

SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

FORWARD PLAN 2025 - 2028



1. Museum Information

Name of museum: Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum (SJBm), Accredited Museum 767

Name of governing body: Lichfield City Council (LCC), as sole trustee of the Dr Johnson Birthplace Trust, Charity No. 500046

Forward Plan review procedure: The Forward Plan will be reviewed at least once every five years.

Date of approval by LCC: 10 March 2025

Date at which this Forward Plan is due for full review: November 2028

2. Introduction

2.1 Introduction to the Forward Plan

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum (SJBm) in Lichfield is a Grade I listed 18th century townhouse which has been open to the public as a museum dedicated to Samuel Johnson since 1901. The SJBm Forward Plan details the current situation of SJBm, reviews the previous plan and states the aims and objectives for the 2025 to 2028 period. Following consultation and design with its stakeholders, the plan is considered by the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee (JBAC) of Lichfield City Council (LCC), the minutes of which are approved by full Council (see 4.1). The aims and objectives are updated annually and presented to the Committee, and the full plan updated every three years.

2.2 Museum statement of purpose

The covenant under which the building was acquired in 1900 remains our fundamental mission:

“...to remain in perpetuity as a memorial to the life, work and personality of Samuel Johnson, his Lichfield connections and his friends and contemporaries.”

The Birthplace Trust, established in 1974, expanded this to refer to the care of the building and provision of a public service: ***“...to preserve the Birthplace as a place for historic interest and to maintain the same as a public museum and for public exhibitions.”***

2.3 Development of this Plan

The SJBm Forward Plan 2025-2028 has been updated using the following sources: previous Forward Plans, external reports including access audits and consultant's review and action plan (incorporating volunteer and committee consultation); user comments taken from visitor books, comments boxes, exit surveys and online reviews; consultation session with Museum Attendant staff, and minutes of JBAC meetings.

2.4 Monitoring this Plan

Progress towards the actions identified in this plan will be monitored in monthly reports by the Museums and Heritage Officer (MHO) to LCC, and at the bi-annual JBAC meeting. Implementation of the plan is the responsibility of the MHO and milestones will be set to measure progress.

2.5 Related Documents

Related SJBm policy, procedure and plans are identified in this document. Documents are checked annually and updated on a rolling programme. Policy items requiring governing body approval to meet Accreditation guidelines are periodically presented to the JBAC and LCC.

3. Review of Forward Plan 2021-2024

3.1 Overview of activities in 2021-2024 Plan

The previous Forward Plan at SJBM covered the period 2021-2024. The plan was created by the former MHO, who left the organisation. Kimberley Biddle took over the MHO role in August 2023.

Despite significant delays to projects and development plans caused by necessary but unexpected structural work on the building's exterior in 2022, and asbestos removal in 2024, much has been accomplished.

Development plans to improve physical access to the ground floor had to be re-evaluated and were ultimately deemed unfeasible due to permissions outside the control of SJBM and LCC not being granted, along with rising costs. Despite this setback we are committed to welcoming all and improving access to the Museum despite the limitations of our building.

The Workroom redisplay project was completed alongside significant improvements to the Bookshop. Displays and security were greatly improved with the purchase of five new display cases.

Upon reviewing the 2021-2024 Forward Plan, it's evident that prioritising the re-display of the Museum is essential in the coming years. Many of the rooms and exhibits are outdated and in need of renewal. The last major re-display took place in 1989/1990, and the Dictionary Room was last updated in 2005, now two decades ago. SJBM and LCC are committed to addressing the evolving needs and expectations of visitors, adopting innovative approaches to museum interpretation and accessibility, and ensuring the preservation and care of both the collection and the historic building.

3.2 Work completed since 2021

The tables below provide details of scheduled tasks within the previous Forward Plan. Outcomes are colour coded with green representing achieved, orange partially achieved, and pink not achieved, or cancelled due to circumstances arising preventing commencement/completion.

Aim 1: Operate to a high professional standard, making the best use of available resources	
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain Accredited status To maximise available income streams To maximise staff and volunteer development To maximise volunteer input 	
How this was to be achieved:	Has this been achieved:
Maintain and update all policy and procedures	Partially complete – full review of policies in progress.
Regular programme of a least six special events per year planned	Completed
Annual training event (e.g. expert speaker, outing to relevant sites and collections) for staff and volunteers.	Completed
Review individual training needs of staff members in annual personal reviews	Completed
Creating short-term volunteer roles and projects aimed at engaging college students and young people	Completed
Target of 50p average donation per head by March 2024	Not achieved – carry forward. New hybrid donations box purchased, and signage updated to achieve target increase in 2025/26 and beyond.
Increase group and education bookings income by 10%	Achieved
Launch online shop and specialist second-hand book online sales	Cancelled – focus was redirected to improving the Bookshop, which has been completed. An online shop launch will be reviewed in the future.
Improved facilities for Private Hire (toilet)	Cancelled due to essential building work and escalating costs. Improvements to the existing toilet and kitchen facilities will be made in 2025/26.
Establish a regular joint meeting of staff and volunteers for updates and feedback	Completed - ongoing
Prepare and submit return Arts Council England Accreditation application.	Ongoing – return due 1 October 2025
Improved facilities for Private Hire (meeting space)	Not achieved – carry forward
Increased audience for Bookshop with provision of disabled access and related adaptations	Cancelled – installation of an external lift and alterations to doorways not possible (permissions not granted). Adaption to the bottom step of the internal staircase has been completed.
Accessible volunteering opportunities in ground-floor displays introduced	Cancelled -initial plans changed due to the external lift access not being possible. Alternative accessible volunteering opportunities will be explored and implemented.

Aim 2: Build and diversify our audiences, responding to user consultation	
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the number of visitors from our local community To monitor users and consult non-users To increase the number of education visits and partnerships To increase the number of group visit bookings 	
How this was to be achieved:	Has this been achieved:
Special events organised to appeal to range of visitors and encourage return visits, including free of charge events/activities.	Completed - ongoing
Promote the use of bookshop as a local resource through offers, sales and street presence	Completed – increased street presence and promotion of the Bookshop through implementing outdoor sales (in front of the Birthplace), improved exterior signage, and online content.
Regular presence on Lichfield Market Square to promote the Museum (stall twice annually)	Completed – ongoing
Engage with local partnerships, events and groups	Completed - ongoing
Annual update to database of schools and groups and periodic promotion by email and post	Completed – ongoing. The new education offer will further provide new opportunities for marketing to schools.
Introduce additional options for completion of the SJBM visitor exit survey (e.g. online, easy access QR codes)	Not achieved – this is being explored and will be carried forward
Conduct street surveys with local people to gather data from non-users	Not achieved – carry forward
Train additional staff members and volunteers in delivery of education programme	Cancelled – the new education programme is being delivered by freelance professional historical educators.
Update Primary school visit to reflect changes to Bookbinding workroom	Completed – printing activity incorporated in new education sessions.
Train additional Museum Attendant staff members and volunteers in delivery of tours and talks	Partially achieved – the content for tours, talks and walks is being refreshed, so this will be carried forward.
Redevelopment of the Museum and displays to include diverse stories and elements of local history	Not achieved – carry forward. This will be incorporated into all future redevelopment/reinterpretation plans.
Review schools offering and devise a planned programme for extending to Key Stages 3 & 4.	Not achieved – carry forward

Aim 3: Increase access to the Museum and collections	
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek alternative solutions to the physical limitations of our Grade I listed building To improve awareness of, and access to, all parts of the collection To update interpretation and displays To improve facilities for researchers and publicise provision widely 	
How this was to be achieved:	Has this been achieved:
Seek expert advice and consultation with users at all stages of development	Partially achieved – ongoing
Work with the Johnson Society to support exploration of fundraising for expansion into an adjacent building (subject to LCC approval with no proactive work being undertaken currently).	Not achieved – the adjacent building is not on the market. Confirmation was received from the owner that there are no plans to put the property up for sale.
Regular programme of small displays highlighting stored collection	Completed
Maintain SJBm blog with monthly collection-based posts	Completed - ongoing
Raise academic profile of Museum, through links with higher education partners, including continued support of Keele Collaborative Doctoral Award	Completed
Digital access to collections relating to Michael Johnson within Workroom development	Ongoing – delays to touchscreen installation.
Redisplay of workroom to become a hands-on accessible space covering history of family business, book trade and binding	Completed
Re-organisation of current displays to incorporate items removed from Workroom and Parlour	Completed
Establish regular volunteer-led open library sessions and publicise with local interest groups	Not achieved – to be reviewed in line with plans for improving the libraries and study area
In-house update to Kitchen display to introduce low-tech interactives for trial and monitoring	Cancelled - partially achieved, however asbestos removal and future redisplay plans have changed the use of this space.
Refurbish Wood Library, incorporating the Blum Study area	Not achieved – carry forward
Relocation of Introductory AV area to Parlour and associated re-display	Not achieved – new plans for AV developments outlined in key aims 2025-2028
Create wheelchair access into Bookshop by street level lift, throughout ground floor and to accessible toilet, subject to planning approval	Cancelled – approval from highways not granted, and permissions not granted for altering doorways.
Establish digital access to upper floors at ground level	Completed – tablet available in Bookshop.
Implement actionable items from Neurodiverse Visitors audit and update SJBm Access Plan	Partially achieved – in progress

Aim 4: Care for the Museum building and collections	
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the storage and care of the collection To improve the documentation of the collection To ensure the ongoing protection of the collection against disaster and damage To ensure the continual maintenance and sustainability of the Birthplace building 	
How this was to be achieved:	Has this been achieved:
Undertake planned programme identified in the updated SJBM Collection Care and Documentation Plans	Partially achieved – ongoing
Bi-annual Collection Clean	Completed
Ensure that all staff are trained in the Museum Emergency plan procedure	Completed
Conduct regular building checks and resolve or report issues promptly	Completed - ongoing
All supplies sourced with consideration to sustainability and carbon reduction	Completed – ongoing
Programme of photography and scanning of collection, with eventual target to have a photograph to accompany every non-library record.	Partially achieved – ongoing
Re-organisation of book storage to facilitate Blum Library move	Not achieved – carry forward
Schedule recommended works from the Quinquennial inspection, including hidden valley gutter exploration	Partially achieved – in progress. Roof repairs and valley gutter exploration completed. Remaining work carried forward.
Removal of asbestos insulation board in basement as part of 2023-24 development works	Completed
Update SJBM Collection Care and Documentation Plans as part of Accreditation renewal process to guide future activities.	Ongoing – carry forward. The Accreditation Return is due 1 October 2025.

4. Situation Review

4.1 Governance & Organisational Structure

The SJBM building and its collection are vested in the Dr Johnson Birthplace Trust (registered charity 500046), of which LCC is the sole trustee. The administration of the Museum, including the employment of staff, is undertaken directly by the Council through its powers under sections 144 and 145 of the Local Government Act 1972. The MHO reports to the Town Clerk of LCC and represents SJBM at Birthplace Advisory Committee meetings.

4.2 Funding & Income generation

LCC provides funding to cover the annual operating costs of SJBM (see Table 1). There is no expectation that LCC funding will be reduced or withdrawn in the further periods covered by the current Forward Plan.

Table 1: Net Expenditure

Service Areas	Budget 2024/25	Estimate 2024/25	Budget 2025/26
Employee costs	116,307	117,121	125,894
Central administration	15,917	16,403	17,296
Repair/Maintenance	4,200	8,517	4,370
Energy	7,520	7,520	8,270
Rates and Water	400	430	440
Supplies and Services	32,070	34,674	36,620
Promotion	2,000	2,000	2,000
Restoration	750	0	750
Stock for sale	3,000	3,765	3,000
Sales income	-10,980	-10,980	-10,980
Contribution from Birthplace Trust	-11,640	-11,640	-11,640
Total	159,544	167,812	176,020

Dr Johnson's Birthplace Trust has a separate account containing funds ring-fenced for collections projects. This comprises remaining monies from the Blum Book Fund established in the 1990s, plus a further gift received from the Blum family in 2020 to be used for book acquisitions, collections care and library projects.

Free admission for standard entry was introduced in 2005 and donations and events admissions quickly surpassed income generated from the Museum admission charge. SJBM also runs a book and souvenir shop in the same room from which the Johnson family bookshop operated from 1708. While Museum income has grown in recent years, several objectives for the 2025-2028 period target increased income generation from sales.

4.3 Staff & Volunteers

LCC employs 7 staff members with a combined 2.7 full-time equivalent. SJBM is led by a full-time MHO for 37 hours a week, supported by a part-time Museum Support Officer (MSO) for 22 hours per week.

A rota of five part-time Museum Attendants welcome visitors and staff the bookshop during public opening hours (equivalent to 35 hours a week November - February, 45.5 hours March-October) plus occasional cover at events, tours and private hires. A team of 11 volunteers support SJBM for an average of 11 hours in total per week, assisting with collections documentation, care and research, running clubs and special events such as family activity sessions. Role descriptions, a Volunteer Agreement and a Volunteer Handbook are provided.

Museum Attendants complete induction training, and a culture of customer care is maintained through regular informal refresher training, checklists and a customer care charter. In-house training sessions are held periodically with training needs identified in consultation with team members. The Deputy Town Clerk at LCC is the organisational lead for Health and Safety matters, and SJBM staff are supported by the employment policies of LCC, including LCC's Equal Opportunities Policy.

4.4 Visiting Audience Overview

Visitor numbers for the 2023/24 financial year showed a 19% increase compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 17,563 visitors. This growth occurred despite a brief closure in March 2024 due to essential building work. The increase aligns with the broader trend of growth within the museums and heritage sector during the same period post COVID-19.

However, despite this recent increase, the Museum is still on the path toward recovering to pre-pandemic levels, with visitor numbers having been impacted by the challenges of COVID-19. Visitor Numbers by Year:

Year	Number of visitors
2023/24	17,563
2022/23	14,807
2021/22	10,607
2019/20	20,994
2018/19	21,472
2017/18	18,287

Visitor number data highlights the Museum's recovery trajectory and the positive impact of ongoing efforts to attract and engage visitors.

Data collected through the visitor book and exit surveys in 2024 demonstrated that Museum continues to welcome a diverse range of visitors across various age groups, as detailed below:

Age Group	Percentage of Visitors
0-4	2%
5-10	11%
10-15	14%
16-24	10%
25-44	20%
45-64	22%
65-74	13%
75+	8%

Visitor Origins: In 2024, visitor data revealed the following breakdown of our audience's geographical locations:

- 22% of visitors were from within 15 miles of the Museum (excluding Lichfield).
- 11% were from Lichfield itself.
- 57% visited from other regions across the UK.
- 10% of visitors came from overseas.

Visitor Satisfaction: Exit surveys conducted in 2024 indicate a high level of satisfaction with the Museum experience:

- 92% of visitors rated their visit above 8 out of 10, with 54% providing a perfect score of 10.
- 91% of visitors rated staff as "Excellent," with the remaining 9% rating them as "Good," demonstrating strong satisfaction in customer care.

These results reflect the Museum's continued success in engaging and satisfying a broad audience.

4.5 Digital Audience Overview

Our digital presence has shown strong growth, with increased reach, engagement, and user interaction across various platforms.

- Facebook Reach: 28.3k users, showcasing significant visibility and broad audience engagement.
- Content Interactions on Facebook: 1.4k, highlighting active participation and audience interaction with our content.
- Instagram Reach: 3.6k users, reflecting a growing following on Instagram.
- Blog Stats:
 - Views: 7.9k, indicating consistent traffic and interest in our blog.
 - Visitors: 5.5k, showing a recurring audience engaging with our blog.
- Google Analytics Insights:
 - Active users of the SJBMM website: 7.2k.
 - Total views: 22,854, demonstrating high user engagement and repeat visits to our website.
 - Views per active user: 3.18, showing that users are returning to explore additional content, suggesting strong ongoing interest and interaction.

These combined metrics highlight the growth of our digital audience, with increasing reach and meaningful engagement across social platforms, our blog, and website. This showcases the value and impact of our digital content, with an active and engaged audience.

4.6 Building & Interpretation

The Grade I listed house was built for Johnson's parents in 1707-8. It remained in Samuel's possession until his death in 1784 and went into private ownership until it was purchased by Alderman John Gilbert and donated to the city in 1900.

Five floors of displays are open to the public comprising a bookshop and entrance area, two period room displays, an audio-visual room, eight rooms of Museum display, and a library area available to researchers by appointment. The interior remains atmospheric with a mixture of interpretation including text panels and interactive displays. The main interpretation scheme dates from the last full update of the displays in 1989/90. Further piecemeal developments include: a more prominent entrance on Market Street re-established in 1993; a re-display of the Dictionary Room in 2005, and the Workroom re-display in 2024.

Under the care of LCC the Birthplace benefits from a quinquennial building inspection and a Repairs and Renewals budget available to meet any urgent building care needs. The building and

contents are insured under a policy with Ecclesiastical.

4.7 Access

The tall and narrow building has steps to the entrance and many unavoidable stairs inside. A good provision of audio support and large print information has been established, and access audits in 2017 and 2019 have provided recommendations for further development. Physical access issues have been addressed to date with a virtual tour available online and an outreach provision. See also the SJBM Access Policy Statement.

4.8 Location & Tourism

SJBM is situated in the heart of the historic cathedral city of Lichfield, which has a population of over 34,000. Lichfield is approximately 17 miles north of Birmingham and benefits from excellent connection to the national road and rail network. Lichfield District Council's (LDC) 'Visit Lichfield' team oversee tourism initiatives for the area, estimating that 5.6 million visitors come to the District's attractions a year. SJBM works closely with 'Visit Lichfield' and the MHO is a member of the Visitor Engagement Network. LCC is involved in local strategic developments, working with Lichfield District Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Civic Society, and ensures that SJBM is considered and included where appropriate.

4.9 Public Opening Hours & Facilities

The Museum is open to the public seven days a week, 10.30am - 4.30pm March to October and 11.00am – 3.30pm November to February, with closure only on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. SJBM lacks a designated car park, toilets, or a refreshment provision, but this is compensated by ample provision within the city centre. The SJBM Bookshop attracts regular local users. The Wood Library offers a dedicated study room for researchers, but it is also used by volunteers and for storage, which limits its availability.

4.10 Collections

The Museum collection has been gradually acquired since 1901 and includes over 8,500 items of personalia, fine art, furniture, manuscripts, books and archive material. The collection represents Johnson and nationally important figures from his circle, as well as items associated with the history of Lichfield. The collection is catalogued on a 'modes' database, with a small and decreasing documentation backlog. Public online access to collections was introduced in 2018.

Only 2% of the collection is on loan to SJBM. 23% is presently on display, and a further 40% is readily accessible in storage on site (mainly library collections in bookcases). Presentation is of a good standard, but some displays are beginning to appear dated. A dedicated area of the SJBM website provides information to encourage members of the public to use the libraries, and volunteers and attendants are facilitated to undertake research on the collections. The limitations of the museum building have resulted in poor storage and environmental conditions for the collection in some areas, but moving into a dedicated storeroom off-site above the LCC offices in Donegal House has enabled significant improvements. Regular environmental and pest monitoring is in place. In 2017 regular collection cleaning was established with a dedicated team of volunteers and annual programme. [Related Documents: SJBM Collections Development Policy, SJBM Collections Care Policy, SJBM Documentation Policy, SJBM Documentation Procedural Manual, SJBM Emergency Plan and SJBM Documentation Plan].

4.11 Security

The building is well protected by a regularly maintained and externally monitored alarm system, CCTV with constant recording on site and remote access, and some display cases are protected by 'break-glass' style alarms. A full review of the security of the Museum was carried out at the last Accreditation award in 2015 by a crime reduction officer and recommendations were carried out, including an update to the alarm system to add additional motion sensors.

4.12 Environmental Sustainability

SJBM has made a commitment to reducing its environmental impact. SJBM joined a West Midlands Green Museums Project in 2012 and decreased energy use through switching to energy saving bulbs and replacing the Museum's boiler. As much waste as possible is recycled and single-use plastic has been reduced. Low-impact and recycled goods are sourced where possible, local suppliers are preferred and SJBM is a supporter of the local Fair-Trade initiative. Sustainability will be considered for future projects and developments.

4.13 Current Position: SWOT Analysis

An updated SWOT analysis (Table 2) has been undertaken to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the period of this plan. Analysis of the SWOT has supported the identification of the Key Strategic Aims for the 2025-2028 period, and the capabilities required by SJBM to achieve these.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly Skilled and dedicated workforce. • Extensive, well-documented, and varied collection, with online access. • Lichfield City Council backing. • Prominent, eye-catching, Grade I listed building. • Samuel Johnson provides rich and varied subject matter for interpretation, diverse programming and events. • Accredited Museum status, enhancing credibility and professional acknowledgement. • Prime location in Lichfield, close to market, major road and rail networks. • Proximity to public amenities such as cafes, toilets and car parks. • Museum prominently featured on city road signage. • A dedicated team of volunteers supporting activities and collections work. • Regular engagement with staff, volunteers and users through consultations. • Well-stocked second-hand bookshop contributing to fundraising efforts. • Free admission for general visitors (excluding organised groups, education visits, guided tours, and ticketed events). • Growing network of partnerships enhancing collaborative opportunities. • New education programme designed for primary school students. • Increasing online presence and engagement across social media platforms. • Inclusive services, including large print information, induction loop, information in multiple languages, and a virtual tour. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and intellectual access challenges that hinder visitor experience. • Limited team size, restricting potential for growth and development. • Lack of facilities, such as toilets, café, car park, and flexible spaces for schools, private hire, and events. • Lack of/limited diverse narratives in current interpretation displays. • Environmental, display and storage conditions not fully suited to the preservation needs of the collection in some areas. • Limited space for library users. • Limited storage space. • Some interpretation panels and old display cases are outdated, affecting visitor engagement. • Ongoing maintenance and repair costs for the historic building. • Poor visitor feedback on pedestrian signage and marketing of tourist attractions across the City.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding partnerships with local heritage attractions and cultural groups to enhance collaborative offerings. • Development of joint initiatives aimed at making Lichfield a prime destination for group tourism. • Planned city centre developments providing new opportunities for visibility and visitor engagement. • Collaborations with local universities could attract a younger, more diverse audience. • Major redevelopment of museum displays could address several existing weaknesses and enhance visitor experience. • The number of heritage attractions in the city, providing a broader cultural offering to attract visitors. • Opportunities to work more closely with local schools, colleges, and universities to increase educational engagement and secure visitors of the future. • To increase the number and variety of events to maintain visitor interest and attendance and attract new audiences. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining overall footfall to Lichfield, potentially impacting visitor numbers. • Ongoing dependence on Lichfield City Council funding for operational sustainability. • Vulnerability of the exposed site to vandalism and environmental damage. • Increased competition for external funding, potentially limiting resources for development. • Limited storage space for the Museum's permanent collection, constraining growth and preservation efforts.

5. Key Strategic Aims 2025-2028

The following have been identified as key strategic aims for the period 2025 – 2028.

- 1. Operate to a high professional standard, making the best use of available resources**
- 2. Build and diversify our audiences, responding to user consultation**
- 3. Develop access to the Museum and collection**
- 4. Care for the Museum building and collection**

The tables below outline the objectives, performance indicators, and the resource plan to meet these aims.

Aim 1: Operate to a high professional standard, making the best use of available resources

Objective	How to be achieved	When will be achieved	Performance indicator	Resource Plan*	
				Workforce	Budget
1.a: Maintain Accredited status	Maintain and update all policy and procedures Prepare and submit Arts Council England's Accreditation Return	March 2025 and annually 1 October 2025	Updated Policy documents Accreditation Award Certificate	MHO; MSO MHO/MSO, MAs Vols.; LCC	Employee costs; Supplies and Services (related minor purchases to meet standards)
1.b: Maximise Available income streams	Remove poor-selling lines in the Bookshop and introduce new products Raise profile of the Bookshop via website, social media and new exterior signage. Increase group and education bookings income by 10% per year through targeted mail outs, on-site leaflets, and raising profile online via website and social media. Increase donations by 10% per year by improving ways to donate online and encouraging onsite contributions. Increase book donations; promote donations via website, social media and the mailing list. Regular programme of a least six special events per year planned. Improved facilities for private hire and out-of-hours events.	April 2026 April 2026 Annually - report to JBAC Annually - report to JBAC April 2026 Season ahead launched in June and November Toilet/kitchen by April 2026. Funding plan for Birth Room facilities by November 2026	Sales records. Target increase of 10% per year Sales records. Target increase of 10% per year Group visit and school booking records Donations records. Target increase of 10% per year Sales records. Second-hand book sales target increase of 10% per year Admissions records New facilities. Funding plan	MSO MSO; MHO; MAs MSO; MHO; MAs MHO/MSO; MAs, Vols. MSO; MAs. MHO; Contractors MHO; Contractors	Employee costs, Stock for Sale (stock offset within the amount given in Table 1); Staff; Promotion; Supplies and Services (costs of events offset by Admissions)

Objective	How to be achieved	When will be achieved	Performance indicator	Resource Plan*	
				Workforce	Budget
1.c: Maximise staff and volunteer development	Review individual training needs of staff members.	Annually	Minutes from meetings/reviews.	MHO; MSO	Employee costs; Supplies and Services for training costs. Use of funded training courses offered by West Midlands Museum Development
	Annual training event (e.g. expert speaker or outing to relevant sites and collections) available to staff, volunteers and JBAC members.	Annually	Officer report. Training log.	MHO; MSO	
	Establish a regular joint meeting of staff and volunteers for updates and feedback.	Annually, April and October	Minutes from meetings.	MHO; MSO	
1.d: Maximise volunteer input	Review and update all volunteer role documentation.	June 2025	Revised documentation available	MHO; MSO	Employee costs; Supplies and Services. Promotion (though mainly free of cost channels e.g. local volunteering centre)
	Develop new volunteer roles including accessible volunteering opportunities.	Ongoing from August 2025	New role outlines available	MHO; MSO	
	Create volunteer roles and projects aimed at engaging students and young people.	Ongoing from August 2025	New volunteers recruited	MHO; MSO	

Aim 2: Build and diversify our audiences, responding to user consultation

Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by	Performance indicator	Resource Plan*	
				Workforce	Budget
2.a: Increase visitor numbers by improving the visitor experience. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. A world class experience for all.	Special events organised to appeal to range of visitors and encourage return visits, including free of charge events/activities.	Season launched June & November	Events publicity; visitor data	MSO, MHO & MAs & Vols	Employee costs. Supplies and Services, Promotion; costs offset by Admissions; LCC Market stall in-kind. Redisplay and commissioning consultant; funding to be identified.
	Regular presence on Lichfield Market Square to promote the Museum.	Annually – twice a year.	Officer report	MSO, LCC	
	Engage with local partnerships, events and groups.	Ongoing – e.g. Lichfield Arts (Festival of Folk)	Visitor records and officer report	MHO; MSO, MAs, Partnerships	
	New website to promote Museum activities.	April 2025	New website available	MSO; MSO	
	Reach new audiences by rebranding and reviewing the imagery representing the museum.	April 2026	Visitor data and officer report	MHO, MSO, MAs	
	Produce development plan for the Museum and displays – to include diverse stories and elements of local history.	November 2026	Plan available	MHO; MSO	
	Full redisplay – seek funding opportunities and implement development plan.	Long-term development beginning March 2027 – 2030	New displays, visitor records and data	MHO; MSO	
	Commission a marketing and audience development consultant to create a marketing strategy.	December 2026	Strategy presented	MHO; MSO	
	Increase hands-on family activities and interactives.	March 2027	Visitor data	MHO; MSO	

2.b: Monitor users and consult non-users	Introduce additional options for completion of the SJBM visitor exit survey (e.g. online, easy access QR codes).	December 2025	Visitor data	MSO ; MAs, Vols.	Employee costs, Supplies and Services. Funding to be identified for consultant
	Introduce visitor feedback points in the Museum.	December 2025	Visitor data	MSO ; MHO	
	Commission an audience insight consultant to conduct 'street surveys' with local people and organisations to gather data from non-users.	October 2027	Visitor data. Report presented	MSO ; MHO	
2.c: Increase the number of education visits and partnerships <i>See also 1.d. re: student volunteering and 3.d. re: higher education partners</i>	New education programme to increase bookings and capacity.	April 2025	School visit booking records. Target increase 10% by April 2027	MSO ; MHO, Consultant	Employee Costs, Supplies and Services, Promotion.
	Annual update to database of schools and periodic promotion by email and post	Ongoing - database updated in June. Mailouts in September, January, and May	School/group visit booking records	MSO	
	Increase links with higher education partners – offering meaningful student placements.	Ongoing – annually	Officer reports	MSO ; MHO	
2.d: Increase the number of group visit bookings	Annual update to groups database and mailout.	Database updated in June. Mailouts in September, January and May	Group visit records. Target increase 10% by April 2017	MSO ; MAs	Employee costs, Supplies and Services, Promotion; Admissions (cost of additional Staff hours for tours/walks offset by admission charge).
	Work with other local attractions to promote group visits as a member of LDC's Visitor Engagement Network.	Ongoing; quarterly meetings	Minutes; Officer report	MHO ; MSO	
	Introduce new guided walking tours for groups.	June 2025	Group visit records	MHO	
	Train Museum Attendant staff members and volunteers in delivery of tours and talks.	December 2025	Trained staff and volunteers; training records	MSO ; MAs	

Aim 3: Increase access to the Museum and collections

Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by	Performance indicator	Resource Plan*	
				Workforce	Budget
3.a: Seek alternative solutions to the physical limitations of our Grade I listed building	Maintain SJBM blog with collection focused posts.	Ongoing	Bi-monthly blog posts posted	MSO ; Mas, Vols	Employee costs; Supplies and Services.
	Investigate options for remote online access to talks.	November 2025	Report to JBAC	MSO ; MAs	
	Online exhibitions on the new SJBM website; providing increased digital access to the collections.	Ongoing – first online by December 2025	Exhibition available online	MHO ; MSO, MAs, Vols	
	Update virtual tour of the museum.	December 2026	Updated tour available	MHO ; MSO, Contractor	
	Seek expert advice and consultation with users at all stages of development.	August 2027	Report from consultation	MHO	
3.b: Improve awareness of, and access to, all parts of the collection	Implement actionable items from Neurodiverse Visitors audit.	Ongoing from April 2026	Officer report	MHO ; MSO	Employee costs; Supplies and Services.
	Introduce handling items for visually impaired.	January 2027	Handling items available	MHO ; MSO, MAs, Vols	
3.c: Update interpretation and displays <i>See also Section 3 (page</i>	Produce a SJBM display/interpretation guidelines document.	July 2025	Display guidelines available	MHO ; MSO	Employee costs; Supplies and Services. LCC project funding. Redisplays – project funding to
	Update object labels.	September 2025	New object labels; Officer report	MHO ; MSO	

4) for further details on Development plans for displays.	Interpretation panel focusing on Franics Barber.	November 2025	Interpretation panel focusing on Franics Barber; Officer report	MHO; Contractors	be identified.
	Re-display of the Parlour – an introduction to Johnson; setting the narrative for the Museum, conveying key messages and impact of Johnson.	December 2027	Redisplay of Parlour completed	MHO; MSO, Contractors	
	Establish digital access to collections/displays on upper floors on the ground floor (Parlour)	December 2027	Digital access available	MHO; MSO, Contractors	
	Re-display of the historic kitchen – providing an audio-visual introduction to Johnson (e.g. talking portraits/immersive).	October 2028	Redisplay of Kitchen completed	MHO; MSO, Contractors	
	AV Room redisplayed/repurposed	October 2028	Redisplay of AV Room	MHO; MSO, Contractors	
	Commission British Sign Language digital visitor guide	October 2028	Guide available	MHO; MSO, Contractors	
3.d: Improve facilities for researchers and publicise provision more widely	Raise academic profile of Museum through links with higher education partners (including partnership with Keele University).	Ongoing	Student placements; Officer report	MHO; MSO, Partners	Employee costs; Supplies and Services. Blum library funding.
	Combine libraries and improve the research facilities and study area.	September 2028	Facilities available, Officer report; research visitor records	MHO; MSO, Contractors	

Aim 4: Care for the Museum building and collection

Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by	Performance indicator	Resource Plan*	
				Workforce	Budget
4.a: To improve the storage and care of the collection	Complete 'Benchmarks in Collection Care' Checklist and update SJBM Collection Care Plan.	July 2025	Plan available	MSO/MHO	Employee costs; Supplies and Services. Blum collection care fund. Cases – funding to be identified.
	Complete planned programme identified in updated SJBM Collection Care Plan.	Ongoing; rolling schedule	Officer report	MHO; MSO Vols	
	Undertake annual Collection Clean.	October 2025	Officer report	MHO; MSO Vols	
	Install conservation blinds throughout building.	April 2026	Blinds replaced	MHO; Contractors.	
	Commission conservator to deliver training for staff and volunteers including Integrated Pest Management, Stop the Rot, and object handling.	April 2026	Training delivered	MHO; MSO, MAs, Vols, Contractor	
	Commission updated conservation report.	April 2026	Report available	MHO; Contractor	
	Re-organisation of book storage to facilitate Blum Library move.	August 2027	Officer report	MHO; MSO, Vols	
	Old display cases replaced with Click Netherfield cases.	October 2028	New cases in place	MHO, Contractors	
	Glaze paintings where necessary and rehang with security lock hangers.	October 2028	Glaze and fittings in place	MHO, Contractors	

4.b: Improve the documentation of the collection	Undertake programme identified in the SJBM Documentation Plan.	Ongoing; rolling schedule	Report to JBAC	MHO; MSO, Vols	Employee costs; Supplies and Services.
	Commission expert to value key significant items from the collections and update valuations on Modes database.	April 2026	Records updated	MHO; Contractor.	
	Complete collection audit.	November 2027	Officer report	MSO; Vols	
	Programme of photography and scanning of collection established, with eventual target to have a photograph to accompany every non-library record.	April 2028	Number of improved records reported	MHO; MSO, Vols	
4.c: Ensure the ongoing protection of the collection against disaster and damage	Update SJBM Emergency Plan.	May 2025, and annually	Updated plan available	MHO; LCC	Employee costs; Supplies and Services.
	Refresher training: ensure that all staff are trained in the Emergency plan procedure.	July 2025 and annually	Officer report	MHO; MSO, MAs	
	Purchase collections care equipment for conservation cleaning.	August 2025	Equipment available	MHO	
	Purchase museum disaster preparedness kit.	August 2025	Kit available	MHO	
	Complete planned programme identified in updated SJBM Collection Care Plan.	Ongoing; rolling schedule	Report available	MHO; MSO, Vols	
4.d: Ensure the continual maintenance and sustainability	Conduct regular building checks and resolve or report issues promptly.	Ongoing, monthly	Inspection Log; Officer report	MHO; MSO; MAs, Vols	Employee costs; Supplies and Services, Repair & Maintenance; LCC R&R budget for immediate
	All supplies sourced with consideration to sustainability.	Ongoing	Officer report	MSO/MHO	

of the Birthplace building	Decoration of rooms throughout property (as referenced in 2023 Quinquennial inspection report.	Phased from June 2025	Officer report	MHO; Contractors	large repairs
	Improve staff kitchen/bathroom facilities.	April 2026	New facilities available; Officer report	MHO; Contractors	
	Five-year electrical inspection to be completed.	November 2026	Inspection completed	MHO; Contractors	
	Fill large gaps in floorboards (as referenced in 2023 Quinquennial inspection report).	December 2027	Gaps filled	MHO; Contractors	
	Replace security glass in upper floor windows (as referenced in 2023 Quinquennial inspection report).	December 2027	Glass replaced	MHO; Contractors	
	Commission building report for floor/weight/load bearing.	September 2028	Report available	MHO; Contractors	
	Quinquennial inspection.	September 2028	Inspection report available.	MHO; Contractors	

* Key to abbreviations used in Workforce (bold indicates lead responsibility). Budgets refer to headings (See Table 1, page 5)

LCC	Lichfield City Council (refers to support and decision making from LCC's Town Clerk and/or JBAC)	MA s	Museum Attendants
MHO	Museums & Heritage Officer	Vols.	Museum Volunteers
MSO	Museum Support Officer	SJBM	Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum