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The History Centre

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Update on History Centre closure

October 2021

Following investigations into the conditions of the building on the first floor of Central Library, Blackpool Council has made the decision to do a full roof replacement.

While this is great news for the future of the History Centre in the building, it does mean there will continue to be disruption to the heritage service while the work is undertaken. Council property services are still creating a full calendar of works and updates on the timetable will be published as they become available.

At present it is anticipated this work and the reopening of the History Centre will take 6 to 12 months.

The library will remain open. This disruption only effects the first floor of the building where the heritage service and History Centre is located.

The key impacts of the roof replacement are going to be:

- History Centre: Will remain closed until all works have been completed
- Newspapers on microfilm: Limited access by appointment will be available following the relocation of the service to temporary location before Christmas 2021
- Collections: The majority of the collections are going into deep storage outside of Blackpool and will be unavailable until the reopening of the History Centre
- Remote enquiry service: There will be a limited remote enquiry service for newspaper searches only once the service has relocated to it temporary location
- Blackpool Museum Project: A small selection of collections are staying in Blackpool in temporary storage for use by Showtown to support the final stage of creating and building the museum displays.

Problems with the building

The History Centre has been closed since February 2020. It was closed in order to provide a storage refuge for the collections that were evacuated from permanent storage due to significant water penetration through the ceiling of the store.

The assessment and repair of the damage was completed over the summer of 2020 but by the autumn of that year it became apparent that the deterioration of the roof was much worse than at first observed and there was negative impact to the heritage service, adult and community learning, Blackpool Central Library and the Grundy Art Gallery.

Blackpool Council property service undertook extensive investigations and assessments and concluded that the building is suffering from water egress predominately due to the age with penetrative damp from the guttering, flashing detailing and external pointing to the South and West elevations.

A recommendation for a full roof replacement was submitted to Blackpool Council. This work is to replace the existing roof coverings, together with pointing, lead work and guttering and this has now been approved.

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