



**Inspiring Your Discovery  
of the  
Black Country**

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**Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020**

### Introduction

The Museum grew out of community pressure in the late 1960s (with the first land purchased in 1973 by Dudley Council) to ensure that the culture and traditions of the Black Country might be preserved and over forty years on it has accumulated a wide range of material – from entire buildings down to pots and pans – which records and exemplifies the particular contribution of the Black Country to the origins of the Industrial Revolution and also the impact of industrialisation on the regional landscape and society. The Museum now extends to 26 acres and is one of the largest and most-visited open-air museums in the UK, having welcomed 8.4m people since it opened; comparable with the other large open-air museum sites of Beamish in County Durham; Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire; St Fagans, South Wales; and Weald & Downland, West Sussex.

We still take inspiration from Elihu Burritt’s famous description of the area, when, as the American Consul to Birmingham in 1868, he said, “The Black Country, black by day and red by night, cannot be matched for vast and varied production, by any other space of equal radius on the surface of the globe.” It is this story of a turning point in Britain’s national story that we continue to tell and celebrate at the Museum, while all the time striving to articulate its relevance today. We exploit the fact that people visit museums – particularly this museum – precisely because we aren’t a classroom, but nevertheless, offer hugely valuable opportunities for learning. Our greatest responsibility is to help make sense of the world, while our greatest potential is to make people, our visitors, think about something they perhaps haven’t thought about before.

The Museum’s entire collections are *Designated* by Arts Council England, recognising their quality and national significance. The Museum now holds a resource of considerable value, for authenticating the sense of regional identity and also for placing the full historical and cultural significance of the Black Country in a national context. Buildings, machines and other ‘things’ hold stories which attest to the national and international significance of the Black Country, chiefly spanning the period 1800-1950.

It is through the completeness and coherence of the reconstructed site that the Museum has established itself as the 'last word' on the Black Country, a reference point for anyone today needing confirmation of – or searching for - Black Country identity. In some histories, the role of the Black Country has been subsumed in the concept of 'Birmingham and the Midlands Hardware District' - a term coined in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, outside the Midlands, there are many who see the entire region as a 'Greater Birmingham' and so, the true significance of the Black Country to national life as a distinct region with its distinctive character, culture and traditions is sometimes eclipsed. Here the Museum has played a prominent role in helping to place it on the map as a place apart from Birmingham and the rest of the West Midlands.

Delivering a compelling visitor experience, day-in day-out, is the most critical and challenging thing the Museum does. It goes to the heart of what we are here for, and it is essential to our success, financial sustainability and continued growth. Attendance is the most important validation of what we do and the life-blood of truly independent museums. We are proud that we are able to pay our own way, and feel that it is the right principle for us. Charging admission (accounting for 68% of trading revenue) is not only critical to being able to fund our activity, but we feel it is the right thing to do because of the strengthened relationship it establishes with our visitors. In short, we believe visitors value the Museum more and we certainly value our visitors more. It also reinforces our feeling that we are very much running a business, but focussed on generating returns for reinvestment, rather than returns to shareholders. The importance of the visitor experience is central, therefore, to the Museum's recently refreshed charitable objects and our new vision, *"our staff live in the Museum to welcome you into the inspiring stories of real people, their streets and homes, work and daily lives, so you too can see, taste, feel, smell, hear and join in 300 years of Black Country history."* This makes real our mission of "Inspiring Your Discovery of the Black Country." Finding the right words to express our vision and mission, as well as identifying our strategic aims for the next five years was a major task.

All too often such things fail to excite, let alone focus the mind on the important things, so we are all genuinely cheered by the buzz created from the enormous collective effort from all tiers of the organisation that led us to adopting this new strategic plan for 2015-20. It has clarified our thinking with six new strategic aims and set us on a clear path going forward. In a copy and paste world, we hope the realness of the Museum will support your own discovery of the Black Country.

**The Museum Team**

### **Our Charitable Objects**

As a registered, incorporated charity, the legal Objects of the Museum Trust (revised and approved by the Charity Commission in May 2013) are:

- (i) the advancement of education for all by increasing and inspiring the public's understanding and appreciation of the significance and impact of the Black Country since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century on the industrialisation of the world as well as increasing the sum of knowledge of the region during this period of its history: and
- (ii) the provision, safeguarding and development of a museum and collections in the Black Country as a means of recording and exemplifying the contribution of the region since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the development of the modern industrialised world, for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

### **Our Vision**

Our staff live in the Museum to welcome you into the inspiring stories of real people, their streets and homes, work and daily lives, so you too can see, taste, feel, smell, hear and join in 300 years of Black Country history.

### **Our Mission**

Inspiring Your Discovery of the Black Country

**Strategic Aim One – Develop Our Distinctiveness and Brand**

- ◆ Amplify how we set our self apart by focussing on our own unique way of doing things to create a distinctive visitor offer, undeniably differentiating the Museum from the mainstream to build a matchless brand.

**Strategic Aim Two – Safeguard, Enrich and Use Our Collections**

- ◆ Strengthen and better use our Designated Collections, intensifying the spotlight on living interpretation, working demonstrations and making things, as the principal and best means of engagement, to create an emotional response from our visitors.

**Strategic Aim Three – Transform the Visitor Journey**

- ◆ Design and build a dramatic revisioning, from beginning to end, of how visitors explore and experience our open-air site to choreograph an unrelenting and immersive visit.

**Strategic Aim Four – Increase Visitor Attendance**

- ◆ Achieve greater resilience and underpin our long-term future by increasing visitor attendance.

**Strategic Aim Five – Achieve National and International Impact**

- ◆ Broaden the appeal and value of the story of the Black Country, way beyond its regional boundaries.

**Strategic Aim Six – Grow and Diversify Our Income**

- ◆ Further develop our culture of enterprise and self-reliance to maximise and diversify sources of revenue, making full use of our assets and resources.

## **Strategic Aim One – Develop our Distinctiveness and Brand**

Amplify how we set our self apart by focusing on our own unique way of doing things to create a distinctive visitor offer, undeniably differentiating the Museum from the mainstream to build a matchless brand.

### **Context**

Our organisation is characterised by being a museum and being an educational charity. Contained in those few words is the essence of the 'public benefit' that we strive and are legally bound to deliver and to report on to the Charity Commission, and for which we are accountable to our visitors. The Museum is concerned with providing enjoyable opportunities for learning in the unique setting of an open-air museum, and utilizing real things (our collections) and real stories, for all our visitors. Visitors are at the heart of everything we do. That is our DNA.

Open-air museums are uncommon and provide an enviable, real life setting for telling the stories they have to tell and a context in which their collections are displayed. Museums, like ours, don't create galleries and exhibition halls with cases and labels; they provide landscapes and streetscapes, where things happen.

The relatively recent history that the Museum tells of the Black Country (c1720-c1970) with a particular focus on c1850-c1950, provides context within living memory for the modern-day Black Country and its continuing importance as a manufacturing centre. However, increasingly nostalgia for the past will need to be replaced by curiosity and fascination, as memories fade and generations are lost if the Museum is to retain its appeal and value to people. The Museum concentrates on a very particular story, not just a generalised story of an area, but of an exceptional hey-day; a transformational period in Britain's national story. In this context, retaining the authenticity of the Museum is critical to the distinctiveness of our brand, to support real lives and real stories.

The Museum and the collective effort of our team is part of a diverse national resource of museums and galleries that seek to retain history's connections to our own lives; to help make sense of the world today by making sense of what has gone before.

### What We Will Do

- ◆ We will only do things, which emphasise and enhance the Museum’s brand qualities of authentic, open-air, living history.
- ◆ We will remain focussed on the distinctive story of the Black Country, when the region played a central and formative role in the creation of the connected, industrialised world we recognise today, while showcasing contemporary success to demonstrate its relevance and legacy in ways, which do not undermine the authentic parts of the site.
- ◆ We will not shy away from showing you the grit, grime and reality of how people lived.
- ◆ We will encourage you to get up close to what we have to show you, free of barriers and display cases.
- ◆ We will open the Museum day and night.
- ◆ We will develop our programme of large scale open-air events, drawing–on real stories of the Black Country and its people.
- ◆ We will allocate more resources for period costume, developing a team that provides for staff, volunteers and, for the first time, visitors.
- ◆ We will use the distinctive dialect and humour of the Black Country to tell our stories.
- ◆ Whilst acknowledging we have a solid foundation on which to develop, our staff remain a key asset and accordingly investing in our people remains a strategic priority for us.

**How Will We Measure Our Success?**

- ◆ Year-on-year improvement in brand recognition measures.
- ◆ The results of market research and year-on-year changes in visitor feedback.
- ◆ The results of staff surveys, including satisfaction levels.

### Strategic Aim Two – Safeguard, Enrich and Use Our Collections

Strengthen and better use our Designated Collections, intensifying the spotlight on living interpretation, working demonstrations and making things, as the principal and best means of engagement, to create an emotional response from our visitors.

#### Context

The Museum has developed over 34 years to become one of the larger, independent museums and one of the big five open-air museums in the United Kingdom. Together with its small satellite museum at the Locksmith's House, Willenhall, the Museum is fully Accredited; a fundamental national standard of museum competence, currently achieved by 1,800 museums. In February 2012 the Museum's entire holdings (some 80,000 objects) were Designated by Arts Council England, for their quality and national significance; one of only 53 organisations in England to have its entire collection recognised in this way, and one of only 140 collections in total. Collections are what define museums, and safeguarding these inalienable assets for the benefit of visitors and users is the first duty of any museum. The Museum continues to enrich its collections, with carefully sourced objects including vehicles, industrial and domestic items, as well the Museum's specialty – buildings.

As an open-air museum with living interpretation a key component of the visitor experience, the contribution of staff and volunteers is crucial. A little over 30% of total staffing costs are allocated to costumed demonstrators, including our Learning staff who facilitate Key Stages 3 and 4 educational groups. Amongst other characteristics, it is this visible and high level of living interpretation that distinguishes this Museum from other, traditional museums. Without this dynamic and visitor-engaged component, the Museum would be a ghost town of abandoned buildings, workshops, streets and industrial landscapes.

The museum attracts a high proportion of educational groups; 28% of attendance, from 1,000 institutions, as well as a broad socio-economic mix from the general public. Therefore, a broad range of motivations come into play, coupled with diverse learning styles, as well as very varied levels of interest and prior knowledge.

## What We Will Do

- ◆ We will develop our collections in line with our Collections Management Policy, incorporating our Acquisitions & Disposals Policy.
- ◆ We will ensure that delivering outstanding lifelong learning is integral to everything we do, and continues to be the Museum's top priority and that effective research and analysis are further advanced to inform the development of all programmes of activity.
- ◆ Through staff induction, training and annual performance review, we will make explicitly clear our expectations in respect of delivering outstanding lifelong learning.
- ◆ We will further develop resources and programmes for visiting pupils that reflect needs and which support and complement the National Curriculum programmes of study, but which also attract independent academies and private schools. We will accommodate all ages and levels, from Early Years through to Higher Education and cover a broad subject area, including history, the arts, science, technology, geography, literacy, mathematics and citizenship; drawing on the legacy of the past and contemporary success of the Black Country.
- ◆ We will recognize that, according to every Service Excellence Organisation, the key to delivering great service is to invest in great staff, on the basis that it is not the customer who comes first in a successful service equation, but the member of staff. We will recognize that effective leadership and management, great training and supported personal development are not only the bedrocks upon which to build service envy amongst the Museum's peers, but are the prerequisites of a healthy and sustainable organisation. Accordingly, we will prioritise additional training resources during the life of this strategy.
- ◆ Trust in what the Museum has to offer is an important part of developing loyalty and therefore, we will develop a consistent minimum offer throughout the year.

- ◆ The visitor experience is significantly enhanced by the presence of demonstrations of industrial processes and small-scale manufacturing, including hot metal work. It is a notable USP, and a reinforcement of the maxim, Made in the Black Country. We will prioritise the further development of such demonstrations.
- ◆ We will prioritise investment in the Museum's historic transport systems to provide a unique and enjoyable way for visitors to experience the open-air site.
- ◆ The recruitment and selection of living interpretation staff and volunteers will prioritise effective communication skills, and we will continue to resource living interpretation as the Museum's most valuable form of learning engagement with our visitors.
- ◆ We will review the Museum's relationships with existing volunteer groups.
- ◆ We will develop a strategy to actively engage with the Museum's community.

### How Will We Measure Our Success?

- ◆ Continue to meet the standards required of Designation and Accreditation.
- ◆ Comparison data through our participation in the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) annual visitor survey.
- ◆ The results from the annual Visit England Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme (VAQAS), and whether the Museum attains and improves the level of its accreditation.
- ◆ Whether the Museum can achieve, retain and thereafter improve its rating under the Learning Outside the Classroom scheme, as awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom.
- ◆ The results of the Museum’s teacher surveys following an educational visit.
- ◆ The Museum’s TripAdvisor rating and analysis of the associated visitor comments and feedback.
- ◆ The results of our biennial visitor surveys and market research.
- ◆ The results of in-venue feedback questionnaires.
- ◆ Level of staff and volunteer satisfaction, and retention levels.
- ◆ Level of participation in staff and volunteer development programmes, and the percentage of staff suitably qualified and skilled for their job role.
- ◆ Health and Safety incidents.

### **Strategic Aim Three – Transform the Visitor Journey**

Design and build a dramatic revisioning, from beginning to end, of how visitors explore and experience our open-air site to choreograph an unrelenting and immersive visit.

#### **Context**

The Museum has developed over the extent of its 26-acre site over a period of 34 years. Despite developments ranging across the site, notably along the so-called Old Birmingham Road, the 'centre of gravity' has always been the village, sitting to the north of the canal arm. In this context, there is a physical and emotional disconnect between entering the Museum, quarter of a mile to the south, and the heart of the visitor experience. This, despite some important individual buildings and features along the way, including the Cast Iron Houses, Drift Mine and Racecourse Colliery, Newcomen Engine, Jerushah – the tilted cottage, Lench's blacksmith workshops and Folks Park. Currently then, the visitor journey is interrupted and somewhat spoilt by significant gaps and wasteland, where the drama and excitement of exploration and discovery is temporarily lost.

After first entering the Museum, through an unsympathetic modern building adjacent to the car park, containing visitor facilities, visitors emerge on-site via a walled modern terrace to look out on a mixed scene of mown grass and the solitary buildings of the Cast Iron Houses and Newcomen Engine, and the colliery area in the near foreground. It isn't immediately obvious which way to go, and the scene ahead isn't especially tempting.

The southern end, or about half of the site, is quite different in character than the village and canal, with its roofscapes, attractive variety of houses, workshops and shops, passageways and backyards. In the village, a genuinely authentic environment has been built, mostly through the very careful reconstruction of buildings, taken brick-by-brick from their original locations in and around the Black Country.

An asphalt road connects the length of the site, with its overhead wires serving trolley buses, while a tramway runs from the southern end of the site to just short of the Old Birmingham Road.

## What We Will Do

- ◆ We will develop a Master Plan for the entire site with a 10-year life, to:
  - ◆ target growth in annual visitor attendance to 500,000, including growth in educational visits to 125,000 and attendance at evening ticketed events of 50,000.
  - ◆ create a lost world, hidden and in stark contrast to the modern Black Country; complete in its industrial landscapes, transport and the streetscapes of its communities.
  - ◆ increase the intensity of visitors' experience by developing a greatly enlarged and authentic stage on which the hustle and bustle and commotion of the lost world of the Black Country is played out, and into which visitors are immersed and become active members of the community.
  - ◆ highlight the duality and legacy of the lost world of the Museum by developing the higher, southern area of the Museum into a contemporary quarter, showcasing the Black Country's progressive industrial success.
  - ◆ increase the developed site by 50%.
  - ◆ increase visitor dwell time to establish the Museum as an all-weather full day out.
  - ◆ recognise the evidence that further developments are an essential and a dominant force on increasing visitor attendance.
  
- ◆ We will be a proactive partner in the further development of Castle Hill, to create more cohesive visitor experiences and developing the tourism offer of Dudley and the Black Country; significantly changing perceptions of the region.

- ◆ We will seek funding for major capital works through public grant-giving bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Local Enterprise Partnership, European Regional Development Fund, as well as large and small trusts and foundations, business sponsorship and high net worth individuals.

### How Will We Measure Our Success?

- ◆ The completion of a Master Plan which addresses identified needs, with indicative costs, by the end of 2015.
- ◆ The support of our local community for our development plans.
- ◆ The identification of a significant new development to be undertaken by the local community.
- ◆ Funding identified by the end of 2016.
- ◆ Planning permission granted in-line with major grant funding requirements.

## Strategic Aim Four – Increase Visitor Attendance

Achieve greater resilience and underpin our long-term future by increasing visitor attendance.

### Context

While delivering on our charitable objects, visitor attendance is the lifeblood of the Museum. As a chargeable venue, with an adult on-the-door price currently £15.95 (2014), visitor-driven-income accounts for almost 95% of total gross revenue income. A growing visitor attendance is the most crucial external validation we submit ourselves to. The advent of TripAdvisor, Facebook and Twitter, while creating powerful marketing outlets, has at the same time, heralded a frighteningly rapid, abundant and open channel for consumer feedback. Good and bad. Our current TripAdvisor rating is 4.5/5. Our latest enjoyment rating is 8.5/10. Our latest value for money rating is 8.1/10 (source: independent visitor research, 2014).

Since the Museum opened fully in 1978, over 8 million people have visited. Since 1978 visitor attendance has ebbed and flowed; most notably when new 'attractions' have opened on site, or large (often steam) events were organized or extensive promotions offered. In recent years, attendance jumped by 12% in 2008 when Hobbs Fish&Chip Shop opened and continued rising on the back of further developments; peaking at 313,319 in 2009. As the impact of more recent developments has declined, attendance has reduced by 20% since the peak of 2009; further impacted by economic conditions and the very poor summer of 2012. The historic average annual attendance, since the Museum became properly established and developed in say, 1982, is 245,000. These numbers put into context the current level of attendance (2014: 270,000) but also provide evidence of the benefit of further developing the Museum's open-air site, as part of improving the visitor experience.

Attendance is highly seasonal with the five winter months of November-March averaging 13,150, compared to the seven summer months of April-October averaging 29,000. Outside summer holidays and winter weekends, educational groups support attendance. 9% of attendance comes from ticketed evening events.

### What We Will Do

- ◆ We will develop an astute communications & marketing strategy which carefully targets resources and effort into growing a loyal and enthusiastic audience who value their bond with us as part of their leisure, educational and social networks and who become unassailable advocates of the Museum to others. The strategy's aim will be to create a life-long relationship with our visitors.
- ◆ Through staff induction, training and annual performance review, we will invest in providing consistently excellent customer service and a touch of magic that exceeds expectations at every point of interaction and which pays attention to the smallest detail.
- ◆ Informed by market research, we will further develop our programme of major ticketed evening events, as well as providing additional activities to enhance daytime visits, especially at peak times.
- ◆ Our approach to increasing visitor attendance and the development of brand loyalty will be market led. We will therefore, be guided by the cultural, social and physical needs of our visitors.
- ◆ We will design and implement a new brand identity, which reflects and powerfully communicates the distinctive qualities of the Museum.
- ◆ We will target a higher level of school visits by continuing to develop tailored resources, taught sessions and other programmes.

**How Will We Measure Our Success?**

- ◆ The levels of overall visitor attendance and year-on-year trends.
- ◆ The level of visitor attendance at ticketed events and year-on-year trends.
- ◆ The level of educational attendance and year-on-year trends.
- ◆ Membership take-up and retention levels.
- ◆ Diversity impact measures.
- ◆ Comparator data with regional and national trends in the museums and leisure sectors.
- ◆ The results of analytics to measure web optimization.
- ◆ The achievement of regional, national and international awards.

## Strategic Aim Five – Achieve National and International Impact

Broaden the appeal and value of the story of the Black Country, way beyond its regional boundaries.

### Context

The Museum grew out of community pressure in the 1960s, notably from the Black Country Society (est. 1967) before opening its doors fully in 1978. It is through the completeness and coherence of the reconstructed site, that the Museum has established itself as the 'last word' on the Black Country, a reference point for anyone today needing confirmation of – or searching for - Black Country identity. In some histories, the role of the Black Country has been subsumed in the concept of 'Birmingham and the Midlands Hardware District' - a term coined in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, outside the Midlands, there are many who see the entire region as 'Greater Birmingham' and so, the true significance of the Black Country to national life as a distinct region with its distinctive character, culture and traditions is sometimes eclipsed. Here the Museum has played a prominent role in helping to place our local community of the Black Country on the map as a place apart from Birmingham and the rest of the West Midlands.

The Museum recognizes that away from the West Midlands the story of the Black Country has less resonance.

Together with its consortium partner (Culture Coventry) in July 2014, the museum became a new Major Partner Museum (MPM), under the auspices of Arts Council England; one of four in the Midlands and one of 21 across England. This designation represents a major achievement and opportunity over the course of the three-year funding programme 2015-18, to further develop the Museum's reputation and to increase our leading role in the museums' sector. The Museum sees retaining its designation as a MPM as a key strategic priority.

The Museum, over the last few years has become a significant member of the Association of European Open Air Museums, Association of Independent Museums, and by virtue of becoming a MPM, will become a member of the National Directors' Council.

### What We Will Do

- ◆ We will effectively deliver, as lead partner, on the ambitions set out in the Major Partner Museum programme of activity 2015-18, and seek to retain this national standing, as well as increasing the level of investment funding from Arts Council England beyond 2018.
- ◆ We will develop a greater international role and reputation through Board-level membership of the European Association of Open Air Museums, including hosting their conference at the Museum in 2017, and seek to develop other international partnerships.
- ◆ We will host the annual conference of the Society for Folk Life Studies in 2015, and actively seek to host other relevant conferences.
- ◆ We will develop delegate conferences, which raise the profile of the Black Country and role in Britain's national story.
- ◆ We will develop an institute for the study of the Black Country, in partnership with a West Midlands university.
- ◆ We will ensure that future development of the site celebrates and showcases the modern-day success of industry and manufacturing in the Black Country as an important legacy of the past.

**How Will We Measure Our Success?**

- ◆ The extent of attracting national and international audiences.
- ◆ The extent of positive national and international media coverage.
- ◆ Successful delivery and retention of Major Partner Museum programme (Arts Council England).
- ◆ Evidence of a proactive and constructive contribution to the National Directors' Council.
- ◆ Evidence of a proactive and constructive contribution to Arts Council England's Major Partner Museum National Group.
- ◆ Visible leadership of the Museum's senior team at a regional, national and international level.

### Strategic Aim Six – Grow and Diversify Our Income

Further develop our culture of enterprise and self-reliance to maximize and diversify sources of revenue, making full use of our assets and resources.

#### Context

Financial strength is essential to enable us to effectively deliver our purpose, and to allow the Museum to develop and realise our full potential for visitors and other users, the local community and staff. Although the Museum (together with its consortium partner, Culture Coventry) will receive significant restricted investment funding of £886k annually from Arts Council England (ACE) from April 2015, under its 2015-18 Major Partner Museum programme, the Museum meets 100% of its day-to-day running costs. In this context, the Museum is a rare example of a self-financing museum. Gross annual costs (2014) of £4.137m are met from paid admissions (60%), commercial sales (34%), with other miscellaneous sources making up the remaining 6%. Financial break-even is currently achieved with 254,000 visitors.

The Museum is currently and will continue to be reliant on external sources to fund major new capital developments and projects, from public sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, ACE and European Regional Development Fund, as well as private trusts and foundations and a small number of individual private donations. Business sponsorship is a potentially significant development opportunity. Funding maintenance is a challenge.

Notwithstanding and welcoming the significant 3-year support of ACE, the Museum is proud of its self-reliance and continues to firmly believe that paid admission, alongside highly profitable trading on-site, offers the most resilient model of 'business', as well securing its continued independence. In recent years the Museum has moved from heavy trading losses of £285k in 2012, to a very small trading loss of £15k in 2013, to the prospect of a trading surplus of c£100k in 2014. This has been achieved through a combination of cost reduction, reversing a decline in visitor attendance and improved on-site trading results. Generating surpluses is an important aim

### What We Will Do

- ◆ We will raise capital funds in-line with our Development Strategy which we commit to reviewing during the life of this strategic plan, including the role of the Museum’s separate Development Trust.
- ◆ We recognize the importance and potential impact of the Museum’s governance arrangements on financial performance, and will undertake an independent review of governance to ensure that it is aligned with best practice and supports the Museum’s financial standing and resilience.
- ◆ As part of Master Planning the open-air site, we will consider the viability of developing served holiday accommodation.
- ◆ We will consider introducing performance-related pay as a means of driving improved financial results and resilience.
- ◆ Through budget planning and other actions we will establish free cash reserves equating to 10% of the average gross turnover of the Museum over the course of the previous three years.
- ◆ In-line with the Major Partner Museum plan of activity, we will use the Arts Council England investment (2015-18), to drive visitor attendance, efficiencies (including opportunities shared services) and better trading results.
- ◆ We will continue to maintain industry standards of gross margin and staffing ratios to gross sales in the Museum’s extensive trading outlets, and look to expand the scale and diversification of the Museum’s non-primary purpose trading.

- ◆ We will continue to put ourselves forward as an effective mentor organisation under the Association of Independent Museums mentoring programme, and will continue to pursue commercial opportunities to support other museums with their business change programmes, as has been the recent case with Warwick Museums Service and Luton Culture.
- ◆ We will consider, as part of developing a Master Plan for the Museum site, disinvesting surplus freehold property to support financing developments or in support of other resilient measures, including endowment.

**How Will We Measure Our Success?**

- ◆ Admission income per visitor, and year-on-year trends.
- ◆ Cash generated from operations and underlying operating surplus.
- ◆ Results of the Enterprise Company and the donation of profits in support of the Museum.
- ◆ Donation of unrestricted funds.
- ◆ Ability to fund capital developments and added-value projects from fundraising.
- ◆ Take-up under the Gift Aid scheme.
- ◆ Current ratio.
- ◆ Percentage of income from non-visitor-driven sources.

## Financial Ambitions

It is the financial ambition of this strategic plan to take the Museum’s annual gross trading turnover from its current (2014) level of £4.258m to £8m, by targeting an increase in visitor attendance to 500,000, to deliver a reliable annual trading surplus (before depreciation) of c£500,000 to build reserves and reinvest. Such a level of performance will require significant capital investment.

	Yr 0		Yr 1		Yr 2		Yr 3		Yr 4		Yr 5	
	Result		Result		Budget		Forecast		Forecast		Forecast	
	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Visitor Attendance	271,467		292,533		305,950		327,367		350,282		374,802	
Visitor Attendance - Change on Prior Year	13%		8%		5%		7%		7%		7%	
Admissions Earnings Per Visitor	£9.37		£9.88		£9.81		£10.05		£10.30		£10.56	
Other Earnings Per Visitor	<u>£5.82</u>		<u>£6.33</u>		<u>£6.05</u>		<u>£6.19</u>		<u>£6.33</u>		<u>£6.48</u>	
	£15.19		£16.21		£15.85		£16.24		£16.64		£17.04	
<b>Trading Income</b>	<b>£'000</b>											
Admissions	1,740	41%	2,085	43%	2,141	43%	2,356	43%	2,595	43%	2,858	43%
Schools and Groups	561	13%	569	12%	585	12%	642	12%	704	12%	772	12%
Events Programme	<u>254</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>271</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>309</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>339</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>372</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>408</u>	<u>6%</u>
	2,555	60%	2,925	60%	3,035	61%	3,337	61%	3,670	61%	4,037	61%
On-site Trading Outlets	1,434	34%	1,669	34%	1,665	33%	1,826	33%	2,003	33%	2,197	33%
Other visitor-driven Income	137	3%	150	3%	154	3%	166	3%	179	3%	192	3%
All other non-visitor-driven income	<u>132</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>146</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>186</u>	<u>3%</u>
	1,703	40%	1,936	40%	1,939	39%	2,139	39%	2,348	39%	2,576	39%
	<b>4,258</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,861</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,974</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,475</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,018</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,613</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Black Country Living Museum – Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020

<b>Trading Expenditure</b>												
On-site Trading Outlets	1,040	25%	1,144	26%	1,185	25%	1,297	25%	1,422	26%	1,560	26%
Governance, Administration and Fundraising	785	19%	859	19%	819	18%	838	16%	857	15%	876	15%
All Other Costs	<u>2,312</u>	<u>56%</u>	<u>2,403</u>	<u>55%</u>	<u>2,660</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>2,963</u>	<u>58%</u>	<u>3,266</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>3,600</u>	<u>60%</u>
	<b>4,137</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,406</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,665</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,098</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,545</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,036</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Trading Surplus Before Depreciation</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>9%</b>
Forecast Capital Spending	0		120		320		400		400		400	
<b>Retained Trading Surplus Carried Forward</b>	<b>121</b>		<b>456</b>		<b>445</b>		<b>423</b>		<b>497</b>		<b>674</b>	

**Key Performance Indicators and Key Impact Measures**

Key Performance Indicators of this plan are:

- KPI1 Total annual visitor attendance
- KPI2 Visitor satisfaction measures
- KPI3 Admissions yield per visitor
- KPI4 Trading net profit per visitor
- KPI5 Cash generated from operations
- KPI6 Health & Safety incidents
- KPI7 External funds raised
- KPI8 Staff costs and ratio of staff to volunteers
- KPI9 Non-visitor-driven revenues
- KPI10 Staff turnover and staff sickness absence

The Key Impact Measures of this plan are:

- KIM1 Positive impact on regional tourist economy
- KIM2 Positive impact on external perceptions of the Black Country and regional pride
- KIM3 Museum spend in the regional economy
- KIM4 Reducing environmental impact as measured by carbon footprint per visitor
- KIM5 Capital investment in the region.
- KIM6 Positive impact on perceptions of museums and their value to society

## Black Country Timeline

1709 Abraham Darby successfully uses coke to smelt iron at Coalbrookdale, increasing demand for coal.

1712 The world's first steam engine invented by Thomas Newcomen and installed in a mine at Coneygree, Dudley.

1769 First Black Country canal is constructed from Wednesbury to Birmingham.

1780 Blast furnaces first used at Spring Vale, Bilston.

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1800

1802 William Jones establishes the first Black Country brewery in Snow Hill, Wolverhampton.

1837 Railway arrives in the Black Country when the 'Wednesfield Heath for Wolverhampton' station opens.

1842 The Earl of Dudley's massive new lime kilns become operational.

1846 19 people killed and 3 seriously injured in the explosion at Rounds Green Colliery, Oldbury.

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1850

1851 Great Exhibition London – glass for the Crystal Palace supplied by Chance of Smethick.

1857 The peak of Black Country iron production with between 120 and 130 blast furnaces producing 777,000 tons of iron.

1868 "Black by Day & Red by Night", the American Consul describes his view of the Black Country.

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1878 West Bromwich Albion Football Club formed by workers from Salter's Spring Works.

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1900

1909 Steam boat President is launched.

1910 Women chain makers of Cradley Heath successfully strike to enforce the first ever minimum wage.

1910 Baggeridge Colliery opens, tapping into hidden reserves beyond the South Staffordshire Coalfield's Western Fault.

1911 Titanic's massive centre anchor made in Netherton and Halesowen.

1920 Sunbeam wins a record breaking victory at the Isle of Mann TT, with a top speed of 59.7mph.

1926 Nationally, a General Strike is called when miners dispute pay cuts.

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1950

1968 Baggeridge Colliery, the last Black Country mine closes.

1978 Black Country Living Museum opens.

1979 The anchor forge of Isaiah Preston, the last in the Black Country, closes

1980 The blast furnace 'Elisabeth' is demolished ending 200 years of iron and steel production in Bilston.

1982 Round Oak steel works closes.

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**1991 Batham’s Best Bitter is voted winner in the best bitter category at the Great British Beer Festival.**

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**2000**

**2009 The Ordnance Survey gives formal recognition to the Black Country on the Landranger map series.**

**2012 The Black Country welcomes the Olympic Torch.**

**2012 President, the Museum’s coal fired steam powered narrow boat, takes part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.**

**2013 Linda Connor from East Sussex becomes the Museum’s 8millionth visitor.**

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**2015**