



Business Plan Update 2017-20



1. INTRODUCTION – "IT HAPPENED HERE"

"The Commandery – It Happened Here" is a programme to transform the Commandery as a visitor attraction and to contribute to a combined Civil War and Heritage City offer which will develop Worcester's visitor profile both in the UK and overseas.

It is based on the most thorough programme of research into heritage tourism commissioned in the City and County and builds on outline development and business planning carried out in 2015. This document is intended to bring those business plan assessments up to date and to provide further details on the design approaches adopted by the project team. The scope and scale of the project has now been extended thanks to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and other funders; it now includes a range of work to the building fabric alongside the interpretation programme to ensure a high quality of visitor experience.

2. CIVIL WAR CITY

The new Worcester City Plan for 2016-21 makes clear the importance of heritage in the City Council's vision for Worcester over the next five years. As part of that vision it wishes to see Worcester's role in the English Civil Wars being more widely recognised, with increasing international awareness of the visit of US Presidents Thomas Jefferson and John Adams in 1786.

A detailed assessment of the Worcester and Worcestershire Civil War product by TSE Research in 2014 identified the market potential for Civil War heritage and the importance of rooting this in a wider Heritage City concept to increase its appeal.

"The combined Civil War and Heritage City offer we believe could be the concept from which to develop and market Worcester's visitor profile. The Civil War giving it an undeniable USP, in terms of direct English Civil War themes but also encompassing the additional USP provided by the US Presidential and democracy links"

The Commandery redevelopment addresses the underdeveloped product issues identified in the report, creating greater visitor resonance in line with audience development research and providing more opportunities for educational visits. A new Civil War heritage trail will also help to reinforce this message and link together sites with Civil War connections in the City Centre.

The task of making inroads into domestic and international markets is best met by a collective approach, led by those with overall responsibility for tourism. Museums Worcestershire currently supports this activity through:

- Membership of the Battle of Worcester Heritage Partnership
- Work with Battle of Worcester Society to host and promote specific events
- Hosting of the Love Worcester events at the Commandery

- Partnership working with the Sealed Knot to support future living history events and re-enactments
- Commemoration of Oak Apple Day
- Contributing to City wide initiatives on related themes e.g. Liberty and Democracy programme for the Magna Carta anniversary

The completion of the Commandery's redevelopment will allow for new initiatives including:

- Closer working on Civil War tourism with other UK attractions
- Development of specific tours linked to the Presidents' visit
- Support for increased ancestral tourism linked to the Scottish armies who fought for Charles at the Battle of Worcester

3. THE COMMANDERY MASTERPLAN

Museums Worcestershire has appointed award winning exhibition designers GuM who have developed a new master plan for the building, with new Civil War displays at the heart of phase 1 as originally agreed. The development of a master plan for the building has refined the approach to the creation of a new visitor offer for the Commandery, in the light of previously commissioned studies on the tourism potential of the City's Civil War history.

This has in turn provided a structured approach to maintenance issues and ensured that the planned capital investment on interpretation is supported by essential works on the building fabric. The master plan for the Commandery now consists of 5 phases:

Phase 0: Commandery Visitor Experience Maintenance Works
General fabric repairs, improvements to decoration, renewal of fire protection and heating improvements in advance of visitor experience and interpretation works.
Phase 1: Worcester – the Civil War City
<p>A series of linked garden wing displays will tell the story of Worcester's part in the English Civil Wars, the key historical figures and the significance of the conflict in helping to shape our Parliamentary democracy.</p> <p>The façade of the building will include a new display of pikes above the gates which will be opened to provide a new entrance into the courtyard.</p> <p>To the rear of the building a new The Commandery Civil War study centre will be established including a library, research and volunteer facilities. The shop displays and stock will be refreshed to reflect the change of theme and reception for group visits will be enhanced in the canal wing.</p>

Phase 2 - "It happened here"
A new light and projection display in the Great Hall to introduce the significance of The Commandery to visitors, plus the story of the visit of US Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in rooms overlooking Fort Royal Park.
Phase 3 - Commercial and visitor services
The creation of a new café in the front of the building facing the street the courtyard and canal, with the relocation of retail and admission point nearer the Great Hall entrance. The establishment of a high quality wedding and corporate hire suite of rooms on the ground floor with an independent entrance. The creation of temporary exhibition space
Phase 4 - Future interpretation
Completion of the interpretation plan concentrating on Medieval and Tudor Worcester.

Phases 0, 1 and 2 are currently at tender stage with a target completion date of June 2017.

The following benefits were identified at the start of the first phase of the project:

- An improved visitor offer linked to the Battle of Worcester story and the visit of the US Presidents, already identified in previous reports on the visitor economy as having the potential to help draw international visitors and reinforce the Civil War City message
- a better offer for schools, particularly at Key Stage 3
- significant opportunities to generate additional income from admissions income, linked to a review of pricing structures, and to increase the number of visitors from all categories, including international audiences
- re-configuring and re-stocking the shop to fit better with the new interpretation plans (as a priority to result in an increase in spend per visitor)
- An increase in the number of weddings and other events to make a contribution of up to £15K per annum.
- Associated heating and environmental improvements in the spaces allocated for displays to improve the experience for visitors and the care of collections.
- Overall, a reduction in building running costs of £37K.
- Generation of an additional income of c£64k by year 3

These figures have been reviewed and amended in this business plan to take account of further work to refine the proposals and develop delivery plans for each area. Details of the revised revenue projections are provided at the end of this document.

Phases 3 and 4 require further feasibility work and assessment, particularly in relation to the relocation of services for a new catering offer at the front of the building. Subject to further investigation, it ought to be possible to achieve completion, even with an external fundraising phase, on or before Easter 2020.

4. THE 2017 CAPITAL PROJECT

The development of the Commandery as a revitalised visitor attraction rests on the transformation of the visitor experience and in particular the success of the new interpretation scheme. The key elements of this change are:

- The creation of a hub on which *Worcester the Civil War City* can develop to bring more visitors to Worcester.
- Communication of the key message that an important moment in history happened on this spot.
- Strongly multi-sensory, multi-levelled engaging displays and interpretation, providing most visitors with an experience of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour dwell time.
- Participatory, dramatic and enjoyable interpretation that can be enjoyed socially as a group with little or no prior knowledge of this period of history.
- Signposts and opportunities for deeper exploration into the historical research and detailed stories for visitors who are interested.
- Design solutions that exploit and enhance the atmosphere of the Commandery's historic spaces.
- Design solutions that are robust enough to withstand the Commandery's range of temperature and other environmental challenges.
- Communication of the key stories even if high-tech elements of the design are temporarily out of order.
- The first stage of improvements for the Commandery site, with future opportunities for more.

The exhibition design package is supported by a programme of works to the fabric which have been designed to support the enhancement of visitor facilities and future income generation. This programme consists of:

- Building fabric investigation and repair works
- Creation of a new pedestrian entrance and signage
- Electrical and lighting upgrades
- Fire and Security System upgrades
- Replacement of heaters
- Redecoration and minor works

Listed Building Consent for the above works was granted in February 2017.

5. MARKETING AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

The marketing plan for the Commandery is built on a substantial research and consultation programme.

In 2013 Museums Worcestershire commissioned a significant body of research (funded by Arts Council England) into the potential of the English Civil War heritage to provide an overarching theme for the Commandery as a visitor destination. The research examined the current visitor experience at the historic site from the perspective of existing and future visitors, evaluated pilot interpretation with these audiences, identified potential future visitors to engage with a Civil War product and quantified the wider Civil War history that exists in Worcester. These studies included:

- English Civil War in Worcestershire, TSE Research (Jan 2014)
- Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester, TSE Research (March 2014)
- Audience research and evaluation of pilot interpretation, MHM (March 2014)
- The Commandery Pricing Plan, Blue Sail (March 2014)
- The Commandery Marketing Strategy, Blue Sail (March 2014)
- Heritage Product Development Final, TSE Research (April 2014)

As a result of this work, the strategic marketing aims identified for the site are:

- To ensure the Commandery sits at the core of the tourism offer for Worcester as the "English Civil War City"
- To increase income for The Commandery to ensure its sustainability and reduce its reliance on public sources
- To maximise the potential of the investment in the interpretation and visitor experience which will be offered by The Commandery

The strategic objectives to support these aims are:

- Present a clear and compelling proposition for the Commandery which can be used directly by Museums Worcestershire and by its partners and others in promoting the Commandery
- Increase income to the Commandery by increasing visitor numbers and spend from targeting marketing at best prospect segments
- Develop a small number of partnership initiatives to enhance the Commandery's appeal for specific markets, extend reach and exploit additional channels

Using the research conducted for the study "Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy" and knowledge of the City's visitor markets, the market segments identified to deliver the best return on investment and with the greatest potential for growth are:

Leisure	Day trips within 45 minutes travel time
	Special interest groups from the UK and USA
	Staying visitors in Worcestershire
Education	Educational groups within 60 minutes travel time

Events	Worcester residents
	Day trips from within 30-45 minutes travel time
Weddings	Worcester residents
	Within 30-45 minutes travel time
Corporate events and functions	Worcester companies and organisations
	Companies and organisations within 30-45 minutes travel time

As a part of its reimagining and repositioning project, a new brand was considered an essential element in the relaunch of the Commandery visitor experience. The intention is to create a strong identity to permeate all marketing channels, reinforcing key messages about the visitor experience and signalling change to stakeholders and previous visitors.

Modus of Worcester were appointed in 2016 to develop a brand and following a series of workshops and focus group, with key partners and users, the following name and proposition was agreed:

The Commandery Worcester

Civil War Battle HQ & Historic Building

Bringing to life tales of treason, treachery and tragedy in this beautiful building with a bloody past, in the heart of historic Worcester where the English Civil War began and ended.

A visual identity with a series of flexible applications was then developed to reflect different strands of the Commandery offer, utilising a colour palette inspired by Civil War uniforms and equipment.

The outline development plan produced by DCA Consulting and approved in 2015 identified the following as immediate priorities: branding and visual identity development and implementing phase 1 of a phased marketing strategy leading up to a relaunch.

The budget included a £32,000 one –off investment for brand development, website development and a marketing campaign before opening the new facilities. These are now all planned or already in place, supported by a part-time post of marketing assistant. This post will need to continue as part of the Commandery's core team, if the financial benefits of the Commandery investment and its impact on the visitor economy are to be realised. The costs of this post have therefore been included in the revised salary budget for 2017-18 and future years' projections.

6. EVENTS

The Commandery's events programme has an important role to play in supporting the refurbishment and repositioning plans for the Commandery in the years ahead. The redesign of the building has included an evaluation of space requirements for activities; the new interpretation plan will place limits on the rooms available to accommodate large scale events in future, as will the dedicated space provided on the ground floor of the garden wing for weddings and corporate hires.

Events have a key role to play in driving up repeat visits and providing a focus for marketing campaigns and collaborative work with other heritage sites. The new budget includes a small uplift for events and re-enactments to ensure the programme is of high quality. This will be supported by an ongoing fundraising drive and the Commandery has received offers of financial support and help in kind from the Worcestershire Ambassadors and the Sealed Knot for 2017.

7. LEARNING AND COMMUNITY LINKS

The original development report by DCA identified significant opportunities to increase visits by school parties. These are to be built around the core offer of programmes to link to local history studies as part of the History Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2, as well as more opportunities to link explicitly to the curriculum at Key Stages 3. These cover the development of the Church, State and Society in Britain 1509-1745. Examples include the causes and events of the Civil War throughout Britain, which is central to the new interpretation, planned for the building and associated trails.

The Commandery has twice received the Sandford Award for Heritage Education, a sign of the quality of staff engagement and facilities in the building. The latter have been reviewed as part of the current spatial planning exercise to continue to offer the facilities needed to host school groups and to deliver an extended programme in future.

The main elements of this programme planned for 2017-18 are:

- Civil War Theatre performances for 5 Worcester schools
- Collaborative arts programme for 10 Worcestershire schools
- Development of new resources and education packs for schools
- New marketing strategy and leaflets for schools
- NFC (Near Field Communication) interpretation and tablets for multimedia tours
- Civil War school loans box

All project materials and additional staffing related to the above have been funded through grants from Arts Council England and the Elmley Foundation. The delivery has also been designed to fit in with the current Commandery Interpretation Team's existing roles in order to avoid additional staffing costs. Further details illustrating how the Commandery's learning offer fits into the wider project are set out in the appendix.

The scale of the learning programme in future years will be subject to further fundraising but will encompass the following areas from 2019 onwards:

- Redevelopment of Monastic and Tudor school sessions
- Staff and volunteer training
- Full delivery and launch of the new education offer
- Full education marketing provision

Museums Worcestershire has well established links with the Battle of Worcester Heritage Partnership, and the Battle of Worcester Society; in addition the Commandery team work closely with community groups like the Friends of Fort Royal Park and the Commandery Gardens.

8. RETAIL AND CATERING

Following the adoption of the DCA recommendations, a small allocation of £7K was made available to reconfigure and restock the Commandery shop. Work to improve visual merchandising and to stock a relevant range of items linked to the new offer was started in the autumn of 2016. This brought immediate results, a 30% uplift in turnover for December compared with the same period in the previous year. Retail income is heavily dependent on footfall to the site however, so any increase will only be sustained and developed once the new displays are launched.

The presence of a Commandery café through the summer months has brought significant benefits, although catering of itself will not generate significant direct income. It also helps to reinforce links between the Commandery and Fort Royal Park users, as well as increasing dwell time for visitors to the building. At the time of writing a new operator is being sought for 2017. At the same time the Commandery team have also sought to improve refreshments for evening events e.g. the Commandery lecture programme, establishing a small bar in rooms off the Great Hall. The development of weddings will also impact on the requirement for high quality catering on site in due course.

The new master plan proposes that the locations for catering and admissions/retailing are switched in the canal wing, with the café moving to a street facing location and outside seating provided in the courtyard. A new admissions point would be established near to the Great Hall. These remain untested plans until further work is done so the current proposals to gradually improve shop sales and the catering offer in their existing locations will be pursued in the short to medium term.

9. CORPORATE HIRE AND WEDDINGS

The Commandery has been available as a venue for hire for many years; among the existing uses are Fright Nights, Ghost Walks and Shakespeare at the Commandery, and occasional lectures and performances. The building is also available for wedding receptions and there were 3 bookings in 2016.

The DCA report identified the potential for greater income generation, providing the following issues could be addressed as part of the scheme:

- Improving the heating and environmental conditions to extend the use of the building in colder months
- Allocating space away from the visitor route for private bookings and smaller wedding receptions
- Exploring the potential for holiday lets in the garden wing
- Providing additional staffing to promote the offer and to manage wedding bookings, to ensure customers receive a high quality of customer care and support.

The initial costs of converting part of the building for holiday lets were deemed to be prohibitive but the other issues are part of the current plans. The proposals for building works and visitor flow have been addressed in the capital scheme and a newly redecorated weddings suite will be located on the ground floor of No 1 Commandery Drive, to give wedding parties a dedicated space for smaller ceremonies or somewhere to gather in advance of larger receptions in the Great Hall or the Commandery Gardens. An initial wedding package is being launched in October 2017, using the allocation of £15k included in the capital plan. Further work is planned to the rest of the wedding suite once further funding can be secured.

Preparations for securing a 3 year weddings licence are now complete and a pricing structure was agreed by the joint museums committee in November 2016. A job description for a part-time wedding coordinator has been developed and the provisional costs for this post included in the budget from September 2017. A weddings brochure with high quality images of the newly refurbished spaces will be produced in October 2017.

The target income from weddings and corporate hire is estimated to be £44,700 (less VAT) by Year 3, based on the following increase in bookings:

2017/18 - £12080 (part year)

2018/19 - £23,560 (4 full price and 2 smaller hires)

2019/20 - £32,740 (6 full price and 5 smaller hires)

2020/21 - £44,700 (10 full price and 7 smaller hires)

10. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

The Commandery is one of four sites managed by Museums Worcestershire and benefits from management, specialist and technical expertise available across the shared service. The building and its team are led on site by David Nash, the Commandery Manager and Museums Worcestershire's Curator of Social History.

The Commandery's team was restructured in 2015 to provide a more focussed approach to interpretation and learning and a more robust structure to respond to forthcoming increases in visitor numbers. Members of the team have a specific brief to provide face to face interpretation to visitors, groups and schools and these skills will enhance the visitor experience alongside the forthcoming improvements in display.

The current establishment is as follows:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Hours pw</i>
David Nash	Commandery Manager	35
Sarah Bourne	Events and Visitor Services Officer	30
Jo Willis	Interpretation and Learning Coordinator	30
Oliver Carey	Museum Attendant	28
Kerry Whitehouse	Interpretation Assistant	16
Carol Campbell	Interpretation Assistant	20
Alex Bear	Interpretation Assistant	13
Mandy Fretwell	Finance and Clerical Assistant	21
Shelagh Allen	Retail Assistant	22
Post vacant	Retail Assistant	22

11. PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING

The cost plan for the following elements of the project in phases 0-2 were approved by the City Council in September/October 2016:

	Total £
Exhibition improvements	184806
Environmental works	38188
Building maintenance and improvements	120000
Marketing	30500
Weddings and Retail	22500
Activity Plan	5000
Design Fees	88000
Lighting	7800
Preliminaries/Contingency/Fees	57400
TOTAL	554194

In addition to the core funding from Worcester City Council, the project has been awarded the following grants and donations:

	Total £
Heritage Lottery Fund	96000
Worcestershire County Council	50000
Arts Council England	28504
Friends of Worcester Museums	5000
Battle of Worcester Society	1000
Worcestershire Ambassadors	500

12. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FORECAST

The Commandery

	2016-17	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
EXPENDITURE	Budget	Projected	Budget	Budget	Budget	
Salaries incl on costs	118180	119229	139790	147540	149015	1
Pay protection (3 years)	3310	3310	3310	0	0	
Casuals and overtime	13100	15613	15500	17100	17100	2
Insurance (staff related)	874	874	870	1000	1000	
Staff sub-total	135464	139026	159470	165640	167115	
Overheads						
Cleaning (windows and materials)	2000	2000	2200	2400	2600	3
Stock for shop	7600	6487	8000	9000	10500	4
Exhibitions	3400	2100	3400	3400	3400	
Equipment and materials	1800	1650	1800	1800	1800	
Events expenditure	1800	1800	5000	6000	7000	5
Stationery	2700	1200	2200	2700	2700	
Communications (post)	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	
Communications (Telephone)	2700	1300	1700	1700	1700	
Marketing	7300	7300	10000	13000	15000	
Other Fees (Licences, VAQAS)	800	900	1000	1000	1000	6
Securicor	1000	1417	800	1000	1000	
Travel and subsistence	300	68	300	300	300	
Bank charges	500	500	500	500	500	
Overheads sub-total	34400	29222	39400	45300	50000	
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	169864	168248	198870	210940	217115	
Admissions	23400	22830	37500	48800	63300	
Educational visits	13000	8900	10200	12100	15250	
Hires and events	10000	10000	12500	23560	32740	
Retail sales	17000	11518	17200	20000	23500	
Café income	0	366	1500	2500	3500	
Donations and miscellaneous	1100	823	1800	1900	2100	
Marketing one -off support			12500			
INCOME TOTAL	64500	54437	93200	108860	140390	
NET EXPENDITURE	105364	113811	105670	102080	76725	

1. Includes p/t marketing post and weddings coordinator (21hrs Sc. 5)
2. Extra casual staffing to support increase in events
3. Additional cleaning to cover events and increased footfall
4. Increased stock in line with income projections
5. Events expenditure increased to provide for three major events annually in Feb./May/August
6. New displays will require PRS licences

