

Creative Cultures

East Sussex County Council

**The Keep & East Sussex
Depicted
Audience Development Plan**

Final Report

May 2007



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Executive Summary

The Keep and East Sussex Depicted Audience Development Plan

‘The challenge for archives,.... is to demonstrate their relevance to society and the public. I believe archives are as relevant today as they have ever been. In part because they teach us about our history and our identity. In doing so, they can help us avoid repeating mistakes of the past. Individuals and communities across the country need to understand their multiple identities, to combat ignorance and prejudice, and to foster tolerance and understanding. Archives are not just about our past, they are also about our present and our future’.

*Speech by David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture,
Archives Awareness Conference, 24 April 2007.*

A. Two Linked Cultural and Heritage Projects

The Keep and East Sussex Depicted projects seek to ‘transform and revitalise historical resource archiving and access to historical documents in the County’. Through these two separate, but closely linked projects, East Sussex County Council and its partners are committing themselves to developing an accessible heritage and cultural service and facility for the local community.

The Keep will provide a new Historical Resource Centre for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, with a new Record Office at its core, ensuring greater access for the community and related services – both through personal visits and remote use of digitised material. It will constitute a landmark cultural facility for the County and Brighton & Hove providing a first class, state of the art archive and record office building which is the focus for a range of activities and services both within the building and through outreach work across the county.

East Sussex Depicted (ESD) will enable on-line access to rare material from the Record Office and the Library and Information Service’s (LIS) local history collections including maps, title maps, glass slides, photographs and postcards of places and people in East Sussex. ESD will develop and utilise the most up-to- date and accessible on-line technology to encourage and facilitate wide community access to existing material. It will contribute to the development of new collections reflecting the lives, cultural experience and heritage of all sections of the local community.

B. The Project Aims

The aims for the two linked projects are:

Preservation

- To provide a central depository for the safe preservation of historical records and other resources fundamental to preserving the history of East Sussex and Brighton and Hove
- To develop and expand the use of ICT and digitisation to provide remote access

Learning

- To create a Learning Centre to provide hands-on and on-line opportunities to develop new skills
- Create a Centre where historical records can be used in conjunction with archaeological artefacts and museum objects for an integrated learning experience
- To provide better access for the education sector to historical material and material currently difficult to access

Outreach

- To provide wide access to and raise the profile of archive and other heritage services
- To utilise the Library and Information Services (LIS) network to provide on-line and interactive access
- To increase access and numbers using the services (including LIS) through a wide range of media and activities
- To create new audiences particularly from those groups under-represented in current use and socially excluded groups
- To develop a long-term marketing strategy that will provide a sustainable economic and user base for the service

Partnerships

- To develop long term partnerships for the new Centre with Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC), the University of Sussex and Brighton University, Sussex Archaeological Society (also known as Sussex Past) and with the Sussex Family History Group
- To attract a wide range of interest groups such as local and family history societies and community groups as users
- To look at further integration of archives services with other County Council heritage services and closer working with other cultural services.

C. The Role of the Audience Development Plan

This Audience Development Plan for The Keep and East Sussex Depicted has been produced in parallel with the development of an Access Plan to:

‘... help to inform and shape new service planning which will have access, inclusion and diversity at its heart. The studies will also be included in the external funding applications, including to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and appropriate others’.

D. Partnerships at the Core of The Keep and ESD

The concept of a new Historical Resource Centre has at its core the formation of an active partnership of organisations within the public, educational and community sectors.

A number of major potential partners and stakeholders were identified and took part in consultations during the 2004 Feasibility Study for The Keep. These included: Brighton and Hove City Council; the University of Sussex; Brighton University; the Sussex Archaeological Society; and the Sussex Family History Group.

The Audience Development Plan has provided an opportunity to re-engage with these potential partners, to up-date them on progress and to explore partnership roles in more depth.

The formation of a Project Board and the appointment of the Project Manager in June 2006, the identification of a preferred location in Falmer and the County Council's continuing support for the project have all combined to provide a very positive backdrop to the audience development planning.

The County Council is holding further discussions with all of the potential partners with a view to firming up the ideas and proposals, providing further information on which costings can be calculated and moving towards the negotiation of partnership agreements where appropriate. As partnership agreements are finalised, it will be possible to gauge their impact on audience development and amend target figures accordingly.

E. The Aim and Target Groups for Audience Development

The overall **aim for audience development** for The Keep and ESD is:

‘to create the most accessible and widely used historical resource service in the United Kingdom. Together, The Keep and East Sussex Depicted will provide a beacon for access within the heritage sector’.

The Keep and ESD will provide both existing ESRO and Library users with a greatly improved service and will encourage users from groups who have previously not used these valuable heritage resources. The **audiences which are the focus for audience development** initiatives are:

- Children and young people
- Families, particularly those from socially excluded groups
- Deaf and disabled people
- Black and ethnic minorities, people from different cultural backgrounds
- Students and adult learners.

F. The Audience Development Initiatives

Planning for audience development will begin in 2008 to ensure that both The Keep and ESD can interest and attract a wide range of partners and undertake a variety of projects and other initiatives that will build new audiences.

The key actions which will support **the four objectives for audience development** are:

- 1. Create a new inclusive service**, welcoming, accessible and exciting for all users, designed and operated to meet best practice with innovative inclusion provision which exceeds minimum standards required for access.

Key Actions include:

- Reviewing opening hours to ensure that as many groups as possible within the community have access to The Keep
- Include a strong commitment to and programme of consultation for access provision, both for the building and its functions

- Work closely with the Design Team to develop a welcoming and flexible array of spaces and movement into and around the building
- Accompany the design, development and construction periods for The Keep with projects involving the local community, particularly those from the target groups with the aim of developing public art or other creative representations of the community's heritage
- Identify and meet the training needs of staff and volunteers in developing innovative ways of working with new groups of users.

2. Create an accessible on-line resource for the Record Office and LIS Local History material which reflects the culture and heritage of the whole community and is designed, presented and maintained to meet the highest access standards.

Key Actions include:

- Creating an on-line resource incorporating the highest standards and innovative approaches to access for those with disabilities
- Agreeing with partners a priority list of 'themes' or categories of material which will become the focus for further digitisation of material and for development of interpretative material and work
- Work with education providers to identify curriculum links that can be made to material held by ESRO, the LIS and partners
- Develop an on-line 'virtual tour' of The Keep to introduce new users (many of whom may be attracted by the on-line access) to the facilities and function of The Keep
- Identify a number of local history and family history societies willing to work with The Keep and the LIS to partner outreach activities particularly in parts of the County more distant from The Keep
- Explore links with West Sussex Past to ensure that users, both within the two counties and beyond, have easy access to linked material and benefit from the combined strengths of the two services particularly through linkages of digitised material, co-ordinated interpretative material and other co-operative provision
- Link the development of The Keep and ESD to the planned programme of activities in Libraries, particularly those involving children and families and ethnic minorities, to introduce LIS users to the extended provision and opportunities of The Keep and ESD.

3. Develop a wide ranging programme of activities through partnerships which will offer opportunities for participation by all sections of the community in every part of the County.

Key actions include:

- Work with teachers and educational advisors to identify the themes, select sources and create the interpretative resource packages which will facilitate school use both of ESD and The Keep in schools and through visits
- Review with partners the combined resources of The Keep and ESD to identify the themes on which activity programmes, delivered at The Keep and through outreach work, can be based

- Work with Sussex University Centre for Continuing Education to identify courses and target groups of adult learners which could be delivered at The Keep and which could draw on its material
- Develop wide reaching outreach activities with partner organisations among community and special interest organisations who work with the target groups for The Keep and ESD
- Develop a programme of events and activities in conjunction with partners. Including a continuing programme of Open Day events, workshops, training and related activities involving the target groups with as wide a range of organisations in the community as possible and with cultural organisations in arts, sports etc.

4. Engage with local communities to increase their understanding of archives and their relevance to the community and ensure that the collections reflect and celebrate their heritage.

Key actions include:

- Build on the possibilities for extending collections (sports, performing arts archives, for example) in collaboration with partners which will attract and interest new groups of users
- Develop projects with BME groups to record experiences and foster the deposit of records from new communities
- Utilise ESD as an effective means to engage with all groups in the community to contribute material for ESD and The Keep
- Links should be made to bodies and projects in the north of France to explore common heritage themes and international understanding of the importance of heritage
- Projects should be created to build archive volunteering and skills among target groups not currently involved in archival work particularly to work with groups in the community not currently using or accessing the collections
- Projects should be identified which can link The Keep and ESD into wider programmes, e.g. for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

G. Targets for Audience Development

These key actions for audience development are set out in a detailed Action Plan. It is estimated that in the first year of operation that The Keep will attract a total of 16,000 users both on-site and at outreach activities – compared to a current total of under 8,000 users. It is envisaged that user numbers will rise to 19,478 after five years of operation.

For East Sussex Depicted it is expected that the number of on-line visits will reach 27,800, with nearly 400,000 total hits on its web-site pages.

Both projects will attract users from all target groups drawn to the wide range of historical resources available both for personal and on-line visits.