

ANNEX A
SNIBSTON DISCOVERY PARK
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1. **BACKGROUND**

Snibston Discovery Park occupies a site of approximately 90 acres on the west of Coalville, in northwest Leicestershire. It is situated near the A511 and a few miles from both the M1 (junct 22) and the A42. (See site plan at Appendix 1)

The Discovery Park takes its name from the former Snibston Colliery, which was active from 1832 until 1983. The site was purchased from British Coal in 1986 by Leicestershire County Council with the aim of creating a new industrial heritage visitor attraction in the area, preserving the core of the historic colliery and the reclamation of derelict and polluted land occupied by the mine's waste tip. All of these were achieved by June 1992, when the site opened to the public as the largest branch of Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service. Snibston is the largest registered museum in the county (reg. no. 545).

The museum is open daily throughout the year, excepting Christmas Day, Boxing Day and one week in January for cleaning and maintenance. Daily hours are 10.00 am - 5.00 pm.

Currently the site comprises the following property:

- The Exhibition Hall (built 1990, approx. 5,500 sq metres), containing five galleries containing historic museum collections and a further five containing hands-on science exhibits, along with a shop, cafeteria, Tourist Information Centre two meeting rooms and the Gimson vertical and horizontal beam engines.
- Outdoor play area with around forty science exhibits.
- Historic mine buildings (built 1850s-1970s, the main structures are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, while the rest are about to be Listed).
- Museum store for medium sized artefacts.
- Museum store for wheeled vehicles, and aircraft frames.
- Museum store for the long-term conservation of medieval bridge and watermill timbers from the river Trent.
- A compound for more robust museum collections and consumables.
- A reconstructed workshop and sawmill from Sheepy Magna (dating from the 1740s).

- The Century Theatre, Britain's oldest surviving mobile theatre (built 1952).
- The reconstructed Coalville Crossing signal box (built 1907).
- A 1940s Finnish railway carriage used as an all-weather lunch space for visitors.
- The former Miners' Canteen, all-weather eating area.
- A restored portion of the Snibston Colliery railway, running from Belvoir Road to the centre of the site, together with two purpose-built platforms.
- A conservation workshop.
- Administrative offices also housing a library of historic mining books and records.
- A workshop for building and servicing interactive exhibits.
- A workshop and store for the site rangers.
- A sizeable collection of colliery railway rolling stock, a 50-seat passenger coach, and four railway locomotives.
- The rest of the Park contains an events arena, car parking for approximately 500 cars, nine pieces of public sculpture, a nature reserve and fishing lakes.
- Day and season tickets are sold for fishing, and an angling club also pays for (non-exclusive) use.
- A small six-hole golf course, driving range and other facilities. This is leased to a private operator Discovery Golf and Leisure Ltd, and occupies 17 acres of the total site.

The 2000 valuation of the Snibston buildings, based on an assessment of reinstatement for insurance purposes, was £7.4m. This excludes the scheduled ancient monuments, and the buildings on the golf course site. The latter are owned by the operator.

The planned maintenance requirements for the buildings are shown as Appendix 6.

Planning Considerations

From a planning control point of view, the Local Plan allows development directly related to the purposes of an Industrial Heritage Museum, together with associated leisure facilities, provided it does not have an adverse effect on the Local Nature Reserve.

Property Ownership Issues

The site was acquired from the National Coal Board in 1986, and is subject to an overriding covenant on the land shown shaded on the site plan (Appendix 1). This provides that the land may not be used for “other than recreational purposes”.

NCB also impressed detailed restrictions in relation to the shaded land to ensure that nothing can be done to adversely affect any mine shafts under the land (NCB having reserved all rights to mines and minerals).

Any sale or lease of the land would require the NCB (or its successor) to be a party to the deal.

Prospective partners will be able to view the title documents and details of the golf facility lease and catering concession, on request.

Other Organisations

The list of organisations who the potential partner would be likely to have contact with, after the setting up of the agreement, are listed in Appendix 8.

2. THE HISTORY

The County Council's involvement in the Snibston project dates back to 1983, when consultants Buchanan and Ove Arup were commissioned to provide a feasibility study on the potential of the Snibston colliery site in Coalville as an industrial history museum. The feasibility study supported the County Council's view to develop the Colliery site and subsequent protracted negotiations with the Coal Board secured the purchase (£300k) for LCC from the Colliery's closure in 1986. The site was managed jointly by the Department of Planning and

Transportation, who worked on the re-shaping and landscaping of the 100+ acre site using Derelict Land Grant money, and the Museums Service. In April 1988, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to the use of a £3 million exempt deferred purchase facility for the Snibston project.

The joint report to Resources Committee of December 1991 described the planned key features of the site and identified an opening date of June 1992. The report also outlined the longer term plan (to 1995) for completion of the railway line access, the sculpture park, the mining displays and other attractions, necessary to generate repeat visits.

Short term (1991-1993) capital requirements were identified as £1,065,000 in 1991.

Snibston opened to the public, on target, in June 1992.

From the outset Snibston was designed to be a pioneer in terms of the 'hands-on' approach to museum interpretation. Snibston was also the largest new build science museum since the War in the UK and became a beacon of good practice not only because of the integrated interactive approach but also because of its approach to access, both physical and intellectual.

The scheduling of the historic colliery buildings as ancient monuments by English Heritage in 1999, marks the national significance of the range of buildings, some of which date to the foundation of the site and the 'heart' of Coalville by George and Robert Stephenson. The 20th century elements of the colliery buildings are noted by English Heritage as "the most significant of their type anywhere in the United Kingdom".

The management of Snibston has been led by a senior curator within the Museums Service, initially by the Keeper of Science and Industry, and more recently by the Curator of Home and Family Life, supported by curatorial staff both based on the site but also elsewhere in the Service.

3. THE CORE OBJECTIVES

The core objectives of Snibston are:

- To create, educate and maintain satisfied customers through a quality visitor experience.
- To promote access in innovative and participative ways, to the collections curated by Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service.
- To help individuals and communities understand and celebrate their past.
- To show that science, discovery and creativity affects and involves everyone and every part of our environment, past, present and future.
- To provide a safe, dynamic, exciting and unique visitor attraction.
- To play a significant role in the regeneration of Coalville and the surrounding area and in the tourism and marketing activities of Leicestershire County Council and North West Leicestershire District Council.
- To be accessible to all.

4. **THE SNIBSTON PRODUCT**

The Exhibition Hall

The exhibition hall is fully accessible for disabled visitors and presents a safe environment for all visitors. The foyer and reception area is free admission and aims to encourage regular use by the local community in particular to the community museum space, shop, café and Tourist Information Centre. The TIC is managed by North West Leicestershire District Council and a (draft) Service Level Agreement outlines responsibilities of both partners. The community exhibition space is available for local museum heritage and other groups. It is generally booked two years in advance. Recent examples of exhibitions and events in this space include 'Shooting the Future', a young people's photographic exhibition managed by Harborough District Council, 'Venice', an art show from King Edward VII students, Coalville, Measham Museum display and a County Council Corporate Parenting celebration event. Two conference rooms are also located in this area.

The initial gallery spaces are dedicated to 'hands-on' introduction through the Science Alive and Light Fantastic galleries and the Loughborough University showcase. The temporary exhibition space currently houses 'Ship to Shore' a Heritage Lottery funded exhibition in partnership with the Mary Rose Trust and the Royal Armouries. The museum collections are supported by interactives (developed and built internally) to aid interpretation of the Tudor technology theme.

The under 5's learning area is currently being piloted adjacent to the University showcase. The main galleries of Transport (road, rail and canal), Extractive Industries and Engineering occupy the open space to the rear of the exhibition hall. The vertical and horizontal beam engines and linked engineering workshop are built into the Engineering gallery. Within this space is a display area for changing fine art and science exhibitions and linked interactives. The Textiles and Fashion gallery is in the air conditioned gallery space and will be (by end 2002/3) the only dedicated gallery for textiles, fashion and related industries in the East Midlands.

Originally intended to explain the machinery used to manufacture hosiery and textiles against the finished product, this gallery has a new approach planned to be in place in 2005/6. NEXT plc has a major partnership with Leicestershire Museums

Service and funded 'The Changing Room' temporary exhibition space in 1997. Major fashion and commercial lettings have taken place in this gallery in the past.

Outdoor Play Area

Containing c. 40 exhibits, this area aims to demonstrate scientific principles through activity and play. Wild Water is the most recent addition. This area is developed and managed by the Interactive Exhibit Builders.

Sheepy Magna Wheelwright's Workshop and Sawmill

Moved from the village of Sheepy Magna in 1992/3, the complex was built c. 1742 (with later additions) and represents a unique museum object of rural working life. As an accessioned item, the Sheepy Magna workshop is managed as a 'museum object' and a balance struck between preservation and access, particularly bearing in mind health and safety requirements. Access is managed through guided tours and 'opening times' by appointment through the supervision of trained staff present throughout all periods of public access.

Historic Colliery Buildings

The range of buildings, constructed from c. 1850, and possibly as early as 1832, was the main feature of the former Snibston colliery site which attracted the County Council to the potential 'heritage' significance of the site and led to the commissioning of the Ove Arup feasibility. Because of the 150 year range of the buildings, the Stephenson involvement, and the early development of Coalville and its communities, the Snibston site was more significant than any other colliery site in the former Area of Mining Decline.

The recent scheduling of the colliery buildings, as ancient monuments, by English Heritage is testimony to the original views as to national importance of the site. The buildings scheduled and listed are shown at Appendix 2, together with a summary of the owners obligations for such structures. Subsequently, a conservation plan has been drawn up by the County Council as a requirement for the work necessary on the scheduled buildings for English Heritage's approval. This is summarised at Appendix 3.

The nature of the colliery buildings, and the Snibston site as a whole, means that as an industrial site, health and safety is paramount. English Heritage guidelines are followed in terms of public access to the colliery buildings, and since 1994/5 Snibston has provided access through organised tours by colliery guides, most of whom were formerly involved in the coal mining industry. The colliery tours have become one of the most popular aspects of Snibston and their further development is limited by the present accessible (ie safe) areas. In due course further enhancement of the colliery area could enable greater public access to the colliery history, though there are no firm plans for this at the present. All the objects, books and items associated with the colliery history are accessioned items, held within the Museums Service's collections or on display at Snibston, including an important library and archive of mining material held on site.

The Century Theatre

The Theatre was constructed between 1948 and 1952 in Hinckley and is Britain's oldest surviving travelling playhouse. Built to take theatre into the communities, the Century eventually took up residence in Keswick, partly because of changed travel regulations inhibiting its touring potential. As a result of the development of a purpose-built permanent structure in Keswick, Leicestershire County Council was

able to acquire the theatre through a combination of Heritage Lottery Funding and the Single Regeneration Budget, and with expert advice from The Theatre Museum (part of the Victoria and Albert Museum). The Theatre opened in 1997 with the objectives of:

- a) providing a unique historical artefact;
- b) providing a community resource;
- c) providing a 200-seat performance venue for the site (science shows etc) and for the area.

The Blue Box Management Committee Ltd is a voluntary group who provide programming and promote use of the performance aspects of the theatre.

The museum use of the theatre is managed by Visitor Services or appropriate arts or curatorial staff for educational and heritage related uses, and access by groups and organised tours. As a historic artefact the Theatre is one of the largest technology items in the Service's collections.

Coaltracks and the Mineral Line

The restoration of the former colliery mineral line was supported by ERDF funding in 1998/9 and completed in 2001/2002. The project realised the restoration of the mineral line from the exhibition hall to the Coalville Belvoir Road junction. The remainder on the site - from the exhibition hall to the events arena - may be realised through WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd) funding. The former mineral line land also extends beyond the Belvoir Road junction to the Coalville market area.

Other Aspects of the Site

An agreement exists with the British Association for the Advancement of Science for the regional body's use of office accommodation in return for organisation of Science Clubs and key events in the calendar.

The bulk of the 90 acres is a former coal tip, landscaped to form a recreational area. The Grange has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Most of the site has been 'greened' up over the last fifteen years and now represents a major local community facility, with fishing, golf facilities, sculpture trail, ponds and nature walks.

The Coach Park and the Events Arena provide the potential for major events such as rallies, historic vehicle displays, steam fairs and the annual fireworks event.

5. THE COLLECTIONS

Snibston has become the foremost science, industry and technology museum in the East Midlands. The museum collections form the core of the visitor experience at Snibston, ranging from the fragile fashion and textile items to the colliery winding gear and locomotives. The collections of Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service as a whole number several million items, and all have a contribution to make in interpreting the social, economic and environmental life of the county. Within

these there are significant collections of sub-regional, regional and national importance and these form the foundation of the most recent Snibston Plan.

Recognition of the regional role of Snibston for science interpretation is made in 'Renaissance in the Regions', the report by Re:Source in 2001 (p.116). Consultation undertaken of the most recent Ten Year Strategy in 2000/2001 reinforced the educational and recreational importance of the following aspects in particular:

- **Coal**

The colliery history, history of the mine, its social impact and importance of 'Power from the Ground' [the scheduled colliery buildings, the contemporary collections, the medieval (and later) mine shaft timbers and associated collections.]

- **Textiles and Fashion**

A revamped gallery (600 sq. metres) to showcase the Service's nationally significant collections ranging from the 18th century to present day, the NEXT collection, the Symington underwear collection and the associated boots, shoes and accessories.

- **Transport**

The aircraft collection, the wheeled vehicle collection, including 18th century 'Beaumanor' coach, 'Whitwick' hearse, The Century Theatre, Jingling Geordie, 'Hansom' cab and 19th century coal barge, amongst other road and rail vehicles. The Hemington bridge timbers.

The Service also holds a number of large items in its collections - the Century Theatre, Sheepy Magna Wheelright's Workshop, the Gimson and other working Beam engines constructed into the Engineering Gallery. As with smaller museum assemblages, these structures are the museum's accessioned items and governed in terms of access and usage, conservation and restoration by the same Registration requirements and insurance as smaller items.

The collections at Snibston are not only those housed in the Exhibition Hall. In addition to the larger external features already cited, the Snibston colliery railway and associated rolling stock, the colliery railway, the 1907 Coalville crossing signalbox, the Weighbridge, and the contents of four storage areas form part of the collections. The storage facility complement the new facility at Barrow- upon-Soar, and from time to time, organised tours are arranged to provide access for research and interest 'behind the scenes'. The medieval bridge and watermill timbers extracted from Hemington gravel pits are currently mid-way through a long-term conservation programme and will, in due course, be reconstructed to form the bridge and watermill located on the Trent. These are the only known evidence of Norman bridge construction in the United Kingdom.

The County Council holds these collections in trust on behalf of society and act as guardians of the long-term public interest in the collections. The Council's draft Collections Management programme specifies standards of care; the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy complies with Registration requirements and the Agreement for Collections Sharing with Leicester City is in process.

Around 10% of the items exhibited at Snibston will be returned to the City Council when they come off display. This is planned to take place when the 'National Gas Museum' is established at Snibston.

As a registered museum, Snibston staff ensure that all items are protected from loss, damage and physical deterioration and maintain appropriate standards of protection against hazards such as theft, fire, flood, vandalism and deterioration of the collections. The Museums Service is part of the Regional Emergency Disaster Squad. This is based on an agreement for material support between museums services in the region, in the event of a disaster.

These and other collections responsibilities apply not only to the curatorial staff but to the governing bodies - in this case Leicestershire County Council (see Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association, 1995, 2002). There are specific ethical guidelines for the disposal of artefacts which have been gifted to museums.

Information about the collections will become available on Multi-MIMSY - the museum's collections IT system, in the near future. Physical access to the stores and the library is arranged by appointment. With the completion of the historic vehicles transfer to Snibston in summer 2002, special open days are planned to enhance access.

6. VISITORS AND MARKETING

Visitor Profile

Since Snibston Discovery Park opened in June 1992 it has attracted an average of around 130,000 visitors each year (see Appendix 4). Admissions data show a sustained visitor mix of 53% children, 39% adults and 8% concessions (students and senior citizens). 32% of visitors come in an organised group while 45% visit as part of a family party (averaging 4.7 people). The average spend in the museum shop is currently £2.06 per visitor.

Admission to the museum is by paid entry. Currently the charges are £5.25 adult, £3.25 child, £15.00 family ticket for two adults and three children over 5. Concessions are £3.50 and under 5's are free. Season tickets range from £11.00 for a child to £40.00 for a family. There are group booking rates for parties and charges for conference and other site lettings.

A number of exercises in market research have been carried out. The most extensive of these were undertaken in 1993 [PRC, 1993], 1994/5 [EMTB, 1995] and 1996 [Crossbow, 1997]. The key points regarding visitor profile are as follows [Crossbow, 1997]:

- Origin of visitors: Leicestershire 51%; Nottinghamshire 11%; Derbyshire 10%. Those travelling from within Leicestershire came from the following areas: 'greater Leicester' 48%; north-west Leicestershire 21%; Loughborough area 21%.
- Gender mix: male 51%; female 49%.
- Age profile of adult visitors: 25-34 yrs 18%; 35-44 yrs 39%; 45-54 yrs 15%.
- Age profile of child visitors: 6-10 yrs 53%; 11-15 yrs 22%.
- Socio-economic classification: A/B/C1, 64%.
- Average length of stay: 2-3 hrs 24%; 3-4 hrs 28%; 4-5 hrs 26%.
- Repeat visitors in 1996: 35%.
- Education groups on average: 28,000-30,000 per annum [25-28% of paid admissions). These groups enjoy concessionary rates, which vary according to the number of visits which schools make to the site.

The same sources also provide a good insight into visitor motivation and satisfaction. Key findings from the 1996 survey are as follows [Crossbow, 1997]:

- 52% of visitors planned their visit during the previous three weeks.
- The most popular attractions were the sections dealing with industrial heritage (98% visited), and the hands-on science discovery areas (97% visited).
- 83% of visitors described their time at Snibston as "very enjoyable", with the tour of the historic colliery buildings receiving the highest satisfaction rating (95%). 89% of visitors stated that they were likely or very likely to return.

The most recent survey of museum users and non-users in Leicestershire was undertaken by Prince in winter 2001. The following findings are relevant:

- Snibston recorded a more than 20% visiting rate alongside New Walk Museum, Leicester, the Great Central Railway, De Montfort Hall and Twycross Zoo. Bradgate Park was the only attraction which scored more than 50%.
- 85.2% of consultees regarded museums as 'educational'. 5.1% felt that museums were only for children.
- 73.4% of respondents wished they could visit museums most often.
- Suggestions for improvement which scored the highest were:

a desire for more activity and hands-on experience;
a desire for more changing displays and those of national importance;
a desire for a more user-friendly atmosphere;
a desire for better advertising.

Marketing and Promotion

The marketing for Snibston is undertaken as part of a Service-wide activity and, as such, is allocated provision from the Service's marketing budget. The amount directly allocated varies year on year, depending on specific priorities, but is, at present, £8,000 approximately. This is to cover all advertising, print and promotional work.

Wherever possible advertising and promotion is sought as an aspect of external funding bids (eg 'Ship to Shore'), in order to help support promotion and publicity further. As a requirement of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant for Ship to Shore an audience development plan was specified by HLF, particularly in terms of access to the exhibition for hard to reach groups, and as outreach and community based activity into handling collections.

A large amount of market intelligence has been accumulated since Snibston opened, and the commitment has been made since 1992 to ensure on-going, meaningful research and consultation with users and non-users. Details of these are cited elsewhere in this document. In addition, development of the website has been seen more recently as an important aspect of marketing and promotion. Recent research both at Snibston and at other sites has indicated that this is an increasingly important tool for information about events and the Service as a whole. The Museums website has been developed within the County Council template, and more recently Snibston and 'Ship to Shore' elements have been developed in order to be added to it.

Despite the low marketing spend, Snibston achieves a high profile with the media on a consistent year on year basis. In 2000-2001 almost 3,000 column ins. of coverage was recorded in the local press with 126 articles. Staff regularly feature on Radio Leicester and since February regional TV has provided four features.

East Midlands Museums Service market research in 2000 shows that:

- 40% of the region's population had made one or more visits to a museum in the previous twelve months - a similar percentage to a previous study carried out in 1995.
- an increasing proportion of the population (21% in 2000 compared with 14% in 1995) never visit museums.
- there is strong recognition that museums visits are educational, and provide family entertainment and they are seen as interesting, not boring - positive perceptions that have increased over the past five years.

- people who made between three and five visits each year in 1995 now only make two visits.

Within the East Midlands Museums Index the following trends can be identified:

- museums in the Index that charge admission have seen their numbers reduce by 50%, while free-entry museums have reduced by 17%.
- visits to those museums in the Index run by local authorities have dropped by 24%, while independent museums in the Index have seen a 57% reduction in visits.

Visitor Composition

In general terms, the busiest period of the year is Easter to August, with weekdays often booked to capacity with school groups. Key galleries are allocated on request to enable dedicated learning time for the school group - a system which has been developed in close consultation with teachers over time to ensure maximum educational benefit and safe operating conditions. Bookings are made on a manual paper system.

Summer holidays and half-term periods are also highly popular, with special events organised to tie in with these periods of the year.

During 2001/02 there were 2,143 fishing tickets sold - 933 adults, 389 juniors, 680 concessions, 56 season tickets and 85 match tickets. There were 680 tickets sold for The Century Theatre arts events.

Free tickets are issued as part of the County Council's Corporate Parenting initiative, introduced in October 2001. 700 looked after children and carers have benefited to date.

7. REVENUE

The attached appendix 5 provides background to the following headline figures:

- The total gross cost of Snibston in 2001/2 was £1,117,702 and is forecast for 2002/3 as £1,163,232.

		2001/2	2002/3
		£	£
This is made up of:	staffing (professional and curatorial)	184,057	190,868
	all other staffing	481,744	499,568
	operating costs (total)	451,901	472,796

The income was £340,710 in 2001/2 and forecast for 2002/3 as £312,390.

8. **CAPITAL COSTS**

The County Council identified in 1991 that sustaining repeat visitors to Snibston was crucial to maintaining healthy income levels. New developments were identified in 1999/2000 as critical to this. These have been achieved. Other prospective developments are:-

a) **Restoration of the Historic Colliery Buildings**

Scheduled and listed buildings requiring significant investment to ensure a safe environment for visitors, staff and local travellers. Restoration would enable extended access to colliery buildings.

b) **Fashion Gallery**

Revitalisation of the enclosed space deemed essential by Business Plan consultees. A livelier, more relevant interpretation to the local and regional dress and fashion heritage, focused on Museums collections.

c) **Power from the Ground**

Partnership with Centrica and Transco to explain the history of gas, using the National Gas Museum's collections.

d) **The Grange Nature Reserve**

Enhancement of the local nature reserve to provide on-site educational and wet-weather facilities.

e) **The Power House Gallery**

Identified as an ideal building for a 'local' gallery and independent museum, focused on the history of Coalville - accessible directly from Ashby Road. Requires voluntary input from Coalville 150 group etc.

f) **Coaltrack Extensions**

The Coaltracks project, the most recent significant capital development, has restored the former mineral line for most of its line (from the Exhibition Hall to Belvoir Road, Coalville) - the outstanding area awaiting reconstruction has been identified and funding available from WREN.

The recent changes in match-funding requirements identified by Heritage Lottery Fund in its Strategic Plan (2002-2006) propose a reduced requirement from the County Council of 10% - £40,000 in total (over 2-3 year period) to achieve the planned projects identified above.

In order to satisfy the Heritage Lottery Fund requirements, applicants need to demonstrate they understand, and can access, the expertise to manage a 'heritage asset' within the development process.

9. **HERITAGE ASSETS - FINANCIAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Financial

Grants and funding support from a range of external bodies has been received to assist Snibston's development.

The first, the deferred purchase financing scheme, agreed in 1988 for £3 million, is repayable over a twenty year period at approximately £150,000 per annum, plus interest at LIBOR plus $\frac{5}{8}\%$. These figures are not included in Appendix 5.

The Century Theatre was purchased with a combination of Heritage Lottery Fund (£154,000) and Single Regeneration Budget (£64,000) and 'opened' in 1997. The Heritage Lottery Fund indicates a 'ten year' lifespan for funded projects.

The Coaltracks project received £130,000 (ERDF) grant aid to support a scheme valued at £323,000. The final drawdown on this scheme was March 2002. A series of outputs are now required to be met by the Service as part of the conditions of the funding, including numbers of passenger trips, numbers of volunteers/staff employed etc. The timescale within which these outputs should be sustained is 5 years.

Both Sustrans and NEXT plc have made financial investment in two major schemes, by the former the cycle paths and sculpture through the park as part of the National Cycleway (£50,000), and by NEXT plc in providing the temporary display area in the Fashion Gallery (£25,000). A further £50,000 is in hand (and £25,000 due in 2003) from NEXT plc to provide matched funding for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid to redevelop the gallery.

There may be repayment obligations to the funding bodies in the event of closure of any of the schemes on a tapering basis from the time of the grant allocation.

Funding support from sponsorship and the private sector was wide-ranging in the early 1990's and over 25 businesses were involved. During the last five years the following other organisations have also made financial investment into Snibston:

De Montfort University
Loughborough University
GEC Alstrom
Centrica
British Sugar

Legal Implications

The provision of museum services is a discretionary service for local authorities. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides enabling powers for county, unitary and district councils, and the Local Government Act 1972 for town and parish councils.

As institutional members of the Museums Association, Leicestershire County Council is signed up to the Code of Ethics, both at member and officer level. The code represents a set of consensual values and standards of behaviour which define a relationship of trust between the museum and communities served.

English Heritage has scheduled the colliery buildings at Snibston because of their national significance and has thus 'earmarked' them for protection. It is therefore incumbent upon the owner to ensure the buildings are not put at risk - from time to time the Register of Buildings at Risk is published - and local authorities are expected to ensure an action plan is in place to prevent physical decline. English Heritage will try to support improvement schemes for scheduled and listed buildings. English Heritage, by virtue of the 'scheduling' requires the owner to undertake restoration work/alterations only with the agreement of English Heritage, in accordance with an agreed Conservation Plan.

As a working industrial site, Snibston aims to comply with health and safety legislation at all times. This is focused particularly at Moving and Working Objects and collections and the outdoor features of the site as a whole.

10. STAFFING

Snibston is the largest site within Leicestershire Museums Service and from the outset, as with all its sites, has an integrated approach to Service provision for a range of services. Consistent with other service sites, the Curator is both site manager and holds a countywide responsibility for a specific area of the Service's

collections (in this case Home and Family Life). The Curator is responsible for ensuring the museum maintains its registration status and that all collections on site, both on display and in store, are managed according to professional registration standards.

The Curator is responsible for the admin. officer, clerical officer, telephonist/receptionist and group bookings officer, for the team of twenty gallery assistants, colliery guides and cleaning staff (eleven fte, nine p/t), and two site maintenance staff. The team includes one sheltered placement. These staff are dedicated to the Snibston site.

The Visitor Services Officer reports directly to the Curator and is responsible for all front of house management, organisation and co-ordination of special events, conference and other facility bookings and visitor information and queries.

Other staff have broader (ie other site responsibilities) including the Interactive Exhibit builders (3 posts) who maintain and construct the Service's hands-on exhibits, the three site rangers responsible for all gardens and site duties at all sites (but based at Snibston) and the Education Officer who provides countywide support.

The Curator is responsible for the Assistant Keeper, Home and Family Life and the Assistant Keeper, Mining and Transport, both of whom have countywide responsibilities.

The total number of staff based at Snibston is:

Professional and Curatorial	11
Other Staff	38 (incl. p/t)
Total	49

As the main showcase for Leicestershire's museums, the permanent and temporary exhibitions and supporting events are sustained by the countywide team of curatorial, conservation, technical and registrar staff. The Keeper of Cultural Life is responsible for the Textile and Fashion Gallery, provides a series of temporary exhibitions in The Changing Room (sponsored by NEXT plc) which links in with the collections in store at Barrow, and enables displays to be drawn from this resource in order to maximise access. The Head of Interpretation manages the temporary exhibition space (currently housing Ship to Shore) and the Keeper of Collections, with his expertise in working life and rural collections, has responsibility for Sheepy Magna Wheelwright's Workshop. The Community Museums Officer ensures a rolling programme of community displays in the free access space in the museum foyer.

The commercial and retail operation at Snibston, including management of the café franchise, the retail operation and the admissions is managed by the Commercial and Finance Manager of the Service, with certain retail staff being funded from the retail account. The present franchise holder is Burningham and Williams.

In common with staff across the Museums Service, all Snibston staff are involved in PPDR (Personal Professional Development Reviews), annual away days and monthly staff meetings. Staff at all levels are encouraged to visit other museums, and to participate in events and exhibitions relating to specific areas of expertise and interest. During the winter 2001, for example, gallery assistants undertook outreach and oral history work in care homes in the Coalville area and at peak times distribute promotional material in shopping centres and tourism events.

Front-line staff work a rota of 4 days on/2 days off and the front of house rota has recently been streamlined to a 9.00 am - 5.30 pm regular arrangement for all gallery staff. Six staff are trained first-aiders, and others have specific customer based skills including BSL qualifications, GNVQ and Health and Safety. In addition,

Snibston, in common with other Service sites, hosts and supports placement students from University of Leicester's Museum Studies course, De Montfort

University and Nottingham Trent, Stephenson College, The Ironbridge Institute and University of Birmingham. Service staff provide ongoing sessions to other postgraduate training courses on a collective basis.

Casual staff are employed to cover peak periods, holidays and sickness. All casual staff undergo induction and training.

The deployment of staff across the 'front of house' is driven by the needs of the industrial nature of the site and requirements for collections care (to comply with registration standards). Invigilation of the museum collections requires staffing in each gallery area of the exhibition hall; health and safety requirements in order to comply with legislation demand attendance on Science Play and additional staffing close to working machinery exhibits. The Railway Inspectorate lays down staffing requirements for the running of the Snibston colliery railway and the Service follows English Heritage guidelines for public access across the historic site and colliery buildings only by accompanied, organised, tour groups rather than open and unsupervised access for the public to wander at will. This feature distinguishes Snibston from non-museum attractions/science centres where there is no professional requirement for staff at this level to be on duty.

The Strategic management of Snibston is undertaken at departmental level, the Curator reporting to the Head of Service as line manager. Forward planning and project development for the Snibston 'product' is dependent on resources, collections and expertise held by staff service-wide, and annual and long-term planning is done, not only for work programming per se, but to enable external funding bids to be prepared and for conservation work to be done (eg Annual Service Plan, Business Plan 2002-2006).

11. ENVIRONMENT

Snibston is the largest museum managed by Leicestershire County Council. Because of its capacity and collections range, Snibston enables the County Council's Museums Service as a whole to qualify for inclusion within the emerging Regional Hub. The opportunity for Government funding to build the infrastructure within regional museums and enhance service delivery is a new initiative (Renaissance in the Regions) for which funding details are pending. The Renaissance report identifies a range of agenda such as access, education and stewardship for which funding streams might be made available, initially to the hubs and then to cascade to other museums.

Snibston within the Regional Museum Context

Facing the Future 2, the Regional Museum Strategy for the East Midlands (2002-2007), highlights the importance which Snibston has had on the regional museum landscape in terms of the increased access to museum provision in the region and increased visitor numbers to the region as a whole. Visits to registered museums in the East Midlands between 1990-1999 showed an increase of 48% as a result of Snibston opening in 1992 (p 18 of Strategy).

Within the application for Regional Hub status for Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Leicester, Derby and Nottingham, the main focal point for each Service is its largest site of provision - over 70,000 visitors per annum. Snibston is the gateway to museum funding for the Service as a whole and to the benefit of our partners, especially North West Leicestershire, Charnwood, Harborough and Melton Borough Councils.

The Regional Museums Strategy for the East Midlands 2002-2007 identifies a number of key points which are relevant to Snibston and the future of the Service. In particular, these suggest that a rationalisation of the system of museums in the East Midlands might be in the bringing together of the regional collections for costume and textiles, science and technology and should be seen as an opportunity. Snibston is cited by Re:Source (The Council for Museums Libraries and Archives) as possibly the major provider of science and industry in the East Midlands and with further potential to develop. In addition, another key opportunity will be the relationships with partners and stakeholders, not only through other local authorities but also with the private and voluntary sectors and national and regional agencies.

Snibston and the Regional Tourism Context

Until 2001, Snibston was the largest indoor tourism attraction within Leicestershire and probably the East Midlands. Since then the situation has changed with the arrival of the National Space Centre and Conkers. The openings of both may have had a significant impact on visitor numbers in 2001/02, although it appears that this situation is now stabilising. Both operators have expressed keenness to work with Snibston this year on joint marketing and promotion activities and this work has been taken forward. Joint initiatives are also in place with Bosworth Battlefield.

There is now a strong attractions base within north-west Leicestershire (including Moira Furnace and Ashby Canal) with potential to bring new and repeat visits.

Snibston within the Broader Environment

Snibston is unusual as a 'charged for' local authority museum. In the East Midlands it is the only significant local authority museum which charges entry. Since Government support for national museums and the abolition of charges, there are fewer museums on the scale of Snibston which require admission charges in order to balance annual revenue budgets.

Visitor numbers to non-national museums have been falling year on year for several years. There has been 8-11% drop in all museum visits since 1990. A number of factors have been attributed to this, such as increased time for outdoor activities and sport and seven day a week leisure shopping opportunities. In 1999, there were 616,161 visits to registered museums in Leicestershire.

Snibston within the Community

Within the local community, Snibston has provided employment opportunities for the 20+ staff based on the site. Over the last ten years, Snibston has developed its role

with the community through an active programme of low cost or free events on a regular basis. The Fireworks event, Community Open days, community showcase and Annual First-Aid competition (a legacy of coal mining social events) attract large numbers from the local community. The Millennium Gala in 2000 attracted c. 17,000 people, primarily from the local community, and provided the opportunity for them to come into contact with the museum and its facilities free of charge. Snibston regularly holds events for special needs local groups and in the winter/off peak periods gallery staff have undertaken reminiscence work in local elderly persons homes.

12. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Reports to Leicestershire County Council, Resources Committee, Policy and Resources Committee and Arts, Libraries and Museums Committee, 1986-onwards (specifically April 1988, March 1991, December 1991).
- Leicestershire County Council Museums, Arts and Records Service (LMARS) registration application to Museums and Galleries Commission 1992, 1999.
- English Heritage Schedule of Snibston Colliery Buildings 1999.
- Snibston: The draft 10 year strategy 2001-2011.
- LMARS Collections Management Strategy and Policy, 2003-08
- Service Level Agreements with British Association for the Advancement of Science and North West Leicestershire District Council for TIC operation (draft).
- Users and non-users of Leicestershire Museums - The Public View 10 years on: D Prince 2002.
- Snibston Business Plan 2002-2007 and consultation feedback.
- Annual Report, LMARS, 2001-2002.
- Registration Guidelines, Museums & Galleries Commission, 1995.

Copies of these publications are available on request.