change in thinking towards a more holistic visitor experience will align the museum with its contemporaries in terms of its offering to visitors. For this to happen, resources and staff levels will need to increase.

Threats

Financial threats

As the museum is reliant on its annual budget, cuts to this budget could have a deleterious effect on its ability to operate at its current level. The museum is operating with minimal resources. Continued under-resourcing and understaffing may lead to an eventual decline in quality and standards, which in turn will see reduced visitor numbers.

Visitor threats

The creation of a competing attraction located closer to, or in, Cork city centre may prevent visitors travelling to Fitzgerald Park to visit the museum. While new museums could offer partnering opportunities, they could also negatively influence visitor numbers.

Environmental threats

Flooding from the nearby river is a serious threat for the museum, which requires the development of a disaster plan to protect the collections. Damage from flooding is expensive to rectify and, in some cases, cannot be corrected. Further deterioration in the condition of Shrubbery House will lead to increased costs of repair/remedial work. As Shrubbery House has so much development potential, there are also opportunity costs associated with delaying its development.

Service threats

Making it as easy as possible for visitors to reach the museum by providing signs in appropriate places, updating the exhibition, and providing seating in the museum, are all part of creating a better visitor experience. Not providing these represents a threat to the quality and standard of the museum's offering to the public.

Internal threats

In the stakeholder research, many respondents highlighted the approach of the Acting Curator as being a key positive element in the museum's sustainability. As there are no other full-time, skilled staff sharing his responsibilities, there would be difficulties if the Acting Curator were to leave.

Learning & growth threats

Continued under-marketing of the museum is more of a wasted opportunity than a threat, as the museum could conceivably continue to operate at its current levels. But the museum will be left further and further behind the times. Growth and development will not be possible without digitally marketing the museum and incorporating marketing techniques into the day-to-day running of the museum. Cultural institutions like museums have been shown to contribute to the flow of tourism in a region, and to its economic and socio-cultural development, as well as the economic revitalisation of the local community.

PESTLE

PESTLE is a tool which allows us to examine the landscape in which the museum operates and look at external factors which may impact upon the museum's progress over the next three years.

Political	Economic	Social	Technology	Legal	Environmental
Support for museums/heritage sector Lobbying and advocacy Relevance of museum, Social/civic role	Possible economic downturn leading to budget cuts Need for economic justification Requirement for better business planning Need to provide more critical services	Resurgence of interest in heritage Improved circumstances of populace Unequal improvement in circumstances Multiculturalism	Development of mobile and smartphone technology Tourists expectations Visitor expectations Developing relationships Outreach Accessibility	Compliance Standards	Policy Shared values Marketing Possible flooding

Political

What is the political situation in Ireland and how does it affect the museum?

There needs to be cross-party support for the heritage and museums sector in Ireland, to create an environment in which innovation and growth can occur, regardless of who is in power. The museum can play its part in lobbying and advocacy or supporting others in this.

The museum can become more relevant by broadening its remit at local level. By fulfilling more roles, for example in social inclusion and education, and providing more key services, it will be easier able to demonstrate its relevance and the crucial role it plays in civic life.

Economic

What are the prevalent economic factors facing the museum?

Some say that Ireland is currently facing into an economic decline that could develop into a full-scale recession. Typically, budgetary cuts affect non-essential services, first. Cuts would create severe difficulties for the museum which arguably hasn't yet recovered from cuts in the last recession.

The museum can't shy away from creating economic arguments for its existence and continued funding and finding ways to quantify its impacts. Better and more strategic business planning is required. Again, rethinking its function and role to include more services will aid this.

Social

What social factors influence the museum?

In great part due to the Decade of Centenaries, Ireland is seeing a resurgence of interest in its cultural heritage, a movement which the museum can harness.

The population generally has seen steadily increasing earnings and higher levels of educational attainment over the last three decades, correlated with greater consumption of culture. With community outreach and engagement programmes, the museum can give opportunities for engagement with cultural heritage to social groups, families and individuals who have not benefitted equally from the improvement in our economy.

Cork is welcoming people from new and diverse cultural backgrounds. The museum can help smooth this transition by coupling celebrations of Irish identity with space for new identities.

Technological

What technological innovations have emerged, or will emerge, to influence the museum or its market?

Development of mobile and smartphone technology has meant the audience has now evolved from being passive consumers of our product to creative co-creators and the museum needs to respond to this new expectation.

Tourists want to use the world-wide web to investigate attractions and destinations before they come. Attractions are judged based on their profile online.

Audiences want to develop a relationship with the museum of which the actual visit is only one part. If they like the museum, they will follow the museum's activities, support its campaigns, participate in its competitions and challenges, review its activities for other potential visitors and share ideas.

Technology presents the museum with opportunities to share content beyond the museum walls.

It also presents possibilities for making the museum more accessible for groups who would not otherwise be able to access it, for example, the Irish diaspora, people abroad interested in genealogy, people with disabilities, people with limited English, people with mental health or social issues, people with limited financial means and so on.

Legal

Are there current legislations that regulate the museum or are there legislations which are likely to change?

Its designated status highlights the importance of museum's role in protecting national cultural heritage, and as it can hold state-owned objects that are of more local than national significance it must maintain high standards of collections care, storage and display.

It also must maintain compliance with legislation around health and safety, employment regulations etc, and best practice in the management of volunteers and other resources.

Environmental

What environmental concerns exist for the museum?

An organisation-wide environmental and sustainability policy will ensure the museum complies with environmental standards, and this can include making the best use of space in the new and older wings of the museum building.

Sharing environmental values with the museum audience presents opportunities for co-creating experiences and activities on environmental topics. Fitzgerald Park is an ideal location in which to discuss natural heritage. This also presents marketing opportunities for the museum.

Climate change increases the likelihood of extreme weather events leading to more frequent flooding from the nearby river, and the museum must take measures to avoid or mitigate this possibility.

Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

We welcome everyone interested in the history and culture of Cork. We promote understanding of its material and historical heritage by collecting, preserving and displaying our collections and making them accessible in engaging and enjoyable ways for everyone.

Our Vision

Cork Public Museum works to provide a cultural space in which every member of our community feels included. We offer opportunities to learn about Cork and the world beyond, through research, our collections and our interactions with one another.

Our Values

Social: We believe there is strength in diversity.

We open our museum to everyone in our community

We provide opportunities for social and cultural exchange and interaction

Economic: We work towards sustainability for our museum

Educational: We support every person's right to participate in education

We believe that education should be enjoyable

We believe that education can take many forms

Collections: Our artefacts open a window on our past, helping us to build our future.

We maintain high standards of collections care and documentation.

We work towards public engagement with our collections by providing research access and engaging exhibitions.

Market Analysis

Overview

In this section we analysed the market environment in which the museum operates. First, we identified our target user groups and their needs. We took account of current trends in tourism, recreation, education and technology. Then we looked briefly at how we are currently performing in each of these areas. Finally, we highlighted opportunities for developing lasting, engaged relationships with our users. The outcomes of these relationships will be

- increased local, national and overseas profile
- greater footfall to the museum
- more public engagement with the museum
- increased revenue through donations, fundraising and funding.

In the section on marketing communications, we looked at the best ways of reaching out to the different target user groups.

Current activities at Cork Public Museum

Tourism

The permanent and temporary exhibitions at CPM are open to the public on a year-round basis. The museum is open from Tuesday to Sunday. There is a small number of floor staff available at a front desk to answer questions, give directions and so on. In recent years there have been several successful temporary exhibitions. The museum has launched these with regional, and often national, publicity.

Recreation

Our museum is a great place to go for families at weekends and on rainy days, but we haven't advertised it as such. Scheduled recreational and family events take place in the park throughout the year. Event attendees spill into our museum, even though we haven't helped organise these events.

Education

The museum does not provide structured educational activities or programmes, mainly because of a lack of staff. There have been some events which allow visitors to handle objects from the collection, and some public lectures and talks.

Technology

Technology is not employed in the exhibition or for visitor care. Opportunities to include it are plentiful but are not being exploited due to a lack of resources.

Target users and their needs

Overseas & domestic visitors

Visitors are looking for an enjoyable way to pass their time in Cork. They want some knowledge about Cork's heritage, and some way of making a real connection with the city. Genealogical interests will motivate some visitors. Research shows visitors often research where they will go, so they need a museum website and social media to look at. After their visit, visitors often continue the relationship via social media and ratings websites.

Corporates and businesses

Businesses in the city look for spaces in which to hold seminars, trainings and functions. By developing Shrubbery House, the museum could offer a stylish and interesting venue for a fee. This is a model which has been successfully adopted by other museums. Businesses also seek opportunities for positive publicity. The museum could exchange marketing and publicity opportunities for sponsorship and other supports.

Families with children

Families need enjoyable educational and recreational experiences throughout the year. Some families have very specific needs, for example those with autistic children. Responding to the needs of families is a way to grow a strong and loyal following for the museum, as families typically develop ongoing relationships with high levels of engagement.

Local Community

Local communities always need places in which they can connect. They hire spaces for events and functions. Groups and individuals attend lectures, courses, workshops, performances and seminars. People seek spaces in which they feel welcome to pass time and can share cultural experiences with others. Participation can be especially difficult for some social groups, including

- people of different cultures
- people with differing abilities
- people from older generations.

It will be important to get the word out to the community in a way which is welcoming and enticing.

School groups

Primary and secondary schools need museum resources to support their curricula. They need engaging and relevant destinations for field trips. For visits, they need structure in the form of a key person who will

- make arrangements with the school, giving all the necessary information,
- look after the group's needs during the visit,
- collect feedback afterwards,
- continue to nurture the relationship.

Third-level institutions

Educational institutions need high-quality placements for their students. Students need opportunities to gain relevant and credible experience and skills.

Civic organisations

Local civic organisations seek

- venues for meetings, presentations and field trips
- spaces for collaborative exhibitions and events
- places for exploring identity through culture and heritage.

Caring organisations

Caring organisations look for places where people can feel included. Cared-for people often have difficulty finding opportunities to socially integrate. They enjoy being invited to share cultural or creative experiences in the community.

Trends relevant to our museum

Trends in tourism

Global tourism is on the rise, particularly cultural, adventure and experience tourism. People are looking for amazing 'experiences' when they travel. They want to return home with awesome and authentic stories. And visitors have become active co-creators of these experiences rather than passive recipients.

The Decade of Centenaries has led to a resurgence in interest in Irish heritage and history. Stories are being retold with modern storytelling devices. This brings them to new and wider audiences. Fáilte Ireland has responded to this desire for stories with their Ancient Ireland brand.

How is this trend relevant to us?

Our historical and archaeological collections contain endless stories. Many relate to the origins and development of Cork and its people. Tourists will want these presented in striking and emotional ways. This will create impact and a memorable visit.

Trends in recreation

Ireland has seen increased living standards, and health and fitness over recent decades. People have a greater desire to spend their free time in ways that will benefit their mental and physical health.

People want activities that different generations of their families can experience together. They seek stimulation and a degree of structure, particularly those with children. Increasingly, folk are willing to leave their comfortable homes for challenging activities on Saturday mornings, like the 'park run', or a cycling challenge.

How is this trend relevant to us?

More than ever before, people are open to participating in organised activities. Focusing on user-benefits will lead to creative ideas for recreational activities. We can also look at ways of collaborating with other organisations on their events.

Trends in education

Parents want their children to have fun. But they are also looking for opportunities to enhance their education. They enjoy learning together as a family. They want their children to take a break from screens and do hands-on activities.

People now feel education should be fun and enjoyable, rather than something to be endured. They see themselves as active learners and are eager for these kinds of experiences. They look for ways to integrate learning into their daily lives rather than keeping it separate.

Inclusion is important to our users. They are designing a new world for their children where we celebrate diversity.

How is this trend relevant to us?

Education is one of our fields of greatest expertise. But, we need to shift from the old ways of presenting information to learners. Dense blocks of factual information are no longer accepted by audiences. We need to present our stories in more digestible segments which use

- intrigue
- imagery
- opportunities for empathy.

Trends in technology

Generally, consumers see technology as a good thing when it is interactive and has a purpose. They are using technology in more targeted and discriminating ways. Not impressed with technology for its own sake, they want to know what the benefits are over a traditional or low-tech solution.

People are now willing to share information, so long as they have reasonable assurances of security. This has facilitated the growth of personalised applications tailored to individuals.

Facebook, Twitter and other social platforms have become a normal part of life. Visitors are using them to 'curate' their lives online. They collect 'experiences' via photos which they use to create an online image of themselves (Fáilte Ireland, 2018).

Increasingly, people expect companies to showcase their products and services on the internet before they decide whether to buy them. This extends to tourism products like museums.

Conversations about every facet of our lives are taking place online. On public fora people discuss their social and cultural lives, their involvement in our communities, and their hopes and aspirations.

How is this trend relevant to us?

Our museum needs to be part of these conversations, because we can add value to the community online. Right now, we are simply not there, and this has contributed to our being frequently overlooked in the real world.

Technology helps to deliver information in novel and enjoyable ways. Without going as far as to 'dumb down' our subject, technology can bring the element of entertainment that people now expect into our exhibitions.

Opportunities for the museum

By opportunities, we mean chances to build lasting, engaged relationships with your target users. Building relationships is the best way to understand our users' needs. And responding to their needs is the best way to build relationships that matter. Responding with the right resources will make us a key service provider. This holds true in tourism, in education, in the community, or wherever we build our relationships.

Opportunities with overseas visitors

There is broad scope for developing our tourism offering to overseas visitors. Auditing the visitor experience will allow us to identify gaps in service provision.

Our first aim is to cater for the visitor's ease of use and enjoyment, from the time they first visit the museum's website, throughout their visit and after they return home (the museum can do this via the online relationship).

Our second aim is to provoke and inspire. The 'culturally curious' visitor, as identified by Fáilte Ireland, wants to be moved by stories from our history. Updating our permanent exhibition by

- using more storytelling and interpretation
- including more interactive and experiential exhibits
- integrating technology into the museum experience
- will improve the quality of the offering leading to greater engagement.

The museum could also examine the feasibility of including exhibits or services relevant to Genealogy.

A good website and social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) will make the museum more visible to tourists. According to Fáilte Ireland (2018), most visitors will research their destination online before they travel. The actual visit is the next point in the relationship. After their visit, they post reviews and recommendations online. They may follow and support the museum's activities on social media. If impressed, they are likely to leave a review on a high-profile travel website. This is how the museum develops a following of loyal supporters who will continue to promote the museum, and Cork tourism, into the future.

Many stakeholders raised issues around signage and access. As our museum is located on the fringe of the city, access for tourists from the city centre needs to be simpler and easier.

Several stakeholders suggested having an outpost in the city centre. Here we could display a sample of our artefacts and give information about how to reach the museum.

How to enhance the museum's offering to overseas visitors

1. Audit the complete visitor experience to identify gaps
2. Update the permanent exhibition to include more storytelling and interpretation
3. Include more interactive, hands-on and sensory experiences
4. Investigate the feasibility of providing genealogy exhibits or services
5. Use technology to improve the visitor experience
6. Use website and social media to attract and build relationships with overseas visitors
7. Increase availability of information in the city centre about the museum and how to access it.

Resources required

- Consultancy/advice on auditing the visitor experience
- Funding and design services to update exhibition
- Staff resources to set up and maintain website and social media.

Opportunities with domestic visitors

The goals for domestic visitors are like those for overseas visitors. An improved experience in the museum will lead to greater engagement, and the promotion of Cork as a destination for domestic travel.

How to enhance the museum's offering to domestic visitors

1. Audit the complete visitor experience to identify gaps
2. Update the permanent exhibition to include more storytelling and interpretation
3. Include more interactive, hands-on and sensory experiences
4. Use technology to improve the visitor experience
5. Use website and social media to attract and build relationships with overseas visitors.

Resources required

- Consultancy/advice on how to audit the visitor experience
- Funding and design services to update exhibition
- Staff resources to set up and maintain website and social media.

Opportunities with the local community

There are numerous ways in which our museum could reach out to the local community. Many of these don't need many resources apart from staff time. Stakeholders have referred to the way in which the libraries have reinvented their role. By providing more key services and supports, they have increased their profile and use. This is something which we could emulate, by fleshing out a more relevant and useful role in community life.

How to enhance the museum's offering to the local community

1. Audit the museum space with the aim of developing a place where local people feel welcome to spend time, i.e. a 'trusted' space
2. Create a marketing campaign aimed specifically at local people to publicise the museum and attract local visitors
3. Develop new channels for local people to interact with the museum, for example via social media, or by collaborating with other community services
4. Run an event dedicated to locals and publicise in the community
5. Create a new exhibition that speaks directly to the experiences of local people, for example on modern industry, and create a campaign to get local people to contribute, then open with a reception for locals
6. Collaborate with highly visible events or organisations
7. Design a programme of events specifically aimed at local people
8. Showcase local heritage and cultural organisations
9. Create a 'Friends of CPM' scheme, or 'My Museum' scheme for local people with benefits
10. Give incentives for local fundraisers
11. Open a 'docent' scheme which allows local volunteers to become museum guides with training and benefits
12. Have an annual public forum where community voices are heard
13. Ask local people for help to grow and develop the museum
14. Develop a 'local space' within the museum, with display and information

Resources required

- Consultancy/advice on how to audit the visitor experience
- Staff resources to set up and maintain website and social media.
- Staff for a 'community outreach' role
- Staff resources to survey community
- Staff resources to collaborate with Fitzgerald Park and other organisations

- Consultancy/help with designing a marketing campaign.

Opportunities with families

Many county museums and small heritage organisations have ensured footfall throughout the winter months by developing an ongoing programme of child and family activities.

How to enhance the museum's offering to families with children

1. Carry out a visitor experience audit of the child-family experience at the museum to identify gaps and areas for improvement
2. Create more child-friendly, experiential exhibits
3. Make the museum a child-centred space by creating areas for activities and learning
4. Ask local families what they would like to see and do at their museum
5. Collaborate with other organisations who engage successfully with families
6. Collaborate more with Fitzgerald Park during their family-friendly events
7. Design a marketing campaign targeting local families
8. Reach out to parents on social media

Resources required

- Consultancy/advice on how to audit the visitor experience
- Funding and design services to update exhibition
- Funding and design services to create activity and learning spaces
- Staff resources to set up and maintain website and social media.
- Staff resources to survey families
- Staff resources to collaborate with Fitzgerald Park and other organisations
- Consultancy/help with designing a marketing campaign.

Opportunities with school groups

Our museum could become a regular field trip destination for the many primary and secondary schools within travelling distance. We could also be a resource for community training and education organisations. It would make sense at this point for the museum to create an education officer role within the museum. The education officer could take responsibility for

1. reaching out to schools,
2. developing materials for teachers and learners,
3. developing products and services to attract adult and community education organisations,
4. take responsibility for developing and nurturing these relationships.

5. How to enhance the museum's offering to school groups
6. Employ an appropriately qualified and experienced education officer
7. Identify potential education partners and subscribers
8. Market to schools and educational organisations
9. Develop a curriculum-linked offering for schools
10. Develop materials for teachers and learners
11. Adapt the museum space to make it learner-friendly

Resources required

- Education officer
- Supporting staff
- Some funding for marketing and materials.

Opportunities with third-level institutions

UCC gives the museum valuable input on archaeological and historical matters. It also runs the only post-graduate museum studies course in the country and places its students for work experience in CPM. We should also consider attracting third-level students from other fields as well. Relationships with students of

- marketing
- social studies
- event management
- design
- community development
- conservation

could bring interns with new skills and research interests. A relationship begun with a student can have a ripple effect whereby the student becomes a lifelong ambassador for the museum in both their professional and personal lives.

Students are often part of large networks online. The museum could capitalise on these with

- interesting and catchy campaigns
- hashtag promotions
- competitions.

A small annual award for the student who makes the greatest contribution (practical rather than academic) could incentivise students to get more involved. The award could be accompanied by a short-term paid internship, giving a student a chance to acquire invaluable

museum experience. The museum could feature the student on its website and social media. This would present an opportunity for positive publicity for the museum, and for the teaching institution.

How to enhance the museum's offering to third-level students

1. Work with students' social networks
2. Establish an annual award for the student who makes the greatest contribution to the museum
3. Reach out to course co-ordinators in other fields of study.

Resources required

- Staff time
- Website and social media development and maintenance.

Opportunities with civic organisations

Cork is abounding with community and special-interest organisations. Many of these would enjoy a relationship with the museum. Working with organisations that look after people from different cultures would give the museum a chance to develop its role as

- a promoter of multiculturalism in Cork
- an agent of cultural integration.

Civic organisations need spaces for their activities. Plus, they often want to collaborate on exhibitions, events and campaigns. This would also bring benefits for the museum in terms of publicity and engagement.

How to enhance the museum's offering to civic organisations

1. Carry out a brief survey asking organisations what they want
2. Offer free spaces for meetings and activities
3. Offer a discount on premium or hired space in return for promotion/marketing help
4. Collaborate on campaigns of common interest to the civic organisation and the museum, for example based on links between historical and contemporary issues
5. Develop incentives for fundraising
6. Run an annual conference/showcase for civic organisations
7. Host a community awards ceremony centred on culture and heritage in the community
8. Arrange or facilitate networking events for culture and heritage organisations

Resources required

- Staff resources
- Funding for building development
- Development and maintenance of website and social media
- Some funding to run event.

Opportunities with caring organisations

To champion social inclusion, the museum should develop its relationships with caring organisations. These may be looking after people with

- special needs,
- physical or mental illnesses, or
- those dealing with difficult circumstances such as homelessness, discrimination or poverty.

These organisations are often looking to partner with inclusive spaces in the community. In these spaces, people of all needs and abilities can share positive cultural experiences together. For example, the museum has an ongoing and productive collaboration with the Irish Travelling Community.

How to enhance the museum's offering to caring organisations

1. Ask organisations what they want
2. Offer free spaces for meetings and activities
3. Offer a discount on premium or hired space in return for promotion/marketing help
4. Collaborate on campaigns of common interest to the caring organisation and the museum, for example based on links between historical and contemporary issues
5. Develop incentives for fundraising
6. Run nostalgia sessions for older users
7. Offer a work placement to adults with disabilities
8. Host art or culture classes for groups of people with special needs
9. Run an annual conference/showcase for caring organisations
10. Host a community awards ceremony centred on social inclusion activism
11. Arrange or facilitate networking events for caring organisations

Resources required

- Staff resources
- Funding for building development
- Development and maintenance of website and social media

- Some funding to run event.

Opportunities with corporates & businesses

Corporate and business sponsorship, donations and supports are generally under-exploited in Ireland. As a cultural institution, the museum helps make the city an attractive location for business. The museum could develop a strategy for building relationships with businesses in Cork. It could also provide an interesting and meaningful venue for conferences, trainings and other events.

How to enhance the museum's offering to corporates and businesses

1. Develop a corporate fundraising strategy
2. Identify potential partners and supporters
3. Develop the museum as a venue for corporate/business hire
4. Consider sponsorship of rooms or facilities

Resources required

- Staff resources
- Funding to examine feasibility of building development.

Communicating with target groups

We need to develop new channels of communication with our users. Through these, we can develop relationships with our users. Building these new relationships will need extra resources, particularly staff. Staff will need time and resources to

- share face-to-face activities,
- listen and respond to the needs of groups, and
- develop relationships online.

The channels through which staff will develop relationships will vary by user. For example, in some cases, users will be best reached via social media. Others will respond to targeted email marketing, or direct contact by telephone. Collaborating on projects will cement our relationships with some groups. Here, we list suggestions for communicating with the different target user groups.

Overseas and domestic visitors

Website

Visitors want to research the museum before their trip, often making the decision beforehand about whether to visit.

- Tourism websites** These act like an online brochure for the museum. The museum can use them to put its offering before prospective visitors at home and abroad.
- Social media** Visitors use social media to research attractions before they visit, and to continue the relationship after they have returned home. They do this by following the museum's activities and by posting reviews and pictures of their visit. This develops a loyal following for our museum who will continue to publicise and recommend.
- Brochures & leaflets** The effectiveness of leaflets has been contested but they are regaining popularity. Companies like Glance.ie display a selection of tourism leaflets in locations such as hotels, airports and car hire centres.
- City Centre Outreach** Several stakeholders have suggested creating an outpost in a prominent location in Cork City Centre, with information and a display of a selection of artefacts, to draw visitors out to the museum.
- Away days for tourism professionals** It is a now-famous anecdote that an American couple, in response to an enquiry about Cork Public Museum in a prominent Cork hotel were told there was no such museum. To address this we could run 'Away-days' for hotel staff. For the price of a minibus, and some staff time, we could collect staff from the city's hotels for a tour of the museum, possibly followed by a complimentary lunch in the attached café. This has been successful in other cities, e.g. Kilkenny. It has been shown that when hospitality staff have had a first-hand experience of an attraction they are more likely to recommend it to visitors.

Corporates & businesses

- Website** The museum's website will be the first port of call for busy professionals. This will present us with an opportunity to make an impression as a well-run venue to impress their clients or conference delegates, and as a game-changing cultural institution worthy of their sponsorship and support.

- Targeted email marketing** Direct response marketing via email would allow us to put our products or services before the appropriate people
- Relationship-building** Developing a relationship with corporate funders and sponsors is a long-term investment of time and dedicated resources.

Families with children

- Social media** Reach out to parents on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. Social media accounts are free but will require dedicated staff time to upkeep.
- Email newsletter** Getting email sign-ups via the museum's website and social media means we will have a list of people who have declared their interest in participating in events. Send these people a monthly newsletter about upcoming events.
- Collaborations** Produce a quarterly event guide for children and families that is available city and county-wide and includes ALL child and family-friendly events in the city
- Piggy-back** Add our events to those of other organisations who have established good lines of communications with families

Local community

- Social media** Reach out to local community in fun and engaging ways on social media, particularly on Facebook where many community groups already have pages and a local following, use social media to create an online ambassador scheme where locals can win a mug/hat/t-shirt for promoting the museum and its activities, for example by liking and sharing, or by showing up to events with a certain number of guests
- Email newsletter** Getting email sign-ups via the museum's website and social media means we will have a list of local people who have declared their interest in participating in events. Send these people a monthly newsletter about upcoming events.

- Poster campaign Design a marketing campaign targeting local people who may not be online. The campaign should promote local ownership of the museum, 'your museum' and have a clear call to action.
- Event promotion Having an event which is either a celebration of locals or of interest to locals, will give our museum a good reason for reaching out, and will send a clear message that the museum is for the community and wants engagement with the community
- Research Take the opportunity to look at who makes up the museum's 'community', as it will be comprised of different groups of people with different needs and goals that we might support or collaborate on.

School groups

- Relationship-building Developing a relationship with schools and a useful and responsive service will take some time and nurturing.
- Targeted email marketing Direct response marketing via email would allow us to put its products or services before decision-makers.
- Marketing materials Samples of high-quality learning/teaching materials, merchandise such as museum-branded pens, badges and erasers can help schools decide to work with us, despite obstacles such as being located far away from the city.

Civic organisations

- Social media It is usual now for civic organisations to be present online which presents an opportunity for us to reach out via social media. We can engage these by posting interesting and relevant content which organisations will share and promote.
- Email newsletter Getting email sign-ups via social media means we will have a list of organisations who have declared their interest in participating in events. Send these people a monthly newsletter about upcoming events which they can share within their organisations.

Event promotion Having an event which is a celebration of local organisations, will give us a good reason for reaching out, and will send a clear message that the museum wants engagement with the community

Caring organisations

Relationship-building This is an opportunity for us to really listen to organisations serving the most excluded sections of society and become a provider of much-needed services in the community.

Email newsletter Getting email sign-ups via the museum website and social media e you will have a list of organisations who have declared their interest in participating in events. Send these people a monthly newsletter about upcoming events which they can share within their organisations.

Event promotion Having an event which is a celebration of local organisations, will give us a good reason for reaching out, and will send a clear message that our museum wants engagement with the community

In sum

In this section, we identified our major target user groups and outlined some of the needs of each. In all cases, there is a range of useful services which we can offer. Our museum could be playing a much greater role than currently, both in the local community and in Cork's thriving tourism industry.

In following these recommendations, there are resource implications which must be addressed. With the current staffing level, it is unlikely that we could cater for these groups in the ways suggested here. More staff would enable the museum to grow engagement by increasing

service provision, expanding our role in both tourism and the community

our profile – our museum simply does not exist online which seriously limits our reach. In the real world many tourists and locals also overlook us.

This strategic management plan represents a first step towards expanding the museum's role in the community, in tourism, and as a cultural hub for Cork.

Strategic Goals, Objectives and Action Steps 2019 - 2022

Overview

This Strategic Management Plan is for a three-year period. It is based on certain assumptions and cannot be achieved without additional funding. The achievement of the performance targets also depends on such resources. The SMP also assumes continued annual funding from Cork City Council. Some of the activities listed below can and will happen using the personnel and finance currently available to the museum. However, the SMP also covers problems and opportunities that cannot be addressed or realised without the investment of extra resources.

These goals have emerged from our environmental analysis, our stakeholder analysis and our market analysis. They sum up what we believe should be priorities for our museum over the next three years. Each goal is broken down into objectives and then into action steps. Action steps are concrete steps we can take to accomplish the objective. By achieving all of the objectives attached to a goal, we will move closer to realising that goal over the three-year period.

Strategic Goals, Objectives and Action Steps

Goal 1. Safeguard our collections

What must we do to achieve this goal?

- a. Audit the security of our collections in the museum and offsite storage facilities
- b. Create a disaster policy and procedures for our museum
- c. Continue cataloguing the collections
- d. Establish procedures for monitoring the condition of objects in the collections
- e. Establish procedures and medium-term plan for conserving artefacts
- f. Audit our current research facilities and procedures
- g. Develop a collaborative relationship with Cork City Archives
- h. Examine the feasibility of developing Shrubbery House to include areas related to the collections, e.g. for research or conservation work
- i. Achieve full accreditation with the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

How will we accomplish each objective?

- a. Audit the security of the collections in our museum and offsite storage facilities
 - Assign this task to a member of staff
 - Draw up a security checklist to be used at each site

- List strengths and weaknesses of current security situation
 - Cost possible solutions
 - Consult with relevant security professionals for advice
 - Identify resources to address issues and make a plan with timeframe.
- b. Create a disaster policy and procedures for our museum
- Assign this task to a member of staff
 - Create time plan for completion
 - Research sample disaster policies and procedures, best practice and MSPI guidelines
 - Draft and submit the policy to the relevant stakeholders for amendment/approval.
- c. Continue cataloguing our collections
- Assign this task to a member of staff
 - Enlist help from volunteers
 - Create time plan for completion
 - Include scheduled reviews of the plan.
- d. Establish protocols for monitoring the condition of objects in the collection
- Assign this task to a member of staff
 - Research best practice and MSPI guidelines for assessing the condition of objects
 - Enlist the help of a conservator when drawing up protocols
 - Draw up schedule for regular checking of objects' condition
 - Include schedule for reviewing the procedures
 - Include scheduled reviews of the plan
- e. Establish procedures and medium-term plan for conserving artefacts
- Assign this task to a member of staff
 - Research best practice and MSPI guidelines
 - Enlist the help of a conservator when drawing up the plan
 - Address the allocation of responsibility in plan
 - Include schedules and timelines in the plan
 - Include a schedule for reviewing the procedures, e.g. annually
 - Include scheduled reviews of the plan, e.g. annually.
- f. Audit our current research facilities and procedures

- Review what the museum currently does regarding research
- Research best practice and look at what other museums offer
- Seek advice from other curators, librarians or archivists
- Look at the feasibility of developing research facilities in Shrubbery House
- Draw up a new policy and procedures for research in the museum.

g. Develop a collaborative relationship with Cork City Archives

- Hold initial meetings to explore potential benefits and challenges
- Set up lines of communication between the two institutions
- Set goals and plan actions to achieve them
- Include timelines and a review process.

h. Examine the feasibility of developing Shrubbery House to include areas related to the collections, e.g. for research or conservation work

- See Goal 5, Objective e, below: Look at the feasibility of developing Shrubbery House as a multifunctional space which can be hired out
- As part of a larger feasibility study, examine potential uses relating to the collections and collections care.

i. Achieve full accreditation with The Museum Standards Programme for Ireland

- Assign this task to a suitably experienced and qualified member of staff
- Refer to the MSPI guidelines
- Seek mentoring support as required
- Create an action plan to fulfil MSPI requirements and recommendations, with timeline and review process
- Identify obstacles to achieving goals, and seek support from management to overcome them, where necessary.

Goal 2. Grow audience engagement

What must we do to achieve this goal?

- Carry out a visitor care audit
- Carry out a visitor experience audit
- Source funding for updating the exhibitions
- Develop an interpretive master plan for our museum

- e. Implement the interpretive plan in stages
- f. Monitor and review the implementation of the interpretive master plan.

How will we accomplish each objective?

a. Carry out a visitor care audit

- Assign this task to a member of staff, volunteer or intern
- Use resources including our visitor survey, online sources, professional guidance to research what visitor care should or could include in our museum
- Draw up a checklist based on this research, to assess visitor care in our museum
- Identify gaps and issues
- Submit a report to management
- Follow up at scheduled intervals.

b. Carry out a visitor experience audit

- Assign this task to an interpretive planning consultant, member of staff, volunteer or intern
- Use resources including our visitor survey, online sources, professional guidance to research what the visitor experience should or could include in our museum
- Draw up a checklist based on this research, to assess the visitor experience (interpretation, storytelling, discovery, interaction etc.) in our museum
- Identify gaps and issues
- Submit a report to management
- Follow up at scheduled intervals.

c. Source funding for updating the exhibition

- Assign this task to a member of staff
- Review available funding resources and potential funding streams
- Draw up a plan for applying for funding
- Draw up a fundraising strategy – consider engaging a consultant for this

d. Develop an interpretive master plan for the museum

- Consider engaging a consultant to guide us through this process
- Research interpretive planning and best practice in interpretation
- Highlight areas of concern in the exhibition

e. Implement the interpretive plan in stages

- Create a plan for phased updates of the exhibition, which correspond to funding availability
- Monitor and review the implementation of the interpretive master plan.

Goal 3. Improve our education offering

What must we do to achieve this goal?

- a. Secure a qualified and experienced education officer for our museum
- b. Create a list of schools within reasonable travel distance of the museum
- c. Communicate with the schools on our list
- d. Develop learning and teaching materials to accompany school visits
- e. Create a list of education organisations who could avail of the museum
- f. Communicate with the educational organisations on our list
- g. Keep records of our interactions with schools and educational organisations
- h. Collect feedback from schools and educational organisations
- i. Audit the museum space for learners

How will we accomplish each objective?

- a. Secure a qualified and experienced education officer for our museum
 - Make a case for opening an education officer role
 - Present this case to the museum's management
- b. Create a list of schools within reasonable travel distance of the museum
 - Assign this and related tasks to a specialised member of staff, if possible, an education officer
 - Use online resources to identify schools within travelling distances
 - Create a reference list of these schools accessible on our system
- c. Communicate with the schools on our list
 - Research and select best methods for communicating with schools, e.g. email, social media, telephone, face-to-face
 - Open channels of communication
 - Ask schools what they need via a short survey with open-ended questions
 - Create marketing materials which outline our offering
 - Distribute our marketing materials to the schools on our list

d. Develop learning and teaching materials to accompany school visits

- Research links with curriculum
- Research educational materials and other museums' educational materials
- Review how technology/digital might be used to enhance our educational offering
- Draft educational materials
- Consider using a professional designer to help with visual layout
- Test on school groups and ask for feedback
- Use feedback to further develop offering

e. Create a list of educational organisations who could avail of our museum

- Assign this and related tasks to a specialised member of staff, if possible an education officer
- Use online resources to identify educational organisations who could avail of our museum
- Create a reference list of these educational organisations accessible on our system

f. Communicate with the educational organisations on our list

- Research and select best methods for communicating with educational organisations, e.g. email, social media, telephone, face-to-face
- Open channels of communication
- Ask organisations what they need via a short survey with open-ended questions
- Create marketing materials which outline our offering
- Distribute our marketing materials to the educational organisations on our list
- Get feedback from educational organisations who have availed of our museum
- Use this feedback to improve our offering

g. Keep records of our interactions with schools and educational organisations

- Create a log and templates for recording contact, visits and feedback
- Use these records to nurture relationships and provide a high-quality service
- Collect feedback from schools and educational organisations
- Establish a schedule for seeking regular feedback from schools and educational organisations, for example, at the end of term, before breaking up for the summer etc.
- Use this feedback to plan our education offering for the following year.

i. Audit the museum space for learners

- Assign this task to the museum's education officer or another suitably experienced staff member
- Research the 'museum as a learning space', via books, articles, online resources and by speaking with other museums
- Audit our museum, looking for ways in which we can make the space more welcoming and stimulating for different groups of learners, i.e. people of different abilities, ages and cultures
- Draw up a report with recommendations and submit to management
- With management, explore options for enhancing the museum space for learners.

Goal 4. Build up our role in the local community

What must we do to achieve this goal?

- a. Audit our current offering to our local community
- b. Get to know our local community
- c. Create space for our community in the museum (work placements, classes and activities e.g. nostalgia, art etc, seminars/forums/awards)
- d. Design programmes for our community
- e. Develop new channels for communicating with our local community

How will we accomplish each objective?

a. Audit our current offering to our local community

- Assign this task to a member of staff
- Research how other museums work with their local communities
- Review our current offering to, and relationship with, the local community
- Draft a plan for increasing our engagement with the local community with a timeplan and costings

b. Get to know our local community

- Research the demographics of our community to identify target groups for our programmes
- Carry out a Needs Analysis of the main groups in our community
- Identify key members of the community and discuss with them the best ways for us to reach out

c. Design programmes for our community

- Assign this task to a suitably qualified and experienced member of staff, i.e. an education officer
- Research the ways in which other cultural institutions reach out to their communities
- Research the education programmes of comparable institutions
- Create a quarterly and annual scheduling template for the museum's education programme
- Cost and schedule education events in agreement with the curator
- Keep records of education events for monitoring and reviewing the education programme.

d. Develop new channels for communicating with our local community

- Assign this responsibility to a member of staff or volunteer(s)
- Research the best social media channels for reaching our local community
- Set up our social media account(s)
- Ensure the museum's social media policy is up to date
- Create guidelines for posting on social media
- Ensure consistency by creating a posting schedule
- Research the most effective ways of reaching our offline audience in the community
- Monitor and review progress at intervals with our curator.

Goal 5. Work towards long-term financial sustainability

What must we do to achieve this goal?

- a. Develop a financial and fundraising strategy
- b. Build relationships with corporate and business supporters
- c. Create easy ways to donate
- d. Look at the feasibility of opening a gift shop
- e. Look at the feasibility of developing Shrubbery House as a multifunctional space which can be hired out.

How will we accomplish each objective?

a. Develop a financial and fundraising strategy

- Consider using professional services for this. If not possible, assign task to a member of staff

- Research similar strategies, best practice and MSPI guidelines
- Ensure our financial policy and procedures are complete and up to date
- Confer with management to include the right elements for our museum
- Investigate the feasibility of new revenue streams
- Investigate funding from new sources
- Include an action plan which outlines the timeframe and the resources that will be needed
- Draft the strategy for management amendment or approval.

b. Build relationships with corporate and business partners

- Research corporate sponsorship of cultural institutions in other jurisdictions
- Create a list of contacts in businesses which might benefit from a relationship with our museum
- Create a list of benefits our museum has to offer
- Decide on the most suitable ways of communicating with businesses
- Create a plan for approaching businesses, with time plan
- Review and monitor the plan at scheduled intervals.

c. Create easy ways to donate

- Assign this task to a member of staff or volunteer
- Research donation methods in other organisations
- With the curator, decide on a range of suitable methods for our museum
- Research these specifically, with costs for materials, installation and upkeep
- Select the most appropriate for our museum
- Plan for implementation, with a time plan and costs included
- Implement, then make a schedule for regular upkeep and review.

d. Look at the feasibility of opening a gift shop

- Research gift shops in other museums and institutions
- Examine the costs and other resources needed for installing, stocking and running a gift shop in our museum
- Draft a report for the curator outlining the costs and potential benefits.

e. Look at the feasibility of developing Shrubbery House as a multifunctional space which can be hired out

- Consider hiring a consultant to guide us through this process, or else assign responsibility for this project to a member of staff
- Research how other institutions use their spaces to generate revenue and serve their communities
- Carry out a needs analysis which looks at how the developed space might meet the needs of our community of users
- Research potential funding for a feasibility study of the development
- List potential users who might support the project, e.g. academic institutions, businesses and corporates, and potential benefits for them
- Make a plan for approaching potential supporters
- Draft a report for management.

Goal 6. Use marketing to increase our impact

What must we do to achieve this goal?

- a. Develop a marketing strategy and actionable plan for the museum
- b. Explore the recommendations in the Market Analysis section of this report
- c. Secure financial and human resources to implement the marketing plan
- d. Implement and monitor the marketing plan
- e. Create a website as a matter of priority
- f. Get our museum communicating on social media
- g. Collaborate with other organisations to increase reach
- h. Engage with third-level marketing teachers and students

How will we accomplish each objective?

- a. Develop a marketing strategy and actionable plan for the museum
 - Consider engaging professional marketing consultancy
 - Assign responsibility for marketing to a member of staff or long-term volunteer, if available
 - Research free and inexpensive marketing methods for our museum
 - Look at what other museums and cultural institutions are doing
 - Create an overall marketing strategy for our museum
 - Create a marketing plan with action steps, time plan and costs.
- b. Explore the recommendations in the Market Analysis section of this document

- List the museums potential target groups and the means for reaching out to these groups
 - Incorporate these into the marketing plan.
- c. Secure financial and human resources to implement the plan
- List the set-up and ongoing resources needed to implement the marketing plan, including human resources
 - Liaise with management about resourcing the plan
 - Confirm the resources are available before implementing the plan
 - If applicable, create a log of obstacles to implementing the marketing plan.
- d. Implement and monitor the marketing plan
- Assign this responsibility to a member of staff or long-term volunteer
 - Carry out daily, weekly and monthly tasks as outlined in the marketing plan
 - Review the implementation at scheduled intervals and make adjustments in agreement with the curator.
- e. Create a website as a matter of priority
- Liaise with management about website timeframe
 - Identify obstacles and generate possible alternatives.
- f. Get our museum communicating on social media
- Assign responsibility to a member of staff or long-term volunteer
 - If necessary, liaise with management regarding resources for maintaining a social media presence
 - Ensure social media policy is complete and up to date
 - Decide on the most suitable platforms for our museum
 - Create a social media strategy
 - Create a social media posting schedule
 - Post engaging content on a regular basis
 - Keep records of which content gets the most engagement from our audience.
- g. Collaborate with other organisations to increase reach
- List organisations with social media experience and an audience which overlaps with ours
 - Friend/follow these organisations on social media

- Tag these organisations in our posts
- Like and share their content

h. Engage with third-level marketing teachers and students

- Consider providing student placements for marketing students
- List marketing colleges and courses who may collaborate
- List potential mutual benefits
- Reach out to course co-ordinators.

Action Plan 2019 - 2022

Action Plan 2019 – 2022

The action plan based on the strategic goals and objectives of the previous section is provided as a separately bound document for ease of use.

Review Procedures

Review Procedures

Biannual Progress Meeting

We recommend that a meeting is held every six months to review the progress of implementing the Action Plan.

The meeting should comprise the Acting Curator/Curator, the person responsible for implementation, if different to the curator, and the person or people responsible for different components of the action plan during that quarter.

The purpose of the biannual progress review is to acknowledge achievements and to identify obstacles. Then to discuss possible solutions to obstacles. Where a solution to an obstacle can't be found, the Acting Curator may bring the obstacle to the attention of more senior management in the hopes of finding a solution.

Annual Review

We recommend holding an Annual Review of the Action Plan. This will acknowledge the year's achievements and identify obstacles to implementing the plan, where they exist.

Questions to ask at this review include

- what has worked and what has not worked over the last twelve months?
- what has changed since the strategic plan was drawn up?
- what do we take out and what new things do we put into the plan?

From this meeting a short report can be compiled for the Acting Curator. The Acting Curator can use this to report to more senior management and to address any obstacles or issues with implementing the plan.

A date should be set by which the Annual Review meeting and report will be completed every year.

Review Record

At the back of the 3-Year Action Plan is a table which allows recording of whether objectives have been achieved or not. This should be filled out at or before the review meetings by the person responsible for implementing the plan.

Performance Measures

Each objective has at least one performance indicator attached. This allows us to measure how well we are succeeding in implementing the action plan. The performance indicators should be reviewed at each progress meeting.

Appendices

Appendices list

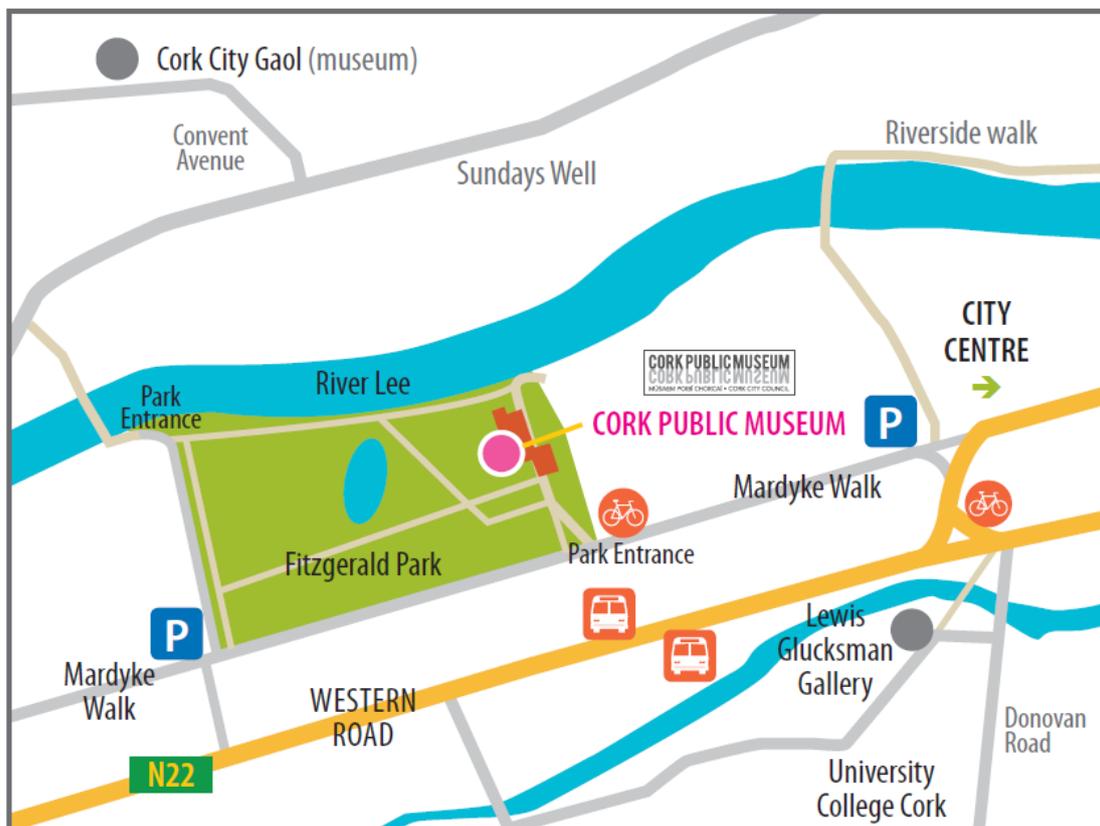
Appendix 1: Location of Cork Public Museum

Appendix II: Layout of Cork Public Museum

Appendix III: Staff/management structure of Cork Public Museum [chart]

Appendix IV: Note on MSPI Accreditation

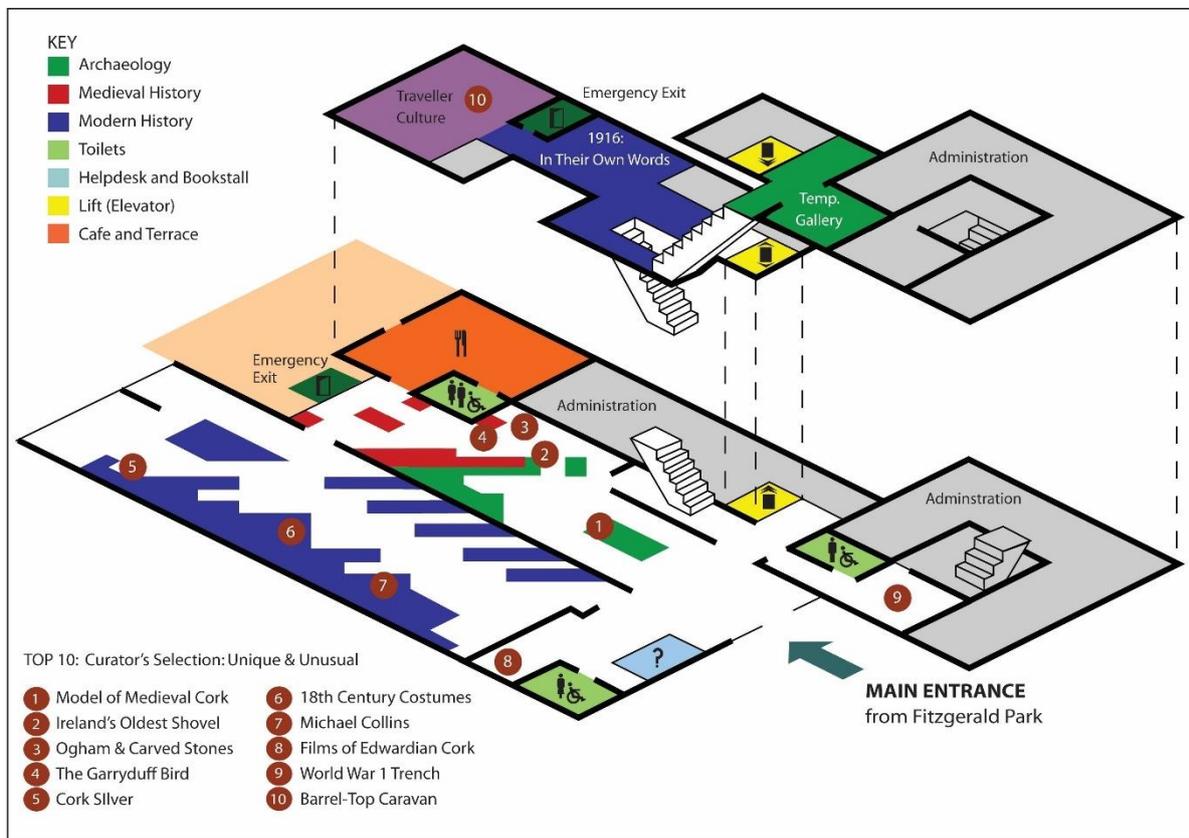
Appendix I: Location of Cork Public Museum



GETTING THERE

-  Just a 15 minute walk from Cork city centre
-  City Bike scheme station
-  208 bus from Patrick Street. 220 from Grand Parade.
-  On street parking available. Disc may be required
-  Pedestrian walkways

Appendix II: Layout of Cork Public Museum



Appendix III: Staff/management structure of Cork Public Museum



Appendix IV: Note on MSPI Accreditation

“The purpose of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) is to benchmark and promote professional standards in collections care and to recognise the achievement of those standards within the Irish museum sector. ... The standards are achievable and can be applied to museums of all sizes and levels of funding.”

https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/museum_standards_programme_standards_guidelines_1mb.pdf

Participation in the programme requires co-operation between museum management and staff, and a commitment of time and effort for a period of up to five years. It requires dedicated staff time and resources, as all aspects of the museum’s operations are reviewed and brought in line with the standards.

The standards cover

- taking care of and documenting a collection;
- storing, displaying and exhibiting artefacts;
- risk assessment and disaster planning;
- visitor care and access;
- museum governance and policies;
- managing finances;
- marketing and
- developing an education policy.

The Heritage Council provides training and mentorship during this process.

There are currently 58 museums in the programme.

Cork Public Museum is aiming for Full Accreditation.

