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County Hall
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NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 18 October 2017

Notice of meeting

Special Meeting of Economy and Development Select Committee

Thursday, 26th October, 2017 at 2.00 pm
The Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

AGENDA

**THERE WILL BE A PRE MEETING FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE 30 MINUTES
PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING**

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Pre-decision scrutiny of the Abergavenny Castle Outdoor Project	1 - 100

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

P.Pavia
J.Becker
D. Blakebrough
A.Davies
D. Dovey
M.Feakins
R.Roden
B. Strong
A. Watts

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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
2. What is the Committee's role?
3. What outcome do Members want to achieve?
4. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
5. Discuss the committee's approach:
 - Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
 - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

Questions for the Meeting

Scrutinising Performance

1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?
2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?
3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?
4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?
5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?
6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?
7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?
8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?

Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? Do they believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works?
6. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?
7. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?
8. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated.

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

(iii) Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

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SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE MUSEUMS: ABERGAVENNY CASTLE EVENTS PAVILION
MEETING: ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE
DATE: 26 th OCTOBER 2017
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. **PURPOSE:**

1.1 To seek comments and consideration regarding the attached Abergavenny Castle Feasibility Study

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 It is recommended that Committee endorses the following prior to submission for Individual Cabinet Member Decision.

The Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study;

The Business Case for the Outdoor Events Pavilion at Abergavenny Castle

2.2 Endorses the business case and corresponding request for a loan of £32K match funding from the Invest to Redesign Reserve towards the total cost of £226k for the building of an outdoor covered events structure ('Events Pavilion') within the grounds at Abergavenny Castle & Museum.

3. **KEY ISSUES:
BACKGROUND**

3.1 In 2015 Amion Consulting carried out a review of the Museum Service which acknowledged Monmouthshire as a county steeped in culture with significant tourist appeal. Findings from the review were used to inform the Five Year Forward Plan which was approved by [Cabinet](#) in December 2016.

- 3.2 Further to the approval of the Forward Plan it was agreed that individual business cases from the plan would be bought forward for scrutiny as appropriate. One of the proposed business cases included reference to the currently underused open spaces of Abergavenny Castle and consideration of a permanent outdoor structure in which an annual programme of events could be developed in order to generate additional income to improve the economic sustainability of the service and to increase partnership working with local communities and businesses.
- 3.3 Sarah Browne Architect was appointed in July 2017 to prepare designs for the Outdoor Events Pavilion. The intention is to submit a planning application in late October/early November alongside a Heritage Impact Assessment, a Noise Impact Assessment and an Archaeological Report.
- 3.4 The Abergavenny Castle site is leased from the Nevill Estate, an agreement which has been in place since the nineteenth century. The current lease expires in August 2020 so should the proposal be approved, then it will be necessary to renegotiate terms prior to commitments being made. The Nevill Estate have been made fully aware of the proposals as detailed and are fully supportive of the current partnership moving forward.

4. REASONS

- 4.1 Within the Forward Plan for Monmouthshire Museums, Strategic Aim Two is: *to ensure we have a resilient and sustainable service*. It states that we will do this in a variety of ways: *Improving and extending our income streams; increasing and widening our user base and raising awareness of our service; and contributing to a vibrant community by adapting to work in new and innovative ways*.
- 4.2 The Forward Plan also alludes to the Destination Management Plan and details how the Service fits in: “Close links exist with Monmouthshire's Destination Development Plan. The main links are to Programme 2: Town & Village Visitor Experience Development Programme 4: Food Tourism Development and Programme 5: Festivals development, using events to boost off peak demand and capitalising on the opportunities to host high profile events at key heritage sites. The role of Monmouthshire Museums includes improving the experience of the town for visitors by helping to interpret its stories and with a wider arts remit staging/promoting events.”

After public consultation and discussions with the Authority, Community Councils, Abergavenny Town Council and Abergavenny Town Team, it was agreed that ‘making more use of the castle grounds’ should be included in the Five-year North Monmouthshire plan. This plan covers Abergavenny and the surrounding rural area and is being taken forward by

Abergavenny Town Council and Abergavenny Town Team. This proposal is therefore very much integrated into the area's wider community plans bringing arts, heritage and culture together in a sustainable way.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

A Rural Community Development Fund application has been made for the majority of the costs related to the events pavilion with a smaller additional application being made to the Welsh Government Pipeline Fund. In order to provide the match funding a loan of £32,000 is requested from the Authority to be repaid over a ten year period at a cost of £3421.13 per year. The intention is that the repayment costs will be funded via profits from the events programme. Additional funds are also being sought from the LEADER/Rural Development Fund to support the first three years of the Events Programme.

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

6.1 In summary this proposal has positive effects on all Well Being Goals, particularly helping towards delivering: A prosperous Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities, A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

6.2 A Future Generations Evaluation is attached. This includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments (attached as Appendix 3).

7. CONSULTEES

Head of Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth
Head of Enterprise and Community Development
The Nevill Estate
CADW
MCC Property Services
MCC Planning Department
MCC Conservation Officer
Abergavenny Civic Society

Abergavenny Food Festival
Abergavenny Local History Society
Abergavenny Town Council (including Ward Members)
Abergavenny Town Team
Abergavenny Transition Town
CAIR (Monmouthshire based Disability Support group)
7 Corners Youth Centre
Local Residents

A wide range of key businesses and stakeholders were involved in the Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix One – Business Case Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion (Includes Appendix A – Draft Designs)

Appendix Two – Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study

Appendix Three – Future Generations Evaluation

8. AUTHOR: Rachael Rogers - Monmouthshire Museums Manager

9. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Outline Business Case – Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion

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1. Executive Summary

This Business Case seeks financial support through a loan from the Invest to Redesign Reserve for match funding towards the building of an outdoor covered events structure ('Events Pavilion') within the grounds at Abergavenny Castle & Museum. (Please note this Business Case forms part of a range of activities detailed within the five year plan which was approved by cabinet in December 2016)

This structure will allow us to develop a programme of events and activities which will both generate income and be of value to the local community.

Events and related activities are well recognised as being central to the delivery of the Museums Service. Events provide an excellent vehicle for active engagement of both existing and new target audiences and are a more proactive way to be 'inspiring' and to 'bring alive' museums, heritage, arts and culture – central tenets of the vision and mission of the Monmouthshire Museums Service.

A feasibility study has already been commissioned and completed which informs the design, layout and location of the covered structure and suggests a programme of events and activities.

The total cost of the project is £226k. External funding has been applied for to cover the majority of the project but we would like to request £32K match funding from Monmouthshire County Council. The profit on future events would enable the authority to recoup its investment over a 10 year period. If profit exceeds our expectations we would seek to make the repayment over a shorter time frame.

2. Introduction

Abergavenny Museum and Castle has a great opportunity and a strong platform on which to build. The opportunity is afforded by strong tourism growth which Monmouthshire is currently enjoying. This growth is fuelling an increase in visitor numbers and consequently a bigger target market. The most recent tourism statistics indicate that the majority of visitors are domestic, and that couples and families with young children form the biggest share of that market. Further, it is clear that visiting castles and museums is the first and third most popular thing to do in Monmouthshire. At the other end of the spectrum the least represented audiences are those in the 16-30 and 80+ age brackets. It is the express intention of the Events Project to both build on existing interests and to address perceived gaps in the market, helping to attract new and under-represented audiences to enjoy what the Museum and Castle has to offer through a carefully designed and targeted Events Programme.

The platform is the Castle grounds themselves, which have a very special set of qualities – the setting and views out, the variety of spaces, the inclusion of the museum, the proximity of a large car park and the location so near to the bustling market town that is Abergavenny, with its own vibrant event scene and its annual Food Festival – one of the premier event in Wales. The Castle Grounds have become a well-recognised venue for outdoor theatre drawing in people from across South Wales as well as visitors staying in the area.

More than this though is the strong sense that the Castle and its grounds 'belong to' and are 'appreciated by' local people.

Events at the Museum and Castle are hardly a new initiative. The Castle grounds have been used for public entertainments since the 1880s. The Castle Grounds have also been one of the three key venues for the Food Festival since its inception nearly twenty years ago, and in the last few years the Castle has been the setting for a packed programme of weekend-long food related events and activities, drawing in up to 1,500 people at any one time.

The grounds currently host:

- **Heritage re-enactments**
 - o The Courtney Household ran public and school focussed re-enactment sessions between 2004 – 2009
 - o In 2015 and 2016, The Freeman of Gwent ran public re-enactment sessions and a Medieval Wedding
- **School visits**
 - o In 2016/17 - 257 school children visited us to participate in sessions on World War II, Toys and Markets.
- **Outdoor theatre productions**
 - o Most years we host an annual theatre performance by a National Company. Since 2015 they have been very popular and well attended adaptations of David Walliams novels.
 - o We also have a longstanding relationship with the Borough Theatre to host 3-4 performances by touring companies each summer.
- **Concerts**
 - o In 2016 the National Eisteddfod fundraising committee used the grounds to host a concert by 'Abergavenny's Elvis'.
 - o In 2016 and 2017 we were the venue for the AM Festival, a family friendly day with a series of performances by local bands. This was hosted by the Round Table and raised money for local causes.
- **Wedding parties and drinks receptions**
 - o A small number of successful wedding breakfast parties and evenings receptions have been held within the Castle grounds.
 - o The grounds have also been used by the nearby Angel Hotel for drinks receptions and wedding photographs
- **Community group activities**
 - o The Museums Service maintains excellent links with local community organisations and has facilitated the use of the grounds by groups including Abergavenny Transition Town and the Friends of Abergavenny Orchard.
- **Organised youth activities**
 - o During Summer 2017 Monmouthshire Youth Service used the Castle grounds for a series of youth activity workshops over 3 days attracting 80-120 young people per day
- **Informal recreation**
 - o For example picnics in the Castle grounds

However, the fact that these events have taken place should not serve to hide the difficulties faced by Museums Services staff and volunteers in staging them. Inclement weather combined with a relatively exposed location and lack of outside shelter has limited the scope and nature of the events that can be staged, and the relative costs of hiring a marquee together with their visual impact has led the Museums Manager to consider alternatives.

A traditional oak framed structure with slate roof and open sides that can be enclosed in poor weather conditions is the proposed solution. It would be able to accommodate around 120-150 people formally seated. The new Events Pavilion, rather like a large bandstand, will provide a permanent shelter within the grounds and a new facility that can be used for a wide range of events and related activities. Critically, providing a high quality events space that can be 'dressed' to suit the occasion. The ability to close the sides is being considered.

The proposed structure will be 18m in length and 9m wide. This will be appropriate for small-scale music, theatre and events and small -medium sized wedding parties.

Please see Appendix A for draft designs.

Its proposed location is the green area to the left of the entrance gate. However Planning Permission is required before this can be confirmed.

The Nevill Estate Company Limited who own the site are in support of the project

Consultancy firm Gareth Kiddie Associates were commissioned by the Museums Service in March 2017 to undertake a 6-month feasibility study to gain a fuller understanding of the potential for events in both the castle grounds and within the museum building. The study included extensive community and local business consultation, to ensure that events being proposed complement rather than compete with the existing local offer and have a sustainable legacy. The work included: testing the public, private and corporate appetite for events at Abergavenny Castle; a review of existing local events; a review of the existing community use of the site. It has produced a potential events programme, recommended private hire arrangements and pricing structure, an appropriate marketing strategy and an outline Business Plan on which much of this Business Case documents is based. (The Final Report accompanies this Business Case).

This study was paid for thanks to a recent grant from the RDP LEADER Fund.

The Museums Service is guided by its current 'Forward Plan 2017-22' which has two clear strategic aims:

- 1) To create a cross-county museum offer to encourage a sense of pride and community identity whilst identifying opportunities for arts and culture development.
- 2) To ensure we have a resilient and sustainable service. This will be achieved by improving and extending our income streams; increasing and widening our user base and raising awareness of the Museums offer, whilst contributing to a vibrant community by adapting and working in new and innovative ways.

A full copy of the Forward Plan can be found on The Hub.

3. Strategy

The Well-Being of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is a key piece of legislation for Wales, which seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

This project has sustainable development at its heart and aims to improve the local economy through tourism. It is considerate of our environmental and cultural well-being and will contribute to the following Well-Being Goals:

- A Prosperous Wales – developing economic opportunities for ourselves and our users
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities – our feasibility study worked with our local communities to devise an events programme that is beneficial to all
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language – the proposed events programme will be wide ranging in its scope. The Museums Service has experience in working bilingually through its exhibitions and has hosted events through the Welsh language. We will continue with this bilingual approach in our programming.

An increased opportunity for events and venue hire at Abergavenny Castle will also contribute to other Welsh Government strategies for our sector:

- *Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020*
The project will include the creation and maintenance of employment within the tourism sector. This would include short term employment opportunities per event but could also potentially open up opportunities for longer term employment in the form of an ‘Events Co-ordinator’ or similar if demand warranted it.
- *Partnership for Growth – The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020*
Through this project we will share year round attractions, activities and cultural experiences of a medieval castle, thereby supporting Wales’ tourism industry. An events programme within the grounds widens the potential audience to beyond those whose primary interest is in the medieval castle.
- *One Wales, One Planet*
Our events programme and private hire venue will promote the importance of sustainable tourism in ways which enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limit. By providing an events venue in a rural town we are reducing the need for people to travel as far for entertainment reducing environmental impact.
- *Vibrant and Viable Places*
This Welsh Government strategy states that organisations in cultural fields and the assets they own or manage can have powerful regeneration impacts at community level. There is clear evidence that participation in cultural activities can make a significant contribution to the acquisition of the transferable skills required by employers. A covered structure will significantly increase our opportunity to host and facilitate events. This in turn will lead to an increased opportunity to participate in cultural activities at a local level thus contributing to these wider skills.
- *Food and Drink Action Plan*
A key part of our events programme will be establishing the food and drink offer which runs alongside. Our priority will be supporting local suppliers and producers. We have a close relationship with Abergavenny Food Festival and they will be a key partner in our work developing an events programme.
- *‘Light Springs through the Dark – A Vision for Culture in Wales*
This recently published Welsh Government education paper acknowledged how important culture is in empowering individuals, helping them to develop confidence, skills and employability. It also notes the increasingly important role that culture makes to our economy, and the significant social impact that can be made by events and festivals by connecting people and communities from all backgrounds and promoting participation. Heritage sites and historic places play an important part in supporting regeneration. *‘They are at the heart of identity and distinctiveness, and can make a decisive contribution to quality of place’*. The provision of a structure to increase the sustainability of the site would contribute

to the protection of Abergavenny Castle, an important heritage asset, therefore enabling us to play our part in empowering our users through culture.

More directly, within the Forward Plan for Monmouthshire Museums, Strategic Aim 2 is *'To ensure we have a resilient and sustainable service'*.

We plan to do this by:

- Improving and extending our income streams
- Increasing and widening our user base and raising awareness of our service
- Contributing to a vibrant community by adapting to work in new and innovative ways

An Events Pavilion will increase the number of opportunities we have to run events, as we will not be hampered by weather conditions. However, a structure also provides a physical focus which increased awareness of it and in turn, the public's awareness of the Museum and Castle.

Within the North Monmouthshire 5 Year Plan it says *'Development of the outdoor space at Abergavenny Castle in conjunction with the Museum in order to bring arts, heritage and culture together in a sustainable way'*. This demonstrates political support at local level for the project.

This project will also contribute to the following programmes within the Monmouthshire Destination Development Plan:

2 - Town & Village Visitor Experience Development Programme

4 – Food Tourism Development and Programme

5 – Festivals development, using events to boost off peak demand and capitalising on the opportunities to host high profile events at key heritage sites.

The role of Monmouthshire Museums includes improving the experience of the town for visitors by helping to interpret its stories and with a wider arts remit staging and promoting events.

4. Financial Implications

Monmouthshire Museums recognise that Abergavenny Castle Grounds provides one of the best opportunities for income generation within the service. Our experience of running events up to now at the site has given us confidence that much more can be achieved if we can provide protection from the weather – an element that has disrupted the success of events in the past.

The income generated from these events could play an important financial role in supporting further development of the service, as well as contributing to the growth and expansion of our user base.

The feasibility report undertaken by Gareth Kiddie Associates has provided us with an ambitious but realistic recommended events programme based on evidence gathered during their consultation stage. If this forecast can be achieved and demand for our events offer is proven to be high, then we could consider further growth in the future.

The following information is based on the information provided in this feasibility report.

4.1 Demographics

To understand the potential usage of the proposed Events Pavilion Gareth Kiddie Associates undertook an assessment of Monmouthshire's current resident and visitor profile.

Residents of Monmouthshire

- The 45-59 age range is the most prevalent age group in the county with 22.4% of the population belonging to this category
- The over 85 age group is expected to increase by 153% by 2033
- In June 2012, 79% of the population were economically active (the highest level in Wales) of which 74% were in employment
- It is estimated that just under 3 million people are within a 1 hour drive of Abergavenny from both Monmouthshire and its surrounding counties

This tells us that we have a good potential audience but we must ensure the events programme we provide can be easily accessed by residents of all ages and incomes. Consideration will therefore be given to the type of events and activities offered, the times that they are offered and charges that are made.

Visitors to Monmouthshire

- In 2015 Monmouthshire welcomed 2.19m visitors, a 4.4% increase on the previous year.¹
- Day visitor days increased to 1.7m, the highest since STEAM began monitoring tourism in the county seventeen years ago.
- To summarise the Wales Visitor Survey 2016 as it relates to the County²
 - Most visitors are domestic (UK/Ireland, and only 7% of visitors to Monmouthshire come from overseas)
 - Couple and families with young children are the most common types of visitor to the area
 - Over a third of staying visitors were either first time visitors to Wales or new to this part of Wales
 - 60% of visitors to Monmouthshire were most likely to have come to the area to visit places, historical/religious sites and attractions.
- The most popular activities undertaken by visitors to Monmouthshire were:
 - Visiting a castle or historic attraction (44%)
 - General sightseeing (30%)
 - Visiting a museum or heritage centre and visiting a religious site (20% for each)
 - Arts and cultural festivals, and more specifically the Eisteddfod (survey coincided with the national Eisteddfod being hosted in Abergavenny), were also popular, with roughly one in eight Monmouthshire visitors attending (12%)
- Satisfaction levels were high with 80% giving it a score of over 9/10
- Most visitors travel using a car

¹ <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2016/05/20/2015>

² Wales Visitor Survey 2016: Monmouthshire County Council – Research Report

This suggests that there is a large and growing market for historic sites such as Abergavenny Castle, and that good quality events can be a significant factor in attracting visitors. If even a small additional proportion of the 2.19 million visitors to the County can be persuaded to make Abergavenny Castle a 'must see' site, then that could help make it more sustainable in to the future. We must also be aware that the majority of our holiday visitors are likely to be of a younger age than our residents – something which we will ensure the programme reflects.

Visitors to Abergavenny Museum & Castle:

- Abergavenny Castle receives around 26,000 visitors per annum
- Of these, 66% come from outside of the area, 11% are local residents, 20% are children and 3% come to attend specific museum events
- The age groups 16-30 and 80+ are under-represented, whilst some sites also lack visits by pre-school children
- The visitor profile is more middle aged and younger older people and family groups

Although we acknowledge that we have suffered from a lack of visitor analysis data in the past, in particular what impact we have on our visitors, this has started to be addressed. A Monmouthshire wide survey carried out across Tourism, Leisure and Culture Services which took place in August 2016 revealed the following comments about what was important:

- 33% said 'Museums need to be interesting and educate people'
- 23% said 'Information is available and relevant'
- 21% said 'History should be preserved and share with everyone'
- 14% said it was 'Important that museums stay free'
- 14% said 'Being able to learn about local history locally'

This information provides us with a steer in terms of the needs of existing users, and who we should be targeting in terms of potential new markets, in particular, local people, families with pre-school children and the 16-30 age groups would appear to have growth potential. We can also see that opportunities for learning and showing relevance to the historic site need to be included in the events programme.

4.2 Latent Demand

Castles in general are great places to stage events. As 'romantic ruins' they appeal to a wide range of people and by their very nature they offer the perfect backdrop for events. Abergavenny Castle is no exception and has some particularly unique qualities which make it particularly attractive as a place to stage events:

- The setting and views out over Abergavenny, Castle Meadows and to the surrounding hills and mountains dominated by the Blorenge.
- The variety of different spaces within the castle grounds, providing different backdrops and a range of different ambiances and atmospheres.
- The fact that Abergavenny Museum is located in a former hunting lodge in the middle of the grounds and atop the Norman Keep.
- The location in the heart of the vibrant and picturesque market town of Abergavenny, well blessed with a good range of restaurants, bars and places to stay.

- The proximity of a large local authority owned car park adjacent to the front entrance gate with easy (level) access into the grounds.
- The fact is it seen as a safe enclosed space for families, especially those with young children³

A study by William Tregaskes, Cardiff University Graduate, commissioned by the Museum Manager in spring 2017 supported these assumptions:

- In answer to the question '*Why do we value Abergavenny Castle and grounds?*' and using a pre-set list of attributes, the conclusions were as follows:
 - The Castle's 'historic value' was most generally appreciated with 89% of participants selecting at least one historical attribute
 - The 'views' out from the Castle were selected by 59% of participants, confirming that the 'views' are important to visitors and a reason for coming to the Castle.
 - The 'natural value' of the sites was appreciated by 47% of participants and this was said to be reflective of the importance placed on the Castle grounds as an accessible green space near to the town centre.
 - The 'social value' of the site was appreciated by 45% of participants, said to be reflective of the Castle as a community asset – a focal point where people from Abergavenny can meet, socialise, take children to play and take part in local events.

These responses tell us that the sites is valued by visitors as being much more than just an empty romantic ruin – people also value the Castle as a greenspace, a natural habitat, a community asset and a place to hold local events. We will also be mindful of protecting the views when locating the structure.

Our current number of attendees for our events are as follows:

- Outdoor Theatre productions are usually attended by around 150-200 people (184 in 2017). The ones based on David Walliams novels have been particularly popular with a high proportion of advance sales.
- The AM Festival was attended by 650 people in 2017 (An increase from 500 in 2016).
- Our public re-enactment events attract around 350 people per day.
- The Food Festival at the Castle is attended by around 1500 people each day (Saturday and Sunday). This year 890 of those came into the Museum itself.
- Stargazing evenings have consistently sold out with 50 places on offer, however we are currently limited by the space we have inside in case of wet weather.
- Art History and Astronomy courses around 20 people attend 10 week courses. As above we are limited by the space we have inside the museum.

4.3 Competitor Review

There are 15 other history and heritage attractions within a 15 mile radius and 10 attractions within a mile of the town of Abergavenny. Our region is also active with events (70 events in September in the Wye Valley and Monmouthshire alone⁴) and South Wales boasts 323 wedding venues, 5 of which are in 'castles'.⁵

³ Consultation workshop – 14 July 2017

⁴ Visit Monmouthshire

⁵ Visit Wales

As part of the consultation process, Gareth Kiddie Associates undertook an online survey of other local event organisations. Of the 29 who completed the online survey, 12 took part in more detailed follow up telephone and Face-2-Face conversations. The 12 included: - Abergavenny Food Festival, The Angel Hotel, The Borough Theatre, Friends of Castle Meadows, County Marquees Ltd, Abergavenny Town Council, Abergavenny Town Team, The Three Peaks Challenge, Black Mountain Jazz, Abergavenny Transition Town, Abergavenny Local History Society, Abergavenny Civic Society.

Their opinions were sought on 2 key areas:

- 1) *Abergavenny Castle and Museum as an historic and recreational public asset*
 - 93% use the grounds/museum either 'frequently' or 'infrequently'
 - 100% felt access for quiet recreation is 'reasonably' to 'very important'
 - 73% 'agree strongly' that private events are acceptable and 23% 'don't mind' the grounds being used for this purpose
 - 82% think it's 'perfectly acceptable' to hold events in the grounds whilst allowing public access to all other areas (However, a significant 9% felt it was 'not acceptable')
- 2) *How Abergavenny Castle and Museum can link with and further develop Abergavenny's annual events programme*
 - 86% of respondents made suggestions as to new possible events including a Crafts & Gifts Fayre (Market Traders), High Quality Street Food Offer (Angel Hotel) and the establishment of an Arts Town (Abergavenny Town Team)
 - 71% felt that common ground existed between what they offer and what the Castle & Museum could do to improve Abergavenny's events offer
 - 91% saw opportunities for joint working and resource sharing
 - 90% saw opportunities to collaborate on marketing and promotion of events at the Castle & Museum
 - 65% would consider the Castle & Museum for events if and when capacity was unavailable elsewhere
 - 86% had no concerns about the Castle grounds being utilised more frequently for fee paying and/or community events

The Museums Service has developed a close working relationship with Abergavenny's Borough Theatre use already use the Castle grounds to stage a range of professional and amateur productions. Regional and national touring theatre companies are also attracted to stage productions within the Castle grounds.

In conclusion we can see that the majority of other events providers wish to see the Castle & Museum become a recognised events venue and are interested in both using and collaborating with our site (e.g. joint programming, joint marketing). However, it was highlighted that the right balance needs to be created between public access and private use and any changes effectively communicated to the community. This will be addressed in our events programme and marketing strategy.

Close working relationships will also be developed with Monmouthshire County Council's own Events Team and the other Museum and Attraction sites (e.g. Shire Hall, Tintern Old Station) to ensure that we are not creating competition and making the best use of resources and expertise. For example, Abergavenny Castle grounds could be promoted alongside other MCC sites for weddings as part of a county-wide portfolio.

Taking the wider market competition into account the key to success will be creating a unique offer at the Castle. Nowhere else appears to be offering quite the same thing as is envisaged for the Castle grounds.

4.4 Current Budgets

The total income and expenditure for the Monmouthshire Museums Service 2016/17 and the budget for 2017/18 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Total Costs 2016/17 and Budget 2017/18 – Monmouthshire Museums

Income	Actual 2016/17	Budget 2017/18
Events	£20,777.44	£22,919.58
Shop Sales	£27,280.87	£31,655.00
Hire of Facilities	£854.82	£1,000.00
Admin	£28.03	£0.00
Refreshments	£830.45	£1,500.00
Non WAG External Grants	£7,775.97	£3,316.00
Fundraising	£11,242.49	£0.00
Professional Fees	£90.01	£1,500.00
Exhibitions Commission	£134.32	£1,800.00
Reproduction Fee	£262.50	£0.00
Reimbursements	£417.71	£0.00
Recoupment (outside scope)	£2,500.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£72,194.61	£63,690.58
Expenditure*	2016/17	2017/18
Employees	£300,714.15	£258,966.74
Premises	£81,546.43	£78,566.25
Supplies & Services	£41,386.72	£37,289.00
TOTAL	£423,647.30	£374,821.99
Net Direct Total Deficit	-£351,452.69	-£311,131.41

4.4 Assessment of Current Performance

Across all of the Monmouthshire Museum sites income from general shop sales has reduced over the last 3 years, whilst visitor figures have remained fairly stable. The site at Abergavenny has consistently attracted the most visitors comparing favourably with similar sized museums across Wales. However spend per head in our shops is at its lowest at this site. This may be due to a less affluent audience. Attendance at events as remained stable or increased. User levels appear to be greater in the castle

grounds although we do not keep records so are unable to evidence this. There does however appear to be a positive interest in the castle grounds that are an opportunity to maximise.

Since Monmouthshire County Council took on the lease for managing the Castle and its grounds the Museums Service has sought to develop a wide range of events appealing to an equally wide range of audiences.

Generating a surplus from events staged at the Castle has not been a requirement or necessarily a priority until now. Previously, when public expenditure enabled more investment in heritage related activities ‘events’ were seen as more of a platform for attracting the engaging with existing and new audiences, rather than as a way of making a profit. However, we recognise that it is entirely possible for our events to do both. The current programme of events creates income which makes a positive contribution towards the costs of the running the Service.

It is fair to say that there has not been a strategic approach to income generation to date.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle grounds are an excellent venue • Good demand from external event organisers • Precedent for charging hire fees for use of the grounds and entry fees for public events (including some higher end market rates) • Could stage a number of different events on the same day without impacting on the visitors to the Castle & Museum • Good events experience in staff and volunteer team 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounds lack cover and basic facilities • Lack of staff capacity • No current pricing structure and the charging policy to date undertaken on event by event basis • Grounds not widely recognized as an events venue
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the perception of the Castle as an events venue • To reach out to new audiences (younger, older, disabled etc.) • To develop a niche events programme suited to the Castles niche nature • Work with others to develop and expand Abergavenny’s event offer • To undertake more joint marketing / joint ticketing arrangements with other local event organisers. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclement weather and the impact that this can have on ground conditions during and ground recovery after an event • Not getting the event offer ‘right’ • Not building enough momentum to attract a loyal/regular event attending audience • Enforced or voluntary limitations placed on event development as a result of complaints from the general public

4.5 General Business Case Assumptions

The costs provided for the building of the Events Pavilion are based on estimated quotes provided by Sarah Browne, the architect responsible for the design. We have also taken into consideration on-going maintenance costs on completion of the build.

The income and expenditure related to the events programme proposed for the outdoor structure are based on a proposal created by Gareth Kiddie Associates following their comprehensive research study. The table below identifies the long-list of proposed events.

The Museums Service plan to undertake a pilot season of events in summer 2018 in order to test these suggestions and identify the optimum programme in Autumn/Winter 2018. We plan to put together a 5 year programme – with Year 1 being in 2018 and Year 5 in 2022. There will be ongoing provision for review during this period.

No events are planned to take place in the out-of-season months and a phased programme of event and activity development will be considered to counter the risk of the Museum Service taking on too much too soon. A full marketing strategy will also be developed and deployed.

The Museum Service is very conscious of its obligation to minimise the risk of noise and other disturbances to its neighbours and will undertake to; give notice of evening events taking place, restrict event finish times, careful screening and positioning of pa equipment, conducting noise monitoring during events and using areas of the castle that are less likely to create a noise disturbance wherever possible.

The Museums Service have also prepared a Heritage Impact Survey to understand the impact of increased events on the Castle grounds and help us to mitigate against any damage. Events will be scheduled to enable a sensible time for ground recovery.

We are aiming to secure a sufficient level of surplus income from the Events Programme to fund a new dedicated 0.4 FTE Events Co-ordinator post for Abergavenny Museum & Castle by the end of year 3. This role will be critical if the events programme is to become sustainable, therefore grant support will be sought to fund the first 3 years of delivery. The post will be supported by a limited number of occasional staff and volunteers.

Initial surpluses will be used to repay the loan and longer term will be provide an income generation opportunity for the museum service.

Table 2 - Proposed Events Programme			
<i>Event</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Heritage Weekend-type event x2	Will complement existing and planned heritage events and Caldicot Castle and other nearby Cadw managed sites.	One in late spring and one in mid-summer	To be developed by the Museums Service.
Family-oriented Heritage Days	Related to above events	One day per week over the school summer holidays	Delivered by external contractors
Outdoor Theatre Events	Consolidation and limited expansion of existing events including performances by national professional companies, regional theatre companies and local amateur groups. Each production will be selected to appeal to a different target audience	3-4 day run of production by national specialist in August. 2 productions by regional theatre companies during	Managed by Museum staff in partnership with Abergavenny's Borough Theatre

		<p>school summer holidays.</p> <p>3-4 smaller-scale outdoor theatre events by local theatre companies and amateur groups.</p>	
Concerts and gigs	<p>Continuation of opportunities to include 1-2 charitable concerts (e.g. AM Fest) and a programme of day-time summer concerts and gigs themed to a particular music genre.</p> <p>Events will be small-scale and intimate in nature so as to not unduly impact on the setting nor on the immediate residential neighbours.</p>	Summer	Managed on a contractual basis by an experienced/skilled locally based events-management company.
Learning activities for schools	<p>Consolidation and further development of the venue for learning activities for schools.</p> <p>Visits will be offered on a first come first served basis with additional slots if the demand warrants their provision.</p>	Initially concentrated into one 3-day period in October.	Castle relevant story-telling activities will be provided by a locally based re-enactment group together with a practical taste of medieval life delivered by an external contractor.
Family focussed games and activities	<p>The extension of the use of the castle grounds as the setting for a range of fun and engaging family focused games and activities.</p> <p>The design of the games and activities will be simple and practical, drawing inspiration from the Museum's collections and helping make a link between the outdoor environment of the grounds and the indoor setting of the Museum.</p>	Ongoing	Developed by Museum Staff
Activities and events for youths and young adults (Twilight Sessions)	<p>Programme of events and activities targeting youths and young adults aged 16-25.</p> <p>Nature of the activities would be led by demand but may include silent discos and outdoor cinema screenings (age appropriate).</p>	Mid-week early evening activities during the summer holiday period.	Developed by Museum staff in conjunction with MCC's Youth Service and delivered by existing locally based providers.
Activities and events for older adults	<p>Targeting older adults (aged 50+) throughout the summer holidays and shoulder periods.</p> <p>Nature of activities and events will be led by demand but may include nostalgic dances/dance classes,</p>	Mid-week afternoon activities and events	Developed by Museum staff in conjunction with MCC's Social/Adult Services and delivered by existing locally based providers.

	singalong music events and exercise classes (e.g. tai chi, Pilates).		
Community activities and events	Opening up of the grounds and covered structure for hire by a range of community and special interest groups whose interests are aligned with those of the Museum & Castle.	Based on local need and demand.	Hiring policy to be managed by Museums staff.
Food related events and activities	Maintenance and further development of the role of the Museum & Castle in the running of the annual Abergavenny Food Festival and the development, in partnership with the food festival organisers, of one new small-scale food related event.	Food Festival – Autumn Small-scale event – late spring/early summer	To be run by the Food Festival team with input from Museum staff.
Weddings and private parties	Promotion of castle grounds and covered structure as a venue.	Restricted to 4- 6 per year (average 1 per month in warmer months)	Either managed internally, possibly as part of a wider portfolio of other MCC owned venues OR the exclusive rights to manage weddings put out to tender to experienced wedding planning.

4.7 Income and Expenditure Projections

The events income generation strategy is focused on building on the strengths of the existing events programme and realising the opportunities for income growth whilst maintaining and building relationships with key stakeholders.

No events are to be designed to run at a loss. There is also no expectation that one type of event will subsidise the staging of another. The minimum expected is for each event type to break even over the course of a year.

The targets for income generation for each type of event will be set prior to the start of each event year and will be based on the income generating potential of each event and in the light of the relative 'performance' of that type of event in the previous year. Each type of event will have its own 'mini-business plan' based on a simple forecast of income and expenditure with set targets for the surplus to be generated in the year ahead. A clear pricing structure for each type of event/activity is to be established.

The Events Programme as a whole is to complement and add value to the local event 'offer' in Abergavenny and be designed to support the growth of local event management expertise.

Income and expenditure projections have been carried out for the first five years. The loan will be paid back from profits over 10 years.

4.8 Project Capital Costs

The building of the Events Pavilion will take place between October 2018 and March 2019. We are seeking to appoint the builders by May 2018 after a robust procurement process has been undertaken.

The work will comprise the construction and installation of the Events Pavilion and associated works including installation of lighting.

A geophysical survey of the site was completed in June 2017. On advice a tree and ecological survey were not required, and a previous bat survey was referred to. A heritage impact survey and noise management plan are being completed as part of the planning application.

All procedures and legislations required for a build of this kind (e.g. planning permission, building regulation fees) have been identified and are acknowledged in the project plan and budget.

The full breakdown of project costs for the building of the Events Pavilion are listed in Table 4.

Building costs have been calculated by Sarah Browne, Architect. These are estimates which will become final costs when the builders are appointed. Fees are standard fees (Building Regulations and Planning Costs) or agreed as part of the tendering process (Architect Fees and Property Services Costs).

The current designs are those that have been submitted with the planning application. They are of course subject to change as part of that process. Please see Appendix A for initial design drawings.

Table 3 - Indicative Project Costs

Project Costs	Amount £	Amount £
Build Cost	£129,250	
Topographical Survey	£1,000	
Planning Application Fees	£1,520	
Architect Fees for Planning	£2,500	
Architect Fees Post Planning/Costing/Tender Purposes	£4,000	
Building regulation plans fee to MCC (approx.)	£2,000	
Structural engineer – provision sum	£4,500	
Property Service fees	£15,000	
Contingency	£2,934	
Sub Total		£162,704
Archaeology Survey	£4,450	
Electrics (Supply and Lighting)	£29,850	
Screening and planting	£16,000	
Wi-Fi	£7,500	
Noise Management Plan – provisional sum	£2,000	
Archaeological Trenching	£3500	
Sub Total		£63,300
Total		226,004

4.9 Community Benefits

This project will contribute to the community in a number of ways:

Access to Culture

The proposed events programme has been designed to appeal to a wide range of people from all backgrounds and cultures. Our events will be open to all and we will refer to the MCC equal opportunities policies in our planning. We are aiming to use these events to engage under-represented audiences, in particular those facing significant existing barriers to their enjoyment of the Museum and Castle, for example those with disabilities or mental health issues, older people, carers and people from different ethnic groups.

The structure being proposed will be fully DDA compliant and we have spoken to CAIR (Monmouthshire based Disability Support Group) during the design process to ensure practical needs are taken into account.

Our site's location close to railway and bus lines, as well as being on a major cycle route also contributes to our accessibility. We will consider these transport services when setting times of our events, to encourage the use of public transport and support those who do not have access to their own transport.

Marketing and communications will include social media and digital marketing to ensure a wide reach as possible. For residents and visitors who do not use social media, a series of digital noticeboards have been installed throughout the town which will enable us to publicise forthcoming events. We will of course continue to make use of non-digital methods such as the use of posters, on site publicity and direct mailings to local organisations and individuals to ensure those that are digitally excluded do not also become socially excluded.

The town of Abergavenny is currently embracing the benefits of digital communication as an effective method of reaching both local citizens and visitors to the town. A free Wi-Fi system is currently being installed within the town with presence analytics capability. We are looking to extend this provision to the castle grounds as an associated aspect of this project. The system will provide local businesses and attractions such as the castle to track not only visitor numbers but also visitor frequency and will enable targeted marketing of events to users of the system that have signed up to receive such communications.

We will adhere to the MCC policy relating to the Welsh Language in all of our events. We have a strong history of putting on events relating to Welsh Culture and Language, including a strong involvement in the provision of events at the 2016 National Eisteddfod. We anticipate our continuing events programme within the structure to have a strong focus on Welsh culture.

Effective community engagement has been important throughout the development of this proposal, as evidenced in the community and local business consultation that was carried out during the Events Feasibility Study. The Castle has been a publically accessible community asset since the 19th century. Ensuring the Castle site continues to be a relevant and accessible site is central to our vision of creating an outdoor structure in the Castle grounds.

Learning/Training/Volunteering

Events make a fantastic platform for learning within heritage/historic sites, particularly now that more traditional approaches seem to be waning. At present there is no dedicated education space at Abergavenny Castle and Museum. This structure will give the Museums Service the opportunity to run free and low cost family events in the grounds that support family integration and early learning.

In addition the introduction of a coordinated and extended events programme within the town will provide increased employment and skills opportunities whilst increasing more opportunities for social interaction and inclusion, and greater exposure to the culture and heritage that Abergavenny has to offer. The increased footfall in the town will also be beneficial for businesses within the area.

An increased volunteer base will be needed to support the events programme (e.g. welcoming and safety, community archaeological dig). We plan to target local people, in particular young people, in order to help build stronger relationships with our community. This volunteering offer would provide

essential employability and life skills to those involved and would link into MCC's 'A County That Serves' programme which provides support, guidance and training opportunities for volunteers within Monmouthshire. There may even be potential to run apprenticeships as part of the events programme once it is established.

4.10 Capital Funding

In October 2017 we submitted applications to the Rural Development Capital Fund and Welsh Government to cover the majority of the cost of the building of the Events Pavilion.

We would like to request match funding of £32K from Monmouthshire County Council – 14% of the overall project cost, to support funding applications.

4.11 Other Benefits

In the Museums Forward Plan, Strategic Aim 1 is to create a cross-county museum offer to encourage a sense of pride and community identity whilst identifying opportunities for arts and culture development. Proposed activities will include the centralisation of facilities to create a county wide 'Collections Centre' which will free up space in town museum sites to enable opportunities to increase community use and income generation potential.

The main impetus at Abergavenny to address promotion of arts and culture is to focus on the atmospheric outdoor space within the castle walls. The grounds are already used for outdoor theatre, food festival, some music events as well as re-enactments. Increasing this use also increases the possibilities of bad weather affecting the events and their financial viability.

Providing a covered space would not only offer some security against the elements but could make an interesting and attractive venue for functions, corporate or private.

5. Health and Safety

MCC as an organisation has a strong track record of managing events and the programme will be subject to all of processes already in place to ensure, above all else, the Health & Safety of the visitors taking part in our events and activities.

Two of the main event management practices undertaken are as follows:

- Generic **Event Plans** for each type of event that takes place with individualised Event Plans for large-scale Flagship Events
- **Risk assessments** undertaken for all events

During the construction of the building the successful contractors will be required to follow all legislation and guidelines appropriate to building sites. We will ensure all staff and visitors are aware of and follow these guidelines and will take appropriate steps to support them on advice from the MCC Health and Safety Officer and MCC Property Services.

5.1 Risks

What is the risk?	What is the likelihood of it happening?	What would the consequences be if it did happen?	What might avoid it happening or, how might the effect be reduced?	Risk Owner
One or more of the grant applications being unsuccessful	Low	The Project could not start	We have addressed all criteria in the applications. We have referred to the evidential material in the Feasibility Study throughout.	Museums Manager
Planning permission being refused	Medium	The process would be delayed if it was felt it could be obtained with reasonable adjustments. The project could be stopped if obtaining permission was impossible.	<p>The timing of the Planning Process is such that we hope a decision has been made ahead of the grant being offered so we are not causing a delay in the grant award process.</p> <p>We have been consulting with relevant departments, individuals and organisations throughout the process: Seeking expert advice from Planning/Conservation/ Environmental Health/ CADW/Property Services/Architect. Talking with community organisations, local businesses and nearby residents.</p> <p>We are also preparing appropriate mitigating documents – Heritage Impact Assessment and Noise Management Plan.</p>	Museums Manager
Not able to realise design of structure within the budget and capabilities of builders.	Low	We would have to redesign the building during the build process.	Through the procurement process we will make it clear what design the builders are expected to follow and will appoint builders that can deliver that design. We will request written evidence of the costs as part of the tender process. We will insert penalty clauses if builders cannot deliver.	Architect/ Property Services/Museums Manager
Weather conditions slowing down	Medium	If there was a significant delay it may disrupt the	We are proposing a long lead in time so the builders are able to start the build well ahead of	Property Services

the building progress.		planned events season.	when we need it finished so we have already allowed for delay. There is also the potential for much of the build to be done off site under cover. We will also consider programming events that would not suffer too badly if we had to substitute with a marquee.	
Discovery of archaeology slowing down the building progress.	Low	As above	As above. A geophysical survey has been carried out so we are aware of the archaeology under the surface. We have also proposed a design which does not require foundations that impact significantly underground.	Museums Manager
Issues with builders and contractors causing a delay in building	Medium	As above	As above (Long lead time etc.) There will also be penalty clauses built in to minimise risk of delays.	Property Services
Potential threat of vandalism	Medium	Cost of putting things right, or affecting the events planned.	We will make the building vandal resistant where possible. We have included the Manager of the local youth centre within our early discussions. We will work with local groups to involve youngsters within the project so that they feel the building belongs to them. We will consider joining anti-social behaviour programme. There is also the potential that more events occurring will mean less opportunity for vandalism.	Museums Manager/Property Services
Opposition from neighbours	Medium	Bad feeling, local negativity.	We will keep neighbours informed at all times about the project and the subsequent events program. Where appropriate we will consult. Following the build we will adhere to conditions imposed on events and we will be mindful of neighbours in our programming.	Museums Manager

Not enough demand for the events.	Low	Underuse of an expensive asset.	We will follow the advice given in the Events Feasibility Study. We will follow their suggestions regarding an events programme and marketing advice.	Museums Manager/Museums Curator
Clash between community and commercial, in house and external programming	Low	Negative publicity for the Castle and Museum.	We will follow the advice given in the Events Feasibility Study. We will retain links made with community and commercial groups. We will be flexible and respond to change. We will also limit types of certain events to ensure that we balance potential for income generation with retaining our role as a key community asset.	Museums Manager/Museums Curator
Competition from other venues	Low	Underuse of an expensive asset.	As above	Museums Manager/Museums Curator
Lack of staffing to build up a programme of events before we can justify taking on additional staff.	Medium	Issues re staffing capacity.	We will follow the advice given in the Events Feasibility Study, so can predict what happens and can plan staff accordingly. Seek grant funded opportunities for staffing in early stages whilst we build up the business.	Museums Manager/Museums Curator

6. Conclusion

We are seeking financial support as match funding for this project through a loan from the Invest to Redesign Reserve. This will be used for the building of an outdoor covered events structure ('Events Pavilion') within the grounds at Abergavenny Castle & Museum. An accompanying Events Programme will run alongside from 2018. Subject to funding and planning the Events Pavilion will be built in Autumn/Winter 2018/19

The total cost of the project is £226k. External funding has been applied for to cover the majority of the project but we would like to request £32K from Monmouthshire County Council. The profit on future events would enable the authority to recoup its investment over a 10 year period. If profit exceeds our expectations we would seek to make the repayment over a shorter time frame.

7. Recommendations

To agree to the loan of £32K as match funding for the RCDF grant funding to ensure the Events Pavilion at Abergavenny Castle & Museum can be completed and the proposed events programme to get underway.

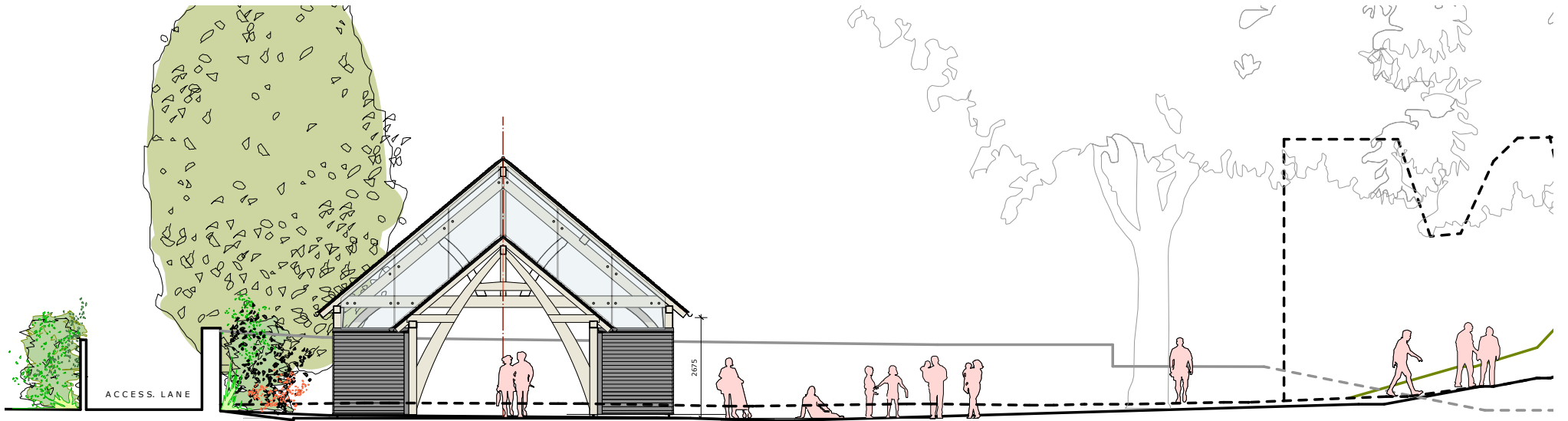
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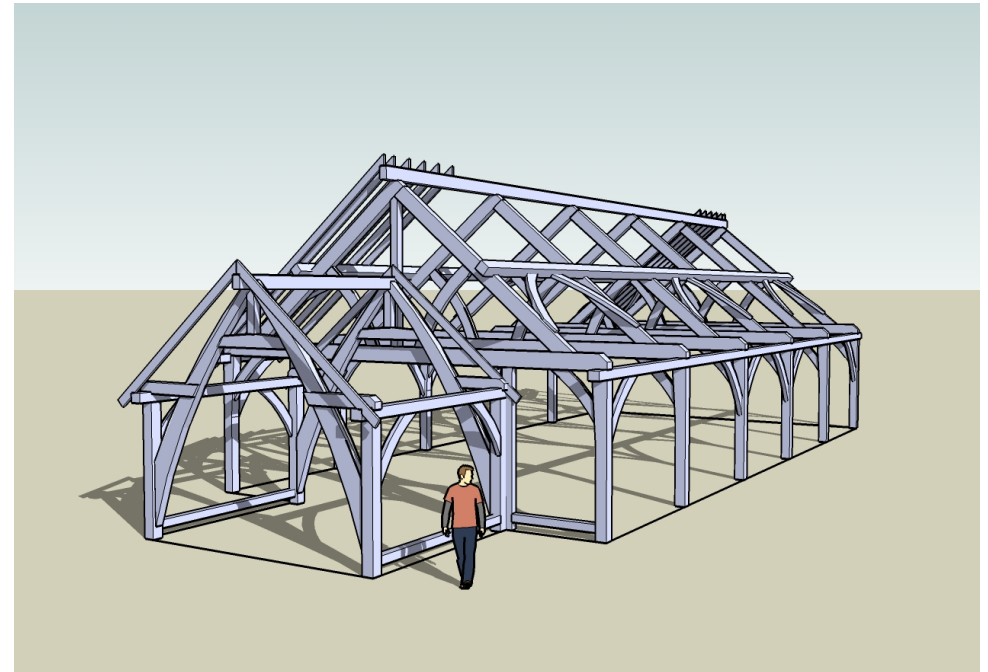


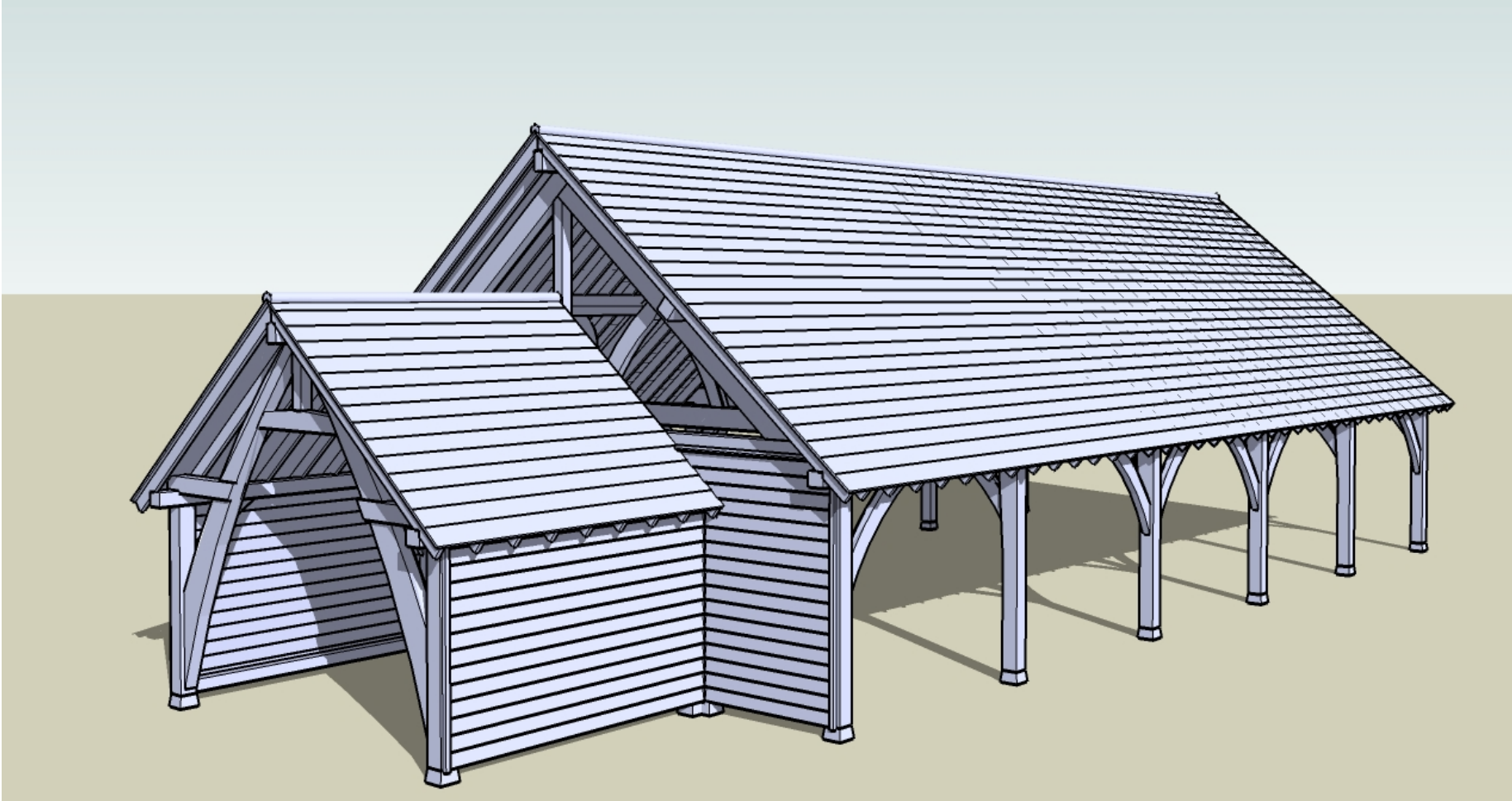
PROPOSED View as site section from SE





PROPOSED View as site section from SW







Abergavenny Museum and Castle Events Project

Feasibility Study Final Report
September 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This feasibility study has been commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council's Museums Service and is concerned with the development of a programme of events and activities to be delivered at Abergavenny Museum and Castle, in conjunction with the construction of a 'covered structure' (a new 'Events Pavilion'), within the Castle grounds. The scope and remit of the study has been to guide the development of the 'Events Project' and to comment on the; design, layout and location of the 'covered structure'.

The 'Events Project' has been initiated in order to more fully realise the full potential of Abergavenny Museum and Castle to act as an events venue. Events and related activities are well recognised as being central to service delivery. Events provide an excellent vehicle for active engagement of both existing and new target audiences, and are a proactive way to be 'inspiring' and to 'bring alive' museums, heritage, arts and culture – central tenets of the vision and mission of the Monmouthshire Museums Service.

Abergavenny Museum and Castle has a great opportunity and a strong platform on which to build. The opportunity is afforded by strong tourism growth which Monmouthshire is currently enjoying. This growth is fuelling an increase in visitor numbers and consequently a bigger target market. The most recent tourism statistics indicate that the majority of visitors are domestic, and that 'couples and families with young children' form the biggest share of that market. Further, it is clear that visiting castles and museums is the first and third most popular thing to do in Monmouthshire. At the other end of the spectrum the least represented audiences are those in the 16-30 and 80+ age brackets. It is the express intention of the Events Project to both build on existing interests and to address perceived gaps in the market, helping to attract new and under-represented audiences to enjoy what the Museum and Castle has to offer through a carefully designed and targeted Events Programme.

The platform is the Castle grounds themselves, which have a very special set of qualities – the setting and views out, the variety of spaces, the inclusion of the museum, the proximity of a large car park with easy all ability access to the Castle and the location so near to the bustling market town that is Abergavenny, with its own vibrant event scene. More than this though is the strong sense that the Castle and its grounds 'belong to' and are 'appreciated by' local people.

Events at the Museum and Castle are hardly a new initiative. The Castle grounds have been used for public entertainments since the 1880s. More recently the Castle grounds have been host to; heritage re-enactments, school visits, outdoor theatre productions, concerts, wedding parties and drinks receptions, community group activities, organised youth activities and use of the site for picnics and informal recreation. The Castle Grounds have also been one of the three key venues for the Food Festival since its inception nearly twenty years ago, and in the last few years the Castle has been the setting for a packed programme of weekend-long food related events and activities, drawing in up to 1,500 people at any one time.

However, the fact that these events have taken place should not serve to hide the difficulties faced by Museums Services staff and volunteers in staging them. Inclement weather combined with a relatively exposed location and lack of outside shelter has limited the scope and nature of the events that can be put on, and the relative costs of hiring a marquee together with the visual impact of these temporary structures, led museum staff to consider alternatives.

The proposed solution is a 'covered structure' of traditional oak framed construction. The new 'Events Pavilion', rather like a large-scale bandstand, has been designed to provide a permanent shelter within the grounds and a new facility that can be used for a wide range of events and related activities. Critically, providing a unique and 'quirky' high quality / high end events space that can be 'dressed' to suit the occasion.

In the initiation of the Events Project the Museums Service were very aware that in seeking to develop an enhanced events programme and creating a new events space, that the project would need to fit in and add value to what is already happening locally. A key aspect of the consultant's brief was therefore to undertake to consult with other local event organisers and venues within Abergavenny.

The consultants undertook extensive consultations via an online survey, follow up telephone discussions, meetings and a workshop which brought many key local event organisers together. A primary motivation for the consultations was to come to understand existing local events provision and for the findings to inform the design of the programme so that it added value and complemented what is already going on locally. The discussions revealed; wide-ranging support for enhancing the Museum and Castle's capacity to act as an events venue, positive feedback on the proposed design of the new 'Events Pavilion', and some useful new opportunities to develop partnership working. There were a few reservations expressed and these were concerned largely with; protecting the key views out from the Castle, avoiding duplication of event provision and ensuring that the general public continued to enjoy free and unrestricted access to the Museum and Castle grounds throughout the year (wherever possible).

Another area of focus for the consultations was to ensure that the new events programme could be developed with the support and active engagement of a range of internal stakeholders within Monmouthshire County Council. The Museums Service itself has geographically dispersed sites across Monmouthshire, and other centrally driven services are concerned with tourism, countryside and events. The assessment here was concerned with; identifying useful links across council service delivery, building shared capacity to deliver events, and realising new income generating opportunities in order to improve financial viability and service sustainability.

The context to these discussions was and remains an important factor. The Museums Service along with a wide range of other non-statutory 'recreation and leisure' related services is under consideration to be externalised and to come under the management control of a new not-for-private-profit charitable trust – an 'Alternative Delivery Model' (ADM) aimed at enabling continued service delivery and realising cost savings for the County

Council at a time of significantly reduced public expenditure. With this in mind the discussions revealed; a wide range of views as to the nature of the proposed events programme going forward, and a good deal of opportunities that might be realised for joint-marketing, tapping into existing experience and sharing resources internally – most especially with MCC’s Events Team.

However, there was also a sense that in working more closely together that sight should not be lost of the ability to maintain a locally distinct event offer and locally responsive event management. This was felt to be particularly the case within the context of Abergavenny, due in large part to the fact that local stakeholders already perceive the Castle to be ‘theirs’, which is clearly no bad thing! The Museums Service too remains committed to its ‘Forward Plan 2017-22’ and there a strong sense that this needs to be followed through, especially as the transition to the ADM remains uncertain and if it does go ahead, will take time to become fully established.

The proposed events programme has therefore been conceived in line with the above process of consultation. Consideration has additionally been given to; the specific needs of target audiences, how far each event and activity can enhance (and detract from) the Castle’s unique qualities, and most especially to what extent the proposed events and activities can be managed so as to avoid key issues that could otherwise potentially arise with respect to - restricted public access, noise disturbance and anti-social behaviour.

The proposed events programme contains very little that is radical or new. This is because the Museum Service has a long track record of developing and delivering events at the Museum and within the Castle grounds and has over the years tried a wide range of activities. The emphasis is much more upon the development of a coherent programme that is well-planned, but flexible enough to respond to changing demands, and that makes the most of the opportunities afforded by the new ‘Events Pavilion’.

The proposed events programme comprises the following:

- **Heritage related events and activities** – One ‘Heritage Day’ type event in late spring and family oriented small-scale ‘Medieval Life’ events during the summer holiday period.
- **Outdoor theatre events** – A season of outdoor theatre events during the summer holiday period, during the afternoon and / or early afternoon.
- **Concerts and gigs** – Continued support in staging the day long AM Fest (charity fundraising music festival) and development of a small number of mid-week early evening music concerts featuring light / niche music.
- **Learning activities for schools** – story-telling and ‘Medieval Life’ type activities concentrated into one ‘Schools Week’ held during May.
- **Family focused games and activities** – outdoor games equipment and a limited number of ‘family fun’ type activities staged during the summer / summer holidays.
- **Activities and events for youths and young adults** – A limited programme of mid-week early evening activities for youths and younger adults (aged 15-25) staged during spring / summer.

- **Activities and events for older adults** – A programme of mid-week afternoon activities and events for older adults (aged 70+) staged during spring / summer.
- **Community activities and events** – opening up the Castle grounds and Events Pavilion for appropriate use by local community organisations and special interest groups.
- **Food related events and activities** – The ‘Abergavenny Food Festival’ weekend in September and potential new small-scale events in spring / early summer.
- **Wedding receptions** – A restricted number of wedding receptions to be held April – September.

The above programme might be perceived as being ambitious, but it is a deliberate intention of the design that the Castle grounds become more animated, inspiring and alive with activity. There will clearly be a need to manage this so as to avoid conflicting uses, and to minimise unintended impact on the heritage, but the Castle grounds are reasonably extensive and activities can be ‘zoned off’ if required. The Museum management is also mindful of the potential impact of events on neighbours and will therefore undertake mitigating actions when planning the programme.

The benefits of bringing more people in are obvious in terms of reaching out and engaging with more people, but there are also the less obvious fringe benefits of having a continual presence and more people looking out for and after the Castle. The programme will also be phased in over a period of three years, allowing time to trial events and activities, and ensuring only those that meet set criteria are carried forward into the programme for the following year.

The consultants have looked at both the marketing and business planning elements of the proposed events programme and contained within this document are ‘Action Plans’ that highlight the key things that the Museums Service needs to do to ensure that the Events Project is a success.

The main conclusions, however, remain as being that the project is both wanted and needed and that the proposed new ‘Events Pavilion’ will become a valuable additional asset enabling a much wider range of audiences to enjoy what Abergavenny Castle and Museum has to offer.

1. THE 'EVENTS PROJECT'

In this section a summary of the client brief is provided together with an overview of the consultancy work undertaken in addressing the brief, and an explanation of how this report is set out and structured.

Client brief

The client is the Museums Service within Monmouthshire County Council. The commission was to undertake a feasibility study to gain a fuller understanding of the potential for events in both the castle grounds and within the museum building. The guidance as to the process was that it would include extensive community and local business consultation, to ensure that events proposed complement rather than compete with the existing local offer and have a sustainable legacy.

The objectives of the work were set out as follows:

- *Test the appetite for public, private and corporate events at Abergavenny Castle.*
- *Review existing local events, to understand current local provision.*
- *Review existing community use of castle site.*
- *Identify a potential event programme that would complement existing events and be popular with visitors and locals.*
- *Identify suitable private hire arrangements*
- *Develop an outline Business Plan for events at the Castle*
- *Develop a marketing strategy*
- *Identify how Abergavenny Castle can be used by the wider community,*
- *Identify a list of local businesses that could potentially support events, e.g. food producers, event equipment providers, caterers, sponsors etc.*
- *Draw together existing events toolkits that would be suitable for use by Abergavenny Castle*
- *Provide an event evaluation template, to ensure measurable data is collected.*
- *Develop a price structure for events at the castle*
- *Establish how best to use a permanent structure within the grounds to provide protection from the weather and create a central base for events.*
- *Provide a cost guide relating to any recommended minor improvements, e.g. improved electricity supply or lighting provision.*

Consultancy work undertaken

Gareth Kiddie Associates - a team of heritage and tourism professionals were commissioned to undertake the study and in the period March – September 2017, undertook the following consultancy activities:

- A web-based analysis of information pertaining to existing and potential audiences for events at the castle.
- A desktop review of the existing use of the site for events and related activities.
- An on-site investigation of the site and its capacity to host events with particular reference to the proposed 'covered structure'.
- Discussions with members of the management team at the Museum and Castle related to their vision for events and their own capacity to manage events going forward.
- Consultations with key internal stakeholders.
- Consultations with local event organisers.
- Consultations with existing and potential new event providers, managers and suppliers of event services, facilities and equipment.

The consultancy activities described above provided the information and evidence to support the compilation of the main elements of the report, namely; the proposed events programme, marketing and business plans, events management 'toolkit'.

This report is set out so as to guide the reader through the results of the consultancy activities described above and to provide the evidence for the conclusions reached and recommendations made.

2. ABOUT ABERGAVENNY MUSEUM AND CASTLE

The section sets out a brief history of Abergavenny Castle by way of introduction and proceeds to look at the priorities of the Monmouthshire Museums Service in managing the Museum and Castle going forward. A summary of what is known about current visitors both to Monmouthshire and to the Castle itself follows and the section ends with a review of how the Castle grounds have previously been and are currently being used for events.

Brief history

- The Castle is medieval in origins and is infamous for the Christmas Day massacre which took place here in 1175. The original Castle would have been of timber construction. The stone remains you see today date to the late 13th, early 14th centuries.

“The keep along with most of the other castle buildings, was destroyed in the Civil War, 1645-1646. In 1818, the present building - now the Museum - was constructed on top of the motte as a hunting lodge for the Marquess of Abergavenny”¹.

- The site has housed a museum since 1959 and holds an interesting collection of objects that span the town’s past from the prehistoric to the relatively recent. It also houses temporary exhibitions. It is described in the Forward Plan as follows:

“Abergavenny Museum was opened ... thanks to a group of local volunteers. The museum has remained at the heart of the town, developing strong links with community organisations. Today visitors are offered the opportunity to view diverse local collections in an historic building and loans of international importance within a modern gallery space. Collections are focused on the history of Abergavenny and district. There are strong archaeological and costume collections. Social history items of particular note include Whiskey the Turnspit dog and items relating to Lady Llanover, Father Ignatius and the Llanthony Valley. The museum within the castle grounds provides both a glimpse into a rich and varied past and an opportunity for people to gather and celebrate their future.”²

- The Castle remains in the ownership of the Nevill Estate Company Ltd and is leased to and managed by Monmouthshire County Council.

Vision, mission, aims and objectives of Monmouthshire Museums Service

- Abergavenny Museum and Castle is currently part of Monmouthshire County Council’s Museum Service.

¹ <http://www.abergavennymuseum.co.uk>

² Monmouthshire Museums Forward Plan 2017-2022, page 5

- The Museums Service will be guided by its current 'Forward Plan 2017-22' which sets out a very clear direction of travel. Below are some of the key features extracted from the Plan...

Vision: 'Inspiring a passion for Monmouthshire'

Mission: 'Bringing museums, heritage, arts and culture alive with our communities and visitors'

Strategic Aim 1: To create a cross-county museum offer to encourage a sense of pride and community identity whilst identifying opportunities for arts and culture development.

- This would be achieved by converting a suitable space under one roof to create a 'Collections Centre' and public exhibition area, financed through a major capital funding bid.

Strategic Aim 2: To ensure we have a resilient and sustainable service.

- This would be achieved by improving and extending our income streams; increasing and widening our user base and raising awareness of the Museums offer; whilst contributing to a vibrant community by adapting and working in new and innovative ways.

Core Values:

- Museums are responsible for the stewardship of collections
- Museums are places of individual and institutional integrity with good governance in place.
- Museums are places for public engagement and public benefit

Links to National Strategies:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- Museums Accreditation
- Tackling Poverty through Culture
- Museums Strategy for Wales
- Creative Learning through the Arts
- Social Care & Wellbeing Act
- National Curriculum for Wales
- Curriculum Cymraeg
- Curriculum for Wales, Curriculum for Life

- The Forward Plan also alludes to the Destination Management Plan and details how the Service fits in:

"Close links exist with Monmouthshire's Destination Development Plan. The main links are to Programme 2: Town & Village Visitor Experience Development Programme 4: Food

Tourism Development and Programme 5: Festivals development, using events to boost off peak demand and capitalising on the opportunities to host high profile events at key heritage sites. The role of Monmouthshire Museums includes improving the experience of the town for visitors by helping to interpret its stories and with a wider arts remit staging/promoting events.”

- As such, both the Museum collection and events have important roles to play in both attracting new audiences, educating and entertaining visitors, supporting local culture and in helping to grow the site’s income.

Visitor profiles

General Visitor Statistics to Monmouthshire

- In 2015 welcomed 2.19m visitors, a 4.4% increase on the previous year and a 6.7% increase on 2013³.
- This equated to 2.95m visitor days. Day visitor days increased to 1.7m, the highest since STEAM began monitoring tourism in the county seventeen years ago.
- Tourism supports 2744 FTE jobs in the County and generated a total of £187m for the local economy; with staying visitors accounting for 77% of all spend.
- To summarise the Wales Visitor Survey 2016 as it relates to the County⁴:
 - Most visitors are domestic (UK / Ireland), and only 7% of visitors to Monmouthshire come from overseas.
 - Couples and families with young children are the most common types of visitor to the area.
 - Over a third of staying visitors were either first time visitors to Wales or new to this part of Wales.
 - 60% of visitors to Monmouthshire were most likely to have come to the area to visit places, historical / religious sites and attractions.
- The most popular activities undertaken by visitors to Monmouthshire were:
 - Visiting a castle or historic attraction (44%),
 - General sightseeing (30%),
 - Visiting a museum or heritage centre and visiting a religious site (20% for each).
 - Arts and cultural festivals, and more specifically the Eisteddfod (survey coincided with the national Eisteddfod being hosted in Abergavenny), were also popular, with roughly one in eight Monmouthshire visitors attending (12%)
- Satisfaction levels were high with 80% giving it a score of over 9/10.
- Most visitors travel using a car.

³ <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2016/05/20/2015>

⁴ Wales Visitor Survey 2016: Monmouthshire County Council - Research Report

- This suggests that there is a large and growing market for sites such as Abergavenny Castle, and that events can be a factor in attracting visitors. If only a small additional proportion of the 2.19 million visitors to the County can be persuaded to make Abergavenny Castle a ‘must see’ site, then that could help make it more sustainable in to the future.

A fuller summary of the statistical data for Monmouthshire is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Visitors to the Museum and Castle

- In 2016 / 17 25,971 people visited Abergavenny Museum and attended Museum run events in the grounds. (N.B. More people would have visited just the grounds on a casual basis and attended outside run events but these visitors are not recorded).
- Of these, 66% come from outside of the area, 11% are local residents, 20% are children and 3% attend specific museum events.
- Monmouthshire Museums contributed £1.47M to the local economy in 2016 / 17 (AIM Economic Impact Survey) with £667,853 specifically attributed to Abergavenny Museum.
- The Service notes that the age groups 16-30 and 80+ are under-represented, whilst some sites also lack visits by pre-school children.
- “Our visitor profile is more middle aged and younger older people and family groups”.
- The Forward Plan acknowledges that in the past there has been a “Lack of visitor analysis data and lack of evidence about the impact that we have on our visitors”.
- However, this has started to be addressed: “A Monmouthshire wide survey carried out across Tourism, Leisure and Culture Services which took place in August 2016 revealed the following comments about what was important:
 - 33% said ‘Museums need to be interesting and educate people’
 - 23% said ‘Information is available and relevant’
 - 21% said ‘History should be preserved and shared with everyone’
 - 14% said ‘Important that museums stay free’
 - 14% said ‘Being able to learn about local history locally’
- This gives the Museum Service a steer in terms of the needs of exiting users, but also suggests who they should be targeting in terms of potential new markets, in particular, local people, families with per-school children and the 16-30 age groups would appear to have growth potential.

The qualities of Abergavenny Castle as a venue for events

- Castles in general are great places to stage events. As ‘romantic ruins’ they appeal to a wide range of people and by their very nature they offer the perfect backdrop for events including, for example; heritage re-enactments, outdoor theatre productions and music concerts.

- Abergavenny Castle is no exception. Indeed the Castle has some unique qualities that make it particularly attractive as a place to stage events, they are as follows:
 - The setting and views out over Abergavenny, Castle Meadows and to the surrounding hills & mountains dominated by the Blorenge.
 - The variety of different spaces within the castle grounds, providing different backdrops and a range of different ambiances and atmospheres.
 - The fact that one of the County’s Museums is located in a former hunting lodge in the middle of the grounds and atop the Norman Keep.
 - The location in the heart of the vibrant and picturesque market town of Abergavenny, well blessed with a good range of restaurants, bars and places to stay.
 - The proximity of a large local authority owned car park adjacent to the front entrance gate with easy (level) access into the grounds.



One of the classic views out from the Castle towards The Blorenge

- The variety of spaces and the qualities of Abergavenny Castle are shown in full in the ‘walk through’ series of photographs shown in **Appendix 2**.
- A study⁵ commissioned by the Museum Manager, supervised by Cardiff University Student William Tregaskes, and undertaken in the spring of 2017 with the support of museum volunteers looked into the public perception of Abergavenny Castle and its

⁵ ‘Understanding the public perception of Abergavenny Museum’s Castle and Grounds’ William Tregaskes (2017)

grounds. 143 visitors to the Castle were surveyed and two of the key questions focused on the public's perception of the Castle's unique qualities:

- In answer to the question '*Why do we value Abergavenny Castle and grounds?*' and using a preset list of attributes, the conclusions were as follows:
 - Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Castle's 'historic value' was most generally appreciated, with 89% of participants selecting at least one historical attribute.
 - The 'views' out from the Castle were selected by 59% of participants, confirming that the 'views' are important to visitors and a reason for coming to the Castle.
 - The 'natural value' of the site was appreciated by 47% of participants and this was said to be reflective of the importance placed on the Castle grounds as an accessible green space near to the town centre.
 - The 'social value' of the site was appreciated by 45% of participants, said to be reflective of the Castle as a community asset – a focal point where people from Abergavenny can meet, socialise, take children to play and take part in local events.
- A key conclusion drawn from the above is that Abergavenny Museum and Castle is valued by visitors as being so much more than an empty romantic ruin. It confirms that the Castle has a unique and special setting with important views out and across the surrounding area. Critically, it confirms that people also value the Castle as a greenspace, a natural habitat, a community asset and a place to hold local events.
- In answer to the question '*What is the most important view from the grounds of Abergavenny Museum and Castle?*' the results were assessed by how many times a particular view was selected. Four views dominated with the other views being selected only a handful of times. The views in rank order are:
 - Towards the Blorengel (selected 87 times)
 - Towards Sugar Loaf (selected 67 times)
 - Across Castle Meadows (selected 55 times)
 - Across town towards St Mary's Church (selected 21 times)
- The conclusion from this question re-affirms what specific views are important to visitors and in the context of this report will help to guide the siting and size of the proposed 'covered structure'.

Existing use of Abergavenny Museum and Castle for events

- The grounds of Abergavenny Castle have been used by local people for community events since the 1880s.
- Since Monmouthshire County Council took on the lease for managing the Castle and its grounds the Museums Service has sought to build on this sense that the Castle grounds are open and accessible to the local community and has sought to develop a wide range of events appealing to an equally wide range of audiences. Events and activities have included:
 - Heritage re-enactments
 - School visits
 - Outdoor theatre productions
 - Concerts
 - Community group activities
 - Organised youth activities
 - Use of the site for picnics and informal recreation
 - The Abergavenny Food Festival
 - Wedding receptions
- The photographs below show the nature of some of these events and activities and highlight the existing use of the Castle grounds.

Heritage re-enactments and family fun days

- The Castle grounds have been used extensively for heritage re-enactments and other heritage related family oriented events and activities



Tudor Event featuring mock jousting skills / AM Fest Family Fun Day

School visits

- School visits are hosted regularly at the Castle grounds.



School visits

Outdoor theatre performances

- The Castle Grounds have become a well recognised venue for outdoor theatre drawing in people from across South Wales as well as visitors staying in the area.
- For some time the grounds were used by the Gwent Youth Theatre to stage performances. The Museums Service hosted its own performances by National touring theatre companies as well as having a longstanding working relationship with the local Borough Theatre.



Illyria Players August 2016: Image courtesy 'Abergavenny Chronicle'

Concerts

- Over a number of years the castle grounds have been used to stage charitable concerts. The 'Relive Rewind' was staged to raise money for Cancer Research and in 2016 an 'Elvis' themed event was staged to raise money for the Eisteddfod.
- The Castle has been host to a small number of concerts. The AM (Abergavenny Music) Fest organised by Abergavenny Round Table was held for the first time in July 2016 and again in September 2017. The event is staged as a fundraiser with a range of family friendly activities taking place alongside a series of music performances taking place from midday to finish at 7.00pm.



Abergavenny Round Table's AM Fest



Community group activities

- The Museums Service maintains excellent links with local community organisations and has facilitated the use of the grounds by groups including Abergavenny Transition Town and the Abergavenny Community Orchard group.



Transition Town and Abergavenny Orchard groups undertaking planting within the Castle grounds

Organised youth activities

- MCC Youth Service have used the grounds for a series of youth activity workshops over three days this summer. The events attracted between 80 -120 young people per day.



Monmouthshire Youth Service set up within the Castle grounds

The Abergavenny Food Festival

- Held annually at the Castle since 2002 the Food Festival has become a key feature in Abergavenny's (indeed Wales') calendar of events and the Castle grounds are considered to be one of the three key venues and fundamentally important to the ongoing success of the Festival.
- Over the two days of the Festival several thousand people visit the castle grounds with around 1500 people on site at any one time. All of the grounds are used and become host to food stalls and food related activities. A 'Ceilidh' takes place on the Friday night before the Festival proper and there is a 'Party at the Castle' featuring live music, dancing and a firework display on the Saturday night.



Use of the grounds during the day at the Abergavenny Food Festival





Castle grounds as the setting for the night party / firework display (above) day time crowds (below)

Wedding receptions

- A small number of wedding breakfast parties and evening receptions have been held within the Castle grounds.
- The grounds are also used by the Angel Hotel for drinks receptions and wedding photographs.



A wedding party within the Castle grounds



Existing events and venues in and around Abergavenny

- Abergavenny has a reasonably busy programme of events and activities being delivered by a wide range of local community and voluntary organisations, public sector supported organisations and private sector businesses. The key venues and events include the following:
 - Abergavenny Markets – Throughout the week at the Market Hall.
 - Fun-Fair – End of May / early September – Bailey Park
 - Abergavenny Steam Rally – May Bank Holiday, Bailey Park.
 - Proposed ‘Arts Festival’ – Late June (Abergavenny Castle to be one of the venues)
 - Gwyl Plant Gwent – Children’s Dancing Festival – Late June / early July (Abergavenny Castle is one of the venues).
 - South Wales Shire Horse Show – Early July, Bailey Park.
 - Abergavenny Festival of Cycling – Mid July.
 - ‘Wall 2 Wall’ Jazz Festival – Early September.
 - The Abergavenny Food Festival (for which the Castle is already a key venue)
 - Fireworks at Belgrave Park – November 5th
 - Abergavenny Christmas Food And Drink Fair – December.

Listing kind courtesy Abergavenny Now website: <http://abergavennynow.com>

3. RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS AND OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

In this section the results of a series of consultations with local events organisers and internal stakeholders are set out and the main themes arising out of the discussions are explored. The ‘conclusions and recommendations’ at the end of this section are important as they set out the fundamental basis for the construction of a ‘covered structure’ within the grounds of Abergavenny Castle and for the development and delivery of an Events Programme.

Consultations with local event organisers

- The main purpose of the consultations was to ensure that the events programme ultimately developed by Abergavenny Museum and Castle, adds value to rather than competes with what is already in existence and being delivered locally.
- The consultations were undertaken via an online survey (29 respondents)
- Follow up, targeted telephone conversations / face to face discussions were held with 12 of those organisations / event organisers as follows:
 - Abergavenny Civic Society
 - Abergavenny Food Festival
 - Abergavenny Local History Society
 - Abergavenny Town Council
 - Abergavenny Town Team
 - Abergavenny Transition Town
 - Black Mountain Jazz
 - County Marquees Limited
 - Friends of Castle Meadows
 - The Angel Hotel
 - The Borough Theatre
 - Three Peaks Challenge
- A summary of the key findings is presented below:

Online survey

- The online survey was designed to ask a range of pertinent questions concerned with two key areas:
 - Views on the Castle and Museum as an historic and recreational public asset.
 - How Abergavenny Castle and Museum can link with and further develop Abergavenny’s annual events programme.

The Castle and Museum as an historic and recreational public asset...

- 100% of respondents felt that access for quiet recreation is ‘reasonably’ to ‘very important’.
- 73% of respondents ‘agree strongly’ that private events are acceptable and 23% ‘don’t mind’ the Castle grounds being used for this purpose.

- 82% of respondents think that it is 'perfectly acceptable' to hold events in the grounds whilst allowing public access to all other areas. However, a significant minority (9%) felt that this would be 'not acceptable'.

Links with and further development of Abergavenny's annual events programme...

- 86% of respondents made suggestions as to new possible events
 - 71% of respondents felt that common ground existed between what they offer and what the Castle and Museum could do to improve Abergavenny's events 'offer'.
 - 91% of respondents saw opportunities for joint working and resource sharing.
 - 90% saw opportunities to collaborate on marketing and promotion of events at the Castle and Museum.
 - 65% would consider the Castle and Museum for events if and when capacity was unavailable elsewhere.
 - 48% knew of possible service providers for the Castle and Museum.
 - 86% had no concerns about the Castle grounds being utilised more frequently for fee paying and / or community events.
- It was clear from the consultations that the majority of the respondents were amenable to the idea that access to the Castle grounds to the general public might be restricted or occasionally prevented as a result of private use.
 - There is also clear support for the Museum and Castle to become a recognised events venue within the town with many organisations feeling that they could use the venue, collaborate on joint initiatives and / or support future events.
 - However, there was a significant minority of respondents who were concerned about this change in emphasis and felt that the public access / private use balance must be addressed and that when the Castle grounds are closed for private events the general public is well informed in advance.

Telephone / face to face consultations

- The targeted telephone conversations and face to face consultations afforded an opportunity for the consultants to get that bit closer to local event organisers and better assess more individualised needs and perceptions.
- There are clearly some existing relationships that are ripe to be built upon and new opportunities to be realised with new partners.
- Local events organisers clearly already recognise the Castle as an events venue and feel sufficiently engaged and interested to comment very positively with respect to developing its potential. Part of the reasoning behind this is a clear sense that a vibrant events programme utilising the Castle grounds can be a catalyst for increased footfall in town and more bookings with local accommodation providers.
- There are some real and practical offers of help for the Museums Service to take up.
- There remains a sense that private events should not prevent access to the Castle grounds.

Consultations with internal stakeholders

- At one level the consultations with internal stakeholders were simply an opportunity to look at and draw on existing 'events' good practice at other sites managed by MCC.
- On another level they were an opportunity to look to the future and to see whether the development of a permanent 'covered structure' in the grounds of Abergavenny Castle would add value the MCC's own programme of events.
- However, the consultations were also an opportunity to assess the impact of major cross departmental changes currently being considered, that will (if they come to fruition) impact significantly on the way in which the Museums Service is managed, and therefore on the development of the 'Events Project' in particular.
- Consultations were undertaken via structured telephone interviews and / or face to face meetings with nine internal stakeholders.
- In the course of the discussions a series of recurring themes arose together with some good / positive suggestions as to the potential way forward for the 'Events Project'. These are summarised below:

Perspectives on the 'covered structure'

- There was a general recognition that the provision of a permanent covered structure would be of benefit to the delivery of events at the Castle, and an acknowledgement that continually erecting and taking down temporary structures (marquees etc) was limiting the development of the events programme at the Castle.
- Indeed for some events and activities, particularly those associated with accommodating the needs of visiting school and community groups, a shelter and somewhere to undertake 'workshop style' / 'messy' activities was perceived as adding a real asset to the site which would open up significant new opportunities.
- Where reservations were expressed they were concerned with the flexibility of a permanent structure in use, and the structure's potential to impact on the views out from the site.
- A couple of consultees suggested that the maintenance of the structure in good condition and the prevention of damage through vandalism / nefarious use will be important.

Impact of the Alternative Delivery Model (ADM)

- The delivery of a range of services, including the Museums Service, undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council is currently in a period of flux and change. Public sector spending cuts are forcing local authorities throughout the UK to re-evaluate the scope and range of the services they continue to deliver and to look at 'alternative delivery models'.
- In Monmouthshire the County Council is looking at the possibilities and proposals to establish its own Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) are currently under consideration.

- In this potential future situation it is anticipated that the new model would have greater flexibility to be more responsive and reactive to the market and would be better able to arrange and coordinate a County-wide 'Events Programme' including : joint ticketing / booking arrangements, electronic point of sale (EPOS), coordinated pricing structure, shared catering arrangements and joint-marketing.
- Another major benefit of an ADM would be the ability to better prevent duplication internally, allowing site / programme managers to concentrate on core shared purpose and long term planning.
- As far as the Museums Service is concerned the Service will continue to be guided by its own existing five year plan - Monmouthshire Museums Forward Plan 2017-2022.
- However, the Museums Service Manager recognises that it would be short-sighted not to look at what might transpire and to ensure that new proposals, including this Events Project take account of what might happen in the near future.
- The general sense is, in any case, there will be good value in looking to make these kinds of arrangements happen whether or not the ADM comes into being, so long as the ability to remain locally responsive is maintained.
- These two threads of the discussions are explored further below.

Tapping into existing experience / sharing resources / joint marketing

- MCC already has a well-established Events Team and operating out of Caldicot Castle. The team has built its capacity to deliver a wide range of events including, for example: Family Fun Days, Heritage Re-Enactments, Weddings and large scale music concerts featuring internally famous artists and attracting thousands of people.
- Whilst the team currently has some hand in helping to deliver events outside of Caldicot, most activities are Caldicot based and it is largely left to individual managers at the Museums' Service other sites at; Chepstow Museum, Monmouth Museum and Shire Hall, Tintern Old Station and Abergavenny Museum and Castle, to direct events as they see fit and in line with the priorities for the Service at that particular site.
- An opportunity nevertheless exists to tap into the hard won experience of the Events Team in a more proactive way and to seek out more effective use of existing skills and resources.
- Joint-marketing already takes place and all sites utilize the 'Visit Monmouthshire' platform for advertising their events. However, there is probably scope to be more proactive and there might be clear benefits in looking to market the venues together for certain events.

Maintaining local distinctiveness and responsiveness

- If the benefits of greater collaboration between the MCC Events Team and MCC Museums Service sites is plain to see then sight should also not be lost of the benefits of maintaining local distinctiveness and responsiveness.

- The manager at Tintern Old Station, for example, has developed an events programme that is rooted firmly in what the Old Station site is about and as a result has been very successful in engaging with its key target audiences, which has in turn helped in the development of a loyal following and provided a platform involving local volunteers.
- It is clearly difficult to replicate this process, but it is undoubtedly important to provide the flexibility within the management framework for this to continue to happen.
- As far as the development of the events programme at Abergavenny Museum and Castle is concerned, to some large degree the site managers have in the past and continue in the present to enjoy a good deal of autonomy in developing and delivering the events.
- The manager recognises (and it is explicit with the brief for this commission) that the overriding concerns should be to stage events that fit with (and do not jar against) the Castle's unique qualities and further, that events stages at the Castle add value to and do not compete unnecessarily with what is a relatively thriving local events scene.
- Indeed to some large extent people within Abergavenny, especially some local organisations and event organisers, already perceive the Castle as 'theirs' and very much a part of the town. So in this sense there is already a very positive local context in which the Events Project is being developed and continuing to fit within this will be key.

Accommodating wedding / civil ceremonies and private parties

- All consultees recognise that the grounds at Abergavenny Castle are a very attractive location for wedding and civil ceremonies to take place, that there is an existing track record of hosting weddings (using temporary marquees), and that the proposal to construct a 'covered structure' will enhance this ability.
- There is also plenty of good experience to tap into across the other sites. In some of the discussions it became clear that it might be sensible to jointly market all of MCC's venues as a 'portfolio' thereby offering prospective couples / part planners a wider / more coordinated choice of heritage locations within Monmouthshire.
- However, and in line with the narrative above it might also be sensible to consider a delivery partner rather than trying to deliver internally within MCC.
- The timetabling of other events and the close proximity of neighbours will be considered when planning weddings.

Events as a platform for learning

- Several internal stakeholders commented that using events as platform for learning remains a priority and whilst the interest in traditional approaches may be 'on the wane', responding positively by developing new ideas for engaging family audiences and school groups in particular was seen as being important.
- In this respect the role of MCC's Tourism, Leisure and Culture Learning Officer, will be important going forward. The Learning Officer commented that there needed to be a

move away from a narrow 'history focus' towards the development of creative learning events centred on 'Inspiration' as a theme and vehicle for delivery.

- The Learning Officer also, however, highlighted the fact that there is a capacity issue and that even though schools visits and family events might be able to 'cover their costs', there would be a need to find resources to support the development of this area of work.

Engaging new and under-represented audiences

- Events used as the platform for engaging 'the community' was an explicit aspect of the brief but a couple of internal consultees commented on the desirability of an events programme that started to provide opportunities for new and under-represented audiences in particular.
- To some small degree the Museums Service is already doing this through its work in engaging young people at the Castle via MCC's Youth Service summer workshops programme.
- It was felt that this was the kind of activity that might be extended and developed to include new audiences – especially those that face significant existing barriers to enjoyment of the Museum and Castle, including in particular; people with disabilities / mental health issues, older people, carers and ethnic groups not currently engaged.
- One of the ways suggested to do this was to weave into an events programme opportunities to take part in hands-on 'arts & cultural' activities.

Working with volunteers

- The Museum and Castle already has its own group of volunteers and good links with local organisations, for example; Abergavenny Transition Town and Abergavenny Community Orchard that help out in one way or another.
- A couple of consultees were keen to point out the value of volunteers in helping out at events and becoming part of the team that makes visitors feel welcome, engaged, informed and safe.
- With an expanded events programme in mind and with limited additional resources it will be important to look to find ways to increase the volunteer base.

Consultations with other key stakeholders and other research undertaken

- The consultants undertook some limited additional consultations with other key stakeholders including the owner of the Castle, the Marquess of Abergavenny.
- The consultants also enjoyed an excellent discussion with the organisers of the Food Festival the results of which have been fed into the plan for maintaining the Castle as a key venue in the Food Festival weekend and for growing and developing a range of complementary food related events and activities at different times of the year.

- Other research focused on looking in greater detail at the market for weddings and involved consultations with a number of wedding planners and venues where weddings are already being held (far enough away from Abergavenny so as to not be seen to be in competition).

Consultation workshop

- Following the completion of the consultations with local event organisers and key internal & external stakeholders a consultation workshop was staged on 14th July 2017, 2.30 – 4.30 pm, the primary purpose of which was to draw together representatives of all of the afore-mentioned consultees.
- 12 people attended the workshop which was held at the Angel Hotel. The following organisations were represented: Abergavenny Civic Society, Abergavenny Food Festival, Abergavenny Local History Society, Abergavenny Town Council, Abergavenny Town Team, Monmouthshire County Council, The Angel Hotel.
- The consultants structured the discussions so that a ‘starter for ten...’ was given on a discussion topic as follows:
 - The **key qualities** of the grounds of Abergavenny Museum and Castle as a venue for events...
 - Existing and target **audiences** to be developed...
 - **Capacity** of Abergavenny Museum and Castle - limitations and opportunities...
 - Events ‘long list’, **programming and priorities**...
- Below is a brief summary of the discussions points that arose that were either strongly reinforcing the messages coming through previous consultations or indeed were entirely new.
 - The Castle and its grounds are perceived very strongly as belonging to the community.
 - The grounds are popular with families with young children for picnics and as a safe, enclosed greenspace in which to play games.
 - Local people appreciate the natural environment within the Castle grounds as well as the ‘aesthetics of the spaces’.
 - Small self-organising local community groups use the grounds for health & wellbeing activities – fitness, outdoor yoga, Tai Chi etc. these could be built on & developed e.g. a ‘Walking for Health’ programme.
 - There are strong historical links that might be made more of with other parts of Abergavenny and other castles in Monmouthshire.
 - The Castle grounds make for an excellent setting and backdrop for ephemeral art exhibitions and a key venue for the proposed Abergavenny Arts Festival due to start up in 2018.

- The Castle could and should play a greater role in meeting the needs of younger people in the 20-30 age group and the proposed 'covered structure' will be an ideal facility to host age appropriate activities, including for example; silent discos, outdoor cinema events etc.
- If more events and activities take place at the Castle there will be a need to consider; careful programming, zoning & use of temporary barriers, communicating effectively with target audiences (including most especially neighbours and existing & regular visitors), stewarding and pricing.

Review of the proposals for the 'covered structure'

The client is proposing a traditional timber (oak) framed structure, with a slate roof and open sides (with an additional ability to enclose the structure in part and on a temporary basis). The proposed size of the design is a structure 18M in length and 9M width. From an events perspective the size of the structure would be appropriate for the kind of events proposed above.

The findings of this study also lead to the conclusion that the following features should be considered:

- The ability to insert permanent / semi-permanent panels into the side(s) of the structure would be useful as it would provide some degree of sound protection and would enable services & W.C.'s to be hidden from view when the other sides are drawn back.
- The ability to easily and quickly draw (or roll) down 'sides' to the structure, enabling it to become a weather proof conditioned / heated environment inside. In doing so consideration should be given to how the structure will look without and with sides drawn. An opportunity exists here to make the structure look more like a traditional large marquee type tent when the sides are drawn and an open 'Great Hall' when drawn back.
- The ability to create internal subdivisions to allow for the creation of; a reception area / cloakroom, seating / dining area, dancefloor / stage, catering / serving area, temporary storage area.
- Flexibility for expansion via the ability to attach additional 'awnings' or similar, either to accommodate the areas listed above or to enable increased space for larger events.

Location

- A variety of considerations have led to the conclusion that the best site is on green to left of entrance gate as you enter the castle grounds.
- Consideration needs to be given to: Views across the site, impact on visual amenity of grounds, the neighbours, disabled access and access for delivery vehicles.
- The area immediately around the structure will be important too, there might be opportunities to introduce new planting / landscaping to enhance the setting and increase interest in the site.

Services

- The majority of the proposed events and activities will require access to W.C.'s and it has been established that the existing facilities within the Museum building are not easily accessible, nor will they always be open.
 - One option is to bring in 'Portaloos' on an event by event basis / as required.
 - Access to a 'wired in' electrical supply will be essential for temporary lighting and for powering event equipment – e.g. amplifiers, speakers, p.a. system etc.
 - Access to a plumbed in water supply would also be useful as some of the events and activities would benefit e.g. food related, schools / family craft workshops etc. There are a number of water taps across the site.
-

4. PROPOSED EVENTS PROGRAMME

This section sets out the proposals for events and activities to be developed, piloted and (presuming the pilot is successful) delivered at Abergavenny Museum and Castle. The key considerations for programming the events are covered, together with the implications for events management and the phased introduction of the events and activities over time. At the end of the section some of the key issues and risks are highlighted together with the ways in which they might be addressed and mitigated.

Summary of proposed events and activities

The programme of 'Events and Activities' proposed to take place at Abergavenny Museum and Castle and as described below has been put together by the consultants based on a process of consultation and with the following key criteria in mind:

- They meet the identified needs and demands of existing and new target audiences.
- They complement and as far as possible avoid direct competition with what is already going on or planned for the future within the context of Abergavenny town and / or Monmouthshire and surrounding area.
- They fit within the vision and strategic aims of the Monmouthshire Museums' Service.
- They enhance and add value to the Museum and Castle and its setting and not adversely impact on the archaeological / historic interest, the visual amenity or the enjoyment of other visitors.
- Taken together, they will be capable of generating an income sufficient to cover the costs of developing and managing them and to generate a surplus to targets set within the business plan.

The proposals remain as a 'long-list' on the basis that there will still be a need for the staff team to undertake pilot projects, before rolling out those events and activities that can be proven to be successful in implementation.

Below is a summary of the main proposals.

Heritage related events and activities

- **One 'heritage day' type event** to take place one in late spring. To be developed by the Museums Service, and designed to complement existing and planned heritage events at Caldicot and other nearby Cadw managed Castles. In addition and related thematically to these events, **a programme family-oriented 'heritage days'** laid on one day per week over the school summer holidays and delivered by external contractor(s).

Outdoor theatre events

- Consolidation and limited expansion of the existing **outdoor theatre events** taking place in the castle grounds, including: Continuation of support to stage productions by a national specialist outdoor theatre companies in August. **Other productions** during the school summer holidays hosted by the local Borough Theatre. The development of a limited programme of up to **three or four smaller-scale outdoor theatre events** enabling local theatre companies and amateur groups to stage / trial new productions and developed as and when the opportunities arise. Each production to appeal to a different target audience. Theatre events to be managed by Museum staff in partnership with Abergavenny's Borough Theatre.

Concerts and gigs

- The establishment of Abergavenny Castle as a venue for a programme of day-time summer **concerts and gigs** themed to a particular music genre. Music events to be small-scale and intimate in nature so as to not unduly impact on the setting nor on the immediate residential neighbours of the Castle. Music events to be managed on a contractual basis by an experienced / skilled locally based events-management company.

Learning activities for schools

The consolidation and further development of the Museum and Castle as a venue for learning activities for schools. Facilitated school visits to be initially concentrated into one three day period in May. Visit slots to be offered on a first come first served basis with additional slots if the demand warrants their provision. Castle relevant **story-telling activities** to be provided by a locally based re-enactment group together with a practical taste of medieval life delivered by an external contractor.

Family focussed games and activities

- The extension of the use of the castle grounds as the setting for a range of **fun and engaging family focused games and activities**. The nature of the design of the games and activities should be simple and practical, drawing inspiration from the Museum's collections and helping make a link between the outdoor environment of the grounds and the indoor setting of the Museum. By their very nature the games should aim to create vibrant 'happy' atmosphere throughout the year, one that helps improve the experience of other audiences without impacting on their own enjoyment.

Activities and events for youths and young adults

- The establishment of a programme of **mid-week early evening activities and events targeting youths and young adults (aged 16 -25)** during the summer holiday period. The nature of the activities and events would be led by demand but trialing might include things like; **'silent' discos, outdoor cinema screenings** (age appropriate) etc. The programme should be developed by Museum staff in conjunction with MCC's Youth Service, and delivered by existing locally based providers.

Activities and events for older adults

- The establishment of a programme of mid-week afternoon activities and events targeting older adults (aged 70+) throughout the summer holidays and shoulder periods. The nature of the activities and events would be led by demand but trialing might include things like; **'nostalgic' dances / dance classes, 'singalong' music events, exercise classes – pilates, tai chi etc.** The programme should be developed by Museum staff in conjunction with MCC's Social / Adult Services and delivered by existing locally based providers.

Community activities and events

- Continuation of opportunities to stage **charitable / community events**, such as the AM Fest and the proposed Arts Festival. In addition to this, the opening up of the grounds and covered structure for hire by a **range of community and special interest groups** whose interests are aligned with those of the Museum and Castle. Availability for hire to be established based on local need & demand. Hiring policy to be managed by Museum staff.

Food related events and activities

- Maintenance and further development of the role of the Museum and Castle in the successful running of the annual **Abergavenny Food Festival** each Autumn and the development, in partnership with the Food Festival organisers, of **a new small-scale food related event(s)** to take place in the Castle grounds in late spring / early summer.

Weddings and private parties

- The promotion of the castle grounds and covered structure as a venue for **weddings and private parties**. Weddings might, either be managed internally by the as part of a wider portfolio of other MCC owned venues. Or, alternatively the exclusive rights to manage weddings might be put out to tender for management by an experienced and qualified wedding planner. The number of weddings taking place will be restricted.

Programming

- A sample 'Year' programme have been drawn up and is shown below. The programming is clearly focussed on meeting the needs and demands of a range of audiences across the year. The range of different audiences has enabled events and activities to be programmed in both the 'Peak Season' and 'Shoulder' periods.
- There are no events scheduled to take place in the off season.

Abergavenny Museum and Castle - Events Programme

Event	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Heritage related events and activities			Medieval Re-enactment		★			'Medieval Life' activities					
Outdoor theatre events							Outdoor Theatre						
Concerts and Gigs						Light music events day / early eve							
Events and activities for schools													
Family focussed games and activities				Schools' Week				Family Games +					
Activities and events for youths and young adults					Twilight Sessions								
Activities and events for older adults					Music events, dances and exercise classes etc.								
Community events and bookings				Arts Festival	★	Community Bookings		AM Fest	★				
Abergavenny Food Festival & other related events				★		★			★				
Wedding Ceremonies / Breakfasts				Wedding Ceremonies / Breakfasts									
	Off Season			Shoulder		Peak Season			Shoulder		Off Season		

★ = Flagship 'one off' Events ★ = Small-scale 'one off' Events

Phased development of the Events Project

- In reaching to so many audiences there is a danger that the programme starts to become 'all things to all people' and in doing so loses a sense of being targeted and focussed.
- There is also a risk to the Museums Service of taking on too much too soon. To counter this the intention within the project development strategy is to establish a 'phased' programme of event and activity development.

5. MARKETING STRATEGY

This section sets out to recommend how the Museum and Castle might improve the marketing of its events and activities. The section starts by looking at why there is a need to do this now, this is followed by a review of current marketing activity benchmarked against marketplace competition. At the end of the section a 'Marketing Action Plan' sets out the specific actions the Museums Service might take going forward.

Growth and development opportunities – why do this now?

- The Service has been recently reviewed and a Forward Plan created which as we have seen, sets out the aims and objectives for the Service going forward. Not least the need to increase audiences and income.
- In particular it recognised that it had the potential to:
 - Be a key service in the delivery of the Welsh Government – Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
 - Increase income generating opportunities.
 - Building Stronger Partnerships
- There is untapped potential at Abergavenny Castle, both in terms of visitor profiles and events usage
- The Castle has seen the benefits and potential provided by events such as the Eisteddfod and the annual Food Festival.
- Britain is becoming an 'Al Fresco' society, with a fashion for more outdoor activities and events (café culture spill over)
- Weddings/ private hire and corporate events are looking for 'venues with a difference'
- The manager has identified funding opportunities for a permanent covered structure in the grounds.
- Visit Wales have been promoting Wales and have initiated a series of themed 'Years' – next year is 'Year of the Sea' and 2019 is the 'Year of Discovery'

Review of current marketing activity

In-house marketing

- For financial reasons, much of the Castle's marketing is done via on-line sources or through email. The Castle has its own web site which is branded as Abergavenny Museum.

Abergavenny MUSEUM

Home | Events | Links | Cymraeg

Visitor Information | Displays | Museum History | Abergavenny Castle | Collections | Schools | Attractions

Visitor Information


- Opening Times
- How to contact us
- Transport Information
- How to find us
- Museum Shop
- Access Information
- Castle Explorers

Introduction

Abergavenny Museum
The Castle, Castle Street, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire

01873 854282

Abergavenny Museum is set in the grounds of a 'ruined' Norman Castle, where you can enjoy a picnic during the summer and a brisk walk on colder days. The museum building was formerly a hunting lodge built by the Marquess of Abergavenny.



The displays tell the story of this historic market town from prehistory through to the present day. The displays are on several levels, with some help most areas are accessible to wheelchair users.

Our features include:

- Regular programme of changing exhibitions
- Family activities, including 'Castle Explorers'. Backpacks, to help you discover more about the castle.
- Workshops and events - please check our events page or contact us to find out about any forthcoming events.
- Staff willing to try and answer any historical queries you may have about Abergavenny and the surrounding area.
- Small gift shop to enable you to purchase a souvenir of your visit.

Cost: Free admission for all (charges apply at some special events).

Abergavenny Museum, The Castle, Castle Street, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. NP7 5EE | Tel: 01873 854282
 Copyright © Monmouthshire County Council

Why not visit another Monmouthshire Museum:

CHEPSTOW MUSEUM Abergavenny MUSEUM CALDICOT CASTLE NELSON MUSEUM

MLA Monmouthshire Air Library

- We feel that adding Castle in to the title would add to its appeal and make it sound more like an events venue.
- It is really useful that the web site has an events page; however, it is currently empty. We would suggest that this should have something in it, e.g. the current temporary exhibition, or perhaps a mention of something like a children's trail that can be given out at the desk (i.e. not necessary date specific events) so that it never looks like there's nothing on.



- The Museum Service has a growing database which receives regular email newsletters re exhibitions, events and other news. This is a sensible way to keep your audience engaged given the financial restrictions upon the Service.
- Posters for events are, where possible emailed out, but some are printed and posted to ensure distribution.
- The Service takes free advertising and listing wherever possible. It is rare for paid advertising to be taken, unless it is for an event/via local press.
- There is cross marketing between the Museum Service Sites.


Town level marketing

- Abergavenny is a vibrant town and has its own web presence thanks to Abergavenny District Tourist Association. They have searchable listings under headings like 'Indoor Fun'. They also have a 'What's On' section for events. The Castle's listing is shown below:

Abergavenny Y Fenni

Home | Places To Stay | Outdoor Fun | Indoor Fun | Eat Drink Shop | Rainy Days | An Hour Away | What's On | Directions | Deals & Offers

Abergavenny Museum & Castle You are here: Home > Abergavenny Museum & Castle




Activities and Attractions | Indoor Activities & Attractions

The Castle, Castle St., Abergavenny NP7 5EE
01873 854282
<http://www.abergavennymuseum...> abergavennymuseum@monmouths...

Find out about this historic market town. Displays include a Victorian kitchen, saddlers workshop and traditional grocers. Housed in a hunting lodge within the castle ruins. Special exhibitions. Children's activities. Shop. Visit our facebook page: Abergavenny Museum or our twitter feed @abermuseum for up to date information.

Map

Enter a Location By car



County level marketing

- The County Council has invested in on-line marketing. The current ‘Visitmonmouthshire’ web site contains information on the Castle via its searchable ‘Things to Do’ listing as shown below.
- This site can also be used for listing events.

visitmonmouthshire

Select Language |

Where to Stay | Things to do | Places to visit | Food & Drink | Events | Blog

Refine your search

Type of Venue

(Any group)

(Any category)

(Any type)

Location

Near

Within

8 miles

Abergavenny

Facilities

Free entry

Accessible by public transport

Children welcome

Disabled access

Facilities for groups

Dogs accepted

(Any other venue amenity)



Or Venue Name

Search

Abergavenny Museum and Castle

Museum, next open Fri 16 Jun - Tue 26 Sep 2017, free entry

VVVAQAS

Abergavenny Castle & Museum + Monmouthshire Women Making Change

Reviews:

Contact

Enquiries

01873 845282

email

www.abergavennymuseum.co.uk

email a friend

Address

Castle Street,
Abergavenny,
Monmouthshire,
NP7 5EE

Also at this Venue

Monmouthshire Women Making Change

Details

The Museum was founded on 2nd July 1959. The idea for a Museum was around from as early as 1903 when it was discussed and minuted by the Abergavenny Free Library Committee. At this meeting permission was given for the library to begin collecting objects. These collections remained at the library until the 1940s when it was said that they were disposed of. The demolition of the historic buildings in Tudor Street and Castle Street during the 1950s once again made people aware of the need for a museum. Alfred Jackson addressed the Rotary Club on 22nd October 1957 and a Committee was formed. Alfred and Ernest Jackson and Duggan Thacker led a group of enthusiastic volunteers and the Museum opened on 2nd July 1959.

www.abergavennymuseum.co.uk

Opening details

Season Dates	Opening Hours
Fri 16 Jun - Tue 26 Sep 2017	Mon - Sun 11:00 to 16:00
Wed 27 Sep 2017 - Sun 27 May 2018	Mon - Tue 11:00 to 16:00 Thu - Sun 11:00 to 16:00

Open Every Day 11.00 - 16.00.

From 27th September until May Half Term 2018 we will be closed on Wednesdays.

Prices

Free entry

Charges apply at some special events.


- The County also undertake other marketing activities such as attending promotional events and buying in to campaigns such as the Southern Wales Tourism Group Travel Initiative which features the Castle.

https://issuu.com/southernwalestourism/docs/monmouthshire_group_travel_guide

Abergavenny Museum & Castle

Find out Abergavenny's history from the Stone Age to present day, all within Abergavenny Castle's fantastic setting. Displays include archaeological finds, a Victorian Kitchen & traditional grocers. Shop & drinks available and wonderful grounds to explore.

tel: **+44 (0)1873 854282**
email: **abergavennymuseum@monmouthshire.gov.uk**
web: **www.visitmonmouthshire.com/museums**



- They also provide Digital Visitor Information Kiosks in a number of locations:
 - Abergavenny Bus Station
 - Shire Hall, Monmouth
 - Cattle Market Car Park, Monmouth
 - Castle Car Park, Chepstow
 - Roadchef Services, Magor
 - Old Station, Tintern
- Exposure via these should be maximised.
- The County supported the creation of an Ambassador team (volunteers keen to help promote the area to visitors). This is another potential source of support and promotion for the Castle.

Tourist Information Centres and Outlets

- There are Tourist Information centres in Chepstow and Abergavenny, as well as Tourist Information Outlets in Caldicot, Monmouth and Usk; all of which are able to help promote the site and any events taking place there. If not done already, it would be worth offering a 'familiarisation' visit to staff from these sites.


Visit Wales

- Visit Wales promotes the Country (primarily) outside of Wales. They do this in a number of ways: <http://www.visitwales.com> web site where they have a searchable listing of attractions. The listing is shown below. NB the Castle only appears under the search term for 'Museums'. The site does not appear if you search by 'Castle' or by 'History and Heritage'. This should be rectified.



Abergavenny Museum and Castle

The Museum was founded on 2nd July 1959. The idea for a Museum was around from as early as 1903 when it was discussed and minuted by the Abergavenny Free Library Committee.


 **Monmouthshire** 0.1 miles, 0.16 km from Abergavenny.



Booking and enquiries:
+44 01873 845282

- There are dedicated pages to the area which can be found at <http://www.visitwales.com/explore/south-wales/wye-valley-vale-usk>.
- This encourages you to download a brochure, which in turn takes you to the 2012 Visitor Guide for Wye Valley and Vale of Usk.⁶ This carries a small advert for the Castle as well as a mention of the Castle and Museum within the 'Trails for Townies' section, shown below and overleaf.

Abergavenny B4 Abergavenny Museum





Castle Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5EE
T: 01873 854282
F: 01873 736004
E: abergavennymuseum@monmouthshire.gov.uk
W: www.abergavennymuseum.co.uk
Open: All Year / Free Admission

Set in the picturesque grounds of a ruined castle. Objects in permanent galleries illustrate life in this historic market town. Victorian kitchen, 1940s grocer's shop and air raid shelter. Refurbished gallery hosts regular temporary exhibitions. Shop. Free entry. Parking.

Opening Times:
Mar-Oct, Mon-Sat 11am-1pm & 2pm-5pm. Sun: 2-5
Nov-Feb, Mon-Sat 11am-1pm & 2pm-4pm

Twitter Feed (@AberMuseum) & Facebook (Facebook.com/AbergavennyMuseum)



- Visit Wales also attends trade and tourism fairs in the UK and Abroad as well as undertaking active PR. As such, it is worth informing them of any events/activities etc. as they are always on the look-out for new stories.
- <http://www.visitwales.com/working-with-us> provides information on how to ensure you: appear on their correct site searches (Kevin Ford from Monmouthshire CBC is listed as the contact for that), engage with them via social media – primarily Facebook, Twitter & Instagram and on how to list events.

⁶ <http://www.visitwales.com/~media/visit-wales/brochure-pdf/wvu2012ebrofin.ashx>

Trails for Townies

Small enough to walk around with ease. Big enough to hold your attention for a day. Here are seven places with designated visitor trails, to make sure you see all the sights.

FIND DETAILS OF ALL THE TRAILS AT
visitwyevalley.com/info/36/trails

Abergavenny

Trails

Not one but seven trails to choose from. It's true that some of them take you outside the town and require transport but all of them start in this market town. The most popular is the walking Trails and Tales for Families which is equally informative for adults.

Main attractions

Castle and museum, St. Mary's Priory church, tithe barn exhibition, market hall, castle meadows.

Independent businesses

Loads to look out for including Abergavenny Music, Alison Tod Milliner, Cooks' Galley, Gateway Cycles, Homes of Elegance, Love Lily, Martin's Jewellers, Straker Chadwick Auctioneers, The Art Shop, The Celtic Warehouse, The Wool Croft and two superb butchers, Edwards and Rawlings.

Visitor information

The Tourist Information Centre at the bus station is open all year and there's a touch-screen kiosk outside providing essential information 24 hours a day. visitabergavenny.co.uk

Caerleon

Trail

There's a Heritage Trail around this tiny town which, believe it or not, was one of the most important military sites in Britain under the Roman Empire. Channel 4's Time Team made some amazing finds during their dig here last summer. Caerleon is also home to the legend of King Arthur and there's an online quest that takes you to five important sites in the town.

Main attractions

Roman baths, barracks, amphitheatre and museum.

Independent businesses

Don't miss the traditional Caerleon Hardware, Sourc'd Greengrocers, The Lodge Coffee and Deli, The Giftbox, The Village Bakery and the Ffwrwm, an eclectic array of shops and places to eat in a courtyard setting full of Arthurian-inspired artworks.

Visitor information

The Tourist Information Centre is located in High Street and is open all year. caerleon.net

Left to right:
 The Market Hall clock tower and The Angel Hotel in the centre of Abergavenny
 Remains of the Roman amphitheatre in Caerleon



Competition

The Castle sits in an area of Wales with a relatively rich supply of attractions and venues. An online search revealed the following:

- Attractions - The 'Visitmonmouthshire' web site lists 15 other history and heritage attractions within a 15 mile radius (see appendix 2) and 10 attraction (of any kind) within a mile of the town.
- Events – There is lots of competition on the events front too. The 'Show Me Wales' events list for the Wye Valley and Monmouthshire for the month of September alone runs to 70 events.
- Conferences and Weddings - Visit Wales list 65 conference venues within South East Wales, 11 of which are in the category 'Castles/Historic Houses/Country Retreats; and various on-line sources offer wedding venues, with one boasting 323 Wedding Venues to choose from in South Wales, 5 of which are in 'castles', 14 of which are in gardens/grounds and with some duplication, 7 are listed as outdoor.

The key to success will be creating a unique offer at the Castle. The Museum itself already offers a unique glimpse in to the history of the town and its people, and with the extra impetus provided by the recent 'Forward Plan' and the restructure, alongside initiatives like this report; it should be able to attract a wider audience.

In addition, nowhere else appears to be offering quite the same thing as is envisaged for the Castle grounds, i.e. the permanent covered structure. The business case for the structure is dealt with elsewhere, however, the marketing of the structure will be fundamental to its success. As will striking the balance of it being a 'unique' and quirky offer whilst still filling up the diary with bookings.

There will also be opportunities for making useful partnerships with some of the competitors such as joint programming, joint marketing etc.

6. BUSINESS PLAN

This section sets out; the results of a review of current income generation from events, a strategy for income generation with clearly defined aims and objectives, opportunities identified for income generation, and the ways in which issues are addressed and risks are managed.

Review of current income generation from events

- Generating a surplus from events staged at the Castle has not necessarily been a priority until recently. This is entirely understandable. In 'pre-austerity' times, when public expenditure enabled more investment in heritage related activities 'events' were seen as more of a platform for attracting and engaging with existing and new audiences, rather than as a way of making a profit. Of course the two things aren't mutually exclusive and in an ideal world the proverbial 'win-win' solution is both sought and attained.
- As has been reported extensively in Section 2 (above) events have been staged at the Castle by the Museum's Service for quite some time. Income from events represents a positive contribution to the costs of running the Museums Service.
- However, it is probably fair to say that there has not been a strategic approach to event income generation and a SWOT analysis of the existing situation has revealed the following:

Strengths:

- The castle grounds are a great asset and an excellent venue for all kinds of events and there is a good demand to host events at the Castle from external event organisers.
- Existing event organisers are used to paying for use of the grounds.
- The majority of the events staged at the Castle to date have incorporated some form of charging / entry fee thereby establishing a precedence.
- Some existing and many new audiences are already happy to pay higher end 'market rates' to attend events staged at the Castle.
- The grounds have the capacity to stage a number of different (small-scale) events staged on the same day without impacting unduly on the enjoyment of the majority of visitors to the Castle and Museum.
- Museum staff and volunteers have developed a range of experiences with respect to small-scale event management and have some existing systems in place to ensure that income generating opportunities are realised.

Weaknesses:

- The grounds lack cover and basic facilities and this limits the nature & scale of events that can take place without temporary marquees / tents & portaloos being brought in on an event by event basis.
- The capacity of the Museum staff and volunteer team in terms of developing and delivering events / managing external event providers is limited both in terms of time and expertise.
- There is no current pricing structure and charging policy to date has been undertaken on an 'event by event' basis.
- Despite the fact some larger scale events such as the Food Festival are hosted at the Castle, the grounds are not widely recognized as an events venue.

Opportunities:

- To change the perception of the castle as an events venue and reach out to new audiences (younger, older, disabled people etc)
- To develop a 'quirky' / 'niche' programme of events that is suited to the Castle's own quirky / niche nature.
- To more effectively with and through existing local / regional event organisers offering them opportunities to develop and expand their 'offer' and taking an agreed proportion of the takings.
- To undertake more joint marketing / joint ticketing arrangements with other local event organisers.

Threats:

- Inclement weather and the impact that this can have on ground conditions during and ground recovery after an event.
- Not getting the event offer 'right' and not building sufficient momentum to attract a loyal / regular event attending audiences.
- Enforced or voluntary limitations placed on event development as a result of complaints from the general public.

Events income generation strategy

- The events income generation strategy has been established in light of the above review of the current situation and is clearly focused on the following:

Aims:

- To build on the strengths of the existing events programme and realise opportunities for income growth whilst maintaining and building relationships with key stakeholders.

- To secure a sufficient level of surplus income from the 'Events Programme' to fund a new dedicated 0.4 fte 'Events Coordinator' post for Abergavenny Museum and Castle by the end of Year 3, and beyond the end of any grant-aid that supports the post in the first three years of delivery.

Strategic objectives:

- No events are to be designed to run at a loss, nor is the expectation that one type of event will subsidise the staging of another. The minimum expected is for each event type is to 'break even' over the course of a year.
- Targets for income generation for each type of event are to be set prior to the start of each events year, on a 'horses for courses' basis (i.e. taking into account the income generating potential of each event) and in the light of the relative 'performance' of that type of event in the previous year.
- Each type of event is to have its own 'mini-business plan' based on a simple forecast of income and expenditure with set targets for the surplus to be generated in the year ahead.
- Each event will be evaluated, not just on financial success, but with respect to softer outcomes, for example, community cohesion, visitor experience etc.
- The Events Programme as a whole is to complement and add value to the local event 'offer' in Abergavenny and be designed to support the growth of local event management expertise.
- A clear 'pricing structure' for each type of event / activity is to be established.

Income and expenditure profile

- The Events Programme is estimated to make a small surplus each year. This will be reinvested in the programme.
- Grant support is required in the first three years if a part-time (0.4 fte) Events Coordinator post is to be established. The post is critical as this person will develop the Events Programme and help it (and the post) to become sustainable.
- The Events Coordinator post will be supported by a limited number of occasional staff and volunteers.
- The maximum number of large scale (over 100 people) events on weekends will be restricted. This will be determined through discussions between the Museum Manager and relevant Officers.

Issues and risks

- Staging the events and activities described in the Events Programme above will clearly come with attendant issues and risks. The purpose here is to highlight the **main** areas of concern and to highlight the key ways in which the Museums Service will address the issues and mitigate the risks identified.

Note: The Museums Service and MCC Events Team have a long and strong track record of running events successfully both at Abergavenny Museum and Castle and at other heritage sites across Monmouthshire (most notably at Caldicot Castle). This Events Programme will be subject to all of the existing processes already in place to ensure above all else the Health & Safety of visitors taking part in events and associated activities. Two of the main event management practices undertaken are as follows:

- **Generic Event Plans** for each type of event that takes place with individualised Event Plans for large-scale Flagship Events.
- **Risk assessments** undertaken for all events.

Noise and other disturbances

- The Museums Service is very conscious of its obligation to minimise the risk of noise and other disturbances to its neighbours and will undertake to; give notice of evening events taking place, restricting event finish times, careful screening and positioning of p.a. equipment, conducting noise monitoring during events and using areas of the castle that are less likely to create a noise disturbance wherever possible.

Impact on the heritage & castle grounds

- The Museums Service is duty bound to look after the Castle and many of its existing programmes of work serve to achieve this end. The Museums Service has prepared a Heritage Impact Survey in order to fully understand the effects of the 'covered structure' and mitigate against this. Events will also be scheduled to enable sensible time for ground recovery.

Maintaining accessibility

- As heritage sites go the castle grounds enjoys relatively good disabled access and it will be the intention of the Museums Service, through the Events Programme, to ensure that this is maintained and enhanced. It is one of the key objectives of the Events Programme to widen access and increase the diversity of audiences building on the existing situation.

Conflicts in use

- The Museums Service is very sensitive to the needs of the many existing Museum and Castle visitors and users of the Castle grounds, as well as first time visitors coming to enjoy what the Castle has to offer. The intention in the Events Programme is very much to enhance the atmosphere by engendering a sense of vitality, but to ensure that this does not impact adversely on the enjoyment of any of its many different types of visitor. This will be achieved by; careful prior event planning and timetabling, zoning and screening as required, as well as through gentle reminders to people visiting the Castle to respect the needs of others. Exclusive use of the Castle grounds for private events will only be granted very occasionally and access to the Museum will be maintained at all other times.

Avoiding competition with other local events

- The Museums Service has excellent relationships with existing local event organisers and through the course of the development of the Events Programme has enhanced many of these relationships. The Museums Service will nevertheless continue to ensure that all events add value / avoid competition with what is happening locally and will continue to attend local forums that serve to discuss the development of events across Abergavenny and surrounding area.
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Monmouthshire ‘STEAM’ Tourism Statistics 2015

<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2016/05/20/2015>

- 2015 was an exceptional year for tourism in Monmouthshire according to the county’s 2015 STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) report. The county welcomed 2.19m visitors, a 4.4% increase on the previous year and a 6.7% increase on 2013. The 4.4% increase between 2015 and 2014 is slightly higher than the currently estimated 4.2% increase for South East Wales as a whole.
- The 2.19m visitors generated 2.95m visitor days within the county, an increase of 5.2% between 2014 and 2015. Day visitor days increased by 3.8% between 2014 and 2015. The total of 1.7m day visits is the highest number for Monmouthshire since STEAM began monitoring tourism in the county seventeen years ago.
- Tourism visits to Monmouthshire were estimated to have generated a total of £187m for the local economy through visitor and tourism business expenditure, representing growth of 6.6% between 2014 and 2015. This increase is also slightly higher than the current South East Wales estimate of 6%.
- Staying visitors accounted for £133.79m (or 77%) of the total amount generated by tourism in 2015 with an average stay of 2.5 nights. The staying visitor market saw the highest growth levels between 2014 and 2015, driven by improved performance in both the serviced and non-serviced sectors. The 8.7% increase in serviced accommodation continues the strong growth of recent years, with an average increase of 8% per annum since 2012. The number of visitors staying in non-serviced accommodation also grew by 10.2% from 2014-2015. This is a welcome improvement following annual falls in the sector since 2011.
- Tourism visits to Monmouthshire last year were estimated to have supported 2,744 full-time equivalent jobs (FTEs). As many as 82% of these FTEs (2,246) were generated directly through visitor expenditure, with the remaining 18% being indirect and induced (498) – supported through the supply chain and further rounds of expenditure within the economy including employee spend. Tourism spend supports the most employment in the accommodation (879 FTEs) and food & drink (675 FTEs) sectors. In addition, a significant number of self-employed people in Monmouthshire earned a living from tourism.
- Tourism is a key driver of Monmouthshire’s economy, with each visitor day bringing an average of £63.19 per day to the local economy, ranging from £31.18 per day for day visitors to £158.77 per day for visitors staying in serviced accommodation. Staying visitors generated an average income for Monmouthshire of £270.70 per visitor.
- Events are an important means of attracting new visitors to a destination – often the primary or sole reason for a visit – and Monmouthshire’s growing high profile events programme undoubtedly contributed to the county’s exceptional tourism performance in 2015.
- County Councillor Bob Greenland, cabinet member with responsibility for tourism said in 2016: “As we look forward to welcoming more than 150,000 visitors to Monmouthshire’s Eisteddfod this summer, this is no time to rest on our laurels. Tourism

is a fiercely competitive marketplace and while major and high profile events attract visitors from far and wide, the visitor experience – from the welcome they receive at the event itself to where they sleep, eat, drink and shop – can have a real impact on whether they visit the area again or recommend it as a destination to friends and family. As social media and user review sites increase in importance for determining destination choice, the quality of welcome and visitor experience become ever more important.”

Visitor profile:

- The proportion of visitors to Monmouthshire coming from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland was similar to the proportion of visitors who came from parts of Wales (48% and 45% respectively). Conversely, the majority of visitors to Wales as a whole were from Wales but Monmouthshire’s proximity to England would explain the higher number of English visitors. Only 7% of visitors to Monmouthshire were from overseas; however, this is higher than the average across the whole of Wales (only 4% of visitors are from overseas).
- Couples and families with young children are the most common types of visitor groups to the area; the former account for a higher proportion of visitors in Monmouthshire than is the case across Wales, whilst the reverse is true for the latter. The average number of people in each visiting party to Monmouthshire is 3.2 (2.6 adults and 0.6 children); lower than the all Wales average of 3.7 (2.7 adults and 1.0 children).
- Over a third of staying visitors to Monmouthshire were either first time visitors to Wales or new to this part of Wales (34%), which is in line with the rest of Wales overall (at 36%). Wales Visitor Survey 2016: Monmouthshire County Council - Research Report

Trip profile:

- Visitors to Monmouthshire are more likely to be on a day trip than visitors to Wales as a whole (at 94% compared to 88% across Wales). The proportion of staying visitors to the area is half that of Wales overall (6% compared to 12% overall). Staying visitors stayed an average of 6.7 nights in Wales.

Motivations for visiting and activities undertaken:

- Visitors to Monmouthshire were most likely to have come to the area to visit places, historical / religious sites and attractions (60%), higher than was the case among visitors to Wales as a whole (51%). This is probably higher across Monmouthshire than the All Wales average because of the interviewing locations selected in the county, for example Tintern Abbey. They were also more likely to give shopping as a reason for visiting (at 20% compared with 12% overall) or to mention attending an event, concert or sporting event (at 18% compared with 9% overall). This is no doubt because the Eisteddfod was held at Abergavenny in August 2016 and all interviewing for the Monmouthshire

'STEAM' Tourism Survey was conducted in Abergavenny town centre during the week the Eisteddfod was held (29 July to 6 August).

- The most popular activities undertaken by visitors to Monmouthshire were visiting a castle or historic attraction (44%), general sightseeing (30%), visiting a museum or heritage centre and visiting a religious site (20% for each). Arts and cultural festivals, and more specifically the Eisteddfod, were also popular, with roughly one in eight Monmouthshire visitors attending (12%), this rose to just over half of visitors to Abergavenny town centre. Outdoor activities were also relatively popular with around one in ten visiting a country park or a nature based attraction (11% for each) or walking more than two miles (9%). However, these were lower than for Wales overall (at 22%, 13% and 14% respectively).

Satisfaction with the overall experience, revisiting and recommending:

- In general, visitors to Monmouthshire were highly satisfied with their visit, as eight out of ten visitors to Monmouthshire (80%) gave a score of either 9 or 10 for Wales overall as a place to visit – the average score was 9.3/10 (cf. 9.2/10 All Wales mean score).
- Wales exceeded expectations for almost half of visitors to Monmouthshire, with 47% saying that their trip was better than expected, while around half felt that their expectations had been met (51%). Only 1% of visitors to the region said that their trip was not as good as expected.
- Virtually all visitors to Monmouthshire said they were likely to return in future (95%); 84% said they would definitely visit again, while 11% would probably visit. The National Eisteddfod in 2016 was held at the Castle Meadows in Abergavenny on 29 July – 6 August. All interviewing shifts at Abergavenny town Centre were conducted during that week. Wales Visitor Survey 2016: Monmouthshire County Council - Research Report. Only a very small proportion of visitors (5%) said they were not likely to make another visit to the region.
- Reflecting the high levels of visitor satisfaction and strong likelihood of returning to Wales in future, virtually all visitors to Monmouthshire said that they would recommend it as a place to visit (96%). Staying visitors to the three town centres spent most money on their accommodation (an average of £436.28), although almost a quarter of staying visitors said they were not spending anything on accommodation, thereby suggesting that they were staying with friends or relatives.
- The second highest average spend amongst all visitors to the three town centres in Monmouthshire was on leisure activities and attractions (£62.90). Visitors spent least on travel in and around Monmouthshire, where the average spend was £23. This is because the majority of visitors to Monmouthshire travelled by private car so some of these visitors might not necessarily have factored in costs such as fuel or car running costs. (Research Report Wales Visitor Survey 2016 Monmouthshire County Council).

Reasons for visiting:

- Visitors to Monmouthshire were most likely to have come to the area to visit places, historical / religious sites and attractions (60%), higher than was the case among visitors to Wales as a whole (51%). This is probably higher across Monmouthshire than the All Wales average because of the interviewing locations selected in the county, for example Tintern Abbey. They were also more likely to give shopping as a reason for visiting (at 20% compared with 12% overall) or to mention attending an event, concert or sporting event (at 18% compared with 9% overall). Again this is because three out of the four interviewing locations in Monmouthshire were town centres and the proportion of visitors saying they were visiting an event will be higher because interviews were conducted in Abergavenny town centre during the week the National Eisteddfod was being held there (56% said this in Abergavenny).
 - Conversely, Monmouthshire visitors were less likely to say they had come to enjoy the landscape / countryside / beach than was the case for Wales overall (40% of Monmouthshire visitors compared with 56% overall) or to take part in outdoor or sporting activities (mentioned by 14% of Monmouthshire visitors compared with 25% overall).
-

Appendix 2 – Walk through photo tour



Entrance gate (left) Lodge (right)



Lawn in front of Curtain Wall - View right immediately after entering castle grounds



*Lawn, North of defensive mound - View back to entrance gate (left)
View left immediately after entering castle grounds (right)*



Original castle entrance Gatehouse



The Outer Bailey



Remains of Tower at end of Museum (Left) Grassed area below Motte (Right)



Museum in former Hunting Lodge



South West Tower (left) Kitchen garden (right)





Future Generations Evaluation (includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact)

APPENDIX FOUR Name of the Officer Rachael Rogers Phone no: 01873 854282 E-mail: rachaelrogers@monmouthshire.gov.uk	MONMOUTHSHIRE MUSEUMS: Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion
Name of Service: Museums	Date: 16 th October 2017






NB. Key strategies and documents that may help you identify your contribution to the wellbeing goals and sustainable development principles include: Single Integrated Plan, Continuance Agreement, Improvement Plan, Local Development Plan, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan, Green Infrastructure SPG, Welsh Language Standards, etc.

1. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	To ensure much valued local services are maintained and by their nature provide employment, growth and an increasingly skilled workforce. Developing economic opportunities for ourselves and our users.	We have undertaken positive engagement and coordination with community focused organisations and local businesses.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Close working with countryside and planning and ensuring our green spaces and cultural heritage is supported.	We have considered ecological issues in the design and use of the events pavilion.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive impact by ensuring quality services are provided by offering events and opportunities to encourage a fit and healthy lifestyle through cultural access.</p> <p>The new offer will ensure that events and activities are also well signposted and the benefits of such activities demonstrated.</p>	<p>Working with key partners will ensure that physical and mental health through activity is widely available and that the service is central to this by working directly with its communities.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Our feasibility study worked with our local communities to devise an events programme that is beneficial to us, local communities and businesses.</p>	<p>Community groups have been consulted as part of this process and will have opportunities to get involved with future events programmes.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>The service will work to ensure high standards are met and maintained that do not conflict with the global drivers.</p>	<p>Any decisions taken will take into account global and well-being issues as part of its day to day processes.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>Monmouthshire Museums contributes greatly to the local culture, heritage and art including the promotion and protection of the Welsh language which will remain part of the core values going forward.</p>	<p>The proposed events programme will be wide ranging in its scope. The Museum Service has experience in working bilingually through its exhibitions and has hosted events through the Welsh language. We will continue with this bilingual approach in our programming.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>The events pavilion and associated exhibition programme will be available for diverse audiences and all its communities.</p>	<p>The feasibility identified programmes for 2 under represented audiences – one targeting youths and young adults (16 -25) and one targeting older adults (aged 70+). However our event will be open to all and we will refer to MCC equal opportunities policies in our planning.</p> <p>The structure will be DDA compliant and we have spoken to CAIR (the Monmouthshire based Disability Support group) during the design process to ensure practical needs are taken into account.</p>

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The feasibility was concerned with; identifying useful links across council service delivery, building shared capacity to deliver events, and realising new income generating opportunities in order to improve financial viability and service sustainability. The provision of an Events Pavilion will improve and ease the delivery of an events programme.</p>	<p>The appointment of a dedicated part time events co-ordinator will help to ensure the delivery of a successful events programme.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>A wide variety of organisations, local businesses, stakeholders and internal Monmouthshire staff will be further involved in the delivery of the programme.</p>	<p>The building will be used and the programme will be a balance of events by the museum service and local organisations and will meet both community needs and generate income.</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>A wide variety of organisations, local businesses, stakeholders and internal Monmouthshire staff have been consulted on both the Events Pavilion and the Events Feasibility Study.</p>	<p>Local organisations will be further involved in the development of the events programme. Both the programme and the structure will be available to community groups and local businesses.</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The Museum Service budget has been reduced in recent years. This project will provide opportunities for us to meet increased income targets.</p>	<p>We will monitor and evaluate the use of the structure and the events programme so we can ensure we are meeting the needs of our audiences and stakeholders.</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The opportunity to develop a new way of delivering the service and sustaining its long term future will give the opportunity to better connect wellbeing outcomes to other partners and bodies.</p>	<p>One of the key drivers of the offer is the promotion of culture and arts and this programme will reflect that.</p>

3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below. For more detailed information on the protected characteristics, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Standards that apply to Monmouthshire Council please follow this link: <http://hub/corporatedocs/Equalities/Forms/AllItems.aspx> or contact Alan Burkitt on 01633 644010 or alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Consider the impact on our community in relation to this e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.	n/a	n/a
Disability	What issues are there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this, producing information in alternative formats, employment issues.	n/a	n/a
Gender reassignment	Consider the provision of inclusive services for Transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.	n/a	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	Same-sex couples who register as civil partners have the same rights as married couples in employment and must be provided with the same benefits available to married couples, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance	n/a	n/a
Pregnancy or maternity	In employment a woman is protected from discrimination during the period of her pregnancy and during any period of compulsory or additional maternity leave. In the provision of services, good and facilities, recreational or training facilities, a woman is protected from discrimination during the period of her pregnancy and the period of 26 weeks beginning with the day on which she gives birth	n/a	n/a

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Race	Think about what the proposal will do to promote race equality with the aim of: eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between persons of different racial groups. Also think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Issues to look at include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy & Traveller, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.	n/a	n/a
Religion or Belief	What the likely impact is e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.	n/a	n/a
Sex	Consider what issues there are for men and women e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another	n/a	n/a
Sexual Orientation	Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.	n/a	n/a
Welsh Language	Under the Welsh Language measure of 2011, we need to be considering Welsh Language in signage, documentation, posters, language skills etc. and also the requirement to promote the language.	n/a	n/a

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities? For more information please see the guidance

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.	n/a	n/a
Corporate Parenting	This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the local authority either through a voluntary arrangement with their parents or through a court order. The council has a corporate duty to consider looked after children especially and promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own).	n/a	n/a

<http://hub/corporatedocs/Democratic%20Services/Safeguarding%20Guidance.docx> and for more on Monmouthshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy see <http://hub/corporatedocs/SitePages/Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.aspx> N/A

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

This report is founded upon the following:

- Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion Business Case
- Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The 'Events Project' has been initiated in order to more fully realise the full potential of Abergavenny Museum and Castle to act as an events venue. Events and related activities are well recognised as being central to service delivery. The work has identified useful links across council service delivery, looked to build shared capacity to deliver events, and realised new income generating opportunities in order to improve financial viability and service sustainability. Events provide an excellent vehicle for active engagement of both existing and new target audiences, and are a proactive way to be 'inspiring' and to 'bring alive' museums, heritage, arts and culture – central tenets of the vision and mission of the Monmouthshire Museums Service.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
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Submission of Planning Application for the Events Pavilion	October/November 2017	Rachael Rogers	Waiting for final completion of Heritage Impact Assessment and Noise Impact Assessment
Submission of funding application for part time events co-ordinator	October/November 2017	Rachael Rogers	Application prepared, waiting for advice on suitability of project for fund.
Discussion with Nevill Estate re lease agreement if funding and planning applications are successful.	January 2018	Rachael Rogers (with relevant senior managers)	We anticipate funding and planning decisions in January 2018.

8. MONITORING: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	On going
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9. VERSION CONTROL: The Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	<i>Endorsement of the Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study and Business Case for Outdoor Events Structure</i>	<i>October 2017</i>	
1	<i>Endorsement of request for £32K loan from the Invest to Redesign Reserve towards the building of an Events Pavilion at Abergavenny Castle.</i>	<i>October 2017</i>	

