Museum of Carpet, Kidderminster

Consultancy Brief for Staff Roles Review

Autumn 2023

Vision Statement

"The Museum of Carpet exists to promote the heritage and history of the 300 year-old carpet making industry in Kidderminster, that became the centre of the trade in carpets"

Background

The Museum of Carpet (MoC) opened on 12th October 2012 and is the only Museum in the UK dedicated to celebrating the heritage, art and industry of carpet making. It invites visitors to discover the unique story of Kidderminster, once known as the 'Carpet Capital of the World', through visuals, photos, films and interactives, which children and adults alike thoroughly enjoy trying out. The story of Kidderminster's carpet industry is brought to life by a dedicated and passionate team of volunteers, most of whom lived and worked in Kidderminster during its carpet industry heyday.

MoC is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), were fully accredited in 2022, and hold an extensive carpet collection stretching back over 100 years, including the Kidderminster Shuttle archives. The museum has a board of 13 trustees, and a small staff team. As well as two new ACE funded part-time posts of Volunteer Co-ordinator and Fundraising Assistant, MoC has existing roles of Learning Co-ordinator (15 hrs a week) and a front of house role (28 hrs a week). The Director role is currently vacant.

MoC has a Friends group which gives a small contribution to the museum every year. The Friends will be incorporated into MoC from the start April 2024, once constitutional and administrative issues are ironed out. The museum also has a corporate membership scheme which raises a small amount of income annually.

As part of the MoC archives, there are original pattern books reflecting a range of classic, historic and unusual designs, and the board is keen to establish the possibilities for licensing the designs commercially.

The museum building, Stour Vale Mill, which was renovated through a £1.7m lottery bid from 2012-15, is engaging, welcoming and has potential for expanding the museum's programmes and income generation activities.

The Museums at Risk Programme

The museum sought support from Arts Council England's Museums at Risk programme early in 2023, managed through West Midlands Museum Development. The programme offers a consultancy support package, intended to identify and address the challenges to the museum of long-term sustainability. The package is in 3 stages:

- **Stage 1** - an organisational review, to identify areas of most need for the sustainable future of the museum, and/or the collection, and to recommend targeted consultancy support or professional advice to help achieve related outcomes.
- **Stage 2** – specialist consultants or professional advisers are appointed to work with the museum to address areas of highest priority, based on recommendations from stage 1.
- **Stage 3** – review to assess progress, and create a final report for next steps or further recommendations.

The review for stage 1 can be read at Appendix 1.

Current Situation & Challenges

In Autumn 2022, MoC sought support from West Midlands Museum Development on its financial future, as energy costs soared, and raised operational costs significantly. The museum's reserve funds are currently being used to cover shortfalls, but this is unsustainable for longer than 12 months. Currently, income is raised from a mix of rent, room hire, admissions, retail, corporate memberships, an annual Friends contribution and other one-off donations. Trustees are now looking to increase income generation across all areas of operation, but focusing initially on developing a professional approach to individual giving. The board is also investigating the potential for income generation through licensing agreements for the original patterns and designs from the MoC archive.

In April 2023, the museum's director resigned, whilst at the same time two new Arts Council England funded posts joined MoC for 2 years. This creates a gap in providing management support to the new posts, as well as in working on income generation for the museum. However, it also provides the board with an opportunity to review its senior staff role, and staff structure, before recruiting again. The role will be considered particularly in relation to income generation and strategic planning. Consequently, trustees will not create a full income generation strategy until a new Director is in post, and can create this document based on the opportunities and potential at MoC, as well as their own skills and experience.

Consultancy Tasks

The board is seeking a consultant who can advise MoC on reviewing the current senior staff role of Director before a new person is recruited. Trustees would like to explore a refocusing of the role towards income generation and overall strategic management. The review should also:

- include a wider look at the whole staff structure, and how a change of role description for the Director would impact and/or shift areas of responsibility or workload
- consider how a redesign of job roles and responsibilities across the staff structure could impact on MoC's overall business model to make it more commercially viable.

The tasks would include:

- Discussing and assessing the current structure and issues with trustees and relevant staff
- Inviting trustee and staff input into the redesign of the Director role, linked to income generation objectives
- Creating a plan for a revised staff structure and business model.

Expected Outputs

- In person visit to the museum, or online discussions with trustees and staff
- Written draft of initial role and structure redesign, to prompt feedback and further input from trustees
- Final written report on Director role and structure redesign, and recommendations for changes to the MoC business model.

Expected Outcomes

- An understanding by the MoC board and staff of the implications of redesigning the senior staff role, across the whole structure
- A clear new plan for MoC's leadership and staff roles
- An understanding of how the business model will be impacted, and should be adapted, following a shift in staff roles and responsibilities.

Timescale

The MoC board would like to begin late September/early October, but would negotiate with consultants to agree an appropriate timetable for this work. The consultancy would need to conclude by end of November 2023.

Budget

The Museum is seeking quotes for up to 4 days consultancy up to a maximum of £500 per day

How to Apply

If you are interested in undertaking this piece of work, please contact Geoffrey Gilbert, Acting Manager, Museum of Carpet – email manager@musuemofcarpet.org.uk with a quotation of cost for your services, and a short description of the approach you would take, how your skillset would suit the museum's needs, and a timetable of anticipated work. Please attach a CV or summary of your previous consultancy work.