

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Task and Finish Group	Report Number: Y/03/16
To: Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Committee	Date of meeting: 01 September 2016

MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE – UPDATE ON REVIEW OF IMPACT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the outcomes of the review of the social, economic and environmental impact of the Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL) that was carried out by the Task and Finish Group of behalf of Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Committee (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 To enable Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the impact of MEAL and the Council's future support for the organisation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That a recommendation be made to the Executive Committee that opportunities for wide use of impact methodology across the Council's functions be explored.
- 2.2 That expert support be commissioned to enable officers to learn and apply the methodology.
- 2.3 That MEAL be encouraged to take up the recommendations within the report and strengthen its data collection.
- 2.4 That the Council look flexibly at the future funding arrangements and opportunities for MEAL in the light of the significant return on public investment achieved by the organisation.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council part funds MEAL through grants and a loan and will therefore wish to see an effective return on this investment in terms of benefit to the local area and achievement of the Council's strategic priorities. The impact research mentioned in 10.4 was supplied at a cost of £7,393.00.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk as below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Ability to offset cuts in grant funding with external funding due to competition will reduce our ability to build community capacity.	Unlikely	Noticeable	Any possible grant funding reductions may reduce the impact of MEAL and the benefit to local communities.

6. Consultations

- 6.1 The impact report has been shared with the MEAL Director and Chairman and with Suffolk County Council Heritage Team (SCC are the main public funder of MEAL).

7. Equality Analysis

- 7.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications.

8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 8.1 There are no shared service implications.

9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

- 9.1 The Community Capacity Building and Engagement theme includes the key output 'targeted grants and funding to support community capacity building'. Fully articulating the impact of MEAL will help the organisation to secure other funding and maximise local benefit. The organisation contributes to other outputs within the JSP including 'continued support for health and wellbeing outcomes that prevent interventions' and 'further develop local economy and market towns to thrive'.

10. Key Information

- 10.1 The Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL) is the largest independent museum in the East of England. It is situated in 75 acres of Suffolk countryside in Stowmarket and consists of 20 historic buildings, collections of 35,000 objects, rare breeds of animals and environmentally significant wet meadows. In addition, the museum has an extensive learning programme, including education and family learning, work based training, heritage skills and crafts training, community learning and supported volunteering.
- 10.2 At the Executive Committee in July 2015 the Mid Suffolk District Scrutiny was requested to conduct a review to explore the economic, social and environmental impact of MEAL on Stowmarket and wider Suffolk, its communities, people and public services.
- 10.3 The review was conducted by a Task and Finish Group, in order to report back to the Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Committee and then on to the Executive Committee.

- 10.4 Change Consultancy was commissioned to undertake the impact research. The company has a track record of working with organisations to determine value and impact created using a variety of methodologies. After examining the brief they proposed a methodology combining elements of Social Return on Investment (SROI) and Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) in order to capture the breadth of MEAL's impact. This research was funded from the transformation fund.
- 10.5 The approach included focus groups with MEAL's team including the Director, officers, volunteers and trustees and desk based research.
- 10.6 A Business Improvement officer and a Communications officer from the Council shadowed the work of the consultant in order to learn how to apply the methodology.
- 10.7 The report 'Economic, Social and Environmental Impact of the Museum of East Anglian Life' is attached at Appendix 1. A key finding from the report is that **for every £1 spent by the local public sector organisations on funding MEAL, value of £12.33 is created**. This is a significant return and as indicated in the report reflects a high level of value generated by MEAL across social, environmental and economic outcomes. This return falls across Suffolk, the district and the community of Stowmarket.
- 10.8 Whilst the average return for public sector investment in heritage facilities is nearer 1:4 a return of 1:12 needs to be considered within the wider narrative about the organisation. Direct comparisons between organisations based purely on the ratio are not advised. However, in terms of a return on investment this is a very positive indicator and gives an independent indicator/evidence base of the significant contribution and value of MEAL within the district.
- 10.9 The report models the impact of MEAL under five headings; health and wellbeing, society and community, education, economy and environment. The breadth of this impact in respect of those living, working and visiting the area, and the contribution to key JSP outputs is evident.
- 10.10 The report notes that the actual impact created by MEAL is larger than it has been possible to evidence and makes recommendations in relation to future data collection to enable impact to be demonstrated more comprehensively. This includes capturing outcome data for participants on all programmes and conducting an annual visitor survey to more accurately determine economic impact.
- 10.11 The impact methodology was found to be valuable by MEAL and the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. The report provides useful evidence which may be used to support future funding applications and the process itself was useful in terms of valuing and understanding impact and how it could be improved.
- 10.12 The methodology could be used with other organisations. However it is quite a detailed process and would be most appropriately used where the likely benefit is proportionate to the work involved. For example where the organisation is strategically important to the Council's JSP priorities and there is the potential to strengthen its capacity to secure other significant funding.
- 10.13 The Council has increased its understanding of the use of the impact methodology by having officers shadow the research. However, as acknowledged in the report,

whilst the SROI framework requires rigour there is also the need for judgement calls, for example about the geography over which benefit is generated. Such choices can make a large difference to overall results. In order to roll out the approach within the Council it would therefore be necessary to provide some further expert support to enable the officers that shadowed this work, and potentially others, to develop the necessary skills and experience.

11. Appendices

Title	Location
(a) 'Economic, Social and Environmental Impact of the Museum of East Anglian Life'.	Attached
(b) Confidential Report X/31/15 to Executive Committee 13 July 2015	See Agenda Item 9

12. Background Documents

12.1 None.

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Economic, Social and Environmental Impact of the Museum of East Anglian Life

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4/7/2016

Executive Summary

MEAL undoubtedly creates economic, social and environmental impact for the local community, visitors to the museum and the wider cultural and heritage sector. This report has modelled the impact into five headings:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Society and Community
- Education
- Economy
- Environment

MEAL creates an impact across all five of these areas although the ability to quantify the impact in economic terms varies. This is partly due to the nature of the impact generated and whilst real, it will never be possible to completely quantify the full impact. However there are areas that, with additional data collection that focuses on outcomes and impact, it will be possible to quantify better in the future.

This report has captured the impact created in three different ways:

1. The quantifiable impact where it is possible
2. Qualitative impact that it might be possible to quantify in the future with further data collection
3. Qualitative impact that it isn't possible to put an economic value to, but is certainly a real impact nonetheless.

Health and Wellbeing

The main areas of impact:

- Reducing social isolation for volunteers and some visitors
- Developing skills and confidence for supported volunteers
- Raising awareness of mental health through exhibitions and programmes
- Supporting those with mental health difficulties through the 'Creative Heritage in Mind' programme.

Society and Community

The main areas of impact:

- Supporting cultural diversity
- Developing a strong local identity
- Encouraging family relationships

Education

The main areas of impact:

- People enjoying life and make a positive contribution
- Learning about heritage
- The educational development of these children, young people and adults

Economy

The main areas of impact:

- Direct economic impact of tourism, employment and spend in the local economy
- Economic impact of work based learning and skills development programmes

Environment

The main areas of impact:

- Reduction of carbon footprint and 'green lung' Stowmarket
- Richness of biodiversity
- Stewardship of historic water meadows

Quantifiable impact

It is possible to quantify the following areas of impact using economic impact assessment and social return on investment methodologies:

Economic impact of tourism	-	£716,129
Economic impact of employment	-	£377,825
Economic impact of spend	-	£189,088
Social impact of wok based learning	-	£186,747
Value of volunteering	-	£268,674
Value of carbon offset	-	£821
Total quantifiable impact	-	£1,739,284

To determine the value created by MEAL the impact must be looked at in relation to the input costs. There are two ways of looking at this for MEAL. One would be to look at the total value of the budget - £549,946. This would give a quantifiable impact of 3.16:1. For every £1 spent value of £3.16 is created.

However a more accurate way of determining the value is to look at the public sector input to support MEAL. This comes from Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Stowmarket Town Council. This comes to a total of £141,060. The rest of the money in the MEAL budget is money they earn or attract from other grants and funding streams. Therefore using the figure of

public sector input costs will demonstrate the value MEAL creates for the local public sector organisations that fund them.

This gives a ratio of 12.33:1. For every £1 spent by the local public sector organisations on funding MEAL, value of £12.33 is created.

The true impact created is, however, much greater than this.

Areas of impact that could be quantified in the future

There are areas of impact that were identified in the report that, with some further collection of data from beneficiaries, it would be possible to quantify. These were largely around the impact made to health and wellbeing. Research that makes it possible to put an economic value to health and wellbeing outcomes, is relatively advanced. Therefore questionnaire tracking of programme participants would make it relatively easy to determine the social value create through MEAL in these areas.

This is particularly the case for:

Supported volunteers – tracking the job outcomes and health and wellbeing outcomes of participants in the programme would relatively easily convert to an economic value of the programme

Volunteers – the impact on volunteers of being part of the MEAL community, the building up of social networks and the development of skills and confidence has an economic value that would be relatively easy to quantify with slightly different data collection.

Creative Heritage in Mind – the qualitative information on the impact of this programme is excellent. A slightly different approach to data collection would enable the social impact of the project to be determined in economic terms as well.

The impact MEAL makes in all of these areas is thought to be relatively large and if data was collected to enable these to be modelled economically, it would certainly increase the impact ratio of MEAL.

Further areas of impact

The report also identified other areas of impact that MEAL creates that it isn't possible to describe in economic terms. This includes the impact the education programme has, the societal and cultural impact and many of the environmental impacts.

Just because it isn't possible to describe these impacts in economic terms, they shouldn't be taken any less seriously. In fact some of these impacts, such as the richness of the biodiversity within MEAL, are probably some of the greatest impacts created.

MEAL is much more than a museum. It has an impact across the local community of Stowmarket, Mid Suffolk and indeed East Anglia as a whole. It cares for collections and puts on displays and related events, but through the site it occupies and the way it stewards that site and through the programmes that engage people, the impact of MEAL goes beyond the economic impacts

identified, significant though those are as well.

Recommendations

MEAL creates a larger impact than it is possible to evidence and develop an economic model for. This will always be the case; however there are some areas that would be relatively easy for MEAL to evidence through the adoption of a slightly different process for monitoring the effectiveness of the programmes they deliver.

It is recommended that the areas of impact identified in this report are used as a basis for monitoring participants on programmes. If they are asked how their association with MEAL has impact on them it will be possible to develop an economic model, based on SROI, to determine the value created. This is particularly true for health and wellbeing outcomes and should include all work with: volunteers, supported volunteers, Creative Heritage in Mind, Work Based Learning and other such programmes. Job outcomes and increased skills should also be tracked and evidenced as these areas are also relatively easy to develop an economic model for.

By reviewing data monitoring in such a way it will be possible to more accurately model the economic, social and environmental impact of MEAL and demonstrate that impact to funders more comprehensively than is currently possible.

The report makes recommendations in three areas:

- Capturing outcome data for participants on all programmes and with volunteers
- Conducting an annual visitors survey to more accurately determine the economic impact of the museum
- Introducing outcome measures to the non-financial KPIs.

The report identifies that MEAL makes a large economic, social and environmental impact. The true impact cannot be fully quantified although is made more evident by the numerous awards won by the museum and the quantity of committed members and volunteers. MEAL could further demonstrate the value it creates by enhancing its data collection and monitoring and this report provides a model for examining that impact in an ongoing manner.

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1.0 Introduction

This report presents an evaluative view of the economic, social and environmental impact created by the Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL). The figures used are for the year of 2015/16, where possible, and therefore provide a snapshot of the value created by MEAL in that year. The monitoring data for MEAL shows only small variations between 2015/16 and other years and therefore it is a fair assumption that the impact identified in this report is still current.

In this report we will:

- Provide some general background and context to the impact evaluation methodologies used and their benefits in terms of measuring and evaluating the impact of services and projects.
- Identify the economic, social and environmental impact created by MEAL and quantify this where it is possible.
- Provide narrative on other areas of impact created that haven't been possible to quantify
- Make recommendation on how MEAL can maximise the impact it makes and develop its data collection to increase the areas of impact that are possible to quantify.

1.1 Background and context

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires, for the first time, all public commissioning bodies in England and Wales to consider how the services they commission and procure might impact on the wider economic, social and environmental wellbeing. The Act has the potential to significantly impact on the wellbeing of communities for whose benefit services are procured.

Understanding and managing this broader measure of value is becoming increasingly important for public sector bodies. Although we use terminology such as impact, benefit and value, the question of what difference we are making to people's lives and the communities where they live and work still remains at the heart of much of what the public sector is about. How we measure what we do continues to be a major discussion point in determining the effectiveness of programme delivery.

1.2 Background to MEAL

The Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL) is the largest independent museum in the East of England. It is situated in 75 acres of Suffolk countryside in the market town of Stowmarket and consists of 20 historic buildings, collections of 35,000 objects, rare breeds of animals and environmentally significant wet meadows. In 2012 it completed a major HLF funded £3m capital project to restore the Queen Anne Abbot's Hall and surrounding buildings. The new developments provide 7 permanent exhibition spaces and a two roomed gallery for temporary exhibitions.

The museum attracts approaching 40,000 visitors. It is a major venue for the community which includes an annual beer festival, blues festival, traditional music day and bonfire night celebrations. In addition, the museum has an extensive learning programme, including education and family learning, work based training, heritage skills and crafts training, community learning and supported volunteering. It has established itself as a key part of the community and plays a thought leadership

role on issues of museum development and in the area of well-being and happiness.

MEAL has won a number of awards including, in 2010, Entrepreneurial Museum of the Year. It is the only UK museum to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark and is accredited under the Arts Council Scheme and VAQAS registered.

The Museum has led the Happy Museum project, an influential initiative which encourages UK museums to re-imagine their purpose, promoting individual and communal well-being and environmental sustainability.

2.0 Methodology

A mixed methodology was used to determine the economic, social and environmental impact of MEAL. This was decided upon in an effort to articulate the full impact made by MEAL as it was felt that using any one methodology came with too many limitations and would not identify the real impact made by the Museum.

The scope of the study was to identify the economic, social and environmental impact created by MEAL. These three parts of the scope require a different approach. Tools based around Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) were used to identify the economic impact. Social Return on Investment (SROI) was the basis for identifying the social impact and the environmental impact was identified using a hybrid approach that drew on both EIA and SROI.

Secondary data and was used throughout the study due to timescale and funding restrictions. This means the social impact identified draws on SROI methodology, but doesn't fully follow the stages identified by the SROI Network who suggest full stakeholder involvement to identify the impact created. Rather this study utilises a previous SROI study and updates the model with more recent figures and in other areas makes conservative estimations to come to an impact figure.

2.1 What is SROI?

SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value that goes beyond output returns and unit costing. It was developed by a consortium of organisations (The New Economics Foundation (NEF), The Charities Evaluation Services, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and New Philanthropy Capital) and funded through the Office of the Third Sector using a number of the principles inherent in social accounting and cost-benefit analysis. These principles include:

- Stakeholder involvement
- Outcome measures
- Valuing what really matters
- Realistic claims
- Transparency
- Validity and reliability

SROI measures change brought about by interventions in ways that are relevant to the individuals or organisations that have experienced that intervention. It tells the story of how change is being created by measuring the social, environment and economic impacts of that change. It uses monetary values to represent the extent of change. For example if the intervention has cost £10,000 but the monetary value in terms of the wider social, environmental and economic benefits total £50,000, the SROI is said to have a 5:1 ratio of benefits to cost. The use of monetary values as a means of calculating SROIs however is not without its critics. Although the basic principle of needing to measure 'apples with apples' is obvious, there are many that argue that putting a monetary value (proxies) on some of the soft outcomes (increased confidence and self-esteem etc) involves an element of guesswork that could be open to misuse. Supporters of SROI would argue that adherence to the principles listed above will address this criticism.

An SROI analysis can take different forms. It can encompass the social value generated by an entire organisation, or focus on just one specific aspect of the organisation's work. It can also be used evaluatively- conducted retrospectively and based on actual outcomes that have already taken place or as a forecasting tool - predicting how much social value will be created if the activities meet their intended outcomes.

2.2 Research limitations

SROI is still a fairly new framework. It measures and accounts for a much broader concept of value, through measuring change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It is about value rather than money. There are however limitations with the methodology, many of which are being addressed by the SROI Network and will be overcome as SROI becomes more widely used with a more established evidence base.

The framework and guidance provided by the SROI Network aims for rigour but there remains a degree of space for personal judgement. Adopting a team approach has reduced this risk as every decision and assumption made has been challenged and agreed by a number of individuals all of whom have undertaken intensive SROI training. The same is true for EIA. There were a number of times in the study where judgement calls could create very different results. For instance; does the local area count as Stowmarket, Suffolk or the East of England? The choice made has the potential to make a large difference to the final results.

One of the main perceived limitations of SROI, as with other types of evaluation, is that it is difficult to compare results between organisations. This is because of the space for personal judgement which could make it possible to inflate or deflate the value created. There are auditing tools and procedures which help to standardise the way SROI ratios are calculated but to a certain degree the process of producing an SROI ratio is specific to every organisation. Therefore it is vital that the overall SROI ratio should not be viewed in isolation. The analysis that accompanies the SROI ratio is crucial as it ensures transparency and makes it possible to see some of the choices that have been made, about what to measure and how to value an impact. SROI should not be viewed as being all about the final financial ratio. This attracts scepticism and criticism and means many of its benefits are overlooked. SROI is a process of understanding and valuing impact and should be used by organisations to understand where their impact is greatest and how they could improve what they do.

Attributing monetary values to outcomes has been perceived by some to be problematic. How, for example, do you accurately measure improvements in confidence, quality of life, or feelings? SROI

seeks to value both the benefit to the wider economy and the individual. While we may be able to calculate, for example, the average value to the state of individuals moving into employment, valuing personal benefit in monetary terms may be more complex. The SROI Network are addressing these limitations through building up a database of acceptable and acknowledged values, outcomes and indicators which have been used in assured SROI analyses. Careful research, referring to existing and accepted evidence bases and adhering to the SROI principles is vital in order to conduct a robust, credible and true analysis.

2.3 Project Methodology

Stage 1 – Focus group with MEAL staff and trustees to identify areas of impact

Stage 2 – Model the impact

Stage 3 – Check for evidence to prove the impact and to quantify it

Stage 4 – Meeting with MEAL to check early findings and assumptions and to ask for further data

Stage 5 – Finish modelling

Stage 6 – Report writing

2.4 Project limitations

The data needed to fully demonstrate the impact of MEAL has not been collected. Therefore there are a number of areas within this study that uses national data from other studies. This makes the assumption that MEAL is a standard Museum located in a standard market town. There are also a couple of areas where current data is not available from MEAL but work has been done in the past and data is available from a previous year. Where this is the case this data has been used and an assumption made that the same is true now. One example of this is a 2013 study of where visitors to MEAL are from. This information hasn't been collected since, but this study makes an assumption that the pattern of visitors hasn't changed.

Throughout the study a conservative approach has been taken to not over value impacts identified. Therefore it is thought that the impact identified in this report is lower than the actual value created by MEAL.

2.5 Areas of impact

The impact created by MEAL falls into five main areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Society and Communities
- Education
- Economy
- Environment

Under each of these headings there are a number of outcomes identified with particular activities undertaken by MEAL leading to the impact. The tables below describe what has been modelled:

1. Health and Wellbeing

Outcome	Impact	Activity
Encourage healthier lifestyles	Reduce social isolation by providing group activities	Volunteer impact
	Provide volunteer opportunities	Economic impact
Supporting Care and recovery	Using programmes to raise awareness of and support those with mental health needs	People involved in 'Creative Heritage in Mind'
		Displays and exhibitions looking at mental health

2. Society and Communities

Outcome	Impact
Supporting cultural diversity and identity	Exhibitions on intercultural understanding
	Exhibitions on local culture and traditions
	Civic pride
Encouraging family relationships	Provision of family days and activities

3. Education

Outcome	Impact
Helping children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution	Looking at long term impact of learning on their decisions
People will have learnt about heritage. Contribute to the educational development of children	School visits and specific content aimed at national curriculum subjects
	Programme to support home educators
People will have learnt about heritage Encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities	Adult education and short courses led/hosted by museum

4. Economy

Outcome	Impact
Economic impact of MEAL	Tourism Impact
	Employment Impact
	Spend on goods impact
Skills developed	Skills for the Future programme
	Volunteer impact

5. Environment

Outcome	Impact
Improving environmental sustainability Negative environmental impacts will be reduced	Taking steps to reduce energy consumption of the museum
	Taking steps to reduce the carbon footprint of the museum
	High level stewardship of water meadows
	Managing gardens and food production organically
	Composting all non-cooked food waste
	Impact on biodiversity of 75 acres site in the middle of a town
Improving environmental awareness	Exhibitions with a focus on environmental awareness

3.0 Findings

3.1 Health and Wellbeing

The main impacts on health and wellbeing identified are through specific programmes the museum runs and, to a lesser extent, the visitors to the museum.

It is not possible to put a quantitative value on all of the impacts identified, partly because of the information that is currently gathered and was provided for this report.

The main areas of impact are thought to be:

- Reducing social isolation for volunteers and some visitors
- Developing skills and confidence for supported volunteers
- Raising awareness of mental health through exhibitions and programmes
- Supporting those with mental health difficulties through the 'Creative Heritage in Mind' programme.

Reducing social isolation

MEAL creates social impact through its business model. A large number of volunteers are used to run the site. This creates a community for these volunteers and this has an impact. In essence the business model of MEAL enhances social capital.

People engage with others through a variety of relationships forming many different types of networks. Social Capital is the resource that stems from these social interactions, networks and network opportunities which take place in specific environments, which in this report is the volunteering experience.

There are different types of social capital, based around different types of networks. Most commonly they are referred to as:

- **Bonding social capital** - This relates to relationships with family, friends and peer groups that provide a sense of belonging in the here and now. It is good for 'getting by' in life.
- **Bridging social capital** - This is about creating links with people outside our immediate circles, who can help us to broaden our opportunities and horizons. It is good for 'getting ahead' in life.
- **Linking social capital** - This relates to relationships between people with varying levels of power. It is good for accessing support from formal institutions.

Developing a variety of social networks can therefore provide a number of benefits: from personal and emotional support to giving more opportunities, choice and power.

This is an impact for volunteers and the same affect is also probably true for members of the museum. When people come regularly they develop networks that develop social capital. For both of these groups it is thought that *bonding social capital* would be the key form developed and through this a reduction in social isolation for some.

Later on in the report the SROI report undertaken for MEAL in 2010 is used as the basis to explore the impact the current Work Based Learning programme is having. To ensure continuity through

this report, the value used in that report for ‘development of positive relationships’ will be used here.

The value identified is £1,791. When adjusted for inflation this gives a present value of £1,973.

Monitoring information from MEAL doesn’t systematically record the number of volunteers and museum visitors that develop better relationships as a result of their association with MEAL. This would be something relatively easy to record and therefore easy to determine the social return on investment of. For instance, if a quarter of the 150 volunteers cited improved relationships and social networks as a result of their volunteering with MEAL, this would equate to a value of around £74,000.

This is considered to be a conservative figure and is just an example of how further data collection would make it possible to put an economic figure to the impact MEAL creates. However it isn’t possible to evidence with the information available at the moment.

Supported Volunteer programme

MEAL co-ordinates a ‘supported volunteer’ programme. This is for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health difficulties. Participants in the programme volunteer at MEAL, but are supported in that and in so doing, develop new skills and confidence. During the 2014/15 year there were 42 people on the programme. Case studies are developed for some of these people and anecdotal evidence suggested there were two participants who moved into employment as a result of the programme not to mention many more who went back to education or moved on to volunteer somewhere else. There is also a value to the new skills developed and the increased confidence of the participants.

The outcomes of the programme are not recorded at present so it isn’t possible to determine an economic value for the programme. However there certainly is a value that, with a different approach to data collection, would be possible to evidence.

Raising awareness of mental health

The museum has a mental health exhibition that, anecdotal evidence suggests, leaves a large impact on visitors. What isn’t possible to tell is anything about the number of visitors that this impacts in this way and what the result of the impact is; i.e. does behaviour change as a result. Therefore whilst there is obviously a positive impact through the exhibition, it isn’t possible to quantify it.

Creative Heritage in Mind

Creative Heritage in Mind is a project focused on a programme of courses for people living in the community who are managing mental illness. The project involves participants with their local heritage, engaged them in art activities and built their confidence in connecting to the local community. The 7 week courses (a single two and a half hour session each week) took place over a year in 4 museums, one of which was MEAL.

The project benefited 61 people who were in receipt of mental health services. The verbatim evidence indicates impact, but has not been collected in a way that enables the impact to be quantified for the purpose of this report. Verbatim evidence linked directly to MEAL’s involvement in the programme includes:

The courses are rich, creative and self-affirming for participants and I have watched individuals blossom and grow in confidence, self-assurance and the discovery or re-awakening of creativity and latent talent. This development and growth carries through to all aspects of participants' lives. The groups feel inclusive and embracing so that everyone feels welcome and capable. Over time, participants have begun to share ideas and help each other so that the sessions are peer-supportive. One of the most important aspects of the courses is that they are based in museums in Suffolk and so we have a rich collection of resources from which we can gain inspiration and knowledge. Volunteer

The content of the courses required, apart from learning new art techniques, participants to problem solve and to approach difficulties from a different angle, which I found incredibly helpful. As a result, this has had a 'knock on effect' in terms of how I approach everyday issues/crises. In the past I would have said to myself, I am having a rubbish day, but now I try to solve it by changing the base of my thinking. This new approach is most definitely as a result of the courses. Participant

I had immense difficulty describing my struggles or talking about what was going on for me and what had led me to the place I found myself, but the gentle prompting from (the artist) and the structure of the project made me realise that we all have a story to tell. This enabled me to gain the confidence to explore areas of my story for myself, which I had previously found too painful to deal with. Participant

I have been involved with the art courses at the Museum of East Anglian Life and have seen the participant's self-esteem, confidence and artistic ability grow. Whether it is through increased communication with the rest of the group, confidence in sharing their work with others through the group's Facebook page or belief in themselves and what they can achieve. It has been an honour and a pleasure to be involved in a project that offers so much opportunity to those who may feel separated from the rest of society through their illness and that makes such a difference to their confidence and self-belief. Museum staff

Delivering positive outcomes for those with mental health difficulties is an area that is relatively easy to quantify. If future monitoring records soft outcomes achieved for all participants, then quantifying this to identify the social impact will be relatively easy.

The SEETEC MEAL project has also begun to evidence health and wellbeing impacts created through the partnership work undertaken. It provides work experience for the long term unemployed. They are predominantly on the Community Work Program (six months), some have been on the Mandatory Work Program (four weeks) and some have been on the Work Program (Variable).

To date it has provided work experience for 50 participants. This amounts to 1016 working days.

The following table demonstrates some of the health and wellbeing impacts of the programme:

Health and Wellbeing	Worse	Same	Improved
Being Active		20%	80%
Communication skills		45%	55%
Connecting with other people		25%	75%
Eating healthier	5%	65%	30%
Feeling good		20%	80%
Giving something to other people		30%	70%

Learning more about yourself		40%	60%
Regular exercise		25%	75%
Smoking	10%	75%	15%
Taking notice of the world around you		45%	55%
Understanding about museums		30%	70%
Volunteering your time	5%	15%	80%
Working as part of a team		25%	75%
Your Lifestyle		30%	70%

If this approach was developed further and all participants on programmes were asked about the impact MEAL has on them under these headings, it would be possible to create a simple model that demonstrates the social value created on an ongoing basis.

With the information about this project available at the time of writing it is not possible to determine the social impact of this particular programme or to ascertain how much of the impact is attributable to MEAL and how much to partner organisations. The approach, though, offers a good route forward to developing data collection that makes it easy to evidence impact.

3.1.2 Summary of Impact Area

MEAL undoubtedly has a large impact on health and wellbeing. It is currently not possible to fully determine this quantitatively due to the information that is collected. However this report would like to suggest that the impact made in this area is greater than the majority of similar sized Museums. The reason for this statement is due to the nature of the programmes at MEAL. They specifically focus on many key outcomes under this heading and verbatim comments all demonstrate the impact made on an individual basis. The recommendations made later on in the report suggest ways MEAL could quantify this impact and thereby prove their impact further.

3.2 Society and Community

MEAL is a focal point for cultural activities in Mid Suffolk. Moreover events like the Traditional Music Day are of regional significance and attract visitors from within and without East Anglia. Another key area of impact for MEAL is society and community, specifically supporting cultural diversity, developing a strong local identity and encouraging family relationships.

The programme of activities for 2015/16 demonstrates a strong emphasis in this area. Activities include:

Stowmarket Day, Festival of Beer and Brewing, Traditional Music Day and the Christmas Fayre. As well as these events many of the exhibitions and collections also promote an understanding of cultural diversity. Great examples of this are the Gypsy Caravans and the ongoing relationship the Museum has with the Gypsy and Travelling community.

Whilst MEAL undoubtedly has an impact in this area, evidencing it in a quantitative way is not possible. There isn't data that demonstrates how visitors to events and exhibitions were impacted and how that impact has resulted in changed behaviour. Evidencing the impact collections and exhibitions have is not a problem that MEAL alone have. It is one the Museum sector as a whole

faces as the impact is not immediate and changed thoughts and behaviours are not captured whilst on the museum site. Therefore this report is very happy to confidently state the MEAL has an impact on supporting cultural diversity and developing a strong local identity, however it isn't possible to put an economic value on that with the data and information that is available.

MEAL also has an impact on strengthening family relationships. A programme of family activities is run throughout the year which provides an opportunity for families to undertake fun and educational activities together. Whilst information is collected on the number of people attending the various different activities on offer, the impact these activities make on family life is not collected. Therefore it is again not possible to put an economic value to this. However the fact it isn't possible to put an economic value shouldn't undermine the impact on family well-being that the museum makes.

3.2.1 Summary of Impact area

Whilst it isn't possible to quantify this area of impact, the report again would like to suggest that MEAL makes a greater impact in this area than the majority of similar sized museums. The reason for this statement is again due to the focused nature of some of the museum programme and the in depth links the museum has to certain minority groups, particularly the gypsy and traveller community. Without an in depth ethnographic study it would be very hard to quantify the impact in this area, however that doesn't make it any less real and MEAL undoubtedly makes a very positive contribution through the work it does.

3.3 Education

Another area of impact the Museum has is on education. MEAL has an extensive education programme for both young people and adults. In the last full year of KPIs provided for this report (14/15), the following numbers were impacted on by MEAL's education programme:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| • No. of schools engaged | 27 |
| • No of KS 1-3 pupils | 1010 |
| • No of KS 4 pupils | 88 |
| • No of SEN/Excluded pupils | 104 |
| • No. of U5 sessions attendees | 558 |
| • No of holiday activity attendees | 521 |
| • No. of children at Crucial Crew | 853 |

MEAL runs a comprehensive programme of educational activities for school groups. The Learning Officer worked with a group of teachers throughout spring and summer of 2014 to re-vamp the school's offer so it works with the new National Curriculum. This was funded by AfSM through a grant from the Bridge. Some of the workshops changed as a result.

For 2015-16 the School Sessions were based on a number of trails and workshops that ranged in price from £45 for a museum led session to free explorer boxes. The trails and workshops include:

- The School Room
- Three Little Pigs
- Life in the past: Meet the Finch Family

- Materials in the Barn
- Mrs Beeton's Bread and Butter Trail

The numbers involved in the schools programme again shows the MEAL has an impact. The education programme and the exhibitions and collections will help children and young people enjoy life and make a positive contribution. They will also have learnt about heritage and MEAL will have contributed towards the educational development of these children and young people.

The challenge again is to evidence the impact made. Currently the data collected focuses on outputs rather than outcomes or impact. This is partly due to the nature of the audience. It is very difficult to determine the level of the impact on the educational development of a child due to a trip to MEAL. There will be an impact but measuring it and determining how much is down to MEAL and how much would have happened anyway is very difficult, and perhaps only possible through a large scale longitudinal study.

MEAL also has an educational impact on adults. There is a specific adult learning programme which includes the Supported Volunteers (looked at in Health and Wellbeing section) and the Work based Learning programme (looking at in Economy section.)

It is possible to quantify some of the impact created through these programmes as the analysis in the respective sections shows.

3.3.1 Summary of impact area

MEAL does great work supporting education. It isn't possible to quantify the impact that is made, but this isn't due to a lack of data gathering. It is impossible for any museum to fully determine the impact they have on education when there are so many other variables at play and the impact might not be realised for many years to come.

The fact schools keep coming to MEAL, given their tight budgets, is testament to the value they place on MEAL and the education programme they run.

3.4 Economy

There are two main economic impacts modelled in this report: the direct economic impact of MEAL in terms of tourism, employment and the spend of goods and services and the economic impact of skills developed through the work based learning programme and use of volunteers.

Direct economic impact

The direct economic impact is the impact that MEAL makes on the local economy. This is modelled through tourism impact – visitors to MEAL spending money in Stowmarket whilst visiting MEAL. Their employment impact, the impact employing local people has on the local economy and the impact buying goods and services locally has on the local economy.

In order to complete this economic impact assessment a combination of visitor, employment and purchasing information from MEAL has been combined with national figures obtained from the Association of Independent Museums (AIM).

Tourism Impact

Total number of visitors 14/15	-	36,157
Of these children	-	2,078
Over 16s	-	34,079

Percentage of visitors who are local, day visitors and overnight visitors (based on 2013 report)

Local visitors	-	72%	-	24,536 visitors
Day visitors	-	21%	-	7,157 visitors
Overnight visitors	-	7%	-	2,386 visitors

Average spend of visitors in the East of England ¹

Local visitor (50% of day visitor)	-	£15.18
Day visitor	-	£30.36
Overnight visitor	-	£52.97

Tourism impact of MEAL

£15.18 X 24,536	-	£372,456.48
£30.36 X 7,157	-	£217,286.52
£52.97 X 2,386	-	£126,386.42
TOTAL		£716,129.42

Employment Impact

12 FTE at MEAL

Employment leakage ratio (staff not living locally) 26% (average from national data)

Displacement ratio 25%

¹ **Source:** DC Research analysis of various regional/national tourism volume and value datasets, 2014
http://www.detini.gov.uk/tourism_statistics_by_local_government_district_2011-2012.pdf
<http://www.visitengland.org/insight-statistics/major-tourism-surveys/dayvisitors/index.aspx>
<http://www.visitengland.org/insight-statistics/major-tourism-surveys/overnightvisitors/index.aspx>

Notes:

1. Domestic night value used as proxy for one night's domestic and/or overseas spend
2. Full detail set out in 'Economic Value of Independent Museum Sector' DC Research for AIM, 2010.
3. Spend assumptions will need to be updated as and when data is released
4. Value for a 'local' visitor has been assumed to be 50% of a full day trip following workshop discussion at the 2010 AIM Conference.

Net wider economic impacts of employment (i.e. Indirect and Induced Employment) = number of FTE staff x (1-deadweight) x (1-leakage) x (1-displacement) x (Multiplier).

Indirect and induced jobs = $12 \times (1-0.25) \times (1-0.26) \times (1-0.25) \times 1.2 = 8.0$

Total direct, indirect and induced employment value of 20 jobs.

Ave. salary of FTE £18,891.25 (£226,695 salary costs / 12 FTE)

Total direct, indirect and induced employment value of £377,825

Table: Employment and Spend Assumptions and Ready Reckoners		
Factor	Value	Rationale
Deadweight (employment and spend)	25%	Rationale based on established status of individual museums in their locations
Employment leakage (use only if information on home location of employees is not available)	Small museum = 21% Medium = 26% Large museums 25%	Based on survey evidence split by size of museum
Spend leakage (use only if information on home location of employees is not available)	Small museum = 55% Medium = 50% Large museums 61%	Based on survey evidence split by size of museum
Displacement (employment and spend)	25% or 37.5%	25% for museums that classify themselves as being of 'low' or 'moderate' significance in their local visitor economy. 37.5% for museums that classify themselves as being of 'major' significance, or a 'key attraction' in their local visitor economy, or those that did not classify themselves.
Multiplier (employment and spend)	1.2 (Type II indirect and induced)	A conservative sector specific multiplier. Assumes low indirect multiplier and higher induced multiplier – reflecting mainly national procurement patterns and local employee residential locations.
Source: DC Research adapted from English Partnership Additionality Guidance (3rd Edition, October 2008) and Scottish Enterprise Guidance Note (November 2008).		
Note: Full detail set out in 'Economic Value of Independent Museum Sector' DC Research for AIM, 2010.		

Economic Impact of Spend on Goods and Services

Total spend with suppliers = £174,375.87

% of spend with suppliers not in local authority area = 55%

Leakage ratio = 0.55

Displacement ratio = 0.25

In order to calculate the wider economic impacts of the museums spend on goods and services, the

total value of spend on goods and services needs to be applied to a formula that takes account of deadweight, leakage, displacement and multiplier factors.

This can be expressed as follows: Net wider economic impact of spend on goods and services (i.e. Indirect and Induced Spend) = spend on goods and services x (1-deadweight) x (1-leakage) x (1-displacement) x (Multiplier). For each ratio this needs to be expressed in the calculation as a number (e.g. 25% as 0.25).

$$174,375.87 \times (1-0.25) \times (1-0.55) \times (1-0.25) = \pounds 14,712.96$$

Total direct, indirect and induced spend of £189,088

This gives a total direct, indirect and induced spend across the three modelled areas (tourism, employment and spend) of £1,283,042.42

This figure is based on the 'local area' being Suffolk. If the 'local area' was taken to be the East of England then this would give an economic impact of £1,392,762 and if the 'local area' was taken to be Stowmarket then the economic impact would be £816,754

Work Based Learning Programme

In 2010 MEAL had an SROI assessment undertaken for their work based learning programme. They continue to run a similar programme today and therefore, due to the time and resource limitations of this study, the methodology and model used for the 2010 study is being used to determine the economic impact of the programme today. Through conversations with MEAL it was determined that the current programme is very similar in nature to the one that ran in 2010 and therefore using the same model, but inputting values from the current programme, will give a good indication of the value created by the current programme.

The current programme, funded by New Anglia LEP is called the 'Work to Achieve' programme. It provides 12 weeks training for 36 trainees from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Outcome & year 1 value	Proxy value x Results	
Progression towards work: £80,659	Increased income from job over benefits £8,340	36 participants adjusted to 23 by attribution x average move of £3,540
Increased confidence and hope for the future: £11,806	Value of counselling £649, + value of work experience £1,139	35% x 36 participants = 13, adjusted to 7 by attribution
Development of positive relationships: £6,946	Cost of social life £1,458 + family counselling £333	30% of 36 participants = 11, adjusted to 5 by attribution
Better family life: £22,672	Cost of family counselling £333 + part cost of bringing up a child £4,805	54% of 48 family = 26, adjusted to 4 by deadweight & attribution

Welfare payment savings: £52,195	Extra service take up (-ve) + welfare savings + tax contributions (+ve) £8,921	36 participants adjusted to 20 by attribution & displacement x average move of £2,930
More effective and efficient local services: £494	Local network membership £25 + admin savings £110	4 out of 4 partner agencies, with no adjustment
Confidence with disadvantaged people: £258	Cost of diversity awareness training at £85	4 out of 10 staff and volunteers, 3 after deadweight

After discounting to present values, the impact over one year is calculated as **£186,747** after adjustments for inflation.

Volunteer Impact

MEAL has a committed volunteer workforce. Mobilising this workforce has an impact in three main areas: upskilling the volunteers, reducing social isolation of some volunteers and the value that comes of mobilising volunteers rather than having to pay salaries.

Total hours volunteering – 34,226

The roles undertaken by the volunteers vary, some are skilled roles, some are less skilled. To provide a conservative estimate of the value of the volunteer workforce mobilised by MEAL it is assumed that all volunteer roles are low skilled and a value for each hour is assumed to be equivalent to a paid role paid at the living wage.

Living wage = £7.85

Value of volunteer workforce mobilised by MEAL - **£268,674**

3.4.1 Summary of Impact Area

MEAL creates an economic impact for the local area. As the results show, the size of this impact depends on how 'the local area' is defined. The impact of tourism, spend and employment is directly related to the size of the museum. However the impact of the work based learned programme and volunteers are thought to be relatively unique to MEAL. The WBL is specifically targeted on creating economic impact and has been doing so for many years. MEAL mobilises a large volunteer workforce and its ability to do so has an economic impact.

3.5 Environment

There is a great focus on the environment at MEAL which without doubt has many positive benefits on the local community, economy and environment. It is not possible to put an economic value to all of these benefits with the information that is currently available. Therefore this section of the report looks to quantify the benefit where possible and explain the benefit qualitatively where it is not possible.

CO₂ emissions

Much research has been undertaken looking at the social cost of carbon. This work has identified the cost of a metric tonne of carbon to the environment and therefore the value of removing it from the air. Therefore understanding the impact of energy saving and carbon reduction initiatives and the impact of carbon reduction of the natural environment makes it possible to put a qualitative value to good environmental stewardship.

Work done by the Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Carbon estimate the value of 1 metric tonne of carbon to be \$41.71 when converted to 2016 values². This equates to around £30 / metric tonne.

MEAL has recently undertaken an energy efficiency programme which has involved upgrading lights to LEDs. This has resulted in savings of 4.32 tonnes of CO₂ / annum.

This gives an impact of **£129.60**

A larger impact is made by the stewardship of the 75 acres of land that comprises MEAL. They have a High Level Stewardship award from Natural England and manage historic water meadows and gardens. This stewardship increases the biodiversity of the area, provides a green oasis in the middle of a town and increases the 'green lung' of the area.

Work by Conant (2009)³ suggests well managed grasslands sequester around 0.76 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year. The MEAL site is around 30.4 hectares. Combining this with the work to put a social value on carbon, the impact of carbon reduction of the MEAL site is around **£692**.

This is considered to be a conservative figure given the MEAL site is not entirely grasslands, but also includes trees which sequester greater levels of carbon.

This gives a total carbon impact of the site of around £821

This is all that can be quantified with the available information. However the real environmental impact of MEAL is far greater. The biodiversity on the site is rich and positively impacts the surrounding area. The rural oasis within a town gives opportunity to others, particularly young people, to learn about the environment which could very well impact on choices they make later in life. MEAL manages its garden and produces organic food and all waste is composted. This all contributes to a much wider environmental impact than it is possible to prove through figures at this point in time.

Perhaps the greatest environmental impact MEAL has is the conservation of the water meadows. This has been recognised by Natural England and water meadow conservation is an area of great national importance. The area of semi-natural grassland in the UK has decreased considerably since

² Source: Technical Support Document: Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon, "Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866" (revised July 2015), Washington, D.C., Environmental Protection Agency, p.3., <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/inforeg/scc-tsd-final-july-2015.pdf>

³ Conant, R.T. (2009), Challenges and opportunities for carbon sequestration in grassland systems, *Integrated Crop Management Vol. 9–2010*

1945, with around 90% having been lost in lowlands. Water meadows form part of a range of English wet grassland habitats, all of which have declined in extent and ecological resilience since the 1930s due to intensification of farming practices, drainage and development on flood plains. Old water meadows thus provide opportunities for the emergence of valuable new habitats supporting open undulating grassland interspersed with derelict wet channels where many species of plants and animals can thrive. Their particular environment of multiple channels encourages mammals, some of which are declining in numbers, such as the water vole. They also provide ideal breeding grounds for priority species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (succeeded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework in 2012), such as the southern damselfly. MEAL's stewardship of the water meadows therefore creates a large environmental impact that unfortunately cannot be quantified in this report, but is nonetheless hugely significant.

3.5.1 Summary of Impact Area

MEAL undoubtedly creates a large environmental impact. As has been discussed, it is not possible to come anywhere near quantifying the full impact of this due to limitations in cost benefit analysis of environmental factors. However the evidence of the impact is found in the support MEAL has from Natural England. The Natural England high level stewardship award is not easy to get and is testament to the impact MEAL makes on stewarding the natural environment.

4.0 Conclusions

MEAL undoubtedly creates a large impact for the local community, visitors to the museum and the wider cultural and heritage sector. This report has modelled the impact into five headings:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Society and Community
- Education
- Economy
- Environment

MEAL creates an impact across all five of these areas although the ability to quantify the impact in economic terms varies across these different headings. This is partly due to the nature of the impact as it will never be possible to completely quantify the full impact. However there are areas that, with additional data collection that focuses on outcomes and impact, it will be possible to quantify better in the future

This report has captured the impact created in three different ways:

- The quantifiable impact where it is possible
- Qualitative impact that it might be possible to quantify in the future with further data collection
- Qualitative impact that it isn't possible to put an economic value to, but is certainly a real impact nonetheless.

Health and Wellbeing

The main areas of impact:

- Reducing social isolation for volunteers and some visitors
- Developing skills and confidence for supported volunteers
- Raising awareness of mental health through exhibitions and programmes
- Supporting those with mental health difficulties through the 'Creative Heritage in Mind' programme.

Society and Community

The main areas of impact:

- Supporting cultural diversity
- Developing a strong local identity
- Encouraging family relationships

Education

The main areas of impact:

- People enjoying life and make a positive contribution
- Learning about heritage
- The educational development of these children, young people and adults

Economy

The main areas of impact:

- Direct economic impact of tourism, employment and spend in the local economy
- Economic impact of work based learning and skills development programmes

Environment

The main areas of impact:

- Reduction of carbon footprint and ‘green lung’ Stowmarket
- Richness of biodiversity
- Stewardship of historic water meadows

4.1 Quantifiable impact

Through available information it is possible to quantify the following areas of impact using economic impact assessment and social return on investment methodologies:

Economic impact of tourism	-	£716,129
Economic impact of employment	-	£377,825
Economic impact of spend	-	£189,088
Social impact of wok based learning	-	£186,747
Value of volunteering	-	£268,674
Value of carbon offset	-	£821
Total quantifiable impact	-	£1,739,284

To determine the value created by MEAL the impact must be looked at in relation to the input costs. There are two ways of looking at this for MEAL. One would be to look at the total value of the budget - £549,946. This would give a quantifiable impact of 3.16:1. For every £1 spent value of £3.16 is created.

However a more accurate way of determining the value is to look at the public sector input to support MEAL. This comes from Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Stowmarket Town Council. This comes to a total of £141,060. The rest of the money in the MEAL budget is money they earn or attract from other grants and funding streams. Therefore using the figure of public sector input costs will demonstrate the value MEAL creates for the local public sector organisations that fund them.

This gives a ratio of 12.33:1. For every £1 spent by the local public sector organisations on funding MEAL, value of £12.33 is created.

The true impact created is, however, much greater than this.

4.2 Areas of impact that could be quantified in the future

There are areas of impact that were identified in the report that, with some further collection of data from beneficiaries, it would be possible to quantify. These were largely around the impact made to health and wellbeing. Research that makes it possible to put an economic value to health and wellbeing outcomes is relatively advanced. Therefore questionnaire tracking of programme participants would make it relatively easy to determine the social value create through MEAL in these areas.

This is particularly the case for:

Supported volunteers – tracking the job outcomes and health and wellbeing outcomes of participants in the programme would relatively easily convert to an economic value of the programme

Volunteers – the impact on volunteers of being part of the MEAL community, the building up of social networks and the development of skills and confidence has an economic value that would be relatively easy to quantify with slightly different data collection.

Creative Heritage in Mind – the qualitative information on the impact of this programme is excellent. A slightly different approach to data collection would enable the social impact of the project to be determined in economic terms as well.

The impact MEAL makes in all of these areas is thought to be relatively large and if data was collected to enable these to be modelled economically, it would certainly increase the impact ratio of MEAL.

4.3 Further areas of impact

The report also identified other areas of impact that MEAL creates which it isn't possible to describe in economic terms. This includes the impact the education programme has, the societal and cultural impact and many of the environmental impacts.

Just because it isn't possible to describe these impacts in economic terms, they shouldn't be taken any less seriously. In fact some of these impacts, such as the richness of the biodiversity within MEAL, are probably some of the greatest impacts created.

MEAL is much more than a museum. It has an impact across the local community of Stowmarket, Mid Suffolk and indeed East Anglia as a whole. It cares for collections and puts on displays and related events, but through the site it occupies and the way it stewards that site and through the programmes that engage real people, the impact of MEAL goes beyond the economic impacts identified, significant though those are as well.

The impact that MEAL has can also be evidenced through the awards and accreditations it gains. These include:

- 2010 Entrepreneurial Museum of the Year, Museum and Heritage Awards
- 2013 Suffolk Museum of the Year – special award for innovation
- Social Enterprise Mark (current)
- VAQAS (current)
- 2014 Pride of Stowmarket Award, Stowmarket Town Council Awards
- 2015 Business contribution to the Community Award, MSDC Community Awards
- 2014 Visit England Awards for Excellence – Highly Commended in Small Visitor Attraction category
- 2014 Suffolk County Council 'Working Together Awards'

Each of these awards and accreditations has criteria that have to be fulfilled and these criteria link to the impact made.

5.0 Recommendations

As has previously been stated, MEAL creates a larger impact than it is possible to evidence and develop an economic model for. This will always be the case; however there are some areas that would be relatively easy for MEAL to evidence through the adoption of a slightly different process for monitoring the effectiveness of the programmes they deliver.

The recommendations fall into three categories:

- Monitoring of specific programmes to enable measurement of the social impact
- Annual visitors survey to enable more accurate economic impact measurement
- A great focus on outcomes through non-financial KPIs

5.1 Measuring social impact

It is recommended that the areas of impact identified in this report are used as a basis for monitoring participants on programmes, volunteers and supported volunteers. If they are asked how their association with MEAL has impacted on them it will be possible to develop an economic model, based on SROI, to determine the value created. This is particularly true for health and wellbeing outcomes. This approach should include all work with; volunteers, supported volunteers, Creative Heritage in Mind, Work based learning and other such programmes. Job outcomes and increased skills should also be tracked and evidenced as these areas are also relatively easy to develop an economic model for.

By reviewing data monitoring in such a way it will be possible to more accurately model the economic, social and environmental impact of MEAL and demonstrate that impact to funders more comprehensively than is currently possible. Once set up this approach to data collection will not be any more onerous or labour intensive and will enable MEAL to demonstrate impact in real time rather than rely on occasional report looking back in time.

It is recognised that for different programmes’ funding criteria different outputs and outcomes have to be measured, however the following recommendations are suggest for all programmes that impact on health and wellbeing.

The question should be asked to programme delegates – ‘as a result of being part of this programme with MEAL, please indicate the impact it has had on you in the following ways:

	Worse	Same	Improved
Less isolated and more connected with other people			
Improved confidence			
Happier and more optimistic about life			
A healthier lifestyle			
New skills developed that will help with finding work			
I have found work			

By recording the results from programme delegates it will be easy to understand the social impact of

the programmes in an ongoing way and to quantify it.

Many more questions could be asked, however it is suggested these ones will be easy to use and will cover some of the main impact that are quantifiable through SROI.

5.2 Visitors Survey

In order to aid further economic impact studies and to make the data used in this report more accurate, it is suggest MEAL conduct an annual survey of visitors. The information that needs to be collected is:

- Where they are from
- Their age
- Whether they are a local visitor, a day visitor or an overnight visitor
- What else they are doing in Stowmarket
- How much money they spend in other places locally whilst visiting MEAL

From this information it will be possible to understand the true tourism impact using the methodology outlined in this report.

It is recommended that for one week of the year visitors are asked this information. The results of this are then treated as a representative sample that is extrapolated for all visitors for the rest of the year. Age and postcode information is captured by the system used in the Tourist Information Centre booking office. This could be used for some of the information required with the survey only asking about additional spend in the local area.

5.3 Outcome Monitoring

The final recommendation is a general one to look at the non-financial KPIs used by MEAL. They are currently all output measures. Including some outcome measures will help to develop the culture and the competence to measure impact against these outcomes on an ongoing basis.