Every weapon has the capacity to be used for good or for ill. Every nation and every community has been shaped to a greater or lesser extent by force of arms, and every right or freedom has at some point been won, lost or regained through conflict.

Arms and armour are among the products of human endeavour which have had the greatest impact on the history of the world: thanks to humanity’s relentless desire for advantage in defence and attack, they have been pivotal in forming and re-forming the cultural and geopolitical shape of civilisations. They have shaped all our past and will continue to shape our future. What we learn from our collective understanding of them is far from an academic exercise. It is central to understanding what it means to be human and to shaping peaceful and productive futures.

By drawing together one of the oldest and most extensive public collection of arms and armour in the world; by developing the research and depth of knowledge to be able to explore the subject across areas of history, politics, art, science and practical application, and by developing creative and collaborative partnerships with a wide and diverse range of people with myriad areas of expertise, interest and lived experience, we create a compelling shared story in our unique shared spaces.
The five-year Corporate Plan

The Royal Armouries’ Corporate Plan 2023-28 sets out where we want to get to over the next five years and describes the key strategic aims and objectives that will get us there.

The context of the period covered by the plan is very much one of recovery, growth and development. Having navigated the pandemic and established a solid foundation for sustainable operations, we can now look forward to a dynamic period of growing our audiences and business, and the development of both our estate and the contribution that the Royal Armouries makes to public life and communities.

Importantly this plan acknowledges that our ambition cannot be met by working in isolation. It signals a renewed commitment to partnership and collaboration and to working with local, national and international partners.
2023 marks the 700th anniversary of the appointment of Keeper of the Privy Wardrobe at the Tower of London – representing the first documented official administration of the monarch’s arms and armour.

This anniversary presents an ideal opportunity to reinvigorate the world’s oldest museum with new relevance and renewed capacity to meet the evolving needs of 21st-century communities. Armouries 700 will build on the intention, set out by Trustees in 2018, to create a masterplan that would:

Transform the institution into a sustainable and forward-thinking entity, leading the field in the study and presentation of arms and armour that facilitates and encourages exploration, fascination and pleasure.

Armouries 700 will comprise a programme of major capital projects and initiatives, supported by significant investment from partners. As such, it forms both a key strategic strand of the Corporate Plan and an important strategic driver of other activities within the plan and the general operations of the Royal Armouries. Developing and aligning our team, culture, quality standards and processes to deliver and make the most of the potential offered by Armouries 700 will be an overarching theme across our activities.
Aims and Objectives

Our high level aims and objectives frame our priorities over the next five years. Details of specific activity falling under each objective are set out on a yearly basis as part of the Annual Operating Plan.

Aim 1 Audiences and Brand

We will substantially increase audience footfall, driving new visitors. We will provide an inclusive, enthralling and participatory visitor experience in our galleries and enhance this with an evolving, exciting and collaborative programme of events and temporary exhibitions. We will increase our knowledge of our existing and potential audiences using robust data and insight. We will strengthen our brand proposition and raise awareness of our offer to deliver growth. We will harness the power of digital to increase both our online and onsite audiences.

Aim 2 Collections and Learning

We will be ambitious in empowering the public to engage with the Collection and understand its impact; inspiring curiosity, reflection, and meaningful debate, and providing learning experiences for all ages. We will set the standard for arms and armour care and conservation and preserve object-based knowledge. We will develop and diversify our people to ensure we harness the Collection and stories that surround it to best effect.

Aim 3 People

Through a series of interlinked initiatives, we will develop, reward, value and diversify the Royal Armouries’ workforce to be recognised as a preferred employer in our field. We will constructively manage relations with partners and stakeholders for the benefit of all parties.

Aim 4 Sustainability

We will secure the Royal Armouries’ long-term future and the achievement of its vision through the development of Armouries 700 and improving the public offer at the three sites. We will increase income, invest in the infrastructure, and embrace environmental responsibility.
By 2028 we will have achieved the following targets, relating to Audiences and Brand, Collections and Learning, People, and Sustainability.

- Increase visitors by 57% to 630,000 visitors per year across both Leeds and Fort Nelson.
- Increase website users by 20% to 1,200,000 per year.
- Achieve commercial (RATE) income target of £3.2 million (stretch target £3.9 million) per year.
- Achieve research Altmetric Score of 3 per article.
- Achieve fundraising targets of £2.5 million revenue.
- Achieve 100% appraisal rates for all staff.
- Increase social media impressions by 20% to 30,000,000 per year.
- Improve staff satisfaction levels by 10% as measured by staff survey.
- Develop carbon and greening strategy and set targets in year one.
- Achieve Net Promoter Score above 70.
- Achieve 36,000 learning participants per year across all sites.
- Achieve 95% staff retention.
- Maintain internal audit at ‘moderate’ level.
- Raise £7.9 million capital by Year 5.
- Establish a baseline to measure staff inclusion in year one.
- Attain 1 research support bid per year.
- Achieve unqualified external audit opinion.
FORT NELSON

WHITE TOWER

LEEDS