

# **Bourne Hall Museum**

## **Service Review and Recommendations**

**May 2025**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) have commissioned ██████████ Heritage & Museum Services to carry out a review of Bourne Hall Museum's (BHM) strategic direction and services and develop a series of recommendations for a successful future.

There continues to be huge public support for museums in the UK with an [April 2024 YouGov Poll](#) for the National Museum Directors Council reporting that 89% of adults think that museums are important to UK culture and 76% of adults think that having a local museum adds value to their area.

Bourne Hall Museum opened in 1970 in Ewell Village as a local history museum for the borough of Epsom and Ewell. It is housed on the first floor of the striking Bourne Hall (BH) which is a community facility also housing the local library and New Surrey Performing Arts Library (operated by Surrey County Council), the Flying Saucer café, performance spaces and rooms for hire. There is a wide range of community focused activity based in BH and outdoors in its attractive gardens and park space.

Bourne Hall itself is a significant modern building which was designated Grade II by Historic England in 2015

*Bourne Hall Library and Social Centre, of 1967-70 by A. G. Sheppard Fidler and Associates, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Architectural interest: a striking design, notable for its space-age flair and the generous, top-lit principal interior space; \* Plan form: the circular layout is well-organised, legible and flexible; \* Historic interest: as an ambitious example of the expansion of the library service and the integration of community facilities and disabled access.*

The museum collection of up to 15,000 objects covers social history, archaeology and local history material including photographs, ephemera, prints and postcards, covering the administrative boundaries of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell from 1937 onwards. The collection covers the domestic, social and commercial life of the area. It has strong collections around the history of the local traveller community and the Epsom Derby. The museum does not collect archive material which is more appropriately housed at the Surrey History Centre.

There are 1.5 FTE staff (a full time Curator and part time Education Officer post) who are supported by a group of regular volunteers and the wider Bourne Hall staff team.

Bourne Hall Museum is an Accredited Museum, meeting the nationally agreed standards set out in the [UK Museum Accreditation Scheme](#) (managed by Arts Council England) alongside [Spectrum, the UK Collections Management Standard](#) and the [Museums Association Code of Ethics](#). The museum submitted its last accreditation return in 2017 and can expect to receive an invitation to make a return (to demonstrate how it is meeting the standard) in the next 12-18 months.

## 2.0 Methodology

This work has been carried out in line with the proposal prepared for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in February 2025.

It has included

- A desktop review of the museum's current planning framework
- A site visit to Bourne Hall Museum to carry out a baseline assessment
- One to one interviews with key council staff and elected members
- A workshop with museum, wider council staff and volunteers to assess current performance against the [AIM Hallmarks of Prospering Museums](#)
  
- Interviews with external stakeholders
  - [REDACTED]
  - [REDACTED]
  - [REDACTED]

The author has taken every care to ensure information collected and given in this report is accurate, however inaccuracies or misunderstandings may have occurred.

The work on this report has been undertaken with support and insights from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council staff and the author appreciates their generous sharing of time and knowledge.

## 3.0 Internal Operating Environment

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's most recent [Corporate Plan](#) has 6 priority themes

- Green & vibrant. A better place to live where people enjoy their surroundings
- Safe and well. A place where people feel safe, secure and lead healthy, fulfilling lives.
- Cultural and Creative. A centre for cultural and creative excellence and inspiration.
- Opportunity and Prosperity. A successful place with a strong, dynamic local economy where people can thrive.
- Smart and connected. Alive and connected socially, economically, geographically and digitally.
- Effective council. Engaging, responsive and resilient council.

The museum has a clear fit under the Cultural and Creative theme which includes the priority to

“Promote the borough’s rich history and heritage”

which has outcomes and activities that relate directly to the work of the museum.

The museum also has the potential to contribute to wider outcomes under the cultural and creative theme and under opportunity and prosperity “promote Epsom and Ewell as a great place to live, work and study”

In 2025-2027 Epsom and Ewell Borough Council are working to deliver an additional **7 priorities**. All the priorities are mindful of changes to local government that will follow this period and focus on ensuring a meaningful legacy for Epsom and Ewell residents.

**Priority 7** is the **Future of the Museum**. This will report on a set of options for the future of the museum service.

It is hoped that this report will provide valuable background to inform these options as it details the challenges facing the museum, the opportunities that can be seized to improve and develop the service and the prioritisation that is essential to deliver this. There are foundational steps that need to be taken to ensure the successful future of the museum regardless of the organisational context. Appendix 1 provides a brief outline of the impact of possible options.

The council is currently consulting on its [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2027](#) which recognises “the positive impact that art, culture and heritage can have in improving our sense of wellbeing, relieving stress and bringing about a sense of connection and purpose”

The museum has enormous potential and a renewed commitment and focus to deliver on this strategic priority. There is an established evidence base in the wider sector for the value of museums to promote health and wellbeing (the [Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance](#) showcases examples of this type of work).

The museum also has an important role to play in developing the **tourism** offer in the borough as it showcases its rich history and stories, from prehistory to the Covid pandemic, presenting the legacy of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and supporting and reflecting the future communities that it will serve. With excellent transport links it is an ideal destination for visitors from across Surrey and neighbouring London boroughs. Research undertaken in 2022 to understand the role of the cultural and creative industries in driving the local economy identified that cultural regeneration, of which a refreshed and forward thinking museum can be part, has a key role in attracting more visitors to the borough.

This research also informs the [Borough's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2023-2028](#) which has a natural synergy and overlap with the work of the museum as its vision seeks to evidence

- Pride in, and knowledge of the Borough's unique history and heritage
- A clear and compelling identity which excites and inspires
- A wide range of local events and activities for people to take part in
- A place where people work together for the benefit of the community

The strategy's vision is

*“To grow the role of Epsom and Ewell as a centre for cultural, creative and heritage excellence both within Surrey and beyond. By 2028 the borough will be a place recognised for its vibrant cultural provision that appeals to, represents and engages with the people who live, work, visit or study within the community.”*

The Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy is also highlighted as a key tool for delivery of health and wellbeing priorities and the work of the museum in this area should be interwoven in this approach.

The new Forward Plan for the museum must outline its contribution to wider council priorities and ensure that opportunities to complement the Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy and other strategic priorities are embraced. It must also identify how, with investment to update and refresh the visitor offer, the museum can offer significant value as a lead museum service to a new east Surrey authority. It is already well placed to tell the rich stories of the history of Epsom and Ewell but it can also provide advice, support and act as a key partner and advocate for the wider museum and heritage community in the east of the county.

At present, the museum sits in the Commercial Services department of the council and is managed under Venues as part of the Bourne Hall team whilst Arts, Culture and Heritage is part of the Housing and Communities department and is managed under Communities as part of the Community Development team. Although the services sit in different departments, an integrated approach to planning is essential to ensure that maximum impact in these priorities areas is achieved. Future organisational structures should consider a closer alignment between these complementary services.

The museum team consists of 1.5 FTE staff, a FT Curator and PT Museum Assistant, supported by the wider Bourne Hall staff and museum volunteers. [REDACTED] and the future operation of the museum, compliance with the national Accreditation Standard and capacity to support both the legacy of Epsom and Ewell's museum service and building for the future, will depend upon professional staffing levels being maintained.

## 4.0 External Operating Environment

The review has been commissioned at a time of change for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

The current structure of local government across Surrey will change from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027 as local government is reorganised <https://www.surreylgrhub.org>

The future structure of local government in Surrey has not been decided at the time of writing but it is anticipated that either 2 or 3 unitary authorities will replace the current structure of Surrey County Council and 11 district or borough councils.

Within Surrey there is a strong, vibrant cultural sector ranging from large Arts Council supported National Portfolio Organisations through to grassroots community groups. The [Surrey Cultural Partnership](#) (SCP) is a collective from culture, heritage, local government, business, education, health and criminal justice working together to ensure that everyone in Surrey has the opportunity to participate in, engage with and contribute to extraordinary cultural activity, whoever they are and wherever they live.

SCP works with 380 cultural bodies across the county and has developed the [Surrey Cultural Strategy 2024-2034](#) which is focused on a vision that

*By 2034 Surrey will be recognised as a confident, vibrant county that celebrates its rich cultural heritage and the creativity that shapes individual and community prosperity.*

SCP provides an important support network for cultural practitioners and seeks to attract funding for culture. At present it is distributing the Heritage for All fund (from the National Lottery Heritage Fund) through the Community Foundation for Surrey.

There are over 40 museums in the county which are supported by the [Surrey Museums Partnership](#) (SMP). It provides a single point of contact to promote and support museums throughout the county and is funded through the County Council and District Councils (including EEBC). SMP encourages partnership working to support local, regional and national goals, advocate for the work of museums and offers funding and expertise to its members.

[Museum Development South East](#) is the Arts Council England funded body that supports the museum sector across the region, including Surrey. They offer access to professional expertise, networking, funding and development opportunities. The Surrey and East Sussex Museum Development Officer is the first point of contact for support for Bourne Hall museum

Within Epsom and Ewell there is a vibrant cultural and local history sector. The museum has well established working relationships with the Epsom and Ewell Archaeology and History Society and the Epsom and Ewell Local and Family History Centre (co-located in the library in Bourne Hall). Beyond history, there are a wealth of cultural organisations in the borough

including the University of the Creative Arts campus in Epsom, Nescot, Laine Theatre Arts and The Horton arts venue which houses a permanent exhibition on the history of Epsom's cluster of psychiatric hospitals.

It is essential that Bourne Hall Museum considers its potential role and purpose in the changing operating environment in local government in Surrey and that this is reflected in planning for 2025 onwards.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

## 6.0 Hallmarks Analysis and Recommendations

The AIM Hallmarks of Prospering Museums are an excellent benchmarking and development tool to review the current position of the museum and consider and order priority areas for action. They can be used effectively by museums with independent/charitable governance structures and those managed by local authorities and universities.

They can be viewed online at <https://aim-museums.co.uk/helping-organisations/aim-hallmarks/>

The analysis and recommendations are based on the Hallmarks workshop carried out with staff and volunteers on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the consultant's baseline assessment work and conversations with internal and external stakeholders.



## 6.1 HALLMARK: PURPOSE

The current statement of purpose is

*“Bourne Hall Museum works to promote the understanding of history in Epsom and Ewell by helping and encouraging people to encounter objects and pictures from the past”*

### **Definition: know, articulate and embrace your purpose**

**You have a clear, compelling and people- oriented purpose that is shared by everyone in your organisation.**

**You actively use it to keep your organisation on course as it flexes and adapts to changes.**

### **Self assessment questions**

- How compelling is our purpose?
- How relevant is our purpose to a wide range of people?
- How well is it shared by everyone in our organisation?

### **Workshop feedback**

- The bones are good but it needs va va voom
- It is maybe a bit passive eg talks about ‘encounter’
- The objects are evidence to help tell the stories of the people of E+E
- It acts as a blurb for the museum
- Needs to be more pithy
- Reflect demographics that have changed
- Promote sense of pride and sense of place
- The purpose needs revising
- Need to revisit even if it remains the same
- Need to encourage new people and new topics to bring people in
- Purpose not very well known – ‘didn’t know our purpose until we turned up today’
- Because we are a LA we can be too wordy
- Bourne Hall as whole product / museum
- The museum service/ museum site

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## 6.2 Hallmark: LEADERSHIP & CULTURE

**Definition: create an organisational culture that can readily adapt and respond.**

**The leadership of your organisation is clear, directed, delegates freely and fosters a positive culture that is open to new ideas and ready to seize opportunities.**

**Your organisation is independent-thinking and entrepreneurial. It is focused collectively on outcomes. Key information on performance is shared within the organisation.**

### Self assessment questions

- How clear is everyone in the organisation about our intended outcomes and progress towards them?
- How effective are we at seizing opportunities and being entrepreneurial?

### Workshop Feedback

- Our Forward Plan needs to be rewritten
- People are not clear on intended outcomes and progress
- Museum staff and volunteers are clear on intended outcomes but not wider Bourne Hall or council staff
- Outcomes and progress needs to be shared with the wider organisation
- There are no structured targets or KPIs

- There is good liaison with volunteer groups and history societies
- We have the seeds to be entrepreneurial
- Local government reorganisation will have a massive impact
- Our hands can be tied because we are a LA
- We need more collaboration with the rest of BH
- There are opportunities to work with the fashion, textile and business courses at the University of Creative Arts in Epsom.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### 6.3 Hallmark: GOVERNANCE

**Definition: consciously practice good governance following Charity Commission and AIM Guidance.**

**All trustees are proactive advocates for the organisation and its purpose. They focus on strategic and significant issues. They avoid conflicts of interest and always wear only one hat at a time.**

**The trustees and senior staff or volunteers understand their different roles and work well together towards the purpose.**

This Hallmark is written to align to the charitable status of independent museums but the self assessment questions have been adapted to fit with the governance of Bourne Hall Museum as a local authority run museum.

**Self assessment questions**

- How well do elected members, staff and volunteers work together?
- How well does our work fit with the Arts, Culture and Library Strategy and wider council priorities?

**Workshop Feedback**

- It's a small team at E+E. We all work well together but are stretched.
- Council decision making structures and processes can be challenging
- We all tend to work according to individual perspectives; we need to work towards common goals
- Things can be disjointed between BH and E+E BC
- The Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy works well
- There are wider challenges with volunteer recruitment post Covid

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

## 6.4 Hallmark: FINANCE

**Definition: be financially resilient and well managed as a charitable business.**

**The organisation nurtures a diversity of income sources. Some of these are predictable and it has sound business planning skills.**

**All leaders understand the key drivers of their business model. The organisation actively identifies, develops and utilises its assets to generate income in order to fulfil its purpose.**

This Hallmark is written for a museum operating in a charity framework rather than as a local government service however similar but different financial challenges are also present for local government museums and this benchmark was used to look at where there are additional funding opportunities for Bourne Hall Museum.

### Self assessment questions

- What are our financial challenges and where are there funding opportunities?

### Workshop Feedback

- Challenges
  - We need enough money to deliver a (new) forward plan
  - There is a need to invest in the museum
  - Being a LA restricts access to some funding opportunities
  - There are challenges around budgets reducing
  - We need to demonstrate economic and social value
  - We don't charge for exhibitions
- Opportunities
  - Links to local businesses/organisations for possible sponsorship and grants
  - Museum shop
  - An online shop
  - Charging a refundable deposit for damages to school loan boxes
  - Look at wider grant opportunities for funding



[REDACTED]

## 6.5 Hallmark: INNOVATION

**Definition: be adaptive, resourceful and prepared to take risks**

**The organisation encourages innovation and creative thinking. It adapts, invests and takes planned risks, in order to find new and better ways to achieve its purpose.**

**No one accepts that the status quo is fixed and unchangeable.**

### Self assessment question

- To what extent do we actively look for new ways of achieving our purpose?

### Workshop Feedback

- We don't look for new ways.
- It is hard to get people to go up to the first floor of BH

### Ideas

- Look at what is happening in other museums, what is working elsewhere (eg across Surrey)
- More market research needed
- Themes with outside speakers
- Open up events to bring in different people
- Create some new walks
- AI
- Opportunities with social media
- Become more neurodiverse friendly- eg quiet open early sessions
- Consider the best space for the museum
- Connect to themes of creativity, culture, heritage, wellbeing

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## 6.6 Hallmark: COLLECTIONS

**Definition: collect, guard and make accessible your collection.**

**The organisation understands the potential of its collection. It recognises what constitutes its heritage assets - including stories, knowledge and places, as well as objects.**

**It seeks to fulfil its purpose through enabling the broadest possible audience to engage fully with all its heritage assets and caring for them in line with best practice.**

### Self assessment questions

- How strong is the link between our collections and our purpose?
- How well do we use our collections to benefit a broad range of people (and engage with new people?)
- To what extent does our collections care meet best practice standards?

### Workshop feedback

- There's a strong link between our collections and our purpose
- Collections relate to the borough of E+E- mostly local history and archaeology
- We could expand the collection too- more contemporary collecting
- The new Collections Development Policy is an opportunity
- The school loan boxes are used to engage young people
- We could work with Nescot on tech history
- Walks and event and re-enactors engage people with the collections
- We change the display cases
- Could also do memory boxes from the collection
- Room D onsite store needs work

This area of work is guided by sector wide standards including the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme (managed by Arts Council England), Spectrum, the UK Collections Management Standard (managed by Collections Trust) and the Museums Association Code of Ethics



**It continually measures its quality and its success in delivering a first-class visitor experience to the broadest possible audience and seeks to adapt whenever necessary**

### Self assessment questions

- How effective are we at delivering a first class visitor experience?
- How well do we understand our current audiences – their needs and motivations?
- How well do we understand our potential audiences and their needs and motivations?

### Workshop Feedback

- We could improve promotional materials
- We give everyone 1<sup>st</sup> class treatment (volunteer perspective)
- The museum is accessible by lift
- We need more and bolder advertising in Bourne Hall and in the park
- We could reflect the history of the hospitals in Horton and the impact on the community now
- We need to sort out some form of visitor survey
- Do surveys when we have events
- We need to identify audience needs + wants in the museum
- We don't completely understand our current audiences

Having a focus on who is visiting a museum (and who is not visiting) alongside working to ensure the best possible visitor experience is essential for the success of any museum.

A key finding of this review was that BHM does not have any current visitor data or insights on who and how many people are visiting. There is some information about attendance at the museum club and use of school loan boxes but no data on general visitor numbers or qualitative insights on the visitor experience. AIM have a [useful publication](#) for smaller museums on conducting visitor research

The Accreditation standard includes the requirement to evidence how you understand who uses and doesn't use your museum and to use this data to plan improvements to your museum offer.

[REDACTED]

## 6.8 Hallmark: AWARENESS & NETWORKS

**Definition: take part in varied, active networks and partnership and have good external awareness.**

**The organisation constantly looks ahead, including outside of itself to the broader heritage and tourism sectors. It is aware of trends and anticipates challenges.**

**It makes itself well-known, relevant to and visible within its immediate community and has a range of other, wider networks.**

### Self assessment questions

- How effectively do we identify external developments that might affect us?
- How well do we know our community?
- How well known are we by our community?
- How good are we at making connections with wider networks?

**Workshop Feedback**

- We have good links to the Surrey History Centre
- Good links to history groups in the Borough
- Jeremy (as Curator) has been at the centre of the museum's networks. Will need to think about continuity etc when he retires
- Suspect that the museum is not well known by the community
- I don't think that we are involved in place making
- We could use the Borough Insight publication to raise awareness

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

## 6.9 Hallmark: TACKLING INEQUALITY

**Definition:** the organisation is inclusive and challenges prejudice, discrimination and racism.

The organisation recognises its responsibility to carry out its purpose for the benefit of all, striving to make a positive impact and represent all communities. It understands

and takes action to challenge prejudice and inequality and create equality of opportunity for its workforce and its users. It acknowledges that the connections between our nation's history and heritage are an invaluable tool in the fight against discrimination.

### Self assessment question

- How effectively does our organisation listen to and act on a range of voices from diverse backgrounds?

### Workshop Feedback

- We need to survey our visitors- we have some qualitative but not quantitative feedback
- Be mindful of digital exclusion in all aspects of our work
- We need to be more inclusive of protected groups (eg types of exhibitions)
- Schools are very diverse and regularly use the museum
- We need inclusive events across BH
- Consider accessibility and interpretation
- Need to plan a calendar of work a year ahead
- Look at examples of work done by the National Trust
- Example 'This is Me' (ask Susan)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## 6.10 Hallmark: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This Hallmark is still under development however the Accreditation standard also asks that museums consider their work around environmental sustainability in their forward plan. It is also one of Arts Council England's Investment Principles.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Climate Action Plan should guide this work and its impact can already be seen in the Bourne Hall improvement works to install solar panels and more energy efficient double glazed windows.

There are opportunities for the museum to review its own carbon footprint and consider potential for improvements as part of the development of the forward plan.

Museum Development South East offers a training and support programme around carbon literacy <https://mdse.org.uk/carbon-literacy-and-climate-action-programme/> and there is also a [carbon literacy toolkit for museums](#) that can be used independently.

### Self assessment question

- What are the opportunities for the museum to reduce its carbon footprint and increase its environmental sustainability?

### Workshop Feedback

- LED lighting in the gallery
- Think about use of plastic in archaeological archives
- Events for local people- encourage use of public transport, more park + ride
- Increase energy efficiency of the building
- Be less paper heavy + recycle



[Redacted text block]

- [Redacted list item 1]
- [Redacted list item 2]
- [Redacted list item 3]

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- [Redacted list item 1]

[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]





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