Wessex Museums Interpretation Plan template

For each exhibition, a detailed Interpretation Plan should be compiled to describe each component of the display and associated programming in terms of:

* Exhibition description
* Themes and key messages
* Target audiences
* Interpretation tools
* Learning outcomes
* Special requirements and opportunities

The Interpretation Plan acts as a control document to inform research and identify ways to work across various museum disciplines such as learning, marketing and digital media. It should also act as a control document during the exhibition planning phase, and as a benchmarking document during post-project evaluation. Review Interpretation Plans regularly to find out what approaches work best for your audiences. Below is sample that could be used as a template for future projects.

**Sample Interpretation Plan (overleaf)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Title of the exhibition: *e.g. Stories from Stonehenge*** |
| **Overarching theme:** |
| *One sentence to sum up the exhibition as a whole* |
| **Key messages:** |
| *4 or 5**key messages taken from your exhibition proposal and developed with the project team.* *Refer back to WMP key messages and guiding principles to ensure the exhibition messages link in with the WMP key messages.*  |
| **Target audiences:** |
| *Existing:* | *New:* |
| **Learning outcomes** |
| *Intellectual outcomes:* | *Emotional outcomes:* | *Behavioural outcomes:* |
| **Section 1 (Area of the Exhibition: *e.g. Introductory gallery*)** |
| **Key messages:** | **Functions of this area** |
| *2 or 3 key messages taken for this section of the exhibition*  | *e.g. Scene setting, an area for visitors to gather themselves and get their bearings, exhibition guide pick-up point etc***Estimated dwell well time:** *e.g. 5 mins* |
| **Look and feel of this area** |
| *e.g. Well-lit gallery space**Feels like the start of a journey of discovery**Minimal but well-chosen objects and interpretation* *Free-flow – people can visit the items in the room in any order and are free to pick and choose what they want to find out about and leave when they wish* |
| **Content/ story** | **Interpretation tools** | **Materials/ resources** | **Contextual material** | **Target audience** |
| Introduction to the exhibition  | e.g. Text panel (150 words) near entrance to the exhibition |  | e.g. Historic image of Stonehenge | e.g. All |
| Map of Wessex locating Stonehenge and other important sites | Large-scale wall graphic | Wall vinyl |  | All |
| Introduction to the key functions of Stonehenge, which were… | Case of ‘gateway’ objects | Conditioned showcase, object labels | Reconstruction drawings to give context to the objects | All |
| Interview with an archaeologist at Stonehenge | Multimedia guide commentary (2 mins max) | See multimedia guide proposal | * Headshot of the interviewee
* Footage of Stonehenge today
 | Specialist interest learners |
| Perspectives of Stonehenge from different eras | Historic quotations at high level (20–30 words each) | Wall vinyls |  | Independent adults |
| Timeline of key events | Image-rich animated digital media presentation  | Large front projection onto gallery wall | Historic images – one per event on the timeline | All |
| The people of Stonehenge (from the distant past to today) | Handling object desk facilitated by a volunteer. (flint axe, vessels, modern druid divination stick etc) | 6 x accessioned museum objects and replicas Volunteer training | Suite of hardcopy images for use by the volunteer to help illustrate a point | Families and young people |