

Woolly mammoth exhibit at Weston Park Museum, Sheffield Andy Brown

The grant will support Weston Park Museum: A Bright Future, a major £1million plan to transform several of the museum's public areas. The project will see the creation of inspiring new displays in the museum's About Art and History Lab galleries, updates to the Sheffield Life & Times and What on Earth display spaces, and improvements to the upstairs picnic space. The re-development will allow Museums Sheffield to change displays more frequently, sharing more of the city's extensive collections of archaeology, natural sciences, social history and visual art with visitors. Acting on feedback from visitors, Sheffield's archaeological finds and sporting history will play a greater role in the permanent displays on view at the museum.

In addition to the primary funding from the HLF, Weston Park Museum: A Bright Future has been supported by a number of charitable organisations across the UK, with a final phase of fundraising scheduled for the New Year. Work on the improvements will begin in late 2015 with the last of the new-look galleries being unveiled in October 2016.

Weston Park museum reopened to the public in 2006 following a major redevelopment funded by a £17m HLF grant with significant support from Sheffield City Council. Since reopening, the museum has become a firm favourite in the city, attracting over 250,000 visitors a year and winning the Guardian Newspaper Family Friendly Museum of the Year award. The project will make strategic improvements to key public areas, building on both earlier investment and the museum's overwhelming successes to date.

The go-ahead for the Weston Park plans follows Museums Sheffield's successful application to the Department for Culture, Media & Sport in January for £110,000 to support the redevelopment of the Millennium Gallery's Metalwork Collection displays, set to open in spring 2015. In summer this year the charitable trust, which runs Weston Park, Millennium Gallery and Graves Gallery, was named as one of Arts Council England's Major Partner Museums, securing funding of £1.8m over the next three years.

Kim Streets, Chief Executive of Museums Sheffield, said: "We're hugely grateful to the HLF for supporting our plans for the redevelopment of Weston Park. The museum has been a huge success, but has the potential to be even better. The redevelopment will enable to us to share even more of the wonderful stories in Sheffield's collections and provide the best possible experience for our visitors."

Councillor Isobel Bowler, City Council Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure, said: "Weston Park is a wonderful celebration of Sheffield and this investment is great news for both the museum and for the city. I'm delighted that the HLF have recognised the wonderful work of Museums Sheffield in showcasing the city's rich heritage."

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire and The Humber, said: "We are very pleased to continue our support for Weston Park's plans to bring more of Sheffield's heritage to more people. Re-launching the museum with its new exhibition spaces in October 2016 will be an enriching experience for residents and visitors alike."

Paul Blomfield, MP for Sheffield Central, commented: "Weston Park is a well-used and much-loved museum which brilliantly tells the stories of Sheffield's heritage. The new funding is a fantastic early Christmas present for the city and I can't wait to see the redevelopment plans take shape."

Notes to Editors

Weston Park Museum
Formerly the City Museum and Mappin Art Gallery, the museum opened in 1874 to house the city's archaeology, natural history, decorative art and social history collections, with the Mappin Art Gallery following in 1887. In 2006, Weston Park reopened following a £19m redevelopment project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Sheffield City Council. Weston Park tells the story of Sheffield, from its geological roots to the people, politics and music that shaped the modern city. The museum comprises five permanent galleries, Sheffield Life & Times, Arctic World, What on Earth!, Treasures and About Art, as well as the Harold Cantor Gallery temporary exhibition space. The museums is home to objects from Sheffield's Social History, Natural History, Geology and Archaeology collections, Visual Art and Decorative Art collections

Museums Sheffield
Established in 1998, Museums Sheffield is the charitable trust responsible for running three of the city's main museums and galleries: Millennium Gallery, Graves Gallery and Weston Park. Find more information on the Museums Sheffield website.

Further information

Chris Harvey, Communications Officer at Museums Sheffield, via email: chris.harvey@museums-sheffield.org.uk or on tel: 0114 278 2664