

# STRATEGY 2030

Inspiring **everyone** with the RAF story - the people who shape it and its place in our lives







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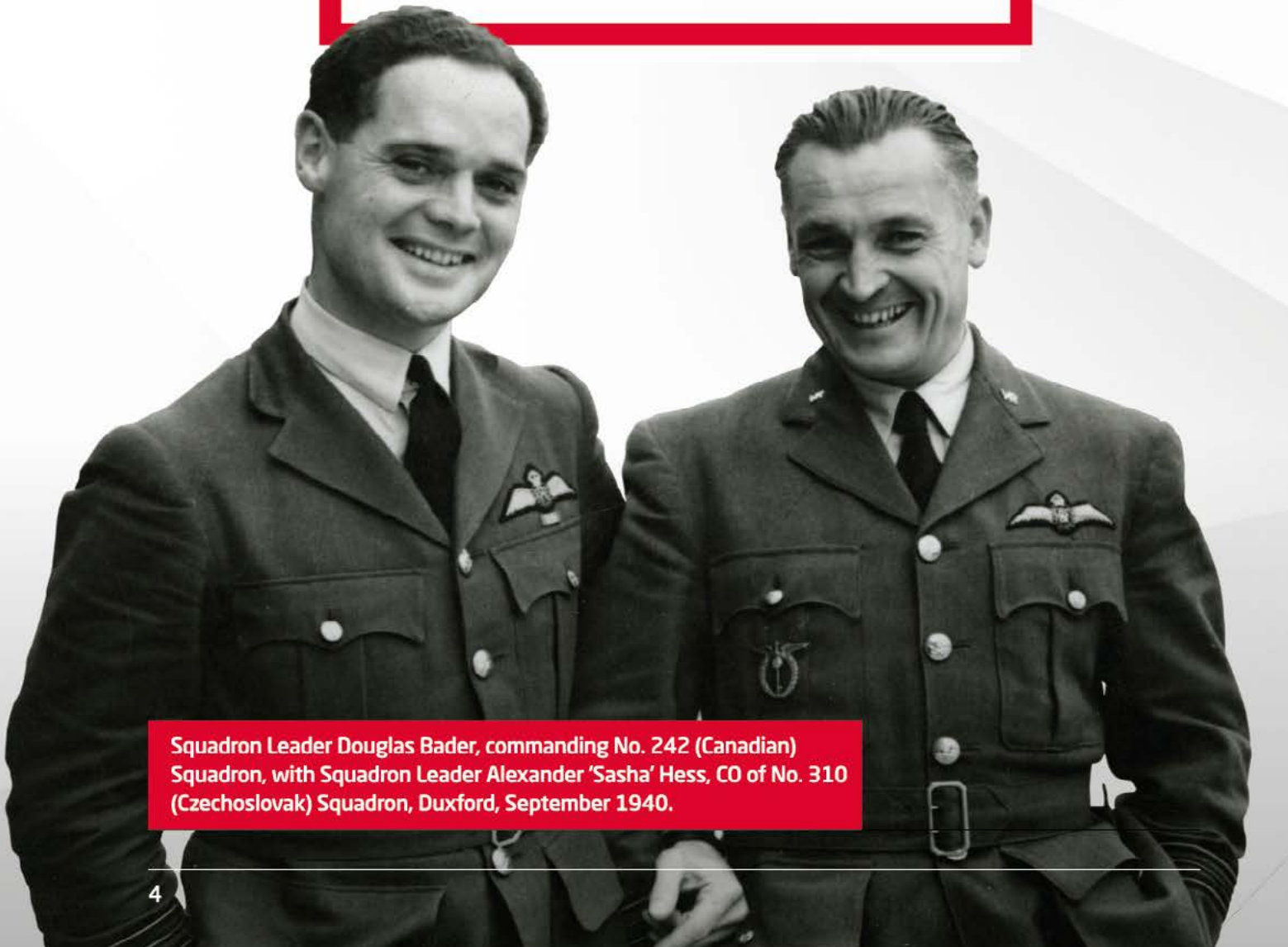
# The Royal Air Force

For over a hundred years the Royal Air Force has been there for our Nation.

The RAF's enduring purpose is global air and space power to protect the United Kingdom's security, stability and prosperity. It secures our skies and our seas, provides reconnaissance and intelligence, and acts quickly in times of humanitarian crisis, moving people and equipment across the world.

The RAF provides the UK Government with choices in a rapidly changing world through its extraordinary people, innovative technologies, global alliances and partnerships with industry.

The RAF is woven into our history, from its formation during the First World War to the vital role it performs today as the nation's first line of defence. These are stories of people. And whether they are stories of technical and engineering innovation, of values and camaraderie, or of courage against all odds, there is connection and relevance for each and every one of us that the Museum harnesses for learning and inspiration.



Squadron Leader Douglas Bader, commanding No. 242 (Canadian) Squadron, with Squadron Leader Alexander 'Sasha' Hess, CO of No. 310 (Czechoslovak) Squadron, Duxford, September 1940.



# The foundations for our next ten years ...

The Royal Air Force has shaped our nation and our society. It has influenced how we live our lives today through its impact on world events, society and technology.

The Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum was established as a legacy of the RAF's fiftieth anniversary, opening our London (Hendon) site in 1972. Our Midlands site began as the Aerospace Museum at RAF Cosford in the spring of 1974 and joined the family in 1979.

The Royal Air Force Museum is a National Museum, a Government non-departmental public body (NDPB) and a registered charity.

During the course of our last strategic plan, the Museum concentrated its efforts on being outward focused and people centred, exploring the history of the RAF over its hundred-year history through its incredible people and ensuring that our collection is relevant, shared and well cared for.

2018 marked the Centenary of the Royal Air Force and the Museum was privileged to support it across

the year as one of the partners in a formal Joint Venture with our sister charities, the RAF Association, RAF Benevolent Fund and RAF Charitable Trust. In June 2018, we opened the major transformation at our London site and, across both Cosford and London, had our most successful year since the Museum's formation, welcoming a total of 989,600 people, a 39% increase.

Our Strategy 2030 guides the Museum during a complex period of our history, with climate change and an unstable international environment ever-present threats to our way of life. We have much to do, but we look forward with confidence and clarity. The Museum's reach has broadened and diversified significantly and the partnerships and friendships developed over recent years give us a firm and inspiring foundation to build on for this next chapter in the Museum's history.



# Our vision for the next ten years

Inspiring everyone with the RAF story  
- the people who shape it and its place  
in our lives.





**The Royal Air Force Museum Trustees, our staff – employees and volunteers – and our key partners have an ambitious, shared vision for our next ten years.**

Our aim is to deepen further our focus on immersive RAF storytelling and be more ambitious in encouraging reflection and debate across our spaces and programmes, as well as welcoming all our visitors for a great day out. We are committed to engaging more people and, equally important, a more diverse range of people by ensuring that our governance, our teams, our collection and our storytelling are better reflective of the changing national population.

Our priorities include the launch of a twenty-five year Master Plan for our Cosford site while continuing

improvements at London. Our RAF Museum Midlands transformation will engage audiences by finding common interests and histories which link them. We will continue to develop and nurture meaningful partnerships and invest our funding strategically, recognising the importance of museums and culture to the social wellbeing and economic prosperity of our communities.

Meanwhile, we shall continue to build and sustain the foundations we need in terms of collections care and management, our estate, and our IT and digital infrastructure. Our team is vital to all of this and our leadership and development programmes will help ensure our committed people are the best we can be in order to deliver our vision and purpose with and for our visitors.

The RAF is iconic to so many people in the UK and overseas and we will continue to research and share its history. Equally, today's men and women in the RAF are active on more fronts than they have ever been in our increasingly complex world. We will ensure that today's stories are at the top of our agenda through contemporary collecting and innovative programmes that keep us relevant and connected.

By 2030 the Royal Air Force Museum will be recognised as a world class National Museum, respected for our commitment to focusing on our audiences and using our collections and spaces in creative ways to engage them with the RAF's story. We shall remain financially sustainable, with firm foundations that enable an agile and creative future.



# Our purpose

To share the story of the Royal Air Force, past, present and future - using the stories of its people and our collections to engage, inspire, entertain and encourage learning.





**The Royal Air Force Museum is a National Museum. Our collection is central to everything we are and do, comprising around 1.3m objects which we hold in trust for the people of the UK.**

As an educational charity, whether visitors are engaging with our displays, taking part in discussion and debate, studying our archive, holding a corporate event in our spaces, having fun at events and in our playgrounds, or enjoying a rest in our cafés, there are opportunities for inspiration from the incredible RAF story in every pore of our Museum.

During the course of Strategy 2030 we plan a major shift to share our stored collections with visitors for the first time, moving them

from our two non-public sites to a collections hub at RAF Museum Midlands. Here they will provide a welcome in and a springboard out to our communities, fostering local pride and belonging. New displays onsite will explore recent RAF history, complemented by immersive learning spaces and woodland landscaping that supports our commitment to achieve Carbon Net Zero by 2030.

Equally, we are committed to sharing the RAF Story outside our walls across the UK and beyond through in-person outreach programmes and online engagement. Examples include touring iconic objects from the collection, research activities, community workshops, loans

with partner organisations and storytelling through [www.RAFStories.org](http://www.RAFStories.org).

We are immensely appreciative of Government investment in its National Museums, and specifically grateful to the MOD and Air Command for their support for the RAF Museum. However, to achieve our Strategy 2030 ambitions, both across day to day programmes and capital improvement, the Museum must grow our commercial and fundraising success significantly within the challenging financial context we operate in. Creative income generation opportunities are embedded in Museum planning and will continue to be focused on as both additional storytelling platforms and essential enablers for our plans.





# A values-driven organisation

**I**N tegrity

**S** haring

**P** assion

**I** nnovation

**R** elevance

**E** xcellence





**Museums matter - they have the power to change lives. They offer a focal point and a space for communities to come together and celebrate shared identities while valuing diversity. They are places where we can question, reflect on and debate the issues of today and yesterday, helping us to make sense of an increasingly complex world. Our fascinating collections are a powerful record of our present and a window to the past through which we can make links to today and tomorrow, while our learning programmes ignite curiosity and spark interest across science, technology, engineering and maths, and with art, literacy and history.**

Museums are social spaces, combatting isolation with a warm and inclusive welcome, while engagement with our collections can have profound and positive impacts for those struggling with dementia and mental health challenges.

But this does not happen on its own. It is our talented and dedicated people who use their knowledge and creativity to make our collections sing and bring

our spaces to life. And we cannot do it alone; we can only harness our collections to best effect by working with others who bring specialist skills and different perspectives.

This takes time, commitment and resources. It needs much more than technical capability; museums need to be increasingly agile and responsive but with clear and consistent values that keep us balanced and grounded.

At the Royal Air Force Museum, our work and our behaviour is underpinned by six guiding values:

**Integrity:** we are open, transparent and ethical

**Sharing:** we work as a team to ensure our collections and expertise are accessible to all

**Passion:** we care deeply about sharing our collections and their stories

**Innovation:** we tell our stories and develop our business with creativity and imagination

**Relevance:** we ensure our legacy by linking our histories with today and tomorrow

**Excellence:** we are professional and strive for excellence in all we do

# Strategic priorities to 2019-30





# Our strategic priorities

**We will achieve our vision and purpose through five strategic priorities that focus outwards with our collections at their heart. These will be supported by strong internal systems which ensure we deliver creatively and responsibly.**

## Inspiring innovative engagement, debate and reflection

- Sharing the diverse stories our collections tell in order to engage and inspire our visitors, both in person and increasingly online, with a step change in the quality and reach of our digital engagement.
- Ensuring our audiences have a voice in our planning, delivery and outcomes and encouraging our visitors to question and reflect on how the RAF story affects their lives and the world we live in.
- Inspiring current and future generations to engage in science, technology, engineering, the arts and maths through our incredible collections, guiding them to pathways where they can fulfil their potential. The RAF has been at the forefront of technological innovation for many years and applications such as remotely piloted air systems will be an increasing feature of everyone's lives over the next decade.
- Further developing our research programmes to ensure both our content and practice is based on exemplary thinking and an informed perspective, becoming a national and international centre of excellence for the research of RAF history by 2030.

**Why?** We know relevance and dynamism are key to fulfilling our ambitions as a National Museum

## Inspiring our people within a dynamic, diverse and collaborative culture

- Equipping our people so they are proud to be part of a brilliant and diverse team, feeling valued, supported and appropriately skilled and rewarded, working positively together to deliver our vision.
- Providing meaningful ways for more people to help us share the RAF story by further developing our volunteer, apprenticeship and work-experience programmes.
- Ensuring that diversity and equity underpins all our activity, from reflecting it in our content to broadening both our audiences and our Museum teams actively at every level.

**Why?** Our inspirational people in turn inspire our visitors and we know we achieve our best when we're committed and motivated



# Our strategic priorities

## Embedding an entrepreneurial, agile and sustainable approach

- Growing and diversifying our commercial and fundraising income streams in order to achieve greater – and more significant – outcomes for all our users, while ensuring our long term sustainability and resilience against social and economic upheaval.
- Ensuring all our development activities and programmes are planned in line with our goal to achieve Carbon Net Zero by 2030, and sharing the RAF's own sustainability ambitions with our visitors.
- Engaging more people nationally with our story by developing our footprint in the UK through our loans, events and research and learning programmes.
- Ensuring that digital technology is at the heart of our thinking and planning in order to engage our audiences, to share our collections more widely and to manage our business.
- Growing a positive can-do culture, responsive and creative in our delivery where we take measured risks and continue to learn from our experiences.

**Why?** Our visitors' lives and society are changing fast and we need to remain forward looking and resourced to fulfil our ambitions

## Fit for the future with brilliant basics

- Offering a great day out and ensuring a warm welcome for every visitor through our friendly, knowledgeable people and beautifully presented facilities.
- Ensuring our collection is relevant and cared for, growing our active programme of collecting with today's RAF in new and creative ways.
- Ensuring that our foundations enable us to achieve our full potential – leading the way in our governance, finance, estates and IT, ensuring a safe environment for all our visitors and with digital literacy embedded across the organisation.
- Instilling a shared appreciation across all our team of how our collections, our people-focus and our commercial priorities are mutually dependent.

**Why?** We need strong and sustainable foundations to fully achieve our vision



## Connecting with communities and partners

- Playing a meaningful role as a National Museum within the rich ecology of museums across the UK – leading, supporting and learning from colleagues through our partnerships and our active loans programme.
- Continuing to grow our relationship with the men and women of the RAF, from the Air Force Board to the newest entrant, both serving and retired personnel. Working with them to plan creative contemporary collecting and public engagement programmes that ensure we represent the depth and breadth of today's RAF now and for the future.
- Building our international relationships, projecting the Museum and UK positively with our global partners and deepening our partnership with the RAF Museum American Foundation to continue to share the stories of the USAF and RAF's special relationship.
- Being active neighbours in Cosford and Barnet, collaborating with others to help shape and deliver cultural and place-making strategies. We will harness our collections and spaces with our partners to combat loneliness, to contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes and to support deprived communities on our doorsteps, raising aspirations and offering training and employment opportunities.
- Nurturing and building our stakeholder and partner relationships, always seeking opportunities to align our priorities together.

**Why?** We know we can deliver better and more creatively through meaningful relationships with others





# Our next phase of transformation

Over the next ten years we will build on the foundations laid by our RAF Centenary programme:

**Our Cosford Master Plan will share more inspiring stories with more people, while ever-mindful of the Museum's Carbon Net Zero ambitions. It includes:**

- A new centre where we will share and care for our stored collections, discovering their hidden stories and unlocking their potential through a major intergenerational programme. The centre will be a hub for learning and ideas-sharing, welcoming in young and old and reaching out into our communities, tackling social isolation and improving health and wellbeing outcomes.
- A science, technology, engineering and maths discovery play area for 3 -7 year olds to engage our youngest visitors in the RAF story and ignite their curiosity through creative play.
- Sharing recent and contemporary stories of RAF men and women, including space and cyber defence with their relevance for all of us.
- New learning and events spaces, indoors and out, engaging all our audiences from school groups and families to our specialist visitors with creative programming. We shall also celebrate and grow our relationship with RAF Cosford and other regional partners to support career pathways for our learners.
- Realigning our visitor centre for an impactful welcome to the site with new opportunities to sustain the Museum by growing our commercial business.

**We shall also progress phase four of our London Master Plan to:**

- Begin delivery of the final phases of our London interpretation strategy covering the inter-war period, Second World War and Cold War stories.
- Ensure we are caring for and sharing our archives and library more effectively, relocating them within a new accessible resource centre.

**In parallel we shall:**

- Continue to share RAF stories across the UK and beyond through digital engagement and by working with partners across our loans, academic and outreach programmes.
- Focus on collecting and sharing the RAF's Space and Cyber stories.
- Explore the Inter War and Bomber Command RAF stories with our communities and partners, co-curating immersive new exhibitions, onsite and online, sparking conversations about their relevance to us today.
- Support our people through upgrades to our office accommodation and social spaces and improve the security and the maintenance of our estate.
- Integrate commercial opportunities for engagement with our storytelling in all our programmes that will help to sustain our Museum financially for future generations.



# Review

The detailed planning framework to deliver this strategy will be reviewed annually as part of the Museum's business planning cycle with an update of Strategy 2030 every three years. The coronavirus pandemic led to a review in summer 2020 by the Senior Leadership Team with a full Board focus in winter 2021. Both concluded that the tone, direction and values underpinning Strategy 2030 were more relevant and needed than ever while agreeing minor updates in this first revision to reflect our changing context.

## Strategic framework



# Thank you to our partners and supporters

Museums can and do change lives and we have set ambitious fundraising and commercial targets to enable the positive change in our Strategy 2030 roadmap. We are grateful to all our partners and friends who continue to support our work:



The State of Kuwait







**We should also like to thank the following:**

RAF Cosford  
Shropshire Council  
Telford and Wrekin Council  
The Marches LEP  
Wolverhampton University  
Tablet Academy  
Aviramp



**Air Chief Marshal  
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