

Your Gateway to
Buckinghamshire's Story

Strategic Plan



The Lenborough Hoard

The forgotten conquest of England



Engaging Visitors, Unlocking Collections

We ignite curiosity and inspire connections to Buckinghamshire's rich heritage through dynamic exhibitions, engaging programs, and inclusive experiences. We curate engaging experiences – temporary exhibitions, guided tours, community programmes – to stimulate curiosity and connect visitors to Buckinghamshire's story.

Building on our legacy, we are changing. Buckinghamshire's County Museum since 1907, housed in a historic Grade II* listed building, we are now dynamically reimagining our roots and developing a museum for the future.

As custodians of over 200,000 objects, our nationally important collections span 300 million years to the present and include the internationally significant Lenborough Hoard, we utilise creative displays and research to ensure their relevance and accessibility for all.

As an Arts Council supported National Portfolio Organisation, we champion accessibility, inclusivity, and a forward-thinking approach to the future of museum experiences. Our approach embraces digital and hands-on experiences, creating a fully immersive and engaging environment for all visitors. We are proud of our renowned Roald Dahl's Children's gallery and our work with Buckinghamshire communities.

We exceed expectations by actively engaging visitors and communities, pushing boundaries in collection care and presentation, and fostering a dynamic staff and volunteer culture, all to dispel the "dusty museum" myth.





Building on a Legacy of Stewardship and Innovation

Established in 2012 as a charitable trust, Discover Bucks Museum safeguards collections entrusted by Buckinghamshire institutions for over 170 years.

The Roald Dahl Children's Gallery, a 1995 innovation recognised with a National Heritage award, continues to be a cornerstone of educational outreach, serving 90% of school visitors. Retaining National Portfolio Organisation status (2023-2027) underscores our commitment to excellence.

A recent £1.2m refurbishment project revitalised core galleries. While further digital enhancements are planned, the Lenborough Hoard's custom-built display exemplifies our commitment to engaging presentations.

Operating independently since 2012, we navigate a competitive funding landscape while striving for financial sustainability.

This strategic plan charts our course for the next decade, ensuring Discover Bucks Museum thrives as a dynamic centre for cultural exploration and learning.



Our Vision

We will become a nationally recognised powerhouse for learning, where every visitor embarks on an unforgettable journey of discovery. We will ignite a passion for the county of Buckinghamshire, fostering a community of lifelong learners, and unlocking the secrets of the past through our unique collections.

To be known nationally, as a significant centre of learning, champion for all things 'Bucks' and recognised for delivering excellent experiences and interaction with our unique collections.

Our Mission

Uncover, connect, and inspire. We ignite curiosity and foster a sense of belonging by collecting, preserving, and sharing Buckinghamshire's stories through captivating experiences.

To collect and share objects and stories reflecting the people, culture and landscapes in Buckinghamshire. We encourage visitors to join us on journeys of discovery. We inspire our community, creating conversations and connections to the place where we live.



Our Values

Inclusion & Representation

We are open and inclusive. We ensure that objects, exhibitions and events we share are representative of our communities so that everyone can see themselves reflected.

Exploration, discovery and wonder

We inspire deeply emotional responses and moments of magic. We help people to explore and find things that are meaningful to their lives and help them discover the heritage of Buckinghamshire.

Meaningful Connections

We are curious and inquisitive about our collections and the world around us. We uncover the wonderful stories linked with our collections to stimulate ideas, knowledge, understanding and conversations.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Audience Engagement

Inspire all audiences: Cultivate lifelong learning through engaging experiences for public visitors, schools, community groups, digital audiences, and academic researchers.

2. Collection Stewardship

Unleash the Power of Collections: Revitalise collection development, foster deeper engagement, ensure exceptional care, optimise management practices, and prioritise robust security.

3. Resource Optimisation

Empower Our People & Place: Invest in staff and volunteer development, optimise infrastructure and buildings to enhance visitor experience, and leverage technology to improve efficiency.

4. Financial Sustainability

Secure Our Future: Ensure long-term financial stability to support all strategic initiatives and deliver exceptional value for our community.



Strategic Objectives:

1. Audience Engagement

- Expand & engage diverse audiences: Grow physical and digital reach to attract new visitors and retain existing ones.
- Retain existing visitors: Our commitment to fresh displays, captivating exhibitions, and enriching events ensures our loyal audience continues to discover new experiences.
- Reach new horizons: Bold programming; thematic and timely exhibitions and dynamic digital outreach will attract diverse audiences, showcasing Buckinghamshire's treasures and stories of the past.
- Champion inclusive learning: Deliver exceptional experiences for learning groups, both on-site and through outreach programs, fostering inclusivity for all communities.
- Elevate our team offer: Pursue excellence in everything we do, prioritising the quality and innovation of our programming and collections.
- Community hub: Become an integral part of our local communities, fostering a strong sense of connection and belonging.
- Inspire young minds: Interactive experiences, object handling, and living history programmes bring history to life for school visitors, fostering a love of learning and appreciation for local heritage.



2. Collection Stewardship

- Safeguard & enrich collections for the future: Ensure the long-term preservation and development of our collections for the benefit of future generations. Invest and fundraise for a revitalised collections storage facility.
- Unlock stories that matter: Curate captivating experiences that utilise our collections to engage diverse audiences. We prioritise presenting the right objects in a meaningful way, ensuring inclusivity of voices and local heritage.
- Accessibility for all: Continuously break down barriers to access by optimising our storage facilities and creating exciting, innovative ways to showcase our collections.



3. Resource Optimisation

- Invest in our people: Empower our staff and volunteer teams by providing ongoing training and development opportunities to cultivate a skilled and engaged workforce.
- Optimise existing assets: Ensure the safety and security of our collections, visitors, and staff by meticulously maintaining buildings and grounds while maximising the potential of our current resources.
- Strategic growth: Expand our reach and impact by exploring opportunities to increase our physical locations and staffing, ultimately enhancing brand awareness and the quality and capacity of our offerings.
- Building partnerships for success: Forge strong and mutually beneficial collaborations with key stakeholders to achieve our strategic objectives.

4. Financial Sustainability

- Diversify revenue & secure sustainability: Develop innovative income streams to bolster financial self-sufficiency.
- Cultivate philanthropic partnerships: Maximise philanthropic support by attracting donations, sponsorships, and grant funding for impactful projects.
- Financial stewardship: Implement robust and forward-thinking financial management practices to optimise revenue generation, minimise unnecessary expenditures, and ensure long-term financial health.
- Inclusive access & enhanced revenue: Maintain affordable pricing to ensure cultural experiences are accessible to all, while also developing an attractive retail and catering offer to generate additional revenue.



Discover Bucks Museum: A Decade of Excellence

Over the next 10 years, we will deliver on our mission, vision and values. Our future museum will have excelled and have been transformed.

We will be a thriving destination: A cornerstone of Buckinghamshire's cultural landscape, attracting over 100,000 visitors annually with engaging events, exhibitions, and internationally-renowned collections like the studio ceramics collection, the 'Aylesbury Egg' and archaeology from the recent HS2 excavations..

We will have delivered award-winning experiences: Rivalling national museums, Discover Bucks boasts interactive, thought-provoking experiences consistently praised by visitors.

We will be a hub for learning and discovery: Our resource centre and collections store are accessible to the public and academia, showcasing RAF Halton history and best-practice collection care.

We will have Invested in all of our people: An exemplary employer, we offer equal opportunities, staff development, and training programs, fostering a skilled and dedicated workforce. We will have harnessed the power of Buckinghamshire's citizens to power volunteer activity. We will be well governed, offering a model for governance in the sector.

We will have achieved financial sustainability: Our robust operating model generates a healthy surplus year-on-year, enabling ongoing investment in visitor experience, collections, and infrastructure.

We will be a **beacon of excellence**: Discover Bucks Museum is a multi-award-winning institution, lauded for its dedication to visitor experiences, storytelling, learning, and museum best practices.





Discover Bucks
Museum

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Supported using public funding by
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ENGLAND**



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