

Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme



Project NL-22-00006
Activity Plan, 08.11.24



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the activity plan

This activity plan is a key part of the documentation for our Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme. It sets out the activity we will undertake during the Delivery Phase of the project to achieve positive outcomes for the people involved, resulting in turn in a more relevant and engaging museum for our visitors and users.

The programme includes opportunities for participation in formal and lifelong learning, community activities, onsite events and volunteering. It also covers how these will be supported and resourced through training, staff roles and spaces.

The structure of the plan

Section 1	Introduction	
Section 2	Current situation – our organisation	These sections provide an overview of the current situation across the organisation, setting out where we are now .
Section 3	Current situation – staffing and operations	
Section 4	Current situation – exhibitions	
Section 5	Current situation – events	
Section 6	Current situation – learning, access and community engagement	
Section 7	Current situation – collections	
Section 8	Understanding our audiences	These sections set out what we know about our current audiences and how we want our audiences to change as a result of the project.
Section 9	Target audiences	
Section 10	Summary of issues and opportunities	This section provides an overview of issues and opportunities identified during the project Development Phase which the project will address.
Section 11	Setting priorities	This section sets out the priorities and principles that sit behind our proposed activities.
Section 12	The activity programme - overview	This section provides an overview of the targets, budgets and timetable for the activity plan, and sets out how our activities respond to the Heritage Fund Investment Principles.
Section 13	Your Heritage	These sections set out proposals for the three strands of our activity plan. They should be read in conjunction with the Action Plan table.
Section 14	Your Voices	
Section 15	Your Museum	
Section 16	The action plan	The Action Plan is provided as a separate Excel workbook.
Appendix A	Evaluation proposals	This section sets out the proposals for evaluating the project.
Appendix B	Partnerships	This section sets out the various partnerships established by the Museum

		to support the Delivery Phase of the Programme.
Appendix C	Community Grants Scheme	This section sets out how the Museum will develop and run a Community Grants Scheme with draft application forms, internal and external process flow charts

Developing the activity plan

The Activity Plan has been developed through consultation and co-creation with our target audiences, community groups, paid staff, volunteers, potential partners, advisory groups, museums and heritage organisations and other stakeholders.

Detail on consultation, piloting and co-creation work during Development and how it has influenced the planned activities and wider project can be found in the Consultation and Piloting report and Consultation Plan spreadsheet.

The Activity Plan has been co-authored by teams from across the organisation, with each team developing the activities for their own work area, in collaboration with colleagues, partners and audiences.

Related documents

The activity plan forms part of a suite of documents. Related documents include:

- Strategy 2030
- Inspiring People Strategy
- Project Management Plan
- Job descriptions and volunteer role descriptions
- Project budget
- Business Plan
- Management and Maintenance Plan
- Environmental Sustainability Plan
- RAF Museum Midlands Master Plan
- Capital Works Pack RIBA Stage 3
- Exhibition Design Pack RIBA Stage 3
- Interpretation Plan
- Audience Development Strategy and Plan
- Marketing and Comms Plan
- Collections Conservation Plan
- Collections Relocation Plan

1.2 Inspiring Everyone: introduction to the project

Inspiring Everyone will be a transformational project for the RAF Museum Midlands. The project has secured development funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (project reference NL-22-00006). The project Delivery Phase will run from Permission to Start, around 1 May 2025, to 31 December 2028.

The Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme will act as a catalyst for the Museum to step up and into our new identity as RAF Museum Midlands serving local, regional and national communities onsite, offsite and online.

Through an expansive multi-strand engagement programme and the transformation of our spaces, the Museum will act as an Anchor Institution regionally, positively contributing to skills development and local investment.

The Museum is placing access and inclusion at the heart of our engagement programme in our mission to tackle unequal access to heritage and create positive outcomes for everyone that engages with us. Barriers relating to socio-economic background, ethnicity and

disability will be tackled across audiences to encourage the widest range of people to engage and ensure that the whole community can take part equally, confidently and independently.

By embedding co-creation from the start, the Programme is empowering audiences to shape, influence and be actively involved in the creation of new interpretation, programmes and facilities resulting in a welcoming, relevant offer which promotes inclusion and social connectedness.

Project outcomes

Through the Inspiring Everyone Programme the Museum will:

- Become a valuable resource for our Midlands community
- Ensure our collection will be better understood, cared for and more widely shared
- Work with partners to involve people in their local and RAF heritage developing their skills and improving their wellbeing
- Work with our audiences to share RAF stories that are relevant to their lives and lived experiences inspiring them to fulfil their own potential
- Move towards our target of being a Carbon Net Zero organisation
- Be more resilient and able to support our community in the future.

Project outputs

The project comprises five interdependent strands:

- The **Engagement Programme** (Activity Plan) will harness the power of RAF heritage (our national collection and the stories of RAF personnel, their families, friends and partners) to connect with audiences who are currently under-represented at the Museum. It will encourage and support our communities to celebrate their creativity in sharing this heritage in their own voices, offering fresh perspectives and insights onsite, offsite and online. The Activity Programme will be delivered across three interwoven strands: Your Heritage - Your Voices - Your Museum.
- We will foster local pride and belonging, providing a welcome in and springboard out to our communities through a purpose-built **Collections Hub**. Moving our collection from inaccessible storage to our public site will support the Inspiring Engagement Programme, sharing objects out in our communities, online and onsite with activities including conservation, research, digitisation, and collections-inspired skills-development and creative sessions.
- An innovative nationally relevant **exhibition** will focus on the critical role of the Royal Air Force since 1980, inviting visitors to discover its mission today and imagine how the service will adapt in the future as it takes on responsibilities for Space and Cyber defence. Co-created content and designs from the Engagement Programme will be an integral part of these new displays as well as being layered across the site and shared across the region.
- ~The development of a new **public realm** will encourage outdoor learning, discovery and contemplation. We will increase biodiversity and create spaces in which visitors and our team can learn about and connect with nature, improving their physical and mental health.
- A state-of-the-art **learning centre** will provide bespoke facilities dedicated to the development and delivery of lifelong learning activities for a wider range of audiences. Our Inspiring Engagement Programme will ignite curiosity and build skills in subjects ranging from science, technology, engineering and maths, to geography, art and design.

Needs and opportunities for the project

See also Section 10, which sets out the needs and opportunities identified in specific work areas during the Development Phase which the project activities respond to.

Broadening reach: Our baseline visitor research survey in 2022 showed that 95% of our visitors were White against a Midlands demographic of 82%, and our employee and volunteer profile does not reflect its diversity. Asian and Asian British and Black and Black British communities are particularly under-represented. Our priority is to diversify our offer, audiences and team to reflect our communities better. We are partnering with local organisations to design and deliver this change meaningfully together.

Improving lives: The Midlands has some of the UK's most deprived areas with high levels of social isolation, low cultural and social capital, and poor health outcomes. Research shows anxiety and depression rose during Covid with 18.5% of people in the UK reporting they are often or always lonely. We will address these issues through partnership activities which develop skills, improve health and wellbeing, and tackle isolation. We are placing access and inclusion at the heart of our engagement programme in our mission to tackle unequal access to heritage and create positive outcomes for everyone that engages with us.

Resilience: As we continue to recover from Covid and the cost-of-living crisis continues, the Museum is keen to build new relationships, broadening our team and visitor reach to ensure future resilience. While our new playground has improved visitor experience, the site provides few opportunities for engagement outdoors, so visitation is weather dependent. On rainy days, numbers can increase by 50%, but will halve during hot weather. Investing in our landscape, new exhibition and activities will improve our offer, increasing visitor numbers across the year with linked secondary spend.

Sustainability: We are striving to achieve Carbon Net Zero. We are learning alongside Shropshire Council and the RAF (as it moves towards its own Carbon Net Zero by 2040), to invest in sustainable technologies and operations, sharing our learnings through the project.

Hangar 1 (home of our new exhibition) is in poor condition with outdated infrastructure, leaks, power outages and low visitor footfall (around 40%). The project will radically improve its fabric and infrastructure and remove gas from its energy supply, supporting our Carbon Net Zero target.

Our collection: Our stores are currently on MOD sites with no public access. A 2022 Collections Benchmarking Report confirmed these buildings are no longer fit for purpose with further evidence provided in the RAF Museum Stored Collections Conservation Management Plan 2024. Our Master Plan moves our stored collection at MOD Stafford onsite to ensure its long-term care and enable access to this nationally important collection for the first time. Our Stafford-based staff will move with the collection enabling more effective working with our wider team.

The Collections Hub and contemporary exhibition will enable the Museum and our partners to harness the collections for active engagement and learning.

Improving our heritage understanding and storytelling: Current displays lack engagement, assume prior knowledge and do not represent our local community, the RAF, or our collections. We want to share stories of RAF innovation, diversity and challenge that weave across its history through immersive interpretation. No First World War and few Second World War personnel are now with us, and the Cold War generation will soon be lost. In the past, our collection focused on higher ranks leading to the exclusion of diverse voices. We must secure these narratives within the national memory now for future generations. Research bursaries are supporting the exploration of new narratives, and the exhibition and refurbished hangar will facilitate contemporary collecting, reflecting RAF heritage of the past 40 years and today. Co-created interventions in our new exhibition and layered across our site will ensure fresh voices and perspectives in all our spaces.

Co-creation: By embedding co-creation from the start, we are empowering core and priority audiences to shape, influence and be actively involved in the creation of new interpretation, programmes and facilities resulting in a welcoming, relevant offer which promotes inclusion and social connectedness.

Lifelong learning: 28,000 young people participated in our schools' programme annually pre-Covid and we have rapidly returned to these levels onsite while delivering online when requested. However, our learning spaces are in poor condition, and we turned away 4,799 learners in 2023-24 due to lack of space and inadequate facilities to enable creative workshops. Our aging lunch facility only holds 60 people, is isolated from other buildings and suffers regular water ingress. New facilities will welcome an additional 8,000 pupils a year, as well as offering community and lifelong learning activities after school, at the weekend and in holidays.

1.3 RAF Museum Midlands

The RAF operates across two sites, London (Hendon) and Midlands (Cosford). This project focuses on RAF Museum Midlands, located in Cosford, Shropshire. The Museum occupies a section of the wider RAF Cosford site, which still functions as an active air station.

The Museum's exhibitions are housed in four hangars, with aircraft also displayed outside. Other facilities on site include a Visitor Centre (built in 1998) and the award-winning Michael Beetham Conservation Centre (built in 2002). The visually stunning and innovative National Cold War Exhibition was added to the site in 2007.



The nearest cities are Wolverhampton (around 10 miles) and Birmingham around 25 miles). Telford is the nearest major town (around 9 miles). The site is located 1.5 miles from Junction 3 of the M54, and is easily accessed by car. Cosford railway station (0.7 miles from the Museum) is served by hourly trains from Birmingham and Telford, although there is currently no footpath between the station and the Museum and no lift to access the station platforms.

Visitor offer

The Museum is open seven days a week, 10am-4/5pm (depending on season). Admission is free, with a flat rate charge for car parking. Average dwell time is 2-3 hours. Staff and volunteers provide a warm welcome at the Visitor Centre main entrance. Team members within the exhibition spaces enhance engagement and provide additional points of contact to support site operations and visitor experience.

The four vast hangars display the Museum's unique collection, ranging from biplanes to fast jets, logbooks to lucky charms. The exhibitions cover topics ranging from the Knights of the Air from the First World War to the National Cold War exhibition. RAF Stories: The First 100 Years showcases the diversity and history of the RAF through the use of personal stories.

Flight Zone offers add on charged experiences for both children and adults, including a Spitfire experience, flight simulator and VR paradrop experience.

Our visitor facilities include the Airfield Kitchen café, picnic areas and the Museum shop. There is also a popular aviation-inspired playground for young visitors.

The Museum is wheelchair accessible and manual wheelchairs and motor scooters available for loan at no charge. The Visitor Centre is fitted with a Changing Places Toilet and baby change facilities are located in every display hangar. Parking on site includes designated spaces close to the entrance for disabled visitors.

1.4 Strategic context

Midlands Master Plan

The master plan for the Midlands site was developed in 2016-2028, working with Buttress Architects and business planners Colliers. The brief for the master plan included:

- Improve the sense of arrival
- Improve visitor orientation and flow throughout the visited areas of the site
- Create spaces that allow the presentation of the history of the RAF using the 'Chapter' approach and in line with the Museum's Interpretation Strategy
- Increase Museum storage capacity to allow for the relocation of the Museum's stored collection at MOD Stafford to the Midlands site
- Increase and improve display space
- Create new dedicated learning facilities
- Maximise commercial opportunities.

The approved Master Plan adopts a hub and spoke approach. This will support local repeat visitors, encouraging them to dip into different chapters or parts of the Museum at different times, while also helping with wayfinding to support public access.

The Inspiring Everyone Programme is one of the first steps towards realising the twenty-five-year master plan, creating a new Collection Hub facility, new exhibition and learning space in Hangar 1, and a new approach to the outdoor realm. See Master Plan Pack.

Local context

Consultation with strategic stakeholders such as Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Councils identified local needs including training and skills development, improving community cohesion and understanding, tourism, and making the West Midlands a place people want to live and work.

This offers us an opportunity to be an 'Anchor Institution', a large, public-sector body unlikely to relocate, rooted in its geographical area and history. Our project will support economic growth, reduce environmental impact, purchase locally and support communities. We will thereby play a key role in the delivery of Shropshire Council's Local Plan, and its Cultural Strategy.

SECTION 2: CURRENT SITUATION – OUR ORGANISATION

2.1 The organisation

The RAF Museum was established as a legacy of the RAF's fiftieth anniversary in 1968, opening our London (Hendon) site in 1972 on the historic pioneering airfield in Colindale (previously RAF Hendon, and home of the London Aerodrome from 1910). Our Midlands site began as the Aerospace Museum at RAF Cosford (established in 1938 as a joint aircraft maintenance, storage and technical training site for the Ministry of Defence) in the spring of 1974 and joined the family in 1979. It was renamed RAF Museum Cosford in 1998, and more recently in March 2022 as RAF Museum Midlands. The Museum also has two external stores, one at MOD in Stafford and another within RAF Cosford.

Our vision, purpose and priorities

Our **vision** is to inspire everyone with the RAF Story – the people who shape it and its place in our lives.

The **purpose** of the RAF Museum is to share the story of the Royal Air Force, past, present and future – using the stories of its people and our collections to engage, inspire, entertain and encourage learning.

We are working to achieve our vision through five **strategic priorities** that focus outwards with our collections and spaces at their heart:

- **Audiences:** Inspiring innovative engagement, debate and reflection (onsite, offsite and online) - Why? We know relevance and dynamism are key to fulfilling our ambitions as a National Museum.
- **Team:** Inspiring our people within a dynamic, diverse and collaborative culture - Why? Our inspirational people in turn inspire our visitors and we know we achieve our best when we're committed and motivated.
- **Agile:** Embedding an entrepreneurial, agile and sustainable approach - Why? Our visitors' lives and society are changing fast, and we need to remain forward looking and resourced to fulfil our ambitions.
- **Performance:** Fit for the future with brilliant basics - Why? We need strong and sustainable foundations to fully achieve our vision.
- **Partnerships:** Connecting with communities and partners - Why? We know we can deliver better and more creatively through meaningful relationships with others.

Our Values

At the Royal Air Force Museum, our work and our behaviour are underpinned by six guiding values: **InSPIRE**:

- **Integrity:** we are open, transparent and ethical
- **Sharing:** we work as a team to ensure our collections and expertise are accessible to all
- **Passion:** we care deeply about sharing our collections and their stories
- **Innovation:** we tell our stories and develop our business with creativity and imagination
- **Relevance:** we ensure our legacy by linking our histories with today and tomorrow
- **Excellence:** we are professional and strive for excellence in all we do

Museum commitments

Three key commitments have been developed with our staff team which thread through all our Museum activities and plans.

- **Sustainability Commitment:** We are in a Climate Emergency and the RAF Museum is committed to addressing this crisis through our operation. We will operate in an environmentally sustainable way, applying the principles of sustainable development for the benefit of current and future generations, both locally and globally.

<https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/about-us/sustainability/>

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment:** The RAF Museum believes that everyone has the right to live without fear or prejudice regardless of race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, social class, religion and belief. Our aim is to embed a supportive and open culture which is inclusive, positive and fair to all, develop flexible opportunities to encourage engagement with the Museum onsite, offsite and online and celebrate differences.

<https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/about-us/our-commitment-to-equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>

- **Health & Wellbeing Commitment:** The RAF Museum is committed to creating an environment where health and wellbeing are actively promoted, where people feel engaged and valued for their contribution. We aim to create a health promoting workplace where people can be themselves, feel their best and perform at their best, so we can deliver an exceptional experience for our visitors.

2.2 Governance and leadership

The RAF Museum is a National Museum, a Government non-departmental public body (NDPB) and a registered charity (Registered Charity Number 1197541).

Since December 2021, the Museum has held Royal Charter status (RC000922). Charter status provides an appropriate governance structure for the future and is an affirmation of the national importance of the Museum. It affords the benefits of a company limited by guarantee with the added reputational gravitas that Charter status brings.

A trading subsidiary Royal Air Force Museum Enterprises Ltd (company number 1511481) is incorporated as a company limited by shares (wholly owned by the RAF Museum) to manage the associated commercial activities (and any activities that are 'non-primary purpose trading') for the benefit of the charity. All profits of RAF Museums Enterprises Ltd are gift-aided to the Museum on an annual basis, as agreed in a Deed of Covenant between the parties.

Our Board of Trustees is chaired by Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, previously Chief of the Air Staff, leading a Board who bring with them a wealth of invaluable knowledge and skills spanning sectors including the military to property investment, construction to accountancy, communications to engineering and much more. See: [Our Board of Trustees of the RAF Museum](#)

The Museum reflects on its governance, skills, experience and composition annually with an external review every three years. A review in 2021 identified the need for finance and legal skills, RAF experience and better representation of women and people from diverse ethnic minority communities which has been addressed through recruitment rounds in 2022 and 2023 (during the Development Phase).

Organisational accountability sits with Chief Executive Officer, Maggie Appleton MBE. She is supported by three directors who lead a senior management group who bring specialist skills and experience to the Museum across 16 departments.

2.3 Key networks and partnerships

Partnerships

The Museum is the National Museum of the Royal Air Force, unique in its size and scope, and officially recognised as such. The Museum works closely with the Royal Air Force, its sponsor organisation at the Ministry of Defence, including liaison with the Air Historical Branch, RAF Heritage and RAF Engagement.

Royal Air Force and Ministry of Defence: A Partnering Agreement is in place between the RAF Museum and the RAF, its government sponsor body, which sets out the relationship and identifies the services that the Museum provides, and the support given by the RAF in order that these aims are achieved. RAF colleagues past and present continue to provide fantastic support and inspiration to the Museum to enable us to share the ever-developing RAF story. Aligned with the Partnering Agreement is a Framework Document drawn up by the MOD in consultation with the RAF Museum and which sets out the broad governance framework within which the Museum and the MOD operates. It sets out core responsibilities, describes the governance and accountability framework that applies between the roles of the MOD and the Museum and sets out how the day-to-day relationship works in practice, including in relation to governance and financial matters.

Sector bodies and museum community: The RAF Museum is a member of the UK Museums Association, the National Museums Directors' Council (NMDC), the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, the Association of Independent Museums and the Group for Education in Museums. It is committed to supporting other museums both across the UK and internationally by involvement in national and international programmes.

Our CEO currently leads the NMDC Environment and Ecology Group, and we are members of the Institute of Conservation (ICON) Sustainability Network.

The Museum has been vetted and approved as a member of Fit for the Future (<https://fftf.org.uk/home>) and is a member of <https://zerocarbonshropshire.org/>

Local partners: The Museum is working closely with Shropshire and Barnet Councils to ensure we are aware of and delivering programmes that respond to local priorities and needs. This includes working with representatives from both councils who lead on sustainability.

Individual and corporate supporters: The Museum works with a wide range of individual and corporate partners who share its vision of inspiring everyone with the RAF story. Our partners not only support us financially through grants, sponsorship and gifts in kind, but they enable us to continue to engage and inspire our audiences through shared programmes and activities.

Delivery partners: We work with partners to ensure the collection is kept up to date and cared for and rely on them to help us acquire new items of national importance. This includes RAF Heritage and Air Historical Branch. RAF Youth and STEM, the Jon Egging Trust and Tablet Academy support our Learning and Engagement teams in London and the Midlands to deliver workshops and activities for children across the UK.

RAF Museum American Foundation: The Museum also works in partnership with the RAF Museum American Foundation, a legally separate organisation, sharing ideas and collaborating on fundraising opportunities to support the RAF Museum and foster and celebrate relationships between our two air forces.

Advisory groups

Research Advisory Board: Our Research Advisory Board is chaired by Sebastian Cox OBE, Head of the Air Historical Branch of the RAF and includes academic specialists from the disciplines of History, War and Conflict, Defence, Conservation, Museology, and Software Engineering.

Access Advisory Boards: We have an access advisory board for each of our sites. The Midlands panel was set up as part of the Development Phase of the current project, following a model used successfully at our London site.

Youth Panels: Similarly, there are youth panels at both sites. The Midlands panel was set up as part of the Development Phase of the current project, following a model used successfully at our London site.

Schools Advisory Boards: Our Schools Advisory Boards feed directly into our formal learning programme. The London board has been running since 2017, while the Midlands board was set up as part of the Development Phase of the current project.

See Section 6.2 for more detail on the Midlands advisory groups.

2.4 Key strategies

Strategy 2030

During our last strategic plan, the Museum concentrated its efforts on being outward focused and people-centred, exploring the history of the RAF over its hundred years through its incredible people and ensuring that our collection is relevant, shared and well cared for. In June 2018, we opened a £26 million transformation of our London site, generously supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It resulted in our most successful year to date, welcoming a total of 989,600 people, a 39% increase. Our London visitor profile broadened and diversified significantly, and the partnerships that developed over the period gave us a firm and inspiring foundation to build on for this next chapter of the Museum's history.

Our current strategic plan 'Strategy 2030' sets out an ambitious vision for the future, shaped and shared by our Trustees, staff team (employees and volunteers) and key partners. This continues to guide the Museum during a complex period of our history, with climate change and an unstable international environment, and ever-present threats to our way of life. We have much to do, but we look forward with confidence and clarity.

Our aim is to deepen further our focus on immersive RAF storytelling and be more ambitious in encouraging reflection and debate across our spaces and programmes, as well as welcoming all our visitors for a great day out. We are committed to engaging more people and, equally important, a more diverse range of people by ensuring that our governance, our teams, our collection and our storytelling are better reflective of the changing national population.

The Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme is our priority project under Strategy 2030. It forms the first major step of a twenty-five-year Master Plan for our Midlands site.

Inspiring People Strategy

Our Inspiring People Strategy details how we value, support, and manage our people, and the culture we foster to enable everyone to work within an open, positive, and inclusive environment. We are committed to:

- Equipping our people so they are proud to be part of a brilliant and diverse team, feeling valued, supported and appropriately skilled and rewarded, working positively together to deliver our vision.
- Targeted learning and development programmes will help ensure our people are the best that we can be in order to deliver our vision and purpose with and for our visitors.
- Providing meaningful ways for more people to help us share the RAF story by further developing our volunteer, apprenticeship, and work-experience programmes.

- Ensuring that diversity and equality underpin all our activity, from reflecting it in our content to actively broadening both our audiences and our Museum teams.

2.5 Policies

The Museum's work is supported by a suite of HR-related policies and procedures and a set of collection policies and procedures that reflect SPECTRUM standards.

During the Development Phase we took the opportunity to review and update our HR policies and procedures including a major reworking of our recruitment and volunteering policies, supporting documentation and associated training to ensure both were supporting our approach to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

We have also introduced three areas of focus across Strategy 2030, key strategic objectives, annual objectives and policies, linked to our Museum Commitments:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
 - Sustainability
 - Health and Wellbeing
- (Further details can be found in Section 2.1 above)



Development Phase consultation, October 2023

SECTION 3: CURRENT SITUATION – STAFFING & OPERATIONS

3.1 Staffing

The Museum currently employs 243 staff across all locations. This includes 132 employees in London and 110 employees in the Midlands (with eleven at the Collection Store at MOD Stafford) supported by around 360 volunteers.

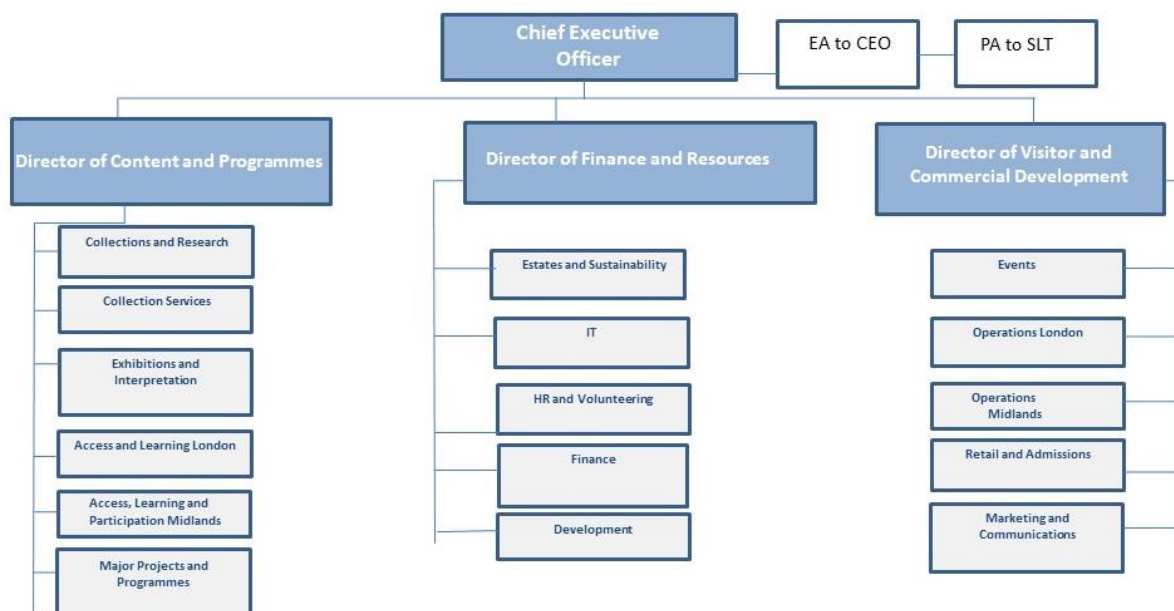
The Finance and Resources Group comprises the Finance, Human Resources (HR) and Volunteering, Estates, Development and IT teams. The Finance and Resources Group support the Museum to manage and develop all resources and activities effectively and flexibly to meet its charitable objectives and strategic ambitions, within a professional, collaborative, diverse and entrepreneurial culture. The team is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate controls are in place to meet all legal and regulatory requirements.

The Content and Programmes Group comprises, Collections and Research, Collections Services, Exhibitions and Interpretation, Learning and Engagement, and Major Projects and Programmes. The Content and Programmes Group develops and delivers creative programmes and resources designed to engage and inspire everyone with our collection and RAF stories wherever they are in the world.

The Visitor and Commercial Development Group comprises: Retail and Admissions, Visitor Experience, Catering and Events, Communications and Marketing. The group is responsible for ensuring our visitors receive the very best day out at the Museum and that every element of the visitor experience meets our customers' needs. It also oversees the commercial development of the Museum, ensuring our offer is relevant to our visitors and contributes to the future sustainability of the Museum.



Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / Senior Management Group (SMG) structure



Working groups

The Museum encourages cross-departmental working to share views and drive innovation. Currently, we support the following working groups:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Sustainability
- Business continuity

Staff training

We encourage our people to be the best they can be and aim to help our employees to maximise their potential. All new employees are automatically enrolled onto the Museum's **Brilliant Basics E-learning Programme**. This programme supports us all to work more effectively, providing enhanced awareness and understanding in key areas. It supports our strategic priorities, in particular **Leading the way with brilliant basics** and **Inspiring our people within a dynamic, diverse and collaborative culture**.

Depending on their roles, many employees are eligible to participate in one of the six role-specific training programmes which make up our **Inspiring People – RAF Museum Training & Development Programme**:

1. Inspiring Engagement – Visitor Experience Programme
2. Inspiring Excellence – Retail Programme
3. Inspiring Confidence – Team Leader/Supervisor Programme (VE)
4. Inspiring Confidence – Team Leader/Supervisor Programme (Retail)
5. Inspiring Management – Skills Development Programme
6. Inspiring Leadership – Skills Development Programme

3.2 Volunteering

We currently have a total of 363 active volunteers across our sites. There are 169 at London, 177 at Midlands, 15 at Stafford, and two remote volunteers. These numbers are exclusive, several of our Midlands volunteers have recently begun volunteering at Stafford too which means the total there is 22.

Our volunteers donated a total of 19,731 hours in 2023-24. Of those 11,716 hours were donated to our Cosford site. We welcomed volunteers at Stafford in February 2024 as part of the Inspiring Everyone Development Phase. They have since donated 85 hours so far to assisting with our collections move.

Volunteering levels have increased substantially as a result of the Inspiring Everyone Development Phase. Volunteer hours at our Midlands site have increased from 6,196 in 2022/23 to 11,766 in 2023-24, an increase of 90%.

Since the start of the project Development Phase 10 new volunteer roles have been created in Cosford and Stafford:

- Learning and Engagement: Community Engagement, Handling Collection Developer, Exhibition Researchers for Schools and Families, Access Panel
- Collections Services: Inventory Volunteers at Stafford
- Communications and Marketing: Bloggers and Social Media Volunteers
- Development: Prospect Research Volunteer
- HR & Volunteering: Administrative Assistant Volunteer (Access-focused),
- Collections and Research: Fine Art Volunteer.

Our Midlands site now has volunteers working across a wide range of areas. This includes roles in Visitor Experience welcoming visitors, giving tours, facilitating cockpit access; roles in Access in Learning welcoming schools, assisting with STEM workshops, hosting Carer's Café; roles in Events helping with our varied programming; roles in Retail helping with immersive experiences; and roles in the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre conserving our objects. Volunteers have also supported the development of volunteer systems, for example as Volunteero Champions, and as members of our skills audit panel.

Our new team of Community Engagement Volunteers has grown rapidly. Since February 2023, the team donated 747 hours to support the Midlands site.

Feedback

We know that our audiences and community participants value the positive contribution of volunteers:

Thank you to you and all the team for making the day so special and exciting for all the young people and their families. Telford & Wrekin CVS Young Carers

'I just wanted to say a massive thank you on behalf of Coventry Libraries for all you did to make us feel so welcome yesterday and all the time and thought you put into making the day so amazing. I would also like to say, the tour from Mike was exceptional! The museum is just incredible.' Coventry Libraries outreach

'We enjoyed it so much and as we just didn't have enough time to see and do everything we will be asking to book another one, hopefully this summer! We all thought it was so well orchestrated and the volunteers were so knowledgeable that we got a really good personal experience and insight into WWII.'
Dementia Singing Friends and Friendly Faces group tour

Our staff team also hugely value the input of volunteers, as epitomised by this quote from our Community Engagement Manager at our 2023 Volunteering Thank You Event:

'I could not have done a lot of the work I have done without the help of volunteers. They have been absolutely amazing and it has been a joy and a privilege to spend time with them.'

Volunteer management and recruitment

We have well-tested and efficient processes for volunteer management and recruitment. Volunteers are managed within individual teams, with an assigned line manager. Thanks to Heritage Fund Development Phase support, we have moved our volunteer management to a new digital system, Volunteero, which offers better functionality for our purposes. The set up of the new system was ably supported by a task and finish group of volunteers.

Where new volunteer roles are required, the Volunteering Team supports departments to produce role descriptions. They also undertake a risk assessment to identify whether a DBS check is required and to what level, what training the volunteer should be given, if references are required, and what level of safeguarding training is required. The Volunteering Team and staff member(s) also discuss the selection process that would best suit the role: taster day, group meeting or one-to-one chat.

The Volunteering Team then advertises the role in relevant locations and collects responses via an online form. The line manager reviews the applications and chooses which applicants to consider, and after their taster day or chat, which applicant(s) to recruit. The onboarding process includes DBS checks or references (if needed), induction, and training. Responsibility is shared between the Volunteering Team and the role line manager.

We have recently recruited a HRV Admin Assistant volunteer with lived experience of hidden disabilities. He is currently focusing on finding new places we can link with and advertise volunteering opportunities to reach a more diverse audience.

Volunteer policies and processes

We ask all volunteers to read and agree to:

- RAF Museum Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Agreement

These set out our standards of behaviour which are expected at all times based on principles of helpfulness and politeness. These also indicate to volunteers what behaviours and support they can expect from the Museum.

Volunteers can access all of the Museum's policies via our volunteer management system. Policies which are particularly relevant to volunteers are

- Confidentiality Policy
- Dealing with Difficulties Policy,
- Data Protection Policy
- GDPR Policy

The processes we have for volunteering are:

- Expenses Process
- Role Description and Approval Process
- Recruitment Advertising Process,
- Selection Process
- New Starter Process
- Leavers Process

We have the following guidance documentation:

- Applicant Guidelines for Potential Volunteers,
- Volunteer for Line Managers,
- Identity Checks
- Volunteering Team Handbook
- Line Managers Guidance (Working with volunteers)

We are currently working on a new Volunteering Strategy and Policy, which will fall under our Museum-wide Inspiring People Strategy.

Volunteer training

The induction and ongoing training volunteers receive is dependent on the role. For some roles, volunteers may need to complete training before they start, while volunteers in other roles are trained on the job, or as the need arises. Some training is delivered face-to-face, and some is delivered via eLearning.

We require all volunteers to complete safeguarding training, and we may require volunteers to undertake refresher training if they are with us for more than a year. In the future, all volunteers will complete Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training.

The Museum's Brilliant Basics eLearning modules are available to volunteers, and volunteers may complete these even if they are not directly relevant to their role.

3.3 Pathways

The Museum is in the process of transforming its approach to work experience, training opportunities and apprenticeships. A key aim is to ensure that opportunities are inclusive and accessible, feeding into the organisation's commitment to diversity. This has been supported by Heritage Fund Development Phase support for a new role of Apprenticeship

and Skills Pathways Manager within the HR and Volunteering team. The post holder has researched and developed our offer for apprenticeships, internships, traineeships and work experience. More detail on each can be found below.

Apprenticeships

The Museum currently hosts an apprenticeship programme at the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre (MBCC). This consists of two apprentices hired each year, who undertake a Level 3 Engineering Course in Metal Fabrication. These apprentices are of huge value to the Museum. They help to complete operation moves for new exhibitions, as well as completing restoration and conservation works on our collection.

The HR and Volunteering Team is currently working to centralise processes around apprenticeships, in preparation for extending the offer. This includes:

- Creating an apprenticeship policy which defines the Museum's recruitment and responsibility for future apprenticeships
- Researching further apprenticeship opportunities
- Looking into the current recruitment process for apprenticeships within the MBCC

Internships / training placements

The Museum currently has one intern position which has been supported by the Heritage Fund during the Development Phase. It sits within the Exhibitions and Interpretation department.

The HR and Volunteering Team has been working to create an internship policy which defines what an intern is, and how the recruitment of an intern differs from other colleagues. In tandem with this, the team is creating a training programme for interns to bolster their transferrable skills and give them the support to flourish in the heritage sector.

After a Development Phase review of the intern recruitment and discussions with external stakeholders and potential new staff, the team has concluded that language around internships is somewhat difficult and that it could be a barrier to some people who would like to apply. We are, therefore, introducing a new traineeship strand. These will be paid, fixed-term positions that offer a full suite of training to the successful candidate. This removes barriers for anyone who has no prior experience, and will resonate more with those who are looking for an opportunity to break into the world of museums and heritage.

Work experience

The Museum currently has no formal work experience programme, although departments do occasionally take on ad-hoc placements. The HR and Volunteering Team is currently working to develop these opportunities across the Museum by:

- Drafting a consistent work experience policy and guidelines
- Consulting with local schools and colleges to find out what they would like from a work experience perspective
- Researching T-Level placements and how the Museum can support these
- Looking into accommodating community-based and non-structured programmes for those that do not sit in mainstream education, or have additional needs
- Introducing a centralised work experience request system
- Researching training opportunities for mentors.

3.4 Marketing and communications

The Museum has a dedicated Marketing and Communications team, working across both our sites. The approach to marketing is evidence based, grounded in research undertaken into current and potential audiences.

A Midlands-focussed Audience Development Strategy and linked Comms and Marketing Plan have been developed for the Delivery Phase of the project, which set out how the Museum will reach and attract target audiences. See separate documents

Detail on current and potential audiences for the Museum and for project activities can also be found at Section 8 of this plan.

Messaging

Our current strategy for messaging is two-fold:

- The Museum has created a strong programme of engaging public events throughout the year, which act as 'tent pole' moments around which we can provide experiences and tell stories that bring new audiences to our sites.
- 'Always on' digital marketing, which focuses on the Museum's USPs (unique experiences, objects and stories), that provide our target audiences with compelling reasons to visit our sites, combined with the active intent to book and commit in the near future.

Regular marketing activity

In 2023-24 our annual marketing and PR budget was £581K, rising to £603K in 2024-25.

Regular marketing activity includes:

- Paid for: advertising (magazines), advertising (radio), online campaigns, posters, leaflets
- Owned: Monthly e-shots, social media, PR generated news/imagery (pushed via social media), website SEO/key words, AdWords management
- Earned: partnerships, online listings, pro-active PR campaign, event/festival attendance

Further detail can be found in the Comms and Marketing Plan along with plans for project-specific marketing.



A student from the University of Wolverhampton conducting interviews for a radio news report.

SECTION 4: CURRENT SITUATION – EXHIBITIONS

4.1 Introduction

The Exhibitions and Interpretation team is responsible for leading the development and delivery of physical and digital gallery, exhibition and display programmes, in support of the RAF Museum's vision, purpose and strategic objectives. The department consults widely and works across internal teams and with external partners and communities to deliver agreed projects.

Exhibitions and Interpretation objectives:

- To share the story of the RAF through representation and interpretation of the RAF Museum's collection and the stories of its people, inspiring innovative engagement, debate and reflection using both physical and digital interventions
- To partner with the RAF, community groups, companies and individuals through co-curation and co-design to develop our exhibitions and interpretation
- To support the Museum's Strategic Plan, London and Cosford Master Plans and associated fundraising through the delivery of an agreed programme of permanent and temporary exhibitions, displays, site transformation and online content
- To ensure there are no barriers to engagement by delivering Access for All: Intellectual, Social, Physical, Aesthetic and Emotional.

Staff team

The Exhibitions and Interpretation department is part of the Content and Programmes Group. Exhibitions and Interpretation comprises two teams across our London and Midlands sites, led by the Head of Exhibitions and Interpretation. The Midlands team comprises the full-time Exhibitions and Interpretation Manager (Midlands) and fixed-term full-time Exhibitions and Interpretation Intern both supported by the Heritage Fund during the Development Phase of the Programme. They work closely with the London team – full-time Head of Exhibitions and Interpretation, full-time Exhibition Designer (3D), Designers (two full-time roles), full-time Content Network Manager, full-time Digital Interpretation Manager, full-time Exhibitions Workshop Manager, full-time Workshop Technician and part-time Exhibitions and Interpretation Manager (London). The whole team supports the Inspiring Everyone Programme.

4.2 Current interpretation offer

Visitors to the RAF Museum Midlands and London sites currently engage with the RAF Museums' collections and stories of its people through a chapter-based approach:

- The First 100 Years of the RAF
- Early Aviation and the First World War (the formation of the RAF)
- Interwar and the Second World War
- The Cold War
- Post-Cold War
- Now and the Future

As part of the Master Plans for our London and Midlands sites, the Exhibitions and Interpretation team delivers physical and digital interventions. Most recently, these have included the re-display of the Bomber Command story 'Strike Hard, Strike Sure: Bomber Command 1939–1945' launched May 2023, and re-display of the Interwar story, launched in July (Midlands) and December (London) 2023.

Smaller displays linked to anniversaries and gallery updates and enhancements also form part of the team's work. Alongside our physical galleries and displays, audiences can engage with our 'RAF Stories' and 'Collections Online' digital platforms.

SECTION 5: CURRENT SITUATION – EVENTS

5.1 Introduction

The Events and Catering Team works across the London and Midlands sites. It comprises a Head of Events, a Public Events Manager and a Public Events Executive at each site, and a Commercial Events Manager at the Midlands site. The Head of Events manages the onsite external catering contracts at both sites and is responsible for dotted line management for two catering General Managers. We outsource our commercial event business in London to our contract catering team, but manage it in-house in the Midlands.

The Public Events teams create and deliver compelling public events designed for a family audience. These take place during school holiday periods. The aim is to create an exciting programme that can be used to 'sell' the Museum to families during school holidays, to increase visitor numbers thereby increasing income through secondary spend in our car park, shops and restaurants and through direct ticket sales fulfilling commercial targets.

The Midlands Commercial Event Manager is responsible for selling the commercial event spaces for events such as conferences, away days, exhibitions and gala dinners.

Event delivery is supported by the Front of House teams and occasionally agency staff. The Events Team also works with a group of committed volunteers who are central to event operation.

5.2 Current events offer

Themed weeks

The public event programme is based on the collections and stories of the RAF Museum under the banner of themed weeks. Examples of themed weeks are 'Jet and Space week', 'STEM week', 'Spies week' and 'Pilot training'.

This is a combined programme across both sites to give weight to the 'one Museum' idea, and to strengthen the marketing clout when talking about the events programme across our many channels. While the themed weeks in the programme are the same, the specific activities at each site reflect the different audiences in each location.

Activities include:

- Robot races, at which children programme and race small robots
- Art activities, colouring, sticking etc
- Airfix kit make and take activities
- Paper plane challenge races
- Aircraft access
- Re-enactor shows
- Science shows.

Activities can take place all over the Museum and are often located in areas that relate closely to the theme.

All public events are aimed specifically at the family audience, particularly those with children aged 3-13. The Events Team and Marketing and Comms Teams work closely to target these audiences using social media, targeted online campaigns, onsite and local marketing such as leaflet drops and banners.

The half-term themed weeks focus on driving increasing numbers of visitors to the sites, while the summer events programme focuses predominantly on income targets. In 2023, the first year we operated our more commercial summer programme, we worked with the Horrible Histories IP brand to create the 'Up in the Air' challenge, an activity-based event

which aimed to increase awareness of the Museum as a school holiday destination and deliver ambitious commercial income targets.

Other public events

In the Midlands, we deliver a 10k race called 'Spitfire 10k', working with the race partner NiceWork. This takes place at the end of the Summer and involves running on the runway of RAF Cosford. As part of the Inspiring Everyone Development Phase, we piloted a one-day community event working with Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council with a view to opening our doors to a more diverse local audience.



Drumming workshop and performance by Hit the Dhol at the pilot Community Day in 2023

In London, we host a popular sleepover event called 'Pillows and Pilots' that we sell to organised groups such as scouts and guides, which involves an evening of activities such as arts and crafts, silent disco and robot races, ending with the showing of a film before the children sleep in the hangars amongst the aircraft. We also host a community event in partnership with the London Learning and Engagement Team. In 2023, the theme for this event was Windrush 80.

Both sites host a Remembrance event on Remembrance Sunday.

Commercial events

Both public sites have dedicated commercial event spaces that are available to hire during the day, as well as spaces in the aircraft halls that can be hired out in the evenings. At our Midlands site we have eight spaces available to hire, ranging from Hangar 1 (1,000 max capacity) down to small classroom spaces. Our main conference room in the visitor centre can seat 130 people theatre-style.

SECTION 6: CURRENT SITUATION – LEARNING, ACCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

The Museum has two Learning and Engagement teams, one based in London and one at the Midlands site. The Midlands Learning and Engagement team comprises eight members of staff:

- Head of Access, Learning and Participation¹
- Community Engagement Manager
- Learning Supervisor (part-time)
- Three Learning Officers (two full time, one part time)
- Learning Assistant Administrator

The Learning and Engagement team develops and delivers programmes for all ages using the Museum's collections and stories to engage, inspire and encourage learning. They run workshops for schools, sessions for under-fives, deliver events (both our own and those sponsored by partners), create in-gallery family trails and resources, develop content for the Family and Schools webpages, manage a Handling Collection on behalf of the Museum, provide audience consultation as part of exhibition development, and work on projects with schools and community groups.

The Midlands team works closely with their London colleagues to learn from each other and ensure our offer and processes are consistent.

JET partnership

The role of Outreach Manager at the Jon Egging Trust (JET) has been co-funded as part of the Development Phase of the current project. Based at JET, they have piloted an RAF-themed learning programme entitled Blue Skies using Museum resources which delivers to students in Midlands' areas identified as being underserved.

The Midlands Learning and Engagement team has an annual budget of around £20,000 to cover travel and subsistence, renew learning resources and bring in external facilitators for specialist sessions.

The staff team is supported by a team of 50 volunteers, working across community engagement, formal learning, research, STEM engagement and access.

Access

The organisation is serious about our access remit and responsibilities. The Learning and Engagement teams deliver Safeguarding training and Dementia Friends Awareness sessions and lead the Access Advisory Group on behalf of the Museum.

Partnerships

Partnerships are critical for both our learning and community engagement work. A list of key partners can be found at Appendix B.

¹ The existing Head of Learning stepped up into this role as part of the Development Phase of the current project. Backfill to support this is also project funded, consisting of an uplift of a Learning Officer to the Learning Supervisor role and additional hours for a part-time Learning Assistant role to increase capacity.

6.2 Advisory panels

Access Advisory Group

Our Midlands Access Advisory Group was set up in August 2023 to inform the development of the current project. It comprises 23 people from diverse backgrounds, with a range of occupations, life experiences and access needs (e.g. Multiple Sclerosis, Dementia, ADHD). This allows us to gain a very rounded view of our current offer and future proposals. The group meets three times a year, and is additionally invited to participate in other consultation (online and in person). Members are formally part of our volunteer team and receive volunteer benefits and support.

Schools Advisory Board

Our Midlands Schools Advisory Board feeds directly into our formal learning programme. It was set up as part of the Development Phase of the current project. The panel meets three times a year. Membership consists of 24 schools (12 Primary, eight Secondary, three SEN/SEMH, one Early Years) and one college. They have reviewed existing sessions with us and suggested improvements, identified areas for new workshops and trialed new activities.

Youth Panel

The Midlands Youth Panel was set up as part of the Development Phase of the current project, following a model used successfully at our London site. The group currently has five members aged 16-24 and has met twice so far (November 2023 and March 2024). The panel has already provided invaluable feedback that both advocated for current plans and generated ideas for improvements. The enthusiastic wave of ideas and viewpoints the panel presented left the Learning and Engagement team inspired with fresh ideas on our approach to activity planning and project development.

Several panel members have met with our exhibition designers AOC and our Apprenticeships and Skills Pathways Manager to discuss current plans for Hangar 1 exhibition content and opportunities at the Museum for work experience. We also have a waiting list of other Museum teams that plan to consult with the panel to support development of proposals in specific areas, including the outdoor realm.



Members of the Youth Panel at RAF Museum Midlands in March 2024

6.3 Learning participants: RAF Museum Midlands

Nearly 45,000 people engaged with the learning programme during the 202023-24 financial year, against a target of 28,000.

Table 1: Levels of learning engagement: 202023-24 financial year

Category	Participants
Onsite – facilitated	17,653
Onsite – self-guided	12,287
Online	2,929
Offsite	12,040
Total	44,909

Formal learners (led sessions) are split approximately 50:50 between primary and secondary school students. Key Stage 2 learners make up approximately 40% of all led session attendees.

Table 2: Breakdown of formal learners by Key Stage, 2022–2023 (academic year)

Category	%
Reception	6%
KS1	6%
KS2	38%
KS3	21%
KS4	21%
KS5	8%
Total	100%

6.4 Community engagement: RAF Museum Midlands

Community engagement has become an increasingly important part of the Museum's work over recent years. A new Midlands-based Community Engagement Manager role was created in 2021 to focus specifically on working with local community groups and organisations, supporting the aims of Strategy 2030. The Community Engagement Manager is tasked with building partnerships with local communities and delivering social impact with the Museum collections and stories.

The Community Engagement Manager's priority has been establishing the need for and delivering the Inspiring Everyone Development Phase activities. The manager has been out and about, delivering sessions to groups on and offsite and engaging with a wide range of people, meeting with different groups and organisations, networking, researching and planning, including on the Museum's Midlands Spitfire Tour in the summer of 2022.

Community engagement work during the last three years has included:

- Initial local networking, including becoming part of the South-East Shropshire Community Connectors, a network of local stakeholders including community groups, charities, NHS, local council and civil service departments.
- Welcoming the Healthy Lives group to the Museum and supporting them to engage with visitors with the work they are doing for local families,
- Developing links with Telford & Wrekin CVS groups, as a new route in to volunteering at the Museum
- Visiting the Wheatlands Care Home and working on a trial co-creation project to trial an immersive loan box.
- Exploring opportunities for social prescribing, which we hope to develop as part of the current project
- Beginning to offer meeting space in our buildings to local organisations, helping us to build relationships and work collaboratively.

- Working with the Royal British Legion to set up a Network for Carers, supporting carers with links to the armed forces. Building on this, we have used the Development Phase of the current project to trial our own Carers' Café, now open to all carers and proving popular.
- Piloting outreach work at community venues in the wider area (initially a library in Coventry and a museum in Leicester)
- Welcoming community groups to site, including handling sessions and cockpit visits.

In 2023, the team delivered 27 onsite community engagement sessions and 23 offsite sessions, reaching a total of 7,450 participants. This represents a substantial increase from the previous year, where the programme reached 1,755 participants.

A new Community Engagement volunteer role was created during the Programme's Development Phase. Volunteers have quickly become a key part of our community engagement work, with 42 volunteers contributing 1,177.5 hours.

We were delighted to offer congratulations to our Carer's Café volunteers on winning the Marsh 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' Award for the West Midlands in 2024. The Marsh Awards are organised by the British Museum and the Marsh Charitable Trust and celebrate the work and achievements of museum volunteers across the UK.

6.5 Our learning offer: RAF Museum Midlands

Led sessions

We currently offer 14 workshops, which can be delivered onsite, online or as outreach sessions. Onsite workshops are charged at £75 for 1 hour and £45 for 30 minutes.

Sessions are delivered by our trained staff or by volunteers with an expertise in STEM. Workshops are aligned with the National Curriculum in England and with the Welsh Four Purposes. We can also offer bespoke workshops to suit schools' needs and topics.

Table 3: Current history workshop offer

Workshop	Key Stage
World War Two: Battle of Britain	KS1 and KS2
World War Two: Spirit of the Blitz	KS1 and KS2
Flying Equipment through the ages	KS1 and KS2
Class of Conflicts – Cold War debates*	KS3 and KS4
Second World War – Discovery Cases	KS1 and KS2
First World War – Life above the Trenches	Reception, KS1 and KS2
Second World War – Artefact handling	All year groups
The RAF and the Cold War	KS3 and KS4
STEM workshops	

* New workshops trialled in the Development Phase

Table 4: Current STEM workshop offer

Workshop	Key Stage
Rockets – science of forces and motion	All year groups
Rover Repair	KS2 to KS5
Parachutes and Helicopter	Reception and KS1
Rocket Cars – science of forces and motion	All year groups
Vex123 Robotics – coding*	Reception KS1 and KS2
Sphero – coding	All year groups
Pulley and Levers*	KS1 and KS2

* New workshops trialled in the Development Phase

Our five most popular workshops make up over 75% of bookings:

- World War Two: Battle of Britain (20%)

- World War Two: Spirit of the Blitz (20%)
- Rockets (18%)
- Flying Equipment through the Ages (10%)
- Rover Repair (10%)

Learning events

We run a free event programme for schools and other learning groups. This enables us to be as accessible as possible to schools with high proportions of low-income families. The events are typically sponsored, ensuring they are financially sustainable. We prioritise applications from schools and groups that have not previously engaged.

Our current formal learning event programme includes:

- **STAAR** (Summer Time Advanced Aerospace Residential). STAAR is our flagship summer residential programme for 40 Year 9 students, sponsored by the Northrop Grumman Foundation. The STAAR programme was shortlisted for the Women in Defence Awards Inclusive Teamwork for 2021, and the STEM in Defence Category for 2022.
- ACER sponsored **STEM Days** with Tablet Academy engaging 400 students each day.
- **Forces in STEM** event for 1,000 learners in partnership with RAF Youth and STEM supported by Tablet Academy, Raytheon, Leonardo, Airbus, Rolls Royce, Meggitt, University of Wolverhampton, Nottingham Trent University and more.
- **Primary STEM days** – 10 event days sponsored by RAF Youth and STEM
- **Robotics Challenge** delivered by Engineering UK
- Key Stage 2 **Glider Challenge** sponsored by RAF Youth STEM team comprising an onsite and online variant with a British Science Association CREST Award
- **Sci-Fest** event engaging over 460 learners over two days.

Our informal learning event programme includes:

- **Scouts Takeover days** with RAF Youth and STEM supporting 300 Scouts to achieve their RAF badge. During the project Development Phase, we trialled takeover days designed for Muslim Scout groups which we are now building into our Delivery Phase plans.

Learning resources

We offer extensive online resources and digital trails for schools, as well as a discovery case with resources that can be used by schools onsite. We also offer print and digital trails for family visitors.

Work experience

16 students from Wolverhampton College undertook work experience at the Museum during 2023–24. This was a pilot project as part of this Programme's Development Phase which enabled us to gain feedback for future programmes of work experience with colleges and schools.

The Museum works closely with Wolverhampton College students to run a twice annual 'Family Afternoon' event. Students studying for vocational qualifications in child-care run craft and sensory activities at RAF Museum Midlands for families with under-fives. The event provides engaging activities for families and direct experience for students.

SECTION 7: CURRENT SITUATION – COLLECTIONS

7.1 Introduction

The RAF Museum collection represents the national memory of the RAF at work and play, during war and peace. The RAF is woven into our history, from its formation during the First World War to the vital role it performs today as the nation's first line of defence. These are stories of people. And whether they are stories of technical and engineering innovation, of values and camaraderie, or of courage against all odds, there is connection and relevance for each and every one of us that the Museum harnesses for learning and inspiration.

The collection includes:

- The largest and most comprehensive collection of RAF related aircraft in the world, from the tiny Avro Rota autogyro, used for secret radar calibration missions during the Battle of Britain, to the VC-10 transport aircraft, in service for nearly fifty years
- Objects ranging from uniforms and medals to unique personal items – including the scrap books of Lord Trenchard and Sir Frederick Sykes, respectively the first and second Chief of the Air Staff, and the personal effects of Amy Johnson – that bring the stories of the iconic figures connected to the RAF to life
- An extensive oral history collection, from first-hand accounts of First World War pilots to the experiences of personnel deployed in current operations
- Large official collections, from manuals to training films, illustrating the inextricable link between the RAF and its suppliers.

Our collection is of national and, in some cases, international significance.

7.2 Staffing

The RAF Museum has two collections departments, the Department of Collections and Research (C&R) and the Department of Collections Services (DCS). In addition to the staff shown below, each team has a Head of Department.

Table 5: RAFM collections staff breakdown

Site	Collections and Research	Collections Services
Midlands	4	13 (inc. 5 Apprentices)
Stafford	2	9 (inc. 2 NLHF funded posts)
London	11	8
TOTAL	17	30

Collections and Research

Collections and Research has responsibility for the research, digitisation, development and sharing of the collection and their expertise. They may be seconded to exhibition and display projects and also support colleagues in other departments.

The team consists of curators and assistant curators (10), the Archive, Library and Research Manager, an archivist, a librarian, an historian, the RAF Stories manager, and two digital content producers.

Collections Services

Collections Services comprises five specialist teams, each with their own work area:

- **Registration team** covering the management of the Museum's Loans Programme, Collections Management policies and procedures. Their work on Loans Review directly supports the development and delivery of the Stafford Move Project.
- **Collections Systems Manager** based at the London site, covering the management and maintenance of the Museum's Collections Management System (Vernon CMS), on

which much of the Museum's object information is recorded. This role manages the development and delivery of systems to support the Stafford Move Project and related programmes of work.

- **Conservation team** – based at the Conservation Studio at the London site and Stafford care for the Museum's small objects and carry out preventative and interventive conservation. While their work is dominated by exhibition and loan support work, they are engaged in directly supporting the Stafford Move Project.
- **The Michael Beetham Conservation Centre (MBCC) team** at the Midlands site and London are responsible for the care, maintenance and movement of the Museum's large objects, notably aircraft on existing static display and aircraft for exhibitions. This team will support the movement of objects from Stafford to Midlands.
- **The Collections Storage team** at Stafford are responsible for the management the objects at that site. They are playing a leading role in the preparation of these objects for eventual move to RAFM Midlands, with the Collections Storage Manager being the Stafford Relocation Project manager.

Additionally, the Head of Collection Services manages the Collections Review project, which also supports the Stafford Move Project.

The Stafford team

The staffing team at Stafford was substantially expanded in 2020/23-24 to support the Inspiring Everyone project, the collections review and preparation for the move of the collection from Stafford to the new Collections Hub RAFM Midlands.

The team at Stafford expanded from three posts to eleven. The existing posts were:

- Collections Storage Manager (Collections Services)
- Collections Storage Officer (Collections Services)
- Curator (Collections and Research)

Additional new posts created at Stafford in 2020/23-24 were:

- Collections Storage Co-ordinator (Heritage Fund supported, planned to continue through into the Delivery Phase)
- Conservation Care and Conservation Officer (Heritage Fund supported, Development Phase only. This role will be made permanent and receive Museum funding after the Development Phase ends)
- Collections Documentation Officer (replacing a similar London-based position)
- Collections Care Co-ordinator x 2
- Collections Move Supervisor x 2
- Assistant Curator (within Collections and Research)

These staff will move over to the Midlands site with the collections once the Collections Hub is in place.

7.3 Collection breakdown

While the bulk of the archive and photographic collection is stored at our London site, the majority of our largest objects (aircraft and exhibits) are housed at our Stafford store.

Table 6: Breakdown of RAFM collection (at October 2023)

Collection area	Accessioned (RAFM-owned)	Loans in	Interpretive	Un-accessioned (T-numbered)	Total
Aircraft & Exhibits	54,908	911	31	31,600	87,450
Archives	150,928	4,399	0	511,383	666,710
Film & Sound	9,549	18	0	7,000	16,567
Fine Art	6,568	536	0	67	7,171
Library	68,493	65	0	139,072	207,630
Photographs	151,016	507	99	205,642	357,264
Total	441,462	6,436	130	894,764	1,342,792

Table 7: Recorded locations of the RAFM Accessioned collection (at October 2023)

Collection area	London	Midlands	Stafford	Outward Loan	Group / Member Recording
Aircraft & Exhibits	5,607	1,016	46,769	927	334
Archives	94,898	302	376	178	11,092
Film & Sound	8,668	0	0	0	756
Fine Art	6,081	13	1	133	276
Library	65,917	221	25	26	1,691
Photographs	125,604	1	3,423	9	21,517
Total	306,775	1,553	50,594	1,273	35,666

Collections at RAFM Stafford and RAFM Midlands

The majority of the Museum's 3D objects (Aircraft and Exhibits) are held in stores at MOD Stafford and Hangar 9 at RAF Cosford. These stores are in a poor state and are not conducive to long-term preservation or collections access.

Collections at Stafford

The Stafford store consists of buildings on No. 6 Site at MOD Stafford. This is a remote rural location on an active MOD site. It is accessible only by prior appointment for relevant staff and contractors and it completely inaccessible to members of the public.

The buildings are largely in a deleterious state. The condition of the buildings, pest infestations, water leaks from roof and walls, lack of adequate heating, lack of ventilation, temperature and humidity control continue to have a serious impact on the condition of the collections stored there. In recent years outbreaks of mould have occurred and the full extent of the impact is to be determined.

The 52,992 accessioned objects and around 22,000 unaccessioned objects at Stafford are housed in stored covering an estimated area of 6,183 m², including:

- 91 m² store of radioactive instruments
- 319 m² of items stored outside

Collections at RAF Cosford

The RAF Cosford Hangar 9 store consists of a Type 'E' Aircraft Shed built around 1938. It offers around 4,655m² of storage capacity. The building is in a deleterious state and, again, pest infestations, water leaks, lack of adequate heating, ventilation, temperature and humidity control has led to the deterioration in the condition of objects stored there. The large doors at the back of the building are at risk of falling down in high winds.

Hangar 9 contains 205 accessioned objects and 439 inventoried unaccessioned objects.

7.4 Collections Review and Development

Since the inception of the RAF Museum's Collections Review in 2014, 16,246 objects have been assessed, 15,144 have passed through curatorial analysis and 15,144 reviewed. 2,570 'Large Objects' for potential transfer have passed through internal consultation and are subject to further documentation to support preparation for transfer advertisement.

Following Large Object transfer preparation, 34 Engines and 180 Large Models have been advertised for expressions of interest.

Post-review and advertisement, 346 Wheels and Tyres have been disposed of by destruction, on the grounds of condition. 37 aircraft and 20 vehicles have been transferred. 46 objects await sale, having received no bids.

As well as identifying objects for transfer or disposal, the Review supports analysis of gaps in the collection and targeted acquisition. The majority of the collection relates to the RAF's first 50 years. Since 1965 material was largely collected on a type basis with proactive collecting limited to a relatively small number of specific purchases for exhibition. Objects relating to specific people and people stories are, therefore, limited and generally relate to senior RAF officers.

Since 2016 the Museum has actively adopted a contemporary collecting focus to support the development of new exhibitions and as part of Strategy 2030 to reflect the diverse and whole history of the Royal Air Force. This is vital to ensure that the Museum reflects the complexity of the Royal Air Force, its place in British society, the impact it has had on British and global history, and its ongoing relevance. Acquiring further contemporary material continues with a focus on material from 1980 to today to be displayed in the new exhibition as part of the Midlands Development Programme. For more information, please see the Museum's Collections Development Policy².

7.5 Engaging people with collections

Opportunities for people to engage with the collection are currently limited by lack of access to the stores. Key routes for engagement with the collection at present (beyond physical displays) are our online portals, our academic programme, loans to other venues and our reading room. The Inspiring Everyone project will enable us to substantially expand access to collections and make the scale and breadth of the collections more visible.

Table 8: Collection utilisation and engagement statistics 2023–24

Category	No.
Total number of accessioned objects stored	354,406
Total number of accessioned objects on physical display	2,248
% of accessioned objects on display	0.5%
Total number of accessioned objects on outward loan	1,081
Number of loan venues	141
Number of advice sessions/talks/lectures to partners/stakeholders	135
Visits to Reading Room	225
Academic papers and talks presented by RAFM staff	13
People engaged with academic programme	6,271

Collections Online

The RAF Museum's Collections Online website (<https://collections.rafmuseum.org.uk/>) enables the public to search the Accessioned Collection inventory.

Enhanced records, with object descriptions, contextual information and high-resolution imagery have been created for a percentage of the collection. They provide a further layer

² <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/01/Collections-Development-Policy-v14-LIVE.pdf>

of knowledge to exhibitions and help share objects which could not be physically displayed. Work is ongoing to increase the number of enhanced records.

RAF Stories

RAF Stories (<https://www.rafstories.org/>) is our ongoing digital online project that collects and shares engaging historical and contemporary stories related to the RAF. It was first developed as part of the Museum's RAF Centenary Programme in 2018, supported by the Heritage Fund. Content can be created by staff, and through external contributions. The stories can be searched by keywords, periods, themes, and concepts. There are also curated collections relating to key themes such as Space Command.

Digital trails

Digital trails have been developed for both our Museum sites to support our current exhibitions. These trails help guide visitors through exhibitions and build on the physical interpretation.

Research access

The RAF Museum Archive and Library team facilitates research for staff, volunteers and the public. It provides access to the facilities and resources in a consistent and fair manner for all users in line with professional best practice and relevant legislation. Access to archive and library material is supported through our London Reading Room where sessions are bookable in advance on Wednesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm.

Internal access to collections

There are currently 76,902 collection digital assets housed on the Museum's Digital Asset Management System. These can be accessed and used by all departments online, for print and presentations.

Other public engagement with collections

The Museum offers a number of opportunities to get closer to our collections including a range of tours (drop-in and bookable), object handling sessions in gallery and events such as Open Cockpits which are part of our public programme.

However, we are currently unable to offer collections store access/tours as these are on restricted-access MOD sites and the team's access to objects for demonstration and handling are limited by the same restrictions.

7.6 Digitisation programme

The Museum has an ongoing programme of digitisation from its material from its archive and Library collection. This digitisation is conducted both externally and internally, by staff and volunteers. Digitised material is made publicly available through the Museum's Collection Online website and in the Reading Room.

The collections digitised help to further the historiography of the RAF, or relate to material which can provide further information relating to the collection at Stafford. This improves Collections Review decisions and helps to identify unconfirmed objects within the non-accessioned collection.

The Museum also undertakes internal scanning of collection records and administrative documentation relating to the collection. We invest each year in external scanning of large sections of our administrative paperwork. This increases the speed of Collections Review work and enhances the accessibility of the documents, improving our collections management. Digitisation of internal records held at our stored collection in Stafford is also reducing the quantity of material we need to transfer to our new Collections Hub.

7.7 Research programme

The Museum's has an independent Research Advisory Board that offers advice and guidance to help develop the Museum's research programme. The Research Advisory Board comprises senior research and academics, scholars and museum professionals.

The Museum's research programme is shaped by a Research Strategy and Research Plan. These documents are developed with support from the Research Advisory Board and give shape to the Museum's ambition to become a centre of excellence for the research of the Royal Air Force.

Sharing research

As part of our Research Programme the Museum hosted our annual conference on 5-6 September 2023 with the theme 'Meaning, Memory and Misremembered Past', 65 people attended in person, and 103 people registered to view the conference online. The Museum also hosted the British Commission for Military History's annual conference on 'Close Air Support and the Battlefield', the RAF Historical Society's 'The Jaguar in RAF Service' and 'Bomber Command: 1943' conferences, and the Royal Aeronautical Society's 'Fallen Eagle: The Demise of the RAF's TSR2 Nuclear Bomber' conference.

We run a programme of in-person and virtual lectures on topics relevant to the RAF. In 2023, this included Air Power lectures with Lancaster University's Centre for War and Diplomacy and the University of Wolverhampton and the lunchtime lectures series at the Museum's Midlands site. The 17 lectures of the 2023 programme had 2410 registrations and were all live streamed.

Museum staff provide talks, lectures, tours and conference papers to share their research and knowledge of the RAF. Staff actively provide media commentary around anniversaries and as subject matter experts, across all forms of media.

Supporting student research

The Museum is engaged in the collaborative supervision of five doctoral students at universities and doctoral training partnerships across the United Kingdom.

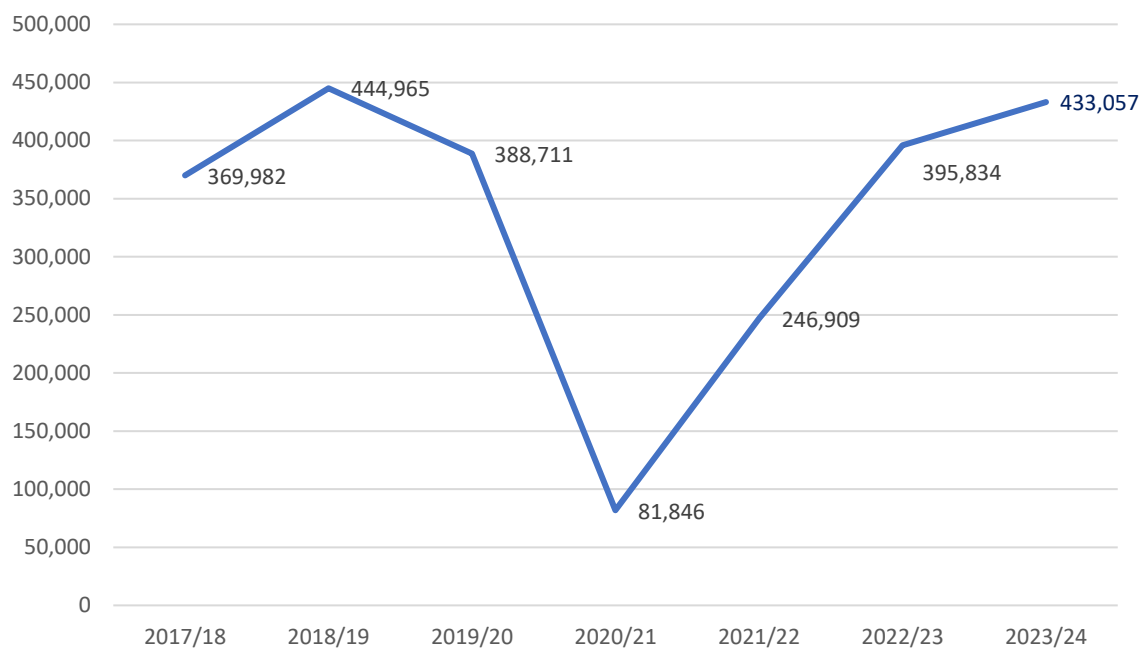
The Museum offers a number of annual academic awards, including a doctoral bursary, and Masters and Undergraduate dissertation prizes. The Museum also provides an annual bursary to the collaborative doctoral students under its supervision. A further bursary was offered to the University of Leicester New Museum School. The School provides a pipeline of fresh, diverse talent to the arts and heritage sector. As part of the bursary we will support a student placement in 2024–25.

SECTION 8: UNDERSTANDING OUR AUDIENCES

8.1 Current visitor numbers

In 2023–24 the RAF Museum Midlands welcomed 433,057 visitors against a target of 430,850. We have been rebuilding audiences since the pandemic and the Museum has now successfully restored our audience numbers to above pre-pandemic figures (excluding the RAF's Centenary year in 2018).

Graph 1: Visitor figures by financial year, Pre Covid to 2023-24



8.2 Visitor and non-visitor research

The Museum conducts rolling research of our audiences and their motivations. This information is then used to inform the Museum's exhibition and events programmes, the channel selection and messaging strategy that is used to promote the Museum to various audience groups, and the methodology, such as imagery and tone of voice, of the Museum's various marketing campaigns.

All key decisions about the visitor offer at the Museum are informed by the research conducted and feedback that is received from our visitors. This has now been built into every stage of the planning process at the Museum.

Our regular research programme includes:

- ALVA face to face Interviews (300 per annum)
- Muse: brand tracking study (6 monthly, 4,200 individuals)
- Digitickets (Museum ticketing database, postcodes analysed quarterly)
- Exit surveys (all visitors)
- Social media analysis (quarterly)
- Website traffic analysis (quarterly)
- Event surveys
- Analysis of visitor feedback
- Project-specific research.

See our Audience Development Strategy for further detail.

Inspiring Everyone: visitor and non-visitor surveys

Two key pieces of additional large-scale audience research have informed the development of the Inspiring Everyone Programme:

- A visitor survey undertaken with visitors to RAF Museum Midlands by JURA Research in 2022 (n=1,451)
- A non-visitor survey undertaken by MEL Research in 2023 (n=695)

The following sections draw on their analysis as well as the most recent postcode analysis run between April and June 2023.

8.3 The current visitor profile at RAF Museum Midlands

Data from the 2022 visitor survey provides some indication of visitor demographics, with the caveat that the data represents the single member of each party completing the questionnaire:

- Respondents were 50% male, 48% female
- Over two-thirds were aged between 35 and 64 (28% 35-44, 20% 45-54, 19% 55-64)
- 8% reported that their day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability (compared to 18% in the England population). Respondents aged 55+ were more likely than younger visitors to report a health problem and/or disability. Two thirds of those reporting a health problem/disability had a mobility disability, and a quarter had a mental health issue.
- 60% of respondents were in managerial and professional roles (lower managerial and professional – 31%, higher managerial and professional 29%)
- 95% of respondents were from a white background, compared to 77% in the West Midlands population.
- 11% of respondents live in Shropshire, 18% in Staffordshire, 6% in Telford and Wrekin, and 31% elsewhere in the West Midlands (total 66% from the West Midlands). 7% come from the East Midlands, 26% from elsewhere in the UK, and 1% from overseas.

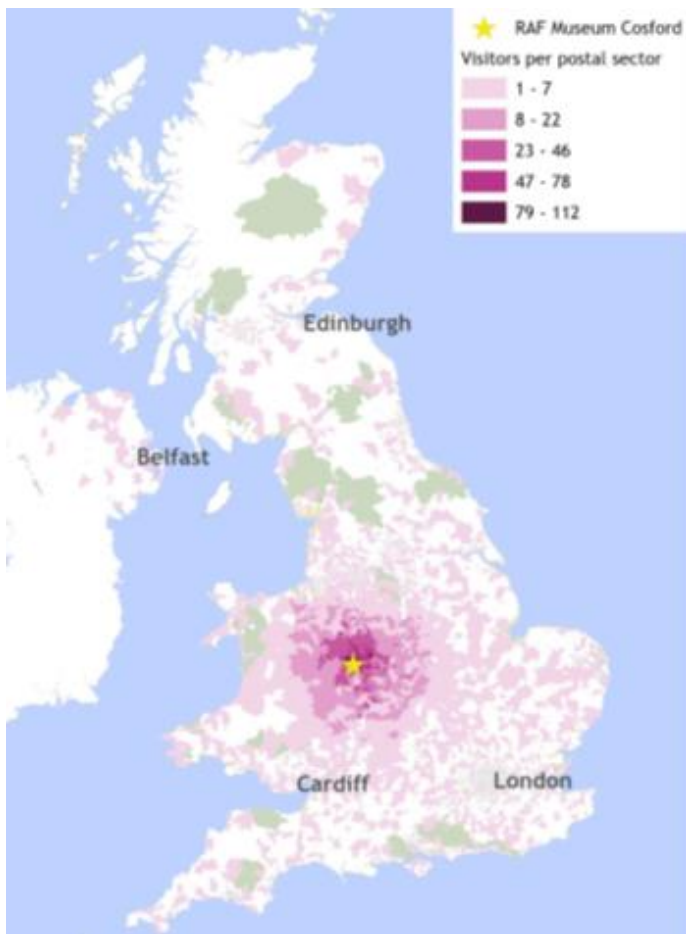
Based on the 2022 visitor survey, we know:

- Most visitors (81%) have no connection to the armed forces
- Most people visit the site with other people (93% of respondents), and most visit in a group including children (62% of respondents). 6% of respondents visited alone.
- 38% of respondents were first-time visitors to the Museum and 62% were repeat visitors.
- Of the repeat visitors, 23% had visited in the last year.
- 71% of Shropshire residents were repeat attendees
- Repeat visiting was still high among respondents from outside the Midlands: 47% had visited the site previously.

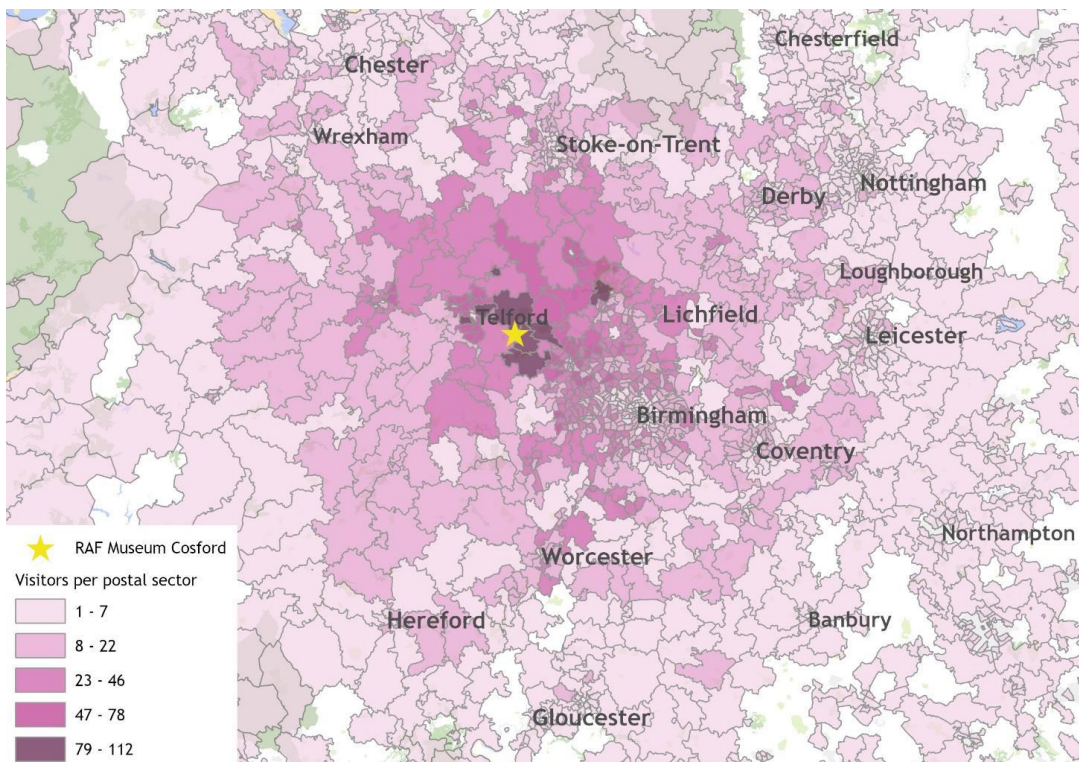
Geographic spread of visitors

Postcode analysis enabled heat maps to be produced showing UK locations of visitors.

Map 1: Visitor postcodes by postcode sector (wide view)



Map 2: Visitor postcodes by postcode sector (regional view)

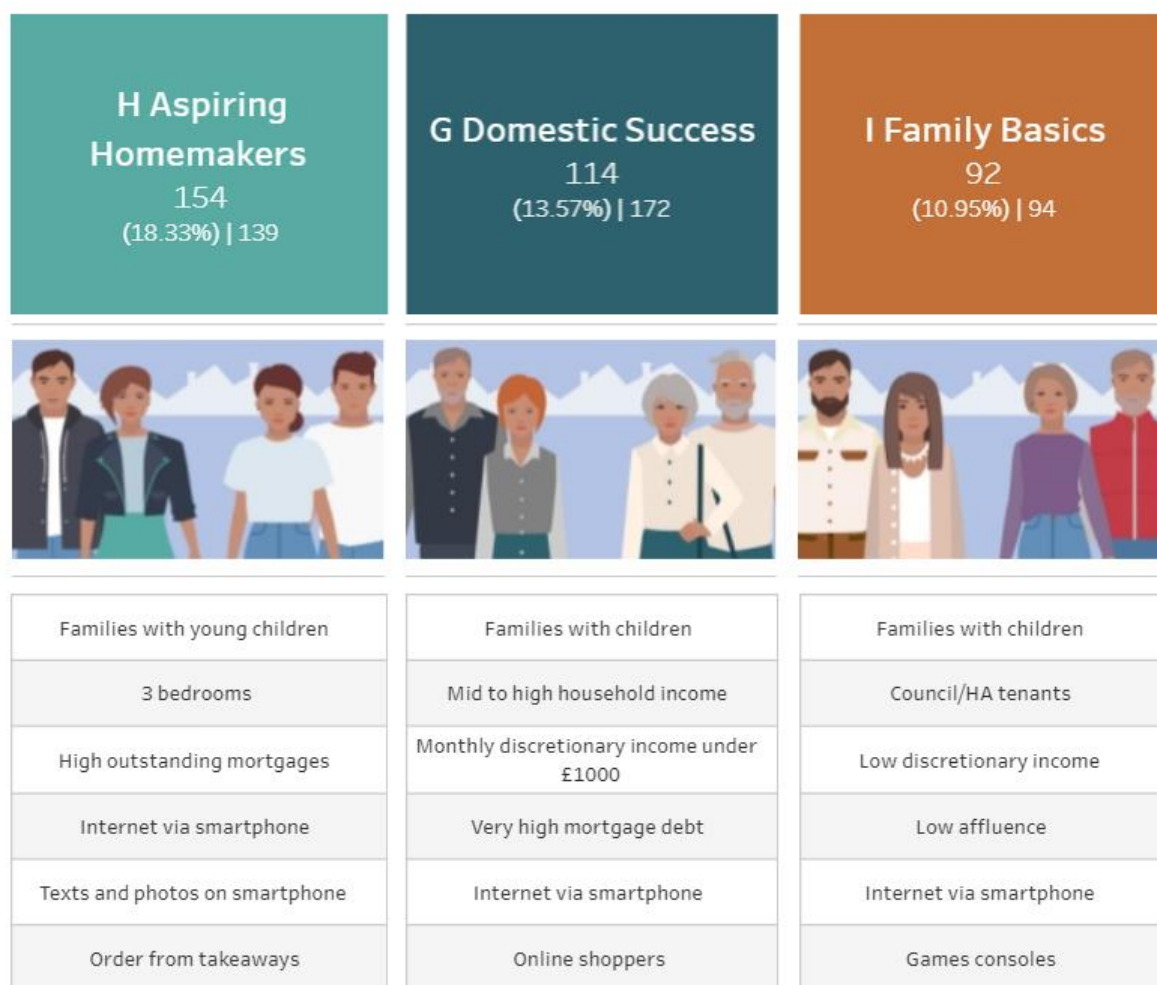


Geodemographic segmentation

Postcodes from respondents within the West or East Midlands have been analysed by Mosaic segment. The most prevalent Mosaic segments among visitors were:

- H Aspiring Homemakers (18%)
- G Domestic Success (14%)
- I Family Basics (11%)

The first two groups are over-represented compared to the base population, while the Family Basics group is slightly under-represented. Nonetheless, this represents an opportunity for the Museum, in that this group is not always prevalent at visitor attractions/cultural settings due to the associated costs.



Source: Royal Air Force Museum Cosford Visitor Survey, Final Report, April 2022. ScotInform.

8.4 Visitor experience

The average dwell time for a visit to the Museum is two to three hours. 43% of respondents visiting for the first-time spent three+ hours on site.

Asked to select the reason/s for their visit to RAF Museum Midlands, respondents were most likely to select 'we enjoy visiting aircraft museums' (57%) and 'to spend time with family and friends' (52%), 'to give the children a new or different experience' (43%), 'to encourage the children's interest or learning' (41%).

Key motivations for families were 'to spend time with family and friends' (67%), 'to give the children a new or different experience' (66%), 'to encourage the children's interest or learning' (64%). 'We enjoy visiting aircraft museums' becomes less important, with 50% of family respondents selecting this option.

Respondents visiting with other adults and adults visiting solo were very likely to select 'we enjoy visiting aircraft museums' as a reason for visiting RAF Museum Midlands (visiting with adults 70%, visiting solo 75%). This far outweighed any other motivation for the visit for both these groups. These groups are also likely to identify RAFM Midlands as a 'must-see site' (33% / 31%).

The majority of respondents (89%) rated their overall enjoyment between 8-10 out of 10. This equates to a mean score of 9.0 out of 10.

Visitor feedback

Feedback on what respondents enjoyed most and what they felt could be improved has been used to inform the current project as well as day-to-day practice.

Key themes to emerge in terms of what visitors enjoyed were:

- Access and proximity to a variety of planes and exhibits, including
- viewing platforms (27% of the 874 respondents)
- The Cold War exhibition (15%)
- The interpretation providing information about content (13%)
- Engaging with staff and volunteers who share their knowledge/provide
- tours (9%)
- A family day out/suitable for all the family (7%)
- The 4D experience (7%)
- The playground/play area (7%)
- The layout and presentation of exhibits and spaces (5%)
- Seeing Second World War planes/learning about the Second World War (4%).

Feedback on areas to improve included:

- Greater access to planes i.e. seeing inside planes, access to cockpits, platforms providing a view to see inside planes, and access around planes (18% of respondents)
- Disappointment that some elements of the visit/site were closed. Some respondents cited Covid restrictions and bad weather as potential reasons for this (11%)
- A request for more interactive opportunities for children (11%) and interaction more generally (4%)
- Disappointment with the café (service, not enough for children and menu) (9%)
- More interpretation surrounding content (5%)
- More content/planes (5%)
- A need for better signage/orientation (2%)
- Activities including trails/quiz sheets for children (2%).

8.5 Learning audiences

Nearly 45,000 people engaged with the learning programme during the 2023–24 academic year, including 35,000 formal learners. Formal learners are split broadly 50:50 between primary and secondary age groups. Key Stage 2 accounts for nearly 40% of formal learning visits.

More detail on the breakdown of our learning audience can be found in Section 6.

8.6 Understanding non-visitors

Non-visitor research undertaken in August-September 2023, supported by the Heritage Fund as part of the Programme's Development Phase, provided valuable insight into who our non-visitors are, what might drive them to visit and what the key barriers might be.

The research surveyed 695 people in total. These were all people living relatively locally (within around an hour's drive) who had never visited RAF Museum Midlands before, but who were open to visiting museums (those who said they would definitely not visit museums/themed experiences were excluded). The sample was weighted to include

substantial segments of non-visitors from ethnic minorities, people with additional needs and people from the most deprived areas.

The following key findings are taken from the report by MEL Research.

Openness to museums

- Non-visitors were open to visit museums, with a greater interest in history more generally than military or aeroplanes, with most interested in being outside (parks/areas of natural beauty) – **highlight opportunities to spend time outside in communications**
- Spending time with friends/family was the most important thing they consider when thinking about days out in general
- Those from ethnic minorities were more likely to agree that museums aren't for them, difficult to navigate and boring – **ensure stories appeal to all backgrounds and are included in promotional material and throughout the site**

Awareness and appeal of RAF Museum Midlands

- When prompted, around two thirds of non-visitors were aware of RAF Museum Midlands
- When asked what they would expect to see/do at the Museum, seeing and interacting with planes was the most appealing aspect of a visit - with many having a good understanding of what they would be able to see/do
- Awareness was the biggest barrier as to why they hadn't visited before – **focus on building awareness of not just the Museum, but what they can do there**

Perceived value of RAF Museum Midlands

- Only 3% of non-visitors were aware that it was free to enter, a very appealing aspect (81% found this appealing) – **key to highlight free entry in future communications**
- A high proportion after completing the survey and finding out more about the museum said they would visit in the next 12 months (70%), highlighting that non-visitors once they find out more about your offering are very open to visiting – **education of the wide range of things to see and do, including outside exhibits with friends and family are important to highlight in communications, focusing on the history and stories of the people involved in aviation and the RAF to appeal to the widest audience**

Source: RAF Museum Midlands Non-Visitor Research, September 2023, MEL Research

Non-visitors from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds

Those from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds were likely to score more highly on statements related to not feeling 'at ease' in museums (such as being boring, and not for them, and being difficult to navigate). However, it is important to recognise that there are different attitudes to museums within this cohort.

People from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds were more likely to agree that:

- Museums should cater to a wide range of audiences, including children and families (81% vs. 73%)
- I often seek out museums as a source of inspiration and creativity (50% vs. 38%)
- Museums should use modern technology and multimedia to enhance visitor engagement (75% vs. 62%)
- Museums should actively address controversial topics and promote dialogue and discussion (63% vs. 50%)
- Museums are too expensive and not worth the cost (32% vs. 23%).

People from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds were more likely to believe that the Museum is expensive. They were more likely to find it appealing that the Museum is free to enter.

People from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds were more likely to say that they found the RAF Museum Midlands more appealing after seeing the description. Once non-visitors were shown pictures of the Museum and given a description of its core offer 70% stated that they were likely to visit within the next 12 months. This effect was particularly strong for people from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds (85% likely/very likely/definitely, compared to 67% for white non-visitors).

Non-visitors with additional needs

People with additional needs are slightly less likely to agree that visiting museums is enjoyable and enriching (68% vs.73%). However, once shown images and description of RAF Museum Midlands, they are almost as likely as other groups to find the site appealing and to report that they would be likely to visit in the next 12 months.

Non-visitors from areas of deprivation

The free entry was particularly appealing to people from more deprived areas (IMD 1 – 4). After seeing information about the Museum, people from more deprived areas were more likely than other groups to report that they would be likely to visit in the next 12 months.

Free entry is key

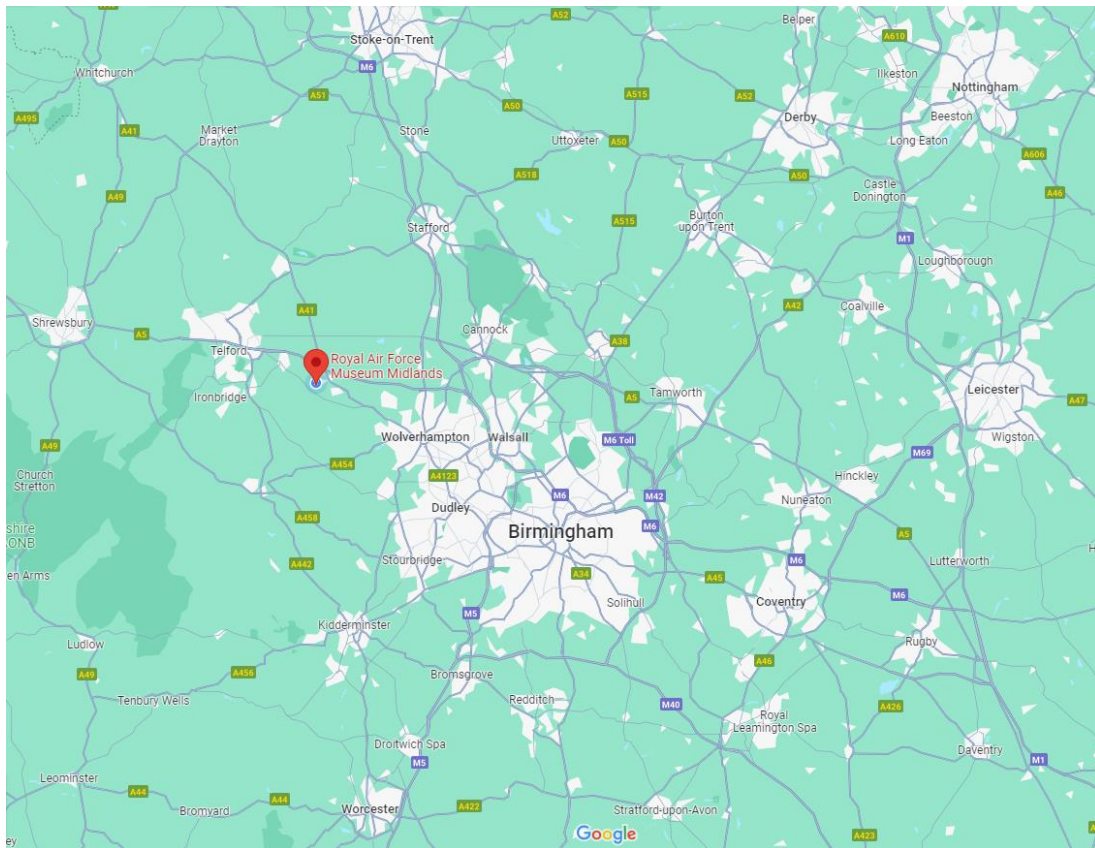
Non-visitors were largely unaware that the Museum was free, but free entry is very appealing. This is an important message to convey to non-visitors, particularly those from ethnic minorities and from deprived areas, who are more likely to believe that it is expensive and who find the free entry particularly appealing.

8.7 Understanding the local area

The RAF Museum Midlands is in Shropshire, closely bordering the West Midlands and Staffordshire. The Museum is a short distance from several major towns and cities.

- 10 miles from **Wolverhampton** city centre which has a population of 263,700 people / 102,000 households (Source: 2021 Census).
- 9 miles from **Telford** city centre which has a population of 18,600 people / 76,500 households (Source: 2021 Census)
- 15 miles from **Dudley** town centre which has a population of 323,495 people / 140,960 households (Source: 2021 Census).
- 18 miles from **Walsall** town centre which has a population of 284,100 people / 115,700 households (Source: 2021 Census).
- 22 miles from **Stafford** town centre which has a population of 136,867people / 64,000 households (Source: 2021 Census).
- 23 miles from **Shrewsbury** town centre which has a population of 76,782 people / 32,535 households (Source: 2021 Census).
- 28 miles from **Birmingham** city centre which has a population of 1,144,900 people/ 423,500 households (Source: 2021 Census).

Map 3: RAF Museum Midlands – local context



Indices of Multiple Deprivation

The Midlands has some of the UK's areas with the highest Multiple Indices of Deprivation including high levels of social isolation, low cultural and social capital, and poor health outcomes. Research shows that only 9% of our current visitors come from these areas although they account for 23% of the local population.

Table 9: Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings for local urban areas

Area	Drive time (mins)	Public transport (mins)	IMD ranking (out of 317)**	% of LSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally	% Visitors
Telford (and Wrekin*)	20	9	99*	16*	6.26
Wolverhampton	30	16	19	21	4.25
Sandwell	30	64	8	20	3.40
Walsall	35	65	31	26	4.10
Shropshire (key town Shrewsbury)	40	34	165	1	3.00***
Stafford	40	56	233	0	2.10
Dudley	45	66	104	11	5.36
Stoke-on-Trent	50	55	15	32	2.55
Kidderminster (Wyre Forest)	50	94	114*	6	0.80
Bromsgrove	60	94	271	0	1.40

Source: IMD and deprivation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Open Data.
 RAF Museum Digiticket database of 2,000 visitors March/April 2024

* Figure relates to wider council area in which town sits

** Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking for lower tier authorities – 1 is most deprived.

***Shrewsbury and Atcham, Shropshire

Ethnic diversity

While our visitor profile reflects the local Shropshire population in terms of ethnic diversity, it is dramatically different to the profile of the wider Midlands area. Internal tracking and research from our baseline in 2022 (ALVA / BDRC) demonstrated that 95% of our visitors are White against a Midlands demographic of 82%, and our employee and volunteer profile does not reflect the region's diversity.

Census data and research (M.E.L Research, ScotInform) shows the highest population groups we do not reach are Asian and Asian British (including people identifying as Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Bangladeshi) and Black – African, Caribbean, and Black British.

Graph 2: Top line regional ethnicity data compared with Museum audience data

	Asian %	Black %	Mixed %	White British %	White Other %	Other %
Museum general visitor	1.8	0.3	0.6	91.8	3.2	0.2
East Midlands	6.5	1.8	1.9	85.4	3.9	0.6
West Midlands	10.8	3.3	2.4	79.2	3.6	0.9
Shropshire	1.5	0.6	0.9	93.8	1.9	1.3

8.8 Target geographical 'cold spots'

Five target 'cold spots' have been identified to help the Museum grow visitor numbers from several of its key target audiences and cross-cutting priorities. These are geographical targets where project activity will be focused. They are:

- Telford and Wrekin
- Wolverhampton
- Sandwell
- Walsall
- Stoke-on-Trent

More detail on the population profile of each area and specific characteristics and challenges can be found below.

Telford and Wrekin	• 10.5% of the population come from ethnic groups other than White British with the largest group being White Other at 2.7% • 92.7% of residents were born in the UK. • 20.8% of school age children are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British • 32.7% of residents report bad or very bad health compared to 27.4% nationally. • Juxtaposition of some of the most deprived and least deprived areas in the country • 26.6% of 16+ residents of Telford and Wrekin have no academic or professional qualifications.
Wolverhampton	• 35% of population from ethnic groups other than White British with the biggest group being Indian at 12.9% • 20.5% of the population have some form of disability or long-term health condition. • Younger population than average 20.4% of population children compared to 19% nationally. • 17.8% of households classed as Family Basics (Mosaic profile) • 41% of children from Black and Minority Ethnic communities

Sandwell	• 34.2% of population from ethnic groups, other than White British, with the largest groups with Indian or Pakistani heritage • 25% of the population are children (19% nationally) • More than half of LSOAs in most deprived 20% nationally • 1 in 5 residents has one limiting health condition. • 72.8% (81.1% nationally) say health good or very good. • Substantially lower proportion of residents with qualifications e.g., 20.3% have no qualifications compared to 7.8% nationally.
Walsall	• 23.1% of population from ethnic groups other than White British • 37.4% of children from ethnic groups other than White British • 9 out of 10 residents born in the UK. • Younger (under 16) and older populations (65-84) larger than the national average • 77.3% of residents say their health is good or very good (81.1% nationally) • 33.7% of over 16s have no qualifications (7.8% nationally) • Extreme levels of deprivation concentrated in the west.
Stoke-on-Trent	• 20.2% of population from ethnic groups other than White British • 23.8% of children under 16 live in poverty (16.8% nationally) • 12.3% of the population over 16 have no qualifications (7.8% nationally) • 53% of the population live in top 20% most deprived in England. • 30.9% of households in Stoke-on-Trent had no cars or vans compared with 25.8% in England. • The prevalence of dementia, epilepsy and other severe mental health conditions are higher locally compared with England.

Sources: 2011 Census, ONS Annual Population Surveys 2018 onwards, ONS population estimates.

SECTION 9: TARGET AUDIENCES

9.1 Commitment to diversifying our audience

The Museum's Strategic Framework to 2030 has been designed to both continue to deliver a positive experience for existing users – and to increase the reach of the RAF Museum to new visitors to our physical and online site(s), sharing the RAF story with our local, national and international communities.

Our commitment to broadening our audience base can be found across many of our strategies including Interpretation, Learning and Engagement, Collections Development and Commercial.

9.2 Visitor targets

Our visitor targets for the Midlands site up to 2033–34 are given in the table below. As a result of the project, we expect visitor numbers to increase to 529,000 per year (2027–28 and 2028–29) after the new exhibition and public realm have opened in summer 2027.

Table 10: Visitor targets for RAF Museum Midlands site by financial year

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
General	333,000	323,000	343,000	390,000	382,000	402,000	407,000	407,000	417,000	422,000
Learning	32,000	32,000	32,000	36,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000
Corporate Events	5,000	4,000	4,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	10,000	12,000	14,000
Public Events	60,000	50,000	50,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	100,000	105,000	105,000
TOTAL	430,000	409,000	429,000	529,000	529,000	549,000	554,000	561,000	578,000	585,000

9.3 Defining target audiences

From the visitor survey work, analysis of existing visitor data and internal staff workshops, the Museum has identified five key target audiences that are imperative for us to attract to ensure that we hit our projected visitor numbers by 2030. Our aim is to increase the reach and appeal of the RAF Museum so we are able to share the RAF Story and Museum experience with more audiences that might otherwise not engage with the culture sector.

The following audience segments have been identified as key targets for the project.

- **Families** – redefined as Families (and Family Groups) with Children 4-16
- **Children and Young People** – redefined to include children and young people outside formal learning contexts
- **Adult Day Trip Visitors**
- **RAF Personnel**
- **Apprentices, trainees, work experience placements and volunteers.**

Each audience has three cross-cutting principles attached to it:

- That we reach people from **lower socio-economic backgrounds**
- That we reach people from a **wider range of ethnic backgrounds**
- That we meet the needs of **people with access requirements and additional needs.**

For each of the target audiences the Museum will:

- **Build Audiences** (growing the core) – Increasing the penetration amongst audiences who currently engage, and extending our reach amongst potential audiences who have similar characteristics to current visitors.
- **Broaden Audiences** (introducing new visitors) – broadening the range of audiences engaging with the Museum and reaching people who are currently underrepresented in the museum's visitor profile.

Changes to our audience segments since the development phase application

As part of the Development Phase of the project, we have removed '**Specialist Access Groups and Individuals**' as a standalone target audience, as we focus on this audience as one of our cross-cutting priorities.

We have expanded the '**Children and Young People**' segment to reflect our commitment to engaging young people in contexts beyond formal learning

We have tightened the definition of the **Families** group based on visitor research.

9.4 Key to overarching barriers and drivers for all groups

Low levels of spontaneous brand awareness across all target groups (except for RAF Personnel)

We have significant challenges building and sustaining spontaneous brand awareness within relatively limited budgets. Spontaneous brand awareness is a key measure, because it recognises the reality of how people make decisions when considering a family day out. We don't just compete with other museums, attractions, etc, we are competing in the 'discretionary leisure time' sector. That means we need to be spontaneously front of mind when people think about what to do this weekend. It is tough to drive meaningful visit intent and consideration when people haven't heard of you! The good news is that we have compelling evidence that shows when we do invest in building our brand awareness, giving people compelling reasons to visit us, presented in a fun and engaging way, we see a significant increase in visitor numbers and spend per visitor.³

For example, we ran a significant radio campaign across May-September 2021 and July-November 2022. We had a great visitor response, and we saw a positive Return On Investment, as well as a far greater diversity of visitors. However, this quickly reverted once the campaign finished.

For all groups, a lack of understanding about the RAF Museum experience.

We have a significant challenge to inform and engage our target groups about what we offer and the benefits. People lack an understanding of the RAF Museum experience, and the RAF Story and its current relevance. However, once people are made aware of these brand benefits, they are very positive and state a strong intent to visit.

When people visit the RAF Museum Midlands, they love the experience. We just need to tell more people about what we offer.

For all groups, a lack of awareness that it is FREE to enter the Museum.

When people are shown what the RAF Museum Midlands experience involves, they assume this quality of experience would cost £12.75 for an adult ticket. When told the Museum is a free experience, it is a significant incentive to visit, with 81% of respondents stating that they found this appealing and 71% of respondents stating that they would visit in the next 12 months. This represents a significant opportunity across all target groups, particularly when people are looking for ways to spend quality time with family and friends, when they are concerned about cost of living.

³ Muse Brand Tracking Research October 2023

9.5 Targets and approach

The sections below summarise the **build** and **broaden** approach for audience development for each of the Museum's **five priority audience groups** and for the **three cross-cutting groups**.

Each section sets out targets for the specific audience groups. These targets are based on the Museum's recent visitor and commercial performance during the post Covid period to date, and forward visitor projections set as outlined below.

- For Financial Year 2023-24 – 433,057 (actual)
- For Financial Year 25/26 – 409,000
- For Financial Year 26/27 – 429,000
- For Financial Year 27/28 – 529,000
- For Financial Year 28/29 – 529,000
- For Financial Year 29/30 – 549,000
- For Financial Year 30/31 – 554,000

Where an audience is currently under-represented within our visitor profile, targets are given as a percentage and volume increase, showing how we will grow and develop the audience from its current base.

Note: BDRC/ ALVA refers to the face-to-face interviews that are conducted on-site three times a year.

Families

They are both current visitors and new to the Museum looking for social, fun and interactive learning experiences that meet the needs of intergenerational groups and offer an inclusive warm welcome

Audience group	Build	Broaden
FAMILIES Local, regional and national	Families (parents, or grandparents visiting as a multi-generational group) with children under 16.	Families on lower incomes from areas with high levels of ethnic diversity including Telford and Wrekin, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Stoke-on-Trent Families with preschool children aged 0-4 Neurodiverse and SEN families Teenage and younger parents and their children Families from the RAF Cosford patch

Barriers

- Low levels of brand awareness. spontaneous awareness of the RAF Museum Midlands currently stands at 1.5% within the catchment area. Without awareness of our proposition, it follows that our ability to generate consideration/intent, physical and digital visit occasions, and positive post visit sentiment are far more difficult. We need to put the RAF Museum Midlands on our regional map.
- Limited knowledge of our offer and experience. Our non-visitor research (MEL) shows that all of our key target audiences for broadening our profile, have a limited understanding of the breadth of our experience and offer. However, once they are made aware of our offer, they state high levels of positive visit intent. The fact we are a free to enter museum is of particular importance to our target audiences when they struggle to balance the monthly budget. We offer a great value day out for all key audiences.

- A prevailing attitude amongst audiences that museums (as a category) might not be ‘for them’. Our non-visitor research demonstrated that our key audiences perceive museums in general as rather inaccessible experiences (highbrow) and therefore, perhaps not relevant to them. This research also highlighted that an initial perception amongst non-visitors is that we ‘are just a museum full of RAF aircraft’, which in itself, is not a significant driver of visit intent. However, when our stories, exhibits, experiences, interactivity, spaces and range all combine, this represents (to potential audiences) an exciting and high value day out. It is a significant driver that we offer lots to see and lots to do, with an opportunity for a different experience each time you visit.

Drivers

- A free/value for money day out
- The Museum offers something for all ages
- There is plenty to see and do including immersive experiences
- Good transport network – just off Junction 12 of M6 Southbound and with a local station and shuttle bus/short walk
- Plenty of parking on-site
- The Museum offers great family-centred facilities including a café, picnicking and baby change
- The events programme offers reasons to visit in school holidays and reasons for repeat visits.

Baseline and targets

Currently, families account for 75% of visitors to our Midlands site (Source: BDRC/ ALVA Feb 23 – Dec 23). We aim to retain that proportion within our audience, while the total number of visitors and family visits grows.

Target Audience: Families
Baseline 75% in 2020/21 = 324,792 visitors
Baseline 75% in 2027/28 = 396,000 visitors
Baseline 75% in 2030/31 = 415,500 visitors

Children and young people

Individuals aged 4-16 looking for experiences to support informal learning, alongside insight, inspiration and a fun/positive visit experience in terms of personal development. They may also be visiting as part of a family group.

Audience group	Build	Broaden
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE Local and regional	Children aged 4 -11 Children aged 11-16	Children living in areas of higher deprivation, with high levels of ethnic diversity and from geographical cold spots locally including Wolverhampton, Sandwell, and Walsall Children with SEN requirements

Barriers

- This young audience group is more likely to be disengaged with the concept of ‘traditional’ museum experiences, are often not the primary decision maker when it comes to the visit decision (this may be a parent, guardian or educational establishment), and are living in a fragmented and complex media landscape, so are ever harder to reach and engage through traditional communications.
- The non-user audience research showed there were very few mentions of the Museum being a good destination to take children, though some mentioned the educational and interactive aspects.

- Accessing the Museum via public transport may be difficult for young people travelling by themselves or with other young people. Potentially requiring multiple trains and / or buses to reach the Museum. this also has a cost implication.
- The cost of transport for school groups in lower socio-economic areas may be unaffordable and prevent them from visiting.
- The Museum's learning spaces are currently at capacity, therefore we are limited with the number of students we can engage with.

Drivers

- After seeing and reading what the Museum has to offer, the non-user audience surveyed thought the interactive and educational aspects of the museum, including VR experiences and themed areas for children were very positive and appealing.
- The Museum has an aviation themed outdoor playground that will appeal to younger visitors.
- The Museum's interactive area of Flight Zone is packed with engaging flight themed experiences for visitors of all ages but will particularly appeal to the Museum's youngest visitors. Including a 4D Theatre, Flight Simulator, Paratroop and VR Experience.
- The Museum runs events throughout each school holiday, with plenty of themed activities, workshops, shows and crafts for younger visitors to engage with.
- The Museum's Learning and Engagement team run a variety of workshops and events for schools and home educated children.

Baseline and targets

Currently, children and young people aged 4-16 account for 36% of visitors to our Midlands site (Source: BDRG/ ALVA Feb 23 – Dec 23), excluding formal learning audiences. We aim to retain that proportion within our audience, as the total audience grows.

Target Audience: Children and young people
Baseline 36% in 2020/21 = 155,900 visitors
Baseline 36% in 2027/28 = 190,100 visitors
Baseline 36% in 2030/31 = 199,450 visitors

Adult day trip visitors

Adults of all ages visiting independently, in groups and on organised trips looking for social and leisure experiences to enjoy and feed lifelong learning interests while providing an inspiring and memorable day out

Audience group	Build	Broaden
ADULT DAY TRIP VISITORS Local, regional and national	Adult leisure visitors from a wider catchment area Coach trips and group visit packages	Visitors reached through Midlands cultural partnerships Shropshire Tourism market 18- to 24-year-olds coming as independent visitors Day trip visitors from areas of deprivation, greater levels of ethnic diversity and geographic cold spots including Telford and Wrekin, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Stoke-on-Trent

Barriers

- Lack of spontaneous or prompted awareness of Museum and the benefits of its offer
- Perception that the Museum is hard to reach / far away from visitor base

- Perception that the Museum may not contain the facilities that a day tripper would require to fully enjoy visit – no parking, no café, no shop, no outdoor area
- Perception that the Museum caters for only a certain age group, people of a certain political leaning or for people who are experts in history
- Perception that the Museum is just an aircraft museum for enthusiasts and that you will require a certain amount of knowledge or understanding of the RAF and its history before you can visit
- Lack of a credible package offer for groups to buy / coach companies to sell onto groups.

Drivers

- Multi award-winning venue with high net promoter score, which has been recommended for a VAQAS Gold Award and which receives rave reviews on Google and Tripadvisor on a regular basis.
- Good transport network – just off Junction 12 of M6 Southbound and with a local station
- Plenty of parking on-site for both private vehicles (cars and motorcycles), with free car parking for coach groups.
- Also offers free catering for coach drivers of pre-booked groups.
- Comprehensive programme of seasonal events and temporary exhibitions as well as strong core offer
- Main exhibitions updated and / refurbished on a regular basis. There is always something new on display and to see.

Baseline and targets

Currently, visitors who are adults on a day trip to our Midlands site account for 36% of total visitors (Source: BDRC/ ALVA Feb 23 – Dec 23).

Target Audience: Adult Day Trippers
Baseline 36% in 2020/23-24 = 155,900 visitors
Baseline 36% in 2027/28 = 190,100 visitors
Baseline 36% in 2030/31= 199,450 visitors

RAF personnel

Serving and retired Whole Force RAF personnel from across the UK who want to learn more about their heritage, contribute to contemporary storytelling and enrich their wellbeing and sense of place through connecting with their service museum.

Audience group	Build	Broaden
RAF PERSONNEL Local, regional and national	RAF Cosford personnel Cadets and Scouts groups Birmingham University Air Squadron	Potential visitors from the Whole Force, covering civilians and contractors Trainees and new recruits at Cosford Personnel from RAF stations further afield Veterans with PTSD

Barriers

- Have already had the training about the service's history so why bother visiting
- The Museum doesn't focus on more modern campaigns, just on the early days of the service and the First and Second World Wars

- The Museum will place its own interpretation on campaigns rather than just stating the facts – or will ‘dumb down’ their accounts of a particular campaign or aspect of RAF life so that the general public can understand what they are reading, but it won’t be wholly accurate.
- Could take family and friends, but basically it will just end up being a busman’s holiday when I could be doing other activities with my family that I will enjoy more
Go there on a regular basis, already, for briefings and planning sessions.

Drivers

- As the service’s museum most likely to accurately reflect the history of the service
- Through RAF Stories, ability for current and ex-service personnel to share their own story, giving important human insights into national and international affairs enabling greater understanding amongst the general public.
- Place where you are most able to see the equipment / aircraft that you worked on or with when first entering the service.
- The new exhibition brings the RAF story up to date and will be kept relevant.

Baseline and targets

Currently, visitors who are current members of the RAF or veterans account for 6% of our total audience at the Museum. (Source: Jura Audience Research October 2022)

Target Audience: RAF Personnel (Current and Veterans)
Baseline 6% in 2023-24 = 25,985 visitors
Baseline 6% in 2027/28 = 31,750 visitors
Baseline 6% in 2030/31= 33,250 visitors

An additional survey question will be asked in all future BRDC/ ALVA interviews whether any members of a party or group visiting the site are current or ex RAF personnel to aid with the tracking and measurement of this audience.

Apprentices, trainees, work experience placements and volunteers

People of all ages at transition points in their employment journey looking for flexible, long and short-term opportunities which enable them to share or enhance skills and develop their talents, positively impacting on their health and wellbeing.

Audience group	Build	Broaden
APPRENTICES, TRAINEES, WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS, AND VOLUNTEERS Local and regional	Current Apprentice and Volunteer numbers	Care leavers through the Care Leavers Covenant Agreement People referred through local Job Centres Students on local Further Education and Higher Education courses with relevant subjects at Wolverhampton City College and University of Wolverhampton and other local colleges

Barriers

- Apprentices – lack of relevant qualifications or attainments to be accepted on an apprenticeship programme

- Apprentices – dependent upon familial economic background, the necessity of obtaining a fully paid job rather than an Apprenticeship which would have greater long-term benefits rather than more immediate benefits
- Traineeships – perception that such a placement would not aid their career progression, including that as a Museum first, rather than a commercial organisation, we do not conduct business with the same rigour as other organisations that are perceived to be more commercial than our own. Basically, you're doing the work that no-one else in the organisation wishes to do and for free.
- Volunteers – too far to travel, too expensive to volunteer, would require too much of a commitment on my behalf. Generally interested in the subject matter but feel that they lack the in-depth knowledge to give credible answers if questioned by the public. Don't wish to interact directly with the public.

Drivers

- Apprenticeships – a great way to gain a practical qualification that employers are looking for, while earning at the same time. Not all apprenticeships require formal qualifications or attainments, just the willingness to learn and a general go to attitude.
- Traineeships – given how the Museum is funded and audited, it is run essentially as a commercial enterprise with the same legal strictures placed on it as there would be on a normal business. So, trainees would be gaining practical experience in a commercial environment.
- Traineeships are a great way for people to test the waters to see whether what they think is a potential career they would like to pursue is actually suitable for them. Some internships, dependent upon length are funded.
- Volunteers – Volunteers who are not remote volunteers receive travel and subsistence for their efforts. Just because you are volunteering at the Museum does not mean that you have to interact with the public, we are able to offer a variety of roles from remote volunteering opportunities to those working specifically with teams that do not interact with the public.
- Volunteering is a great way to maintain the skills that you already have while developing new ones that could be used in other aspects of an individual's life.
- No volunteer is asked to complete an activity without having the proper and full training to undertake it in a confident manner.

Baseline and targets

The baseline and targets for this audience is as set out in the HR Action plan for the recruitment of apprentices, trainees, work experience placements and volunteers.

Cross-cutting audience: people from lower socio-economic backgrounds

Individuals living in areas of deprivation locally and regionally and reliant on community partners to assist them in their day-to-day living requirements, whether financially, legally or in terms of subsistence such as food banks / clothing banks.

Currently, visitors who from lower socio-economic backgrounds account for 9% of total Midlands' visitors (Source: BDRC/ ALVA Feb 23 – Dec 23).

Barriers

Based on research conducted to date by Scotinform and MEL Research it is suggested that the barriers preventing this group from visiting the Museum are:

- Financial (lack of awareness of free entry, perception of value of experience)
- Physical (hard to reach location, lack of private transport)
- Educational (often have the lowest attainment at school and less than satisfactory experience of formal and informal education).

Drivers

- 81% of respondents from the most deprived background found the Museum to be either more appealing or significantly more appealing on hearing a description of it and seeing imagery
- They are the group most likely to seek out museums as a source of inspiration and creativity
- They are the group that are most interested in living history and re-enactments
- They are also the group most likely to have an interest in aircraft and aeroplanes.

Baseline and targets

Cross Cutting Audience: People from Lower Socio-Economic Backgrounds
Currently represent 9% of audience in 2020/23-24 = 38,975 visitors
Grow to 12% of total audience in 2027/28 = 63,450 visitors
Grow to 18% of total audience in 2030/31 = 99,725 visitors
Current baseline according to 2021 Census is 20% of local population

Cross-cutting audience: people from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds

Individuals who identify as coming from ethnic groups or cultural backgrounds other than White British.

Currently, visitors who from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds account for 13% of total Midlands' visitors (Source: BDRC/ ALVA Feb 23 – Dec 23).

Barriers

Based on research conducted to date by Scotinform and MEL Research it is suggested that the barriers preventing this group from visiting the Museum are:

- Cultural (the Museum not reflecting or accurately understanding the history or culture of the audience, not interested in the subject matter)
- Perceptual (the Museum may not be a welcoming environment, it's not for me as I don't vote a certain way or read a certain paper)
- Intellectual (the Museum will talk in manner or a language that is not readily accessible or easy for myself or people visiting with me to understand)
- Financial (entry is too expensive or too costly for me to reach), lack of awareness of product and offer.

Drivers

- Free Admission, and free parking offer for local residents living in TF11, WV7 and WV8
- Once a description of the Museum offer and imagery was shown to this group 88% of respondents found the offer significantly or more significantly appealing.
- This audience is significantly more interested in science and technology than others, with 42% of this audience having an interest in aviation and aircraft. Exhibition content will reflect these topics in a readily comprehensive manner.
- Those with children were particularly interested in the outdoor playground, and 87% of this audience found free entry to the Museum very or somewhat appealing.
- Comprehensive calendar of public events, with events and exhibitions specifically co-curated with ethnic minority groups to ensure that we are telling their story using a tone and voice that will be welcoming.

Baseline and targets

Cross Cutting Audience: People from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds

Currently represent 13% of audience in 2020/23-24 = 56,300 visitors

Grow to 16% of total audience in 2027/28 = 84,650 visitors

Grow to 20% of total audience in 2030/31 = 110,800 visitors

Current baseline according to 2021 Census is 23% of local population

Cross-cutting audience: people with access requirements and additional needs

People who are experiencing social isolation, have physical access or learning needs, mental health challenges or other access requirements.

Currently, visitors with access requirements and additional needs, whether physical or mental, account for 18% of total Midlands' visitors (Source: BDRC/ ALVA Feb 23 – Dec 23).

Barriers

- Based on research conducted to date by Scotinform and MEL Research it is suggested that these will be physical, intellectual, cultural, financial, location and behavioural.
- By creating a safe environment, in which each of these barriers are addressed, individuals with such requirements will be confident that both they and other individuals in their group, whether family or friends, who may themselves have their own such requirements, will enjoy a pleasurable day out where they do not have to worry about day-to-day practicalities.

Drivers

- Appropriate training of staff (Dementia Friends, Safeguarding)
- Creation of quiet spaces both indoors and outdoors that will enable rest and thinking
- Accessible galleries and exhibitions, which are not only physically accessible, but also culturally, linguistically and intellectually accessible
- Real practical assistance such as Changing Places Toilets, wheel-chair accessible lifts where Galleries are not on one level, large print guides for those with visual impairments, free wheelchairs on request (subject to availability)
- Free admission and disabled parking bays.

Baseline and targets

Cross Cutting Audience: People with Access Requirements and Additional Needs

Currently represent 18% of audience in 2020/23-24 = 77,950 visitors

Maintain as 18% of total audience in 2027/28 = 95,225 visitors

Maintain as 18% of total audience in 2030/31 = 99,725 visitors

Current baseline according to 2021 Census is 18% of local population

SECTION 10: SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

10.1 Introduction

This section explores the key issues, opportunities and needs that informed development of the activities set out in this plan.

These are drawn from extensive consultation, testing and piloting during the Development Phase of the Inspiring Everyone Programme. See the Consultation and Piloting Report for details.

10.2 Diversifying and broadening audiences

Research and consultation have shown that there are opportunities to reach more audiences prior to visiting by creating an inclusive and broad range of visitor information, engagement, and experiences. We will add value to their visit and bring RAF stories alive through tours, talks, collection handling and aircraft access.

Recruitment of volunteers will be essential to fulfil this offer, and this will be programmed to recruit, induct, and train the team to provide an exceptional visitor experience. Existing and new staff members will need to gain the skill sets and knowledge to deliver the enhanced visitor offer and level of positive engagement needed. This will be done through training using external providers and inhouse expertise, via coaching and shadowing those who have learnt or have the required skill sets.

The level and pace of change to the visitor offer will need careful planning to ensure existing staff and volunteers are enabled and empowered to get on board and deliver the expectations and requirements of the new operating model.

New volunteer roles will need to be created and existing staff roles to be reviewed to align with the new operating model and required skill sets. Training using external or internal resources and expertise will support the transition and enable them to take the opportunity identified with a positive and collaborative mindset. Key staff and volunteer members will experience examples of what is being proposed at other venues, to bring it alive to them and to help them support others through the changes proposed.

10.3 Volunteering

According to an internal survey of volunteers in July 2023 which had 97 respondents, just 7% of volunteers are women, 7% have a disability, and 1% are Black, Black British, African or Caribbean with no other ethnic groups represented but White (87%). Our volunteers are often retired and over 55, with volunteers aged 65-74 being the largest group.

Going forward we will ensure that we especially target the groups in our three cross-cutting priorities.

We will work with the HR team and the Skills and Pathways Manager on branding and on more targeted advertising. We will also work with the Community Engagement Manager who provides a link with the local community. We will continue to identify barriers to volunteering and consider what changes we can make to remove them.

In terms of skills and experience, we will maximise on what our current (and future) volunteers can offer us. With that in mind, we have recently completed a skills survey which received 117 responses. Our current volunteers especially have management, communication, leadership, training, and research we might optimise more. There are skills and training that our current volunteers lack which we could build or seek new volunteers who have those skills. For example, under Collections our current volunteers have

substantial skills and experience with aircraft and vehicles, but little to none in other areas of our collection such as archives, maritime, ordnance, uniforms, medals, photographs and film.

10.4 Staffing and skills development pathways

The lack of diversity in the Museum sector workforce has an effect on the pool of people from which we recruit. We will, therefore, develop our own routes into both our Museum and the wider sector including apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience.

There is much scope to broaden our approach – working with a wider range of people to provide opportunities to those highlighted in our three cross-cutting priorities.

We will research recruitment and branding voice to ensure we are presenting the Museum as an accessible and inclusive hub for everyone – and removing barriers by showcasing the inner-workings of the Museum. By creating this openness, we will enable a diverse range of audiences to understand and connect with the Museum – which will in turn broaden our pathways programmes.

For our paid positions such as apprenticeships and traineeships, we will make these streams accessible – ensuring that there are no barriers for those applying. We will explore new recruitment options – using platforms that are accessed by audiences from our cross-cutting strands who are currently underrepresented within the Museum. We will also implement these positions across several of our departments to support the Inspiring Everyone Programme – with bespoke project content that will offer a breadth of both niche and transferrable skills that can only be accessed at the Museum.

For our work experience programme, we will work with a much broader range of local institutions, offering a diverse range of programmes and packages that can accommodate students with a complex variety of needs. Furthermore, we will expand on the meaning of work experience within our organisation – creating insight experiences for anyone that is interested in learning about museums and heritage. These opportunities will be accessible for all.

10.5 Collections

Object identification: The Museum has a large number of objects for which it does not have detailed documentation records. Given the breadth of equipment that the RAF has used, and the ancillary parts which are incorporated within this equipment, the identification of objects can be challenging. This challenge does, however, provide the Museum with an opportunity to work with volunteers, both in-person and remotely, to help identify objects within the collection. Identifying these objects will be the first stage in a further collection review identifying whether we should transport the item to our new Collection Hub, or look to find outcomes at other organisations.

Engagement through digitisation: The Museum has identified opportunities to increase our reach and the diversity of the community we engage with the collection through an expanded digitisation programme. This will be furthered by expanding the number of enhanced records on our Collection Online platform. Drawing on co-creation of content for the Collections Online platform will both further expand our reach and provide opportunities to a wider range of users.

Opportunities to diversify the research community: There is a need to increase the diversity of our wider research community. The Museum facilitates programmes which are aimed at contributing to improvements in this sector, but this is an ongoing challenge. The Museum will continue to expand access to our collection, support early career scholars, and co-design research opportunities which extend beyond traditional subjects of study. There is also a need to identify new opportunities of engaging with the collection that can inspire a

new and wider generation to engage in research relevant to the RAF Museum and the RAF story.

Skills development: We will develop a training programme which features externally facilitated sessions to foster CPD which can foster wider learning and departmental improvements through peer-to-peer learning sessions disseminating knowledge on specialist subjects from hazard assessment and identification to historical knowledge of the collection.

Handling objects: With an improved handling collection and access to more artefacts via the new Collections Hub we can share many more inspiring stories. Currently we have a limited handling collection due to unsuitable storage space (for example, we cannot include uniforms in the handling collection due to water burst risk). Having access to the Collection Hub will allow us to use much more of the collection for our work to unlock potential in young people and our communities,

Collections Hub: A recent Collections benchmark report highlighted issues with the Museum's stored 3D collection of around 65,000 objects. It found that collections care at MOD Stafford falls short of the most basic level of care - most clearly around the condition and performance of the buildings, the storage facilities and environmental control. A new-build 4,000m² Collections Hub will enable us to conserve, research, digitise and share this stored collection with visitors for the first time, providing a welcome in and springboard out to our communities, fostering local pride and belonging.

The new facilities will be based on modern logistic centres, delivering museum collection care standards with our environmental commitments informing the design, providing stable conditions throughout and specialist environments where required. The design will enable future expansion when required and funds allow as well as a future phase to develop integrated staff office and welfare facilities.

The hub will include our conservation centre, visitor facilities, and activity rooms.

Light touch interpretation will support public talks, tours and activities enhanced by new research and collection knowledge sharing.

Having easy access to the stored collections will enable paid staff, volunteers and partners to use objects to inspire participants in learning sessions and community activities on site and across the Midlands.

10.6 Expanding learning opportunities

Learning Centre: While we have the capacity within our existing team to deliver substantially more learning visits on site, we are limited by our lack of learning and lunch spaces. With the new facilities provided through the Inspiring Everyone Programme, we anticipate being able to welcome an additional 8,000 formal learners a year.

Lack of dedicated learning space reduces both capacity and flexibility. Peak time for school visits is October and November, when the Second World War offer is in high demand. Bookings currently have to be turned away during this period. There is also a capacity issue around Easter, when varying holiday periods mean that schools want to book in at the same time that spaces are being used for family activities.

The need to fit groups into our poor-quality lunch space (capacity 50) seriously limits our capacity to welcome schools on site.

Space for messy activities, community engagement and storage is also limited. Many of the spaces we can use for learning and community engagement are not accessible to

wheelchair users. We have no outdoor space that can safely be used for learning, and we are keen to get students outside into the landscape.

Our new learning spaces will enable exploration, discovery and debate and will ignite visitors' curiosity, both in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), as well as in geography, art, history and design. They will provide safe spaces for social and emotional learning using creative experiences to explore challenging issues.

The facilities will also support programmes and activities developed for and delivered across the Museum site and across the Midlands, designed with the widest range of participants and subject matter in mind.

Tackling disadvantage: Research is showing the pandemic has long-term detrimental effects, especially for those who are already disadvantaged. Areas of impact include income/employment losses and illness as well as increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and loss of purpose. Some groups are particularly affected by anxiety and depression, including young adults, those living alone, city-dwellers, families with children and lower-income households. By engaging with people already affected and at risk now and working with them over the coming years, we will be able to identify and respond to their needs effectively and embed this into our activity and planning through this project and beyond.

We are already seeing young people not at the standards of education they would ordinarily reach. We have an opportunity to support schools from areas of deprivation to build confidence and skills while on school visits. We can be better equipped to provide the right environment, resources and space for young people to learn outside of the classroom. We know that learning outside the classroom is more effective than young people just learning in school. We can inspire young people through our stories and objects.

Transport connections: Schools struggle with transport and transport costs. The Cosford train station could provide an important link. If the route between the station and the Museum was improved this would allow access to more schools within the Midlands so we are lobbying Shropshire Council and the Regional Rail Authority for a path and more frequent trains. To support this, the Museum has contributed to funding a pathway feasibility study, currently in progress. Our Action Plan includes running either a eco-shuttle bus or eco-taxis between the station and Museum until a pathway is installed.

10.7 Exhibitions and interpretation

Broadening reach and resilience

As a result of our piloting, co-creation and testing activities during the Development Phase, we have connected with diverse community groups from the West Midlands area that represent our target audience groups. By working with these groups to co-create the new exhibition, we are diversifying our offer and will deliver an exhibition that is of interest and relevance to them. At the same time, our engagement with these audience groups supports relationship-building within the local community and helps to promote greater organisational resilience.

Improving our heritage understanding and storytelling

The new exhibition will enable us to bring the RAF story up to date and look to the future, helping deliver our Vision - sharing the stories of current RAF personnel and the impact the RAF has on all our lives today. Through RAF Stories, we will capture new stories from the Cold War+ generation before they are lost. Co-created interventions will facilitate contemporary collecting and the inclusion of more diverse voices and narratives that represent our local communities.

Working with the RAF

The development of a new exhibition that will share the stories of the RAF's people and its collections from 1980 and into the future presents an exciting opportunity to build connections with the RAF community, including serving personnel and veterans. The amount of information that RAF personnel and potentially some veterans can share with us, however, is controlled by the military classification of information. This is more likely in relation to recent and current events. In response to this, the exhibition team have ensured that flexibility is built into the exhibition design. This will enable us to update displays to respond to both international developments, discussed in more detail below, and the release of information.

Rapid response to international events

It is regrettable but inevitable that international developments will take place between exhibition development and exhibition delivery/ opening in 2027. As discussed above, we have embedded flexibility, and we are allowing for expansion space within the exhibition design that will enable us to incorporate new collections and digital material.

The exhibition scope also looks towards the future of the RAF and its people, which presents an exciting opportunity to ensure the continued relevance of the exhibition to our audiences. Post-opening, we will maintain the lifespan of the exhibition by co-curating displays with audiences that rapidly respond to international events, modelled on programmes such as the V&A's Rapid Response Collecting.

Hangar 1: The main part of the refurbished Hangar will house a new nationally relevant exhibition provisionally titled: The RAF: 1980 to Today, inviting visitors to explore the critical and diverse roles of the RAF over the past 40 years and how they are looking forwards to ensure the service is fit for the future.

The exhibition will embrace digital technology and be at the forefront of best practice in museum interpretation. Design is being developed through co-creation while artefacts ranging from aircraft to films will be selected through co-curation and research to support our storytelling and reflect our diverse local communities. Our 'RAF Stories' and 'Collections Online' digital platforms will enable us to share content across the globe as well as in the new displays. Multisensory display and interpretation work will be developed through co-design and evaluated to engage audiences with a wide range of interests and backgrounds, ensuring that access (whether physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social or emotional) is for all.

10.8 Commercial sustainability

Within the gallery, we will create hireable spaces with wow-factor and the facilities to support them, helping to deliver our commercial strategy. This will also support Museum-led activities such as fundraising events, helping us become more resilient.

A key element of the 25-year master plan is to include a new space in Hangar 1 that can be sold for commercial and private events. There are limited alternatives for high quality unique venues in the West Midlands area, and this increase in our commerciality will provide income to support future Museum projects.

Consultation with visitors and our RAF Museum Enterprises Board has led to a change in the capital project scope. Currently our shop sits at the end of the Cold War Hangar with many visitors believing that this marks the end of their onsite exploration. To ensure better footfall to the newly developed Hangar 1 and to take advantage of new product ranges which will relate to our new exhibition content, we will relocate the shop at the end of this exhibition, fully funded by the Museum and delivered as part of the Programme.

10.9 The public realm

The site redevelopment will include landscaped areas with walking trails and opportunities for discovery, learning, rest and contemplation. Investment in the outdoor realm outside

Hangar 1 and the new Learning Centre, near the entrance to Hangar 2 and adjacent to the entrance of the Collection Hub will incorporate seating with pockets of greenery creating much-needed outdoor facilities creating the option to host learning activities outdoors.

The public realm will provide open spaces for groups and serve as breakout areas and circulation routes for staff.

The designs incorporate sheltered and exposed seating with greenery to create pleasant spaces for rest and relaxation, supporting visitor and staff wellbeing as they are able to spend time in nature.

This public realm is a key extension of the current Museum offer, and consideration has been given to understand how the fabric of the public realm can be inclusive for all visitor and enable ease of navigation.

The outdoor realm opens up many opportunities for our volunteers. It gives a chance for those without access to green space to join us, including those that love gardening to be able to come along and volunteer to maintain or plant the outdoor realm. Input from our Access panel and SEN schools are supporting the design, ensuring the landscape is accessible.

SECTION 11: SETTING PRIORITIES

11.1 Introduction

This section sets out key priorities for the Activity Programme, outlines how we expect the programme to respond to the National Lottery Heritage Fund's investment principles, and sets out our plans to support the project legacy.

11.2 Underlying aims

The planned activities have been designed to help us meet our **project outcomes**. Through the Inspiring Everyone programme the Museum will become an Anchor Institution regionally, positively contributing to confidence and economic recovery as well as supporting government priorities for social, health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Museum will:

- Become a valuable resource for our Midlands community
- Ensure our collection will be better understood, cared for and more widely shared
- Work with partners to involve people in their local and RAF heritage developing their skills and improving their wellbeing
- Work with our audiences to share RAF stories that are relevant to their lives and lived experiences inspiring them to fulfil their own potential
- Move towards our target of being a Carbon Net Zero organisation
- Be more resilient and able to support our community in the future.

The proposals also reflect the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage 2033 **investment principles**:

- **Saving heritage:** conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future
- **Protecting the environment:** supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage
- **Organisational sustainability:** strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

A summary of how the activity proposals map against these principles can be found at Section 12.7.

11.3 Priorities for the activity programme

Target audiences

The activity programme has been created with the target audiences set out in Section 9.3 in mind. There is a strong focus on how to involve our cross-cutting audiences in every part of the programme. Any activity undertaken as part of the Inspiring Everyone Programme will either directly engage one or more of the target audience groups, or support engagement by those groups.

Collaborative design

The activity programme has been created with staff from across the Museum's departments, from Collections to Events. The process has enabled the teams to work together to find ways of reaching new audiences and encouraged collaboration across departments.

Many of the proposed activities have been designed in collaboration with target audience groups via the piloting, trialling and consultation that has taken place in the Development Phase (see Consultation and Piloting Report).

Prioritising co-creation

The proposals prioritise opportunities for co-creation with audiences as we move into delivery. The majority of our activities are expected to involve target audiences as active participants. Everything from social media to large scale events will be designed in collaboration with our audiences.

Creating a legacy

The RAF Museum is committed to ensuring its investment and that of Programme sponsors has an enduring legacy. The activity programme legacy will include:

Audiences

As part of our Evaluation Plan, the Museum will commission independent research into our audience demographics and responses to our Programme after the opening of the capital works and one year on. Analysis of this evaluation will enable us to build on success and identify any areas that need more attention against our audience development targets. This will also enable us to co-create more / different opportunities for engagement.

Skills and training

A number of opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience are being introduced for the Programme's Delivery Phase. These will be evaluated during the phase and a plan created for their future delivery at both our Museum sites.

Volunteering

New and increased opportunities for volunteering have been trialled during the Development Phase and an action plan for volunteering in Delivery has been prepared. This will be evaluated during Delivery and a plan created for their future delivery at both our sites.

Paid roles

Two departmental restructures were carried out during the Development Phase to ensure the Programme was effectively resourced.

- In Collections Services, four roles were re-focussed and moved from the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre to MOD Stafford to help prepare for the move. These roles will return to the Midlands site as our stored collection moves to the new Hub.
- In Collections and Research, a new role was created as Assistant Curator to support the move. This role will move to the Midlands site as our stored collection moves to the new Hub

Our three core MOD Stafford-based staff will move to the Midlands site with the collection move.

The Exhibitions and Interpretation Manager and Collections Care and Conservation officer roles funded in the Development Phase were identified as being key to the Museum's future reliance and made core at the end of the Phase.

The Apprenticeships Skills and Pathways Manager role funded in the Development Phase has been identified as essential to the first year of the Midlands Programme Delivery. It will then move to core Museum funding to support apprenticeships and other skills pathways development for the wider Museum.

Other roles which are either continuing into or being introduced for the Delivery Phase will be reassessed later in the project are:

- Backfill for the Head of Access, Learning and Participation through a Learning Manager role for one of the Learning Officers and an increase in hours to full-time for the Learning Assistant
- Co-funded Jon Egging Trust posts: 50% Liaison Officer/15% Liaison Officer/70% Regional Manager
- Collections' Storage Coordinator
- Community Grants Coordinator P/T
- Community Engagement Officer
- Exhibition Maintenance Technician.



Primary school students creating a 'project board' to accompany their Lego build for the new Learning Centre

SECTION 12: THE ACTIVITY PROGRAMME – OVERVIEW

12.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the activity proposals which will be delivered as part of the Programme. The following sections (Sections 13 to 15) then provide more detail on our proposals. The formal action plan table is introduced at Section 16 and provided as a separate workbook.

12.2 Key changes since Development Phase submission

- Expansion of ownership of the activity proposals across the Museum. Staff teams have worked collaboratively with colleagues and audiences to develop activity proposals for their own work areas, creating a joined-up activity programme that is engaging and deliverable
- We have structured our activity programme around three key strands (Your Heritage, Your Voices, Your Museum). See below.
- Further definition of required paid staff support, development pathway opportunities and volunteering roles and numbers.

12.3 Activity strands: Your Heritage, Your Voices, Your Museum

The Inspiring Everyone Activity Programme will harness the power of RAF **heritage** (our national collection and the stories of RAF personnel) to connect with audiences who are currently under-represented at the Museum.

It will encourage and support our communities to celebrate their creativity in sharing this heritage in their own **voices**, offering fresh perspectives and insights onsite, offsite and online.

This will help to define and create a new RAF **Museum**, firmly anchored in our community to enable us to reach out across the Midlands and the nation.

The Activity Programme will be delivered across three interwoven strands:

- Your Heritage
- Your Voices
- Your Museum

Your Heritage

Your Heritage will provide new ways for people to explore their heritage onsite, off-site and online.

Activities in this strand include work out in the community with target audiences, our cockpit-on-tour programme, large scale events, targeted school holiday programming, a new STEAM-focused digital offer, our learning partnership with the Jon Egging Trust to engage disengaged young people, and our digital skills partnership. It also encompasses special projects linked to researching and exploring our collections, and the collections move from Stafford to our new Collections Hub.

Programmes:	Heritage in our Hands programme Jon Egging Trust Blue Skies programme Discovering Heritage programme: our formal learning offer Collections programme Collections Relocation programme
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Your Voices

Your Voices will bring community voices and perspectives into the Museum through co-curation, consultation and collaboration.

It includes work with target audiences to co-curate our new exhibitions in Hangar 1, creative projects that bring the experiences of marginalised groups into key spaces working alongside creative practitioners, collaborative online projects and our Community Grants Programme.

Programmes:	Community Interpretation programme Community Grants programme Interpretation co-creation programme Social media and marketing programme Specialist Advisory Panels
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Your Museum

Your Museum activities focus on strengthening the Museum's people, skills and facilities, creating a museum that welcomes all our communities.

This strand includes project staffing, paid training placements, volunteering and training. Our behind-the-scenes programme will welcome people into the Museum during our capital build and invite them to shape the new Museum. Our Access and Inclusion programme will develop resources, activities and events which reach out to wider audiences.

Programmes:	Building a new Museum: Project staffing Building a new Museum: Apprenticeships and traineeships Building a new Museum: Volunteering Building a new Museum: Training Behind-the Scenes-programme Access and Inclusion programme: co-creation and consultation Access and Inclusion programme: visitor offer Launch programme
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12.4 Outline project programme

The activity programme will be delivered in two phases:

- May 2025 – July 2027: activities during capital build (site remains open)
- July 2027 – December 2028: activities after the opening of Hangar 1/the new exhibition

Detailed timings for individual activities can be found in the project Action Plan. The project programme (separate document) shows the intersection of the activity programme with the wider project timetable.

12.5 Summary budgets for activity

Table 11: Activity budgets by Heritage Fund cost category

Activity costs:	R1 budget	Current - 23/10/24	Variance from R1
New staff	£732,380	£658,678	-£73,702
Paid training placements	£216,625	£255,363	£38,738
Training for staff (1)	£20,000	£21,750	£1,750
Training for volunteers (1)	£15,000	£14,780	-£220
Travel and expenses for staff (2)	£10,000	£13,500	£3,500
Travel and expenses for volunteers (3)	£50,000	£50,000	£0
Event costs (4)	£0	£75,440	£75,440
Equipment and materials (activity)	£415,000	£343,729	-£71,271
Professional fees (activity) (5)	£0	£25,000	£25,000
Other costs (activity) (6)	£2,000	£2,000	£0
Other costs:			
Community grants	£35,000	£36,950	£1,950
Totals	£1,496,005	£1,497,190	£1,185

(1) Budgets for staff and volunteer training are not easily separable, as the bulk of training will be delivered to both groups. The figures shown here represent a nominal separation.

(2) A £13,500 allowance for staff travel has been set aside within project budgets. Project-related travel expenses beyond this level will be covered by Museum core budgets.

(3) A £50,000 allowance for volunteer expenses has been set aside within project budgets. Costs are expected to be higher (estimated at £105,000). Additional costs will be covered by Museum core budgets as part of our wider commitment to accessible volunteering.

(4) New cost category. Budget from Equipment and materials (activity) has been moved into this category where it relates directly to delivering events.

(5) Professional fees to support digital skills hub

(6) Funded conference places.

12.6 Engagement targets

We expect the activity programme to involve:

- 200,000+ participant engagements
- Three apprenticeships and three training placements
- 60,000+ hours of volunteer time
- 362 volunteering opportunities (with an estimated 233 new volunteers)
- Training opportunities for 571 paid staff and volunteers.

Table 12: Summary of engagement targets by activity programme

Activity programme	Engagements
Your Heritage	
Collections programme	403
Discovering Heritage programme: our formal learning offer	12,430
Heritage in our Hands	8,930
Jon Egging Trust Blue Skies programme	1,795
Subtotal	23,558
Your Voices	
Community Grants Programme	180

Community interpretation programme	360
Interpretation co-production programme	588
Social media and marketing programme	167
Specialist advisory panels	180
Subtotal	1,475
Your Museum	
Access and inclusion: co-creation & consultation	70
Access and inclusion: visitor offer	165,840
Behind the scenes programme	8,233
Launch events	3,800
Subtotal	177,943
Total engagements	202,976

12.7 Responding to National Lottery Heritage Fund investment principles

The table below sets out how we expect our **activity proposals** to strongly support the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage 2033 investment principles and the ambitions that the Heritage Fund has for each area. The Programme's capital works also deliver strong outcomes for all investment areas (please see the Investment Principles Mapping Report).

Saving Heritage		
Improved condition, viability and public understanding of heritage	✓✓✓	Activities which prepare our national collection to move and programmed post re-location include collections review, object research, digitisation and conservation by paid staff and volunteers helping us improve the condition of our collection and our understanding of our objects so they can be more effectively shared. There is a focus on identifying heritage in the collection or for future collecting which share a Midlands story. The heritage is central to the delivery of community and schools' activities onsite, offsite and online.
Reduced amount of 'heritage at risk'	✓✓✓	Activities as part of the collection move plan from MOD Stafford to the new Collections Hub include condition assessment, cleaning, digitisation, packing and unpacking by paid staff and volunteers. We will work with volunteers to build our knowledge and understanding of the collection, identifying gaps for future acquisition.
Transformational long-term projects improving the condition of heritage and the pride people take in their environment	✓✓✓	Activities are designed to engage underrepresented audiences and increased numbers of our current audiences with the national collection both within the project and as an ongoing embedded cultural change as we become a regional Anchor Institution. The Your Heritage strand of the Engagement Programme will provide new ways for people to

		explore and share their heritage onsite, offsite and online. Outreach and onsite activity will be rooted in the collection and, through a proactive and inclusive approach with priority target audiences, people will learn more about the RAF story, its connections with where they live and their own lives. They will feel confident that the Museum is a place for them, will take part in programmes independently and will recommend the Museum to others. Capital investment will create a sustainable, viable and vibrant site offering a warm welcome to all our visitors.
Made digital heritage more open, accessible and discoverable	✓✓✓	The project's digital components will ensure that RAF heritage is accessible and discoverable for future generations. Leveraging previous investments from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Museum will expand our digital offerings with RAF Cadets recording new interviews for RAF Stories and the new exhibition, as well as co-creating digital trails with target audiences. These resources will meet Heritage Fund licensing requirements and remain accessible for at least 20 years after project completion.
Protecting the Environment		
Put landscapes and habitats into recovery	✓✓	There are new opportunities for volunteering in both landscape planting and ongoing management and maintenance.
Increased understanding of and connection with nature	✓✓✓	We will involve our communities and audiences in developing and maintaining our landscape, across a suite of activities. Programmes such as creating site trails, building mobile planters, creating bug houses with primary schools, and inclusive planting sessions will engage local groups and foster connections with nature. New volunteer roles will support landscape maintenance, involving the community in the Museum's sustainability journey. Storytelling about the RAF's, and the Museum's own, journey to Carbon Net Zero will be shared in the new exhibition and trails. Schools' workshops will explore carbon reduction options and sustainable energy sources.
Reduced the negative environmental impact of our funding portfolio	✓✓✓	The Programme was the catalyst for a partnership with Shropshire Council, the West Midlands Rail Executive and RAF Cosford which will create a safe pathway between Cosford Railway Station and the Museum. This will significantly increase the number and percentage of visitors travelling to site by public transport from the current poor figure of 3%.

		We will invest project resources into providing an eco-transport service until the pathway is installed. Sustainability training will be delivered. Procurement policies prioritise suppliers with strong environmental sustainability practices.
Improved heritage's ability to adapt to climate change	✓✓✓	The preparation for and move to the stable environmental conditions in the new Collections Hub and Hangar 1 will ensure that our national collection has improved ability to adapt to climate change.
Inclusion, Access and Participation		
Increased diversity of heritage workforces, leadership and audiences	✓✓✓	All activities have been designed to deliver this principle working from the Audience Development Strategy and Plan built through research and consultation during our Development Phase The 'Your Museum' strand in the Engagement Plan will strengthen the Museum's workforce through activities inviting community input, creating paid training and volunteering opportunities, engagement with schools to promote career opportunities, and inclusive events and resources. Improved interpretation, learning provision and access to the stored national collection onsite in the Midlands will encourage more national and international visitors in addition to increasing our regional and local reach. The project has five target audience groups, identified through visitor and non-visitor surveys: families, children and young people, adult day-trippers, RAF personnel, and trainees/volunteers. For each group, we will expand participation from people from lower socio-economic and diverse ethnic backgrounds, as well as those with accessibility needs. By employing strategies to build on current audiences and reach new ones, the Museum will extend our appeal to those traditionally underrepresented.
Reduced barriers for people under-served by heritage providing more equitable opportunities for active involvement and participation.	✓✓✓	Consultation pre-project and through the Development Phase has identified the barriers to engagement with under-served audiences and been addressed in our proposed activities. Expected outcomes include over 200,000 participant engagements, three apprenticeships, three paid traineeships and 362 volunteer opportunities. Our Learning Centre will support engagement with 8,000 new learners per annum. The 'Your Voices' Engagement strand facilitates co-curation, creating displays reflecting diverse perspectives through a community grants

		programme, collaborative creative projects, a social media and marketing programme, and input from specialist advisory panels. ‘Your Museum’ activities with our specialist advisory panels will remove navigation and orientation barriers for all visitors and create self-guided resources for underserved school groups. Public events like annual Community Days and an Open Family Ifar will celebrate community connections. The Museum will adapt holiday programmes to include free activities. New pop-up talks, tours, and family-oriented handling activities will make exhibits accessible to target audiences, including sign language tours and resources like sensory backpacks for children and quiet spaces for visitors with sensory needs. Lack of accessible public transport was a significant reason for not visiting in a recent survey of 695 non-visitors. We are working with Shropshire Council, the West Midlands Rail Executive and RAF Cosford to deliver a safe pathway for the 12-minute walk between Cosford station and the Museum. If improvements aren’t completed by the 2027 launch, eco-transport options will bridge the gap.
Enabled more people’s heritage to be recognised, enriching lives	✓✓✓	The Engagement Programme emphasises co-creation, inviting audiences to actively shape the Museum’s social media, events and exhibitions to share their own heritage. We will share contemporary RAF stories onsite, offsite and online, amplifying voices that reflect diverse experiences and local heritage. Battle of the Decades events will invite the public to share memories from recent years, contributing directly to the new exhibition’s timeline. A Community Grants Programme will empower community groups to create their own projects sharing their heritage in their communities, across the Midlands and at the Museum.
Supported people to creatively use digital technology in heritage to promote access and reach	✓✓✓	The Museum will enhance our website for intuitive use by visitors with access needs, guided by the Access Advisory Panel. Volunteer-led online talks will enable prospective visitors to explore RAF stories, encouraging in-person visits. A co-created digital trail, developed with BAE Systems apprentices, will spotlight RAF innovations and STEAM content, engaging families and young people in technology and the RAF’s legacy. The Learning Centre will support a digital skills hub for all ages, promoting digital literacy.

		Open API protocols will ensure all digital resources remain adaptable for future projects, making RAF heritage accessible for years to come.
Organisational Sustainability		
Increased organisations' sustainability by developing commercial and digital skills strengthening governance and leadership	✓✓✓	The Museum's Audience Development and People Strategies delivered through activities in the Programme will drive efforts to diversify and expand both our audience and workforce, enhancing our commercial strength and governance capabilities. Our public events programme and the new shop with exhibition-linked products are designed to support financial growth and increase commercial skills. Investment in digital training during the Development Phase has upskilled our teams while the new Learning Centre will offer a programme of digital skills sessions for all ages.
Developed skills and capacity across the heritage sector	✓✓	We have developed a strong focus on skills and training with opportunities for 571 paid staff and volunteers to undertake training during Delivery. New opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships, and work experience are planned, with evaluation guiding future implementation. New and increased opportunities for volunteering have been trialled and an action plan for volunteering prepared. This will be evaluated, and a plan created for their future delivery at both our sites. Recruitment of new roles to support the Programme has been carried out for Development with further roles being introduced for Delivery. Two development roles have already been made permanent and a further role will move to core after a year.
Embedded resilience in projects we fund	✓✓✓	The delivery of the activity programme will change the Museum's culture and embed its future resilience by engaging more and more diverse audiences and increasing the diversity and skills of our paid and volunteer workforce. Activities will also result in greater commercial resilience.
Strengthened heritage's contribution to economies and local communities	✓✓	The Museum will play an effective role as an Anchor Institution in the region, working closely with local stakeholders to create social value. We anticipate a substantial increase in visitor numbers, boosting annual visitors from approximately 430,000 to around 591,000, and a 60% rise in income via the Museum's trading company by 2034.

		Our procurement policy prioritises Midlands-based suppliers and mandates social value contributions, including training and volunteer investment, ensuring that our operations directly benefit local communities. An Economic Impact Assessment estimates the Programme's net impact at over £10 million by 2027-28, factoring in regional visitor contributions, purchase of goods and services and employment effects.
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SECTION 13: YOUR HERITAGE

13.1 Introduction

Your Heritage will provide new ways for people to explore their heritage onsite, offsite and online.

Activities in this strand include work out in the community with target audiences, our cockpit-on-tour programme, large scale events, targeted school holiday programming, a new STEAM-focused digital offer, our learning partnership with the Jon Egging Trust (JET) to engage disengaged young people, and our digital skills partnership. It also encompasses special projects linked to researching and exploring our collections, and the collections move from Stafford to the new Collections Hub.

The outline below should be read in conjunction with the detailed proposals set out in the attached Action Plan.

13.2 Heritage in our Hands programme

A pilot's perspective: Spitfire on tour

A programme of inclusive and high-profile events out in the community. We will take a replica Spitfire cockpit out and about into the community with a programme of hands-on activities, creating an interactive mobile museum experience.

We will create a mobile museum centred on the Spitfire Cockpit, which will be transported in a hire van. The van will be large enough to fit the replica Spitfire cockpit onboard (loaded and unloaded via a tailgate), as well as a step ladder to access the cockpit, a gazebo and other items from the handling collection, uniform, educational materials and some audio-visual equipment.

The programme will engage with local communities and organisations as well as places further afield in the East and West Midlands with the history, heritage and inspiring stories of the RAF. The mobile museum will offer different activities including storytelling, roleplay, creative workshops and actual objects for handling.

This strand will enable the community engagement team to engage with a wider range of organisations and smaller organisations with the opportunity to take a large piece of kit with a substantial 'wow' factor out and about. The programme will target groups and community organisations in identified areas of high deprivation.

The replica Spitfire cockpit was built by our engineering apprentices and includes original flying equipment. Many people that have climbed into the pilot's seat have said stepping into the Spitfire cockpit provides an immersive way to experience history. It is specifically relevant to RAF Museum Midlands as RJ Mitchell, the designer of the Spitfire, is originally from Stoke-on-Trent.

Museum on tour

RAF Connections: We will work with young people to develop accessible engagement activities that can be used at events out and about in the community. We will actively seek out diverse events where we can share our inspiring RAF stories and engage audiences with our handling collection and STEM activities.

We will develop stronger partnerships with our local libraries and their audiences through **Family Library Days** which engage families with immersive and enjoyable activities. We will be targeting libraries identified areas of high deprivation both in rural and urban settings.

Building Bridges with STEM will be a programme of targeted community work in collaboration with four young people's groups. Participants will be invited to design and

construct aspects of the Museum in Lego, exploring the vision for the capital build and linking it to inspiring RAF narratives.

At the other end of the age spectrum, we will partner with residents of a care home to co-create **immersive loan boxes**, which will then be lent out to other homes and groups, reaching people who we know are interested in our stories but who can find it difficult to travel to us.

13.3 Jon Egging Trust Blue Skies programme

Jon Egging Trust (JET) works with young people from areas of the UK experiencing a high level of deprivation who are struggling to engage in school, have lost focus, confidence and self-belief and are at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). In school this typically presents as lack of engagement in the classroom, disruptive behaviour, or persistent absenteeism, with knock-on effects on learning.

During the Development Phase, we supported a JET Regional Manager role, part-funded by the RAF Museum via our Heritage Fund Development Grant. This enabled us to reach out to vulnerable young people from deprived areas across the West Midlands in a more meaningful and intensive way.

We now intend to extend this partnership into the Delivery Phase, supporting the delivery of JET's Blue Skies programme over the period August 2025 to December 2028 by continuing to fund staff roles and delivery costs. This will enable the programme to continue in the Midlands, having been piloted as part of our Development Phase.

The Blue Skies programme is an intensive three-year programme offering over 100 hours of intensive face to face support to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The sessions support cohorts of 15 students and build cumulative positive impact across a three-year syllabus (Year 1: Teamwork, Year 2: Leadership, Year 3: Employability). They combine unique teambuilding and workplace experiences in the STEM, military, and space sectors – intentionally designed to develop social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies - with in-school sessions to translate learning into the classroom and inspire engagement with learning.

Over the delivery period, the funding will support twelve full cohorts of students (15 per cohort) enrolled on the three-year Blue Skies programme by the academic year 2026-2027 and beyond. JET will also offer Inspirational Outreach sessions in partnership with the Museum for up to 200 students per year.

JET Blue Skies outputs and outcomes for August 25-December 28:

- 180 individual students supported by JET's long-term Blue Skies Programme per year by 2028
- 22,140 student hours over the proposed three years
- 90% of students to have developed their Social and Emotional Learning skills over the three-year programme.
- Over 80% of students to show an improvement in school engagement.
- Over 70% of students enrolled on the three-year intensive Blue Skies programme will be of socio-economic disadvantage.
- 100% will have been able to experience at least two visits to the RAF Museum, Midlands.

These are total outcomes and outputs for the programme, to which our partnership and National Lottery Heritage Fund would be directly contributing.

13.4 Discovering heritage programme: our formal learning offer

Under the guidance of the Schools Advisory Board, we have extensively analysed our workshop programme, identifying crucial gaps requiring attention. Specifically, our

evaluation pinpointed a deficit in STEAM subjects (including coding) and in Geography – disciplines of paramount importance needing incorporation into our curriculum.

Refreshing our self-guided offer for school groups is also vital to address the financial barriers faced by some school groups from underserved communities, who may struggle to afford paid-for workshops.

Learning hub: Veterans' stories for intergenerational learning

We will develop a new workshop using RAF Stories to share veterans' stories with young people, targeting primary and secondary schools from identified cold spots in Birmingham, Walsall and Stoke on Trent.

We will work with the RAF Stories team to develop and deliver the workshop which will be based on a specific theme or period (for example the Second World War). We will identify two key themes or time periods to focus on, developing two sessions, one for primary schools and one for secondary schools. The themes will link with the new exhibition content in Hangar 1.

The workshop will initially be delivered as outreach at target cold spot schools. The session will be designed so that it can be delivered from a laptop, and one outreach bag (for the corresponding uniform/artefacts). It will ensure the session is adaptable and can be delivered at any school, via a large auditorium, in a classroom setting. It will also be adapted for delivery online.

Once Hangar 1 reopens, the workshops will become part of our core onsite learning programme.

Learning hub: Geography evacuee days

We will create and deliver a geography-linked cross-curricular Evacuee Day which will link with History, Mathematics, map plotting and route planning. Each workshop will be reviewed and evaluated by schools, starting with those represented on the Schools Advisory Panel.

Learning Hub: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths (STEAM)

We will establish the Museum as a STEAM hub that delivers linked projects, activities, and sessions. We will train other museums, teachers, and schools in STEAM and design and technology-based activities, utilising RAF collections and stories to inspire and educate. Our planned activity includes:

Hub resources and training: We will create a library of STEAM equipment that teachers and other museums can come and explore to inform their own practice and purchases (e.g. VEX robotics, drones, Lego). We will provide training in using the resources (both from external trainers and as part of our in-house training programme) and example lesson plans.

Lego SPIKE Prime sustainability/environmental workshop: In partnership with Raising Robots we will develop and deliver a coding workshop using Lego SPIKE Prime robots, with an emphasis on accessibility and sustainability. This module will delve into strategies for reducing our organisation's carbon footprint, aligning with our commitment to becoming a Carbon Net Zero organisation. The workshop will focus on alternative power sources, i.e. solar, wind, sea.

Takeover days with a STEAM theme: We will expand our Takeover Days programme in partnership with Girl Guiding. We will deliver two Takeover Days on a Forces in STEM theme. External partners will come in to deliver engaging activities in a round robin structure, alongside an exhibitor show. Partners may include RAF, BAE, Raytheon, STEAM Learning, Tablet Academy.

Geography/Maths crossover workshop: Based on feedback from our Schools Advisory Panel, we will develop and deliver a new geography and maths crossover workshop, based on the exhibition in Hangar 1 and the resources in the Collections Hub.

Design and technology day: In partnership with STEM Workshop, we will develop and deliver a design and technology day which can be delivered onsite or at school premises. Students will be challenged to develop a logistics system to transport goods from aircraft to land vehicle to be able to dispatch goods quickly and safely. The day will explore mechanical systems, forces, leverage, and electronics.

Teacher training days: We will deliver three teacher training days in collaboration with Design and Tech UK, Raising Robots and TA Education. These will cover:

- Showcasing our equipment and its uses
- RAF-linked activities which can be delivered in schools
- Support for teachers involved in competitions set by the Museum

Our STEAM Hub will also add value to our existing programme of STEAM events, including our annual Forces in STEM event.

Learning hub: Digital hub

Following consultation with the Schools Advisory Board and participants in a pilot programme of digital skills workshops for older people, we are planning to create a formal and informal programme of digital skills opportunities, creating a digital hub at RAF Museum Midlands.

The goal is to make digital skills accessible to a broader audience, ensuring future readiness for modern employers such as the RAF/heritage organisations where digital proficiency would be of benefit and its partners in the aerospace industry. Additionally, we aim to ensure that our stories and collections are digitally accessible by providing people with the skills to utilise the formats and digital offerings we will provide including training other museums. By supporting the upskilling of staff, volunteers, young people, and older adults, we will broaden our reach to share our stories.

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the world's reliance on digital technologies, highlighting the importance of digital literacy for all age groups. We have seen the growing importance of the internet in people's daily lives – both to engage with organisations such as local councils and the government and to socialise with friends and family. We have also witnessed the dangers of using online/social media platforms such as the spreading of fake news, online bullying and the growth in online fraud.

Phase 1 (May 2025 to May 2027): We will host a series of test activities designed to gauge the impact and success of new initiatives aimed at developing digital skills. These activities are critical for refining our programme before the official opening of the Learning Centre.

Phase 2 (May 2027 to December 2028): We will offer an established programme of digital activities linked to RAF skills, stories, and collections. This will further enhance our reach by increasing technological proficiency, addressing digital poverty, and supporting local communities and other Museums within the Midlands through continued upskilling efforts.

Topics and initiatives are expected to include Digital Skills for Creative Artists, Future Ready Skills/eSports, Digital Literacy and Accessibility, Reducing Digital Poverty.

Both phases are expected to be delivered via a digital residency from Tablet Academy Education, our current digital skills supplier. Sessions will be delivered in the new Learning Centre which will have two rooms designed and equipped to deliver tech-based training.

Immersive loan boxes and storytelling

We will work with our Handling Collection Volunteers to create three new **immersive loan boxes** for schools, helping to expand our geographic reach.

Trails to support self-led school visits

We will work with the Youth Panel on a co-creation project to create **trail worksheets** for schools to support self-guided visits to Hangar 1.

We will also create an **interactive trail** across the whole site, with input from all three of our advisory panels. This will primarily be aimed at schools, but will also be used by other visitors. It will particularly support engagement by learners with access needs. The trail will provide an immersive and interactive experience, offering meaningful engagement regardless of financial constraints.

Virtual tours for schools

A new **virtual tour** will extend accessibility to schools unable to visit our Museum, whether due to distance, financial barriers or access challenges. Virtual visitors will be invited to explore the Museum and gain access to some quirky and unique areas.

A **pre-visit online tour** will be created to support students and others with diverse access requirements and additional needs. It will provide informative content to help people understand what they can expect on a visit to the Museum, creating a more inclusive experience. This will support both school and public visits.

13.5 Collections programme

Contemporary collecting: 1980 to today, objects and stories

Our pro-active collecting strand will focus on the period from 1980, which is currently under-represented in our collections. Currently only 5% of the Museum's accessioned collection relates to the period 1980-2023. By actively collecting we can fill gaps related to a diverse range of service personnel. The current generation of RAF do not feel their 'history' is something we would want to capture and share. It is, however, inspiring. By pro-actively collecting we will gain material we need to preserve for posterity, increase the range of objects which have relevance to younger and more diverse audiences, and inspire a new generation with content which allows them to maximise their skills and passions

Objects: We will undertake a public appeal for objects for the new exhibition, building on a pilot scheme in 2024. We will engage with the wider RAF family to make national calls for specific objects, or types of objects relevant to specific periods and events. Working with specific RAF groups who champion service personnel with protected characteristics, RAF heritage organisations, and local community groups we will collect a wide range of objects to help grow the accessioned collection and the stories of the RAF we hold.

Stories: We will use our existing RAF Stories platform to offer a public collection programme and organise reminiscence sessions with groups of veterans. This will increase the stories of relevance that we collect and share. The activity will gather oral histories captured from RAF personnel, veterans, and those with a connection to the RAF (for instance the children of RAF Veterans) as part of a public history programme that feeds into and responds to our exhibition development for the RAF 1980 to Today.

This activity will feed into the Hangar 1 exhibition, but its main driver is to produce content in response to exhibition progress and development to compliment the one-to-one interviews being conducted. This would offer the opportunity to 'reactively' target content/concept gaps which emerge as part of the organic 'proactive' gap filling. The content produced would then be available to develop the exhibition kiosks but also to expand its impact digitally, through the RAF Story platform.

Collections research volunteer programme

Our research projects will be directly connected to our collection, and will champion digital technology. Our collections research volunteer programme has three strands:

- A volunteer project to **digitise collections records** at our London, Midlands and Stafford sites. As competence and confidence grow, we hope that the volunteers will be able to co-develop an ongoing programme of record digitisation.
- A hybrid onsite and digital **volunteer object identification project** to identify 1,600 objects which are part of the Museum's collection, but which are unidentified or only partially identified. This will enable people from across the nation and world to share their expertise with the Museum and our audiences.
- Additional opportunities for volunteering on collections research projects within our new Collections Hub. Developing the means for specific collections projects where the work will offer volunteers the opportunity to develop material science and heritage skills which could aid their future careers. These could include work on aircraft fabric research projects such as the Afghan air force, Hawker Hind, or researching aircraft structures based on existing collection of parts, with the aim of producing new research.

Practical preservation

This activity will invite community groups to partner with us to explore our collections and curate their favourite items. We will partner with four groups: Telford and Wrekin CVS Carers group, RAFMM Youth Panel, spouses of RAF personnel based in Cosford, and the Newport Men's Shed group.

The project will be led by a group of trained volunteers, who will collaborate with each group over six months (one session a month), working in our Collections Hub. Volunteers will facilitate skill-sharing sessions among participants. This dynamic exchange of knowledge will foster intergenerational connections, with older volunteers imparting their expertise to younger individuals, while also embracing reverse mentoring opportunities where younger members contribute their insights and skills.

Participants will have the opportunity to delve into our artefacts, select objects and learn preservation techniques including cleaning and minor repairs. Each group will select their favourite objects, and these artefacts, accompanied by the group's interpretation, will be showcased in a small exhibition in the Collection Hub.

MA placements

We will support a minimum of three **MA placements**, hosting students undertaking collections valuation research and other research. Typical placements involve around 20 days of research activity.

Funded conference places

Our 2027 conference will focus on the themes and date ranges explored in our new Hangar 1 exhibition (1980 to Today). We will offer 10 funded places, including associated costs, to those who could not financially afford to attend the conference or would not look to do so otherwise. We will advertise the funding is aimed to encourage participation from the identified target audiences and support those on limited budgets.

13.6 Collections move

The **collections move** project will move around 75,000 objects from MOD Stafford to publicly accessible storage facilities at RAF Museum Midlands by the end of 2028. Volunteers will support all stages of the process including documenting objects, checking the condition of objects, cleaning and packing objects.

There is a separate Collection Relocation Plan which sets out the anticipated activity in detail.

SECTION 14: YOUR VOICES

14.1 Introduction

Your Voices will bring community voices and perspectives into the Museum through co-curation, consultation and collaboration.

It includes work with target audiences to co-curate our new exhibitions in Hangar 1, creative projects that bring the experiences of marginalised groups into key spaces working alongside creative practitioners, collaborative online projects and our community grants programme.

Specific strands are:

- Community interpretation programme
- Community grants programme
- Interpretation co-creation programme
- Social media and marketing programme
- Specialist advisory panels

The outline below should be read in conjunction with the detailed proposals set out in the attached Action Plan.

14.2 Community Interpretation programme

Past and Present Voices

Three in-depth co-creation projects will create new interpretation for display in key areas across the Museum. We want to bring different voices and perspectives into our exhibitions. The projects will serve as catalysts for innovation, empowerment, and collective storytelling, leaving a mark on both participants and visitors alike. We will work with three different target groups, each over six months.

- **Blitz/displacement.** Working with refugee groups through Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council. For install between Hangars 2 and 3.
- **Experimentation.** Working with young people from Birmingham Central Mosque. For install in Test Flight/Model Room.
- **Cold War perspectives.** Working with SAND (Safe Aging No Discrimination - a group of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people). For install as layered commentary in the National Cold War Exhibition.

Facilitated co-curation sessions will take place on and offsite (at least three sessions per project). Participants will work alongside Museum staff and external facilitators to curate a new exhibition or installation for three key spaces in the Museum. Community Engagement Volunteers will support the sessions.

Collaborative creative exhibitions

We will co-create temporary exhibitions with target communities from diverse backgrounds for use in communities and in the Museum. Three different communities will work with creative practitioners and Museum staff to create pop-up exhibitions for use at the Museum and across community spaces. Participants will explore our collections and be invited to create an exhibition using a form of artistic expression. The anticipated community groups and focus areas are:

- One Voice (Telford) - exploring the African and Caribbean RAF story during the Second World War and beyond, including the migration of the Windrush generation to Britain
- Nehemiah Housing Association - exploring RAF stories from Southeast Asia.

- Biddulph Youth and Community Zone (youth group) - exploring the contemporary diversification of the RAF (Meet the RAF: Service, Loyalty, and Discipline.)

14.3 Community Grants programme

Designed for community groups and not-for-profit organisations, these project grants will increase inclusion, access and participation with heritage. The successful applicants will use Royal Air Force stories as the launchpads for engagement with participants.

There are two strands under which applicants can apply:

- **Flights of Fancy** – for creative arts projects
- **Force-full Stories** – for story match projects –

Projects should meet the dual aims of:

- Inspiring everyone with the RAF story, and
- Helping people to develop skills or enhance existing skills.

Grants will be available from £250 to £2,000. A total of £36,950 will be distributed over three rounds, including travel costs for participants to visit the Museum.

A project-funded **Community Engagement and Grants Co-ordinator** will lead on developing and delivering the grants programme. They will be a key source of support for potential applicants and successful grantees. They will also be responsible for reviewing progress on each project and checking compliance.

See Appendix C for information about the Community Grants Programme and process flow charts.

14.4 Interpretation co-creation programme

As we move into the Delivery Phase, we will continue to involve our audiences in developing the interpretation content.

Developing content and language

We will undertake **co-curation of exhibition content** with groups with lived experience. We will work with the RAF's LGBT+, Mental Health, Diversity and Disability Networks and Fighting with Pride to develop interpretive content that relates to their respective communities, informed by their own diverse lived experiences, perspectives, and narratives.

We will work closely with target audiences and people with lived experience (including Combat Stress) to **develop difficult content and trigger warnings**. We will discuss how we approach challenging content within the exhibition design, and develop trigger warnings for specific exhibits. We will also consult with relevant target groups with lived experience about **interpretative approaches** and **accessible and appropriate language**.

We will **consult with experts** to ensure that any interpretation on Northern Ireland is sensitive, well-judged and represents multiple narratives and perspectives.

Developing specific features

We will work with RAF Cadets and our Youth Panel to **co-design interactives** for the Hangar 1 exhibition ensuring young people are involved in the design process. We will partner with Blind Veteran's UK to **co-create a soundscape for Bravo November**, working with past crew members.

We will work with Combat Stress and their co-production arm, National Veterans' Voice, to **co-create outdoor interpretation**, creating spaces that provide a space for visitors, including veterans, to decompress, contemplate and take time out.

We will **co-create activities and movements** for the outdoor realm graphics with RAF Cosford PT School and RAF Cadets including activities to encourage visitors to move, discover and use their imagination.

We will work with Graphic Design students from the University of Wolverhampton to **co-design the exhibition graphics** as part of a live student project.

RAF Stories co-creation project

We will continue to strengthen links with a local RAF Cadet squadron through an **RAF Stories co-creation project** to co-create three new RAF Stories that will feature in the exhibition and website. The Cadets will co-create all aspects the development of new RAF Stories – from selecting interviewees to preparing questions and conducting interviews – which will result in the creation of interpretive content that is relevant and engaging for the RAF Community and young people, as well as supporting their professional development.

Collection Hub welcome interpretation

We will partner with families in challenging circumstances to develop a new sensory interactive and welcome interpretation for the Collection Hub. We will work with families identified through the Haven Wolverhampton (domestic abuse support) to create a welcome/ introduction, object display and a sensory interactive. The workshops will identify touch and smell-based items and develop designs for the model.

Collaboration with RAF communities and experts

We will work with UK Space Command, RAF Cosford and RAF Waddington to co-create the immersive experiences within the exhibition space, in particular the Space enclosure, Tornado feature and drone cabin. We will work with RAF Cosford No. 1 Radio School on cyber, RAF Cranwell on recruitment and training and HIVE (the RAF Cosford community centre) on 'Meet the RAF' and 'Support' sections of the exhibition, particularly around the RAF Community and support available for families. We also plan to co-create exhibition content on recruitment and training with RAF Cadets.

14.5 Social media and marketing programme

Our activity proposals include collaborative projects to create messaging and online content developed by and for our target audiences. The activity described below is in addition to the marketing and comms activity set out in the project Marketing Plan.

Voices focus groups: collaboration with target audiences on messaging and tone

To inform our marketing and social media messaging we will collaborate with groups that represent our key target audiences, and work with them to develop key messages. We will run regular focus groups (three per year) with people representing our key target groups, in particular:

- People from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- People from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds
- People with access requirements and additional needs
- Families

We will work with participants to develop and test language and messaging that resonates with them, and which can be used across all our channels. This will support us to bring authentic voices into our marketing mix via films, text and images. We will also use input

from the focus groups to develop an inclusive language guide and a new tone-of-voice guide.

Countdown to opening campaign

In the run up to the launch of the new exhibition in July 2027, we will invite representatives from our Voices focus groups to share the key messages they have shaped using their own words, images and films. This will be a concentrated social media campaign over the six weeks running up to launch, co-created with Voices participants over the previous six months.

Sharing and celebrating key events

We will visibly celebrate key events, including national, cultural, and regional dates and anniversaries that chime in with our five target audiences and cross-cutting groups. We will work with the Youth Panel to create the calendar of events to be celebrated, and will invite members of the target communities to work with us to create online and onsite content linked to those events.

Social media takeovers

Departmental social media takeovers will see teams taking over our social media channels to share what they are doing behind the scenes.

Promoting pathways opportunities

We will promote volunteering and paid placements via co-created social media content which focuses on what our volunteers and trainees do and what they get out of their roles, focusing on the experiences of people who belong to our cross-cutting audiences.

14.6 Specialist Advisory Panels

The Programme will continue to host and support the three advisory panels set up in the Development Phase of the project:

- Schools Advisory Board (3 sessions per year)
- Access Advisory Board (3 sessions per year)
- Youth Panel (4 sessions per year)

Members of the Access Advisory Board and Youth Panel are Museum volunteers and receive benefits (travel expenses etc) in line with other volunteers.

The Access Advisory Board also forms a pool of people who can be called upon to provide specialist advice on their own lived experience. This role sits outside their regular volunteering at Advisory Board sessions. In this case, they are offered a fee for their expertise.



Youth Panel work experience information session, 2023

SECTION 15: YOUR MUSEUM

15.1 Introduction

Your Museum activities focus on strengthening our people, skills, facilities, creating a museum that welcomes all our communities.

This strand includes project staffing, paid training placements, volunteering and training. Our behind-the-scenes programme will welcome people into the Museum during our capital build and invite them to shape the new Museum. Our access and inclusion programme will develop resources, activities and events which reach out to wider audiences.

The outline below should be read in conjunction with the detailed proposals set out in the attached Action Plan.

15.2 Building a new Museum: Project staffing

The following staff roles are included in project new staff costs. More detail can be found in the Action Plan and budget. Job descriptions for all new roles can be found in the Project Management pack for the Delivery Phase application.

Table 13: Project funded staffing: roles continuing from Development Phase

Role	Basis
Collections Storage Coordinator	44 months (full time)
Apprenticeship and Skills Pathway Manager	Project funded for 12 months (full time)
Co-funded posts with the Jon Egging Trust: 50% Liaison Officer, 15% Liaison Officer, 70% Regional Manager	41 months (full time)

Table 14: Project funded staffing: backfill continuing from Development Phase

Role	Basis
Learning and Engagement Manager (uplift to salary from L&E Officer): Provides backfill for the Head of Access & Learning and Participation who will lead on activity plan delivery.	44 months (full-time)
Learning and Engagement Assistant (uplift in hours for existing role): Provides backfill for Learning and Engagement Officer taking on Manager role.	44 months (0.66 FTE increase in hours)

Table 15: Project funded staffing: new roles in delivery phase

Role	Basis
Community Engagement and Grants Co-Ordinator	41 months (0.6 FTE)
Community Engagement Officer	41 months (full time)
Exhibition Maintenance Technician	23 months (full time)

Changes since the Development Phase application:

- The Exhibitions and Interpretation Manager role funded in the Development Phase was identified as being key to the Museum's future reliance and was made core at the end of the phase. It is therefore no longer included within the Delivery budgets.
- The Apprenticeships Skills and Pathways Manager role funded in the Development Phase has been identified as essential to the first year of the Midlands Programme

Delivery. 12 months funding for this role has, therefore, been included within project budgets. The role will then move to core Museum funding to support apprenticeships and other skills pathways development for the wider Museum.

- The backfill for the Head of Access & Learning and Participation is now planned to be at Manager rather than Supervisor level to provide more effective support for the Learning team.
- The role of the Community Grants Co-ordinator has been expanded to support the work of the community engagement team
- An assumption of 3% per annum has been included for staff pay rises
- An allowance of £1,500 has been included for equipment for each of the three staff roles which are new for the Delivery Phase (a total of £4,500, compared to £20,000 in the Round One application).

Other staffing changes to support the project

Two departmental restructures were carried out during the Development Phase to ensure the Programme was effectively resourced.

- In Collections Services, four roles were re-focussed and moved from the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre to MOD Stafford to help prepare for the move. These roles will return to the Midlands site as our stored collection moves to the new Hub.
- In Collections and Research, a new Assistant Curator role was created at Stafford to support the move. This role will move to the Midlands site as our stored collection moves to the new Hub

Our three core MOD Stafford-based staff will also move to the Midlands site with the collection move.

15.3 Building a Museum: Apprenticeships and traineeships

Paid training placements

The following paid training placements are included in project budgets. More detail can be found in the action plan. Job descriptions for all roles can be found in the Project Management pack for the Delivery Phase application.

Table 16: Paid training placements

Role
AV/IT Apprenticeship Level 3
Learning Business and Admin Apprenticeship Level 3
Major Projects and Programmes Project Management Apprenticeship Level 4
Learning and Community Engagement Traineeship
Exhibition and Interpretation Traineeship
Curatorial and Research Traineeship

Changes since the Development Phase application:

- Apprenticeships in Business and Admin at Stafford and Comms and Marketing have been deleted as consultation with teams showed that they could not be meaningfully supported.
- Proposed internships have been redefined as traineeships as this better reflects the opportunity for people not in work or education.
- An additional traineeship in our curatorial team has been introduced.
- The Learning traineeship has been combined with the community engagement role to offer a broader experience that is more likely to lead to future employment.
- Salaries have been calculated based on current 21+ year old National Living Wage rates for the traineeships and the level 4 Apprenticeship. Salaries for the Level 3

Apprenticeships are based on 18–20-year-old National Living Wage rates (as opposed to the lower apprenticeship wage). This is in line with our wider pay practices.

- An assumption of 3% per annum has been included for annual pay rises.
- Full training costs have been included for the Apprenticeship posts (these costs were not previously captured).
- An allowance of £1500 has been included for equipment for each of the posts and £112 for uniform.

Work experience placements

We will offer a new **T-Level work placement programme** for five students per year. The programme will give students experience a wide range of museum work, including co-creation.

Our **work experience programme** will offer five-day placements to 15 students each year, across three week-long cohorts.

Recruitment for placements will be targeted towards cross-cutting priority groups.

15.4 Building a new Museum: Volunteering proposals

Volunteers play a crucial role in attaining the objectives of our Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme. At the core of the of the activity plan for volunteering is the recruitment, engagement, retaining and supporting of a diverse group of volunteers, and facilitating a volunteering programme that will contribute to RAF Museum's organisational sustainability, benefit our local community, contribute to wellbeing, and promote heritage.

Volunteer roles and targets

The Delivery Phase of the project is expected to involve **362** volunteering opportunities (approximately 233 of them new volunteers), contributing a total of **61,022.5** hours over the period 2025 to 2028, with a value estimated at £1,220,450 (£20 per hour). Volunteering hours and opportunities broken down by role are shown in the following table.

The Volunteering Team has worked with individual departments to create volunteer role descriptions for each of the roles identified which are shared in the Project Management Pack.

Table 17: Volunteer roles and targets

Role	Number of hours total (2025-2028)	Number of volunteers
Handling collection	724	5
Exhibition researcher – schools	360	3
Exhibition researcher – families	195	3
Community engagement	1782	13
Subtotal	3061	
Engineer	340	5
Inventory volunteer - condition flagging	2776	13

Inventory volunteer - superficial cleaning	3618	17
Packer – packing	9056	44
Packer - goods out preparation	132	2
Packer - goods inwards sort	132	3
Packer – unpacking	1548	34
Packer - condition checking	3772	82
Packer - physical location in new store	516	11
Subtotal	21890	
Bloggers	486	3
Remote video editor and captioner	240	1
Social media assistant	607.5	2
Subtotal	1333.5	
Development prospect researcher	945	1
Estates support/outdoor realm	300	5
Subtotal	300	
Events support (Family Event Maker)	5965	40
Evaluation assistants	45	2
HR and Volunteering assistant	1620	3
Volunteer Buddies	1460	15
Subtotal	3080	
Welcome host	5292	10
Tour guide	5292	10
Aircraft access	5292	10
Sign language tour guide	36	3
Volunteer driver	586	7

Subtotal	16498	
Fine art volunteer	675	2
Digitisation volunteer	810	1
Unidentified object researchers (remote)	6420	12
Subtotal	7905	
Total	61022.5	362

Recruiting and supporting volunteers

The Volunteering Team will undertake general and targeted volunteer recruitment, aiming to attract a diverse range of people as well as engaging individuals with specialist skills and interest where appropriate.

Volunteers are directly line managed by staff within each department and all line managers receive training from the Volunteering Manager and ongoing support from the Volunteering Team to ensure a productive and rewarding experience. Our volunteer management system (Volunteero) was introduced as part of the Development Phase of the project, and will remain essential to supporting and managing volunteers.

We will take a proactive approach to maintaining an active and enthusiastic community of volunteers, making sure there is a mutually beneficial relationship. This includes offering remittance for their travel expenses, hosting annual thank you events, actively showing our appreciation, and offering the opportunity to expand skills and knowledge.

Broadening our volunteer base

A key goal is to involve more diverse volunteers and more volunteers from our local community, reflecting our three cross-cutting priorities of reaching those from lower-socio economic backgrounds, those with access requirements, and people from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds. Continuing work begun in Development we will ensure that our overall volunteering programme and individual roles are promoted where they will reach these audiences. We will continue to identify local organisations and communities to connect with and adapt our recruitment strategy based on our research and according to what we learn by listening to those communities. The Volunteering Team will also work closely with the Community Engagement Manager and Apprenticeship and Skills Pathway Manager to utilise their community connections.

To expand our volunteer programme to include more volunteers with additional support needs, we will introduce a **Volunteer Buddy programme**. The scheme will allow us to recruit and support volunteers who may not be able to undertake a volunteering role independently, or who might benefit from one-to-one peer support. Buddy support is expected to take many forms, from helping with onboarding paperwork to supporting volunteers to undertake tasks. The scheme will cover a wide range of support needs, from physical access and sensory access to support needs linked to neurodivergence, mental health or learning disabilities. We will develop relationships with local organisations who support people with additional needs such as Catherine Care and Yellow Ribbon. Volunteer Buddies will benefit from opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge, with training provided. All our volunteers, staff and our visitors will benefit from a more diverse community of volunteers.

Reciprocal visit programme

We will facilitate visits to other heritage sites for our volunteers. This offers opportunities to cultivate volunteers' interest in local heritage, develop new skills and knowledge, meet a diverse range of people, encourage greater wellbeing, and promote our Museum and our Inspiring Everyone Programme. The museums visited will be carefully chosen - balancing our volunteers' interests with our aspiration to connect them with stories and volunteers they may otherwise not encounter but could be inspired by. In having volunteers from other museums visit us, we can inspire in turn, and cultivate a potentially lifelong interest in the RAF story amongst an audience we may not have reached. This could lead to the recruitment of volunteers or staff, promotion on social media or by word of mouth, a donation or purchase of membership, inspiring someone to learn more about and be invested in preservation of the RAF story and heritage overall.

15.5 Building a new Museum: Training proposals

The Inspiring Everyone training programme represents our commitment to investing in the growth and wellbeing of our team while fostering a culture of resilience, inclusion, and sustainability. By equipping our staff and volunteers with the skills and knowledge to navigate challenges effectively, we ensure that collectively, our organisation remains adaptive, reflective, and capable of making a positive impact in the communities we serve.

We will enhance organisational resilience by fostering a culture of inclusivity, where diverse perspectives are valued and respected.

Environmental sustainability training modules focus on integrating environmentally conscious practices into daily operations and decision-making processes. Participants will learn about pathways to carbon net zero, sustainable resource management, energy efficiency, carbon literacy, waste reduction, and the importance of corporate social responsibility. By embracing sustainability as a guiding principle, we demonstrate our commitment to environmental stewardship and contribute to building a more sustainable future for our organisation and the communities we serve.

Our **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training sessions** are designed to deepen understanding of privilege, bias, and systemic barriers. Through interactive discussions and engaging workshops, participants will explore strategies for promoting and advocating diversity, challenging stereotypes, and creating equitable opportunities for all. Colleagues will be given the tools to support each other and visitors through enhanced understanding of autism, neurodiversity, menopause, race and gender. We aim to foster empathy and inclusivity within our organisation and work towards cultural competence.

Other training is aimed at specific groups of staff and volunteers to support them to carry out their roles effectively, delivering sessions to 571 people.

Table 18: Planned training activity

Training	Courses/providers identified	Staff trained	Volunteers trained	Total trained
Environmental sustainability training	Sustainability Champion Training (GEP Environmental); Environmental Sustainability Skills for Workforce (IEMA)	20	10	30
EDI training suite	Diversity Trust; Kids in Museums	20	5	25

British Sign Language training	british-sign.co.uk	35	15	50
Family collections tour training	Not yet identified	0	6	6
Tour guide training	iHasco and internal	0	10	10
Storytelling training	The Whole Story	2	5	7
Public engagement training	Science Museum Group	2	5	7
Lego SPIKE Prime training	Raising Robots	6	1	7
Exhibition briefing	In house	10	5	15
Quiet and prayer room briefing	In house	10	5	15
Media training	Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)	6	4	10
Train the Trainer	Certificate in Careers Leadership (Level 6) – Career Development Institute	1	0	1
Forklift truck training	HSS/Modus	6	0	6
Asbestos awareness	Larry Card/UKATA	6	0	6
Training for collections volunteers	In house	0	138	138
Onboarding welcome event	In house	8	230	238
Total		132	439	571

15.6 Behind-the-Scenes programme

During the capital works phase, we will run a Behind-the-Scenes programme including public tours, co-creation projects and partnerships with schools. Supporting the behind-the-scenes programme and enabling public access will form part of the contractor briefs for the capital works.

Public programme

We plan to run five **Behind-the-Scenes open days**, three during the capital build and two preview days after handover. These will be planned in collaboration with the Access Advisory Group to ensure the events are as accessible as possible. The open days will include hard hat tours, collections talks, and spotlight talks from various people including the Exhibition Team, the construction partner and our partner architects.

Additionally, we will run regular **hard hat tours** during the capital build.

Timelapse filming of exhibition construction work on site will be shared on the website and via social media.

Creative responses: schools' engagement

Our partner schools will be key to developing and sharing content during the capital works phase. We will partner with a primary school and a secondary school in our cold spot target areas (local areas of economic deprivation). Students will be invited to see the development in progress and respond creatively. The programme of activities is anticipated to include an art project to design hoardings showing what will be included in the new exhibitions, creating content that reviews the new exhibitions (behind the scenes, pre-opening and opening) and interviewing staff who have worked on the project.

Environmental responses: landscape engagement

We will involve our communities and audiences in developing and maintaining our landscape, across a suite of activities:

Design and build of mobile planters: Community groups will be supported to design and build mobile planters for Collection Hub Landscape area, working alongside our staff in the Museum workshops

Design and build bug houses: A co-creation project with the capital works partner primary school to create bug houses to be located around the site.

Planting sessions will invite groups with specific access needs, in particular learning difficulties to learn about the plants and to get involved in the planting work.

Volunteer landscape maintenance

A new **volunteer landscape maintenance role** and gardening group will be introduced to support maintenance and general up-keep of new landscape areas.

Collaborative QS project

A collaborative project with University of Wolverhampton Quantity and Building Surveying students. Students will cost construction materials and survey buildings. The project will run through the capital works offering students experience on working with a live project and collaborating with a client and their capital team specialists. This has been included in the tender requirements for the Main Contractor.

15.7 Access and inclusion programme: co-creation and consultation

Wayfinding and signage

We will co-create the new wayfinding and signage, working with groups with specific access needs. This will help to ensure that the visitor orientation is as accessible as possible. We will also work with Front of House staff and volunteers to understand and address existing issues.

Website development

We will work with members of the Access Advisory Panel and volunteers with access needs to review the website. We want to ensure that our website is intuitive and provides the required information for people with access needs, especially when viewed on mobile devices.

Consultation with Blind Veterans UK

Consultation on the accessibility of the exhibition for visitors who are partially sighted, including circulation routes, development of tactile interactives, timeline and audio description for AV interactives.

15.8 Access and inclusion programme: visitor offer

Inclusive events

Our project-funded onsite public event programme will target specific audiences to enable the Museum to remove barriers to access and participation, particularly to those people who are underserved by heritage.

Annual **Community Days** working with local partners and communities will invite new audiences into the Museum. An **Open Family Iftar** will be an inclusive gathering celebrating diversity and mutual learning, emphasising the shared values of community and togetherness.

Our **Battle of the Decades** events will invite visitors to share their memories of the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s and 2020s. This will be co-curation on a grand scale, feeding directly into the timeline in the new exhibition.

We will adapt our themed weeks **school holiday programmes** to link to the Inspiring Everyone stories and attract new audiences, including lots of fun, free activities and new bought-in activities to capture people's attention.



Pilot Open Family Iftar, March 2024

Tours and talks

The project will be an opportunity for us to extend our day-to-day offer of tours and talks to better meet the needs of our target audiences and to encompass the Collections Hub and new exhibition.

We will create new **close-up tours** for each section of the new exhibition and for the Collections Hub. As with our current tours, these will be delivered by volunteers. A new **family-friendly tour** will be designed to be more accessible to our younger audiences. We will introduce new bi-monthly **sign language tours**, recruiting and training a new pool of volunteers (anticipated to be d/Deaf BSL users) to deliver the tours.

Within the galleries, short new **pop-up talks** will be created to share a wider range of RAF Stories linked to specific objects or areas. We will also introduce **collection handling points** to share stories using hands on objects. These are expected to be open daily, supported by volunteers.

Online pop-up talks created by our welcome volunteers will enable visitors to discover more about the collection and the people stories prior to visiting, creating reasons to visit.

BAES digital trail

We will co create a digital trail in partnership with BAE Systems and their apprentices. The trail will feature innovations and content that are historically linked to BAE Systems and their involvement with the RAF and the RAF story. We will work with the apprentices to research, test and co curate the digital trail for both families and schools. The key focus will be STEM content including innovations from the past and looking to the future. The trail will encourage visitors to explore the whole site, igniting families and young people with an interest in STEM and how things work.

We will also produce a paper trail including activities/puzzles based on BAE Systems engineering skills. We will test and trial the trail with schools on self-guided visits and families from cold spot areas.

Sensory resources

We will create **family backpacks** to support independent access by families, providing them with additional resources to enrich their museum experience. **Sensory bags** tailored specifically for SEN students will support comfort and engagement during their visit. Similar **sensory kits** will be available in the quiet room to support visitors with additional needs to use the space.

Community hub

The Museum wants to offer support to other organisations that struggle to find spaces to facilitate valuable social prescribing activities and to continue building connections with communities that may not ordinarily visit us.

We will, therefore, offer a space for groups organising social prescribing activities to use free of charge and a bespoke tour led by our knowledgeable volunteers as an introduction to the Museum.

Eco-transport link

The road between Cosford railway station and the Museum is a clear barrier for visitors who might otherwise arrive by public transport. The distance is only around two thirds of a mile along flat ground, but the road has a 60 MPH speed limit and is unlit with no footpath, just an uneven, narrow grass verge. The Museum is working in partnership with Shropshire Council, the West Midlands Rail Executive and RAF Cosford to explore options to address this barrier through a co-funded feasibility study. Should this not be delivered for the main project launch in summer 2024, the project will trial an eco-transport option from the railway station to the Museum to bridge this gap.

15.9 Launch programme

Subject to further consultation with our team and participants, we are envisaging three large-scale **launch events**: an informal event for staff, volunteers and co-creation participants, a formal stakeholder event to celebrate and promote the project, and a public launch combining tours, music, food and fun. The public event will serve as a focus for promoting the new offer.

SECTION 16: THE ACTION PLAN

16.1 Introduction

The Action Plan for the Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme sets out the planned activities, together with intended audiences, benefits for people, resources, timetable, targets and measures of success.

NOTE: the Action Plan is provided as a separate Excel workbook.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION PROPOSALS

A.1 Introduction

This appendix sets out the expected approach to evaluation, including logic models and an overview of the expected tools and methodology to be used.

A.2 Approach to project evaluation

Our evaluation programme comprises five phases. The first two phases have already taken place. Phases 3 and 4 will take place during the Delivery Phase of the Heritage Fund project. Phase 5 is our ongoing evaluation of long-term impact.

1	Pre-project baseline	Visitor surveys carried out in September 2021 and non-visitor surveys undertaken in February to April 2022 provide an established comparator for evaluation Visitor numbers will be compared to 2019-20 (i.e. pre-pandemic) as well as to 2021-22.
2	Front-end evaluation	Front end evaluation was undertaken during design development (project development phase) to test early ideas/assumptions. This was mainly qualitative, collecting and analysing feedback from broad consultation (see Consultation and Piloting Report). It included a survey of non-users and further analysis of barriers to visiting (see Section 8).
3	Formative evaluation	Will be undertaken at technical design development to test reactions to proposals informing the final stages of design. This stage will include consultation through focus groups, online surveys, in-gallery consultation and physical and digital prototype testing.
4	Summative evaluation	Summative evaluation will examine project outcomes in comparison to baseline data, assess and share our learning and propose further developments. Reporting anticipated three months after opening (October 2027) and 12 months after that (October 2028).
5	Post-project longitudinal evaluation	Longitudinal evaluation will enable a longer-term study of project outcomes.

A.3 Undertaking the evaluation

The evaluation process will be overseen by the Project Lead (Stephen Richards, Head of Major Projects and Programmes), with our Marketing and Communications team playing a key role in visitor research and collating visitor information.

Role of the external evaluator

We will appoint an external evaluation consultant, with responsibility for undertaking the summative evaluation and producing the associated reports. A budget has been set aside to enable this. The appointed evaluation consultant will be expected to revisit and revise the evaluation proposals to suit the project needs and their own working practices.

Although summative reporting will not take place until October 2027 and October 2028, we intend to appoint the consultant at the outset of the Delivery Phase. This will allow them to input into setting up systems, and give them the opportunity to see the story of the project unfold.

The evaluation consultant brief will include providing support to the Project Lead, Marketing and Comms team and wider project team to help them establish the wider Delivery Phase evaluation approach and create any new recording systems required.

A.4 Outputs

Outputs of the evaluation during the Delivery Phase of the project are expected to include:

3	Formative	Internal lessons learned reports	Exhibitions team / Project lead
4	Summative	Visitor survey reports Visitor feedback reports Visitor data reporting	Marketing and comms team
		Feedback and participant data for specific activities	Activity leads
		Volunteer data and feedback Trainee data and feedback Staff/volunteer training data and feedback	HR team
		Internal lessons learned reports	Project lead
		Summative evaluation – interim report Summative evaluation – final report	Evaluation consultant
		Post-project monitoring data for Heritage Fund 12-month survey	Project lead

Sharing lessons learned

We will share our learning as widely as possible. Internal lessons learned reports will inform the development of the current project and future developments at our Midlands and London sites.

Externally, we will offer advice to other heritage organisations. We will focus on sharing learning around sustainability both in and beyond our sector where it might be relevant.

We are happy to serve as a National Lottery Heritage Fund project case study where appropriate.

A.5 Evaluation tools

The evaluation consultant will be expected to review the tools required to effectively evaluate the project. These are likely to include the interventions set out below. Specific measures of success for particular activities are set out in the project Action Plan.

Activity area	Quantitative	Qualitative
Visitor evaluation	Visitor numbers CRM information School visit numbers Event numbers Visitor demographics (via booking processes/visitor questionnaires)	Exit interviews Focus groups Comment forms Observational study Online feedback Visitor survey (existing regular survey)

Participant evaluation	Participant numbers Participant demographics (via booking processes/ feedback forms)	Focus groups Comment forms Informal mechanisms (vox pops, graffiti walls etc)
Online activity evaluation	Google analytics	Online comments and engagement
Staff, apprentice and volunteer evaluation	Training records (staff) Training records (volunteers) Paid placement outcomes Volunteer records (hours, number of individual volunteers, volunteer demographics)	Training feedback Volunteer survey Workshops and focus groups
Activity delivery	Record of project activities (activity log) Photographic record	Reflections from staff on lessons learned and activity outcomes
Capital works and sustainability interventions	Record of works undertaken Photographic record	Feedback from contractors, design team, stakeholders

Monitoring and record keeping

The project team will ensure systems are in place to capture the following key monitoring data:

- Activities log (to include record of activity undertaken and participant numbers)
- Training records
- Volunteer records
- Volunteer demographics
- Visitor numbers

Additional monitoring and record keeping which will feed into the evaluation includes:

- Project photographic record, with appropriate permissions
- Heritage Fund progress reports
- Press releases
- Social media content and engagement
- Online activity
- Website statistics

Audience data

The Museum's regular audience research programme includes:

- ALVA face to face Interviews (300 per annum)
- Muse: brand tracking study (6 monthly, 4,200 individuals)
- Digitickets (Museum ticketing database, postcodes analysed quarterly)
- Exit surveys (all visitors)
- Social media analysis (quarterly)
- Website traffic analysis (quarterly)
- Event surveys
- Analysis of visitor feedback

This research will feed directly into the evaluation of the project and will be made available to the external evaluation consultant to inform the summative evaluation reporting.

Demographic monitoring data

After the completion of the project the Museum will be asked by the Heritage Fund to submit demographic monitoring data for the volunteer team, trainees and participants. This includes details of numbers taking part, gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic background etc.

The team will ensure that mechanisms for collecting this data are in place. This data will be assessed throughout the project to ensure that the engagement programme is reaching the expected audiences.

A.6 Project outcomes

The project will be evaluated against its intended outcomes:

- Become a valuable resource for our Midlands community
- Ensure our collection will be better understood, cared for and more widely shared
- Work with partners to involve people in their local and RAF heritage developing their skills and improving their wellbeing
- Work with our audiences to share RAF stories that are relevant to their lives and lived experiences, inspiring them to fulfil their own potential
- Move towards our target of being a Carbon Net Zero organisation
- Be a more resilient organisation and able to support our community in the future.

The evaluation will also need to consider the extent to which the project contributes to the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Investment Principles:

- **Saving heritage:** Conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future.
- **Protecting the environment:** Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** Supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.
- **Organisational sustainability:** Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

A.7 Logic models

The project has been divided into the following strands for the purpose of evaluation:

- Engagement programme: Your Heritage
- Engagement programme: Your Voices
- Engagement programme: Your Museum
- Hangar 1 refurbishment
- Learning Centre
- Contemporary exhibition and co-curated interpretive interventions
- Collections Hub
- Improvements to outdoor spaces

For each of these strands, a logic model has been created, based on an adapted version of the template suggested by the Heritage Fund. These models can be found below. They outline the proposed activities that fall into each strand, and the expected inputs, outputs and outcomes.

These logic models form a framework for evaluating each element of the project and assessing to what extent the project has delivered its intended outputs and outcomes. In addition, the individual lines of the activity plan will be used to assess delivery against the anticipated outputs and outcomes for each activity.

Engagement programme: Your Heritage

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Heritage in our Hands programme Jon Egging Trust Blue Skies programme Discovering Heritage programme: our formal learning offer Collections programme Collections relocation programme	Project activity budgets Staff time Volunteer time Partnerships	New ways for people to explore their heritage onsite, offsite and online Engagement targets for specific activities as set out in the project Action Plan	Long term partnerships with local strategic, community and grassroots organisations will broaden the range of support for the Museum. The Museum will be more effective at meeting local and regional need and as a result become more relevant for audiences. An expanded, more diverse audience will enjoy richer engagement with RAF heritage Formal learning programme better meets the needs of schools Increased profile of the Museum across the Midlands	Inclusion, access and participation: - Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage - Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation - Support all communities to explore and share their heritage - Accessible digital heritage resources
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Have the activities been delivered as planned? Were any additional or changed activities delivered? Were the expected participant numbers achieved? Are a wider range of people, accessing the Museum and RAF heritage? Did people enjoy the activities?			Feedback from stakeholders and partners Feedback from volunteers Feedback from activity participants Reflections from key staff members Activity log/participation records Evaluation reporting from JET Learning engagement records Feedback from teachers and students	

Engagement programme: Your Voices

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Community interpretation programme Community Grants programme Interpretation co-creation programme Social media and marketing programme Specialist Advisory Panels	Project activity budgets Staff time Volunteer time Partnerships Community Grants budget Input from community organisations	Engagement targets for specific activities as set out in the project Action Plan 18 community groups given grants to deliver their own projects linked to RAF heritage	Target audiences will shape, influence and be actively involved in the creation of new interpretation, programmes and facilities Participants and communities will feel more connected to the Museum, which will offer a more relevant experience Long-term relationships with partners and community stakeholders	Inclusion, access and participation: • Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage • Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation • Support all communities to explore and share their heritage • Accessible digital heritage resources
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Have the activities been delivered as planned? Were any additional or changed activities delivered? Were the expected participant numbers achieved? Are a wider range of people, accessing the Museum and RAF heritage? Did people enjoy the activities?			Feedback from stakeholders and partners Feedback from volunteers Feedback from apprentices and trainees Feedback from activity participants Feedback from community groups and applicants for community grant scheme Reflections from key staff members Activity log/participation records	

Engagement programme: Your Museum

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Building a new Museum: Project staffing Building a new Museum: Apprenticeships and traineeships Building a new Museum: Volunteering Building a new Museum: Training Behind-the Scenes-programme Access and Inclusion programme: co-creation and consultation Access and Inclusion programme: visitor offer Launch programme	Project activity budgets Staff time Volunteer time Partnerships	Engagement targets for specific activities as set out in the project Action Plan The visitor profile will be more representative of the West Midlands community Visitor numbers will increase from 433,000 to 529,000 by 2027/28 Volunteer numbers at the Midlands site will increase from 209 to 363	Barriers relating to socio-economic background, ethnicity and disability will be reduced. The whole community will be able to take part equally, confidently and independently. The project will create a skilled, empowered and expanded volunteer and staff workforce bringing a wider range of people, skills and capacity to the Museum's operation, ensuring it stays agile and proactive. The Museum will play an effective role as an Anchor Institution in the region, working closely with local stakeholders to create social value	Inclusion, access and participation: - Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage - Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation - Support all communities to explore and share their heritage - Accessible digital heritage resources Organisational sustainability: - Support heritage skills development - Support financial sustainability
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Have the activities been delivered as planned? Were any additional or changed activities delivered? Were the expected participant numbers achieved? Are a wider range of people, accessing the Museum and RAF heritage?			Visitor feedback (post-visit survey, in gallery feedback opportunities) Staff survey Feedback from stakeholders and partners Feedback from volunteers	

Did people enjoy the activities?	Feedback from apprentices and trainees Feedback from activity participants Volunteer records Training records Visitor numbers Visitor demographics Reflections from key staff members Activity log/participation records
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Hangar 1 refurbishment

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Redevelop the existing Hangar 1 building	Capital costs Professional fees and time Project management resource	Hangar is repaired, redecorated and envelope is insulated New facilities created: quiet room, prayer room, learning centre Sustainable technologies in place for environmental and lighting controls and welfare facilities	Redevelopment creates fit for purpose space for the new exhibition, for learning spaces, and for visitor facilities Sustainable technologies support the move towards Carbon net Zero The modernisation of the offer will make the Museum a more attractive venue for commercial activity and lead to increased income contributing to long term sustainability	Saving heritage: - Revitalise and maintain Protecting the environment: - Environmental footprint - Mitigation Organisational sustainability: - Support financial sustainability
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Were the capital works implemented as planned, to timetable and within budget? Are environmental impacts reduced/mitigated?			Conversations with key stakeholders Photographic record Sustainability audit Analysis of commercial impact	

Learning Centre

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
New Learning Centre facilities	Capital costs Professional fees and time Project management resource	Learning Centre enables increased engagement with formal learners and lifelong learners	Learning centre provides bespoke facilities dedicated to the development and delivery of lifelong learning activities for a wider range of audiences. Learning spaces interlink with the new exhibition, enabling exploration, discovery and debate, igniting curiosity in STEM, art, history and design.	Inclusion, access and participation: • Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage • Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Are the Learning Centre facilities fit for purpose? Is the Learning Centre being used to engage wider audiences and increase engagement with learners?			Conversations with key stakeholders Feedback from students and teachers Records of learning activity Reflections from Learning and Engagement team	

Contemporary exhibition and co-curated interpretive interventions

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Creation of a new exhibition in Hagar 1 and co-created interpretation interventions across the site	Exhibition design and build costs Professional fees and time Project management resource Staff time Volunteer time Project co-creation activity	New exhibition sharing the critical role of the RAF over the last 40 years, exploring its mission today and imagining its future Layered co-created interpretation across Hangar 1 and across the site as a whole Outdoor interpretation interventions	Changed public perception of the many roles of the RAF today including humanitarian missions, Space Command and environmental sustainability A refreshed and relevant visitor offer, resulting in increased visitor satisfaction and supporting growth in visitor numbers Interpretation reflects the voices and perceptions of wider communities	Inclusion, access and participation: • Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage • Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation • Support all communities to explore and share their heritage
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Was the interpretation implemented as planned, to timetable and within budget? Is the interpretation engaging and fit for purpose? Does it help people to connect to the RAF story? Does the interpretation reflect the voices and perceptions of wider communities? Does the interpretation add value to a visit?			Visitor feedback (post-visit survey, in gallery feedback opportunities) Audience testing Feedback from co-creation participants and wider stakeholders Reflections from exhibitions team	

Collections Hub

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Deliver the first phase of creating a new Collections Hub at the Midlands site Relocate stored collections to site Remedial conservation, digitisation and repackaging of collection material	Capital costs Professional fees and time Project management resource Staff time Volunteer time	New Collections Hub constructed Collections prepared conserved, digitised and repackaged appropriately Collections moved from existing stores to the Midlands site Targets relating to volume and number of objects prepared and moved as set out in the Collections Relocation Plan	Stable environmental conditions throughout and specialist environments for specific collections Increased opportunities for volunteering in conservation, object research, digitisation and collections management Substantially increased public access to the stored collections Easier access for staff, volunteers and researchers, leading to increased use of the collections Improved physical condition of collections Collections are embedded in sessions delivered in the new Learning Centre, in outreach activity and in community and visitor engagement on site Approach to the capital build supports the move towards Carbon net Zero	Saving heritage: - Heritage at risk - Revitalise and maintain Protecting the environment: - Environmental footprint Inclusion, access and participation: - Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage - Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Was the capital build implemented as planned, to timetable and within budget? Has the work been completed to an appropriate standard? Are environmental impacts reduced/mitigated? Has the collection move programme been undertaken as planned, to timetable and within budget? Is there increased engagement with collections as a result of the new facility?			Conversation with key stakeholders Photographic record Collections access records	

Improvements to outdoor spaces

Project activity	Inputs	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Link to Heritage Fund investment principles
Investment in the outdoor realm across the site, including new trails, seating, and space for outdoor learning	Capital costs Professional fees and time Project management resource	New areas of public realm constructed: at Hangar 1, Hangar 2 and the Collections Hub Site trails co-created and used Learning sessions held in new public realm area outside Hangar 1	The outdoor realm encourages outdoor learning, discovery and contemplation Increased biodiversity on site People use outdoor spaces to improve their physical and mental health Outdoor interpretation and trails engage visitors with the RAF story	Protecting the environment: • Nature • Environmental footprint
Key evaluation questions			Key evaluation tools	
Has the outdoor realm been improved for visitors? Has the outdoor realm been improved for nature? Are outdoor spaces being used for learning, discovery and contemplation Have environmental impacts of changes to the landscape been minimised?			Conversations with key stakeholders Biodiversity surveys Visitor feedback Feedback from staff on use by learners Photographic record	

APPENDIX B: PARTNERSHIPS

B.1 Partnerships for learning and community engagement

Partnerships are crucial to the Learning and Engagement team's work. Key links include:

Educational organisations

Schools: We work closely with our schools when developing new content, using them to test and trial new provision. We have particularly strong relationships with local primaries (Albrighton Primary, Perton, Codsall, Erasmus Darwin Academy, Aldridge School, Wednesfield Primary, Birches First School, St Christophers) and have a cohort of secondary schools who assist us in developing our event programme content Charlton Secondary School, Hadley learning Community, St Peters C of E Academy, Ellowes Hall Sports College, Perry Hall Multi Academy Trust and The Orchard School

Home educators: We have a good relationship with a large cohort of home educators. They review and support our new offers and changes in how we work, and offer great feedback. They often champion us and share our offer too.

University of Wolverhampton: We have a longstanding partnership, with links into their School of Architecture and Built Environment, School of Engineering and STEM outreach team.

Wolverhampton College: We work with Wolverhampton College on our Family Afternoons (providing hands on experience for childcare students) and are trialling work experience opportunities.

Telford and Wrekin Virtual School: The Virtual School supports children in care. We have participated in their conference with young people providing activities during the breakout sessions. We worked with a group of young people who created our first restaurant place mat that was co-created, and we both attended their celebration event and also hosted one,

Learning partners

Jon Egging Trust: JET support vulnerable young people who are struggling to engage at school through STEM activities. We work in partnership with them to support their Blue Skies learning programme. As part of the Development Phase of the current project, we trialled a joint RAFMM/JET staff post, which focuses on reaching out to schools in deprived areas in the Midlands, including Wolverhampton, Stoke, Stafford and some areas of Telford and Wrekin.

Tablet Academy: Tablet Academy are a preferred education supplier and longstanding partner. They provide expertise in digital, coding and drones. The Tablet Academy team have upskilled the RAFMM learning team in digital practice.

STEM Learning: STEM Learning is the largest provider of STEM education and careers support to schools, colleges and other groups working with young people across the UK. The Museum has a representative on their Midlands advisory board. We actively support their work through our STEM learning programme. Our learning volunteers are registered with them as STEM Ambassadors.

First TECH: This is a newer partnership for us. We host the regional event for their annual robotics competition, aimed at 14–15-year-olds.

Design and Technology Association: Support teachers, businesses and young people with curriculum-linked resources, advice and training linked to Design and Technology

We Lead: A programme to empower young people between the ages of 16 to 21 with a range of multiple skills and competencies, give them a head start in life and shape them into future leaders and role models

Raising Robots: Deliver high quality STEM training and activities to young people and train STEM ambassadors in the use of technical equipment such as LEGO Spike Primes

RAF Youth and STEM: Sponsor and deliver STEM activities throughout the UK to encourage young people aged nine and above to take up STEM subjects

VEX Robotics: Deliver high quality engagement and training in coding and robotics including international competitions for schools

Community links

South-East Shropshire Community Connectors: A network of local stakeholders including community groups, charities, NHS, local council and civil service departments. The group has been a great source of support and a useful starting point for building community links in our local area.

Libraries: We have a strong established partnership with Staffordshire Libraries and Shropshire Libraries and through them links into the wider Midlands library network.

Care homes and dementia support: We have trialled activities with Alzheimer's Society, dementia groups and care homes including, Memory Café at Dawley Town Hall, Bilston Lions Memory Café, Wheatlands Care home, Whitchurch Care Home, Dementia Wellbeing sessions at Dawley Town Hall and Bantock House Museum.

Telford and Wrekin CVS: We are working with them to promote our trial Carer's Café and provide opportunities for their carers' groups (including young carers) on site. In addition, we collaborated with this group for a creative arts project for adult carers. Their work, developed with the support of creative artist Luke Perry, will be exhibited in Weston Park in November 2024. As part of the evaluation of this project a video of participants comments was made for the exhibition by our RAF Stories team.

Care Leavers Covenant: We are the only museum in the West Midlands that has joined the covenant. We are looking at ways to offer opportunities to Care Leavers.

Plasma of Hope: A charity based in Walsall that supports people living with Sickle Cell Disease or other related diseases. We built a relationship and engaged in a Creative Project called 'A creative way of being' with the artist Luke Perry, co-creating clay aircraft and sculptures of inspirational Black RAF personnel, supported by Forgotten Generations.

Equalinks CIC: We have worked with Equalinks on a pilot Iftar event, and they created bespoke Cultural Diversity training for the Museum. Following this the Museum participated in a Muslim Scout Leader Day where we offered a range of STEM activities and co-created an Iftar badge, before hosting a second fully booked Iftar.

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council: We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with them and worked with them to deliver two trial Community Days.

Shropshire Armed Forces Outreach Team, Shrewsbury Council: We joined them for two Armed Forces Days in Shrewsbury Castle and are planning to continue this work including for additional consultation on the exhibition. We will be hosting their veteran Outreach Cafes with the intent of hosting four a year.

Shropshire Safe Places: Support the work of vulnerable people in Shropshire

Digital Innovators (Birmingham): Specialise in giving young people between the ages of 14 and 24 access to fulfilling career opportunities. We were invited to set up a real-life project based on the Midlands Development, 'How can we better engage young people onsite at the Museum'. The young people came up with outstanding ideas and in addition some participants joined us for further volunteering opportunities

SAND - Safe aging no discrimination: Improve the experiences and increase the expectations of LGBT+ people as they age in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. We are exploring how we can work together and embrace their covenant.

Staffordshire Venture: Provide opportunities and support independence for disabled adults. We delivered a co-created project with the artist Sarah Fereday, creating clay tiles inspired by their visit to the Museum

West Midlands Combined Authority: Support young people to develop their skills and careers

Armed Forces

RAF Cosford: Our neighbours RAF Cosford are an important partner in our STEM work. They have their own pool of STEM Ambassadors, and often provide staff to support our work with young people. This gives students an opportunity to meet serving RAF personnel. They also support with staffing for large learning events such as Forces in STEM. We also engage directly with new recruits through their Fit 4 Life programme, ensuring recruits are aware of Museum provision and providing handling sessions.

RAF Youth and STEM Team: We have worked in collaboration with RAF Youth and STEM since 2017. We were their key delivery partner to launch their centenary programme. We now deliver multiple events each year with them (STEM day, Scout days, Forces in STEM). They provide us with sponsorship and access to resources.

Heritage organisations

We are building important links with the Learning and Engagement teams at regional heritage organisations including:

- Birmingham Museums and Galleries
- Black Country Living Museum
- National Museums Liverpool, Maritime Museum and International Slavery Museum
- Barber Institute of Fine Art
- Wolverhampton Art Gallery
- National Memorial Arboretum
- The Place at Telford
- Newark House Museums Leicester,
- Culture Coventry
- Coventry Transport Museum.

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

C.1 RAF Museum Midlands, Grants for Community Project

Designed for community groups and not-for-profit organisations, these project grants will increase inclusion, access and participation with heritage. The successful applicants will use Royal Air Force stories as the launchpads for engagement with participants.

There are two strands under which applicants can apply:

- **Flights of Fancy** – for creative arts projects
- **Force-full Stories** – for story match projects –

Projects should meet the dual aims of:

- Inspiring everyone with the RAF story, and
- Helping people to develop skills or enhance existing skills.

Flights of Fancy

Projects submitted under this strand should have a creative arts output which can be achieved within the applied for budget, or with the assistance of other – already secured - funding. There is no restriction on which art form is chosen: drama, dance, music, visual arts, film, photography etc. Anything which utilises creative expression and imagination and achieves the dual aims above.

Force-full Stories

Projects submitted under this strand should come from community groups who want to share their own stories and relate these to RAF stories. Connections will be shared between participants' own stories and those of RAF personnel in an oral or written form.

We welcome podcasts, blogs and films, but the choice of medium is entirely up to the applicants. There will be an opportunity to deliver at least one Force-full story-match tour at the Museum, which should involve one or more of the project participants. For an idea of some of the stories the Museum has collected, please see <https://www.rafstories.org/>. The project must achieve the dual aims noted above.

Priority, under either strand, will be given to those projects which are clear about project legacy considering how will Museum visitors (whether in-person or online) be aware of and able to access project outputs, and what lasting value will the project have for community members?

RAF Museum support

The RAF Museum team can offer the following support:

- ✓ An introduction to the Museum's collection
- ✓ Access to stories of people who served or are currently serving in the RAF
- ✓ Loan boxes containing objects to spark the imagination
- ✓ A Community Officer to assist you in the process and to be your point of contact with the Museum
- ✓ A space to meet
- ✓ A space to perform or display outputs (subject to availability).

Application process

There will be three rounds with grants available ranging from £250 to £2,000. At each round, we will offer six grants, three over £1,000 and three grants £1,000 excluding travel costs.

Rounds will be run as follows:

- September 2025 – 2026
- September 2026 – 2027
- September 2027 – 2028

In addition to the grant, travel to the Museum can be reimbursed to a maximum of £800 per group. We understand that there may be reasons why groups or individual participants may be unable to visit the Museum in-person, and this will not in any way prejudice an application.

Payment process and guidance

- The Grants Pack will include accounting forms, one for the grant and one for the travel expenses so they can be submitted separately.
- Grants will be paid at 80% at the start of the project when the grant acceptance form is received by the RAF Museum and 20% on completion.
- Accounts guidance will be included in the information pack for the groups receiving the funding. This will demonstrate how to fill in the form to make claims and what supporting documentation and format is required. Webinars will also explain the process where necessary.
- The guidance will also include information on how to claim for travel
- A single point of contact will be required from the successful applicants for handling the accounts. This is to streamline communication and ensure consistency.
- Providing 80% of the funds upfront and withholding 20% until receipts and required information are received will help maintain control and ensure that groups submit the necessary documentation, where possible.

This approach will ensure that the project remains compliant, that the National Lottery Heritage Fund's requirements are met, and that we have the necessary documentation to claim back any recoverable VAT.

Eligibility

The grant scheme is only open to formally constituted community groups and not-for-profit organisations who operate in the following areas:

Round One: Birmingham – inner city / Wolverhampton / Black Country

Round Two: Shropshire / Staffordshire / Wyre Forest (Kidderminster)

Round Three: doorstep communities Telford and Wrekin, Cosford, Albrighton, Shifnal

The project must primarily involve residents from those areas as participants.

We welcome – but are not restricted to - applications from women's groups, LGBTQ+ groups, groups working with people with disabilities and groups with a high proportion of members from Asian and Asian British (including people identifying as Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Bangladeshi) and Black – African, Caribbean, and Black British communities.

The organisation will need a business (not personal) bank account.

We will not fund:

- Projects used to support any political organisations or for campaigning on any political issues, or involving the dissemination of any material that is capable of being defamatory.
- Projects without activity and outcomes that can be measured and evaluated.

Priority will be given to groups who haven't received any financial award / support from the RAF Museum in the last year.

How to Apply

Each round will start with an Expression of Interest (EOI).

Potential applicants should complete the templated EOI form and submit it to the RAF Museum's Community Grants Officer. This will be followed up by a call/meeting in person to discuss the potential application.

Following the Expression of Interest meeting, groups may be invited to complete a full application using a templated application form.

Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by the RAF Museum Community Engagement team. Shortlisted applications will be further reviewed by a panel including RAF Museum staff and community representatives.

The Panel will consist of a minimum of six people from the following:

Community Connectors groups, RAF Museum Volunteers, the RAF Museum's Access Panel, the Head of Learning and Engagement and the Community Engagement Officer.

Panel members except for Museum staff will be encouraged to claim travel and subsistence up to £25 per person. Panel participants will receive refreshments during meetings

Post – application

Feedback will be shared on request with unsuccessful applicants.

Successful applicants will be invited to accept their grant which will be awarded on completion of:

- A grant acceptance form including bank details
- A start up meeting with two members of the applying organisation.

Support will be available from the RAF Museum's Community Grants Officer throughout the project including a mid-project review and post-project support for evaluation

Reporting Requirements

- Progress reports (schedule to be decided in consultation with the Community Grants Officer)
- Agreement to photos/filming and site visits
- Acknowledgment of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the RAF Museum using agreed branding
- Receipts to be sent to the Museum if expenditure on an individual item exceeds £500
- List of expenditure at end of project
- Light touch evaluation at start, middle and end points of the project.

Evaluation

We will require various methods of quantitative and qualitative evaluation to be agreed with the grant recipients. All community groups will be asked to provide evidence of their projects through video, film, digital copies of work etc. Any evidence such as photos, exhibition pieces, art forms etc, from the projects the community groups create will be shared on the Museum website (with appropriate permissions) on social media channels and internally.

Feedback and lessons learned will be considered for subsequent rounds.

Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme

Grants for Community Projects

Expression of Interest Form

For further enquiries or to discuss your application, please contact_____

Expressions of Interest (EOI) close on_____

Applicants will be notified if invited to progress to full application by_____

Full applications close on_____

Successful applicants will be notified after_____

All projects need to be completed within nine months of grant receipt.

1) About you

- Name and address of organisation
- Type of organisation
 - o Registered charity (No.)
 - o Limited company (No.)
 - o Voluntary or community group
- Details of main contact person

2) Which strand of activity are you applying under (you may apply under both, but would need to submit two separate application forms):

- ☐ Flights of Fancy – creative arts project
- ☐ Force-full Stories – story match project

3) What is your project idea?

Please give a short factual description of your project idea in no more than 200 words

4) Please tell us how your project will meet the priority to inspire everyone with the RAF story in no more than 200 words.

Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme

Grants for Community Projects

Application Form

5) About you

- Name and address of organisation
- Type of organisation
 - o Registered charity (No.)
 - o Limited company (No.)
 - o Voluntary or community group
- Details of main contact person

6) Which strand of activity are you applying under (you may apply under both, but would need to submit two separate application forms):

- ☐ Flights of Fancy – creative arts project
- ☐ Force-full Stories – story match project

7) What is your project idea?

Please give a short factual description of your project idea in no more than 200 words

8) Please tell us how your project will meet the priority to inspire everyone with the RAF story in no more than 200 words

9) Please tell us how your project will meet the priority to help people develop skills or enhance existing skills in no more than 200 words

10) Please tell us about the need or demand (or both) for your project in no more than 200 words

11) Who are the participants in your project in no more than 200 words

12) When will your project start and finish?

Projects should start within two months of being awarded a grant and should complete within nine months.

13) Please provide your project milestones

• Project Milestone	• Who will complete / deliver this?	• Expected date to be completed / delivered by? *
•	•	•

*While exact dates won't be known, please estimate where – within the 9-month timespan of the project – the completion date would fall e.g. Week 3, end of month 4

14) What are the costs of the project?

Include any training costs which will be necessary for the project to run

• Description	• Irrecoverable VAT	• Cost
•	•	•

The value in the cost column should be the cost including any VAT that can't be recovered.

15) How will the project be funded?

- Grant (how much are you asking for from us) £
- Other sources of funding (please provide details) £

Is this funding already secured?

TOTAL£

16) Please provide estimated travel costs for one visit to the Museum (return journey) for all participants in the project

17) Who will be managing the project and what skills and experiences do they/ your team have in no more than 100 words?

18) What support will you require to enable your project to run in no more than 100 words?

19) Are there any barriers to participation that we need to be aware of in no more than 100 words?

20) Tell us what will happen to things that your project has produced (for example, an exhibition or a film) after the funding ends in no more than 200 words

21) How will you know that your project is successful and how will you evaluate this in no more than 100 words?

Checklist of policies and insurances in place e.g.

- ☐ Public Liability Insurance
- ☐ Employer's Liability Insurance
- ☐ Safeguarding Policy and reporting procedures
- ☐ Health and Safety / Risk Assessment

Declaration statement for signing – to include agreement to grant terms, not giving false information, authorisation to submit this application on behalf of the organisation, that agreements are in place with any partners named in the application, that the project won't relate to or support a particular political party, that the final evaluation will be received within one month of the project's completion etc.

Name:

Organisation:

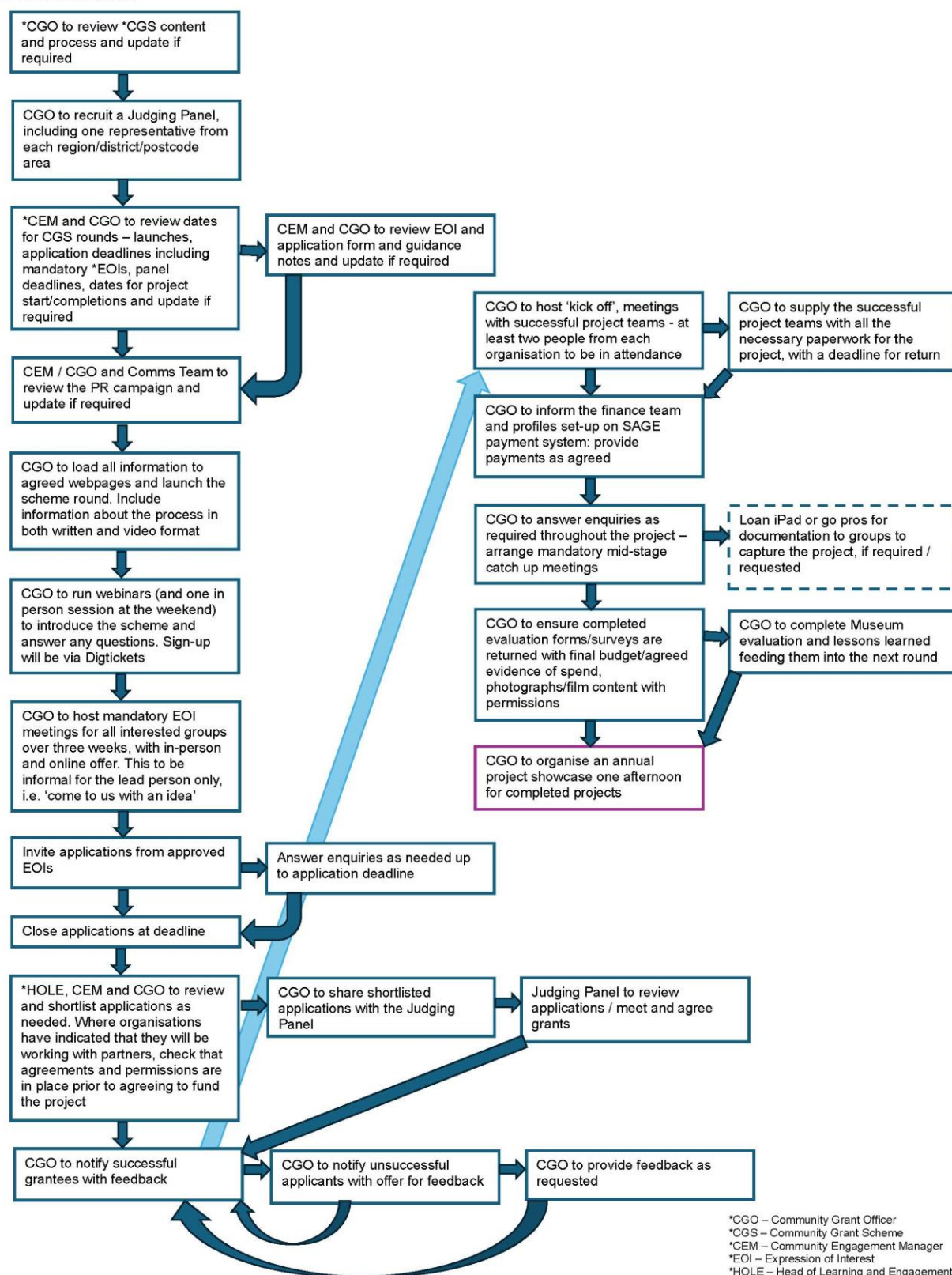
Position:

Date:

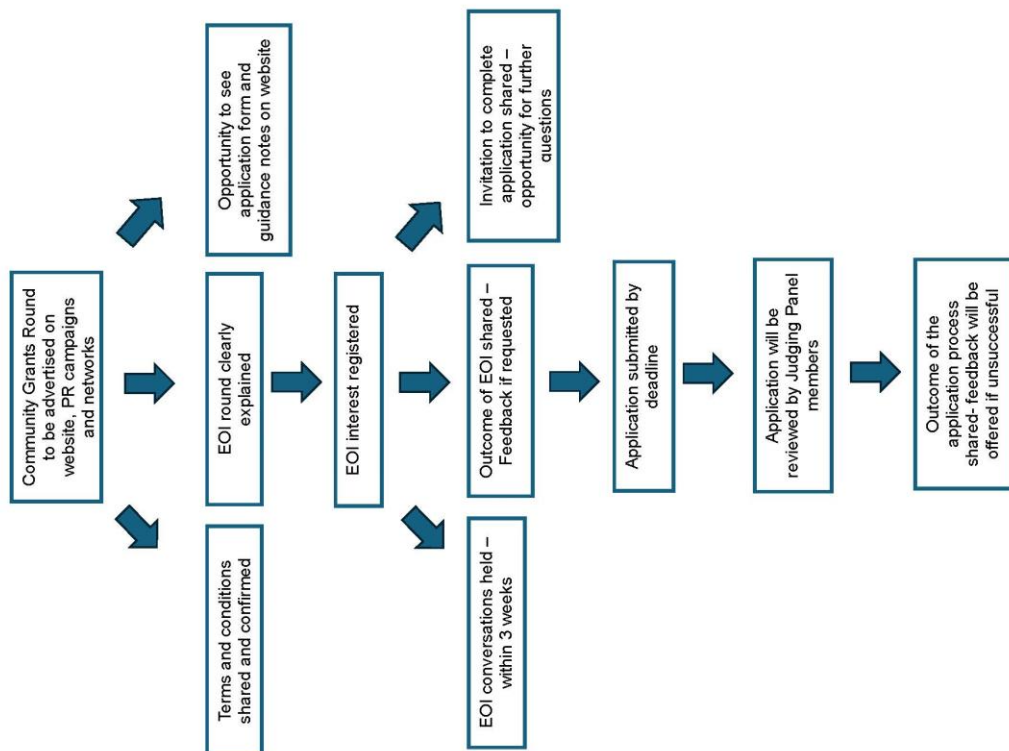
Please send the completed application to:_____

Process Flow Chart

Internal Flow Chart



External Flow chart



Successful Applications Flow Chart

