

# Background to RAMM Oversight Panel formation and function

## **New governance arrangements specified by Arts Council England**

RAMM has received a provisional grant fund from Arts Council England (ACE), which is dependent on new governing arrangements in the form of an Oversight Panel being in place.

The Oversight Panel will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the progress of RAMM in meeting its delivery against targets and success measures set out in the ACE funding agreement while following Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation 2023-26 relationship framework as far as is appropriate.

ACE will then use the reports to help identify any risks that they believe exist in relation to RAMM delivering its funding agreement with them.

The Oversight Panel will *not* be responsible for operational functions, policies and procedures and any other functions of RAMM already managed and overseen by Exeter City Council.

## **From Arts Council England: 'How Arts Council England works with National Portfolio Organisations' 2023-6 Investment Programme**

*"Accountability and transparency are core components of our public investment, both for us and for the organisations we invest in. To deliver on these expectations, IPSOs will be expected to meet specific requirements for reporting and monitoring..... This enables us to track the progress of our investment programmes and the strategic contributions they are making to Let's Create, our stakeholders and the wider public."*

[NPO Relationship Framework 2023-26 Investment Programme.pdf](#)

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## **Existing governance arrangements for RAMM within Exeter City Council**

As a public service provided by Exeter City Council (ECC), RAMM's local authority governance provides the context for its engagement within its setting and the wider environment. It is one of a portfolio of district council (second tier) place-based services that include growth and economic development, environment, communities and culture, leisure and well-being and housing. Local democratic systems and accountability ensure RAMM's services connect closely to community need.

The democratic and political planning cycles that shape ECC's services and engagement with communities means that RAMM's business plans receive regular scrutiny as part of the wider council service portfolio. RAMM benefits from HR support and IT systems that come along with its role as a council service.

The checks and balances built into ECC's democratic system offer high levels of assurance and accountability through Scrutiny Committees, Executive Committee and full Council, each consisting of community representatives in the form of elected ward Cllrs. The museum's financial scale and significance within the council's overall expenditure and budget setting means that it is able to secure strategic focus from senior officers and Executive members.

The Portfolio Holder for Arts & Culture and Democratic Services currently plays an instrumental role in the relationship. Exercising designated authority for the museum, she is also the principal link in the chain of accountability that leads to the Executive Committee through to Council. The Portfolio Holder is empowered to bring political direction, challenge, knowledge and advice to RAMM's work. The decisions of the portfolio Holder and Executive Committee can be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committees which can call for reports from the Portfolio Holder and from RAMM for information and debate and for recommendation to the Executive Committee and/or the full Council. In the setting of RAMM, the Portfolio Holder is RAMM's governing body lead and as such is regularly involved at an operational level in public and media presentation of exhibitions and events.

In summary, the Portfolio Holder has a central role in RAMM's governance at strategic level, in monitoring, reporting and representation. The current ECC Democratic structure does not provide for a dedicated 'Museum committee', Subgroup or Advisory Panel, that might otherwise share responsibilities and disseminate information.

In 2021 discussions began with ECC to address how an Oversight Panel might be accommodated within the democratic structure and its potential role in performance monitoring and supporting the work of officers. The Oversight Panel would look to extend Councillors' understanding of museum outcomes and the Investment Principles connected to Arts Council England grant funding.

## Proposed arrangements

To maintain clarity around ECC's responsibilities and accountabilities for ACE Investment and also to ensure an Oversight Panel connects into wider democratic structures, the Oversight Panel will be Chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Arts & Culture and Democratic Services, with the Portfolio Holder for Communities as Vice Chair and further membership of four non-Executive Committee councillors. In total, the six councillors should reflect the current political balance of the full Council to ensure appropriate challenge, engagement and representation.

In addition, one member of the Exeter Cultural Partnership and one from the RAMM's Youth Panel will be invited to complete the Board.

Administrative support will be provided by a member of RAMM staff.

The work of the Oversight Panel will be defined by Terms of Reference which will include role definitions, and the scope of its decision making within the agreed framework of ACE investment. The Oversight Panel will be compliant with ECC policies that support transparency, openness in public decision making, Equality and Diversity impact assessment and addressing any conflicts of interest. The balance of the board and its membership will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with the full Council Committee membership placement decisions at full Council AGM.

Members will be briefed on the NPO 2023-26 plans and the detail of 2023/23 activity and Investment Principles activity. They will be provided with documents including expected targets and outcomes, together with associated financial planning with regard to the ACE Investment principles. They will receive quarterly reports, progress updates and a risk register using the RAG rating to monitor progress. Members will also have access to RAMM's management dashboard showing progress against key targets. Feedback from RAMM's Community Advisory Panel will also be shared with the Oversight Board ensuring that diverse voices from the local community are represented and heard at a strategic level.