

Reference	
Executive Director	Lynne Ridsdale
Cabinet Member	Cllr Morris

Section A

Service Area	Corporate Core
Budget Option Description	Options appraisal of Bury Art Museum & TIC

Budget Reduction Proposal – Detail and Objectives

Bury Council recognises the important role that culture plays in community and economic development. Through the leadership of the Arts and Museum service the Council became the first GM Town of Culture in 2019; the museum site will be included in the culture quarter of the Bury town centre masterplan and the scope for a significantly expanded events offer is central to regeneration plans in Radcliffe and Bury through the new public hub / flexi hall buildings.

Independent advice on a potential borough culture strategy was sought and partners have been engaged during the autumn to bring it to a conclusion. The intention is to bring forward a proposal for Council approval in March 2023

The Council's Art Museum is presently central to the borough cultural co-ordination and a much-loved asset. The service operates with a small team comprised of a manager, curator; assistant curator, operations officer and a small number of Visitor Assistants. In addition, the service provides a Tourist Information Service which, by operating from the front desk of Fusiliers' Museum, also host the reception to the Fusiliers Museum.

In the context of the council's budget position options to underwrite the museum costs have been considered over the last 8 weeks, including addressing the disrepair of the listed building from which it operates and the fact that visitor numbers have, regrettably, reduced and not yet recovered post Covid and a long-standing income target remains outstanding.

The options appraisal has been informed by feedback from over 500 survey responses and 37 stakeholder replies from organisations and interest groups. Detailed analysis of the results is below this template but focusses largely on support for greater commercialisation including suggestions for a "friends" group; to pursue voluntary donations and host charged-for, ticketed events. The overwhelming message from the public who have responded is that it is not necessary financially to close the site as cost contributions will be achievable.

In the context of further analysis and consultation feedback, final proposals are to:

- Invest in professional technical advice to submit a high-quality MEND application to the Arts Council for repairs to the building. This process is now underway
- Review staffing costs to make a small reduction in the service cost base
- Pursue voluntary income through installation of a digital, voluntary donation point
- Implement ticketed events during 2023 as part of service planning which will address the historic £20 000 income target and explore scope to increase income in future to contribute towards costs
- Invest UKSPF funding in leadership and fundraising capacity across the Bury arts sector, including the museum, to provide the capacity to develop and implement a commercialisation model which will address pressures within the art museum and for other partners. This will include pursuing external grant funding from partners such as the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as income from donations and optional ticketed events available to the public
- Commit to a feasibility study to engage an external partner to develop and operate some of the museum space for external event hire, particularly weddings, in order to achieve a rolling revenue income line and enhance the events offer within Bury Town Centre

	2023/24	2024/25
Budget Reduction (£m)	£0.050m	£0.200m
Staffing Reduction (FTE)	2-3	0

Section B

What impact does the proposal have on:

Property
The property disrepair will be addressed through external investment, subject to a successful MEND application. A feasibility of the engagement of an external operator to further develop the site for external events hire will also be explored.
Service Delivery
The proposal is to maintain current service delivery and develop the offer to include additional, ticketed events to secure additional income
Organisation (Including Other Directorates/Services)
BGI capacity required to support the architectural assessment for MEND application; to progress a feasibility study for events use and a major dependency on Bury town centre masterplan. Any changes to the building will impact of Bury Museum and Archive service which also operate from the site
Workforce – Number of posts likely to be affected.
Efficiencies sought from staffing structure – potential reduction of 2-3 posts, subject to a detailed service review and consultation exercise
Communities and Service Users
Dependency of public engagement with ticketed events and contributions to a voluntary donation point
Other Partner Organisations
Fusiliers' museum affected by any changes to reception support

Section C

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risks	Mitigations
Community opposition to any reductions or changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community consultation
Arts council funding withdrawn for museum roof on basis of any change in use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEND application now underway; engagement with Arts Council contact
BGI capacity to include museum within Masterplan programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site formally included in culture quarter proposals
Ability to engage meaningfully with Arts Council/deliver change, outside of directly impacted staff group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated leadership proposed, funded by UKSPF
Insufficient income from commercialisation model secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savings deferred to year 2 to give time for commercialisation model to be developed and values confirmed. Option revisited in 2024/25 if assumptions not achieved

Key Delivery Milestones: *Include timescales for procurement, commissioning changes etc.*

Milestone	Timeline
Temporary leadership and fundraising capacity established Donation point installed Income strategy for existing target in place	April 2023
Service review & c£50 000 savings identified	June 2023
Feasibility study of operator for event hire; outline business case determined	June 2023
Income strategy developed	July 2023
Evaluation to inform 2024/25 budget	October 2023

Section D

Consultation Required?	Complete
------------------------	----------

	Start Date	End Date
Staff		
Trade Unions		
Public		
Service User		
Other		

Equality Impact

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate/ adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or undergone a process or part of a process of gender assignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA Required?	No
----------------------	-----------

Section E: *Financial Implications and Investment Requirements*

Investment requirements – Revenue and Capital
MEND application requires investment provided for from existing funds Feasibility study for future events space to be funded form UKSPF funds

Finance Comments – Will the proposal deliver the savings and within the agreed timescales?
Delivery: 50k by summer 2023 – service restructure / voluntary donations

200k income generation 2024/24 from event hire and fundraising/income. Strategy to be pursued in 2023/24 to demonstrate achievable values and confirm assumptions

Bury Art Museum Consultation Report

Methodology

Consultation commenced on 7th November 2022 and closed six weeks later, on 19th December 2022. The questionnaire was developed and hosted on-line on 'One Community', the council's engagement and consultation portal (hard copies were available on request and from reception points in the Art Museum and Fusiliers Museum.

523 responses were received on-line via One Community with a further 37 email/letters/testimonies received to the dedicated engagement inbox.

The consultation was promoted via:

- Council Social media accounts
- Press releases
- One community newsletter
- The Bury Directory
- Art Museum newsletter
- Hub weekly newsletters
- Direct engagement with stakeholders e.g. funders, schools, exhibitors, other cultural venues both in Greater Manchester, Nationally and Internationally, community group users of the museum spaces, local arts and cultural groups, groups that the Art Museum work in partnership/collaboration with.
- Two events at the Art Gallery at which the consultation was actively promoted.
- Community groups newsletters

The survey was open to all and therefore respondents were self-selecting, meaning that results should be viewed as indicative of the wider population rather than representative.

All percentages have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.

All free text responses received from the on-line survey have been grouped into themes along with those from emails/letter/testimonies.

The overall view from respondents both on-line and those who sent it email/letters/testimonies was to keep the art museum open, as it is an asset to Bury, it plays a central part of the cultural offer and history of the town and is also a valued place to view art, both by local residents, those visiting from across Greater Manchester and from across the country.

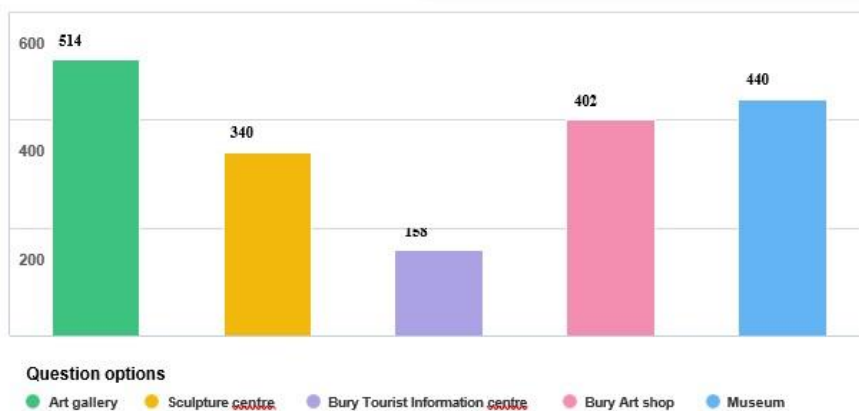
Respondents did also have many positive and imaginative ideas as to how the 250k savings needed from the museum could be generated, which was mainly through greater commercialism, working in partnership and considering other funding streams and income generation schemes, as well as ideas generally about how the spaces and building could be used to its advantage, whilst maintaining the art collection and allowing the public to see it in person.

The survey received responses across all demographics (see graphs below) but no real differences in opinion was found.

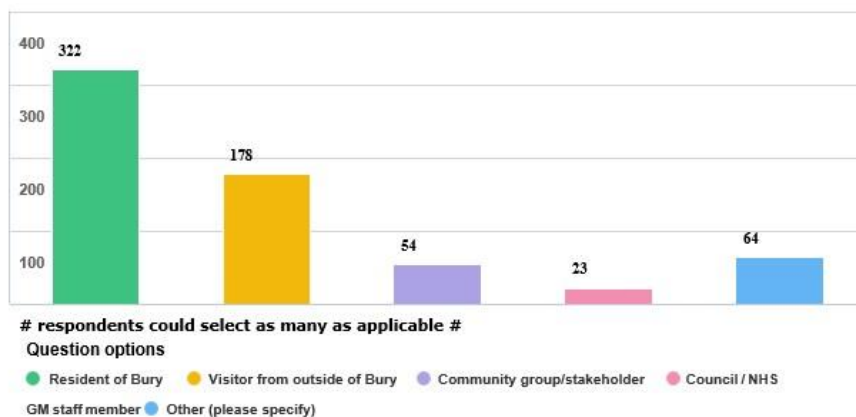
Bury Art Museum Consultation Findings

Question: What if any, have you used in the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply)

Within the last 12 months 514 respondents stated that they had visited the Art Gallery, with a further 440 visiting the Museum, 402 visiting the shop, 340 attending the sculpture centre and 158 people accessing the tourist Information centre.



Question: How are you responding to this consultation?



As the graph shows, the largest group of respondents were residents of Bury (322), whilst 178 respondents visited from outside of Bury. 54 people were responding as part of a community group or as a stakeholder and 23 staff members of the Council/NHS GM responded. 64 people responded as 'other'.

'Other' responses came from:

- Exhibitors/artists – 32 respondents
- Bury College lecturer/teacher in Art – 6
- Local business owner – 3
- Volunteer at Bury Art Gallery – 3
- Museum professional - 2

On-line open-ended results

Respondents were next asked a series of questions that asked for their comments and thoughts. For each question all comments have been grouped into themes.

Question: Do you have any suggestions as to how the Council could make the £250k savings required from the Art Museum?

518 comments were made to this question. The comments have been themed as below, along with a small number of the comments.

The largest number of comments that were received related to the art gallery being more commercial, with suggestions such as hosting weddings, charging for entry, loaning out pieces of art, being a film location, musical events, hire out for private events. Repurposing the space (for corporate events, community use, events) partnership delivery, and alternative ways of funding were also suggested by large number of respondents. Digitisation of collections was put forward but mainly to complement the physical presence of the collections rather than replace them.

Greater commercialism

The largest number of comments that were received related to the art gallery being more commercial, with suggestions such as hosting weddings, charging for entry, loaning out pieces of art, being a film location, musical events, hire out for private events.

'hire out building for private events when shut - filming, weddings, conferences., concerts. It's a beautiful building and so should be of interest'

'increase the profile of the shop - why no online shopfront? Could be a great shop window for local contemporary artists generating commission'

'I'd like to see greater commercialisation, what about more music events, alcohol licence (with local brewers such as brewsmith, brightside etc), local artists selling events etc, dining experience with guided tours, dating events,

more art courses, perhaps in the evening oil, acrylic, drawing etc. Charge for this'

'More options for events. There's loads of demand for parent and baby stuff, and being such an accessible venue could create a great opportunity. A kid safe/friendly play space would definitely encourage us to come more'

'Greater commercialisation

Use of historic buildings for filming, weddings, functions etc'

Repurposing of space

'Rent the unique gallery spaces for private parties, weddings, corporate events, conferences, craft fairs, music events'

'By using the museum space for ticketed, paid performances and events'

'Use the space as a training space for other public service groups to use, rather than buy space commercially from outside the council. There are excellent examples of this in other museums regionally and nationally. Ideal for NHS/Education training groups'

Partnership delivery

'By working with schools and other community projects to educate future generations to develop an understanding and love of the arts. Encourage established artist to share their skills within the museum'

'Partnership delivery would be a preferred method - more support from the wider cultural sector in GM'

'partnership delivery, could this be linked with Fusilliers Museum next door. Can there be any partnership with other museums/galleries in GM - Lowery/Imperial War Museum exhibitions from other GM/North West organisations'

Alternative ways to raise funds

'Start a membership scheme? Annual subscription in return a couple of member events (talks/tours) and cafe/shop discount'

'Legacy scheme / Bury supporters group / Event hire / greater commercialisation, prints on demand, art collection / virtual supporters or adoption scheme'

'Friends of scheme'

'Crowdfunding for repairs'

Digitisation

'Expanded digital provision may support the art museum, if this can generate income, and it can be done without reducing the existing offer'

'Use of digital media'

'Expanded digital provision might be a valuable asset and a way of drawing more people to the museum'

Question: How would any change to current arrangements impact on you/your group?

509 comments were received to this question. Comments received fell in to three main themes as below.

Impact on Bury

'Bury would cease to become an attractive place to live, and investment would surely shrink if Bury Art Museum's service was to diminish under the wishes of the council'

'If this gallery were to close or change too much, I feel the cultural heart would be stripped from the Town...it would be devastating'

'It would be a tragedy for Bury to lose it's only art based cultural space'

'It would take away from the community massively. Cultural landmarks like this are the backbone of any town and not having it there would have severe negative repercussions on family days out, tourism and myself as an artist'

'I visit monthly and bring visitors here, any closure would impact on the attractiveness for me/ my visitors coming to the town centre'

'I am an artist and professor of art and daughter to two young girls - your change would mean a bury would win the race to the bottom of culture - well done - seriously it would affect me in that bury would not be visited by me my family nor any of my friends and associates - again own goal'

'It will take away a reason to visit Bury and enjoy (and spend money) in the rest of town's amenities. It makes me wonder whether Bury values its history and culture, which are well manifested by the Museum'

'Would not visit anymore'

'The museum provides a vital cultural hub at the heart of the community, and I would visit Bury considerably less were it not there'

'The Art Museum puts on exhibitions that I have travelled to Bury to see. While in Bury, I spend money in local shops. The closure of the Art Museum would remove my reason for visiting Bury town centre'

'The art gallery is a real asset to our community and it's removal would significantly impact many people's likelihood of visiting Bury and therefore engaging with other services and spending money in our shops and businesses'

Impact on local artist/exhibitors

'Precious opportunities for local artists to exhibit and sell art work be lost'

'I have exhibited with the Museum as part of the Text Festivals. It would be a huge loss if this place were no longer available. I have donated time and work to the Museum'

'If the gallery closed We would not get a chance to Have our annual exhibition and it is an important event for Bury Art Society'

'Without Bury Art Gallery, I'd have not shown my first major work. This work demanded 50 people, who had never been to Bury before, going to participate as well as enjoy the exhibition and Bury's other offering's before and after. So to answer the question, new artists would not have a space in Greater Manchester, and Bury would cease to have any cultural connection to the county'

Educational impact

'Bury is small. It helped me through my entire art career and time at university to see such a nice gallery in this small town. In doing so attracts more people, and makes it a proper culture hub and hotspot. You'll push people away, therefore effecting like-mindless and culture of the North!'

'The community would be without an internationally-reaching art museum and Sculpture Centre, artworks by world-renowned artists such as JMW Turner, community events and workshops, and no provision for the thousands of school children that come throu The removal of a local art museum will negatively impact the educational remit of the local area. It will be a big blow to children and schools in the area gh its doors year upon year as part of the educational offer'

'The gallery and museum offer my children and their friends a chance to engage with art and historical artefacts. Hands on workshops enable them to interact with history in a way a text book can't do. Being surrounded by changing exhibitions both in the sculpture centre and gallery challenges them to think about the world in ways they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to. Art helps children think critically - take inspiration away and you risk taking away the spark which leads to new exciting ways of thinking and as a result, progress'

'I work at Bury College Art department, and we have links with the Bury Creatives team and often do things in collaboration with this team. We also use the Gallery as a valuable local resource to show our students artwork in person as often they have never visited a gallery'

before. If the gallery were to close or reduce its provision or opening hours, this would impact us'

Question: If the Council withdraws the museum, how could the public access it's art collection?

485 comments were received to this question. The comments fell in to two main themes; it wouldn't be able to be viewed and located to other venues.

Digitisation was mentioned but in the main was commented on to complement the physical collection not replace it.

Don't think it would be able to be viewed

'The collection is important and needs to be both cared for an accessible to the public and the current gallery is the best way of doing this'

'There is no real way of enabling the population to access the collection'

'I suspect the public wouldn't be able to access the collection and it would be lost forever'

'The public will not be able to access the art collection. It will be a great loss to Bury. I work in the town and do not live there but I think the town centre has a great deal to offer and the museum is in an important part of that. If lost, it will not be regained'

'There is no substitute for seeing the collections at first hand'

'Withdrawing the museum would be in conflict with taking into account the Deed of Gift and the obligations for care and repair of the collection. Bury's residents have a right to access their public art collection. It is also important that wherever anyone lives in the country (be that London or Bury) that one can access public collections of significant art. Removing access from communities that are already disadvantaged will result in lowered aspirations and opportunities for creative development and town regeneration'

Located to other venues/galleries

'Loan of artwork to other locations?'

'Safely display in already public spaces like the bus station'

'Move all art collection to another free to access museum'

'Share to neighbouring venues'

'The collection would need to be moved to an alternative location or housed, conserved and displayed within the current building in a scaled down forma

'Display the physical collection around bury in other public and prominent buildings on rotation. Then everyone might get to see it'

Digitalisation

People did suggest digitalisation may be an option but generally thought it should complement not replace being able to see the collection in person

'Art UK or similar digital platform'

You would need to invest in a digitisation programme that includes high resolution photography of the collection items, full cataloguing of the items, delivery of the catalogue

and associated images online, all of which is likely to cost as much as, if not more than, the £250K you are seeking to save by closing the Art Museum. 629 of your artworks are already in the digital public domain via Art UK, you could build on this by discussing with Art UK whether there is potential for further digitisation of your collection.

Digital access is an option but looking at art on screen is no replacement for being in the space.

Question: Any other comments?

378 comments were received. The comments received reiterated comments to the previous three open ended questions. With the majority of comments stressing the need to keep the art gallery open and as it is now and stating what a loss it would be to Bury as a place if it were to close. Respondents also commented again on how the 250k could be generate as they had done in previous questions.

Below are examples of comments received to this final open ended question.

‘Please think much more imaginatively about this problem. I fully understand you can't financially support this, but think and get the right person in to help with a very small team for a period and you should be provided with a legacy that means you don't have to worry about this issue again’

‘Withdrawal of funding and removing staff from Bury Art gallery and museum/ Tourist information centre would fundamentally change the outlook of Bury within the North West: far from building on the reputation as town of culture this is now being destroyed. All the opportunities provided to school children, youth groups, vulnerable adults, residents, workers and visitors to Bury would be lost. Closing Bury Art Museum would be a huge loss both locally and nationally as access to the import collection of art would be lost’

‘The council have a great asset in the gallery. The museum has regained its full registration lost after the sale of the Lowry painting and this should not be jeopardised again. The museum provides a cultural beacon at a time when few other cultural options exist. It is unreasonable to say that the building could remain the heart of the cultural quarter and taking away its function as a respected (registered) museum and art gallery. It is a creative space Because it is a fully functional gallery. The gallery's engagement with the public, for children and adults is already excellent, providing a service which supports school curriculum at all levels. Their engagement also supports adults, not just artists and creatives but provides an unofficial mental health and wellness service. The council should encourage and further build on this. Above all, the council need to retain the skill set of the museum team who already provide these services which other museums have to buy in’

‘Just generally horrified that anyone's considering shutting an art museum’

‘Think it would be unforgivable if the museum were closed. The town would lose a valuable asset which would speed up the decline of the town centre and lose tourists and visitors’

Respondents were then asked a series of questions about themselves. The tables below show the responses received.

Question: Which age bracket do you fit in to?

Age bracket	number of respondents and %
18 or under	2 (0.4%)
19-24	17 (3%)
25-34	60 (11%)
35-44	115 (22%)
45-54	95 (18%)

55-64	128 (24%)
65+	118 (22%)

As the table shows, the largest number of respondents were over the age of 35, but relatively evenly slip between 35 and 65+ years. The younger age groups were still positively represented.

Question: What is your gender?

Gender	Number of respondents and %
Female	346 (65%)
Male	186 (35%)

65% of responses were received from females, with 35% from males.

Question: What is your religion?

Religion	Number of respondents and %
No religion	301 (59%)
Christian	171 (33%)
Jewish	10 (2%)
Muslim	6 (1%)
Buddhist	4 (1%)
Hindu	1 (0%)
Other	20 (4%)

The largest number of respondents to the survey (59%) stated that they had 'no religion' with a further (33%) stating that they were Christians. Other religions were represented in the responses.

Question: Do you have a disability?

No	452 (86%)
Yes	73 (14%)

86% of respondents did not have a disability, however 73 respondents (14%) had a disability.

Question: What is your Ethnicity?

Ethnicity	Number of respondents and %
White (English, Welsh, Scottish)	433 (83%)
Other White	33 (6%)
White Irish	15 (3%)
African	11 (2%)
Other Mixed Race	7 (1%)
White and Black African	6 (1%)
Indian	2 (0.4%)
Pakistani	2 (0.4%)
White and Black Caribbean	1 (0.2%)

Chinese	1 (0.2%)
Other Asian	1 (0.2%)
Arab	1 (0.2%)
White and Asian	1 (0.2%)

The largest number of respondents were 'White' (83%) however responses were received from many different ethnic groups.