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 |