

Troops boarding ships ahead of the D-Day landings in 1944

Today's announcement of £4,044,500 comprises the majority of the D-Day Museum's £4.9m transformation project with just £170,000 of match-funding still needed to make the project a reality.

The museum transformation will create spaces for learning, events and displays. New galleries will tell the story D-Day - from the planning and build up to the day itself - using objects, interactive material and the perspectives of people who were alive at the time.

Cllr Linda Symes, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport, said: "We're delighted to get the news we've been anticipating. We're in the final straight of our fundraising journey to make the transformation of the museum and our aspirations for the project a reality. The £4.9m transformation project will maximise the impact of the collection and ensure that this important chapter in history is retold in a way which inspires and meets the expectations of today's museum audiences. The D-Day Museum will reopen as the International Museum of D-Day, Portsmouth ahead of the 75th anniversary of D-Day in 2019 and tell the story of D-Day in a way which is pertinent to local residents, families, young people and international visitors alike."

Jane Mee, Project Director, said: "The new International Museum of D-Day will be a fantastic addition to the world-class visitor offer in Portsmouth. Transforming the D-Day Museum will establish the museum as the national centre that the scale and significance of the D-Day story deserves - with exhibitions that truly engage and excite audiences now and into the future - and to inspire interest in and a greater understanding of what happened and why D-Day is still relevant

today.

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Using the words and perspectives of the people who took part on both sides - military and also the French civilians - and the museum's iconic and evocative collections, the D-Day Museum will bring the story to life for this and future generations. We will create an inspiring, 'must-see' environment, where everyone feels welcome - from school children to academics, families to military history enthusiasts. We will work with schools and youth organisations to ensure our learning programmes inspire young people."

The museum will close in October 2016 and reopen in late 2017 in good time for D-Day 75 commemorations in June 2019. Plans for the museum are spectacular and will retell its stories from a historical and personal perspective.

The museum's activity and events programme will be transformed by the funding, which includes money for a public programmes manager and additional resources for the re-launch of the museum and events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day in 2019.

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: "Involving 156,000 men from the British and Allied forces, the D-Day landings were the largest seaborne invasion the world has ever seen and a momentous event in European history. As we head towards the 75th anniversary, this National Lottery investment will help to refresh and revamp Britain’s only museum dedicated to the landings, helping to bring this story to life for a new generation."

The D-Day Museum is dedicated to interpreting and commemorating the Normandy landings of June 1944 which marked the start of the allied invasion of north-west Europe. It holds a large collection including the only two remaining specially adapted Beach Armoured Recovery Vehicle used in the landings and the Dickin Medal awarded to Gustav the pigeon, who brought news of the landings back to the UK.

H.E.G. (Eddie) Wallace, Chairman of the Southern (Portsmouth) Branch of the Normandy Veterans Association 1987-2014, said: "As Normandy veterans, we are delighted to hear that the D-Day Museum is receiving this funding. We see the D-Day Museum as a memorial and the national focus for remembering D-Day. It is vital to keep the story of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy alive, and to remember our comrades who did not come home but are still buried in Normandy."

Notes to editors

- In June 2014, HLF awarded the D-Day transformation project a 'round one' pass with accompanying development funding of £224,000. In 2015 a further bid was submitted to HLF for the next phase of funding which has now been confirmed
- The estimated total cost of the project is just under £5m and fundraising work is still ongoing via the charitable trust, the Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust, to ensure funding for vital outside works to the area and site
- In November the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne allocated £600,000 from Libor funds to the project, and Portsmouth City Council has committed £378,000 to the project and costs of £150,000 over the first five years