

Strategy 2030

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





Contents

Strategic framework	5
The Royal Air Force	6
Our foundations	7
Our vision	8
Our purpose	10
A values-driven organisation	12
Our strategic priorities	14
Strategy 2030 development priorities	17
Thank you to our partners and supporters	18



Strategic framework

Our Vision

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

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 and encourage learning

Strategic Priorities

Inspiring innovative engagement, debate and reflection



Audiences

Why?

We know relevance and dynamism are key to fulfilling our ambitions

Inspiring our people within a dynamic, diverse and collaborative culture



Team

Why?

We know we achieve our best when we're committed and motivated

Embedding an entrepreneurial, agile and sustainable approach



Growth

Why?

We need to grow our income significantly to sustain our work and achieve our ambitions

Fit for the future with brilliant basics



Performance

Why?

We need strong foundations to fully achieve our vision

Connecting with communities and partners



Partnerships

Why?

We deliver better and more creatively through meaningful relationships with others

Our Values



Integrity



Sharing



Passion



Innovation



Relevance



Excellence

The Royal Air Force

For over a hundred years the Royal Air Force has defended the skies of Britain.

The RAF works with UK and international partners to watch the skies, respond to threats, prevent conflict, and provide assistance in an uncertain world.

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 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, commanding No. 310 (Czechoslovak) Squadron, Duxford, September 1940.

Our foundations

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 Museum was established in 1968 as a legacy of the RAF's fiftieth anniversary, opening at 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 governed by Royal Charter.

During the course of our last strategic plan, the Museum concentrated on being outward focused and people centred, exploring the history of the RAF through its incredible people and ensuring that our collection is relevant, shared and well cared for. In June 2018, we completed a major transformation at our London site to mark the Centenary of the Royal Air Force. Across both sites, we had our most successful year since our formation, welcoming 989,600 people, a 39% increase.

The RAF Museum's Midlands Development Programme is our central delivery pillar for Strategy 2030. Developed closely with our communities and partners, it will comprise immersive exhibitions exploring the recent RAF story, a new learning centre and outdoor

spaces, and a new-build collections hub. The latter will enable us to move our stored collection from MOD Stafford to provide a welcome in and a springboard out to communities, fostering local pride and belonging. The Midlands Programme is planned to support our commitment to achieve Carbon Net Zero, both through the development itself and by sharing the RAF's and the Museum's own sustainability ambitions and progress with our visitors.

Strategy 2030 guides the Museum during a complex period of our history, with rapid social change, cost of living challenges, the climate crisis and an unstable international context ever-present threats to our way of life. We have much to do but 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

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



The Royal Air Force Museum Trustees, staff and volunteers have an ambitious, shared vision.

We want to give a warm welcome to every visitor, deepen our focus on immersive RAF storytelling and be more ambitious in encouraging reflection and debate across our spaces and programmes. We are committed to growth: engaging more people, and a more diverse range of people, both in-person and digitally. We must also ensure that our governance, our teams, our collection and our storytelling better reflect the changing national population.

The transformation of our Midlands site in 2027 will support this ambition, as well as making a step change in the way we care for and share our collection. Today's stories will be at the top of our agenda through contemporary collecting and innovative programmes

that keep us relevant and connected. We will continue to improve our displays and public spaces and to address the significant challenges posed by our ageing estate and infrastructure, guided by the Master Plans for both sites.

Our team is vital to the Museum's ambitions and our leadership and development programmes support our committed people to deliver our vision and purpose with and for our visitors.

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. We are proud to be one of the UK's world class National Museums, sharing globally important stories but with our local communities firmly at the heart of our work.

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 and an educational charity. 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.

Whether visitors are engaging with our displays, taking part in discussion and debate, studying our archive and collection, 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 in every pore of our Museum.

We are conscious of the part we play in supporting the UK's need for growth in science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) skills. In May 2025, the UK Government reported that 49% of engineering and technology businesses cited difficulties with recruitment due to skills shortages, estimated to cost the UK economy £1.5bn per annum. Through our learning and skills programmes, apprentice roles, inspiring exhibition content and engaging events, we will celebrate role models and demonstrate the breadth of opportunities and possibilities open to people.

During the course of Strategy 2030 we look forward to opening our stored collections to visitors for the first time and remain committed to sharing RAF stories across the UK and beyond through in-person outreach programmes and digital engagement. Examples include touring iconic objects from

the collection, community workshops, loans with partner organisations, online learning programmes, research activities, and storytelling through [RAFstories.org](https://www.rafstories.org)

We are deeply appreciative of Government investment in its National Museums, and especially to Air Command and the MOD for their support for the RAF Museum. However, rising operational costs are significantly outpacing current levels of funding. To care for our collections, deliver our programmes, address the pressing challenges of our ageing infrastructure, and appropriately reward our people, we require significant additional resource. Since 2018–19, the last full year before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum has successfully doubled its self-generated income. However, the need to accelerate our commercial and fundraising growth within today's demanding economic context is paramount. Innovative income-generating initiatives are now embedded in our strategic planning, serving not only as vital funding streams but also as creative platforms to enrich our storytelling and expand our reach.





**A values-driven
organisation**

**Integrity
Sharing
Passion
Innovation
Relevance
Excellence**

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 make sense of an increasingly complex world.

Museums are social spaces, combatting isolation with a warm and inclusive welcome, while engagement with our collections can have profoundly positive impacts.

Our fascinating collections are a powerful record of our present and a window to the past through which we can make links to tomorrow, while our learning programmes

ignite curiosity and spark interest across science, technology, engineering and maths, and with art, design, literacy and history.

But this does not happen on its own. Our talented and dedicated staff and volunteers use their knowledge and creativity to make our collections sing and bring our spaces to life. And 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 to guide us.

**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

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.

Embedding an entrepreneurial, agile and sustainable approach

We will:

- Grow and diversify our commercial and charity income streams to help us achieve more significant outcomes for all our audiences, while building resilience against social, economic and technological upheaval.
- Engage more people nationally with our story onsite and by developing our footprint in the UK through loans, events, and research and learning programmes.
- Ensure we think and act digitally to grow our audiences, to share our collections more widely, drive efficiency and manage our business.
- Encourage a positive can-do culture, responsive and creative in our delivery, where we take measured risks and continue to learn from our experiences.
- Ensure programmes are planned in line with our goal to achieve Carbon Net Zero, sharing both the Museum's and the RAF's own sustainability ambitions and journey with our visitors.

Why? We need to grow our income significantly in order to sustain our work and achieve our ambitions



Fit for the future with brilliant basics

We will:

- Offer a warm welcome for every visitor through our friendly, knowledgeable people and accessible, beautiful spaces.
- Ensure our collection is relevant and cared for, growing our active programme of collecting with today's RAF in new and creative ways.
- Ensure our foundations enable us to achieve our full potential in every area from governance and infrastructure to support services and programming.
- Harness the power of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence, both as enablers and to enhance visitor engagement within a clear ethical framework.
- Instil a shared appreciation across all our team of how our collections, our people-focus and our commercial priorities are complementary and mutually dependent.
- Continue to invest in our cyber security resilience.

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

Connecting with communities and partners

We will:

- Continue to grow our relationship with the RAF, from the Air Force Board to the newest entrant, both serving and retired personnel. Work with them to ensure we represent the depth and breadth of today's RAF now and for the future.
- Build our international relationships, supporting the UK's global partnerships. Nurture our friendship with the RAF Museum American Foundation (RAFMAF) and continue to share stories of the United States Air Force (USAF) and the RAF's special relationship.
- Play a meaningful role as a National Museum within the rich ecology of visitor attractions across the UK – leading, supporting and learning from colleagues through our partnerships and active loans programme.
- Be active neighbours in the Midlands and London, collaborating with others to shape and deliver cultural and place-making strategies. Harness our collections and spaces with partners to combat loneliness, contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes and support deprived communities, celebrating our localities, raising aspirations and offering training and employment opportunities.
- Nurture our relationships with a diverse range of partners and foster new ones, always seeking opportunities to align our priorities.
- Continue to draw on the valuable insights of our youth, access, schools' and research advisory panels to guide our direction and our decisions.

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

Inspiring innovative engagement, debate and reflection

We will:

- Share our collections through creative interpretation and events content and programming. Engage our visitors both in person and with a step change in the quality and reach of our digital engagement.
- Inspire current and future generations to engage in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), and across art, design, literacy and history, guiding them to pathways where they can fulfil their potential.
- Ensure our audiences and partners have a voice in our planning, delivery and outcomes. Encourage visitors to question and reflect on how the RAF story affects their lives and the world we live in.
- Further develop our research programmes to ensure our content is based on an informed perspective, becoming a national and international centre of excellence for the research of RAF history.

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

We will:

- Support our staff and volunteers to be part of a brilliant and diverse team, feeling valued and appropriately skilled and rewarded, working positively together to deliver our vision.
- Provide meaningful ways for more people to help us share the RAF story by further developing our volunteer, apprenticeship and work-experience programmes.
- Ensure our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is reflected in our content, our audience development and in our Museum teams actively at every level.
- Live our value of integrity through our storytelling, our openness in decision-making, and with honesty when we make mistakes, while celebrating our successes together.
- Continue to fulfil and grow our community and social value commitments including as an Armed Forces Gold employer, a Carbon Literate Organisation and Dementia Friendly Venue, supporting access for all, including those with neuro-divergent needs.

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

Strategy 2030 development priorities

Over the Strategy 2030 period we are building on the foundations laid by our RAF Centenary Programme:

During the first five years of the Strategy (2020-25) we:

- Were awarded a Royal Charter from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (2022)
- Opened new exhibitions exploring the Battle of Britain (2020) and Bomber Command (2023) stories at both sites
- Opened an outdoor RAF-themed play area at our Midlands site (2020)
- Opened displays covering the inter-war period at our London site (2023)
- Opened a display exploring the story of Noor Inayat Khan at our London site (2024)
- Achieved the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award
- Considered our CNZ commitment in all planning and made progress through Public Sector Decarbonisation (SALIX) grants for both sites; reglazing Hangars 3, 4 and 5 in London; and achieving Carbon Literate Organisation silver standard
- Achieved visitor recognition accolades including TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice awards for both sites in 2023, 2024 and 2025, placing us in the top 10% of listings worldwide
- Achieved accreditation through the Mayor of London's Dementia Friendly Venues Charter.

During the second five years of the Strategy we will:

- Open an RAF-inspired indoor play area at our London site (2026)
- Complete our Inspiring Everyone: RAF Museum Midlands Development Programme (2027) comprising:
 - Immersive exhibitions exploring the contemporary RAF Story and looking to the future
 - An adjacent lifelong learning centre
 - A Collections Hub to care for and share our stored collection for the first time
 - Outdoor spaces for learning, socialising and relaxation
 - A major engagement programme (completes in 2029).

And we shall continue to:

- Plan the building blocks of our next Strategy with a focus on caring for and sharing our archives and library more effectively, relocating them within a new accessible Research Centre at our London site alongside immersive spaces for lifelong learning.

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.

Review

The detailed planning framework to deliver this strategy is reviewed annually, with an update of Strategy 2030 every three years.

Beyond Strategy 2030

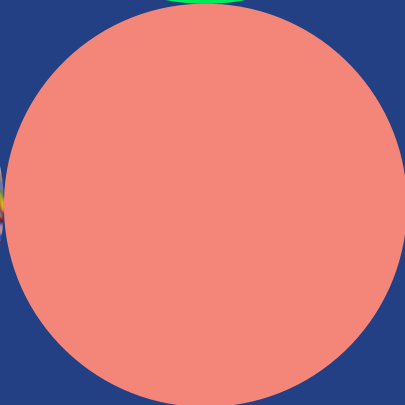
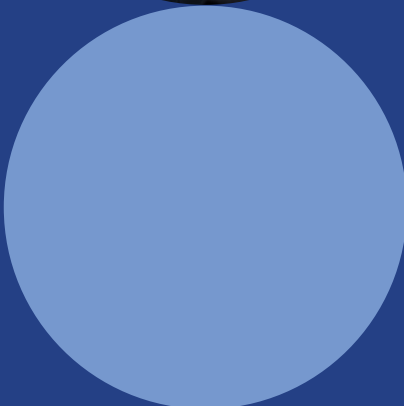
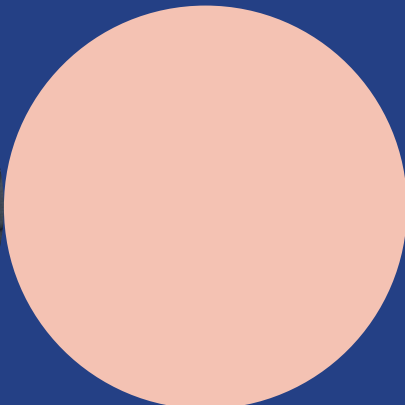
We will begin consultation on the next strategy in early 2028 for publication in 2030.



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