

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet Committee – Group Company Governance

18th March 2021



Subject: Birmingham Museums Trust Ltd - Company Pen Portrait
Report of: Alison Jarrett, AD Commercial and Development,
Finance & Governance
Relevant Cabinet Member: Councillor Brigid Jones
Relevant O &S Chair(s): Councillor Sir Albert Bore
Report author: Alison Jarrett

Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :		

1 Executive Summary

Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) is to present to Members on the private agenda. This report provides Members with a pen portrait of the Trust.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the information provided

3 Background

- 3.1 BMT was set up in 2012 as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee to manage the Council's historic houses, cultural sites and collections on behalf the City Council. The Trust has a trading subsidiary Birmingham Museums Trading Ltd which contributed £644k to BMT in 2019 and its subsidiary charity, Thinktank Trust. It should be noted that Birmingham has the largest civic museum service in England.
- 3.2 The collections are displayed and stored in nine venues including Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery which operates as the head office for the BMT. The collection contains approximately 1 million objects. Much of it is designated by Arts Council England (ACE) as being of national importance and many collections are of international significance. Only 10% is on display or on loan at any one time. The collection is stored in 2 locations; BMAG and the Museum Collection Centre (MCC), Dollman Street, Nechells. Both sites require some refurbishment and improvements to the Council's collection storage facilities in order to continue to comply with the Arts Council's Museums Accreditation Standards.
- 3.3 Charitable Objectives
- To advance education by the operation, maintenance, development and promotion of museums, galleries and libraries in Birmingham, together with associated facilities and related programmes of outreach and research, fostering knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts, history, science and technology by residents and visitors to the city of Birmingham.
- 3.4 Vision
- To reflect Birmingham to the world, and the world to Birmingham.
- 3.5 Core purpose
- To showcase our outstanding collections and venues to inspire learning, creativity and enjoyment for people of Birmingham and visitors to the region.
- 3.6 Guiding Principles
- Inclusivity - Birmingham Museums Trust is for everyone
 - Excellence - We strive to be leaders and innovators, offering great experiences to our customers
 - Working Together - We work in partnership and support each other to achieve more for our audiences
 - Trust - Birmingham Museums Trust can be trusted to deliver on our promises and plans
 - Sustainable - We are entrepreneurial and put sustainability at the core of our practices

3.7 Aims

- Leading in excellence
- Developing the collection and venues
- Growing and diversifying audiences
- Building a sustainable business
- Investing in people

3.8 The company received a fixed fee payment for services from BCC of £2,831m in 2020 and 2019 plus a variable performance based fee of £2.0m including repayments for Thinktank rent, service charges and grant. These are planned to fall away if, as planned, the Council takes over the Thinktank lease directly from Millennium Point Trust in 2021. The Thinktank Trust has previously received loan finance of £11.5m and a grant of £1.4m to assist with property lease payments. Prior to 2020 the Trust employed an average FTE of 179 together with the services of over a thousand volunteers. This has significantly reduced since the advent of the pandemic with a large proportion of staff being made redundant or put on furlough.

3.9 In July 2018 Cabinet considered options for the relocation of BMAG and its stores during proposed refurbishment works within the Council House complex. Whilst proposals for major redevelopment of the whole Council House and BMAG Complex have been postponed until after the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the site will be closing from May / June this year for necessary electrical rewiring works that cannot be avoided. The complex will then reopen in phases with the first phase of Council House and BMAG 1885 wing reopening by March 2022 in time for the start of the CWG's Cultural Programme.

3.10 Key personnel and board members within BMT are:

Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah – Co-Directors of Birmingham Museums Trust

Toby Watley - Director of Collections

Rachel Cockett - Director of Development

Alex Nicholson-Evans - Commercial Director

Janine Eason - Director of Engagement

Richard Paterson - Finance Director and Company Secretary

Trustees

Niels de Vos (Chair)

Councillor Phil Davis

Councillor Robert Alden

Eamon Mooney

Tracey Stephenson

Jonnie Turpie MBE

Eleanor Porter	Mohammed Ali MBE
Claire Williamson	Luke Southall
John Diviney	Dr Louise Brooke-Smith OBE, FRICS, MRTPI
Liam Byrne MP	Clive Bawden
John Diviney	Sapreena Kumari
Liam Darbon	

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 4.1 This report provides information to Members on Birmingham Museums Trust and will assist in the exchanges and discussion on the presentation within the private agenda.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The Chair of the Committee has been consulted on the attendance of BMT.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 This report provides an outline of the company and background for discussion of company performance with the company representatives.

7 Compliance Issues:

- 7.1 **How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

The Council provides services to community through a number of different vehicles. This report provides information on BMT, a major provider of museums and heritage services and within the city.

The recommended decision supports the Birmingham City Council Plan 2018-2022, outcome 4: Birmingham is a great city to live in through priority 8, we will enhance our status as a city of culture, sports and events.

7.2 Legal Implications

The Council's Section 151 Officer has a duty to ensure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, requires the Council to have effective arrangements for the management of risk.

7.3 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report but Members should consider any questions or considerations arising from this report for discussion during the private agenda.

7.4 Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications directly arising from this report.

7.5 Human Resources Implications

There are no human resources implications directly arising from this report.

7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equality duty or equality analysis issues relating to the proposals set out in this report.

8 Background Documents

None