

**CULTURE, RECREATION &
TOURISM
CABINET MEMBER MEETING**

Agenda Item 92

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Brighton Museum & Art Gallery: Change to Opening Hours
Date of Meeting: 24 March 2009
Report of: Director of Cultural Services
Contact Officer: Name: Janita Bagshawe Tel: 29-2840
E-mail: Janita.Bagshawe@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

NOTE: The special circumstance for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 23, Access to Information and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least 5 days in advance of the meeting) is that staff consultation had not been finalised in time for the despatch of the agenda.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 To seek approval from the Cabinet Member to a change in the opening hours of Brighton Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG). The Museum is currently open until 7.00 pm on Tuesdays. This late opening has not drawn the visitor numbers which were hoped for. There is public demand however for the Museum to open earlier on Sundays.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 Approve a change to the opening hours on Tuesdays and Sundays for Brighton Museum & Art Gallery. The Museum is currently open from 10.00 am-7.00 pm on Tuesdays, 10.00 am-5.00 pm Wednesday-Saturday and from 2.00-5.00 pm on Sundays.

2.2 It is recommended the Museum opens 10.00 am-5.00 pm Tuesday-Sunday. The exact date of implementation will need to be agreed as soon as operationally possible.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The late opening on Tuesday evenings was introduced at the Museum in May 2002 when the Museum reopened following redevelopment. Unfortunately the extended opening time has not attracted the visitor numbers which were hoped for.

The total visitor numbers between 5.00-7.00 pm on Tuesday evenings from the beginning of January 2007 to the end of January 2009 was 3442. This gives an average of 32 visitors for each Tuesday evening during that period and an average of 16 visitors per hour of opening. The average hourly visitor numbers during the remainder of the Museum's opening hours was 100 in 2007 and 102 in 2008.

To illustrate: for the four weeks of January 2009 visitor numbers on Tuesday evening were: 5, 12, 8, 12 (therefore an average per hour of 2.5, 6, 4, 6). For the four weeks of January 2009 visitor numbers for the three hours on Sunday afternoon were: 318, 287, 631, 807 (therefore an average per hour of 106, 96, 210 and 269).

- 3.2 Evidence shows that during Tuesday evening opening the Museum shop makes a small operating loss due to the low visitor numbers. During the first two hours of trading on a Sunday afternoon, however, the average visitor number is higher and leads to an operating profit.
- 3.3 It is, therefore, proposed that the Museum closes at 5pm on Tuesdays and opens at 10am on Sundays.
- 3.4 There is also opportunity for the Museum Café to make more income through the earlier Sunday opening. It would give potential to attract Sunday lunch trade, which it cannot do at present.
- 3.5 The proposed changes will be met from within existing budgets.

4. CONSULTATION:

- 4.1 Lessees of the café at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery.
- 4.2 Information & Security staff are to be consulted.
- 4.3 Information gathered from visitor feedback surveys indicates that there is public demand for the Museum to be open for longer hours at weekends.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 It is expected that any one off and recurring costs associated with the planned change in hours will be met within budget. The Sunday morning opening is expected to increase visitor numbers, which in turn will generate retail income and donations and support the Value for Money objectives. Visitor numbers and income levels for the changed hours will be monitored.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley, 24/02/09.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are potential industrial relations implications as a change to working hours can amount to a variation in the terms of a contract of employment. However, Museum staff are currently on a rota which covers Sunday mornings and are, in any case, to be consulted before any changes are implemented.

On that basis, the risks of adverse consequences (eg industrial action) are small but should be taken into account when consulting with affected staff.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce, 20/02/09.

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 As is mentioned in 3.1 & 3.2 information has been gathered from visitor numbers to the Museum, which demonstrates that visitor numbers are considerably higher in the current first two hours of trading on Sunday afternoons.

Equalities officer consulted: Maureen Pasmore, 23/02/09.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 An extension to the hours of the current service increasing the opportunity for weekend visits to the Museum.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 No other option considered. The alternative would be to continue with the current opening hours.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 7.1 To extend the opening hours Brighton Museum & Art Gallery on a Sunday (with effect from a date to be agreed) in order to maximise weekend opening times and to meet public demand.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms:

None

Background Documents:

None

