

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: Date: 9 November 2011

Subject: Poorly Performing Performance Indicator - CC3b: Number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums that were in person per 1000 population

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise committee of the poorly performing Performance Indicator - CC3b: Number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums that were in person per 1000 population; explaining results for 2010/11.
- 1.2** To inform committee of current work relating to this indicator, the impact of this, and plans for the future of Clydebank Museum.

2. Background

- 2.1** This Performance Indicator CC3b: number of visits to/usages of Council funded or part funded museum that were in person per thousand population had a target value of 110 for 2010-11. The figure achieved fell significantly short of this target and was 75 visits per thousand population.
- 2.2** Although owned and managed by The Scottish Maritime Museum statistics for Denny Tank Museum are collated for this P.I. as the museum is part-funded by West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 2.3** Clydebank Museum was established in 1980 by Clydebank District Council with the support of local community campaigners who wished to see Clydebank's rich industrial history recognised and preserved. The collection at that time was focused on three key themes: WWII (in particular the Clydebank Blitz), Singer, and John Brown's Shipyards.
- 2.4** Clydebank Museum is based within Clydebank Town Hall. Since 2003 Clydebank Museum has been managed by WDC Culture Section and latterly WDC Libraries & Museums during which time the museum has seen radical changes including: a doubling in annual visits in person, a regular programme temporary exhibitions, and national accreditation.
- 2.5** In June 2010 Clydebank Museum was again assessed by Visit Scotland as part of its Quality Assurance Scheme and achieved 4 Star status putting the museum in the top 12% of museums nationally.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Visitor figures to both Denny Tank Museum and Clydebank Museum were significantly impacted in 2010/11. Extreme weather conditions affected visitor figures for November-January with visitors unable to visit due to road conditions and disruption to public transport. This also resulted in temporary museum closures.
- 3.2** Both museums were also closed for extended periods in 2010 to allow building and refurbishment works. Throughout August and September 2010 Denny Tank Museum was closed to the public resulting in reduced visitor figures for that quarter. Similarly Clydebank Museum has been closed to the public since 23rd December 2010 as part of the refurbishment of Clydebank Town Hall. This again impacted on visitor figures.
- 3.3** In addition scaffolding was in place outside the entrance to Clydebank Town Hall for a period of months in 2010 whilst the museum was open. Combined with the lack of external and internal signage this negatively impacted on visitor numbers.
- 3.4** The transient nature of a rolling programme of temporary exhibitions also translates into varying visitor figures through a twelve month period. Visitor figures can increase or decrease depending on the popularity of a particular exhibition and is reflected in visitor figures collated.
- 3.5** Clydebank Museum has been closed throughout 2011, whilst Clydebank Town Hall is refurbished. Significant measures have been taken to ensure delivery of museum services within West Dunbartonshire. Two local heritage centres have been established in Clydebank & Dumbarton Libraries. These new facilities provide permanent exhibition space promoting public access to museum exhibits, archives and artefacts from the local history and museum collections.
- 3.6** Dumbarton Heritage Centre opened at Dumbarton Library in March 2010, with improvements to Clydebank local history service following throughout the summer and completion of Clydebank Heritage Centre in October 2010. The provision of these heritage centres reflect demand identified through public consultation and has resulted in increased visitor figures recorded for the 1st Quarter of 2011/12.
- 3.7** Visitor figures for 1st Quarter 2011/12 reflect a significant increase in visitor figures. Visits in person to museum exhibitions and Denny Tank Museum have increased substantially compared to the first quarter of 2010/11; increasing by a factor of 10 and 4 respectively. The increase in Denny Tank Museum visitors has been influenced by its recent refurbishment.
- 3.8** 1st Quarter statistics for 2011/12 also compare very favourably with previous 1st Quarter statistics and are higher than any recorded in the last five years. These being: 2007/8 = 17, 2008/9 = 20, 2009/10 = 23, 2010/11 = 11, 2011/12 = 66

- 3.9** Schools visits in person are lower in the 1st Quarter of 2011/12 due to the temporary closure of Clydebank Museum. However there has been a substantial increase in uptake of outreach services including museum resource kits for schools and care homes with participation figures up by 2,750.
- 3.10** Current work includes a partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland where Clydebank Museum will be the National Portrait Gallery's 'Partner in the West of Scotland (one of only three partners selected nationally). This means that Clydebank will be the sole venue for annual exhibitions from the National Portrait Gallery on the west coast for at least five years.
- 3.11** Dependant on Scottish Government funding, announced in December/January, the exhibitions will be loaned to the museum at minimum or no cost. In the eventuality that no government funding is received, the relationship between Clydebank Museum and the National Galleries will still continue, with high impact loan requests being granted to the museum before requests from other bodies are considered.
- 3.12** As an indication of their commitment to work in partnership with us, the National Galleries are in the process of considering the loan of major works of art to Clydebank Museum to celebrate the re-opening of the Town Hall in 2012.
- 3.13** Following the refurbishment of Clydebank Town Hall, elements of the museum's collections will be relocated on permanent show within the venue, in addition to the provision of a new temporary gallery space for small touring exhibitions. Clydebank Museum itself will be refurbished (depending upon funding) and will reopen promoting a major exhibition of 20th Century paintings with works on loan from amongst other the National Galleries.
- 3.14** It is anticipated that the refurbishment of Denny Tank Museum in 2011, the extension of Clydebank Museum within the newly refurbished Clydebank Town Hall and programme of exhibitions being developed in 2012 will result in increased visits and an improvement in this performance indicator in the coming year/s.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** To realise the full potential of the planned enhancements to Clydebank Museum and links with National bodies will require capital investment some of which has been allocated from within existing budgets. Match funding is being sought from a number of external funders. Libraries & Museums have an excellent track record of attracting external funding to West Dunbartonshire.

However it is recognised that in the current economic climate it is becoming increasingly difficult to gain external funding and plans may be scaled down as required.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report.

7. Equalities, Health and Human Rights Impact Assessment

- 7.1** No significant issues were identified for potential equality impact in this report.

8. Strategic Assessment

How will this help make best use of our money?

- 8.1** The proposals to enhance Clydebank Museum aims to achieve Best Value for the Council. In addition to committing 30k from Educational core funds, external funding is being sought from a number of funders for the refurbishment of Clydebank Museum including improvements to environmental monitoring and security. On the basis that funding bids are successful the council will realise over 80k external funding representing 62% of total project costs more than doubling council investment.

How does it make better use of our physical and human assets?

- 8.2** In addition to the resulting Best Value use of existing budgets and maximisation of external funding this project enables significant capital investment in Clydebank Museum. Enhancing the venue and enabling it to host exhibitions of national and international calibre. This will provide the only venue of this standard in West Dunbartonshire. Partnership working with the National Galleries will benefit staff through the sharing of skills and provision of training to support service delivery.

How does it change or impact on service provision?

- 8.3** The enhancement of Clydebank Museum will result in a Museum and Gallery suitable for exhibitions from internationally famed institutions such as the National Galleries, which will appeal to local, national and international audiences, increase tourism and improve the museum's performance in Statutory Performance Indicator reporting.

9. Conclusion and Officer's Recommendation

- 9.1** The committee is asked to note the contents of this report in relation to the poorly performing Performance Indicator for: Number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums that were in person per 1000 population in 2010/11; and the reasons given for this.
- 9.2** Committee is also asked to note the significant efforts, and impact made, to increase visitor figures through the establishment of two new heritage centres in Clydebank and Dumbarton. Also the plans to enhance Clydebank Museum, and partnerships with National agencies in order to attract exhibitions of international quality, to improve tourism and increase Statutory Performance Indicator results.

Terry Lanagan
Executive Director of Education

Person to Contact: Laura Mason, Head of Service, Educational Services,
Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU.
Tel: 01389 737304.
E-mail laura.mason@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All Wards