

Appendix 1

Background to Forward Plan 2026-29

External environment

Political	Local Government Reorganisation; funding from DCMS and review of ACE; museum as council service reporting to elected members;
Economic	Reduced/standstill funding for public sector; high cost of living; inflation putting pressure on household incomes; partners losing funding, cost of services higher (fees for workshop leaders, transport costs etc.); Exeter's growth plans; RAMM's economic value to the city £6.8M+
Social	Increasing demands on public/voluntary sector; educated city with strong University; strong community feeling through community groups etc.; committed, passionate grassroots organisations working positively at a local level (Community Builders, Wellbeing Exeter, local foodbanks, charities etc.); socially-aware audiences requesting decolonisation and anti-racism; environmental awareness; increase in people experiencing mental health challenges and social isolation.
Technology	Audiences increasingly online but digital deficit for some; people expecting more experiential exhibitions; social media, more experiences being accessible due to hybrid events; hybrid working for teams; AI changing everything.
Environmental	Climate change, ecological crisis. ECC net carbon zero strategy, younger people in particular becoming more passionate about environmental issues; .

SWOT analysis

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections of national and international significance. • Maximising value of Exeter City Council (ECC)'s core funding as leverage for external grants. • Profile, audience and stakeholder recognition of RAMM supported by strong past performance and reputation. • Dynamic and creative programming has relevance for the community served. • Experienced and committed staff team. • High levels of support from community volunteers. • Team has clear understanding of museum purpose and direction. • Cross fertilisation and convergence of different art forms; contemporary and historic practice. • Support from two associated independent charities enables developmental aspects of our work. • Good data and insight for decision-making • Able to demonstrate economic value of the museum • ECC net carbon zero strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local context of city's relatively buoyant economy and growth prospects. • City Council's ambition for city and its services. • Local government reorganisation • Labour government's focus on growth and skills development • Social and civic value of RAMM – reputation and goodwill • Strong partnerships • Co-production through RAMM's work with partnerships and audiences. • Democratisation of culture/content diversification. • Growing recognition of RAMM's value to health and wellbeing agendas. • Potentials of technological change to extend the reach of RAMM's collections and services, through digital, personalisation of experiences and targeted individual relationships. • Use of data to better understand audiences, shape and promote services. • Digital enables global reach, exchange and collaboration. • Potential of AI to streamline admin and data tasks • Socially aware audiences (e.g. decolonisation and anti-racism) • Opportunity to foster sense of belonging and civic pride through promoting connection and community • Strong community feeling committed grassroots organisations working positively at local level • People becoming more passionate about environmental issues.
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressures on public sector funding and position as discretionary service. • Competition for resources • Meeting multiple community needs and balancing conflicting demands/ interests. • Reduced marketing budget to compete for audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure on public sector funding. • Local government reorganisation • Increased need to demonstrate impacts with same or less resource. • Need to recast and represent museum's work to meet new stakeholder priorities and interest.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to reinvest in 'core offer' updates/renewal. • Limitations of digital infrastructure, capacity and priority inhibits development and opportunity. • Lack of physical space (e.g. for venue hire) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for 'air- time' and need to advocate nationally, locally, to ACE and to sector. • People's disposable discretionary income diminished – cost of living crisis • Changing demographics and community need. • Significant competition for people's time and attention (multiplicity of choices and sophistication of competitor marketing). • Social media changing communication and peoples' expectations. • Increased polarisation of audiences, particularly on social media • Visitor expectations of offer and demand for public access to collections continues to increase. • Premium placed on visitor 'experience'. • Climate change, ecological crisis
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Alignment with Corporate Plan

Local Economy

We will build on Exeter's thriving economy by attracting new businesses and continued investment in our city by collaborating with national, regional and local businesses and partners. We will work together on regeneration and growth activities designed to attract new businesses and continued investment in our public spaces, culture, heritage and tourism industries.

Outcomes	
A thriving, diverse and resilient city which can adapt to changing conditions.	RAMM's economic value work shows how the museum contributes £6.8M to the local economy.
Businesses will be reporting increases in footfall and business success.	RAMM drives footfall to the city centre.
A vibrant cultural and tourism offer.	Alongside the Cathedral, RAMM is the city's main visitor attraction. It is also a source of information for tourists.

People

We will encourage residents and community groups to be healthier and more active, promote inclusion and community cohesion and efforts to ensure people feel safe and welcome.

Outcomes	
Health inequalities will reduce.	Wellbeing projects including social prescribing work with Wellbeing Exeter, Museum Meet Up etc.
Communities will be more resilient.	Community engagement programme, collaboration with community groups
More residents, including those from our priority neighbourhoods and communities, will be participating in leisure and cultural events and activities.	Festivals and outreach projects targeted at priority neighbourhoods, voucher scheme, Time Odyssey schools programme
A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone.	Exhibition and event programme, Lates, schools programme, venue hire events.

Sustainable environment

We will reduce our own carbon emissions and work with the city's key partners, businesses, communities and residents to take action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Outcomes	
A city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.	RAMM's programme of exhibitions and events shine a light on the action that people can take.
A carbon-neutral city	RAMM has a decarbonisation plan and an environmental forum for action team.