



## **WIGAN MUSEUM – INVITATION TO TENDER**

Wigan Museum is inviting tenders for a Freelance Exhibition Curator for the period October 2025 – February 2026. The role will be responsible for concept development and delivery of a new exhibition in the main gallery space at Wigan Museum, working alongside the museum team. The exhibition is envisaged to run from February – July 2026.

---

### **ABOUT WIGAN MUSEUM**

Wigan Museum is a local authority managed museum that celebrates and explores the local and social history of the Wigan Borough area. Fully accredited, the museum is located on the edge of Wigan town centre, in a grade II listed former library building which opened in 1878 and was designed by Alfred Waterhouse and incorporates the stunning local studies library space.

The museum is managed by a small but dedicated team who form part of the wider culture team that is responsible also for Trencherfield Mill, Turnpike Gallery in Leigh and our Archives facility at Leigh Town Hall.

Our service develops and delivers an ambitious and diverse range of programmes and activities to engage residents and visitors to the borough, aligned with Wigan Borough Council's Progress with Unity vision and with our borough wide Cultural Strategy, due to be launched in September 2025.

The museum collection consists of some 35,000 artefacts and artworks mostly located at an offsite store, which reflect the history of the Wigan area and which in many ways is a typical example of a small/medium sized borough collection.

### **PROJECT AIMS**

The museum team are currently working with a consultant to develop an ambitious new vision for the public offer at Wigan Museum that is rooted in and reflective of the needs of our borough residents. This project will develop a fresh new approach for our exhibition spaces at Wigan Museum to showcase the borough collections in innovative ways that explore and celebrate Wigan's rich heritage.

This work will culminate in the submission of a funding application in November 2025 that if successful, will mean the museum would be closed to the public from July 2026, whilst works to the interior of the building are underway.

The current exhibition 'What's in Store', will close in November 2025, with most of the exhibition objects due to be moved to store at the end of the exhibition. This presents an exciting opportunity to create a temporary exhibition that tests thinking emerging from the visioning process.

New Perspectives (working title) will align with the new cultural strategy theme of 'New Heritage', fostering our commitment to a collective identity that honours our roots while guiding our journey forward together, presented as a series of contemporary reflections and responses to aspects of Wigan's heritage, culture and landscape, including new commissioned content and existing work/collections given new meaning and a fresh context in the museum space.

#### Outline themes

1. New narratives on Wigan's heritage, with community participation/digital at their core
2. Reflections on our changing landscape - including nature's resurgence within Wigan's post-industrial landscape, wider context of environmental challenges including to animal habitats.
3. Diversity of voice, celebrating the rich and layered communities of the borough and what it means to live in Wigan.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Co-development with residents, communities and target stakeholder groups is an integral part of the Wigan Museum ethos. The museum team is already working successfully on collaborative projects with local partners (e.g. Young Curators Collective: *'Together in Time: Young People in Wigan'* and a digital programme with FACT Liverpool and Everything Human Rights) to explore our collections and has strong cultural partnerships across the borough to draw on. There is an expectation that some community consultation will form part of this commission.

### **OUR REQUIREMENT**

We are seeking an Exhibition Curator to work with the museum team and stakeholder groups to devise and produce a temporary exhibition that responds to the emerging themes outlined above. The role will be responsible for the following:

- Working closely with the museum team to devise the temporary exhibition including content, narrative and interpretation.

- Selecting, contracting and managing artist's delivery of commissioned work, including managing the relationships with artists commissioned.
- Selecting content from existing collections and bodies of work as appropriate to the exhibition.
- Actively engaging key stakeholders in the design of the exhibition.
- Collaborate with external technicians on the physical design requirements for the exhibition.
- Working closely with the museum team to plan the efficient delivery of the exhibition, including ongoing monitoring of the exhibition plan and budget.
- Champion excellence and ensure that the exhibition is both accessible and of the highest quality.
- Support the promotion of the final exhibition, including being available for press and publicity.

## KEY DELIVERABLES

Exhibition design concept options from creative workshop sessions and consultation with the museum team	End November 25
New Artist commissions	Early December 25
Exhibition design, content, narrative finalised	End December 25
Exhibition build/install	January/February 26
Exhibition Opens	14th February 26

## KEY INFORMATION

An LED lighting upgrade across the entire building is due to take place in November 2025 as part of a wholesale project across all Council assets. This includes all ceiling lights. The existing exhibition track lighting is LED. This upgrade will provide an opportunity to design the lighting positions for the exhibition whilst the scaffold towers are in situ.

There are many exhibition-grade showcases and other infrastructure items available for re-use in the exhibition. These have been quantified, and a schedule will be provided to the Curator on appointment.

The museum works with external technicians to support exhibition builds and anticipated costs for this have been factored into the formulation of the budget for the creation of the exhibition layout but will need to be reviewed with the Curator on appointment.

An Access Audit was undertaken on 29 July 2025, and the findings will be provided to the Curator on appointment.

## METHOD FOR SUBMISSION

Please submit a tender proposal that includes the following:

- Your interest in undertaking this project.
- How you would add value to the project (relevant skills, knowledge and experience).
- Demonstrable experience working with small/medium sized museums or galleries to develop and deliver successful temporary exhibition (3 relevant case studies).
- Your proposed methodology of how you will approach the commission and work creatively with the museum team and community stakeholders.

Submissions should be sent to [B.Whittaker3@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:B.Whittaker3@wigan.gov.uk) by 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## SCORING CRITERIA

Submissions will be scored in line with the weightings as laid out below.

Criteria	Weighting
Interest in commission	10%
Value and Experience	50%
Methodology	40%

An interview will only take place if required.

## TIMETABLE

Stage	Date
Tender document issued	8 September 2025
Tender submission deadline	29 September 2025
Tender Assessment	1 October 2025
Successful candidate notified	2 October 2025
Start date	10 October
End role	27 February 2026

## **BUDGET**

The fixed fee for the Exhibition Curator is £7,000 plus VAT for the period October 2025 – February 2026, based on a rate of £300 per day over approx. 23 days – working pattern to be agreed on appointment.

The exhibition budget, including commissions, exhibition fabrication and installation is £27,000.

The successful provider will be managed by Ben Whittaker, Business Manager – Culture Arts & Heritage from the Wigan Council Culture team and Louisa Attaheri, Assistant Business Partner Museums.

Payment terms to be staged payments in arrears. Schedule to be agreed with the successful tenderer.

For more information contact: [B.Whittaker3@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:B.Whittaker3@wigan.gov.uk)