



# HEAD OF STEAM – DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM

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## Forward Plan 2022-2024

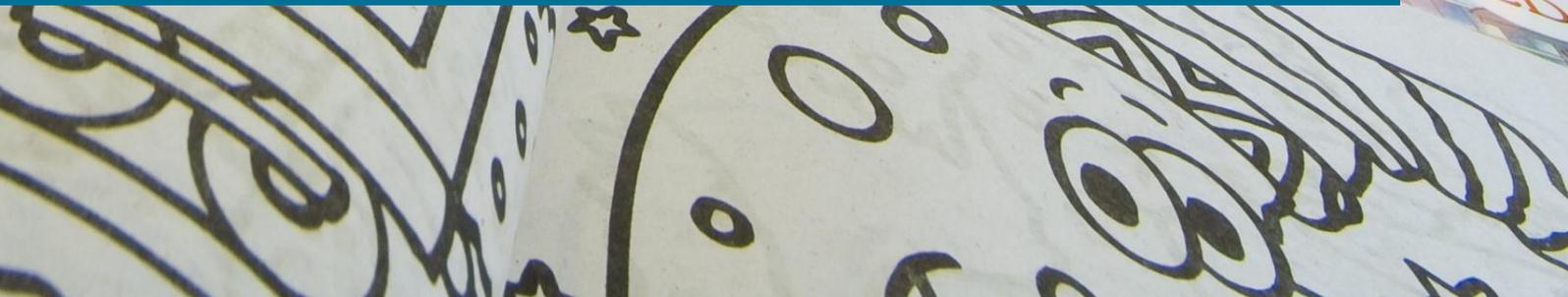
Strategic objectives of Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum for the period May 2022 to May 2024.



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council



**Head of Steam**  
Darlington Railway Museum



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The forward plan outlines the strategic objectives of Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum for the period May 2022 to May 2024.
- 1.2. The plan will be reviewed annually, with the first review being in May 2023. The plan will be reviewed by the museum's management team.
- 1.3. A two year gap between this forward plan and the previous forward plan exists as a result of the Covid pandemic (2020-2022) when the museum was subject to government imposed closures and restrictions.
- 1.4. In February 2022 Darlington Borough Council's Cabinet and Full Council approved the business plan that will see the redevelopment of the Head of Steam site, known as Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter (DRHQ), using £20 million funding from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). The DRHQ project will develop the current site into an international visitor attraction by 2024 to enable Darlington to be a central part of the Bicentenary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025.
- 1.5. The museum site is due to close for redevelopment at the end of December 2022. This forward plan is designed to be cover the period when the museum site is open to the public in 2022 and outline the work plan for the period of redevelopment 2023-24 when the museum site will be closed to the public (but museum engagement with the local communities will continue). A new forward plan will be developed alongside partners to drive the DRHQ, due to open in Spring/Summer 2024.
- 1.6. Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: XXXX

## 2. Statement of Purpose

Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum aims to delight all its visitors in the town that is the birthplace of modern passenger rail.

The museum's **mission** is to explain the significance of Darlington to railways, and for Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and its unique place in the birth of the modern railway.

The museum's **responsibility** is to preserve for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.

The museum's **objective** is to make, in relation to the funding it receives, a worthwhile contribution to community development and economic prosperity in Darlington.

### **3. Background to Museum**

- 3.1.** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum is located on the route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the world's first steam hauled railway to carry fare-paying passengers. The museum consists of the Stockton and Darlington Railway's buildings of the 1830s/50s, North Road Passenger Station and a range of north-eastern region railway exhibits.
- 3.2.** The museum was founded in 1975, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Darlington and Stockton Railway, when the campaigning of enthusiasts and community activists resulted in the preservation of the passenger station. One side of the platform was partitioned off for ongoing main line usage and the remainder opened as 'Darlington Railway Museum'. The museum was originally administered by a charitable trust, but responsibility passed to Darlington Borough Council in 1984.
- 3.3.** The museum changed its name again in the early 1980's and became the 'Darlington Railway Centre and Museum'. This name change was adopted to highlight the other historical buildings on the site, i.e. Hoptown Carriage Works, Goods Agents Office and Goods Shed. As a whole, the site represents the world's most important surviving group of early railway buildings.
- 3.4.** Over the past 30 years the site has become home to several independent heritage railway organizations, working in partnership with the Council. Partnerships include A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, Darlington Railway Preservation Society, Darlington Model Railway Club, North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group, North Eastern Railway Association and the Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum.
- 3.5.** In 2007/2008 a £1.7m refurbishment project was undertaken with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Northern Rock Foundation, the Railway Heritage Trust, English Heritage, European Regional Development Fund and other sources - Darlington Borough Council and the museum was re-branded the Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum.

**4. Review of the Previous Forward Plan (2016-2019)**

4.1. The previous Forward Plan was created in 2016.

4.2. The plan was created by the Museum Manager Curator, Leona White-Hannant, for inclusion in the Museum’s Accreditation Return in December 2016.

4.3. The plan addressed five aims and their associated objectives for the period 2016-2019 and was created with the input of the museum team.

4.4. Aim: To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.</b></p> <p><i>(See Audience Development Policy and Plan)</i></p>	Develop a Lego Show at the museum (2017)	Check other regional Lego events to avoid clashes	January 2017 <i>Completed June 2017</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Events budget
		Liaise with Brick Alley LUG	February 2017 <i>Completed June 2017</i>	
		Set date of event (November 2017?)	March 2017 <i>Completed June 2017</i>	
	Mark the 175 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of North Road Station (2017)	Press Release asking for memories and photographs	April 2017 <i>Completed March 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Events budget
		Develop history of station tours and trails	August 2017 <i>Completed Oct 2017</i>	
		Launch tours and trail to coincide with NERA station display	September 2017 <i>Completed Oct 2017</i>	
	Development of summer blockbuster exhibition (Summer 2019)	Join Touring Exhibitions Group	January 2018 <i>Completed Jan 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Exhibitions budget
		Block out diary for Summer 2019	January 2018 <i>Completed Jan 2017</i>	
		Identify which exhibitions are available	March 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2018</i>	
		Feasibility study re: environ conditions in Meeting Room	April 2018 <i>Completed Jun-Sep 2018</i>	
		Investigate funding streams	July 2018 <i>Completed Apr 2019</i>	

		Identify need for new display equipment	September 2018 <i>Completed Feb 2019</i>	
	Develop 'Focus on' Collections Event (2018)	Investigate whether other museum have done a similar event	January 2018 <i>Completed Mar 2018</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Staff training re: conservation etc.	June 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Launch sessions	October 2018 <i>Completed Ju-Aug 2018</i>	

**4.5. Aim: To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer (s)
Engage with new groups and schools, in particular Secondary schools, through activities and new workshops.  (See Learning and Access Policy and Plan)	Consult with Secondary Schools about that they want (2017)	Identify Secondary Schools in Darlington.	January 2017 <i>Completed July 2017</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Education budget
		Contact schools	February 2017 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
		Consult with History / Science Technology leaders	March 2017 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
	Recruit Front of House (Interpreters) Volunteers (2017)	Send out Press Release	June 2017 <i>Completed - ongoing recruitment</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Education budget
		Drop In/Open Day session	August 2017 <i>Completed - ongoing recruitment</i>	
		Training of volunteers	September 2017 <i>Completed - ongoing recruitment</i>	
	Develop new STEM Workshop for schools (2019)	Consult STEM subject leaders	June 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Education budget & external funding
		Talk to STEM NE	July 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
		Investigate funding streams	September 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
		Talk to 'Foundation for	October 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	

		Jobs' & 'Darlington Partnership'		Learning and Access Officer / Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Develop and trial new activities	April 2019 <i>Completed Nov 2019</i>	
	Recruit and Train volunteer Engine Cleaning Team (2019)	Liaise with NRM re: cleaning procedure and guidelines	April 2018 <i>E-mailed Jan 2018 but NRM never got back to us</i>	
		Involve Health & Wellbeing groups e.g. GOLD	May 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Develop a training day for new recruits	August 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Send out Press Release	January 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Drop In/Open Day session	March 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Launch project 'Spring Clean'	April 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	

4.6. Aim: To care for the museum's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
<p>Complete Documentation Backlog and increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.</p> <p>(See Collections Management Framework)</p>	Complete Documentation Backlog	Complete Documentation Stage Two	December 2017 <i>Ongoing</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Complete Documentation Stage Three	December 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Complete Documentation Stage Four	December 2021	
	Promotion of Collections and Archive (2017)	Purchase new camera and photography cube (funded by Friends?)	December 2016 <i>Completed March 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Develop 'Objects in Focus' section on website	January 2017 <i>Completed January 2017</i>	
		Attend at least three outreach events	December 2017 <i>Completed April 2017</i>	
		Basic museum database on-line	December 2017 <i>Not completed</i>	

	Partnership working within Darlington (2017)	Establish link with Hippodrome's new Heritage and Engagement Officer	January 2017 <i>Completed November 2016</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Develop closer links with Centre for Local Studies e.g. exhibition sharing	July 2017 <i>Completed July 2017</i>	
		Work with the Ingenious Darlington concept to further develop the Heritage Offer in Darlington	December 2017 <i>Completed Dec 2017 (website, social media)</i>	
	Relocation of collection stored elsewhere on site (2019)	Get safe access to the site	January 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Organise area for removal of artefacts to (interim location)	January 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Inventory of the container	March 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Rationalise artefacts	May 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Identify artefacts for conservation	June 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Move artefacts to new storage area	October 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	

**4.7. Aim: For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the place of the birth of the modern railway.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
Promote the museum and Darlington's railway heritage through an improved marketing strategy and		Liaise with Communications Team and D&P	December 2016 <i>Completed December 2016</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget
		Develop new marketing strategy using data from	January 2017 <i>Completed December 2016</i>	

<b>online presence.</b>  <i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i>		The Audience Agency		
	New museum marketing material (2017)	Design new museum leaflet	January 2017 <i>Completed Feb 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget
		Print new museum leaflet	February 2017 <i>Completed Jul 2017</i>	
		Distribute new leaflet	March 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	
	Develop standalone website (2019)	Meeting with Neil Bowerbank	December 2017 <i>Completed</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget and Museum budget
		Xentrall ICT re: website	March 2018 <i>Completed Mar 2018</i>	
		Development & test period	November 2019 <i>Completed Jan-Apr 2019</i>	
		Launch website	December 2019 <i>Completed May 2019</i>	
	Work collaboratively with other Tees Valley Partners (2019)	Liaise with Tees Valley Partners on future projects e.g. TV Combined Authority bid 'Great Places'.	December 2019 <i>Completed Apr 2017 - ongoing</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget

#### 4.8. Aim: To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
<b>Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income through new lines of stock and online presence.</b>  <i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i>	Retail discount for annual members to encourage repeat spend (2017)	Mailshot regarding annual member discount in shop	December 2016 <i>Completed Jul 2017</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget
		Trial run	January 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	
		Evaluate results	February 2017 <i>Completed ongoing</i>	
	Darlington souvenirs shop stock (2017)	Identify suppliers	December 2016 <i>Completed Dec 2016</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget
		Liaise with suppliers	January 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	
		Order shop stock	March 2017 <i>Completed ongoing</i>	

	Promotion of museum as venue to hire (2017)	Promote the meeting room for private hire	May 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget
		Promote the museum for weddings	July 2017 <i>Completed Jan 2018</i>	
	Develop on-line shop via new standalone website(2019)	Talk to other museums with on-line shop	December 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget and Museum Budget
		Photograph shop stock	July 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	

#### 4.9. Summary of Previous Forward Plan

The previous Forward Plan was written with the input of the museum team (Events and Admin Officer, Learning and Access Officer and Collections and Learning Assistant). The aims and objectives were written to be SMART and achievable within the three year period with a small team delivering the outcomes. The majority of the actions outlined in the forward plan were achieved within the time frame.

One of the main objectives of the previous Forward Plan was to increase and diversify the museum’s audience through a varied events, exhibitions and learning programme. The visitor figures in the table below show the increase in visitor numbers over the 2016-2019 period that the previous forward plan covered. The peak in 2018 was due to a highly successful Lego event that took place in February 2018 during which over 2600 people visited the museum in one day. The table shows an increase in visitor figures of 10,000 from 2016-2019. That is a 30% increase in visitors to the museum during the period of the previous forward plan. During 2020 and 2021 the museum’s visitor figures were affected by Covid. A combination of closure and restricted numbers had a huge impact of figures for these years and for this reason have not been included in the comparison as this was out of our control.

Year	Visitor Figures	Comparison
2014	32,612	-
2015	34,071	4.5%
2016	32,580	4.6%
2017	36,365	11.6%
2018	44,727	23%
2019	42,746	4.4%
2020	10,092*	-
2021	20,366*	-

\*Covid

## 5. Current Position

### 5.1. Environmental Sustainability

In July 2019 Darlington Borough Council (DBC) Members acknowledged the threat of climate change and passed a motion committing the Council to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

As part of our commitment DBC have developed a strategy and action plan to set out the baseline of our own carbon emissions, to identify the key actions and intervention measures required to meet this commitment and what measures we will take to deal with unavoidable impacts of climate change.

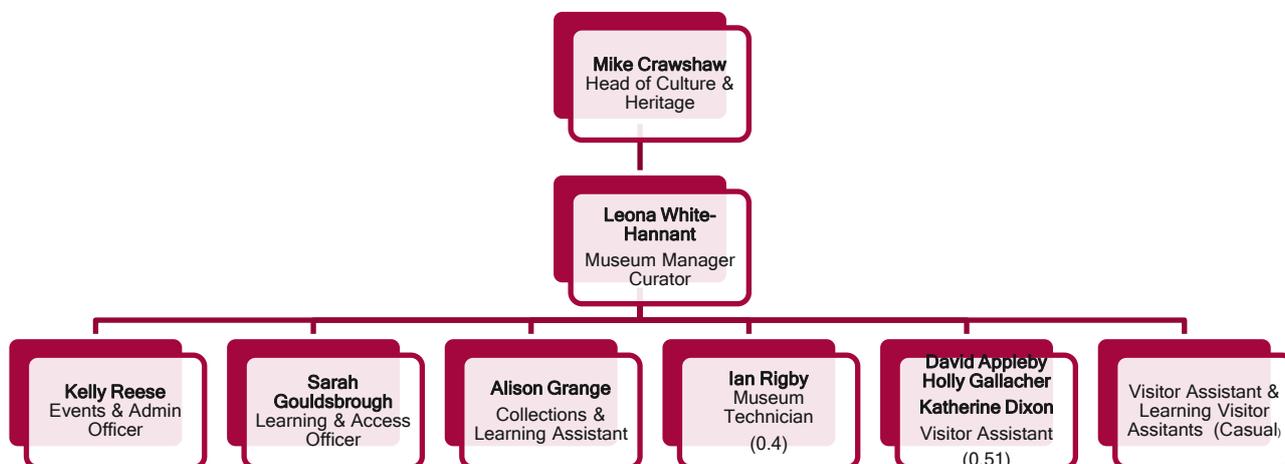
The museum has signed up to the NPO Tees Valley Museums Group Green Policy. The policy is motivated by the understanding that we need to change the way we operate to ensure that our actions are sustainable and that the damage that we do to the environment through our operations is minimal. Being 'Environmentally Sustainable' is one of 6 key destinations NPO want to reach as part of our long term vision. This is a positive process that will improve our working environment, our ways of working and our communities. We all are part of larger organisations who have robust and ambitious targets and the tools for change to realise their ambitions.

To ensure green policies are adopted each site will nominate a person responsible for championing green actions within each service. Head of Steam's contribution to the plan is below:

**Head of Steam continues to consider the environmental impact when purchasing materials or services. The main changes have been:**

- The implementation of recycling facilities at reception and in the café to enable visitors to recycle their empty food and drinks packaging. We recycle or reuse materials wherever possible.
- The museum is slowly reducing the amount of single use plastic and paper it uses in the café by replacing it with proper cutlery and crockery.
- Visitors are able to refill their reusable water bottles during their visit to the museum. Staff use public transport, walk or car share wherever possible.
- Sustainable and smarter travel choices are at the heart of the plans for the redevelopment of the museum site
- We are looking for a source of renewable energy to provide power for the site.
- Introduced paper straws
- No longer buying single use event decorations
- Organised regular recycling collection with local authority.
- Installed water butt on platform to collect rain water for plants.
- Reuse packaging from café for seedlings for station garden.
- Reduction in use of plastic in craft activities.
- Encourage use of recycled materials in craft activities (done virtually during lockdown).
- **Y4 Aims:**
- Purchase recycling box from teracycle for nitrile gloves.
- Ensure sustainability and recycling are part of redevelopment.
- Reconsider our reliance on individually wrapped products in café and meeting room

## 5.2. Organisational Structure



## 5.3. Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter

Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter (DRHQ) is a project that will invest in our rail heritage and assets ahead of the bicentennial anniversary in 2025 that will create a national visitor destination in Darlington. The Vision for DRHQ is:

*“By 2024, Darlington is recognised as the world’s most historic railway town with the Railway Heritage Quarter becoming a major visitor attraction showcasing internationally significant heritage in the Tees Valley, which will be central to the Stockton and Darlington Railway’s bicentennial celebrations in 2025. This project will reveal the story of Darlington and its communities that saw an opportunity and seized it, connecting, and transforming the world in the process. Our unique and authentic heritage will be reimagined with a strong narrative, varied interpretation, reimagined spaces, and new experiences to engage a wider audience, including local residents, businesses and visitors from around the globe. This site will act as a catalyst for heritage-led regeneration and social cohesion, empowering our communities and businesses to be part of the next transformational change.”*

The Rail Heritage Project also delivers against several the Council’s Priorities to:

- *Grow Darlington’s economy*
- *Maximise the potential of our young people*
- *Support the most vulnerable in the Borough*
- *Working with communities to maximise their potential*

Heritage and cultural regeneration are now recognised as a key ingredient in delivering economic growth. The DRHQ will add to the economic growth story of the town, and Northgate

in particular, and will be a key venue for 2025 bi-centenary anniversary events, which will put Darlington and the wider region on the world map being a place to be truly proud of, demonstrating the Council's commitment to valuing our heritage and culture.

DRHQ will contribute to the development of young people through a heritage educational experience in a fun environment, creating a community hub for the local area and offering opportunities for all residents and visitors to explore Darlington's role in the birthplace of modern passenger rail. There are strong links and synergy with the wider developments at Darlington Station, Central Park and the town centre. The DRHQ will be a key visitor attraction within walking distance of the town centre, helping attract people to live in Darlington, visit Darlington and enjoy all that Darlington has to offer. DRHQ will be connected to the town centre via the linear park along the River Skerne; providing an accessible and attractive route will encourage visitors to not only go to DRHQ but also explore the town centre where they will contribute to the wider local economy.

**The objectives are:**

- **Heritage** - to reveal, conserve, protect and promote aspects of the heritage on site and secure its long-term future. The project will remove the Goods Shed from the Historic England Buildings at Risk register and will conserve and interpret the rest of the site attracting around 369,000 visits to the site each year. This restoration, development and interpretation of the heritage will act as a key element in the bicentenary celebrations which will remind the world of Darlington's impact.
- **Engineering** - retain live engineering on site through developing third sector capacity and providing opportunities for the wider community through skills, learning and volunteering.
- **Innovation** - use past, current and future innovation to inspire, engage and motivate visitors and communities to raise aspirations and instil pride in the area.
- **Play** - through bespoke play, engage the local community and improve the wider visitor experience across the whole site.
- **Events and Activities** - develop an events and activity programme with an extended and engaging plan to increase the range and number of site users and audiences.
- **Skills and Learning** - deliver an educational programme for local and regional schools alongside more formal and informal skills and training opportunities in partnership with on-site partners and other interested relevant education bodies.
- **Community** - be a vehicle for improved health and well-being through increased activity and volunteering opportunities that provide positive social, health and quality of life benefits.
- **Interpretation** - engage a diverse audience including those that do not normally visit, and interpretation helps to do that by being exciting, creative and immersive through the telling of the story to keep the site fresh and vibrant.
- **Economy** - the site will act as a catalyst for economic growth by attracting local, national and international visitors, investment and spend, and creating employment and enterprise opportunities for the local community.
- **Heritage Action Zone** - act as one of the key orientation points along the 26 miles of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, providing a hub for visitors to not only access the site but also the S&DR walking and cycling route, and wider interpretation.
- **Commercial** - applying a commercial approach, demonstrating heritage and tourism as a viable sector for private investment.
- **Sustainability** - proposals will work towards contributing to the overall climate change 2050 target.

## What is planned for the Rail Heritage Quarter

The development will transform DRHQ into a major visitor attraction and museum by 2024 so that it can be a central part of the bicentenary events of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) in 2025. Essential improvements will be undertaken to a number of significantly historic buildings on the site linking them together to create cluster attractions including the Skerne Bridge, the oldest working railway bridge in the world. Digital and technological investment will bring history to life into and there will be a new immersive ride experience only seen at theme parks. The DRHQ will have a café and shop, themed play area, a new live engineering building, temporary exhibition space and extended car parking all of which attract all generations to visit.

### There are a number of elements to the overall site:

- **The Goods Shed** - Currently occupied by Darlington Rail Preservation Society (DRPS), this Grade II\* Listed building will be repaired and restored (removing it from the Historic Buildings at Risk register). This will be the entry/admission point to DRHQ café and will have an immersive visitor digital media experience and a Hologauze projection of locomotives.
- **North Road Station Building** - A Grade II Listed building on a 200-year lease from Network Rail to Darlington Borough Council that houses the Head of Steam Museum. The refreshed museum will offer a rich visitor experience, immersed and engaged in the S&DR story and Darlington's place within it. Visitors will learn about where they are standing - the station itself - through its beautifully preserved original space, enticing visuals, and accounts drawn from archival ephemera - that will draw them back to the site repeatedly. There will be a number of exciting augmented and virtual reality installations that the visitor can engage with alongside traditional interpretation. The most memorable encounter of all within the museum is likely to be the Black Box experience, an extraordinarily vivid immersion into passenger rail travel from 1825 to the present day (if not also the future), and the extraordinary impact it had across societies and cultures around the world. The detail of the black box experience is under development, it is proposed that it will include a 9 or 12 seat 4D cinema type experience where the hydraulic cinema seat moves in different directions given the feeling of movement. The design will be capable of delivering the heritage experience but will also be such that different shows can be easily added for different times of the year to stimulate repeat visit. The museum will be free (which removes the financial barrier to heritage allowing improved access to local deprived neighbourhoods) with the Black Box generating income through being a charged for experience.
- **The Carriage Works** - Currently occupied by the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust (A1SLT) and North East Locomotion Preservation Group (NELPG). Within the carriage works a new archive store, study centre, reading rooms and open store on one side and temporary exhibition on the other, will be created. This will attract touring exhibitions improving local access to national collections and exhibitions.
- **External Play Area** - The development of a must-see play area designed to fit with the heritage story of the S&DR. Provides a new attraction and activity for locals and visitors that will increase the overall visitors to DRHQ, generating increased secondary spend opportunities at the café and shop.
- **New Build Engineering Shed** - Creation of new engineering shed to house A1SLT with public visitor access via a bridge across the main line into a viewing gallery. The element of DRHQ creates the space for ongoing new build locomotives adding to the authenticity of the site, drawing in additional visitors.

- **Footbridge Link** - A footbridge link from DRHQ site, over live operational rail track to the new live steam engineering building - providing safe and accessible access to this aspect of the visitor attraction.
- **1861 Shed** - The 1861 Shed and surrounding land have been purchased to be part of the DRHQ with the restoration of the building to provide space to relocate DRPS into one half and the other half used for storage and garaging of locomotives. The outside spaces will provide the connection to the wider site with the cycling and walking route coming through this space as well as the private rail siding.
- **Private Siding and Turntable** - The private siding linking the mainline to the site will allow locomotives to arrive on site by rail and provide the opportunity to run steam train rides as part of the events programme through the year. The cost of providing and laying and maintaining the private siding is the responsibility of A1SLT with support from DRPS. The turntable currently is aspirational and subject to further funding applications.
- **The Lime Cells** - A building recently acquired by Darlington Borough Council is derelict and in poor condition. The Lime Cells will be repaired and will become an office for Friends of S&DR to support the continued work of the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and provide focus for an extensive programme of community engagement activity in relation to HAZ and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). Subject to a successful Round 2 application to NLHF (a first-round pass was granted in December 2021) this development will enable the Friends organisation to recruit and train more volunteers to take part in management of the HAZ.
- **Car Park** - Whilst we would anticipate some visitors will arrive by train to North Road Station, and over time hopefully this will increase, there is still a requirement to provide a car park which is placed purposefully close to the iconic Grade I listed Skerne Bridge, the oldest operating railway bridge in the world and a key player in the First Day, 27 September 1825. It is also famous for its illustration on the five-pound note. Close to the car park will be points of interpretation, all of which will convey a top-level introduction to the significance of the site in which they stand.
- **External Works** - This includes entrance works, pedestrian areas on McNay Street, coach drop off, pedestrian crossing for North Road, highways work, drainage, bus stops, cycleways and landscaping.

## Interpretive Approach

- The unique selling point of the DRHQ is the site itself, the cluster of heritage buildings and its proximity to the historic Skerne Bridge are assets only Darlington can seize upon. However, the interpretation of the site is key to making it a success and this has been developed in tandem with the physical aspects of the project.
- The investment in interpretation and bringing the experience to life will create an awe-inspiring, memorable 'sense of place' and the realisation that 'it happened here'. The site will provide accessible entry points to the main themes of the Stockton & Darlington Railway story and Darlington's key role within it. The main themes are:
  - **A global innovation** - The birth of the modern railway happened here in Darlington and was an innovation that changed the world forever.
  - **The First Day** - Over 10,000 people witnessed the first ride of the first passenger steam train here in Darlington on 27 September 1825.
  - **Darlington then and now** - The railway heritage of Darlington is all around us, and innovation continues to thrive in Darlington today.
- The latest technologies offer opportunities for the rich heritage of the site to be brought alive for visitors, where using immersive, multi-sensory approaches, they can experience the sights and sounds of Victorian Darlington.
- Once visitors have experienced the DRHQ, they will fully appreciate just how much the S&DR transformed the town and its fortunes forever. It will be a place where local heritage will lead to sustainable regional regeneration, investment and the transfer of new knowledge and skills to local communities. With a strong narrative, varied interpretation, reimagined spaces, and the creation of new experiences, it will explore the S&DR's enduring influence on the people, development and identity of Darlington and the region - past, present and future.
- It will tell the story of a place, a time and range of people that brought together unique combinations of existing ideas and technologies and new solutions that combined the ingenuity and determination of engineers, entrepreneurs, financiers, surveyors, builders, navies, and countless unnamed individuals who gave their knowledge, expertise and faith to a great, world-changing endeavours.
- Alongside all of this, the DRHQ will showcase and inspire the innovation and invention currently going on in the region - in industry, universities, entrepreneurial start-ups, and established companies - and build connections with knowledge, technology and heritage communities around the world through the interpretation of the collection and the site.
- The interpretation will appeal to a wide range of audiences, both formal and informal learners, and is fundamentally visitor-focussed in its approach. Interpretation across the site ensures that there are engaging opportunities for a range of ages and preferences. The digital 'black box' experience is balanced with beautifully lit, iconic star objects such as Derwent, the celebrated Hackworth engine of 1845. Hands-on, interactive exhibits are included as well as a playful use of audio. The printed word will be clear and accessible, and an engaging use of existing archival material - newspapers, illustrations, photos, letters and diary entries - will provide authentic insights for all visitors. Provision for the under 5's is integrated throughout the interpretation and through bespoke play spaces.

- The approach adopted to interpretation will be:
  - Welcoming, friendly and informed
  - Presenting a sense of place
  - Inclusive
  - A playful approach
  - Content delivered through themes and stories
  - Digital 'wows'
  - Interactive, hands-on experiences
  - Intellectually accessible and engaging
  - Physically accessible
  - Participative
  - Environmentally responsible
  - A vibrant programme of activities and events
  - Attracting repeat visits

### **Delivery Timetable**

- Cabinet and Council approval February 2022
- Phase 1 construction mobilisation March 2022
- Phase 1 construction completion March 2023
- Phase 2 construction mobilisation January 2023

### **5.4. Succession Planning**

The museum has the following procedures in place for effective continuity and resilience to ensure the continuous running of the service. This will enable staff to 'multi-task' and cover other posts' work if required.

- Building Operations Management
- Banking Procedures
- Opening & Closing Procedures
- Events Development
- Education & Community Activities
- Collection Management
- Acquisitions
- Temporary Exhibition Planning and Delivery
- Marketing and Development
- Externally Funded Projects.

For examples of the procedures see appendices (*See Appendices 12.1*).

## 5.5. Access at the Museum

- The museum's last access assessment was in 2019 and was conducted by the NPO's Access Officer.
- The museum is Dementia Friendly and Autism friendly.
- An access kit is available at reception. It includes magnifying sheets, easy to hold pens, signature guides etc.
- All labels and interpretation panels are in an accessible font.
- The building is accessible. The building accessible via a ramp and a wheelchair is available for use by visitors.
- The museum has prepared a Visual Guide for visitors on the autistic spectrum, which is available to download from the website or collect from reception.
- The museum's access statement is available on the website.
- Access to the museum's collections is available by appointment through the Ken Hoole Study Centre.
- Large print guides are available.
- The museum has introduced guides to the museum in several languages for our international visitors.

## 5.6. Tees Valley Museums Group (TVMG)

- Tees Valley Museum Group is a consortium of five Local Authority Museum services: Stockton (the lead authority), Darlington BC, Redcar and Cleveland BC, Middlesbrough BC and Hartlepool BC.
- Mission statement: TVMG will ensure we remain ambitious and relevant for all of our communities; sharing and preserving their heritage and stories, giving real meaning to the work we do together.
- The museum service will continue to work with the Tees Valley Museums Group (funded by the Arts Council) during the period of this Forward Plan and beyond.

## 6. Consultation and Analysis of Views

In 2019 TGAC were commissioned by Darlington Borough Council and Tees Valley Combined Authority to undertake audience research as part of the Railway Heritage Quarter Grand Narrative & Interpretation Strategy.

TGAC used a wide range of information gathering techniques including desk based and archival research, site visits, stakeholder engagement, and meetings with experts and enthusiasts, special interest groups and representatives of the local communities. This was combined with 'in depth' community consultations, reviews of the collections held in the three museums along the line, and benchmarking exercises at other cultural and heritage sites.

### Stakeholder Consultations

Between November 2018 and March 2019, TGAC met with stakeholders, specialist interest groups, arts organisations and potential industry partners.

### Online Survey

An online survey was live from Monday 18th February until Monday 18th March 2019 with 240 respondents. The survey link was distributed through several known networks and was largely filled in by people who knew about or had some connection with the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

### Community Consultation

JHA conducted a range of group and individual consultation interviews in the development process. Conclusions from their report are provided later in this document.

### Community Open Days

TGAC and JHA undertook three days of community consultation during February half term, 2019. 286 people attended and contributed to the open day sessions which took place over four days at the following venues: Preston Park Museum and Grounds, Locomotion, Shildon and Head of Steam, Darlington.

It was identified that the general breakdown of existing audiences is as follows: Older Adults, Local Families, Local People, Day Visitors, Rail enthusiasts (national and international).

Target Audiences were deemed to be: Adults over 50, Families with Children under 11, Young People and those Not in Education, Employment or Training, People in ill health, Local BAME Communities, Communities living along the 26 miles.

### Overall Summary of Consultation Findings

Local communities and educators alike are engaged with the SD&R heritage and supportive of the plans to raise awareness of it through access to the 26 mile line and across the Railway Heritage Quarter interpretation and activities. This interest extends to a wide range of benefits and outcomes that those consulted perceive will result from the project, including:

- A renewed sense of local awareness of the region's heritage.
- Younger and future generations learning about the region's heritage leading to a new appreciation for their local area and a sense of grass roots local pride.
- Family history projects galvanising local communities to engage with the heritage and revealing new, personal stories.
- Raised levels of aspirations, particularly in young people.
- New facilities and activities that will fulfil existing community needs.

- Activities and volunteering opportunities that provide positive social and health and quality of life benefits.

The research found that it is clear that the Railway Heritage Quarter promises to thrive as a community hub, if it takes on the activity related preferences and recommendations voiced by the audiences consulted as part of this process:

- To engage audiences from across the spectrum of abilities, ages, social, cultural or economic backgrounds.
- To provide opportunities for young people to gain new skills, experience and qualifications which will be a valuable resource to help set them up for their next, vital stage in life.
- To be a vehicle for new social interactions and improved health and quality of life, and it will be a source of pride for all.

The museum will continue to use the Audience Agency to produce surveys and reports on the museum's visitor profile (funded via Tees Valley Museums Group NPO). An example of the museum's questionnaire can be found here: <https://www.head-of-steam.co.uk/plan-your-visit/we-value-your-feedback/>

Looking forward DRHQ will implement a ticketing solution that will support collection of visitor data to help diversify our audience.

## 7. Aims

**The museum team agreed that aims for the next three years were the same as in the previous forward plan as they are relevant to the current museum and the future DRHQ.**

7.1. To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

7.2. To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.

7.3. To care for the museum's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.

7.4. For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the birthplace of modern passenger rail.

7.5. To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.

## 8. Objectives

8.1. Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.

8.2. Engage with new groups and schools through partnership working, activities and new workshops.

8.3. Increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.

8.4. Commitment to a successful transition from HOS to DRHQ, by retaining existing audience and supporting growth of new audiences.

8.5. Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income.

9. Action Plan 2022-24

9.1. Aim: To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.</b></p> <p><i>(See Audience Development Policy and Plan)</i></p>	<p>Develop Events on the Road programme (2023)</p>	Talk to Events Team about possible locations	August 2022	<p>Events Officer / Events budget</p>
		Plan events and activity programme.	October 2022	
		Promote the events and activity programme.	January 2023	
		Deliver the Events on the Road programme.	December 2023	
	<p>Develop STEAM focussed event for our main summer event (2023)</p>	Investigate companies that can deliver STEAM activities	September 2022	<p>Events Officer &amp; Learning Officer / Events budget</p>
		Select a venue and a date for the event	October 2022	
		Book activities for event	December 2022	
		Promote the event	June 2023	
	<p>Develop hard hat tours for during redevelopment (2023)</p>	Talk to Hippodrome about their tours during redevelopment	March 2022	<p>Events Officer &amp; Museum Manager / Events budget</p>
		Talk to RHQ Project Team about health & safety on site	May 2022	
		Organise dates for tours	September 2022	
		Organise tour guides and route for tours	October 2022	
		Promote the tours	December 2022	
		Start hard hat tours	April 2023	

**9.2. Aim: To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Engage with new groups and schools through partnership working, activities and new workshops.</b></p> <p><i>(See Learning and Access Policy and Plan)</i></p>	Engage with one new (non-visiting) school or group per term (2022)	Identify and contact non-visiting schools/group	April 2022	Learning & Access Officer / Education budget
		Consult with History/Science Technology leaders	June 2022	
		Book in one visit per term	December 2022	
	Create Accessible Tours for Museum on the Move (2023)	Identify key objects that can be touched	September 2022	Learning & Access Officer & Collections Assistant / Education budget
		Check any conservation issues	October 2022	
		Develop tour	October / November 2022	
		Trial tour	December 2022	
		Promote tours	February 2023	
		Launch tours	April 2023	
	Research and Development workshops for new site (2024)	Liaise with collections staff to identify relevant themes	May 2023	Learning & Access Officer & Collections Assistant / Education budget
		Develop 3 new workshops in consultation with teachers	October 2023	
		Develop 5 supporting resources to support blended learning offer	December 2023	
		Promote learning offer	April 2024	
	Develop one new talk per year to give to interest groups (2022, 2023, 2024)	Identify topics for lectures	May 2022	Learning & Access Officer / Education budget
		Research topics	August 2022 / 2023	
		Write talks	October 2023 / 2024	
Promote talks		January 2023 / 2024		

**9.3. Aim: To care for the museum’s collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.</b></p> <p><i>(See Collections Management Framework)</i></p>	<p>Prepare the collection to be moved to an interim location (2022)</p>	Inventory of the container	June 2022	<p>Collections and Learning Assistant / Collections budget</p>
		Organise area for removal of artefacts to during redevelopment	August 2022	
		Undertake a full collections audit.	December 2022	
		Pack all stored objects ready for move to interim location	December 2022	
		Remove all objects from display in the museum and pack ready for move to new location	January 2022	
		Identify artefacts for conservation	March 2023	
		Move artefacts to open store/archive store	April 2024	
	<p>Actively engage with young people and local community by developing Museum on the Move programme (2024)</p>	Secure lease of a van through DBC	October 2022	<p>Manager Curator &amp; Collections and Learning Assistant / Collections budget</p>
		Consult with partners on possible workshop and touring programme	December 2022	
		Liaise with insurance team	December 2022	
		Fit out van and choose objects to be included	March 2023	
		Launch Museum on the Move project	April 2023	

**9.4. Aim: For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the place of the birth of the modern railway.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Commitment to a successful transition from HOS to DRHQ, by retaining existing audience and supporting growth of new audiences.</b></p> <p><i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i></p>	<p>Keep the public informed about the redevelopment of the site (2023)</p>	Regular social media posts	April 2022	<p>All staff / Museum budget</p>
		Write blog with updates about the site	July 2022	
		Organise hard hat tours of the site	January 2023	
	<p>Develop e-newsletter (2023)</p>	Liaise with IT on implementation of e-newsletter.	July 2022	<p>Manager Curator / Marketing budget</p>
		Liaise with D&P on the design of the newsletter	October 2022	
		Distribute first edition of newsletter	January 2023	
	<p>Investigate satellite presence in the town centre for outreach during redevelopment (2023)</p>	Talk to council buildings and retail outlets to see what is available	May 2022	<p>Manager Curator / Museum budget</p>
		Select a venue and hire the space	October 2022	
		Deliver outreach sessions	February 2023	

**9.5. Aim: To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income.</b></p> <p><i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i></p>	<p>Develop satellite shop during redevelopment (2023)</p>	<p>Identify stock for sale</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Events Officer / Museum budget</p>
		<p>Install stock displays in shop and set up till system</p>	<p>January 2023</p>	
		<p>Launch and promote shop</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	
	<p>Investigate options for mobile retail stall (2023)</p>	<p>Investigate mobile card payment device</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Events Officer / Museum budget</p>
		<p>Identify events we can attend with retail stall</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	
		<p>Investigate transportation of mobile retail stall</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	
	<p>Develop a new offer in the shop each month (2022)</p>	<p>Decide a new promotion for each month</p>	<p>April 2022</p>	<p>Events Officer / Museum budget</p>
		<p>Launch shops offer</p>	<p>May 2022</p>	
	<p>Develop on-line shop via website (2024)</p>	<p>Liaise with IT on implementation of on-line shop</p>	<p>January 2024</p>	<p>Events Officer / Museum budget</p>
		<p>Test on-line shop</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	
		<p>Launch of on-line shop</p>	<p>Summer 2024</p>	

## 10. Resources

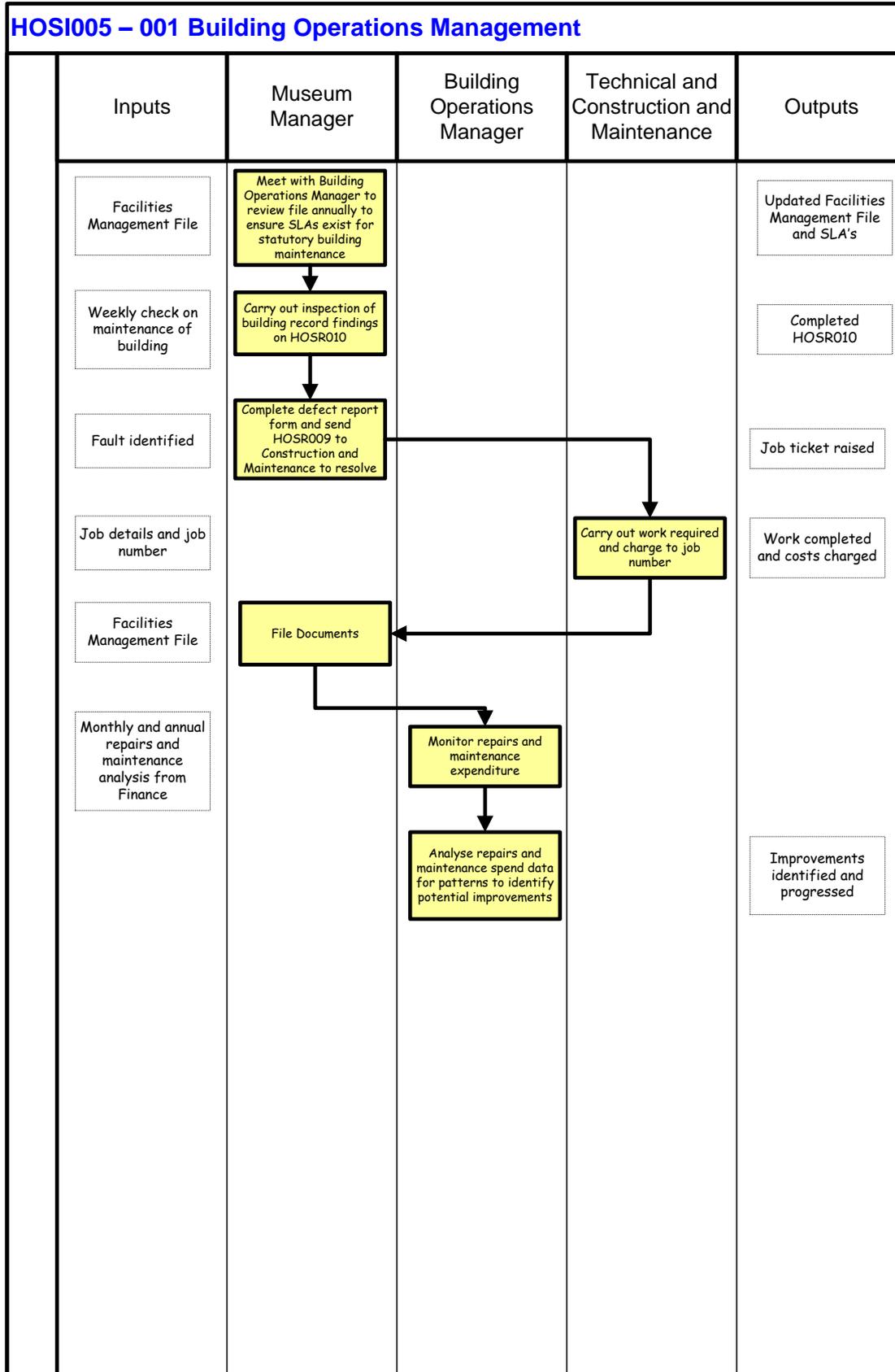
- 10.1. The museum employs four full time museum professionals for the effective delivery of the service. The Museum Manager Curator oversees the strategic and operational management of the museum service in addition to curatorial duties such as collections management, exhibitions and overseeing the Ken Hoole Study Centre. The Learning and Access Officer develops and delivers the learning programme for the museum including being responsible for all access issues relating to the museum. The Collections and Learning Assistant assists the Manager Curator with collections management, enquiries, exhibitions and the running of the Ken Hoole Study Centre as well as helping to deliver educational workshops with the Learning and Access Officer. The museum also employs an Events and Administration Officer who organises and delivers all of the museum's events as well as overseeing the retail offer at the museum and handling all of the museum's administrative duties. The museum employs three Visitor Assistants (3 x 0.51) and a pool of casual Visitor Assistants to work front of house.
- 10.2. The museum uses volunteers to assist (not replace) staff with activities such as cataloguing, guided tours etc. although the number of volunteers has greatly reduced since the Covid pandemic.
- 10.3. The budget for utilities lies with Corporate Landlord.
- 10.4. The museum generates income through admissions, room hire, venue hire (weddings), monetary donations, retail and events.
- 10.5. The museum's budget for 2022/23 can be found in *Appendices 12.2*.

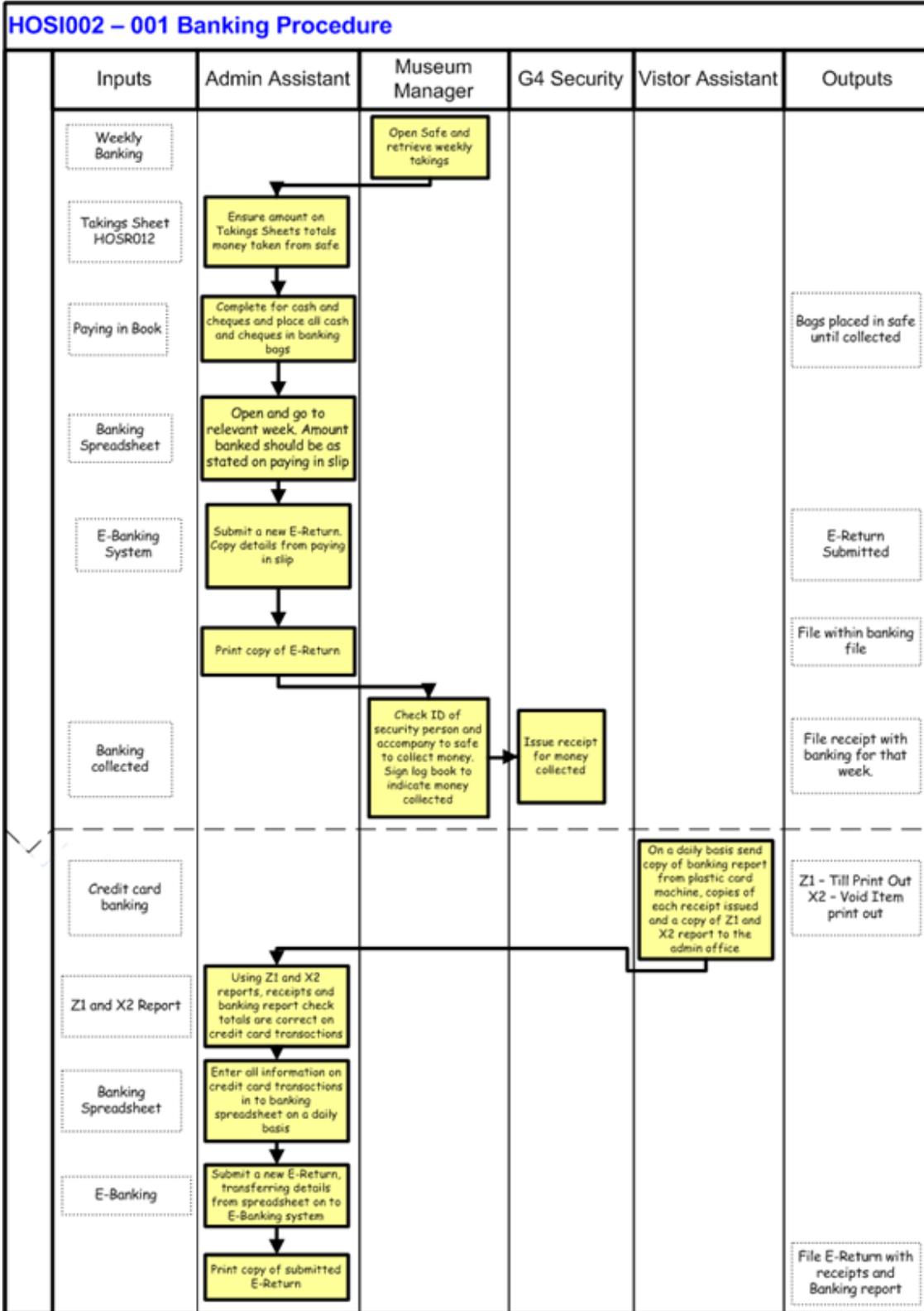
## 11. Review Date

The Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum Forward Plan will be reviewed annually with the first review taking place in May 2023.

## 12. Appendices

### 12.1 Examples of museum's procedures





## 12.2 Museum budget for 2022-23

Costc	Costc(T)	Account	Account(T)	Approved Budget
90871	Railway Museum	1000	Basic Pay	174,360.00
90871	Railway Museum	1050	Nic Employers	13,250.00
90871	Railway Museum	1060	Superann `Ers	33,300.00
90871	Railway Museum	1707	Employee Training Course Costs	1,000.00
90871	Railway Museum	1710	Employee Related Insurance	2,360.00
90871	Railway Museum	2015	Non-Domestic Rates	34,630.00
90871	Railway Museum	2021	Building Repairs And Maintenance	3,230.00
90871	Railway Museum	2027	Soft Landscaping	610.00
90871	Railway Museum	2811	Responsive - Grounds Maint	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	3001	Casual Mileage	220.00
90871	Railway Museum	3016	Officers - Other	540.00
90871	Railway Museum	4004	Commissions & Other Services	770.00
90871	Railway Museum	4009	Equipment	2,310.00
90871	Railway Museum	4028	Licences	150.00
90871	Railway Museum	4030	Marketing & Advertising	16,000.00
90871	Railway Museum	4031	Materials	3,070.00
90871	Railway Museum	4037	Professional Fees & Consultancy	10,260.00
90871	Railway Museum	4043	Security Services	1,700.00
90871	Railway Museum	4045	Stationery	810.00
90871	Railway Museum	4046	Subscriptions	340.00
90871	Railway Museum	4048	Telephone Costs	570.00
90871	Railway Museum	4050	Postages	650.00
90871	Railway Museum	4072	Misc. Insurances	4,320.00
90871	Railway Museum	4083	DBS Checks	100.00
90871	Railway Museum	4094	Printer Consolidation Charge	1,000.00
90871	Railway Museum	4507	Ppe Clothing & Equipment	750.00
90871	Railway Museum	4815	Production Costs	3,340.00
90871	Railway Museum	4850	Other Supplies & Services	1,390.00
90871	Railway Museum	7014	Printing	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	7801	Man & Admin Allocation	830.00
90871	Railway Museum	8002	Leasing Charges	470.00
90871	Railway Museum	8004	Principal Repayments	590.00
90871	Railway Museum	9218	Fees & Charges General (Standard Rated Vat)	-220.00
90871	Railway Museum	9263	Reports Photocopying, Etc(Standard Rated Vat)	-220.00
90871	Railway Museum	9271	Admissions	-46,030.00
90871	Railway Museum	9803	Other Income(Outside Scope Vat)	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	9816	Contributions/Donations	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	9838	Rents, Wayleaves (Outside Scope Vat)	-3,720.00
90871	Railway Museum	9839	Lettings (Standard Rated Vat)	-40.00
<b>90871</b>	<b>Railway Museum</b>			<b>262,690.00</b>
90872	Railway Education	4009	Equipment	400.00
90872	Railway Education	4031	Materials	1,000.00
90872	Railway Education	4037	Professional Fees & Consultancy	6,260.00
90872	Railway Education	4815	Production Costs	0.00
90872	Railway Education	4850	Other Supplies & Services	600.00
90872	Railway Education	9012	Other Government Grants	0.00
90872	Railway Education	9816	Contributions/Donations	-2,000.00
90872	Railway Education	9926	Other Grants (Outside Scope Vat)	0.00
<b>90872</b>	<b>Railway Education</b>			<b>6,260.00</b>
90874	MUSEUM TRADING	4037	Professional Fees & Consultancy	0.00
90874	MUSEUM TRADING	4805	Items For Resale	6,240.00
90874	MUSEUM TRADING	9928	Sales - Goods (Standard Rated Vat)	-7,910.00
<b>90874</b>	<b>MUSEUM TRADING</b>			<b>-1,670.00</b>
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4013	Food & Drink Costs	0.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4045	Stationery	0.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4054	Catering Provisions	1,770.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4136	Catering Consumables (Cutlery Etc)	0.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	9940	Catering Income (Standard Rated Vat)	-3,000.00
<b>90875</b>	<b>Railway Museum Catering</b>			<b>-1,230.00</b>
				<b>266,050.00</b>