



Strategic Plan

2023-2026

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INTRODUCTION

Wessex Museums is a thriving consortium of the principal museums that tell the stories of the Wessex region and its people, from prehistory to now. The partnership brings together seven museums across Dorset and Wiltshire: Poole Museum, Dorset Museum, The Salisbury Museum, Swindon Museums and Wiltshire Museum.

This is a natural partnership of museums covering the geographical spread of Dorset and Wiltshire, and with world class collections spanning archaeology, fine and decorative art, ethnography, literature, social history, costume and textiles. As such, the Wessex Museums are perfectly placed to share the story of Wessex and its relationship with the rest of the world.

The Wessex Museums partnership was formalised in 2017 when the consortium secured major funding from Arts Council England (ACE) as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). In the same year, the consortium formed a registered charity, the Wessex Museums Trust. The Trust exists to build the resilience and relevance of the partner museums and we seek every opportunity to connect, inspire and add value to peoples' lives through our collaborative programme.

Wessex Museums Charter

Wessex Museums is a thriving partnership of the seven leading museums across the counties of Dorset and Wiltshire.

Our partners

Dorset Museum

Lydiard House Museum

Poole Museum

STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway

Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

The Salisbury Museum

Wiltshire Museum

Our mission

To support museums to connect, inspire and add value to peoples' lives.

Our purpose

Wessex Museums exists to build the resilience and relevance of the museums in our partnership and across our region.

Our values

Collaborative

Seeking every opportunity to work together, recognising and building on our different strengths, and appreciating that these generate a vital and creative tension.

Inclusive

We value peoples' differences and work to ensure fairness in our policies and practices, to enable diverse people to work and engage with us.

Innovative

We are brave and creative in our approach to resilience, seeking opportunities for real innovation that will help secure our future – and always challenging what this means to us.

Sustainable

We want to achieve real impact and longevity through our work, by doing the things we can really achieve well and that are sustainable. We want to minimise our impact on the environment.

Our opportunities

We believe that this partnership provides the opportunity to:

- Strengthen the message and cultural offer of our museums.
- Push us out of our comfort zone to do things in new ways.
- Tell important stories from across our region.
- Increase our organisations' resilience and sustainability.
- Share and learn from successes and mistakes, build relationships and enhance our reputation with partners and stakeholders.

A NEW CHAPTER

2023 marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Wessex Museums with the growth of our partnership and a new National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding award to support our partnership to 2026. Swindon Museums have joined our partnership, extending our geographical and audience reach, and bringing complimentary strengths to our collaboration. With another ambitious programme to deliver over the next three years, Wessex Museums will continue to focus steadfastly on our mission and values and to be a dynamic catalyst for museum practice and programmes that are more relevant to more people.

In 2021 we refocussed our plans to address the pressing priorities for our museums and audiences during the global pandemic. Whilst there has been recovery in some areas, the cost-of-living crisis has increased the financial pressures faced by our museums. Wessex Museums' purpose is to build the resilience and relevance of our partner museums, and our priorities in this plan will therefore focus on:

- Supporting resource capacity and workforce development in our partner museums.
- Developing our audiences through our partnership programming.
- Improving access to our world-class collections.
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and environmental sustainability best practice across our organisations.
- Building an evidence base for the impact of our work as a partnership.

This plan sets out the Wessex Museums' NPO programme for period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2026.

OUR PLAN

Wessex Museums has ambitious plans to connect more people across more of our region and beyond, with the culture and heritage of Wessex in ways that promote creativity, understanding, activism and community cohesion. Central to our programme for 2023-26 is our strategic priority: Connecting with Communities, particularly those who are currently underserved by our museums.

We will actively collaborate with these communities using our collections, alongside the stories, heritage and landscape of the region, to develop and deliver our public programming; showcase, share and reinterpret our collections; ultimately supporting the relevance and resilience of our museums.

Our programme of activity for 2023-26 coalesces around four themes, which will make a strong contribution to the outcomes and investment principles in Let's Create. These themes have been developed by listening to the experience of our Community Curators, partner organisations, and the needs and interests of underserved communities in our region.

- **Hidden Voices** - platforming and celebrating diverse voices, perspectives and experiences through our museums' programmes and interpretation.
- **Placemaking** - working together to explore place, identity and belonging, to share stories, experience and create meaning about life in the Wessex region.
- **Sustainable Communities** – inspiring and empowering communities to have agency and to sustain their interests, creativity, and our shared environment.
- **Wellbeing & Play** - providing space and programming that encourages coming together in support of wellbeing and exploration through play.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and Digital are golden threads that run through our strategic plan, and our EDI framework and Digital Strategy objectives are embedded within our programme activity (indicated by *EDI* and *Digi* respectively in our action plan).

Whilst we have made some progress on our environmental responsibility plans as a partnership over the last three years, we recognise that we must go much further to address the climate emergency in our organisations. We have developed a new partnership environmental framework and the next stage is to engage colleagues across the partnership in environmental action planning with stretching targets around carbon reduction.

OUR PLAN



SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Museums' unique ability to share the story of Wessex through our collections is enhanced by our partnership ▪ Designated and internationally important collections, including pre-history and archaeology ▪ Professional and motivated staff teams maintained and working together across 4 museums ▪ Partnership staff posts (e.g. Community Curators, Collections Assistants) that facilitate collaborative programmes ▪ Significant volunteer engagement and community support for our museums ▪ Good relationships with ACE & NLHF strengthened by major funding successes ▪ Experience of high-profile temporary exhibitions shared across the partnership ▪ High quality permanent displays ▪ Established working groups support skills sharing and staff development across the partnership ▪ Significant museum buildings that tell a story ▪ Success in attracting major funding as a partnership ▪ Complementary skills at leadership team level ▪ Sharing good practice across the partnership (i.e. Mentoring, problem-solving), resulting from different business models ▪ Confidence – organisational and leadership ▪ Skills & experience of WMT Board ▪ Developing digital skills ▪ Supportive museum membership bases ▪ Continuing support from volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audience development and innovation through delivery of partnership exhibitions ▪ Build the profile and financial resilience of the Wessex Museums Trust ▪ Development of digital skills, content and platforms across the partnership ▪ EDI framework to support diversity in our organisations ▪ Shared environmental framework to drive forward carbon reduction across the partnership. ▪ Partnership facilitates projects that develop sustained relationships with underserved groups and community partners ▪ Creation of a shared collections database ▪ Capital redevelopments at all partner museums ▪ Develop long term partnerships with regional and national museums ▪ Housing and population growth across the region ▪ Dorset Museum conservation facilities could be used by the partnership ▪ Attract funding for partnership projects.
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial profile of the Wessex Museums Trust ▪ Revenue funding streams available to WMT without competing with the partner museums ▪ Capacity for delivering partnership activity ▪ Lack of diversity in Boards, membership, workforce, volunteer cohorts ▪ Old buildings with poor environmental conditions and requiring excessive and costly maintenance ▪ Interpretation and displays in some of our galleries ▪ Collections management (documentation) ▪ Small number of full-time professional staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of living crisis impact on visitor numbers and financial resilience of the partners. ▪ Staff vacancies and redundancies ▪ Staff capacity to deliver museum priorities and partnership activity ▪ Highly competitive fundraising landscape ▪ Further reductions in LA funding ▪ Costs of delivering high profile exhibitions ▪ Climate change ▪ Pace of change in digital technology

PESTLE ANALYSIS

P (Political)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change of government / local government ▪ Withdrawal of Local Authority funding due to lack of political understanding/expediency/engagement ▪ Devizes Town Council & Salisbury City Council taking on more local services, causing museums to be less visible
E (Economic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact of financial pressures on economy, inflation, tourism and labour market. ▪ Competitive funding environment ▪ Local authority budget cuts ▪ Rising costs to meet national standards for employment and building regulations ▪ Further increases in retirement age could reduce volunteer input ▪ Significant number of major cultural projects seeking investment ▪ Impact of increasing transport costs / reductions in public transport
S (Social)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact of cost-of-living crisis on cultural participation ▪ Local/regional competition for tourists ▪ Local competition for families with young children ▪ Visitor expectations and preferences ▪ Ageing population ▪ Housing developments leading to population growth in Dorset and Wiltshire
T (Technological)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competition in the digital realm ▪ Digital skills and capacity limitations within the partnership ▪ Reliance on digital expertise external to the partnership ▪ Fast pace of technological change ▪ Customer expectations for more technology underpinning museum visits
L (Legal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GDPR and other legislation making it harder to fundraise ▪ Governance model for Poole Museum ▪ Increasing complexity of governance (and hence costs)
E (Environmental)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delays to capital redevelopments in partner museums ▪ Impact of changes to patterns of visitor behaviour (Sunday/evening opening) ▪ Museum premises at risk due to changing weather patterns (particularly flooding). ▪ Climate change impact on infrastructure and Wessex tourism ▪ Impact of policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on visitor numbers

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Wessex Museums put in place a partnership intersectional Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) framework (included as draft in Appendix C) in 2020, which we believe will move us and our partners to take stronger, practical action to address EDI in our organisations, our programming, and to make us better allies.

Our EDI framework commits Wessex Museums to:

- Embed and integrate an intersectional EDI approach into all parts of our organisations
- Ensure our organisations reflect the diversity of our region
- Amplify the stories and voices of marginalised groups through our programmes
- Engage communities in our decision-making and programmes, particularly those from underserved groups
- Dismantle racism and discrimination in our organisations
- Educate ourselves and our colleagues on EDI and what it means to be an ally

Each of our partner museums and Wessex Museums Trust, have their own organisational EDI action plans aligned to the partnership's framework. The plans define practical actions to support our EDI framework commitments in the areas of governance, workforce and audiences.

The EDI framework flows through all parts of our organisations and therefore is integrated into our programme and activity, as expressed in our action plan (pp 21-33 see *EDI*).

OUR AUDIENCE PRIORITIES

Our museums were visited by more than 260,00 people last year and around 3.9 million people live within a one-hour drive time of our four venues. Generally, just over half of all our visitors are locally based with the remainder of our visitors being tourists, largely from the UK. We recognise the fundamental importance of encouraging visits to our museums to support our organisational resilience and sustainability. This NPO programme will improve access to our world class collections, forge links with local communities to extend our audience reach and deliver excellence through our partnership programming to encourage museum visits.

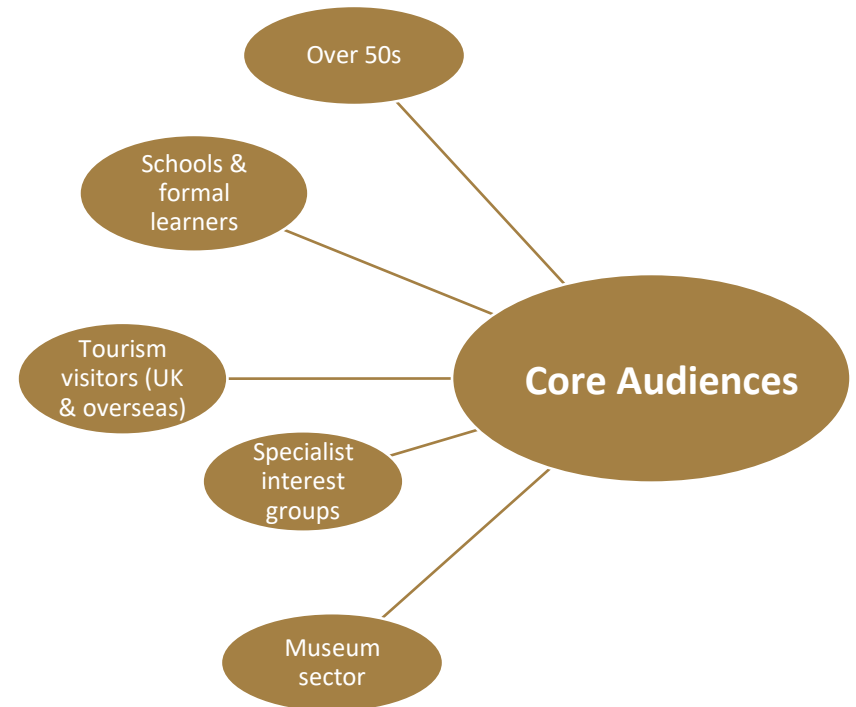
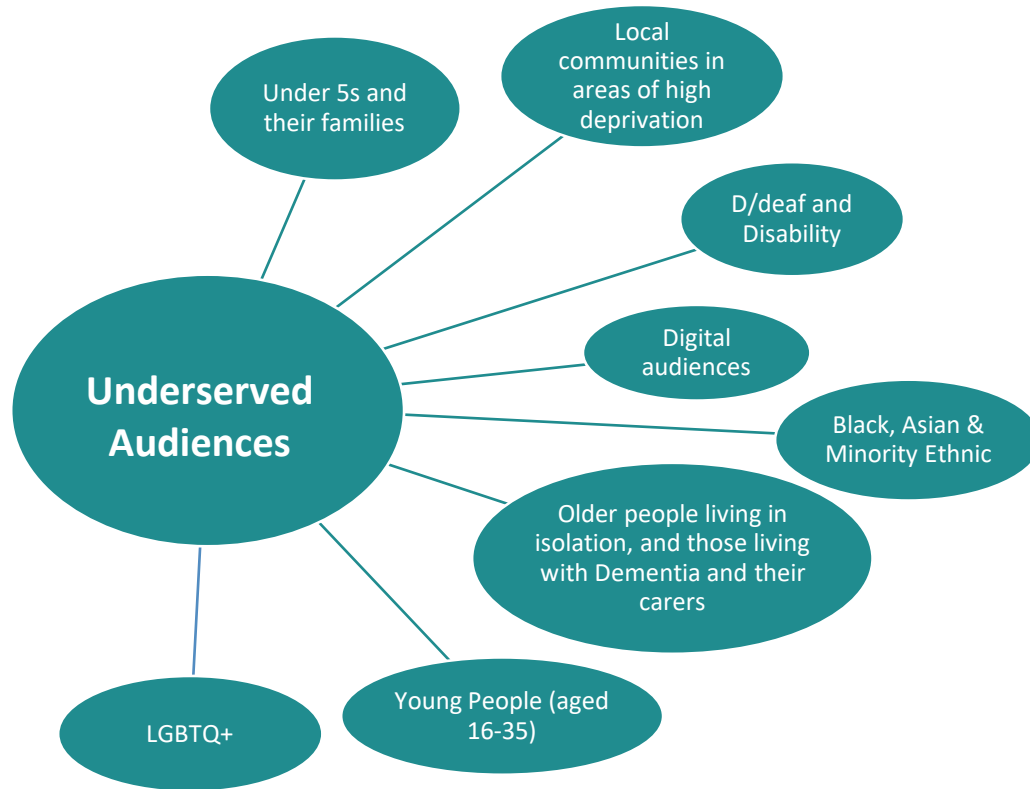
The visitors across the partnership have a similar profile – largely they are white, British and over 50 years of age - this is not a reflection of the 2021 Census population data for our region. Our underserved audiences continue to experience barriers to visiting our partner museums. Wessex Museums has a strong focus on engaging underserved audiences in our localities with the partner museums and their collections; as demonstrated by much of the activity in this strategic plan. Our intersectional approach to the delivery of this programme will help us to be more inclusive, build sustainable relationships with our local communities and be more relevant to them.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on museum visits over the past year has been tangible in our partner museums, with attendance not recovering to 2019 levels in some venues and with no clearly discernible visitor patterns since the pandemic. Over the past two years, we have focussed largely on our local visitors, with international tourism slow to return following the pandemic. For this strategic plan, we will continue with our local focus but with a view to showcasing Wessex as a unique, special and internationally important place. Our exhibitions will be a platform for showcasing the outstanding collections held by our partner museums and in turn, raise our profile as significant cultural destinations in the region.

The pandemic revealed new audiences in the digital realm, some of whom may never visit our museums in person, but nevertheless were hungry for digital content inspired by our museums and their collections. The past two years have seen Wessex Museums explore new digital content and generate income from digital. In the period of this strategic plan, we plan to build on our skills in content development and our better understanding of our digital audiences, to create new and engaging digital content that celebrates our museums and their collections.

Our audience development targets are focused on the priority audience groups shown below and are integrated across our programme (see action plan pp 21-33 *Aud*).

OUR AUDIENCE PRIORITIES



DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Wessex Museums maintains our commitment to better understanding our audiences through robust data collection and analysis, including use of Illuminate and the Impact & Insight Toolkit across the partnership. The data we collect is compared against the demographic profile of our localities and our region, in particular the 2021 Census data.

Our focus in this strategic plan is to:

- Be more effective in the use the data we collect to inform our partnership's future planning.
- Engage audiences earlier in our evaluation cycle, through advisory and focus groups, to ensure our programmes are relevant to our target audiences.
- Extend our data collection to better understand the impact of our operations and programmes, particularly environmental and economic.

As an NPO we are required to survey our visitors through the Arts Council's insights platform, Illuminate, and we will do so throughout the life of this Strategic Plan. This will enable us to examine our audience data in detail individually and as a partnership, to inform our audience development priorities. We will also use Illuminate to assess our performance in comparison to other venues, both regionally and nationally. Alongside this we will continue to use the Impact & Insights Toolkit to evaluate elements of our NPO programme, including digital, to evaluate the impact of the activity on audiences.

EVALUATION & REFLECTION

In this strategic plan, Wessex Museums has committed to improve how we evaluate the impact of our partnership activities and our museums. We understand that evaluation and reflection create a culture of learning and continuous improvement and are therefore critical to the resilience of our partnership and museums.

We will develop and use a range of evaluative tools and techniques that are suited to our unique collaboration to interrogate, evaluate, reflect and learn from our work. Our priorities in relation to evaluation over the next three years are to:

- Embed the Evaluation for Impact framework developed through the Bridging the Gap project, into all of our community-based work.
- Develop a bespoke evaluation framework and toolkit for our partnership exhibitions.
- Evaluate the economic impact to our museums of our partnership programmes.
- Agree a methodology for measuring the carbon footprint of our partner museums and the carbon impact of our partnership exhibitions, with a view to reducing carbon emissions and achieving net zero emissions ahead of the UK target of 2050.

DIGITAL

Digital is a golden thread running through our strategic plan, touching all aspects of our programme.

Our Digital Strategy has three key objectives:

- To future proof our organisation through digital integration and capacity building.
- To create and broadcast digital content to help diversify our audiences and encourage museum visits.
- To explore new business models for using digital to engage audiences and generate income.

During 2023-26 we will review, consolidate and strategically grow our digital profile, content and audiences. Having built the necessary infrastructure, we will continue to build our Virtual Wessex Collections by increasing the number of records and images accessible online. The aggregated online database will facilitate Wessex in 100 Objects, a programme of partnership loans, micro exhibitions, online collections showcase, a digital exhibition, talks programme and new online learning resources which explore the links between our partner museums' collections to share new stories about the region. Alongside this, we will grow our sector focussed content through case studies, online resource libraries, and digital skills sharing sessions. We aim to grow our sector based digital audience profile by 10% by the end of 2026.

Our digital action plan is included as draft in Appendix D and our objectives and activities are fully integrated with our NPO action plan (pp 21-33 see *Digi*)

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Wessex Museums Trust (WMT) has been a registered charity since January 2017, established to build the profile of the partnership, its constituent museums, and to enable collaboration through a range of shared programmes. Our charitable status enables us to advocate for the work of the partnership more effectively. WMT is responsible for the delivery of this strategic plan and the management of the collaborative programme.

A governance review was undertaken during 2022/23 at the point that WMT externalised from BCP Council and Swindon Museums joined the partnership. The result is that in 2023, the WMT Board will grow to include ten trustees. The larger Board will include a fifth nominated trustee (from the nominating body - Swindon Borough Council) and two additional 'appointed' trustees to balance the independence of the Board. Within the constitution there remains option to further increase membership to the Board from, for example, further museums joining the partnership. The trustees are appointed for a term of three years.

The WMT will not alter the current governance arrangements at the individual museums, where boards of trustees and/or the Local Authority will maintain responsibility for their governance and management. The Directors of the partner museums, as the nominated trustees to the WMT Board, provide the direct link between the individual museum governing bodies and the Trust. Minutes of the WMT Board are a standing agenda item for the meetings of the governing bodies in each of the partner museums.

Approval of the Wessex Museums Strategic Plan and the partnership agreement is sought from each of the partner museums' governing bodies on an annual basis. In addition, where the on-going activities of the Trust have a direct impact upon the management, legal and/or financial matters of a partner museum, approvals are sought from the individual museum's governing body.

Governance & Management as a National Portfolio Organisation

Wessex Museums is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation for the period 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2026 which covers the period of this strategic plan. Wessex Museums Trust is the funded organisation for the partnership's NPO and is therefore legally bound by the terms of the Arts Council's Funding Agreement.

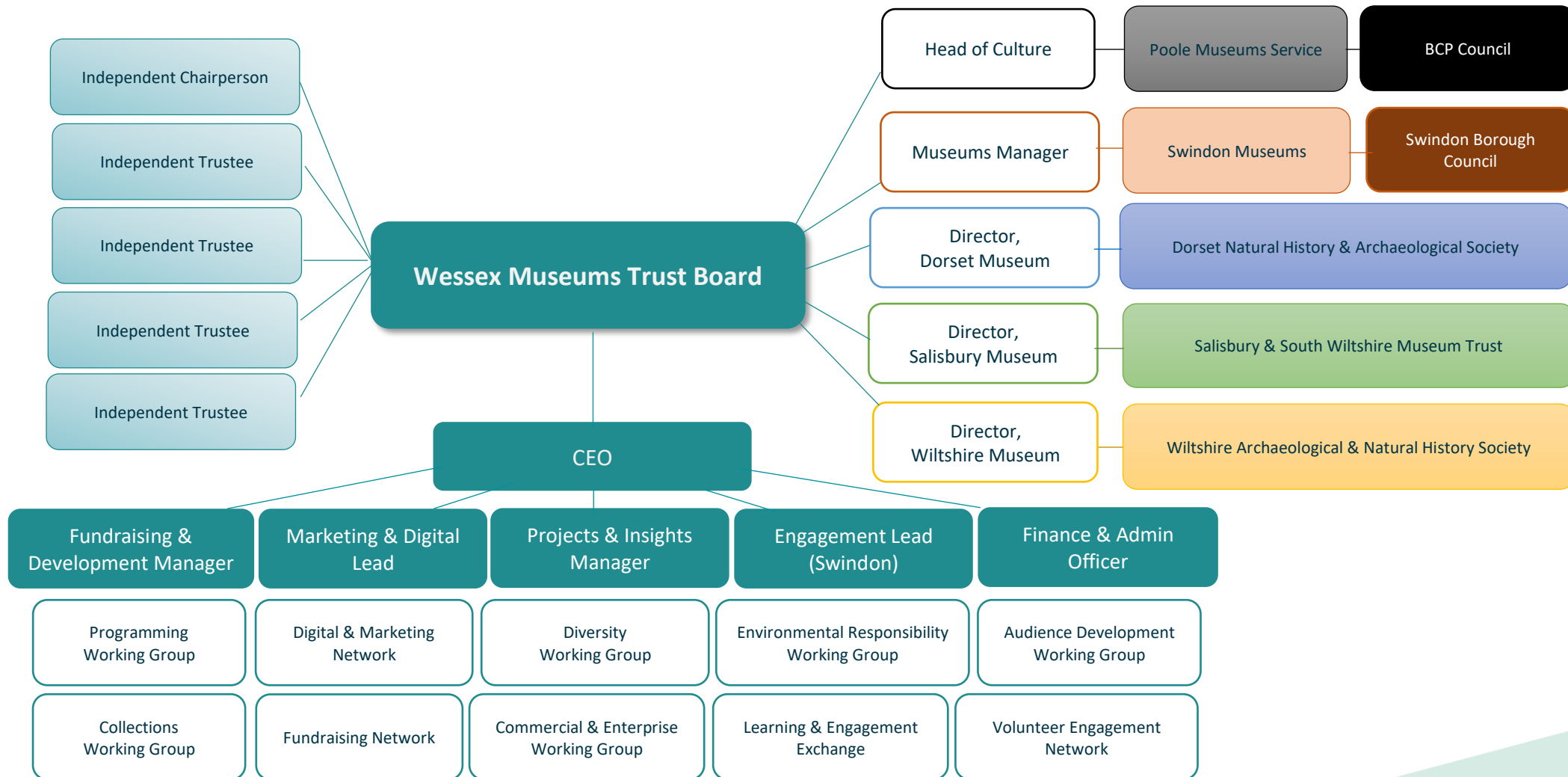
The WMT Board have oversight of the Strategic Plan, management of risks, decision making in relation to expenditure, etc. The delivery of the strategic plan and NPO programme management, reporting and financial administration is carried out by the Wessex Museums staff team, led by the CEO, and funded by the NPO grant. Five

other members of staff, the Fundraising & Development Manager, Marketing & Digital Lead, Projects & Insights Manager, Wessex Engagement Lead (Swindon) and Finance & Admin Officer, also work across the partnership and are funded by the NPO grant. Wessex Museums staff are employed by WMT.

The partnership continues to engage staff in the partner museums with the delivery of our strategic plan through thematic working groups and other peer networks. These working groups / networks bring together the specialist staff working across the partnership to deliver against some of the objectives in the plan, making the most of our shared knowledge and experience, and capitalising on opportunities for partnership working.

NPO funding has created staff posts and freelance appointments across the partnership that are responsible for managing and delivering certain aspects of this Strategic Plan. Posts and freelance contracts are employed and managed by WMT or by one of the partner museums, as appropriate. (See Management of Posts & Freelance Contracts through NPO)

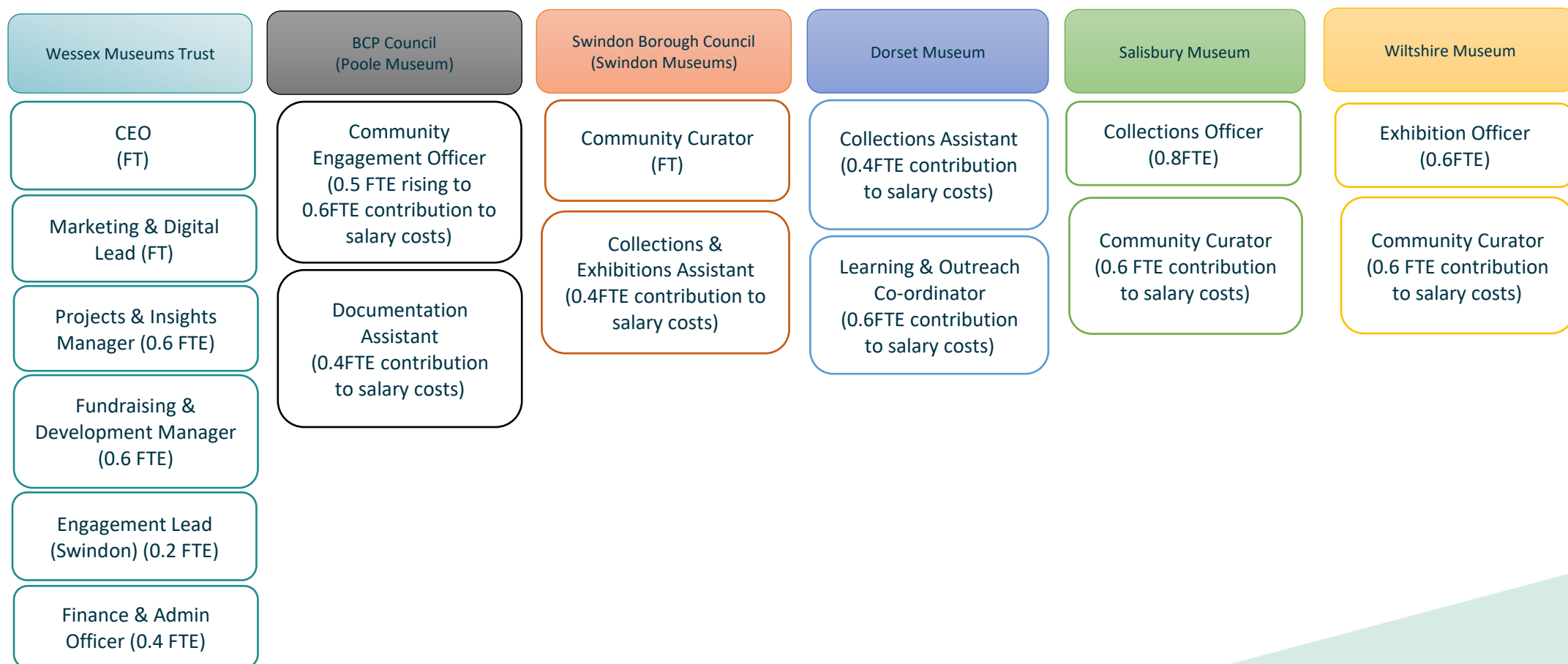
GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT OF WESSEX MUSEUMS



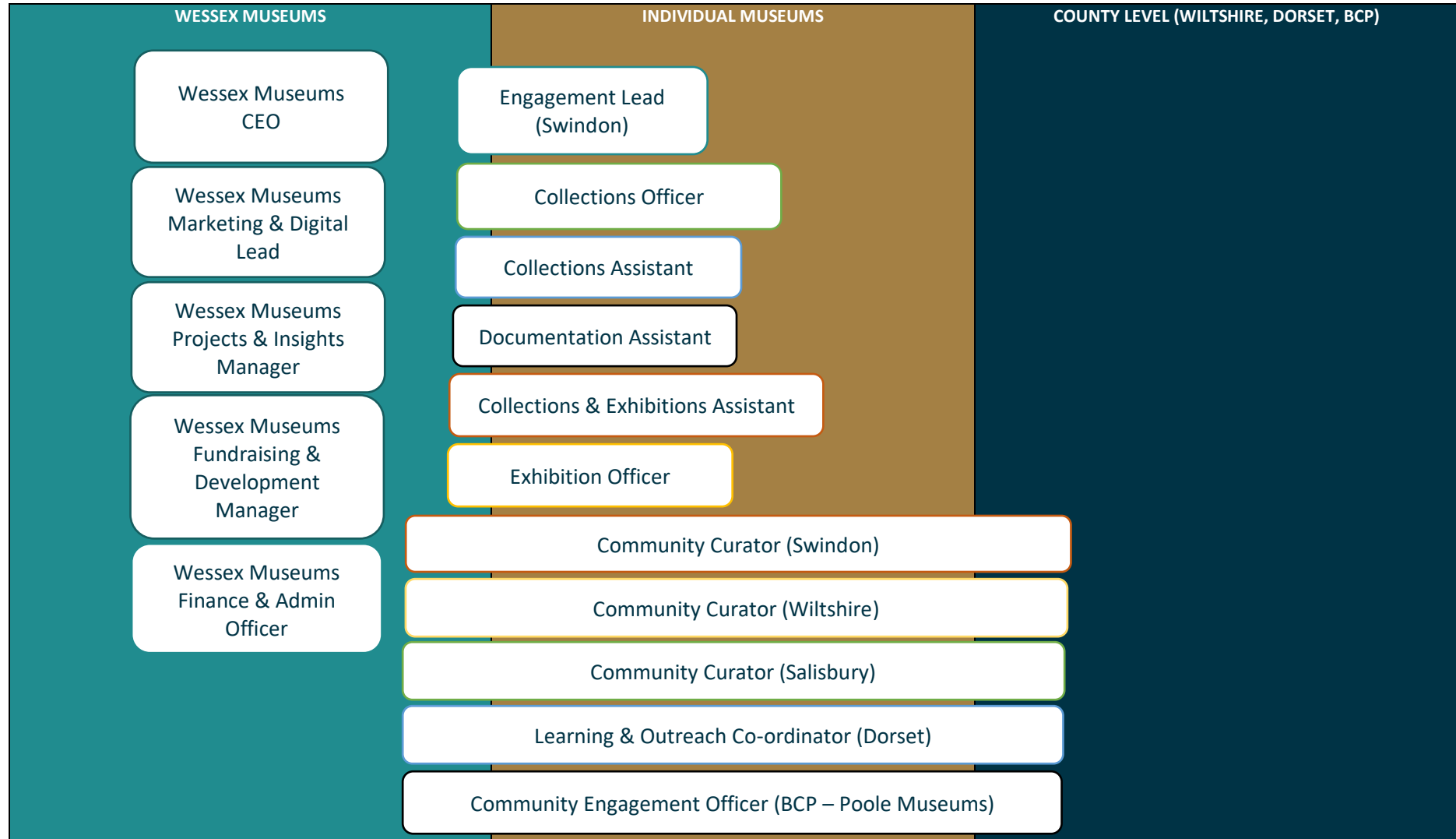
Management of Posts & Freelance Contracts through NPO

Partnership staff roles funded by Wessex Museums NPO and any freelance contracts will be employed and managed by WMT or by one of the partner museums, as appropriate. Employed staff and freelancers are bound by the terms and conditions agreed by their employer. Funding from the NPO for staff posts and freelancers that are employed and managed by the partner museums, will be transferred by WMT to the partners in accordance with the partnership agreement, programme budget and cashflow.

The planned structure for the employment and management of posts as of June 2023 is as follows:



A post / freelancer role that is employed by a particular museum will often be working across the partnership and/or county. The diagram below shows how the posts / freelance roles will be working.



ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WM IMPACT
OUR COLLECTIONS & INTERPRETATION	To build a virtual Wessex Museums Collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregation of records to central database. Authored records created for Collections Showcase on website. 	By end of 2023.	Virtual Collections working budget Wiltshire Museum staff Programming WG Collections Manager (SM) Collections Assistants (DM//PM) Marketing & Digital Officer Volunteers	DD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New collections records with images available through the shared database. (from Q1, on-going). 250 new collections records with images uploaded to the database in Q1. (Digi) 1250 new collections records with images uploaded to the database by the end of 2023/24. (Digi) Staff report better understanding of functionality and use of shared database. 12x objects from each partner museum are featured on the Wessex Collections Showcase by the end of year 1. (Digi) 1x partnership digital exhibition created from the records on the online database by the end of year 1. (Digi) 	Partner museums' collections are more accessible and better interpreted for audiences. Collections information is up-to-date, searchable and accessible. Researchers able to access the latest research on collections. Audiences able to engage with collections on-line in different ways. Digital resources are preserved for future generations.	Wessex Museums have collections available digitally to engage more diverse audiences. Wessex Museums are able to use the virtual collection to share information with each other and other museums for programming, loans, exhibitions, etc. Wessex Museums virtual collections support formal and informal researchers. Engage with the AHRC programme - Towards a National Collection
	To conserve our collections across the Wessex Museums.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority collections for conservation linked to the Folk exhibitions. Conservation of objects for Folk exhibition 	From April 2024 Apr 2024-Oct 2024	Project Curator Programming Working Group Fundraising Freelance conservationists	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 objects conserved for the Folk exhibition by Dec 2024. 	More objects from the Wessex Museums collections are on public display.	Museums have objects from their permanent collections conserved. Collections are better monitored and cared for.

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WM IMPACT
OUR COLLECTIONS & INTERPRETATION	To use our collections effectively to better tell the stories of the Wessex region.	Contemporary Collecting To undertake contemporary collecting projects with underserved audiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life in 2020s Lest We Forget Wessex Folk (see Our Programming) 	Mar 2023 – Dec 2025	Community Curators Collections Working Group	Collections WG	3x objects accessioned into each museum's collections on the identified collecting theme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 4x underserved community groups engaged in contemporary collecting projects per annum. (Aud/EDI) Lest We Forget - 4x Oral histories/stories from diverse perspectives collected by the museums. (Q1/Q2) (Aud/EDI) 	Audiences feel actively involved in the collecting and stories in the partner museums. Audiences able to engage with contemporary objects in their museums.	Museums are relevant and represent their communities through the objects and stories they tell. Museums build relationships and raise their profile with audiences.
		Decolonisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a library of resources and examples of best practice for decolonising collections. Complete pilot projects and provide case studies on Wessex Museums website. Agree a partnership decolonising collections framework. Museums to develop decolonising collections action plans in line with the framework. 	On-going By autumn 2023 Sep 2023 Dec 2023	CEO Diversity WG Decolonisation / Collections WG	CEO / Collections Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource library in place on WM Teams by end of Y1. (EDI) Decolonisation pilot projects complete and shared through case studies on WM website by end of 2023.(EDI) Partnership decolonisation framework agreed by Sep 2023. (EDI) Partner museum decolonising collections action plans in place by end 2023. 	Audiences experience broad points of view in the museums displays. Audiences have a better understanding of the museums, their collections and the stories of marginalised peoples in the region. Underserved audiences feel represented by the museums.	Decolonisation practice is embedded into collections management in the partner museums. Museums are more representative of their local communities. Museums establish sustained relationships with underserved audiences. Museums diversity their audiences, workforce and governance.

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIS	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES	To engage and collaborate with underserved audiences with our museum spaces through relevant and co-curated events and activities.	To collaborate with communities to define programming and projects with the partner museums based around our four engagement themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hidden voices, placemaking, sustainable communities, wellbeing & play. 	Apr 2023-Mar 2026	Community Curators Engagement Lead (Swindon) LEX Working Budget	CEO / LEX Co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15x community co-created projects with underserved audiences during 2023/24. (Aud/EDI) 9x regular, repeating museum programmes for underserved audiences. (on-going from Q1) (Aud/EDI) Focussed consultancy support for Swindon Museums to initiate inclusive community practice and support pilot projects (Year 1) (Aud/EDI) 200 people from underserved communities engage in projects/ programmes in the partner museums by end of 2023/24 (Aud/EDI) 	<p>Underserved communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the museums as welcoming spaces that recognise the needs and sensitivities of underserved audiences. Are able to collaborate with the museums in new ways. Have agency in how their stories are told. Gain experience and skills through working with the museums. Learn about local history and artefacts. <p>Museum visitors are exposed to co-curated stories from underserved communities.</p>	<p>Museum staff and volunteers are more confident in working with diverse and underserved community groups.</p> <p>Museums build new and sustainable relationships with underserved audience groups in their local communities.</p> <p>Interpretation and display in the museums spaces amplifies the voices of underserved communities.</p> <p>Museums meaningfully involve underserved audiences in decision making in their organisations.</p>
		Lest We Forget - community collaboration to co-create an exhibition on the Black experience of WW1/WW2 In Wiltshire touring to Wiltshire, Swindon and Salisbury Museums.	Apr 2023 – May 2025					
		RiverRun Wessex - A collaboration with Cape Farewell, exploring the chalk streams in close proximity to the Wessex Museums through a community research project leading to artist residencies and touring exhibition to all partner museums.	Apr 2024 – Apr 2026					
		Fashioning Our World - Young people taking part in workshops at Dorset Museum exploring sustainable/unsustainable fashion. Partnership with Salisbury Museum and sustainable fashion organisations, resulting in co-curated showcase.						

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIS	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES	To create career development opportunities for young people through our museums.	To offer work placements in our museums for people from underserved communities and provide access support to these placements.	Apr 2023 - Mar 2026	Opportunities Fund £2k p.a.	CEO / LEX Co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x work placement for underserved person per year / per museum. (EDI) 	People from underserved groups have the opportunity to gain professional skills and qualification in the museums.	<p>Museum staff and volunteers are more confident in working with diverse and underserved people.</p> <p>Museum has more diverse representation in its workforce and decision making.</p>
		To review our process and procedures for recruitment and management of work placements.	Sep 2023	CEO	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced recruitment and management procedures for work placements, including clear roles and responsibilities, in place by 2023/4 Q4. 	Partner museums feel supported to deliver successful work placements.	Partnership facilitates and support successful work placements for more diverse people in the partner museums..
CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES	To enhance our digital learning content.	<p>Digital Learning Platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of digital resources for platform Review platform objectives, audience, placement. Platform design Content loaded to the platform. Testing 	<p>May 2023</p> <p>Sep 2023</p> <p>Oct - Dec 2023</p> <p>From Jan 2024 on-going</p> <p>Jan-Jun 2024</p>	<p>Engagement Lead</p> <p>LEX</p> <p>Marketing & Digital Lead</p>	Marketing & Digital Lead / LEX / Marketing WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 digital learning resources available online by the end of 2023/24. (Digi) 5x teachers/schools engaged in user testing of platform. 40 interactions with online learning resources by the end of 2024. (Digi) 10 museum workshops booked through engagement with digital learning platform. (Digi) 	More C&YP and schools are able to engage with museum content digitally to support learning.	<p>Museums are able to increase audience reach and engagement through the use of digital technology.</p> <p>Museums build relationships with schools beyond their locality.</p> <p>Museums are able to generate income through digital schools platform.</p>

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
OUR PROGRAMMING	To create partnership exhibitions and programmes that unite us, tell the stories of Wessex, respond to contemporary issues and engage more diverse audiences.	Elisabeth Frink at Woolland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition Development Exhibition at Dorset Museum Exhibition at Swindon Museum & Art Gallery Exhibition at Salisbury Museum 	Apr 2023 – Nov 2023 Nov 2023 – Jun 2024 Jun – Oct 2024 May - Sep 2025 Apr 2023-Dec 2024	DM Director Of Collections & Engagement, Exhibition Manager Projects & Insights Manager Marketing & Digital Lead Exhibition budget DM Learning & Community Outreach Co-ordinator	ES / Programming WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15k visitors to exhibition at Dorset Museum 10 people from underserved communities engaged in co-curation of the exhibition. (EDI/Aud) Community response forms part of the exhibition. 100% of community feedback that they have been actively and positively involved in decision making about the exhibition stories and themes 90% of community feedback that they feel pride in Elisabeth Frink as a Dorset artist Visitor response to IIT dimensions above 70, peer & self responses to IIT dimensions above 80 Staff feedback is positive in respect of the tourablility of the exhibition 	Visitors have opportunity to see major retrospective of Frink's work in Dorset. Visitors gain better understanding of Frink, her work and her life in Dorset. New audiences are exposed to Frink's work and life. Underserved audiences have the opportunity to exhibit their work alongside Frink.	High profile exhibitions increase visitor numbers, spend and donations. Home grown exhibition is tourable to other partner venues. Opportunity to work with underserved audiences through the work of a major Wessex based artist. Opportunity to raise the profile of the permanent collections in the Wessex Museums.
		Engagement programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting Elisabeth Frink - community co-curation project with D/deaf group. 						

ACTION PLAN

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OUR PROGRAMMING	To create partnership exhibitions and programmes that unite us, tell the stories of Wessex, respond to contemporary issues and engage more diverse audiences.	Wessex Folk exhibition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition Development Exhibition at Swindon Museum & Art Gallery Exhibition at Dorset Museum Exhibition at Poole Museum Exhibition at Wiltshire Museum Exhibition at Salisbury Museum 	Jan 2023-Jan 2024 Jan-Mar 2025 Mar - May 2025 Jul - Sep 2025 Oct -Jan2026 Feb - May 2026	Curator Projects & Insights Manager Marketing & Digital Officer Exhibition budget Fundraising	CEO / Programming WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40k visitors to the exhibition across the partnership. Visitor response to IIT dimensions above 70, peer & self responses to IIT dimensions above 80 2x local community engaged artists are commissioned to create new folk with underserved communities. (Aud/EDI) A minimum of 5x underserved and diverse perspectives are captured through the documentary film. (Aud/EDI) 20 participants from underserved communities engaged in co-curation across the two museums. (Aud/EDI) Staff report increased confidence in engaging underserved audiences co-curation. (EDI) 100% positive feedback from participants about their involvement in co-curation for the exhibition. (EDI) Participants report an increased understanding of Wessex folk art and traditions. 	Visitors are reconnected to and gain a better understanding of the folk arts and traditions of Wessex. More diverse perspectives of folk are platformed through the exhibition and shared with audiences. Home grown exhibition is tourable to other partner venues.	Museums build relationships with their local communities and new audiences including from underserved communities. Museums' folk collections are better researched and interpreted. Museums collect intangible folk heritage into their collections through film and song. Museum staff and volunteers are more knowledgeable about folk collections. Opportunity to raise the profile of the permanent collections in the Wessex Museums.
		Engagement programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community co-curated new folk with underserved audience groups working with artists. 	Oct 2023-Feb 2026	Community Curators, Exhibition budget,				

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	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
OUR PROGRAMMING	To create partnership exhibitions and programmes that unite us, tell the stories of Wessex, respond to contemporary issues and engage more diverse audiences.	John Piper's Wessex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition Development Exhibition at Wiltshire Museum Exhibition at Dorset Museum Exhibition at Poole Museum Exhibition at Swindon Museum & Art Gallery Engagement Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts based community programme resulting in co-created display as part of the exhibition. 	Jan 2023 - Jul 2024 Jul - Sep 2024 Nov 2024 - Feb 2025 Feb - Apr 2025 May - Aug 2025	Marketing & Digital Officer Marketing working budget	DD/ Programming WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure 6 loans from national lenders. Develop home grown touring exhibition. 10x participants from underserved communities engaged in co-creation, which forms part of the exhibition. 100% positive feedback from participants about their involvement in co-curation for the exhibition. 30k visitors to the exhibition across the partnership. Visitor response to IIT dimensions above 70, peer & self responses to IIT dimensions above 80 	Visitors have opportunity to see Piper's work related to Wessex in the region. Visitors gain better understanding of Piper and his Wessex related work. New audiences are exposed to John Piper's work. Underserved audiences have the opportunity to exhibit their work alongside Piper.	High profile exhibitions increase visitor numbers, spend and donations. Home grown exhibition is tourable to other partner venues. Opportunity to raise the profile of the permanent collections in the Wessex Museums.
		Hardy's Wessex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition touring plans Exhibition at Swindon Museum & Art Gallery 	Nov 2022-Jan 2023 Feb - May 2024	Project Curator SWM&AG Exhibitions staff DM Exhibitions Manager and Curator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward plan for future partnership exhibitions in place for 2022 onwards. 	Audiences will have a diverse range of exhibitions / programming available to them in the region. Visitors have a better understanding of the collections and the Wessex region.	Museums have exhibition plans in place for future years that align with budgets and resources. Museums have more opportunities to showcase and conserve their own collections. Museums have more opportunities to work together to achieve economies of scale.

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
OUR PROGRAMMING	To create and broadcast digital programming that helps us to diversify our audiences and encourage museum visits.	Wessex in 100 Objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a co-curated approach to object selection with communities. Select objects for Collections Showcase and digital exhibition. 	April – Sep 2023 From Oct 2023 / on-going	Collections Working Group Community Curators Collections / Documentation Officers in partner museums	Collections WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12x objects from each partner museum are featured on the Wessex Collections Showcase by the end of 2023/24. (Digi) 150x people from local communities are engaged with the project over the 3 year period. 1x partnership digital exhibition created from the records on the online database by the end of 2023/24. (Digi) Micro exhibitions in partner museums from end of 2023/24. 	A more coherent story of the objects that represent the region is presented to audiences.	Interpretation and display has a stronger narrative about the region and therefore attracts more visitors. Loans from partners generate new interpretation and audiences.

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
BUILDING RESILIENCE	To develop and diversify our fundraising and income generation.	<p>Develop positive relationships between WMT and major grant giving trusts and foundations.</p> <p>Develop WMT capacity to generate Income from donations and ticketed events, without direct competition with the museums.</p>	Apr 2023-Mar 2026	<p>CEO</p> <p>Fundraising Consultancy</p>	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve £50k in fundraising during the life of the strategic play. Achieve £3k in donations and other income during the life of the strategic plan. 	<p>Wessex Museums provides an alternative model for fundraising & income generation for the sector to learn from.</p> <p>Audiences are clear about how they can support Wessex Museums.</p>	<p>WMT fulfils it's purpose to support the resilience of the partner museums.</p> <p>Co-ordinated fundraising benefits all partners, by providing additional opportunities to secure grants.</p> <p>WMT diversifies its income making it more sustainable.</p> <p>Fundraising facilitates delivery of excellence in programming, leading to increased audience reach & engagement.</p> <p>NPO funding raises the profile of the WMT and continues to strengthen the partnership.</p>
	To effectively manage WMT programmes and projects.	<p>Wessex Museums Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend Finance & Admin Officer Recruit Projects & Insights Manager Continuation of Fundraising consultancy support during staff absence. Work placements - scope opportunities for Digital and student placements in the WM Team. 	<p>Aug 2023</p> <p>June 2023-Mar 2026</p> <p>From Nov 2023 ongoing</p>	CEO	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wessex Museums team fully staffed by end of 2023. 1x work placement in place with Wessex Museums by spring 2024. 	<p>Museums have a vibrant offer and are relevant to their communities.</p>	<p>Wessex Museums Trust is a sustainable organisation.</p> <p>Wessex Museums Trust effectively manages its programmes and finances.</p> <p>Museums build relationships with YP and FE/HE institutions.</p> <p>Museums benefit from diversity in the workforce.</p>

ACTION PLAN

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Digital (Digi) Audience Development (Aud)

	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
BUILDING RESILIENCE	To embed equality, diversity and inclusion into all parts of our organisations.	EDI framework delivery:		CEO				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner museums and WMT review action plans align for new NPO period. EDI training extended, to include bite size videos for other protected characteristic groups. Review WMT recruitment policy. Develop EDI resource library. Recruit trustees to the WMT Board from underserved audience groups. Newsletter includes regular item on EDI. EDI standing item on all Board agendas. Diversity data published annually in impact report. 	Apr – Aug 2023	Trust Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner museums and WMT have reviewed EDI action plans in place by Sep 2023. (EDI) 	Museum governance better reflects the make-up of the local community.	Museum staff and volunteers are more aware of EDI and better equipped to deal with this in their organisations.
			On-going	Directors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDI training bite size in social model of disability by end 2023/24. (EDI) 	A diverse museum workforce reflects the locality.	Wessex museums build long term relationships with underserved communities.
			By end of 2023	Diversity WG		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustee representation from underserved communities on WMT Board by end of 2023. (EDI) 	Audiences from underserved groups have greater agency in museums services.	Wessex Museums Board better represents the diversity of the region.
				Diversity Champions				
				Training & Skills Sharing Budget: £4k p.a.				
				Marketing & Digital Lead	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity information reviewed and published annually as part of impact report. (EDI) 	EDI framework helps make the Wessex Museums more accessible and inclusive.	

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	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
BUILDING RESILIENCE	To integrate digital in our organisations and build digital capacity & skills.	Digital Comms Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comms plan tailored to sector facing audience and effectively support other audiences visit museums Increase access to museums and collections Develop partnership resources to support comms plan. (Messaging and frameworks) 	By end of 2023 – updated annually Ongoing From Jan 2024	Marketing & Digital Lead	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify audiences and preferred communication channels. (Digi) Increase and build loyalty of sector audience through LinkedIn. (Digi) Data monitoring shows partnership reaching wider digital audience. (Digi) 	Audience will receive clearer messaging and receives the correct audiences. Expand opportunities for research, learning and engagement in heritage .	WMT staff and partners work cohesively, save time and resources Wessex Museums partnership can work in dynamic way responding to data trends and able to assess impact
		Website, social media and digital comms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website development plan Update social media guidelines Social Media plan Develop partnership document and photo libraries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library of existing photos gathered from museums. Commission new photography as required. 	April 2024 – updated annually. By end of 2023 - updated annually By end of 2023 – updated annually September 2023 - Updated annually From Jan 2024 onwards.	Marketing & Digital Lead Website developer support (£1.1k pa) Partner museum digital reps Marketing working budget £4k p.a.	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website development plan in place by April 2024.(Digi) Mailchimp automations set-up by April 2024. And new lead gen forms in place (Digi) Update photo libraires and permissions annually. 	Audience will receive clearer messaging and receives the correct audiences. Expand opportunities for research, learning and engagement in heritage .	
		Digital upskilling for museums staff / vols: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep internal network of digital reps up to date Individual digital training and 121 with Digital Tech Champions. Digital Skills Audit 	Ongoing End of 2023	Marketing & Digital Lead Engagement Lead Digital Tech Champions tTraining budget £2k per annum	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital reps meet quarterly. Digital skills audit complete by end of 2023. (Digi) Digital skills training plan in place by April 2024. (Digi) 		

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	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
BUILDING RESILIENCE	To better understand our audiences and the impact of our work through evaluation and data analysis.	Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor analytics for our digital channels and subscriptions. Design evaluation methodology for special exhibitions and programmes. Partnership exhibition evaluation framework and toolkit Folk exhibition focus groups Data & evaluation surgeries 	on-going By Nov 2023 By Nov 2023 / on-going Apr – June 2023 Apr & May annually	Marketing & Digital Lead Programming Working Group Project & Insights Manager Partner museums Evaluation budget	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly evaluation of website and social media.(Digi) Evaluation methodology agreed for Frink exhibition by Oct 2023. 30 people from underserved audience groups engaged in Folk focus groups. (Aud/EDI) 	Programming and engagement activities are continuously improved. Audiences have the opportunity to influence programming choices in the museums. Audiences have opportunities to feedback on their experience of partner museums / exhibitions.	Evaluation and audiences inform planning of future programming and engagement opportunities. Museums are more relevant and have a better understanding of the preferences/barriers of the target audience groups. Partnership programming is relevant to target audiences. Museums build relationships and raise their profile with underserved audiences in their locality.
		Visitor Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and amend current visitor survey with staff / volunteers. Implement new visitor survey across the partnership. Visitor survey review points. 	By June 2023 By July 2023 Mar annually	Audience Development WG Volunteers to administer surveys and input data. Projects & Insights Manager	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illuminate system operational in museums by July 2023. (Aud) 	Visitors are able to feedback on their visitor experience to each of the museums. Visitor experience and programming is improved based on visitors' views.	Robust audience data is available to the partnership to inform programming and improve the visitor experience. Opportunity to compare visitor data with other organisations. Partners have better understanding of digital audiences.

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	AIM	OBJECTIVES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCE	OWNER	KPIs	CUSTOMER IMPACT	WMP IMPACT
BUILDING RESILIENCE	To share our learning and develop skills across the partnership and more widely across the culture and heritage sector and amongst key regional/national stakeholders.	Training & Skills Sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees Away Days on key themes Digital upskilling (digital strategy) LEX – building skills & capacity for museums learning staff EDI training (EDI framework) Carbon Literacy training for museum staff 	1 per annum from Oct 2023 On-going On-going On-going By Mar 2024	CEO Trustees Marketing & Digital Lead LEX Co-ordinator Skills Sharing & Training budget £2k p.a.	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Trustees away day per annum. Digital CPD plan in place by Mar 2024. LEX CPD plan in place by Sep 2023. EDI bite size for other protected characteristic groups developed/signposted by Mar 2024. 10 x staff Carbon Literacy certified by Mar 2024. 	Museum staff and volunteers are able to access training and peer support through Wessex Museums networks and events. Museum staff build digital confidence, capacity and skills.	Building skills and capacity will help to ensure the sustainability of the partnership.
	To respond to the climate emergency by reducing our environmental impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene Climate Emergency WG Partners to define carbon footprint baseline. WMT Environmental sustainability action plan with carbon reduction targets developed and agreed by Board. Environmental action plans with carbon reduction targets for partner museums. 	Sep 2023 By Jun 2024 By Jun 2024 By Jun 2024	CEO Staff/vols in partner museums Working budget £2k for expert advice Julie's Bicycle Creative Climate Tools / Transforming Energy Programme	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wessex Museums environmental sustainability action plan agreed by end Mar 2024. Partner museums to update environmental action plans to align with new framework by Mar 2024 	WMT and Museums are actively reducing carbon emissions in their organisations.	Museums have a better understanding of their carbon footprint and measure they can take to reduce it. Museums reduce their carbon footprint, making them more sustainable and adaptable to climate change.

Wessex Museums

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