



EYAM MUSEUM

Options Project Consultant Brief

Guideline contract value £45,000-£50,000

Following successful award of a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Eyam Museum is seeking consultant support for a project pivotal to its future development.

Founded 30 years ago to house the personal collection of a local historian, Eyam Museum has grown (in audience terms, at least) way beyond the expectations of its founders. The Museum is seeking to take a significant step in its development, looking to broaden its audiences, and update its interpretation strategy, business model and facilities.

The successful consultants will have considerable experience of conducting projects of this scale and scope. They will be able to draw on this, together with sector experience, to provide the Museum with first-class advice and live examples of similar successful projects that they have led. Applications are welcomed from both consultancy firms and groups of independent consultants working together under a single lead contact.

Further to the detailed content required, the consultants will need to work collaboratively with the Museum's key staff and Trustees, ensuring buy-in to the project process and its outcomes as the project progresses.

About Eyam Museum

Eyam Museum's primary purpose is to tell the story of the plague in Eyam (1665 – 66). It is a highly successful organisation – well run, financially secure and widely respected within the sector. Post-COVID visitor numbers have quickly returned to and exceeded pre-COVID levels, and the organisation is a vibrant and energising place for visitors, staff, volunteers and Trustees alike. It has very recently renewed its Arts Council England Accredited status.

However, the Museum faces a range of challenges in diversifying its audiences, providing appropriate interpretation for present-day visitors and in the infrastructure and facilities of the current building. It is within this context that the Museum's Trustees and employees are committed to update and develop the Museum and continue to improve its offering to a diverse set of audiences.

Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

The long-term development of the museum has two key aims:

1. Creating a museum commensurate with the importance of the Eyam plague story, already widely known nationally and internationally, ensuring its business model continues to be financially sound and sustainable
2. Complementing the Museum's role as a visitor attraction with its function as a key community asset driving impact and change with and for local residents

The Eyam Museum Options Project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to commission a comprehensive consultancy project to appraise options for redevelopment of our museum.

In order to build the case for funding long-term development, the Museum is looking for consultant support in identifying the parameters of this development, which we see as having four main objectives:

1. Developing and diversifying the Museum's audiences
2. Updating and enhancing our interpretation strategy
3. Optimising our business model, including admission income, retail and fundraising
4. Improving the building and facilities

The required outcomes of this project are:

1. Provide Eyam Museum with a set of feasible options for future development which have been thoroughly researched and analysed and which address the key aims of the project
2. Support and facilitate the Museum's decision-making process in identifying a preferred option and mapping in broad terms the next steps to implementing it

Consulting Process

Area 1. Developing and Diversifying Audiences

Visitor numbers remain very healthy and have fully recovered (and increased) following the COVID closure (in 2023 over 34,000 visitors). However, we are aware that the Museum's adult audiences are largely drawn from a relatively narrow segment of the population, closely tracking that of visitors and holidaymakers in the Peak District National Park – either families or older, white and middle-class couples enjoying a day out.

Visits by schools, on the other hand, are more likely to reflect wider diversity, since many are from the nearby conurbations of South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and the East Midlands. We have an ambition to further diversify our audiences beyond school groups.

Another key audience is the local community, which is not particularly attracted by the traditional narrative of the plague story, which is already very familiar to them. However, the collection includes extensive research material about individuals and family networks in Eyam during the plague, which is not fully explored in the Museum. We believe this would be of great interest to the local community, especially as there are many descendants still living in the area. This aspect of the story has great human interest for visitors and locals alike.

Eyam's long and varied history beyond the plague story is largely under-represented in the Museum, providing significant opportunity for community engagement to enhance this aspect of our stated purpose.

The initial part of this project, therefore, is to analyse the Museum's current and potential audiences, and advise on ways to develop these, building on Eyam's status as a very well-known tourist destination.

Required consultancy work:

Conduct a range of qualitative and quantitative research through focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, social media and other techniques across our range of current and potential audiences, to enable us to better understand their needs. This will allow us to review the balance between the plague and non-plague aspects of our purpose, while ensuring a resilient operating model.

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Deliverables:

Draft Audience Development plan including –

- Analysis of data and summary of subjective feedback
- Segmentation of current audience data
- Identifying priority audiences and understanding their behaviours
- Identifying what stories they would like to see
- Highlighting real and perceived barriers
- Exploration of the implications of these findings
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Interim presentation of outcomes of this area

It is critical that the outcomes and recommendations of this part of the project are based on wide-ranging and statistically sound data on our current and potential audiences. The recommendations here form the foundations for subsequent areas of the project in that the recommended set of audience groups must collectively ensure a long-term resilient financial model.

Area 2. Enhancing the Museum's Interpretation Strategy

The second major element of the Options Project is to obtain expert advice and support to develop a new interpretation strategy. This would include a more inclusive story-telling approach, with better layering, differentiation and interactive displays to enable access for a wider range of audiences. This is likely to include a range of techniques, many requiring additional space to be effective. In the short term, we are able to test various approaches in temporary exhibitions. As and when more space is available, these can be extended to the permanent exhibition.

Required consultancy work:

Comparative analysis of strategies and techniques utilised by comparable museums, drawing on the consultants' broad experience within the sector and supported by a range of case studies that are pertinent to Eyam Museum (preferably, but not limited to, ones that the consultants have implemented, and not necessarily only from the UK). The deliverables for this section should be focused on addressing the aims for the project described above.

Deliverables:

Report and feedback to the Museum on –

- Current best practice in interpretation strategy in comparable museums
- Co-creation best practice
- Creating a framework for interpretation strategy and co-creation
- Drawing on analysis of our audience' needs and current best practice, make recommendations on what Eyam Museum could and should implement in this area
- Consideration and reporting of the cost, space and time implications of adopting these recommendations
- Interim presentation of outcomes in this area

The outcome of this section will have a major bearing on what changes and improvements are required for the Museum's facilities.

Area 3. Optimising the Museum's business model

In 2023, operating income generated by the Museum comprised two parts – admissions income forming two thirds of the total and retail activities (including a small online

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operation) constituted the remaining third. Historically, the Museum has been awarded a number of relatively small grants from funders such as Arts Council England, Museum Development and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, but has undertaken no philanthropic fundraising or sponsorship arrangements.

The retail operation is and will continue to be integral to the success of the Museum, contributing an increasing amount of profit to overall performance over the last few years. It is, therefore, important to include the performance and contribution of our retail operation as part of this study.

Additionally, we wish to consider a potential future business model which includes the current operational activities and examines other opportunities for fundraising and income-generation.

Required consultancy work:

Provide analysis and advice, drawing on the consultants' experience in the sector. This will be supported by a range of best practice case studies that are pertinent to Eyam Museum (preferably, but not limited to, ones that the consultants have implemented, focusing on UK entities of similar size and scale to Eyam Museum).

Deliverables:

Draft business plan, including –

- Current operational, retail and other fundraising best practice in comparable museums
- Drawing on audience analysis and current best practice, make recommendations on what Eyam Museum could and should implement in this area
- Consideration and reporting of the cost, space and time implications, as appropriate, of adopting these recommendations
- Interim presentation of outcomes in this area

These recommendations should clearly inform the next aspect of the consultancy, Area 4.

Area 4. Improving the Building and Facilities

The Museum's building and facilities are stretched to deal with the current audience demand, especially at weekends and during school holidays. Furthermore, the lack of space constrains the development of new interpretation strategies or retail space and the provision of learning and research facilities. Storage space for the collection is far from ideal in the present building.

To meet the aims for audience development, enhancing our interpretation strategy and implementing retail best practice outlined above, the final objective of this Options Project is to scope out a range of possibilities for the future development of the building and its facilities. This must address their feasibility (including planning considerations within the Peak District National Park), and potential costs, together with implications for the Museum's operations and financial stability.

Developments options could include –

- Limited modifications to the current building
- Rebuilding and / or limited expansion of the current building on its existing site
- Acquisition of neighbouring land allowing expansion of the building
- Inclusion of a Grade II listed building (the remains of Bradshaw Hall on adjacent land) into the Museum's estate

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The study should also look at the implications of incorporating other potential developments, including, for example –

- Creating a research and education centre (on-site or nearby)
- Creating study facilities and/or meeting spaces
- Examining the feasibility as well as the costs and benefits of providing additional facilities for visitors, e.g. on-site toilets and café

Required consulting work:

- Analyse a range of possible ways forward, including a high-level SWOT analysis of each proposal
- Assess the development environment in the Peak District National Park
- Analyse the timeframes, costs and benefits of each proposal

Again, we would expect the consultants to draw on their broad experience to provide this advice, supported by a range of case studies that are pertinent to Eyam Museum (preferably cases with which the consultants have been involved).

Deliverables:

A final report and presentation covering all aspects of the project to include –

- Specific recommended options with supporting material, including outline costs sufficient to inform a next stage grant application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Advice on actions required to achieve net zero targets within a reasonable timeframe
- Detailed advice on how to take forward the implementation of the preferred option(s)

Consultants to present the final outcomes of the Options Project to the Management Committee at one or a series of workshops, and to facilitate the process of decision-making required.

Timing of the project

Proposed outline timing for the project

- Invitation to Tender and commissioning consultants – by mid-October 2024
- Data collection and analysis November 2024 – February 2025
- Development of report and feedback – March 2025
- Workshops and decisions on next steps – April 2025

Project Governance

Internally, the Project will be managed by a sub-committee of key staff and Trustees, led by the Chair, which will work closely with the consultants. The Project Manager, responsible for day-to-day management of the work will be Owen Roberts, Curator. The Project and its outcomes will be reviewed on a regular basis by the full Management Committee. An external consultant will provide evaluation of the project. All project consultants are expected to contribute to the evaluation process and provide feedback and data to the consultant as required. The Museum is providing match funding to the grant from its reserves to contribute to the costs of the Project.

Tender Process Information

1. Invitation to Tender issued early August 2024
2. Indication of intention to respond must be received by Eyam Museum by email no later than 24.00 on Thursday 22nd August
3. Following this, the Project Manager (Owen Roberts, Curator, curator@eyam-museum.org.uk) and / or the Chair (Richard Coates, richard.coates@eyam-museum.org.uk) will answer questions received by email up to 24.00 on Thursday 29th August. Substantive responses may be shared with all tendering organisations, at our discretion
4. Completed tenders should be received by the Museum no later than 24.00 on Sunday 15th September 2024. These must include –
 - a. Statement on the overall aims and objectives of the project
 - b. Summary of tendering organisation's consulting philosophy
 - c. Detailed descriptions of how the consultancy will address each of the described areas of the brief, including time allocated
 - d. A timeline project plan
 - e. Bios of the consultants who will be allocated to the project, including the project manager
 - f. Descriptions of similar projects delivered by the organisation (preferably including the nominated consultants) post-COVID
 - g. Detailed breakdown of costs of the project, including consulting fees, expenses, and VAT if required
 - h. Confirmation of availability for in-person presentation of the proposal in Eyam (see 6. below)
 - i. Confirmation of availability to start the project on the required date (see 8. below)
5. Eyam Museum will review all applications and shortlist up to three for in-person presentation in Eyam. Consultancies will be notified that they have been short-listed no later than Monday 23rd September. The presentation should be led by the key consultants who will deliver the project and will be at the consultancy's own expense
6. The selected consultancies will be invited to present their proposals to the Trustees and Managers of Eyam Museum on Tuesday 22nd or Wednesday 23rd October
7. While cost is an important consideration, the principal criteria for creating a shortlist and the final selection of a consultant to work with Eyam Museum will be –
 - Accuracy of interpretation of the brief
 - Appropriateness and deliverability of the proposed project plan
 - Quality and experience of individual consultants allocated to the project
 - Ability to bring creative and innovative ideas to the project
 - 'Chemistry' and fit with Eyam Museum's culture and aims
 - Evidence of similar projects delivered recently by the consultancy
8. A decision on the outcome will be made following the presentations, and the successful organisation notified by Friday 25th October
9. It is intended that the project will commence at the beginning of November (exact date to be agreed with the successful consultant).