

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Information briefing on Brighton &amp; Hove's activity to mark the suffrage centenary</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>27 September 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director, Economy Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Val Birchall</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 292571</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>val.birchall@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report provides information to Members on the activity in Brighton and Hove to mark the centenary of women's suffrage in 2018.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report.

**3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Representation of the People Act 1918 was passed on 6 February 1918, giving women over the age of 30 who met the specified property requirements the right to vote for the first time. (Women under 30, and who didn't meet the criteria, had to wait another 10 years for the privilege.)
- 3.2 Activities to mark the centenary of the act have been taking place across the country. In Brighton & Hove, as set out below, the Council has been involved through the Royal Pavilion & Museums Service (including at The Keep) and has supported and promoted activities organised by other cultural and community organisations, including through Visit Brighton.
- 3.3 The Women's History Group will contribute research to inform additional layers of interpretation and topics for talks, information and publicity materials including suffrage trail maps, a website and social media platforms. The group will also honour Brighton & Hove suffragettes who campaigned for women to have the right to through blue plaques. There will be a plaque close to the North Street quadrant where the headquarters for one of the first Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) branches in the country was located. There will be separate plaques on the Brighton homes of three prominent women - Minnie Turner and Elizabeth Robins and Clementina Black, whose plaque is expected to be installed on 18th November 2018.
- 3.4 As part of the "Women Up: Suffrage Memorial Project" Brighton Museum is creating a display located in the 'Images of Brighton' gallery which will be

launched in November 2018 and will feature suffrage objects from the city's collections. Highlights will include the 'Votes for Women' sash and Holloway prison brooch belonging Minnie Turner.

- 3.5 The Council's Digital Media Bank carries a small number of related digitised items from the collection, including a portrait of Minnie Turner and a postcard threatening violence against Christabel Pankhurst. These are available to download and re-use for free under an open licence. Blog posts relating to the suffrage movement have received over 4,400 views including suffragette items in Digital Media Bank: <https://damsbrightonmuseums.org.uk/assetbank-pavilion/action/browseItems?categoryId=1599&categoryTypeId=1> and our most popular blog post on suffragettes: <https://brightonmuseums.org.uk/discover/2011/03/08/found-suffragettes-hiding-in-the-brighton-dome/>
- 3.6 To celebrate the anniversary of the Representation of the People's Act, two special 'Behind the Scenes' afternoons at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery called 'Their Fight Our Future' took place. Staff worked with students from Northbrook MET college who displayed their newly created costumes, inspired by women in history and were present to talk about who they chose and why. One member of staff dressed up as local Suffragette Minnie Turner to talk to visitors, and curators also brought out objects from store, such as a bodice and bloomers from the 1890s and a Mary Quant mini skirt, illustrating how women's changing fashions reflect social change. Visitors were encouraged to contribute to an anonymous vote as to whether they vote now or not and why.
- 3.7 A Bitesize talk about Minnie Turner aimed at families took place in February half term. A member of staff dressed in character as Minnie Turner and sang, told stories and offered children the chance to get up close to some of Minnie's important belongings, such as her sash. 45 people attended, almost half of which were children or young people. International Women's Day on 8th March saw over 2100 people visit Brighton Museum and Art Gallery.
- 3.8 The Keep created two displays of archive material, one of which coincided with the 6 February anniversary, celebrating suffrage activity in the local area. Additionally, relevant stories and images have been shared throughout the year on the Keep blog and social media channels, most recently about Margaret Bondfield, the first female cabinet minister, who started her working life, aged 14, as a shop assistant in Hove.
- 3.9 The Keep Open Day on 15 September will be based on the twin centenaries of female suffrage and the Armistice, and will include displays of original archives from all The Keep's partners, as well as free talks, activities and tours of the building. The Keep hosted a talk by local historian Frances Stenlake on suffragist activity in Brighton and East Sussex during Women's History Month in March, and she will be speaking again at the Open Day in September, with more emphasis on Brighton and on the war work undertaken by suffrage campaigners.
- 3.10 Brighton Dome has been officially recognised as one of the 41 heritage buildings across the country central to suffragette action, where Brighton members of the WSPU organised public meetings at which suffragette leaders Emmeline and

Christabel Pankhurst and others spoke.

- 3.11 Brighton & Hove Libraries have put on a display called Votes for Women featuring a volume of the original Votes for Women newspaper. The exhibition is in the Tony Miller Rare Books Reading Room in Jubilee Library and runs from 19th July to 20th September.
- 3.12 Brighton & Hove Libraries hosted an exhibition by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom entitled '100 years on from War to end all Wars'. The exhibition ran from 16th to 22nd July, and included references and information about the Women's Suffrage Movement.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 N/A

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The development of the display at Brighton Museum is being undertaken with input from the Women's History Group. International Women's Day events are led by the Women's Centre with the Royal Pavilion and Museums Service and Brighton Dome making collections accessible.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 As an important centre for suffrage activities, the Council has sought to highlight the contribution of locally prominent figures in the movement and the provide access to the city's collections in a series of relevant, accessible and well-informed projects serving a range of audiences. It has collaborated to support groups in the community to mark the anniversary at the Royal Pavilion & Museums, at The Keep and through the support and promotion of Visit Brighton.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the recommendation is for noting only. The activities detailed within this report have been funded from approved service budgets and external contributions.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford*

*Date: 06/09/18*

##### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Alice Rowland*

*Date: 07/09/18*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The activities described in this report set out to raise awareness of the significance of the Suffragette movement and thus raise awareness of women's contribution to the history and development of Brighton & Hove.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 None directly related to this report. The installation of the new display will reuse existing cases.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 N/A

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. None

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None