

To: All Members of the Community and Wellbeing Committee

Dear Councillor,

COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY, 2026 , Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall

Please find attached the following document(s) for the meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee to be held on Wednesday, 25th February, 2026.

2. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE CALLED-IN DECISION OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE MADE ON 13 JANUARY 2026 (ITEM 04) REGARDING THE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BOURNE HALL MUSEUM** (Pages 3 - 32)

This report invites the Community and Wellbeing Committee to consider the recommendation from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee ('A&S'), made at A&S's 5th February 2026 meeting with respect to the called-in decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee ('C&W') made at C&W's 13th January 2026 meeting in relation to Agenda Item 04, "Options for the Future of the Museum".

For further information, please contact democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or tel: 01372 732000

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

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**RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE CALLED-IN DECISION OF THE
COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE MADE ON 13TH
JANUARY 2026 (ITEM 04) REGARDING THE OPTIONS FOR THE
FUTURE OF THE BOURNE HALL MUSEUM**

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Report Author	Dan Clackson
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	<p>Appendix 1 – Report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee on 13th January 2026 (Agenda Item 04, “Options for the Future of the Museum”).</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Extract from the draft minutes of the 5 February 2026 A&S meeting, in relation to A&S’s consideration of Agenda Item 04, “Call-in of the Decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee Made on 13th January 2026 (Item 04) Regarding the Options for the Future of Bourne Hall Museum”.</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Bourne Hall Service Review and recommendations (redacted) – to follow</p>

Summary

This report invites the Community and Wellbeing Committee to consider the recommendation from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (‘A&S’), made at A&S’s 5th February 2026 meeting with respect to the called-in decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee (‘C&W’) made at C&W’s 13th January 2026 meeting in relation to Agenda Item 04, “Options for the Future of the Museum”.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

Either;

- (1) Accept the recommendation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to rescind/withdraw the decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, “Options for the Future of the Museum”, and**
- (2) Having considered the information provided within the Appendices to this report, agree the most appropriate course of action for the Bourne Hall Museum’s future as follows:**
 - a) Option 1: Do nothing and carry on with business as usual, or;**
 - b) Option 2: Invest in improvement of the Museum. (Should option 2 be agreed, a funding request will go to Strategy and Resources Committee March 2026 for consideration), or;**
 - c) Option 3: Close the Museum.**

Or;

- (3) Note the recommendation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee made at its meeting held on 5th February 2026 and resolve to implement immediately the decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, “Options for the Future of the Museum”.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 In accordance with Annex 4.6, section 14.4 of the Council’s Operating Framework, C&W must consider the recommendation from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee made at A&S’s 5th February 2026 meeting with respect to the called-in decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee (‘C&W’) made at C&W’s 13th January 2026 meeting in relation to Agenda Item 04, “Options for the Future of the Museum”.

2 Background

Meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee held on 13th January 2026

- 2.1 On 13th January 2026 the Community and Wellbeing Committee ('C&W') received the report, "Options for the Future of the Museum" (Agenda Item 04). The report asked C&W to consider potential proposals for Bourne Hall Museum.
- 2.2 The report's recommendation, as set out below, asked C&W to evaluate the available options and agree the most appropriate course of action for Bourne Hall museum's future:

"(1) Evaluate the available options and agree the most appropriate course of action for the museum's future:

- a) Option 1: Do nothing and carry on with business as usual or;*
- b) Option 2: Invest in improvement of the Museum (should option 2 be agreed a funding request will go to Strategy and Resources Committee March 2026 for consideration) or;*
- c) Option 3: Close the museum."*

- 2.3 Following C&W's consideration of the report, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

"Option 2: Invest in improvement of the Museum (should option 2 be agreed a funding request will go to Strategy and Resources Committee March 2026 for consideration)". In the event that Strategy and Resources Committee do not approve said funding request, instead do nothing and carry on with business as usual."

- 2.4 The report, along with all its appendices, for Agenda Item 04, "Options for the Future of the Museum", as laid before the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting, has been provided at Appendix 1 to this report.

Call-in of the decision

- 2.5 Following the 13th January 2026 C&W meeting, the Council's Scrutiny Officer received a call-in request, submitted under Annex 4.6 paragraph 14.2.3 and in accordance with paragraph 14.2.4 of the Council's Operating Framework, in relation to C&W's decision made in respect of Agenda Item 04, "Options for the Future of the Museum". The call-in request reasoned that in making its decision, C&W had not had regard to certain relevant information as it was not brought to the attention of the Committee at the time.

- 2.6 The call-in request was deemed valid by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee ('A&S') under Annex 4.6 paragraph 14.2.4. Accordingly, the decision made by C&W at its 13th January 2026 C&W meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, "Options for the Future of the Museum", was reviewed by A&S at its 5th February 2026 meeting in accordance with the procedure set out under Annex 4.6 section 14.3.
- 2.7 During the course of debate, A&S considered that in coming to its decision, C&W had not had regard to certain relevant information, and that C&W's decision ought to be rescinded and then re-taken once the relevant information had been put before the Committee Members. The relevant information to which A&S Members referred was two documents, namely:
- [Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Culture Peer Challenge – Bourne Hall Museum – 4th-6th August 2025 Feedback Report](#)
 - Bourne Hall Museum Service Review and Recommendations.
- 2.8 The Council's Chief Executive – acting in her capacity as the Council's 'proper officer' for access to information to Members has considered the recommendation of A&S and has determined the following:
- 2.8.1 As the Culture Peer Challenge report is available on the Council's website, a link to it has been provided at section 8.1 (Other papers) of this report.
- 2.8.2 It is her considered view that The Service Review includes operational detail and workshop commentary which is not required for policy determination. Mindful of the A&S recommendation, a redacted version shall be appended to this report (to follow) limited to the relevant findings and implications necessary to help inform the Committee's decision between the available options.
- 2.9 Following A&S's review of the called-in decision, the Committee resolved (three for, two against and the Chair not voting):
- "That the called-in decision should be referred to the relevant policy committee with a view to its being withdrawn / rescinded and the decision being re-taken."*
- 2.10 An extract from the draft minutes of the 5th February 2026 A&S meeting, in relation to A&S's consideration of Agenda Item 04, "Call-in of the Decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee Made on 13th January 2026 (Item 04) Regarding the Options for the Future of Bourne Hall Museum", has been provided at Appendix 2 to this report.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 In accordance with Annex 4.6 section 14.4 of the Council's Operating Framework, C&W is now asked to have regard to the resolution made by A&S at its 5th February 2026 meeting, in relation to Agenda Item 04, "Call-in of the Decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee Made on 13th January 2026 (Item 04) Regarding the Options for the Future of Bourne Hall Museum", and to consider whether or not to accept A&S's recommendation.
- 3.2 A&S's recommendation may be accepted or rejected as it has been presented and shall not be subject to amendment.
- 3.3 If C&W decides to implement the decision notwithstanding A&S's recommendation, C&W must state its reasons for doing so. These reasons will then be communicated to A&S. In this event, the decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, "Options for the Future of the Museum", would be implemented immediately.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 4.1 Equality Impact Assessment
 - 4.1.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 4.2 Crime & Disorder
 - 4.2.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 4.3 Safeguarding
 - 4.3.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 4.4 Dependencies
 - 4.4.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 4.5 Other
 - 4.5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications in relation to the "Options for the Future of the Museum", are set out in the report presented to the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting (Agenda Item 04), which has been attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 5.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The process for the consideration of recommendations from A&S by policy Committees is set out in Annex 4.6 of the Council's Operating Framework – Overview, Audit and Scrutiny (including Call in Procedure and Councillor Calls for Action).
- 6.2 The legal implications in relation to the “Options for the Future of the Museum”, are set out in the report presented to the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting (Agenda Item 04), which has been attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 6.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the content of this report.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- N/A
- 7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None for the purposes of this report.
- 7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None for the purposes of this report.
- 7.5 **Partnerships:** None for the purposes of this report.
- 7.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** None for the purposes of this report.

8 Background papers

- 8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- [Community and Wellbeing Committee, 13th January 2026, Agenda Item 04, “Options for the Future of the Museum”.](#)
- [Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 5th February 2026, Agenda Item 04, “Call-in of the Decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee Made on 13th January 2026 \(Item 04\) Regarding the Options for the Future of Bourne Hall Museum”.](#)

Other papers:

- [Annex 4.6 of the Council's Operating Framework – Overview, Audit and Scrutiny \(including Call in Procedure and Councillor Calls for Action\).](#)
- [Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Culture Peer Challenge – Bourne Hall Museum – 4th-6th August 2025 Feedback Report](#)

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OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Report Author	Linda Scott
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Summary of reviews2. Potential steps of investing in the museum3. Summary of advantages and disadvantages of the options4. Comparative summary table

Summary

This report presents an appraisal of three strategic options for the future of Bourne Hall museum, drawing on findings from the Bourne Hall museum service review and the culture peer challenge report. The museum is a valued cultural asset with significant potential, but faces challenges in relevance, accessibility, and sustainability.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) **Evaluate the available options and agree the most appropriate course of action for the museum's future:**
 - a) **Option 1: Do nothing and carry on with business as usual**

or;

 - b) **Option 2: Invest in improvement of the Museum (should option 2 be agreed a funding request will go to Strategy and Resources Committee March 2026 for consideration)**

or;

 - c) **Option 3: Close the museum**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The future of the Museum is identified as Priority 7 within the Council's Strategic Priorities. This requires the development of a proposed set of options for the future delivery of Museum services, which forms the basis for the recommendations set out in this report.

2 Background

- 2.1 Although this priority has been looked at in isolation for defining the strategic options for service delivery it must be noted that the Museum is an integral part of Bourne Hall.

This paper therefore aims to set out these connections at a high level to inform decision-making.

The success of the Museum has significant links to the future success of Bourne Hall in terms of developing a long-term sustainable business plan for the venue.

The wider Bourne Hall business plan concerns itself with seeking to protect the future of Bourne Hall as a key community asset in the changing context of Local Government Reorganisation. to ensure its attractiveness to the new East Surrey unitary authority or another local governance entity and/or trust.

The strategic options for service delivery all directly link to possible future stewardship models for the wider Bourne Hall.

2.2 Service reviews

Two major reviews were conducted in 2025 to assess the future direction, operations, and sustainability of Bourne Hall Museum:

- **Bourne Hall Museum Service Review** (May 2025)
- **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Culture Peer Challenge** (August 2025)

Both reviews provide valuable insights and recommendations for the museum's development, with notable areas of alignment and distinction. Both reviews concern themselves with the museum being a success and only therefore link to option 2 regarding investing in the museum. A summary of these reviews can be found in appendix 1.

2.3 Strategic options

Three strategic options for future service delivery have been considered as follows:

Options	Description
1. Do Nothing	Maintain current operations, with only minor changes within existing resources.
2. Invest in Improvement	Implement recommendations from recent reviews to transform and sustain the museum.
3. Close the Museum	Close to the public, dispose of the collection, and manage transition.

2.4 Option 1 – Do nothing

This would involve:

- Maintaining the museum as it is, with no additional investment of time, effort, or money.
- Keeping the Museum and its storage unchanged.
- Maintaining compliance with accreditation requirements
- Making small operational changes which address recommendations from the service reviews, but only those that can be delivered within existing budget and resources

This option would not incur additional financial cost but would undermine the wider Bourne Hall business plan. It risks the museum’s future under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and would diminish its community value.

Next Steps:

- No further action required.

2.5 Option 2 – Invest in the Museum

Together, the Service Review and Peer Challenge offer a comprehensive blueprint for the future of Bourne Hall Museum. The Service Review delivers a practical roadmap for immediate and medium-term improvements, while the Peer Challenge sets the strategic direction and highlights opportunities for transformation. Their combined recommendations would help ensure the museum is resilient, relevant, and sustainable in the face of organisational and community changes.

Next Steps:

Phase 1: 1-15 months

- March 2026 Strategy and Resources committee for consideration for funding
- Consider recommendations from Service reviews
- Engage stakeholders and the public in shaping the vision.
- Develop a Museum change implementation plan
- Make smaller immediate operational changes such as update displays, improve accessibility and implement visitor data collection and evaluation.
- Feed into a wider Bourne Hall Business Plan regarding the role of the Museum and Consider the museum's location.

Phase 2: 15+ months

- Future stewardship models
- Funding opportunities

2.6 Option 3 – Close the Museum

This option would see the Museum close its doors to the public, following a public consultation.

Once the doors are closed to the public the process of disposing of the collection would begin. This will take a period of up to 10 years.

Next Steps:

- Conduct a legal and ethical review in line with the Museums Association guidance.
- Undertake public and stakeholder consultation.
- Plan for collection disposal and/or storage.
- Manage communications to mitigate reputational damage.

See appendix 3 for summary of advantages and disadvantages of the options

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 All options would require an equality impact assessment

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 Not applicable for this report

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 Not applicable for this report

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 Not applicable for this report

3.5 Other

3.5.1 Not applicable for this report

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The current annual budget is around £232,168 which encompasses:

- Employee costs: £65,785 (1.5 FTE staff)
- Accommodation: £123,840 (central recharge for use of the space)
- Central services charges: £32,110
- Insurance recharges: £2,292
- Other costs: £12,180
- Income from museum activities: £4,039

4.2 Option 1: Do nothing

This option would see the budget remaining as set out above with only inflationary and staff cost increases annually. No additional costs would be incurred but no additional income would be generated either. Over time income may deteriorate due to the poor-quality offer. This would be a status quo scenario.

4.3 Option 2 : Invest in the Museum

This option takes the form of two phases. The first phase is about developing a long-term plan for the future of the Museum and making smaller operational changes over the course of the coming months in line with the Service Review Recommendations to position the Museum to be in a stronger position in the context of LGR.

The second phase would be what happens to the Museum after vesting day in terms of its stewardship model, operating costs and funding opportunities. The costings below therefore relate to phase 1 only.

Phase 1 investment would need to fund the following:

- Additional activities
 - Facilitate and manage stakeholder engagement
 - Draft an implementation plan

- Develop a shared strategic plan for programming, staffing, and budgeting.
 - Enhance Visibility and Community Reach
 - develop a brand/comms and marketing strategy
 - develop a bespoke website and social media presence
 - Implement visitor data collection and evaluation.
 - Recruit and diversify volunteers
-
- Operational changes
 - Update displays, improve accessibility and marketing.
 - Strengthen partnerships with local groups and schools.
 - Replace long-form text in displays with concise, accessible summaries.
 - Create trails linking museum, libraries, and gardens to encourage exploration

Appendix 2 sets out potential short-term steps in terms of investing in the museum based on the findings of the service reviews.

4.4 Option 3: Close the Museum

This option would see the majority of the costs above maintained for a number of years during the transition phase, including staffing, accommodation and internal recharges. However, there would be no income generated from museum activity.

There is likely to be additional costs incurred around specialist advice on disposing of the collection. This option could also incur additional costs depending on the speed at which action to close the museum is to be undertaken. It is assumed for the purposes of this option that the Museum would be closed to the public and the resources shifted to handling the collection to transfer or dispose of all the assets.

Should any items be retained, although not envisaged, there would be an ongoing storage cost.

The process can take several years, especially for legal collection disposal, which must comply with Arts Council and Museums Association ethical guidelines.

4.5 Overview of estimated costs

The table below aims to estimate costs and savings over the short, medium and long term. It should be noted that these figures are based on the 'as is' scenario of the Museum being operated directly by the Council.

Years 1-2 are the focus of this paper with years 3-5 and 10+ used to depict how the options would evolve over time. Caution should be added to these costs and are for illustrative purposes only.

Years 1-2 costs

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Running cost pa	£240,000	£240,000	£280,000
Investment pa	0	£125,000	0
Savings/income	£4,000	£6,000	0
Net cost pa	236,000	£359,000	280,000

Years 3-5

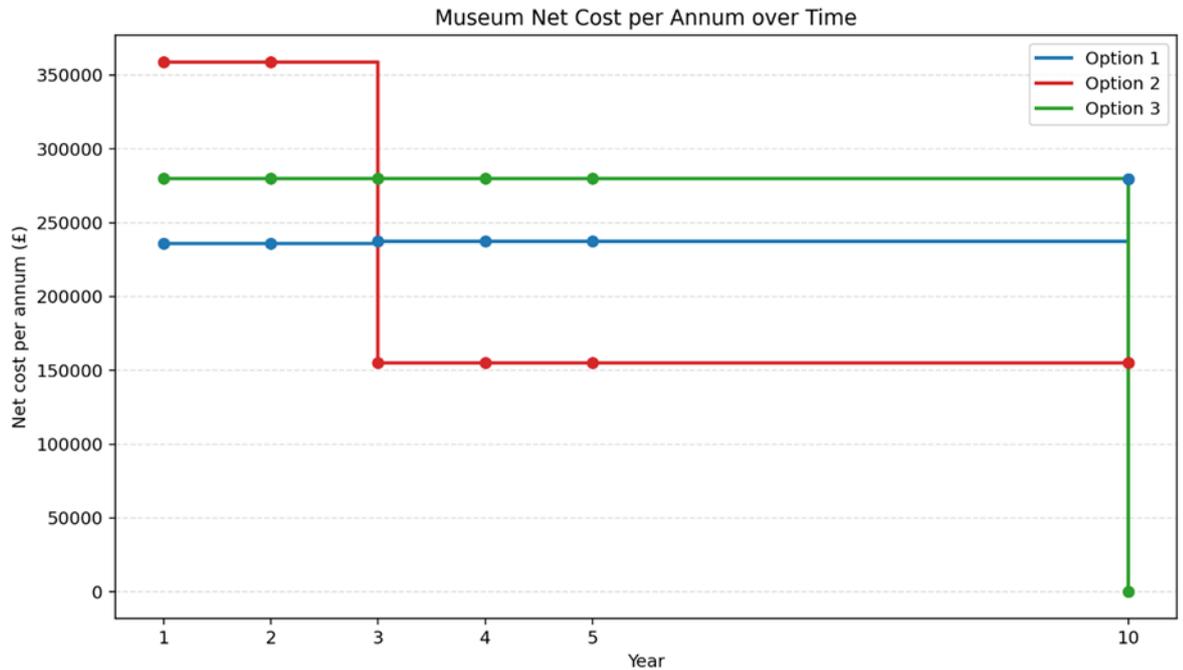
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Running cost pa	£240,000	£175,000	£280,000
Investment pa	0	0	0
Savings/income	£2,500	£20,000	0
Net cost pa	237,500	£155,000	280,000

Year 10+

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Running cost pa	£280,000	£175,000	0
Investment pa	0	0	0
Savings/income	£500	£20,000	0
Net cost pa	£279,500	£155,000	0

The above demonstrates that:

- **Option 1** over time increases in running costs due to inflation and income slowly drops away as the Museum offer deteriorates.
- **Option 2**, whilst operating as part of a council will have ongoing running costs but the business plan has been bedded in which has reduced the operating costs. The investment also sees additional income generated from the added community value.
- **Option 3** closing the museum is a lengthy process that incurs on going costs for many years post the decision to close. During this time there is no scope to generate income.



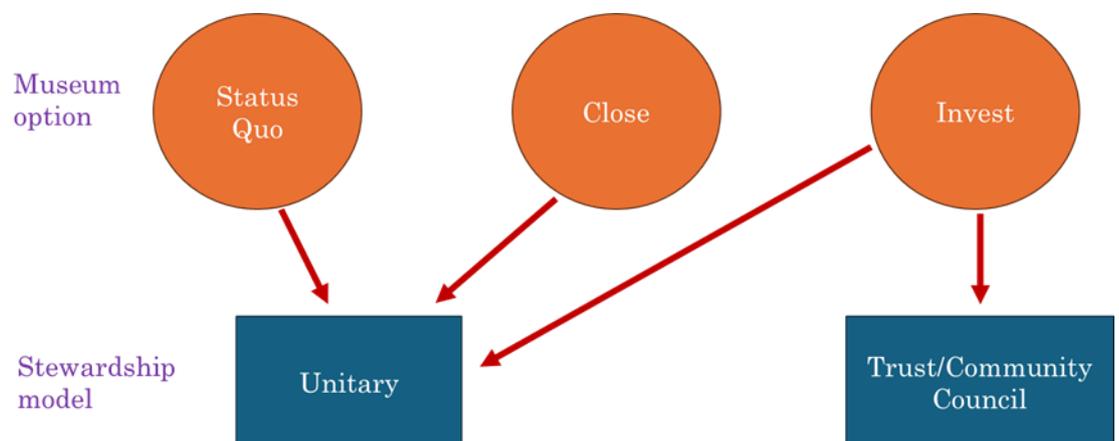
The option 2 costs could be reduced further should the Museum and wider Bourne Hall transfer to a different stewardship model.

See appendix 4 for comparative summary table

4.6 Governance Implications

The three options have different implications in terms of the Museum’s future and different governance/stewardship models.

Only one of the three options seeks to secure the Museum’s future. It is this option that would enable a medium-term decision for the Museum to be transferred to another entity opening up funding opportunities and different operating models which reduce costs further.



The above is also true for wider Bourne Hall long-term financial sustainability. The Museum is an integral part of the community venue and should form part of a wider strategy and business plan for Bourne Hall.

- 4.6 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Option 1 is already provided for within this Committee's approved revenue budget and requires no additional resources. Options 2 and 3 would require additional corporate funding; if either is preferred, a further report should be submitted to S&R to secure the necessary funding.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 **Employment Law:** Ensuring compliance with employment laws when making changes to staffing, whether investing in new roles or making redundancies.
- 5.2 **Contractual Obligations:** Reviewing and honouring any existing contracts with suppliers, donors, and other stakeholders.
- 5.3 **Intellectual Property:** Managing intellectual property rights related to the museum's collections and exhibitions.
- 5.4 **Health and Safety:** Ensuring that any changes comply with health and safety regulations to protect staff and visitors.
- 5.5 **Accessibility:** Adhering to accessibility laws to ensure the museum remains accessible to all members of the public.
- 5.6 **Legal Officer's comments:** None other than as stated above.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Future of the Museum
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Not relevant.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** Not applicable
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** Not applicable
- 6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** The Council is mindful of a potential transfer to a new governance model as part of Epsom Ewell Borough Councils Local Government Reorganising

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- None

Appendix 1- Service reviews – the findings

Areas of Alignment

- **Strategic Vision:** Both reviews emphasise the need for a refreshed, clear vision and purpose for Bourne Hall Museum, ensuring relevance to local communities and alignment with council priorities.
 - **Accreditation & Compliance:** Maintaining national museum accreditation and updating policies and procedures are highlighted as essential for credibility and future funding.
 - **Governance & Future Planning:** Each review recommends reviewing governance models and preparing for local government reorganisation, with a focus on stewardship and long-term sustainability.
 - **Financial Sustainability:** Both advocate for diversifying funding sources, improving financial transparency, and actively seeking external grants and partnerships.
 - **Visitor Experience:** There is consensus on the need to enhance visitor engagement, make displays more interactive and accessible, and systematically collect audience data.
 - **Community Engagement:** Stronger partnerships, community involvement, and inclusive practices are recommended to ensure the museum reflects and serves its diverse population.
 - **Environmental Sustainability:** Both reviews encourage embedding sustainability into museum operations and strategic planning.
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Key Differences

- **Depth and Detail:**
 - The **Service Review** provides a detailed operational action plan, with specific recommendations, timelines, and benchmarking against sector standards.
 - The **Peer Challenge** adopts a broader strategic perspective, focusing on high-level options, best practice examples, and the wider context of local government change.
 - **Communication & Change Management:**
 - The **Peer Challenge** places greater emphasis on clear communication with staff and the public, especially during periods of uncertainty and transition.
 - **Operational Focus:**
 - The **Service Review** delves deeper into internal processes, collections management, documentation, and succession planning for staff and volunteers.
 - **Best Practice & External Learning:**
 - The **Peer Challenge** provides more examples of sector best practice and encourages learning from other institutions, particularly in areas such as shared spaces, co-creation, and volunteer management.
 - **Inclusivity & Accessibility:**
 - The **Service Review** offers more detailed recommendations for tackling inequality and improving accessibility, including specific policies and research actions.
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Conclusion

Together, the **Service Review** and **Peer Challenge** offer a comprehensive blueprint for the future of Bourne Hall Museum. The Service Review delivers a practical roadmap for immediate and medium-term improvements, while the Peer Challenge sets the strategic direction and highlights opportunities for transformation. Their combined recommendations will help ensure the museum is resilient, relevant, and sustainable in the face of organisational and community change.

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Appendix 2 – Potential steps for investing in the Museum

Phase 1: Vision & Governance (Months 1–3)

- **Define museum vision and purpose**
Action: Conduct stakeholder workshops and community consultations.
Timeline: Month 1–3
-

Phase 2: Financial & Strategic Planning (Months 3–6)

- **Develop business plan**
Action: Include revenue streams, grant targets, and reserves policy.
Timeline: Month 3–6
-

Phase 3: Infrastructure & Design (Months 6–12)

- **Commission building design and accessibility improvements**
Action: Appoint architects and designers; integrate flexible layouts and digital features.
Timeline: Month 6–9
 - **Install interactive displays and digital systems**
Action: Implement QR codes, touchscreen exhibits, and online ticketing.
Timeline: Month 9–12
-

Phase 4: Collection (Months 6–18)

- **Update collections policies and documentation**
Action: Align with Arts Council Accreditation standards.
Timeline: Month 6–12
-

Phase 5: Audience Development & Marketing (Months 9–18)

- **Launch brand refresh and marketing campaign**
Action: New website, social media strategy, and signage.
Timeline: Month 9–12

- **Develop education and outreach programmes**
Action: Partner with schools and community groups.
Timeline: Month 12–18
-

Phase 6: Workforce & Volunteer Programme (Months 12–18)

- **Recruit and train volunteers**
Action: Create inclusive volunteer roles and training plans.
Timeline: Month 12–15
 - **Upskill staff in digital engagement and fundraising**
Timeline: Month 15–18
-

Phase 7: Launch & Evaluation (Months 18–24)

- **Soft launch of redesigned museum**
Action: Host community preview events.
Timeline: Month 18–20
- **Monitor KPIs and review progress**
Action: Quarterly reporting on audience, financials, and impact.

Appendix 3 - Summary of advantages and disadvantages of the options

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1: Do Nothing	No immediate additional costs Maintains current service and compliance	Risks decline in quality and relevance Undermines wider Bourne Hall business plan Vulnerable to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and funding pressures Community value likely to diminish
Option 2: Invest in Improvement	Enhances community value and engagement Potential for increased income and reduced costs over time Positions museum for sustainable future and alternative stewardship models	Requires upfront investment (£125,000/year in Years 1–2) – Funding source to be identified – S&R Committee March 26 Ongoing operational costs Success depends on effective implementation and stakeholder buy-in
Option 3: Close the Museum	Potential to reduce long-term costs (after transition) Removes ongoing operational burden	High transition costs and ongoing expenses for several years Loss of community asset and cultural value No income generation during transition Significant reputational risk

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Appendix 4 - Comparative Summary Table

Criteria	Option 1: Do Nothing	Option 2: Invest	Option 3: Close
Strategic alignment	Weak	Strong	None
Financial impact (Y1-2)	£236k/year	£359k/year	£280k/year
Long-term cost (Y3-5)	£237.5k/year	£155k/year	£280k/year
Community value	Declines	Enhanced	Lost
Risks	High (status quo)	Medium (change)	High (closure)
Sustainability	Poor	Strong	None

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**Extract From Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit And Scrutiny Committee
Held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 5 February 2026**

PRESENT -

Councillor Steven McCormick (Chair); Councillor Phil Neale (Vice-Chair); Councillors Chris Ames, Steve Bridger, Tony Froud, Alison Kelly and Chris Watson

In Attendance: Councillor Alex Coley (for agenda item 4), Councillor James Lawrence (for agenda items 4 and 13) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge (for agenda item 4 as Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee), Ade Oyerinde (External Auditor) (Grant Thornton) (in attendance remotely for agenda items 1-7) and Usman Rasheed (External Auditor) (Grant Thornton) (in attendance remotely for agenda items 1-7)

Absent: Councillor Jan Mason

Officers present: Cagdas Canbolat (Director of Corporate Services (S151)), Andrew Bircher (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Alex Awoyomi (Principal Solicitor), Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services) (for agenda items 1-4), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant), Will Mace (Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager), Oliver Nelson (Public Protection Manager) (for agenda items 1-5), Phoebe Batchelor (Democratic Services Officer) and Angela Guest (Democratic Services Officer)

41 CALL-IN OF THE DECISION OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE MADE ON 13 JANUARY 2026 (ITEM 04) REGARDING THE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF BOURNE HALL MUSEUM

The Committee considered a report that invited the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to consider the call-in of a decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee, under Agenda Item No 4 "Options for the Future of the Museum" at its meeting on 13th January 2026. The call-in had been made in accordance with the procedures set out in Annex 4.6 – Overview, Audit and Scrutiny (including Call-in Procedure and Councillor Calls for Action) of the Council's Operating Framework.

The following matters were considered:

- a) Councillor Alex Coley was given three minutes to address the committee as the main councillor requesting the call-in. He stated that there were missing reports from the Community and Wellbeing agenda which were pertinent to the decision and therefore the committee did not make their decision with all the relevant information. He had been told that the reports would be published with the agenda pack but instead there were highlights from them within the main report. He was also surprised that there was no mention of the two reports in the Audit & Scrutiny Committee report being discussed

tonight. He spoke about the confusion and mixed messaging about the closure or potential closure of the museum, the exclusion of stewardship and governance questions and recharge costs that might not reflect the true cost of running the museum. He therefore called upon the Audit & Scrutiny Committee to request that the decision be taken again and the missing reports be circulated to enable a fully informed decision. The missing reports were the Bourne Hall Museum Service Review (May 2025) and the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Culture Peer Challenge (August 2025).

- b) Councillor James Lawrence had requested to speak to this item and was also given three minutes to address the Committee. He claimed that this was part of a broader issue with failure to resource the committee system properly and cited an urgent decision as an example where decisions had been taken at committees without the full information. The report author was quoted as acknowledging, with hindsight, to the Community & Wellbeing Committee that they should have had the whole document rather than the executive summary. Councillor Lawrence went on to say that as the two reports were missing from the agenda today that Audit & Scrutiny Committee did not have adequate information to know whether the decision taken at Community & Wellbeing Committee was correct and therefore encouraged the decision of Audit & Scrutiny Committee to recommend withdrawal of the original decision and for Community & Wellbeing Committee to reconsider the entire item with the missing reports as part of the agenda pack.
- c) Councillor Clive Woodbridge, as Chair for the Community & Wellbeing Committee was given three minutes to address the Committee. He stated that the Community & Wellbeing Committee had had a good discussion on this item and was given all the relevant information from both missing reports. They were excluded from the agenda pack, and an executive decision format was used to help council members, so they didn't have to wade through volumes of information. The pertinent points from both reports were fully covered in the main report. He felt that all the relevant information was there and that the members had all the information that they needed to make the decision. It was also worth noting that there were three options before committee on that evening. One was to carry on as normal, one was to enhance the museum service with some investment, and the third option broadly was to close the museum. Both the reports said that the museum was of value and did not recommend closure. Both the reports said that at present it was lacking in certain areas and that certain changes needed to be made. Councillor Woodbridge believed that the decision the committee reached was fully in line with the reports and had the reports in their entirety been included that it would not have altered that outcome. The decision was unanimous and the recommendation to Strategy & Resources Committee was also a mechanism by which the council could review the decision. The committee members had also received a briefing in detail on the museum and requested that Audit & Scrutiny Committee leave the decision unamended as the report also needed to go to Strategy & Resources for the financing of the decision and any changes could be made there.

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- d) In response to a Member question the Chair explained that a meeting had been arranged with committee members prior to committee just to ensure that members were fully briefed on several items on the agenda and their role/process with a call-in as the council had not dealt with one in over 10 years. Also, the link to the LGA cultural report could be included in the minutes for this meeting. The service review was an operational document and therefore restricted. Any member wishing to have a copy would need to speak with the Chief Executive.
- e) A Member requested legal advice as he believed if a committee was going to discuss background documents such as the LGA Peer Challenge Review in this case, that the document should be attached to the agenda and made public and not just send a link to members on where to find that document. The Chair reiterated that members were being asked to consider whether there was a lack of information for the decision to be taken and if so then this committee could make recommendations to the Community & Wellbeing Committee it was not a diktat and the Community & Wellbeing Committee could either accept the Audit & Scrutiny recommendations, or not. The Principal Solicitor was unable to respond to the specific question but would provide a response following the meeting. However, he did support the Chair's view that committee were to consider whether there was a lack of information for Community & Wellbeing Committee to make their decision.
- f) A previous member of the Community & Wellbeing Committee stated that she was not surprised this item had been on the agenda or the options for decision and was not sure whether she would have needed the other two documents to make a decision.
- g) A Member cited Councillor Coley in saying that the Committee were being asked to decide whether receipt of the service review would have caused a different decision to be made. He asked how, without the document available tonight how the committee were supposed to judge the relevance of that report. He also reiterated that the peer challenge report should have been made public and read from the public record of the report regarding financial information being skewed due to the apportionment of costs to Bourne Hall giving a false picture of the running cost of the museum. That was a major problem that the Community and Wellbeing Committee should have been informed of, and he could not see this reflected in the report the committee received. That was crucial information not given to the committee.
- h) The Head of Operational Service stated that he and his team were responsible for the report and presented operational evidence and what options were looked at. The reports received at committee contained all the operational information needed in the summary. Regarding the finances, the LGA report spoke of was the central service costs and rental of the building. Rental of the museum was about £130k and central services cost approximately £32k. Officer were asked to look at options and could only come up with the three that were offered. The Strategy & Resources Committee would look deeper at the finances.

- i) Councillor Woodbridge gave further clarification by pointing out paragraphs 4 and 4.1 of the main report which gave a budget breakdown including employee costs, accommodation, central services and insurance was a central recharge. He stated that the term skewing was relating to the headline figures which are skewed heavily by the central recharges rather than operational costs of running the museum. He reiterated that he believed Community & Wellbeing Committee had enough information to rely on to make their decision.

Councillor Ames proposed that recommendation c be put to the vote. Councillor Watson seconded the motion.

Following consideration the Committee resolved (three for, two against and the Chair not voting):

That the called-in decision should be referred to the relevant policy committee with a view to its being withdrawn / rescinded and the decision being re-taken.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Phil Neale, declared an interest in that he was present as a substitute at the Community & Wellbeing Committee where this decision was taken even though he did not vote he withdrew from the room whilst the Audit & Scrutiny Committee considered the call-in.

COUNCILLOR STEVEN MCCORMICK (CHAIR)