

Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury

AUTUMN 2024





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documentary film



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah for taking the first step towards deepening democracy within the UK's museum sector. The hard work starts now!

Thank you to Rob Lewis and Rosie Barker at Birmingham Museums Trust for all their support. Thank you also to Lucy Reid of DemocracyNext for all of her work acting as a critical friend and advisor to Birmingham Museums' Trust.

We would like to thank all the commentators, and all the members of Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury without whom this project would not have been possible.

About the authors

The recommendations of the Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury are reproduced here in the Jury's own words. The remaining content was written by Rowan Harris and Pete Bryant of Shared Future. No legal responsibility can be accepted for any loss or damage resulting from the contents of this document. It does not necessarily represent the view of Shared Future in relation to any policy or projects.

About Shared Future

We are a community interest company working across the UK. Our aim is to provide an excellent service that makes a difference to communities and individuals and works towards a fairer, more equal society. Our mission is to move those we engage with towards greater individual and collective authority and autonomy, by supporting their ability to act wisely, confidently and in community with others. Since setting up Shared Future in 2009, we've built a team of experienced practitioners with a diverse range of skills. We work together on worthwhile and stimulating projects that reflect our personal values.

About DemocracyNext

DemocracyNext is an international foundation working to accelerate the spread of high quality, empowered, and permanent citizens' assemblies.

demnext.org

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www.sharedfuturecic.org.uk

Produced January 2025



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Introduction

The Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury was commissioned by Birmingham Museums Trust with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Jury ran from September to November 2024 and was facilitated by Shared Future. This report details the process and final recommendations.

Museums work in the public interest by collecting, preserving, and displaying objects and artworks for the public's education and enjoyment. Increasingly, they are struggling to deliver on this mandate.

Museums now face a range of challenges, from public sector funding shortfalls to low visitor engagement. This includes a failure to engage with those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and particularly those with limited or no formal education.

This has been compounded in recent years by the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis, which drastically altered the attitudes and behaviours of their prospective audiences.

Citizens' Juries and other forms of participatory engagement are increasingly seen as important tools to enable cultural and heritage sector institutions like museums and art galleries to re-engage with the public and increase the impact of their work. This rests on the ability of such processes to engage a cross-section of the public, with diverse opinions and experiences.

The Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury was convened to answer the question:

'What does Birmingham need and want from its museums, now and in the future; and what should Birmingham Museums Trust do to make these things happen?'

In Summer 2024, 5,000 letters were sent to households across the Birmingham Metropolitan Area, inviting residents to join the Jury. 87 people responded, registering their interest and availability, from which 28 participants were randomly selected to reflect the demographic characteristics of Birmingham.

To ensure a robust, fair, and unbiased process, an independent Oversight Panel was also recruited, bringing together representatives from local government, the private sector, voluntary sector, educational sector, the cultural and heritage sector, deliberative democracy, and other community groups.

Of the 28 people selected for the Jury, 26 members attended all the sessions and voted on the recommendations in this report. Aged 18 to 79 and from many different walks of life, they met for 30 hours across three evenings online and three full days in-person beginning on Saturday 5th of October 2024. The Jury heard from 12 'expert' commentators, made 3 exhibition visits, and shared their own opinions and lived experience.

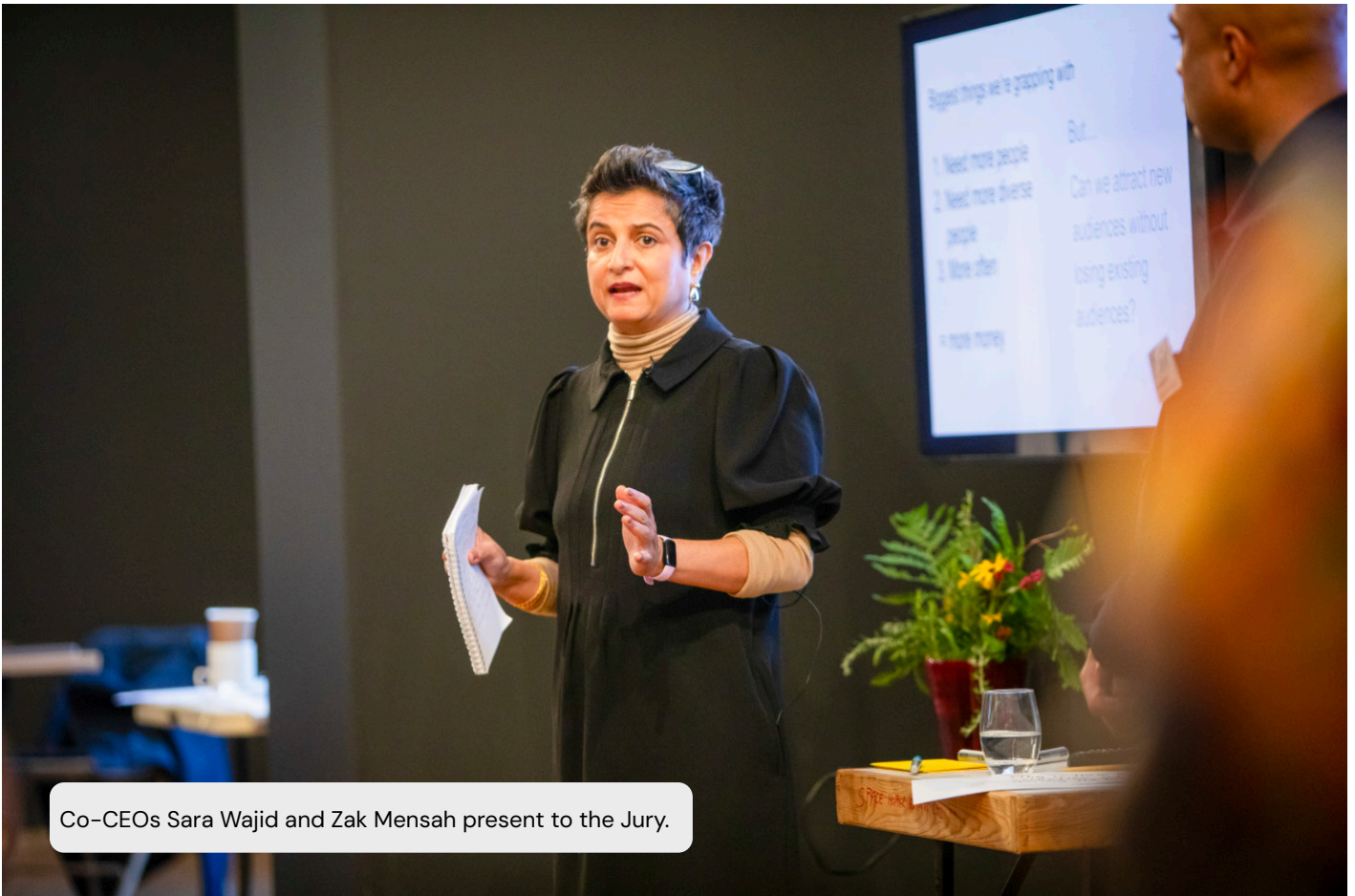
After 30 hours of deliberation, the Jury produced 11 'roles of the museum' and 20 recommendations covering funding and marketing, community engagement and collaboration, exploring diverse perspectives, and new audiences, accessibility and inclusivity.





Foreword

Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah are the Co-CEOs of Birmingham Museums Trust



Co-CEOs Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah present to the Jury.

This publication sets out the Recommendations of a Citizens' Jury looking at the future of Birmingham's Museums. It comes at a critical time for our city's museums, and indeed for civic museums across England. The financial pressures on local authorities which, for over 150 years, have funded the nation's networks of museums which preserve and interpret local and global heritage, mean that we are at a tipping point; unless new funds are found soon many will close and important collections will be lost. Birmingham City Council owns a world class collection of over one million objects and nine venues across the city, which are managed on their behalf by Birmingham Museum Trust. Leaving aside the detail of the Birmingham Jury's recommendations for a moment, their main finding is that citizens value and feel ownership of their museums and believe that they can be of immense value in helping to create a city which is proud of its

great history and its super-diverse present and can combine trust and hope with honesty about past injustices and contemporary issues.

It's hard to recall this now, after such a ringing endorsement, but we started on the process of commissioning the jury with a real fear that people would say that museums were not relevant, or were important but not a priority given the pressures of the cost of living crisis and of the dire state of Birmingham City Council's finances. This seemed like a real risk, as unlike most consultations about museums, we were not asking visitors about what they might like; we were asking a representative sample of the entire population what they wanted from their museums. And Shared Future, who facilitated the jury, made it clear that the way they worked meant that our role would be to provide the jury with information for their deliberations; we

would not be able to determine the direction those discussions took. That we believed the answer could really have been 'Nothing' or 'Not much' reflects two things.

First it reflects the difficulties staff experience of sustaining their morale in the face of fifteen years of cuts; any reflective museum person would inevitably wonder if the contribution they are so committed to delivering was really not wanted. The findings of the jury were truly inspirational for us, and we are more determined than ever to develop Birmingham's museums into world class institutions that everyone can be proud of.

And second, it reflects a pervasive assumption in the public sphere that everything has to be measurable and that the contribution of cultural, civic institutions like museums can be converted into a cash value. Museums do of course contribute to the local economy in all sorts of ways – attracting tourists, inspiring creative workers, offering lifelong educational opportunities – and the jury members agree this is important. But this is the last of their eleven recommendations. Everything else is about the cultural and civic role of museums, as a core institution of a democratic community who share the same city.

One of the most moving moments was, at the final session, one of the jury members said: 'I feel like a citizen again'. This Citizens' Jury isn't just about the recommendations, it's about the process. With so many pressures driving polarisation and eroding the institutions which bring people together, BMT are embracing deliberative democracy not only as a way of making better decisions, but as part of our contribution to the renewing of democracy itself. This jury is not a one-off: it's the first step in modelling the kind of democratic society we would like to live in.


We are not objecting to metrics – but there is a risk of focusing on what's countable rather than on what's important. The Citizens' Jury is all about accountability. The jurors have made it clear what's important to them and the recommendations are being published precisely so that the Board and staff of Birmingham Museum Trust can be held to account for their implementation.

The Citizens' Jury is a central part of Laying the Foundations, our overall plan for the renewal of Birmingham Museums. This has involved bringing in a wide range of experts to help us plot a way forward

that responded to the vision of the jury members, but was also realistic about our funding situation. Recruiting this expertise, including the facilitators of the Citizens' Jury, was only possible because of funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. We would like to thank them, and all the buyers of Lottery tickets, who made this possible.

We would like to thank the jurors who gave so much of their time, energy, insight and experience to the process, as well as the members of the Oversight Group, who represented a wide range of Birmingham and UK organisations and whose role was to ensure the integrity of the process. We are also grateful to the commentators who gave presentations on topics requested by the jurors and who answered their sometimes very searching questions. Special thanks to our advisor Mark O'Neill, who originally conceived of and proposed this process, the first of its kind for a museum in the U.K.

We know we cannot deliver these recommendations on our own. We need support from, and partnerships with, a wide range of civic, third sector and commercial organisations who share our vision of enabling Birmingham to realise its potential to become a model city for 21st Century Britain. This may seem like an extravagant aim, but the other key message from the jury to Birmingham Museums staff was to take risks and be bold. What else would you expect from Birmingham?



Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah

Co-CEOs, Birmingham Museums Trust

Background

Museums across the world are facing a range of challenges, from funding shortfalls to low visitor engagement.

As public service organisations, museums receive much of their income from public sector budgets. According to the Local Government Association, councils are the biggest public funder of culture. However, this core funding has come under huge strain in recent years because of pressure on council budgets. This is especially true in Birmingham. Birmingham City Council's recent declaration of bankruptcy means difficult decisions will have to be made around where funding is allocated in the city.

These funding pressures have been exacerbated by a decline in visitor numbers and associated revenue. The COVID-19 pandemic caused visitor numbers to plummet as museums around the world closed their doors and lockdowns forced people to remain inside. Since reopening, visitor numbers have gradually increased, though often not at the pace or to the level required.

There are also striking inequalities reflected in the demographics of museum visitors, both in Birmingham and more broadly. Those with a degree or professional qualification **are up to 4.6 times more likely to visit a museum** than those with no formal qualification. Those with lower household incomes are also less likely to visit a museum. This suggests that museums, as a whole, are failing to deliver equally for all sections of society.

To begin to address these issues, Birmingham Museums Trust commissioned a citizens' jury, bringing together residents and stakeholders to understand how the museum can better serve the public while at the same time moving towards financial sustainability.

What is a Citizens' Jury?

The Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury is an example of a 'deliberative' process (see also citizens' assemblies) aiming to meaningfully engage with



Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG).

diverse citizens on challenging issues. The main aim of such processes is to produce recommendations on what decisions need to be made, that take into account the views of a diverse range of stakeholders.

Citizens' juries, which can involve between 20–40 participants (citizens' assemblies tend to be much larger) have become a key tool in inclusive policymaking on issues such as climate mitigation and adaptation, health and wellbeing, and more. They can create a mandate for commissioners to take action, by building legitimacy through in-depth deliberations and impartial facilitation.

Crucially, such processes ensure that those who are not normally part of the decision making process are able to voice their concerns, ideas, and lived experiences. This can help to deliver effective and durable policies while also achieving wider buy-in from the community.

The Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury was recruited

via a process called sortition, with the support of the Sortition Foundation. This made it possible to bring together a group of people that reflect the diversity of Birmingham. This is particularly advantageous when exploring the diverse, evolving, and unmet or unknown needs of residents from a public service.

The Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury is the first to take place in a museum in the UK, but part of a growing number of cultural institutions exploring such practices as part of their social responsibility. In Germany, the Bundeskunsthalle, an art gallery in Bonn, and Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, a decorative arts museum in Dresden, ran similar processes in 2023. The New Art Exchange in Nottingham has also recently incorporated a permanent citizens' assembly into its leadership structure.



Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury.

How was the Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury Selected?

A legal Jury's legitimacy can be partially attributed to the fact that every citizen has an equal opportunity to take part. Citizens' Juries derive their legitimacy in a similar way, through a process called sortition. This process relies on a technique called 'random stratified sampling'.

The Sortition Foundation (a not-for-profit organisation with expertise in the use of stratified, random selection in decision-making) determined all potential addresses in the Birmingham metropolitan area using the Royal Mail address database. 5,000 randomly-selected households then received an invitation letter with some frequently asked questions.

The letter highlighted the value of lived experience over specialist skills or knowledge of museums and offered payment of £330 in vouchers plus expenses for taking part in the process. By providing gift vouchers and expense payments, we can ensure that those who are not normally engaged, particularly when there is a significant time commitment involved, are heard.

Interested residents were invited to respond via telephone or register their details online. 87 people

responded and 28 people were invited to take part in the process.

The Jury was designed to reflect the demographics of the population of Birmingham. Participants were selected based on the following characteristics: Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Disability, Education, Religion, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and LGBTQI+ status.

The Oversight Panel decided that it was important to overrepresent from lower education levels to bring in people who were less likely to visit the museum. Unfortunately, the a low response rate from those with 'no qualifications' meant this was difficult to do. However, data on museum attendance was collected during the process (opinion lines activity) and during an evaluation survey. This confirmed that we had recruited a diverse panel, many of whom did not visit the museum.

All Jury members were invited to a 1-to-1 phone call in advance of the first session. This helped to establish a relationship with members of the Shared Future team, to summarise the purpose and workings of the Jury, and to reassure Jury members, answer any questions, and identify any further support or travel needs.



Recruitment letter and envelopes.

Recruitment Targets

	Recruitment target based on available statistics	Actual Jury members
Gender	Male: 48.7% Female: 50.7% Non-binary: 0.7%	Male: 48.3% Female: 48.3% Non-binary: 3.4%
Age	16-19: 7.9% 20-24: 10.5% 25-34: 18.8% 35-49: 25% 50-64: 20.8% 65+: 16.9%	16-19: 10.3% 20-24: 13.8% 25-34: 20.7% 35-49: 20.7% 50-64: 20.7% 65+: 13.8%
Ethnicity	White British: 48.6% Asian or Asian British: 31.0% Black or African or Caribbean or Black British: 11.0% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: 4.8% Other ethnic groups: 4.5%	White British: 44.8% Asian or Asian British: 31.0% Black or African or Caribbean or Black British: 13.8% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: 3.4% Other ethnic groups: 6.9%
Disability	Yes: 20.3% No: 79.7%	Yes: 20.7% No: 79.3%
Education	No qualification: 23.9% Level 1: 10.1% Level 2: 12.5% Level 3: 23.6% Level 4 and above: 29.9%	No qualification: 3.4% Level 1: 10.3% Level 2: 20.7% Level 3: 31.0% Level 4 and above: 34.5%
Religion	Christian: 34.0% Muslim: 29.9% Other religion: 5.9% No religion: 24.1% Prefer not to say: 6.1%	Christian: 31.0% Muslim: 20.7% Other religion: 6.9% No religion: 34.5% Prefer not to say: 6.9%
Indices of Multiple Deprivation	1: 41.3% 2-3: 25.3% 4-5: 20.1% 6-7: 7.5% 8-10: 5.8%	1: 37.9% 2-3: 31.0% 4-5: 20.7% 6-7: 10.3% 8-10: 0%
LBGTQI+	Straight or Heterosexual: 87.6% All other sexual orientations: 3.0% Prefer not to say: 9.4%	Straight or Heterosexual: 75.9% All other sexual orientations: 17.2% Prefer not to say: 6.9%

Oversight Panel and Observers

Citizens' Juries incorporate a range of measures to ensure that the process is as transparent as possible and stands up to scrutiny.

Oversight Panel

In line with best practice, an Oversight Panel was recruited to ensure that the process was fair and stood up to scrutiny. The Oversight Panel, chaired by Tony Simpson of Birmingham Museum Trust's Board of Trustees, met four times and consisted of a range of local organisations and individuals. The group met to:

1. Ensure that the project design was fair and rigorous
2. Agree upon and monitor the process of citizen recruitment
3. Suggest topics to be considered by citizens in the Jury
4. Identify 'commentators'/'witnesses' best able to present on these topics
5. Push for implementation of the Jury's recommendations

Oversight Panel Members

- Andrew Smith, Church of England
- Anita Shervington, BLAST Fest
- Chris Jordan, Birmingham City Council
- David Mba, Birmingham City University
- Esther Slater, Feast
- Luís de Melo Jerónimo, Calouste Gulbenkian
- Marcia Lewis, Witton Community Hub
- Mark O'Neill, Independent Museums Consultant
- Nicole Curato, Birmingham University
- Paul Slatter, Childrens' Quarter
- Rabiya Latif, Near Neighbours
- Robert Alden, Birmingham City Council
- Saima Suleman, Birmingham City Council
- Tom Keavney, BelN Media Group
- Tom Wakeford, Freelance Consultant
- Tony Simpson, BMT Board (**Chair**)

Observers

To ensure transparency, we provided external stakeholders with an opportunity to observe the process from start to finish. No more than three observers were permitted at each session, to ensure that jury members did not feel overwhelmed.

In addition to commentator presentations (available on the website) and Q&A sessions, observers were able to watch any deliberative exercises or activities.

All observers were briefed to remain silent. They were not allowed to participate in any of the small group discussions.

Who attended as an observer?

Representatives from the following organisations attended at least one session as an observer:

- Andrea Bonnell, Birmingham Museums Trust
- Hayley Pepler, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Isabella Roberts, External Evaluator
- Lucien Smith, Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Lucy Reid, DemocracyNext
- Mark O'Neill, Independent Museums Consultant
- Niels de Vos, Birmingham Museums Trust (Chair)
- Rob Lewis, Birmingham Museums Trust
- Rosie Barker, Birmingham Museums Trust
- Sara Wajid, Birmingham Museums Trust
- Siobhán Stevenson, Birmingham Museums Trust
- Stuart Tulloch, Arts Council England
- Tismena Bashir, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Tony Simpson, Chair of Oversight Panel and Trustee, Birmingham Museums Trust
- Zak Mensah, Birmingham Museums Trust

Jury Sessions

The Jury took place between September and November 2024. It consisted of 3 in-person Saturday sessions and 3 online sessions on Thursday evenings.

Session 1: Introduction and welcome to the jury

The first session was held on Saturday 5th October 2024 at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The aim of the session was to introduce members of the Jury to each other and to begin thinking about the significance of museums in the context of Birmingham.

Shared Future provided a brief introduction to the process, explaining the overall structure of the jury and some basic principles, the question to be considered, as well as logistics such as vouchers, expenses, filming, and observers. We then invited any questions before launching into a game of 'people bingo'. This activity enabled people to get to know each other in a friendly, informal way.

Before the next activity, Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah, the Co-CEOs of Birmingham Museums Trust, explained the rationale behind the jury, including what will

happen to the recommendations. This was followed by a short question and answer session.

Home Groups

After a short break, the jury went into four 'home groups'. The jury would return to these groups at the start of each session, so that they could get to know a few other people well and also one of the facilitators. This would give all participants a chance to check in with each other about how the sessions were running. The groups were determined in advance to ensure that each group was as diverse as the jury.

Group Guidelines

By inviting people from different backgrounds, with different opinions, and varying life experiences into a room, we invite the potential for conflict. With this, there are opportunities to learn and develop ideas, but only if the unique experiences, ideas, and viewpoints of participants are respected.



The Jury engages in a question and answer session with Birmingham Museums Trust Co-CEOs.

To ensure that we made the most of our time together, we asked participants to contribute towards a set of guidelines for the Jury. Research has shown that by developing their own guidelines for working together, groups are more likely to adopt them.

In home groups, we asked each person to contribute one thing that they needed from the session to make it work.

At the end of the session, these individual requirements were grouped, and where necessary merged, to create a full list of guidelines. These were shared back with the Jury via email and at the start of the next session. We would refer to the guidelines as a tool to keep conversations on track.

What does Birmingham mean to you?

It was important to begin the Jury by grounding the participants in their own lived experience. While many participants were not museum visitors, all had an understanding of Birmingham and their place within it.

To ease participants in, facilitators asked them individually to write anything down in their notebooks that came to mind. They offered the prompt: "If Birmingham was a colour, smell, outfit, song, movie – what would it be?"

Participants were invited to share their initial thoughts with each other, before joining one of four groups. These included 1) drawing, 2) Lego modelling, 3) freeze frames, and 4) a small group conversation.

Each group was given 20 minutes in their chosen group to produce something before sharing it back with the wider group. The outputs from this activity would be used as a stimulus throughout the Jury.

Hopes and fears for Birmingham

Drawing again on participants' own lived experience, facilitators next asked each participant, in groups of three, to share their 'hopes and fears' for Birmingham. While one person was speaking, another would draw. Two groups would then come together and share their illustrations, adding descriptions or key words where necessary to explain their drawings. These were shared back with the Jury after the lunch break. They were then shared with the Jury in an online repository (a shared Google Drive) and displayed during the later in-person sessions.

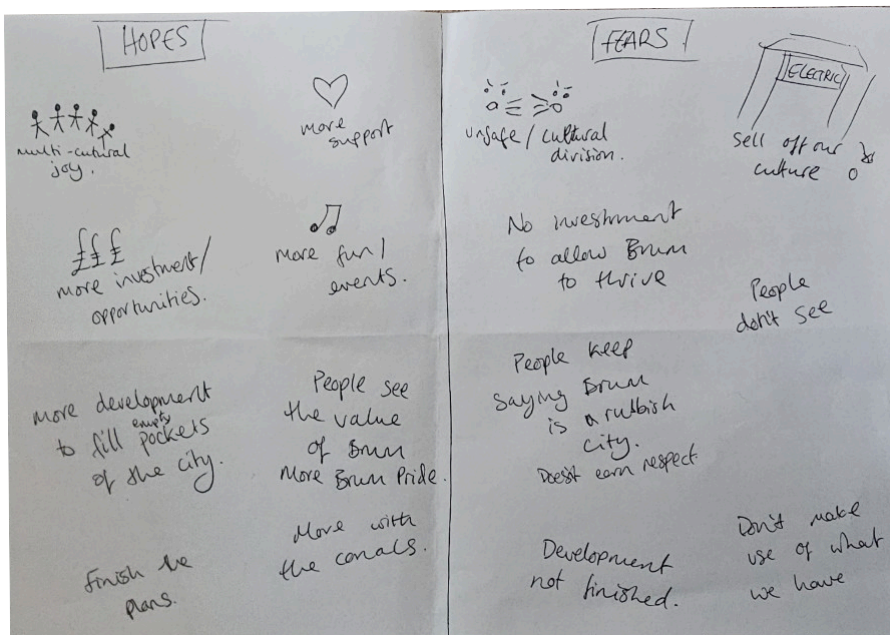
Group Guidelines

1. Do not interrupt others.
2. Everyone's voice matters and all our opinions should be valued and not dismissed. We must respect each other's opinions even if we don't agree with what is said.
3. When speaking we all have different levels of confidence. We must all be conscious about how much time we take up when speaking so that all of us have an opportunity to do so if we want to.
4. No-one should feel stupid asking a question – no question is a stupid question.
5. Being able to disagree and challenge is important, however we must disagree respectfully with the idea – not the person, e.g. "I disagree with that" rather than "you are wrong".
6. Only one person at a time should speak so we are not overwhelmed and quiet people can be heard.
7. If possible keep your phones on silent and away.
8. We should all try to make sure we record ideas.
9. Make sure we can all hear each other – this means sometimes we should have microphones available.
10. Make sure the sessions are interactive for example through using small groups.
11. Make sure there is always time to reflect.
12. We must make sure we look after ourselves. Some things can be triggering – so look after yourself for example take a minute, speak to a facilitator etc.
13. Let's start and finish on time.
14. We need to respect people's boundaries and privacy.



Model from the group using Lego to illustrate what Birmingham means to them.

Drawing of the Hare and Hounds pub in Kings Heath, Birmingham with the caption "community".



List of 'hopes and fears' for Birmingham produced by a small group.

Selected opinion lines (Session 1)

Disagree

Agree



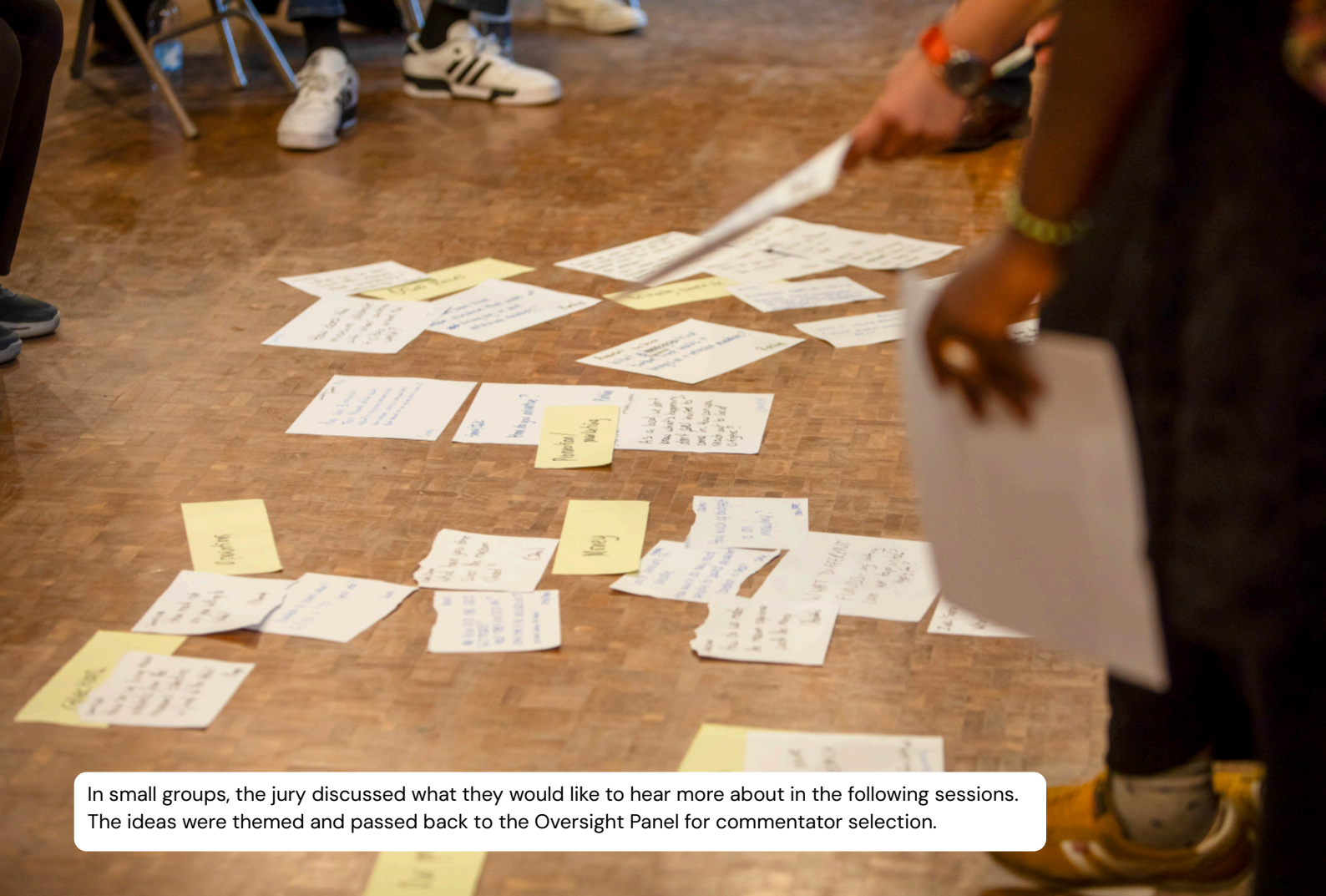
"Most museums are boring"



"The objects stored and stories told in Birmingham Museums are relevant to me"



"City council money spent on the museum is money well spent"



In small groups, the jury discussed what they would like to hear more about in the following sessions. The ideas were themed and passed back to the Oversight Panel for commentator selection.

Session 2

On the evening of Thursday 10th October, the Jury reconvened online on the Zoom platform for the second session. For many in the Jury, this was their first time taking part in an online discussion space (we provided laptops and dongles to 5 participants, as well as training on how to set up and join the call).

Home Groups

The evening kicked off with a quick refresher of what we did in the first session, before launching into home groups. In home groups, we provided a quick refresher of how to use the basic functions of Zoom (e.g. 'mute', 'turn off camera' etc.). We also reminded everyone that if they were experiencing any technical difficulties at any point, they could call or message for dedicated technical support.

In their home groups, facilitators asked each participant to reflect on how they were feeling about the process. We shared a 'weather chart' and asked each jury member to choose the weather symbol that reflected how they felt, and explain why.

For the remainder of the home group section, we reflected on the guidelines that they had produced during the previous session. We asked them if the

group guidelines reflected what they felt was important, highlighting where any had been merged, and asking if anything needed to be added.

Commentators

The commentators for Session 2 explored the top two most pressing issues that the Jury had said they wanted to hear more about in session on. These were: 'ideas for how to get more people in' and 'research on existing and new audiences'. The two commentators selected to speak were:

- **Katy Raines**, Founder and CEO of Indigo, "*Audience research into people who don't visit Birmingham museums and why*" ([Recording](#))
- **Prof. Suzanne MacLeod**, Co-Director Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), University of Leicester, "*How to make a great museum experience for everyone*" ([Recording](#))

After the presentations, Jury members went into small groups to discuss what they had heard and develop questions for each commentator. The questions were then grouped by facilitators on a Miro board (an online platform for brainstorming and mind maps).

Jury members were encouraged to ask their own questions. If they were not comfortable doing so,



- **Zak Mensah**, Co-CEO, Birmingham Museums Trust, “Budgets” (**Recording**)
- **Mark O’Neill**, Independent Museums Consultant, “Glasgow Museums and Polarised Perspectives” (**Recording**)

Following the presentations, Jury members split off into small groups to discuss what they had heard and develop questions for each commentator. The questions were then grouped by facilitators on a Miro board.

The question and answer format was the same as described for session 2.

What do we need to remember?

As in previous sessions, participants entered small groups for a discussion on what they needed to remember. The discussion was recorded and shared ahead of the Jury writing their recommendations.

Where there was time, each small group was invited to reflect on anything they agreed with or wanted to challenge that the commentators had mentioned.

Session 4

The fourth session took place online on Thursday 7th November 2024. After reminding the Jury of the overarching question, we launched into a home group check-in and discussion.

What does a recommendation look like?

To get the Jury to start thinking about possible recommendations, we had a short discussion on what individual recommendations, or a body of recommendations might look like that answer the overarching question.

Facilitators emphasised that there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ format to a recommendation and that it is more important that the Jury shares their ideas. Facilitators shared some examples of very specific or prescriptive recommendations and very broad or directional recommendations that Shared Future juries have written in the past.

Facilitators emphasised that Jury members do not need to know all the answers, and the recommendation may simply propose further research is needed. Finally, the facilitators encouraged participants to think about how many recommendations they should write.

facilitators asked the questions on their behalf. Any questions that were not answered due to time constraints were emailed to the commentators after the session to provide a written response. These were then shared with the Jury ahead of the following session.

What do we need to remember?

Before the end of the session, we returned to working in small groups. We asked all participants to think of one or more things they needed to remember from what they had heard in this session and share them with the group. These discussions were recorded by the facilitator and then shared back with the Jury when they were writing their recommendations.

Session 3

On 17th October, the Jury met online for their third session. The Jury kicked off with a quick check-in in home groups and a critical thinking exercise.

Home Groups

We began by watching a [short video on ‘critical thinking’](#) from the New Democracy Foundation. In home groups, the Jury then spent some time reflecting on what questions they thought needed to be asked to be able to answer the overarching question: ‘What does Birmingham need and want from its museums, now and in the future; and what should Birmingham Museums Trust do to make these things happen?’

Commentators

The Jury heard from two commentators in Session 3 on other issues they had said they wanted to hear more about. These were funding and revenue sources and ways of presenting different perspectives on local history. The commentators for the session were:

Where is the museum at now?

In this visual exercise, facilitators showed each group an image of a tree with a number of figures at different locations around the tree. Some were scrabbling to get up, or helping others. Some were happy, some were scared. Others sat proud on the branches, while another had fallen off. The facilitator then asked participants:

- Which figure best represents where you think the museum is at now?
- Which figure best represents where you think the museum should be in the future?

The facilitator encouraged participants to think of some reasons why they felt this way so that they could share it with the rest of the group.

If there was time, the facilitator asked their group to reflect on the word cloud that they produced in Session 1 and whether there were any surprises on that list.

Commentators

The Jury heard from three commentators about the different exhibitions and how decisions are made about what to exhibit. They also had the chance to watch two pre-recorded videos about different BMT venues.

- **Felicity McWilliams**, Curator, Birmingham Museums Trust, *Made in Birmingham Exhibition* ([Recording](#))
- **Victoria Osborne**, Curator, Birmingham Museums Trust, *Victorian Radicals Exhibition* ([Recording](#))
- **Sara Myers**, Creative Practitioner, *The Past is Now Exhibition* ([Recording](#))
- **Museums Collection Centre** ([Recording](#))
- **Thinktank Science Museum** ([Recording](#))

As Victoria Osborne's presentation and the videos of the Museums' Collection Centre and Thinktank Science Museum were pre-recorded, we asked **Toby Watley**, Director of Collections and Estate at Birmingham Museums Trust to be present to answer any questions that the Jury may have.

After the presentations, the participants were moved



into smaller, facilitated break out groups to take part in a rotating question and answer session with each commentator. They spent 10 minutes with each commentator.

What do we need to remember?

For the final activity, we gave participants the opportunity to reflect individually, before sharing back with the group one or more things they thought needed to be remembered when it came to writing recommendations. These were recorded by the facilitator and then shared back with the group ahead of Sessions 5 and 6.

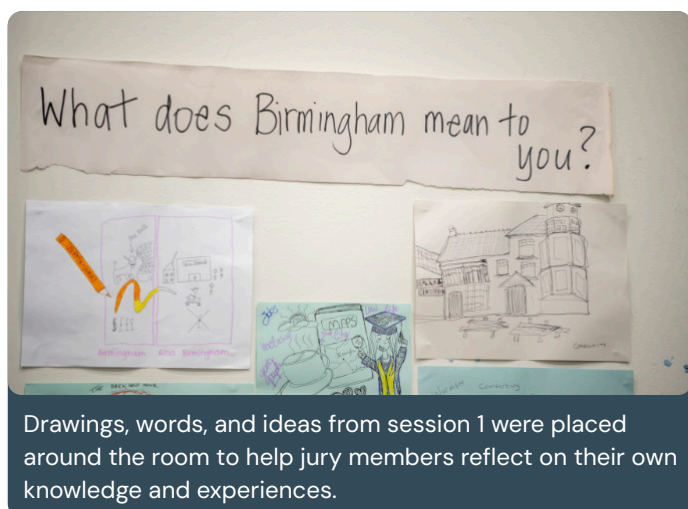
Session 5

The fifth session took place on Saturday 16th November in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Before launching into the day's activities, we reminded the participants of the overarching question they were seeking to answer.

Home Groups

To stimulate discussion, we launched into a quick ice breaker activity in home groups. On each table, facilitators placed replica ceramic bowls with 10 icebreaker questions. The facilitator asked participants to pick out one question from the bowl and gave them 30 seconds to think of an answer before sharing back with the group.

After the icebreaker, we invited the Jury to walk around the room and observe all their outputs from the first day of the process. A facilitator stood at different points around the room to summarise the outputs and stimulate a conversation between participants. By reflecting back on these conversations, the idea was to bring people back to their lived experience of



Birmingham. This was intended to encourage them to think about whether the museum might fulfil a different purpose within the city.

What should our museums be for?

We divided the Jury into four groups based on the day of the year they were born. Each group then worked with a facilitator to answer the question “*what should our museums be for?*”. The facilitator would probe for more specific answers where necessary. Facilitators also encouraged participants to think of museums both in terms of the service they currently provide and as a space within the city to broaden the discussion.

The outputs from each of the four groups were written

on pieces of cardboard which were then collected and combined where appropriate by a facilitator to produce a list of 11 ‘roles for the museum’. These would be ranked and refined later in the session.

Exhibition tours

The Jury then split into two groups to visit two exhibitions that they had heard about in Session 4. They had 30 minutes to explore each exhibition. Museum staff gave a brief introduction to the exhibition but participants were free to explore on their own. Participants were encouraged to keep the ‘roles of the museum’ they had just discussed in mind as they toured each exhibition.

After the exhibition tours, participants returned to their home groups to reflect on what they had seen, whether they were surprised by anything, what feelings the exhibition elicited, and whether they knew people who would enjoy it. **Toby Watley**, Director of Collections and Estate at Birmingham Museums Trust was present to answer any questions that the jury had about their tour of the exhibitions.

What should our museums be for: what are our priorities?

After a short break, participants were moved into random small groups. Each group was given an identical set of cards with some roles for the museum.



Jury members visit the ‘Made in Birmingham’ exhibition.



These were a combination of all the roles for the museum produced in the earlier exercise (merged by a facilitator where any duplicate or similar roles appeared).

Participants were then asked to order the roles as if on the rungs of a ladder, with the most important at the top on the table in front of them. The facilitator would ask questions to encourage deliberation e.g. "do you agree with this order? If not, why not?"

Each ranking was given a points score and these were tallied so that an overall ranking could be shared with the group later.

Commentators

The Jury heard from three commentators about the wider role of museums within schools and the city.

- **Claire McColgan**, Director of Culture & Major Events, Liverpool City Council*
- **Trina Tiernan**, Work Related Learning & Employability Manager, Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College (**Recording**)

- **Nathan Eglinton-Cook**, Supported Internships Coordinator, Heart of Birmingham Vocational College (**Recording**)

Each commentator spoke for 5 minutes. Participants were then invited to take part in an 'open space' format question and answer session, where participants were free to choose which commentator to have a deeper discussion with.

What should our museums be for: large group reflection

The results from the roles the museum prioritisation activity were shared with the large group. The group was reminded that this was not a ranking, but a way of stimulating discussion. If it was felt that the roles needed more work, there would be an opportunity to revisit them in the final session.

A number of opinion lines were organised around the roles of the museum. We then asked participants to advocate for or challenge the relative importance of each role.

Draft recommendation writing (Round 1)

Towards the end of the day, the Jury began drafting some recommendations in small groups.

Ahead of the session, we shared all the 'things we need to remember' that facilitators had collected from participants at the end of each session. Before the session, a facilitator roughly grouped these into four themes, as follows:

- Group A: Community involvement and collaboration (including schools and young people).
- Group B: Funding and Marketing.
- Group C: New audiences, diversity and representation.
- Group D: Understanding who is coming and who isn't and balancing education and entertainment for our unique audiences.

In each corner of the room there was a table with a facilitator dedicated to a single theme. Participants were asked to choose to sit at a table based on the theme that they were most interested in. We reminded participants that they would be able to choose a different theme to work on in the next session.

Each group had approximately 45 minutes to begin thinking about what they would want to recommend. They were asked to refer to the list of things they needed to remember to stimulate discussion, but encouraged to also draw on what they had heard or seen during the day, and bring their own experience.

Facilitators reminded participants that they may have conflicting ideas for recommendations and that this does not mean they could not recommend two opposing things, as these would be voted on later. They were asked to remember the group guidelines as they discussed potential differences (e.g. 'we must disagree respectfully...').

The draft recommendations were then typed up and shared back with participants ahead of the next session.

Session 6

The final session took place on Saturday 30th November 2024 in the Event Suite at Thinktank Science Museum.

Facilitators reminded participants of the aim of the day, to answer the overarching question: **'What does Birmingham need and want from its museums, now and in the future; and what should Birmingham Museums Trust do to make these things happen?'**

Opposites game

The session started with a short warm up activity designed to get the blood flowing and break participants out of conditioned patterns of thinking.

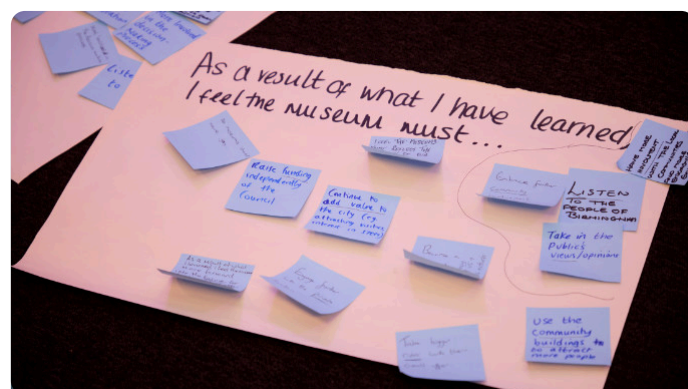
The facilitator gave the group a series of instructions to follow such as 'stop', 'walk', 'touch your knees', 'touch your head', 'jump', and 'turn'. After the group had become comfortable following the instructions, the facilitator altered the meaning of each instruction. Instead of walking when the facilitator shouted 'walk', they now had to stop.

After a few minutes, the facilitator asked the Jury how it felt to play the game. The facilitator asked participants to reflect on how we make sense of words, how these words link to our actions, and who sets the rules about meaning and actions.

This Jury was reminded that this was their final day on the project to define the role and purpose of a museum, and that whatever we've been told and conditioned to believe about a museum is up for grabs. Participants were then asked to make their way to their home groups for the next exercise

Statement ideas

In each deliberative process we run, we ask the group to produce a statement. This is different from the recommendations, in that it focuses more on the feelings of participants and the journey that they have been on. A small group is usually tasked with writing



Jury members share their thoughts and feelings to help inform the statement writing group.

the statement.

To make sure that each member of the Jury had the opportunity to contribute, we asked them to produce suggested words and phrases to be included in the statement. They were given two prompts to respond to:

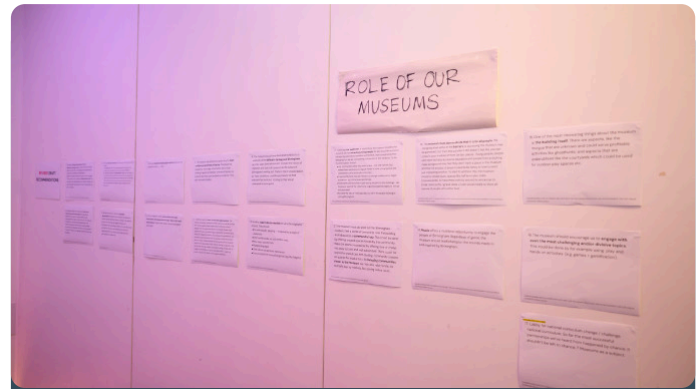
- as a result of our work together I feel...
- as a result of what I have learned I feel the museum must...

Participants were asked to stick sticky notes against each prompt. These were grouped for participants to consider later as part of a statement writing group.

What are our museums for?

Facilitators asked participants to reflect on the 'roles of the museum' from the previous session. Each participant was given a copy of the roles of the museum in the order in which they were ranked previously. Participants were asked if they had any thoughts on them since the last session, or if there were any that they were unclear about. If participants had any questions, they were encouraged to write these down and, if comfortable, to share them with the larger group.

After a quick question and answer discussion, each facilitated group chose one 'role for the museum' that



Refining the 'roles of our museums' from Session 5.

they would like to further refine. Each group was split into 'cheerleaders' and 'critics', and asked to note down positives and negatives about the role. Each group presented these back to the larger group.

All participants then took part in a large group conversation to discuss whether or not they felt there were any modifications that needed to be made to the existing roles. Suggested changes were made and tested again by the facilitators with the large group.

Draft recommendation writing (Round 2)

After a short break, participants were asked to return to their draft recommendation writing groups from session 5. Recommendations had to be sorted and



Writing the recommendations



Revisiting recommendations from Session 5.

some combined prior to session 6 by the facilitators, to clarify them and remove repetition. We gave participants a chance to review them and suggest any necessary re-edits.

Draft recommendation writing (Round 3)

Participants were then given a chance to join a new table to draft recommendations under a different theme, or work on recommendations which didn't fit neatly into the four themes.

Statement Writing

Towards the end of the recommendation writing, Jury members were given the opportunity to join the statement writing group. This group considered all the

inputs from earlier in the session and shared their thoughts on how to make the statement more impactful.

Sharing the Statement

The statement was read out by a facilitator. Jury members did a show of hands to indicate their support for the statement. If participants were unsure about a word or phrase, or felt something was missing, they were asked to share their thoughts. Any suggested edits were then discussed as a large group. The Jury was reminded that this would only make it into the final report with at least 80% approval. The voting took place after the final session. The statement can be viewed on page 23.

Exhibition Visit: Thinktank Science Museum

The Jury was given 45 minutes to visit the Thinktank Science Museum. This was an opportunity to check their recommendations before a final large group edit took place. During this time, facilitators typed up the recommendations as they stood.

Finalising the Recommendations

Throughout session 6 participants were given repeated opportunities to discuss, refine and add to their recommendations, in a supportive, non-conflictual and relaxed manner.



Jury members visit the Thinktank Science Museum

Towards the end of the session, this took the form of a final large group deliberation and edit of the 'roles of the museum' and recommendations, followed by individual reflections in home groups. This would give Jury members a final opportunity to reflect before they voted at home, and encourage them to think about what, if any, comments they might make on the recommendations (see Annex A and B).

Celebration Activity

For the final 20 minutes, we sat in a large circle in the middle of the room. Everybody was asked to quietly reflect on what they have enjoyed most about the process. The group then passed a microphone around the circle to share their thoughts. Some of these reflections are shared on the next page!

Celebration and reflection...

I've learned to take on board people's opinions and listen to people, and it's made a huge difference to me!

Thank you for showing me Birmingham Museums are not boring...I'd never go to a museum when I'm on holiday... but I went to five museums in Lisbon and they were really, really interesting.

I feel really hopeful about the future of Brum, I feel really happy that this has taken place. I've got so much Brum pride and it's only growing through this process. I'm really hopeful that other people can see how amazing Brum is because of this.

it's been really nice to meet everyone and I hope we get to see each other again soon. I've really enjoyed it.

I would love to see the citizens' jury concept be developed further. I think it could be used to tackle lots of other issues facing the city, so I'm really interested to hear what happens in the future.

I feel like I've become a bit of an active citizen through this process... It's been really enjoyable to meet a wide range of people that we probably wouldn't bump into.

I didn't know what to expect when I got the leaflet [...] but I've come here and it has changed my mind. I thought it's old, boring, not worth going, however, by seeing it, it has changed my mind and it has made me change my opinions.

I've enjoyed every session we've done, but mainly when we've all been together, that's far more rewarding. There were times where I thought we're never going to pull this together, but with all these amazing people, it's been done and the recommendations well, it'd be interesting to see what the Museums Trust take up from that.

It's been a great experience to meet loads of people and have some really constructive discussions about something that I would've just walked past. I used to work in Victoria Square so I used to see it every day and I didn't think twice about it...

Jury Statement

The following statement was written by a small group of Jury members. An 80% threshold of support was set for inclusion in the report.

The statement received 100% support from the Jury.

At the beginning of this process we didn't know what to expect. Many of us haven't been to a museum in a long time, we didn't know what Birmingham Museums Trust was about, and what it could mean to us. We were not engaged and did not feel close to our museums.

As a result of the process, we feel more pride in our museums and the city. We heard a range of perspectives speaking on diverse topics that relate to how the industry works. As a group of different people with different lives we have different opinions, but have found consensus in our shared aspirations for Birmingham Museums Trust to thrive. We feel more connected to our museums and hopeful for their future. We have enjoyed being a part of this decision making process and it has made us advocate for and promote our museums in our own communities.

Our museums need to update how they are perceived in Birmingham and on a national stage. The re-opened Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is much more appealing, we hope to see this continued across the other sites and that the Trust makes sure the people are aware of the amazing things it has to offer and the process it has gone through.

We acknowledge our museums are fighting for their survival; they must take risks in their bid to be inspiring, educating, engaging to all. It is important for our museums to involve and represent the communities they are responsible to, i.e. the people of Birmingham and they shouldn't be precious about doing so. We deserve museums that are proud of us, that we can be proud of, that celebrate what's unique about Birmingham.

The voice of the museum is to some extent, the voice of the people, and we want everyone to hear us a mile coming.

Roles of the Museums

The 'roles of the museum' are listed in rank order. Jury members were asked to vote on a scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" for each recommendation, with each vote worth the following number of points:

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
+2	+1	0	-1	-2

The points for each role were tallied and the roles ranked accordingly.

Jury members were also invited to comment on the roles. These can be found in Annex A.



Role A

1st | 45 Points

Our museums should be spaces for a variety of experiences. They should enable experiences that are **educational and improve knowledge** and experiences that are **fun and entertaining** and offer escapism.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
19	7	0	0	0

Role B

2nd | 41 Points

Our museums must be spaces that welcome and inspire **all ages and backgrounds**, but especially young people with fun, engaging and exciting activities. Our museums are **not just for an educated elite**.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
15	11	0	0	0

Role C

3rd | 38 Points

Our museums must educate residents and visitors about the **diversity of our people and our histories so we understand the different groups in our city**. For example, our immigrant stories, who came, why, what they did and how they are contributing now. This means amplifying stories that have been historically silenced and will build community cohesion and bring people to visit.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	12	1	0	0

Role D

4th | 36 Points

Our museums must help us to contribute to **what the future could look like** by:

- encouraging audiences to learn from past experiences
- introducing new concepts and innovations and helping us to consider their impacts and roles in society
- fostering creativity and imagination by inviting curiosity and posing questions.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	11	1	1	0

Role E

=5th | 34 Points

Museums should include local people. **People who've done extraordinary things but also everyday people and their lives.** It allows people from the communities to be represented, changing the idea that museums are an echo chamber for the elite.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	10	4	0	0

Role F

=5th | 34 Points

Our museums must **engage and inspire** about **a wide range of subjects and topics** including but not limited to science, history, arts, and the natural world.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	10	2	0	1

Role G

=7th | 33 Points

Our museums must help people understand that **all our histories must be heard from different perspectives.** There is more than one side to the story. We must challenge the perspective of the 'victor' and tell harsh truths as stories must be balanced. This will **encourage critical thinking** and help us learn from our mistakes.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	11	4	0	0

Role H

=7th | 33 Points

Museums must create **welcoming social spaces** that enable us all to connect with each other better

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	11	4	0	0

Role I

9th | 32 Points

Museums should be for championing **the most unique things about Birmingham** as part of the city's legacy, from the present, recent past and historically, e.g. metal music, Tolkien, the Electric Cinema, Birmingham Small Arms, the jewellery quarter, jazz, the Royal Ballet, The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, & LGBT history Gay Liberation Front etc.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	6	7	0	0

Role J

10th | 30 Points

Museums must raise awareness of **topical issues and current events** of relevance to the local community, in particular, **issues that are currently dividing our communities**, including international issues with local repercussions. The museum has a role to play in counteracting biases in the media and should spotlight the work of locals taking positive actions and bridging diverse communities.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	10	3	2	0

Role K

11th | 23 Points

Museums must contribute to and **work with the local economy**..

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
8	12	2	3	1

Recommendations

The recommendations are listed in rank order. Jury members were asked to vote on a scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” for each recommendation, with each vote worth the following number of points:

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
+2	+1	0	-1	-2

The points for each recommendation were tallied and the recommendations ranked accordingly.

The recommendations are grouped into 4 themes. a) Funding and Marketing, b) New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity, c) Community Engagement and Collaboration, and d) Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums. The rank within each theme is also provided.

Jury members were also invited to comment on the recommendations. These can be found in Annex B.



Recommendation 1

1st | 48 Points (Funding and Marketing 1)

We need **better promotion** of the museums and their activities for example:

- Challenge the City Council's planning rules that prevent the museums from doing promotion at its entrances (BMAG)
- building the museums' social media strategy so it includes a) the use of traditional social media channels (e.g. Facebook) but also b) work with influencers and channels such as Tik Tok (with short videos) to attract those who may not have an interest. (This could be achieved initially through a private event for influencers).
- generally increase the level of physical promotion (e.g. bus branding, posters and Council signs) including one, easy read, centralised comms leaflet that covers all Birmingham heritage sites

We recognise it is unrealistic to do all these at the same time – there should be a phased approach

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
22	4	0	0	0

Recommendation 2

2nd | 47 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 1)

Exhibits need to be **accessible for all of Birmingham's citizens**. They should:

- Be aesthetically pleasing – to appeal to a range of audiences
- Offer audio blurbs not just written ones
- Have easy read formats and audio descriptions
- Multiple languages including British Sign Language
- Think about the sensory experience beyond the visual art
- Accommodate for neurodivergence (e.g., offer fidgets); dyslexia, colour-blindness
- Consider opening times- for example the museums' collection centre is only open during prayer times on a Friday, while on weekdays, BMAG is only open during working hours.
- Offer transport for marginalised groups
- These accessibility adjustments should be well promoted outside of the museums so that people understand that these spaces are accessible to them.
- Audio guides should include different people telling stories like kids, and regular people (not actors with scripts) with fun, engaging and exciting activities.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
22	3	1	0	0

Recommendation 3

3rd | 44 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 2)

Many people from different backgrounds feel like the museums aren't for them. It is the responsibility of the museums to change that perception by including young people, people who have had less access to education and people from a working class background – **everyone needs to feel they can come to the museum as they are.**

- Create buzzy spaces for different age groups, like weekend clubs or social spaces.
- Meeting community needs like safe and warm spaces with free hot drinks.
- Have activities around its entrances that welcome people in and break down the stuffy/grand vibes.
- Social media that shows all types of people inside.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
19	6	1	0	0

Recommendation 4

4th | 43 Points (Funding and Marketing 2)

We must continue to drive for **corporate sponsorship** including local companies (e.g. a Netflix sponsored Peaky Blinders exhibition). We need to build on the fact that our biggest industries in Birmingham are technology, creative and manufacturing and lean on these for sponsorship. Some of these relationships with corporates may initially start as partnerships to collaborate. We should fully exploit the potential to use exhibition space for corporate events and entertainment. Market research is needed to ensure space is sold at a good market value. We also need to explore the market for church events and Asian weddings.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	9	0	0	0

Recommendation 5

=5th | 42 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 1)

Birmingham Museums Trust needs to **build closer relationships with more schools**. This can help to advertise the museums to younger audiences and encourage them to return in their own time. The museums can develop a mutually beneficial relationship with students by embedding itself within the curriculum. It can do this by building strong relationships with teachers, providing them with resources, and offering work experience. Students could support the museums, for example, by using their skills to design and run marketing campaigns.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
18	6	2	0	0

Recommendation 6

=5th | 42 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 3)

Attracting **new audiences** is a priority as the museums should be for everyone. We feel **attracting young people** (16–24) should be a priority, followed by parents and toddlers and families, older people and other demographics we are not reaching or have lost in the transition. To do this the museums should:

- Ask communities what they want to see – not just visitors. Researchers should a) be on top of trends of what young people are interested in, what entertains them etc. b) incentivise people fairly to participate in accessible surveys, and c) work with marginalised groups e.g. visually impaired, or deaf people to design spaces which are fun, engaging and accessible.
- Create exhibitions that are relevant to younger audiences or target audience by diversifying the objects and collections– e.g. immersive experiences, tech enabled access and cinematography
- Host events and activities to get young people and wider community into the buildings– use the space beyond the collections. (e.g. encourage teenagers to visit as a study break; have scheduled events such as performances and workshops.
- facilitate the idea of “making a day out of it” for people thinking of visiting Birmingham.
- Use opportunities to guide audiences to discover other exhibits that they might not have otherwise engaged with.
- Showcase developing technologies to engage curiosity and debate about their role and influence on society e.g using AI generated Images alongside human generated images with interactive voting to see if people could see which is which and highlighting the struggle and challenge facing new artists. Or Interactive exhibitions which explore human capabilities vs computer capabilities like the peeling a grape experiment to prompt thinking around the role of assisted technologies for treating illness.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
19	5	1	1	0

Recommendation 7

=7th | 41 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 1)

The museums should have dedicated exhibitions to celebrate all the **different heritages of Birmingham**, eg. Race– including Irish, Asian, Black, African, Afro–Caribbean etc., to share the history of migration and how it all connects to the culture of Birmingham’s melting pot. And also consider all of the other cultural identities and protected characteristics such as LGBTQI+, Gender, Disability. There is lots of unused space so these exhibitions could be permanent so that everyone has a voice or rotating so they are all celebrated at some point.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	7	2	0	0

Recommendation 8

=7th | 41 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 2)

The museums must do work so that Birmingham residents feel a sense of ownership over the building and it becomes a **community hub**. This could be done by offering unused spaces to use by the community. Make the spaces accessible by offering free or cheap use, easy to book and well advertised. There could be spaces for workshops, hot desking, community classes, art spaces for local artists. By bringing communities closer to the museums we may also raise funds, for example pop up markets, fee paying online tours.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	9	1	0	0

Recommendation 9

=7th | 41 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 3)

Birmingham Museums Trust should **lead cooperation with other heritage sites and institutions**. Cross pollination benefits all – including linked communications and events and knowledge sharing. Collaboration with the museums shouldn't be left to chance. The museums have something for everyone, they need to build longstanding and beneficial relationships/partnerships at all levels of the city.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
15	11	0	0	0

Recommendation 10

10th | 39 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 2)

The museums and exhibitions have a duty to **share multiple perspectives of history** and the external factors which impact these such as politics. The museums need to raise awareness of this whilst staying impartial to allow people to make up their own minds. Exhibits must encourage conversation and critical thinking. Impacts of historical events and figures are nuanced and have good and bad connotations. This can't be oversimplified.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	11	1	0	0

Recommendation 11

=11th | 38 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 3)

Exhibitions need to **invest in stimulating discussions**.

The museums should ask questions of the audience as well as prompt them to ask questions and create opportunities for audiences to consider different accounts of events.

The object and blurb isn't enough. People need support to have conversations and understand the nuance and should be engaged to interact. This can be done through feedback as well as having trained staff to engage in conversations. A good example of this is exploring access to food in the Made in Birmingham exhibition.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	11	0	1	0

Recommendation 12

=11th | 38 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 4)

Museums can help us to **build a more positive future**. They can help us to understand how to respond to rapid changes in society, such as in technology, the environment, or demographics.

To do this, the museums should showcase the work of **young people**, who bring **new ideas and ambition** to make the world a better place. Their honesty, positivity, and creativity is often an inspiration for adults and can help them to navigate difficult issues. Their work should not be confined to an exhibit for children, but should be seen as something that adults can also learn from.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	12	1	0	0

Recommendation 13

=11th | 38 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 4)

We need to **bring communities into the decision-making process**. The museums should consider:

- the Citizens jury in a future advisory capacity.
- explore the idea of places on the museums' board being allocated specifically to community representatives

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	6	2	0	1

Recommendation 14

14th | 36 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 5)

We need to **bring communities into the decision-making process** around exhibitions and how underutilised spaces are used. Exhibits like the Victorian Radicals feel like they are designed by a select few, for a select few. Transparent, collaborative decision-making will help bring those who are engaged into the museums by creating a relationship of trust. By drawing on the lived experiences of ordinary people, we can also ensure that people feel there is 'something for them' on display.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	10	3	0	0

Recommendation 15

15th | 35 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 5)

It is not biased to invite **communities who have faced harm and oppression to share their truths and experiences**. These stories need to be acknowledged and shared.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	9	4	0	0

Recommendation 16

16th | 34 Points (Funding and Marketing 3)

There should be a **consistent brand** across all the museums while still allowing each museum to promote their own identity. Building the brand may lead to new funding opportunities. The trust may want to consider **a new branding to reflect our thoughts on the role of the museums**.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	11	2	1	0

Recommendation 17

17th | 32 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 4)

One of the most interesting things about the museums are **the buildings themselves**. There are aspects, like the morgue that are unknown and could serve profitable activities like ghosthunts; and aspects that are underutilised like the courtyards which could be used for outdoor play spaces etc.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	11	3	1	0

Recommendation 18

18th | 31 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 5)

Music offers a multilevel opportunity to engage the people of Birmingham. Regardless of genre, the museums should champion the sounds made in and inspired by Birmingham.

- Museum directors should recognise the musical heritage in their vision of growth
- Curators should research history across all music genres
- Fundraising specialists should secure sponsorships through live performances and collaboration with event managers, promoters, etc
- Exhibition designers should tailor to open mic nights, songwriting workshops and jam sessions.
- Digital content creators should be engaged for online playlists, podcasts and virtual tours.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	11	5	0	0

Recommendation 19

19th | 30 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 6)

The museums should encourage us to engage with even **the most challenging and/or divisive topics**. This could be done for example, by using play and hands on activities, games and gamification.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	11	4	1	0

Recommendation 20

20th | 29 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 6)

Our museums should go out into Birmingham and meet people where they are. The museums should bring exhibitions (e.g. mobile collections) to different parts of the city, and different types of spaces, which may in turn encourage people from these areas to visit the central museums

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	7	3	2	1

Annex A: Comments on the Roles of the Museums

During voting, Jury members had the option to provide a comment next to each recommendation explaining their reasoning.

The following is a compilation of all comments on the recommendations, listed in rank order. Comments have been further divided into the five voting options. For example, a comment will be listed under 'strongly agree' if the Jury member voted 'strongly agree'.



Role A

1st | 45 Points

Our museums should be spaces for a variety of experiences. They should enable experiences that are **educational and improve knowledge** and experiences that are **fun and entertaining** and offer escapism.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
19	7	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- And be as close to the truth as possible or where possible.
- And promote local history, artists and showcase what is unique about our city

Role B

2nd | 41 Points

Our museums must be spaces that welcome and inspire **all ages and backgrounds**, but especially young people with fun, engaging and exciting activities. Our museums are **not just for an educated elite**.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
15	11	0	0	0

Agree

- The phrase "young people" is open to interpretation, I think it would be helpful to have a more specific age range.

Role C

3rd | 38 Points

Our museums must educate residents and visitors about the **diversity of our people and our histories so we understand the different groups in our city**. For example, our immigrant stories, who came, why, what they did and how they are contributing now. This means amplifying stories that have been historically silenced and will build community cohesion and bring people to visit.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	12	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- More personal stories of the early immigrating.

Agree

- I would prefer the word "inform" rather than "educate".

Role D

4th | 36 Points

Our museums must help us to contribute to **what the future could look like** by:

- encouraging audiences to learn from past experiences
- introducing new concepts and innovations and helping us to consider their impacts and roles in society
- fostering creativity and imagination by inviting curiosity and posing questions.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	11	1	1	0

Strongly Agree

- Not forgetting the past. Keeping an eye on the present. Getting ready for the future.
- Thinktank is a vital resource for inspiring children about science

Agree

- I have enjoyed this museum jurors and hope it succeeds in the future

Role E

=5th | 34 Points

Museums should include local people. **People who've done extraordinary things but also everyday people and their lives.** It allows people from the communities to be represented, changing the idea that museums are an echo chamber for the elite.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	10	4	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Stories from every day people, give every day people who visit a connection to the museums

Role F

=5th | 34 Points

Our museums must **engage and inspire** about **a wide range of subjects and topics** including but not limited to science, history, arts, and the natural world.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	10	2	0	1

Agree

- Need to make sure we don't try to cover too many issues and spread ourselves thin.

Strongly Disagree

- Adding on: a wide range of times must be displayed, as well, as the museum has a tendency to focus on more recent history. Including more exhibitions on medieval or prehistory has a unique appeal which will draw in more interested visitors.

Role G

=7th | 33 Points

Our museums must help people understand that **all our histories must be heard from different perspectives**. There is more than one side to the story. We must challenge the perspective of the 'victor' and tell harsh truths as stories must be balanced. This will **encourage critical thinking** and help us learn from our mistakes.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	11	4	0	0

Strongly Agree

- We need to tell the story of the past warts and all otherwise we only learn what folk want us to know.
- We can't move forward into the future if we don't listen to all sides of the story regarding our past.
- I also think it is important to note that this needs to be done in a way that does not dismiss people who may not have been exposed to different perspectives. These stories are complicated and have nuance, and our Museums are best placed to encourage open conversations that can hopefully counteract the increasingly polarised views in our society. We should be inviting people in rather than calling people out.

Agree

- This is really important, but I see it as being an overarching theme that spreads across all other recommendations rather than something to do on it's own.

Neither Agree nor Disagree

- I would expect any museum to present a balanced view of history.

Role H

=7th | 33 Points

Museums must create **welcoming social spaces** that enable us all to connect with each other better.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	11	4	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Many people lack a third space outside of work and their homes, therefore utilising museum space to cater to the community in a way that allows connection could draw in a wider audience that's historically felt disenfranchised with the museums (e.g. working class, families, young people)

Role I

9th | 32 Points

Museums should be for championing **the most unique things about Birmingham** as part of the city's legacy, from the present, recent past and historically, e.g. metal music, Tolkien, the Electric Cinema, Birmingham Small Arms, the jewellery quarter, jazz, the Royal Ballet, The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, & LGBT history Gay Liberation Front etc.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	6	7	0	0

Strongly Agree

- To help the museum add value to the city by attracting visitors with an interest in these issues

Role J

10th | 30 Points

Museums must raise awareness of **topical issues and current events** of relevance to the local community, in particular, **issues that are currently dividing our communities**, including international issues with local repercussions. The museum has a role to play in counteracting biases in the media and should spotlight the work of locals taking positive actions and bridging diverse communities.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	10	3	2	0

Strongly Agree

- Museums need to be impartial.

- Given Birmingham's history and demographics, it could share stories about immigration and integration without fear of courting controversy

Disagree

- Whilst this seems a worthy idea I think that considerable care would be required as there could be a risk from people/groups with their own personal agenda. Some issues are divisive and I think the greater emphasis should be on the positive work and actions within our diverse city.

Role K

11th | 23 Points

Museums must contribute to and **work with the local economy**.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
8	12	2	3	1

Strongly Agree

- I think the first priority is to ensure financial viability. I believe the Museums should be open every day and for longer hours, which would require sufficient staff and money to pay their salaries, to pay for use of extra utilities, etc and to be able to stage many diverse exhibitions both permanent and changing. Marketing and advertising both nationally and locally would hopefully encourage higher interest and footfall, which in turn would contribute to the wider local economy – hotels, restaurants, bars, etc.
- Museums are an important part of the “offering” of other major cities to help attract visitors and enhance the prestige of the city

Agree

- Supporting/fostering mutually beneficial partnerships with local businesses and reinvestment into local area/community.
- But also international.

Disagree

- Again this is an overarching recommendation rather than something to consider in isolation. Despite lots of deliberation I'm still not fully sure what this means.

Strongly Disagree

- Increase visitor number will add to local economy

Annex B: Comments on the Recommendations

During voting, Jury members had the option to provide a comment next to each recommendation explaining their reasoning.

The following is a compilation of all comments on the recommendations, listed in rank order. Comments have been further divided into the five voting options. For example, a comment will be listed under 'strongly agree' if the Jury member voted 'strongly agree'.



Recommendation 1

1st | 48 Points (Funding and Marketing 1)

We need **better promotion** of the museums and their activities for example:

- Challenge the City Council's planning rules that prevent the museums from doing promotion at its entrances (BMAG)
- Building the museums' social media strategy so it includes a) the use of traditional social media channels (e.g. Facebook) but also b) work with influencers and channels such as Tik Tok (with short videos) to attract those who may not have an interest. (This could be achieved initially through a private event for influencers).
- Generally increase the level of physical promotion (e.g. bus branding, posters and Council signs) including one, easy read, centralised comms leaflet that covers all Birmingham heritage sites

We recognise it is unrealistic to do all these at the same time – there should be a phased approach

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
22	4	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Social media has a huge untapped audience and the Museums need to tap into that and keep people informed on a regular basis.
- This process has shown me that there is a lot great stuff happening at Birmingham museums, but people aren't hearing about it. If they hear about it, they will come.

Agree

- There needs to be more promotional work done in the inner city areas Eg. Erdington, Northfield areas like these areas don't get to know what is going on in the museums so more work needs to be done to promote the museum in these areas.

Recommendation 2

2nd | 47 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 1)

Exhibits need to be **accessible for all of Birmingham's citizens**. They should:

- Be aesthetically pleasing – to appeal to a range of audiences
- Offer audio blurbs not just written ones
- Have easy read formats and audio descriptions
- Multiple languages including British Sign Language
- Think about the sensory experience beyond the visual art
- Accommodate for neurodivergence (e.g., offer fidgets); dyslexia, colour-blindness
- Consider opening times- for example the museums' collection centre is only open during prayer times on a Friday, while on weekdays, BMAG is only open during working hours.
- Offer transport for marginalised groups

- These accessibility adjustments should be well promoted outside of the museums so that people understand that these spaces are accessible to them.
- Audio guides should include different people telling stories like kids, and regular people (not actors with scripts) with fun, engaging and exciting activities.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
22	3	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- The vast majority of people work Monday to Friday and museum opening times have to reflect on this by opening at later times and or the weekends.
- Joint with recommendation 12, arguably the most important recommendation. Physical accessibility assessments must also be carried out in the museum building, investigating aspects such as uneven flooring, accessible bathrooms and the weight of doors.
- Some of this information could be on the visitors own smart phones to reduce cost to the museum, ie through an app or a QR code.

Agree

- Especially re: avoiding prayer times

Recommendation 3

3rd | 44 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 2)

Many people from different backgrounds feel like the museums aren't for them. It is the responsibility of the museums to change that perception by including young people, people who have had less access to education and people from a working class background – **everyone needs to feel they can come to the museum as they are.**

- Create buzzy spaces for different age groups, like weekend clubs or social spaces.
- Meeting community needs like safe and warm spaces with free hot drinks.
- Have activities around its entrances that welcome people in and break down the stuffy/grand vibes.
- Social media that shows all types of people inside.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
19	6	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- It was fantastic to see families at the Made in Birmingham exhibition and that's what museums should be creating.....an atmosphere of involvement and away from the stuffiness

Recommendation 4

4th | 43 Points (Funding and Marketing 2)

We must continue to drive for **corporate sponsorship** including local companies (e.g. a Netflix sponsored Peaky Blinders exhibition). We need to build on the fact that our biggest industries in Birmingham are technology, creative and manufacturing and lean on these for sponsorship. Some of these relationships with corporates may initially start as partnerships to collaborate. We should fully exploit the potential to use exhibition space for corporate events and entertainment. Market research is needed to ensure space is sold at a good market value. We also need to explore the market for church events and Asian weddings.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	9	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Asking a Tech company how the museum's can best use tech in the future to promote the museum's
- I think involving local personalities would engender interest and encourage people to come to the Museums who would not normally think of doing this.
- Peaky Blinders exhibition is a good idea – would help to attract visitors

Recommendation 5

=5th | 42 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 1)

Birmingham Museums Trust needs to **build closer relationships with more schools**. This can help to advertise the museums to younger audiences and encourage them to return in their own time. The museums can develop a mutually beneficial relationship with students by embedding itself within the curriculum. It can do this by building strong relationships with teachers, providing them with resources, and offering work experience. Students could support the museums, for example, by using their skills to design and run marketing campaigns.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
18	6	2	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Currently a missed opportunity to support and celebrate the talents of our young people in schools, colleges and universities across the city
- A young person could follow a guide around for a few hours to see how it's done and maybe write a narrative of their own.
- The most important recommendation in my opinion, joint with accessibility.

Neither Agree nor Disagree

- I remember going on a school outing in the 60s to the Science museum in New hall Street which has now become the Think Tank. The Think Tank is far more interactive for any child IF some of the interactive displays and or games were to work.....which they didn't.

Recommendation 6

=5th | 42 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 3)

Attracting **new audiences** is a priority as the museums should be for everyone. We feel **attracting young people** (16–24) should be a priority, followed by parents and toddlers and families, older people and other demographics we are not reaching or have lost in the transition. To do this the museums should:

- Ask communities what they want to see – not just visitors. Researchers should a) be on top of trends of what young people are interested in, what entertains them etc. b) incentivise people fairly to participate in accessible surveys, and c) work with marginalised groups e.g. visually impaired, or deaf people to design spaces which are fun, engaging and accessible.
- Create exhibitions that are relevant to younger audiences or target audience by diversifying the objects and collections– e.g. immersive experiences, tech enabled access and cinematography
- Host events and activities to get young people and wider community into the buildings– use the space beyond the collections. (e.g. encourage teenagers to visit as a study break; have scheduled events such as performances and workshops.
- facilitate the idea of “making a day out of it” for people thinking of visiting Birmingham.
- Use opportunities to guide audiences to discover other exhibits that they might not have otherwise engaged with.
- Showcase developing technologies to engage curiosity and debate about their role and influence on society e.g. using AI generated Images alongside human generated images with interactive voting to see if people could see which is which and highlighting the struggle and challenge facing new artists. Or Interactive exhibitions which explore human capabilities vs computer capabilities like the peeling a grape experiment to prompt thinking around the role of assisted technologies for treating illness.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
19	5	1	1	0

Strongly Agree

- AI exhibitions would be topical and draw visitors

Recommendation 7

=7th | 41 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 1)

The museums should have dedicated exhibitions to celebrate all the **different heritages of Birmingham**, eg. Race– including Irish, Asian, Black, African, Afro–Caribbean etc., to share the history of migration and how it all connects to the culture of Birmingham's melting pot. And also consider all of the other cultural identities and protected characteristics such as LGBTQI+, Gender, Disability. There is lots of unused space so these exhibitions could be permanent so that everyone has a voice or rotating so they are all celebrated at some point.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	7	2	0	0

Strongly Agree

- I remember when I first arrived in Birmingham at the age of 11 years and seeing the smog above me as we arrived at Snow Hill Station. You no longer see that smog anymore.

Recommendation 8

=7th | 41 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 2)

The museums must do work so that Birmingham residents feel a sense of ownership over the building and it becomes a **community hub**. This could be done by offering unused spaces to use by the community. Make the spaces accessible by offering free or cheap use, easy to book and well advertised. There could be spaces for workshops, hot desking, community classes, art spaces for local artists. By bringing communities closer to the museums we may also raise funds, for example pop up markets, fee paying online tours.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	9	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Online lectures and tours at a reasonable fee are a good way to bring the Museums to potential national and international notice. The more people who are aware of what there is to see, the more people there are who are likely to visit. This would require good presentations that are informative, interesting and also fun.

Recommendation 9

=7th | 41 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 3)

Birmingham Museums Trust should **lead cooperation with other heritage sites and institutions**. Cross pollination benefits all – including linked communications and events and knowledge sharing. Collaboration with the museums shouldn't be left to chance. The museums have something for everyone, they need to build longstanding and beneficial relationships/partnerships at all levels of the city.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
15	11	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Agreements with other heritage sites in the region to allow free entry for membership holders and 12 month return passes.
- Eg refer visitors to other interesting but not well known Trust sites– e.g. Sarehole Mill

Recommendation 10

10th | 39 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 2)

The museums and exhibitions have a duty to **share multiple perspectives of history** and the external factors which impact these such as politics. The museums need to raise awareness of this whilst staying impartial to allow people to make up their own minds. Exhibits must encourage conversation and critical thinking. Impacts of historical events and figures are nuanced and have good and bad connotations. This can't be oversimplified.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	11	1	0	0

There were no comments against this recommendation.

Recommendation 11

=11th | 38 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 3)

Exhibitions need to **invest in stimulating discussions**.

The museums should ask questions of the audience as well as prompt them to ask questions and create opportunities for audiences to consider different accounts of events.

The object and blurb isn't enough. People need support to have conversations and understand the nuance and should be engaged to interact. This can be done through feedback as well as having trained staff to engage in conversations. A good example of this is exploring access to food in the Made in Birmingham exhibition.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	11	0	1	0

Strongly Agree

- I think this is one of the recommendations that should be near the top simply because conversation and discussion can do so much to diversify what the museums actually mean. People need the human-touch in order to really become fond of something. This is the way forward.
- All folk attending a museum should be allowed to ask questions.
- A food exhibition...Birmingham has a very wide and diverse food culture many that's not well known

Agree

- Guided tours available on certain days

Recommendation 12

=11th | 38 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 4)

Museums can help us to **build a more positive future**. They can help us to understand how to respond to rapid changes in society, such as in technology, the environment, or demographics.

To do this, the museums should showcase the work of **young people**, who bring **new ideas and ambition** to make the world a better place. Their honesty, positivity, and creativity is often an inspiration for adults and can help them to navigate difficult issues. Their work should not be confined to an exhibit for children, but should be seen as something that adults can also learn from.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	12	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Getting together a group of young people walking around BMAG to see what they think

Agree

- I agree but some clarity on what a 'young person' is would be helpful here – Child? Adolescent? Young adult?

Recommendation 13

=11th | 38 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 4)

We need to **bring communities into the decision-making process**. The museums should consider:

- the Citizens jury in a future advisory capacity.
- explore the idea of places on the museums' board being allocated specifically to community representatives.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	6	2	0	1

Strongly Agree

- See above – especially re: citizens jury

Strongly Disagree

- We could equally send out surveys to ask the feedback of the community as a whole on decision-making, perhaps with incentives such to complete these such as museum gift cards. Also, many of these recommendations are conceptual in nature, as the reshaping of the museum progresses it would also be useful to receive regular input on specific practical recommendations such as which exhibitions to install. The Citizens' Jury would potentially be useful for this in a continued capacity.

Recommendation 14

14th | 36 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 5)

We need to **bring communities into the decision-making process** around exhibitions and how underutilised spaces are used. Exhibits like the Victorian Radicals feel like they are designed by a select few, for a select few. Transparent, collaborative decision-making will help bring those who are engaged into the museums by creating a relationship of trust. By drawing on the lived experiences of ordinary people, we can also ensure that people feel there is 'something for them' on display.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	10	3	0	0

Strongly Agree

- The Victorian Radicals exhibition helped to pay for the Made in Birmingham exhibition.
- Without exhibitions such as Victorian Radicals it becomes difficult to fund other free exhibitions such as Made in Birmingham. Rank 13
- One of the most important recommendations – curators as professionals have a very important part to play, but there needs to be more consultation with local schools and the wider community. One idea could be to keep the Citizens Jury on an enduring basis to help do this.

Agree

- I think there are many interesting stories to be told but it is still important to showcase the marvellous items that already form the Museums, such as the world famous pre-Raphaelites and the Staffordshire Hoard – there are lots of people who do want to see such things. All tastes should be catered for – probably not all at once!

Recommendation 15

15th | 35 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 5)

It is not biased to invite **communities who have faced harm and oppression to share their truths and experiences**. These stories need to be acknowledged and shared.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	9	4	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Absolutely and we need to tell the whole story and not just cherry pick.
- This should include but not be limited to ethnic minorities, ensuring to include other marginalised groups who have suffered historic oppression such as the transgender and disabled community.

Neither Agree nor Disagree

- While I do agree with this general point there's a fine line between inviting speakers to talk about the stories and histories of their community and alienating others because of the subsequent intertwining of diametrically opposed cultures. This must be done in a tactful way.

Recommendation 16

16th | 34 Points (Funding and Marketing 3)

There should be a **consistent brand** across all the museums while still allowing each museum to promote their own identity. Building the brand may lead to new funding opportunities. The trust may want to consider **a new branding to reflect our thoughts on the role of the museums.**

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	11	2	1	0

Neither Agree nor Disagree

- Really good questions..hopefully they have the answers from the jurors

Disagree

- Risk of this becoming a distraction and unnecessary costs.

Recommendation 17

17th | 32 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 4)

One of the most interesting things about the museums are **the buildings themselves**. There are aspects, like the morgue that are unknown and could serve profitable activities like ghosthunts; and aspects that are underutilised like the courtyards which could be used for outdoor play spaces etc.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	11	3	1	0

Strongly Agree

- Ghost hunts very interesting idea!

Recommendation 18

18th | 31 Points (New Audiences, Accessibility, and Inclusivity 5)

Music offers a multilevel opportunity to engage the people of Birmingham. Regardless of genre, the museums should champion the sounds made in and inspired by Birmingham.

- Museum directors should recognise the musical heritage in their vision of growth
- Curators should research history across all music genres
- Fundraising specialists should secure sponsorships through live performances and collaboration with event managers, promoters, etc
- Exhibition designers should tailor to open mic nights, songwriting workshops and jam sessions.

- Digital content creators should be engaged for online playlists, podcasts and virtual tours.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	11	5	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Online content could be a quick win

Recommendation 19

19th | 30 Points (Exploring Diverse Perspectives in Museums 6)

The museums should encourage us to engage with even **the most challenging and/or divisive topics**. This could be done for example, by using play and hands on activities, games and gamification.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	11	4	1	0

Strongly Agree

- This would aid some cases explaining difficult topics increase understanding.

Agree

- I feel a little more clarification is needed on how gamification will be utilised for this topic specifically.

Recommendation 20

20th | 29 Points (Community Engagement and Collaboration 6)

Our museums should go out into Birmingham and meet people where they are. The museums should bring exhibitions (e.g. mobile collections) to different parts of the city, and different types of spaces, which may in turn encourage people from these areas to visit the central museums

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	7	3	2	1

Strongly Agree

- Perhaps a way to utilise the parts of the collection that are kept out of sight in warehouses.

Strongly Disagree

- Can't see how this could work logistically with any real purpose.

Annex C: Questions for commentators

After each commentator slot, members of the Jury spent time reflecting on the presentations as part of a small group. They then individually or collectively posed questions to each commentator. The questions are listed in this section.

Please note, questions that were asked in the open-space format discussions described in session 5 have not been recorded.



Session 1

- What can we learn from other museums about profitability / sustainability?
- How does the museum collaborate with other countries and cities around the world
- What is young people / social media marketing plans?
- Expanding what they do – How are they getting more people to do the private money /commercial things? Advertising?
- What is your plan to change the public perception of museums?
- Can we do Sunday market or short term market (to do with art and design matter) in the museum's space?
- How do you advertise
- How do you promote the museums?
- How much of a budget is on marketing?
- How can we bring more artefacts from the museums collections in front of the public?
- How much risk are you willing to take?
- Duration of action plan? 5/10/??? Year plan?
- What different funds e.g. lottery can we tap into / apply for?
- What have you done since the museum closed?
- How do we make the museum experience worth the money?
- What ideas have you got for trying to attract new visitors in – for example new exhibitions
- Could we allow schools, colleges, and local artists in the city to exhibit their own artwork in the museum? This would help to make the museums relevant, inclusive, and showcase local talent
- What does your school outreach look like?
- Why now?
- What is in scope for recommendations? E.g. can we change exhibits?
- How did they increase visitor numbers in Belfast?
- Will we get feedback? Proposals implemented – how will we know?
- What has been tried elsewhere that works at bringing in and maintaining numbers?
- How does he see the future of museums? How do you see it going to keep up with needs and wants of people?

- Least amount of people? How much do people need to spend per person? Donation vs shops.
- As a local, we don't know what's happening, don't feel invited to come in. How can you reach out to local citizens?
- How does Birmingham Museums Trust utilise social media? In my opinion, museums do not have a presence online, so why would Gen Z think museums are an inviting palace to come?
- How will you encourage visitors to visit things that are less relevant?
- How did you engage during the pandemic, and can we learn from that to encourage visitors?
- How did the CEOs get there? Are they voted in? Can they be booted out?
- Who decides what goes into museums and what influences their decisions?

Session 2

- Interested in how does the thinking align to BMT's sites and how vastly different e.g. Blakesley Hall
- is it possible to choose something that the majority of people will like?
- How do museums internationally source funds, is it more successful than in UK?
- How is the Argentinian museum being used for community purposes, and has it increased footfall?
- Wouldn't we expect more people from 35–44 than 16–24 age groups anyway? Does this give a false impression and can you break it down further?
- Lots of people are interested in Birmingham history, are there any stats about a desire for history of others countries? Could there be room of other cultures from abroad? Birmingham is an international city
- What research has been carried out with volunteers?
- how many people total were surveyed? what % of the population? where from etc?
- is it the first time that this survey (exercise) has been undertaken?
- Have you got similar research on residents opinions from Bristol, Glasgow etc.?
- No information about London museums – Do you only have information on West Midlands museums?
- polarised views slide. What were the demographics on each side?
- How do you manage expectations of people who

want the existing rather than what they regard as woke or not about them?

- Which age groups attend Glasgow museums?
- 4mn visiting Glasgow – do we know what they're doing right?
- How are these museums managed? Is it the trustees or the wider community that decides what goes on display?
- What about younger than 16 yr olds ? E.g. 5–15. what are their stats?
- Are children not factored in? Demographic information suggests not (starts at age 16)
- Only 6% of visitors are 16–24s why might this be?
- Can you share examples of how museums have successfully decolonised their collections or re contextualised problematic exhibits to the public?
- How do you manage the tension of people's polarised views, and how do we prioritise conflicting views when deciding on exhibitions, and how are curators held accountable for deciding beyond their own interests?
- How do we manage dealing with potential intolerance in complaints about the museum's changes/recognise the difference between feedback meant in good faith from people who just preferred the old system for its merits.
- How do we manage the tension of feedback from valuing people to valuing bias?
- Polarised views– what is the balance of the polarised views between people who love the new exhibitions and those who prefer the old exhibitions, and when you mentioned a drop in memberships vs attracting new memberships– what was the ration of that?
- How to get the right mix of people in, in your opinion?

Session 3

- Are the 9 museums in Glasgow similar to the 9 museums in Birmingham/ in size, exhibits, visitor numbers?
- Are there specific topics and subjects that do well in Glasgow museums and would they translate to Birmingham?
- How did Glasgow museums achieve their visitor numbers?
- what are the key differences between Glasgow and B'ham in terms of success and failures
- why is Glasgow so successful in getting people

through the doors?

- In Glasgow, you talked about having exhibitions about the British empire and war exhibitions, did these kinds of exhibits attract visitors? Did they get good feedback in Glasgow?
- What was Glasgow's position before they saw an increase in number? Was it similar to Birmingham's current position?
- Can Birmingham get one well known piece? Like a Dali? Can Birmingham afford to get something like that?
- 30% of visits are tourists – how much tourism exists within Birmingham. Part 1 – is there enough tourism in Birmingham for it to be comparable? if not, is it worth pursuing?
- £20 spend to £4 spend – why the difference? How could we change this? How did they increase it?
- What are BMAGs weakness?
- biggest issue is around diversity– what's on offer vs the diverse residents.
- Glasgow stats– 4mill visits a year with a population of 600 000– what is Birmingham's ratio of visitors to the population?
- Funding from the council has greatly reduced, is there a direct link to a drop in visitor numbers, what is the direct impact on the museums and exhibitions?
- Does the Birmingham Museum Trust actually own the buildings?
- Why does the council not give relief on council tax or other bills
- Budget 5.3 mil each way. Living Wage increases – how does it impact their spending?
- If the trust increase it's income from patronage will the amount they get from the council change. Go down even further?
- Museums in different cities do they ever collaborate and how would that look?
- should there be a bigger emphasis on digital marketing an educational materials in Birmingham museum – physical brochures can be v expensive?
- are museums putting enough emphasis on food and drink including B'ham as this could potentially bring in a lot of money?
- Who owns the Think Tank?
- Think Tank is the biggest spend and gets the most visitors– Did you say that building is rented, and could we not use an existing space that isn't doing so well to balance the books a bit?

- what is the museum doing about the climate crisis in the way that it is operating and physical marketing?
- What's Glasgow doing right that Birmingham isn't?
- Are the people (demographics) that go to the Glasgow museums the same as the Birmingham museums?
- Why does Birmingham get less money from the council compared to e.g. Glasgow?
- If the museum was more successful at getting people in would that mean the council would contribute more, like in Glasgow?
- Is the ThinkTank owned by the council?
- Because we have less money, should we sell properties to have less but better funded museums?
- Which Birmingham museum is getting the most out of the budget?
- Where are we in the 4 year funding cycle?
- Is there room for two sides of history when its so emotionally charged?
- Parallel histories – Good/bad side of history approach – examples where it has worked in museums?
- Would it work to show what happened to people during the British Empire here in Birmingham?
- Is the tension around polarisation a bit of a risk to stick on one topic rather than exploring all the other opportunities and existing buildings and exhibitions like the pre-raphaelites? Is resolving this tension the only way to increase visitor numbers? Shouldn't we have stories that everyone are interested in, not just the people who are interested in this kind of thing?
- The exhibition the past is now was discontinued – are there any plans for similar exhibitions in the future and if there was would there be plans to get money from the Arts Council?
- We visited the science museum, liked the outdoor playground, and paid for a ticket indoors. But hoping for more interaction for kids indoors. Can you do that?
- Are there any plans to increase something for the planetarium or bring more in that space?
- How often do things change in the museum?
- Collection centre looked very impressive – is much of it loaned out to other museums?
- Is the loaning process reciprocal?
- Is there any thought to aesthetics and themes? Lights, curation, how the room looks?
- How do you decide what goes on show? Do you ever get the public involved with that?
- The collection centre opening hours are very restricted. Who is it aimed at? School children? 2 hours on a Friday not conducive to visits
- Out of the current facilities/resources we've got, which excite you the most and what should we be focusing on more? How much scope have we got to do that?
- Are these videos on social media to get a higher profile?
- Is there anything hands-on in the Made in Birmingham Exhibition?
- Is there a plan for a Windrush exhibition?
- Peaky Blinders Exhibition – there is a fantastic history there which could really draw people in ?
- What marketing was done for the Maiden Birmingham Exhibition?
- What is the most challenging part of your job?
- The Victorian dresses can you try these on?
- The museum collection there are some things in there that I thought why are they here?
- is the warehouse the museum itself, where is it?
- What is an accredited museum?
- How do you balance getting revenue and members and allowing people to see the exhibits because it belongs to everybody?
- How much does it cost to store collections and how do we decide what to take in and how long for?
- Is insurance high?
- How much influence does the council have over the collection as the owner of it?
- Are the maintenance costs for the think tank higher than the others/ I went recently and lots of the interactive exhibitions weren't working?

Session 4

- How recent traumatic histories are harder to tell, but particularly traumatic histories are difficult to tell. Figures as heroes. How do we tell the histories of people who have done both good and bad things? How do you feel about an exhibition that put those things side by side?
- How did people react to the past is now exhibition
- Is it possible to do small exhibitions to schools of what was made in Birmingham?

- How do you change out the interactive exhibitions or do you not?
- Not into art but big into activism so would love to know more about the priorities you have as an activist? What do you look for in what to challenge and promote?
- What examples do you have of exhibitions or museums furthering social justice in an ethical way, rather than harmful way?
- People see objects as something to resonate with. Do you find that in the exhibition?
- How often do you plan to change exhibitions like Made in Birmingham?
- How can people use that community/ collaborative space Back to the drawing board you mentioned and do you advertise it?

