



The National Museum of the Royal Navy

# Strategy 2022–2027

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# Introduction

The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) was stood up in 2009 to create a single voice for the Royal Navy's museums and wider heritage. In the years since, this voice has spoken clearly and been widely heard.

My predecessors as Chairman, and their Boards, have overseen strategies and corporate plans which have enabled the Executive to make significant progress towards this single voice. The NMRN began with four sites: the Royal Naval Museum, the Fleet Air Arm Museum, the Royal Marines Museum, and the Royal Navy Submarine Museum. It now has a further four: HMS Caroline in Belfast, Devonport, *Explosion!* The Museum of Naval Firepower and NMRN Hartlepool. Across these sites it holds the nation's richest and most diverse collection of historic warships – first and foremost the 'nation's flagship' HMS Victory. In 2019 some 1.2m people enjoyed these sites and another 15m accessed NMRN digitally. Our impressive achievements are set out in the Museum's annual Impact Reports, 2010–2019.

Throughout these years the NMRN's strategic development was constrained by two major factors. Firstly, an initial lengthy process was required to integrate the existing four naval museums and their separate Trustee boards in order to create a single strategic direction and single team – now definitively complete. Secondly, with Grant-in-Aid (GiA) from our sponsor department falling in real terms year-on-year, the NMRN needed to develop funding sources other than GiA. In the period 2009–2019 revenue rose from £6.6m per annum to over £20m per annum; in the same period, some £150m was raised for capital projects or endowments with 98% generated from outside the Royal Navy. Much had therefore been achieved, by an effective and efficient team, in that first ten years.



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revenue rose from

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**per annum**

to over

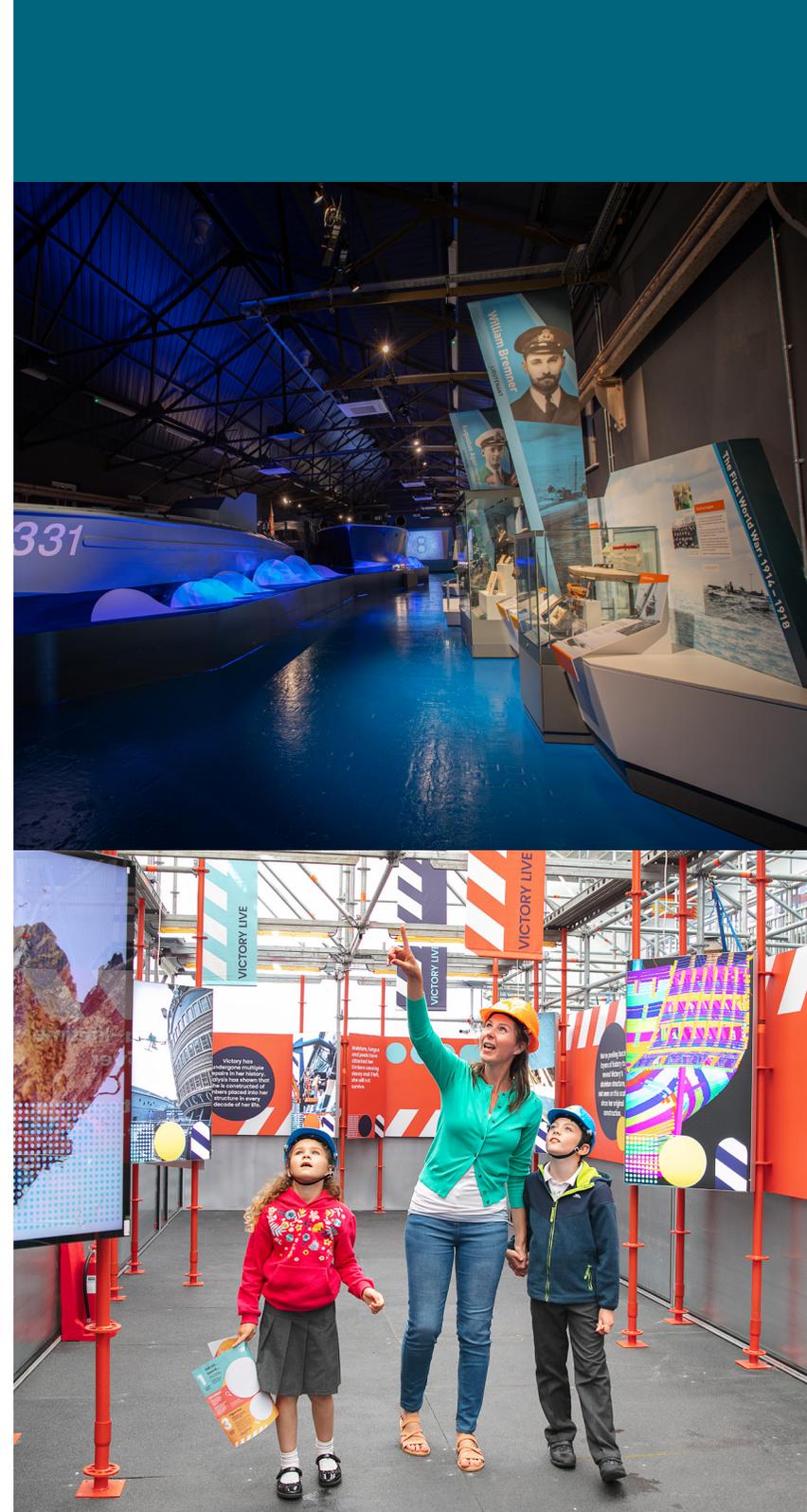
**£20m**  
**per annum**

The advent of COVID in March 2020 changed everything for the NMRN, as our self-generated revenue collapsed. Our Strategy and the delivery of our Corporate Plan were suspended while the focus of the Museum switched to financial survival. Fortunately, the Royal Navy has been hugely supportive, providing additional funds on which to draw, in both 2020–21 and 2021–22, to underpin cashflow. When the Museum has been able to open and to trade, the response from our visitors has been heartening and financial performance has been strong. However, the last two years have dramatically highlighted the faults in the Museum’s funding model and the situation remains freighted with risk.

From July 2021, therefore, the NMRN Trustees have worked to analyse the Museum’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to radically review our strategy. Our conclusion is that we expect the world that the Museum emerges into post-COVID will be different from the pre-COVID world, and possibly very different. Throughout we have been mindful of the Royal Navy’s major review of its role and requirements. A central plank of the Museum’s strategy is therefore to support the Navy in achieving its goals – entirely in accordance and consistent with the NMRN’s charitable objects.

This Strategy provides a view of what the NMRN *could and should* be in this changed world, with a clear Vision, Mission and Values to guide us. It sets out both our strategic aims for Audiences, Collections and Sustainability for the next five years and also our shorter-term phasing of priorities.

## Admiral Sir Philip Jones



# NMRN 2035: The Long View

It is 2035 and the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) is thriving. Its sites are drawing 3.5m visitors a year and each of them as a result is either making an operational surplus or is breaking even. Heavy investment in NMRN's Virtual Global Museum Community is attracting 75m participants annually from around the world, generating growing revenue from paid-for content, advertising and sponsorship. The NMRN is regarded as a world leader in how to blend the real with the virtual, changing the concept of what a museum is and can be.

To achieve this position NMRN has invested heavily in its sites. Drawing on data collected from both visitors and non-visitors each site has been re-imagined offering a blend of accessible and pleasurable learning and entertainment; informed by community consultation and underpinned by world class research. Almost all the galleries on every site have been reworked in recent years and there is constant programme of gallery renewal supported by an ambitious programme of exhibitions and an equally vibrant public programme. All aspects of every site – galleries, exhibitions, experiences, learning, play, retail and catering – are carefully weighed, considered and blended to create amazing days out with a high level of repeat visiting. Some of NMRN's sites are becoming resorts where people can stay overnight extending their visits beyond a single day.



Our sites have been reimagined as cultural campuses, with complimentary offers and engagement by partner organisations which draw different but complimentary audiences. The cultural offer has been thoughtfully enhanced by commercial development which yields a separate and significant strand of income, helping to support the organisation. Our sites, ships, aeroplanes and collections are at the heart of what we do: offering the shock of the real. But NMRN is not limited to our sites. Our Virtual Global Museum provides innovative resources, content and experiences which inspire, enrich and delight a user community that stretches round the world. Crucially, these resources have been developed with hundreds of community partners across the world creating a sense of ownership and engagement which extends far beyond the often passive experience of the online universe. The content has been co-developed and co-curated. Many of our partners have a naval connection, but many of them have been drawn into NMRN by realising that the Royal Navy (RN) has touched and shaped their own lives.

The key output of this work is that millions more people understand the RN, what it has achieved, how it has shaped the world and why it remains crucial to the nation. This enhanced understanding has translated into increased support and engagement both for the RN and NMRN.

NMRN as an organisation has transformed its business, adapting to visitor's and user's wishes by adopting a digital first approach. Our systems allow us to understand what motivates our visitors and users in new and imaginative ways and to help convert them into supporters and donors.



// Our Virtual Global Museum provides innovative resources, content and experiences which inspire, enrich and delight a user community that stretches round the world.”

// The success of the organisation is underpinned by a highly skilled, diverse and very flexible team driven by a can-do attitude and with very strong entrepreneurial flair.”

User and financial data flow seamlessly through the organisation so that decisions are made swiftly and effectively on sound evidence. A key part of our transformation has been delivering on the determination to become carbon neutral, and we are leaders in this field.

The success of the organisation is underpinned by a highly skilled, diverse and very flexible team driven by a can-do attitude and with very strong entrepreneurial flair. The team is alert to changes in the operating environment and always striving to anticipate and embrace change. Other cultural organisations are delighted to be able to employ those trained at NMRN and as a result we have wide influence on the cultural sector.



# Strategic Framework 2022–2027



# Vision

To be the world's most inspiring Naval Museum, linking Navy to nation.

# Mission

Inspiring enjoyment and engagement with the story of the RN and its role in shaping both our nation and the modern world.



# Strategic Aims

We will deliver the vision and mission through three aims:

## 01 Audiences

- › Grow and diversify our global audiences – on site and online.
- › Create innovative and inspirational experiences, services and products.
- › Build our brand and reputation as the authority on the RN story.

## 02 Collections

- › Sustain and develop our world-class collections and sites.
- › Explore different RN story perspectives with our diverse communities and collections.
- › Extend access to our collections and sites through digital transformation.

## 03 Sustainability

- › Grow our income and financial resilience to secure long-term sustainability.
- › Reduce our carbon consumption and transform our estate.
- › Build partnerships and influence as a national museum.

# Our People

The Trustees recognise that none of this will be achieved without the skills, dedication and hard work of our people. This requires that we:

- › Value and empower our people.
- › Are outward-facing, inclusive and audience-led.
- › Build a culture of innovation and enterprise.
- › Be sustainable in all that we do.



For continuity, we are retaining the values our staff developed and adopted in 2015. We will update these values only after a full workforce consultation. In the interim, our focus remains upon listening to our diverse audiences and making this a great place to work.

## OUR VALUES



**NMRN Vision:**  
To be the world's most inspiring Naval Museum

Our values will guide our everyday actions and ensure we are all working towards a shared vision, enabling us to be better at what we do, creating a great place for us to work and ensuring we provide first class services to our visitors and users.

**Mission:**  
Inspiring learning, enjoyment and engagement with the story of the Royal Navy, and its impact in shaping the modern world

-  **M** Make Things Happen
-  **A** Achieve
-  **R** Respect
-  **I** Inspire
-  **T** Trust
-  **I** Innovate
-  **M** Motivate
-  **E** Excellence



# Strategic Aims and Objectives



# 01

## Strategic Aim: Audiences



### 1.1 Grow and diversify our global audiences – nationally, on site and online

- › Improve RN access to collections and activities to support current RN service objectives as agreed in Grant-in-Aid (GiA) framework.
- › Reduce identified barriers to access and engagement at every opportunity, including consideration of some free-at entry sites.
- › Use data to better understand how to engage, retain and grow our diverse audience.

### 1.2 Create innovative and inspirational experiences, services and products

- › Promote the modern navy across all sites – physical and digital – in line with GiA agreement.
- › Develop an innovative and inspiring learning offer to engage new and diverse audiences.

### 1.3 Build our brand and reputation as the authority on the RN story

- › Implement and develop the Research policy to build scholarship and academic standing.
- › Support the RN in interpretation of contested naval history, through academic rigour and standing.
- › Develop and implement unified branding and interpretation across our physical and digital estate.
- › Provide a coherent and integrated framework for museum development by developing and implementing the Interpretation, Audience Development and Digital strategies, making sure they connect with with the Master Narrative and other key strategies.

# 02

## Strategic Aim: Collections



### 2.1 Sustain and develop our world-class collections and sites

- › Prioritise investment in the care of our existing collection.
- › Add new sites and collections when they improve reach and effectiveness, are sustainable, and address gaps in the Master Narrative.
- › Working in partnership, provide naval heritage advice to RN and the museums/heritage sector.

### 2.2 Explore different RN story perspectives with our diverse audiences

- › Engage diverse voices to provide broader perspectives in collecting and interpretation.

### 2.3 Extend access to our collections and sites through digital transformation

- › Improve access to our collections, attractions and sites by focusing on creating connectivity between physical and digital objects, exhibition and experiences.

# 03

## Strategic Aim: Sustainability



### 3.1 Grow our income and financial resilience to secure long-term sustainability

- › Build appropriate unrestricted reserves by 2023.
- › Increase annual income from both capital and revenue fundraising.
- › Deliver efficiency saving through governance and operational improvements
- › Improve risk and project management systems and skills.

### 3.2 Reduce our carbon consumption and transform our estate

- › Improve and develop commercial, property and other revenue generation and skills.
- › Develop ambitious sustainability/environmental strategy in partnership with RN to reduce NMRN carbon footprint and lead MOD-funded museum sector.

### 3.3 Build strategic partnerships and influence

- › Embed the Mary Rose Trust (MRT) partnership and address the interface with Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust (PNBPT) by 2023.
- › By the end of 2022 agree an appropriate increase in GiA based on a new funding framework that delivers specific RN support.

# Key Performance Indicators

Our strategic aims will deliver our vision, mission and strategic direction. We plan our delivery through an annual budget and Corporate Plan with SMART objectives. We will develop our annual reporting to demonstrate our social, environmental and economic impact and progress against the following key performance indicators:



% of operating reserves held

The number of visitors to each of our Museums

The number of unique visits to our website(s)

The % visitors who would recommend a visit

The number of facilitated and self-directed visits by under-18s in formal education

The number of UK loan venues for our collections

Our self-generated income from admissions and trading activity

Our self-generated fundraising income

# Priorities and Phasing

## Short Term: Years 1 & 2 Consolidate and integrate.



### Key Metric:

**Restoration of  
financial stability  
after COVID.**

In response to our assessment of the museum's current position, our direction to the Executive Team on delivery is phased.

- ▶ Tightly control expenditure while the NMRN recovers from the impact of recent months, and we can reassess the financial implications of operating after COVID.
- ▶ Limit commitment to any new capital project or large acquisition, with exceptions only for those essential to our purpose, such as renewing interpretation, restoration of a Royal Marines Museum, or filling important collections gaps in our Master Narrative.
- ▶ Prioritise the care, conservation and presentation of our existing collections and sites, including consolidation of collections with partners where resources are duplicated.
- ▶ Focus on our people, including alignment of terms and conditions and retention of key skills.
- ▶ Complete and implement the current Governance Review to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our governance, reinforce the concept of 'one museum', and improve programme and project management.
- ▶ Develop and implement our core, linked strategies on Interpretation, Research, Audience Development, Digital and Environment/Sustainability to support a shared transformation across our sites and activities, engaging new and diverse local, national and international audiences.
- ▶ Work closely with RN to support their Global Navy initiative and offer embedded opportunities to promote the modern service and its message through our sites and activities.
- ▶ Renegotiate a RN GiA partnership framework, addressing core NMRN operating costs and an agreed capital strategy which delivers specific, shared outputs and outcomes.
- ▶ Build income generation and fundraising to supplement GiA in delivering NMRN strategy.
- ▶ Build a modest but appropriate unrestricted reserve, equivalent to six months core operating costs for the Portsmouth Naval Base activities.
- ▶ Review Portsmouth Historic Dockyard strategy and agreements with partners, including RN, MRT and PNBPT to reduce NMRN financial and operational risk.

# Medium Term: Years 3–5

Grow audiences and transform experiences on site and online against a common interpretation strategy.

- › Fill key gaps in our coverage of the Master Narrative.
- › Deliver and exercise governance through a unified, simple structure with retention of only those additional bodies essential to achieving our mission and purpose.
- › Adopt a consistent and integrated approach to presenting the story of the RN at sites and online through linked Audience Development and Interpretation strategies.
- › Implement a Digital Strategy that links sites and collections and engages new audiences through inspirational interactive experiences.
- › Prioritise expenditure on projects that fill notable interpretative gaps in coverage of the Master Narrative and that promote modern RN messages.
- › Explore free entry at limited sites (e.g. Hartlepool) to diversify and build audiences and support community engagement.
- › Invest in refreshment of our interpretation to make this as compelling and exciting as possible.
- › Through our Research Strategy, build our academic strength and partnerships, both to support learning and interpretation, as well as improve the development of our specialist staff.
- › Make an understanding of both broad and specialist naval history more available to the RN and its personnel as part of a revised GiA framework.
- › Further, build a modest but appropriate unrestricted reserve, equivalent to six months core operating costs for the NMRN Group.

## Key Metric:

**Audiences grow and diversify, enjoying outstanding experiences that generate understanding of the wider historical context and roles of the RN (including today's Global Navy) and are inspired to learn more.**



# Long Term: Over 5 years

Transformation into a sustainable, world-class national museum.



- › Become a national museum which has free at point of entry sites, and control of its own estate, with linked income generation opportunities.
- › Include embedded, pay entry exhibits and partnerships (e.g. Mary Rose and other partners).
- › Ensure fully integrated NMRN site and digital presence, with linked sites engaging audiences to experience different chapters of the RN story, alongside the messages of the current Global Royal Navy.
- › Work towards a GiA negotiation that underpins the financial security of the NMRN as a free at point of entry, national museum, reaching the widest possible audience, in support of the RN.
- › Further build a modest but appropriate, unrestricted reserve, equivalent to 12 months core operating costs for the NMRN.
- › Publish commitments to reduce carbon consumption, linked to the RN's own environmental strategy.



## Key Metric:

**Significantly broadened audiences – onsite and online, nationally and internationally – understand the RN, its role and ethos, delivered through exceptional experiences.**



[www.nmrn.org.uk](http://www.nmrn.org.uk)

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