

Joint Museums Committee**Wednesday, 21 June 2017, The Commandery, Worcester -
2.00 pm****Present:****Minutes**

Mrs L Denham, Mrs L C Hodgson and Mr M Johnson

Iain Rutherford, Museums General Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)Phillipa Tinsley, Senior Curator - Collections and
Interpretation (Museums Worcestershire)

Hannah Needham, Assistant Director of Children.

Families and Communities (Worcestershire County
Council)

David Blake, Managing Director (Worcester City Council)

Anne Worboys, Principal Accountant (Worcestershire
County Council)Simon Lewis, Committee Officer (Worcestershire County
Council)**Available papers**

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March
2017 (previously circulated).

**311 Named
 Substitutes
 (Agenda item 1)**

None.

**312 Apologies/
 Declarations of
 Interest
 (Agenda item 2)**

Apologies were received from Ms K J May.

Mrs L Denham declared an interest as Chair of the Fort
Royal Hill and Commandery Gardens.**313 Election of
 Chairman
 (Agenda item 3)****RESOLVED** that Mr M Johnson be elected
Chairman for the ensuing year.**314 Appointment of
 Vice-Chairman
 (Agenda item 4)****RESOLVED** that Mrs L C Hodgson be appointed
Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

315 Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

316 Annual Review 2016-17 (Agenda item 6)

The Joint Committee considered its Annual Review 2016-17.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- Would it be possible for members of the Joint Committee to visit the Commandery before it was reopened? Helen Large responded that she would arrange a visit for members dependent on the state of the building works
- It was pointed out that green rather than blue flag status was being sought for Fort Royal Park and Commandery Gardens in 2017
- What were the key lessons learnt from the major audience research programme? Helen Large commented that the programme highlighted where members of the public had regularly attended. However lower public satisfaction levels for certain venues indicated a lack of recent investment, for example the lack of a dedicated point of contact for all visitors at the Museum and Art Gallery had had an impact
- Had the service provided any assistance to other museums in the county? Iain Rutherford commented that Broadway Museum had requested and paid for advice to improve their forward planning processes as they were interested in the accreditation process. Philippa Tinsley stated that the service had shared skills with other museums in the county including Tenbury Museum. Iain Rutherford added that Museum Development Support, provided by Ironbridge Museums and funded by the Arts Council, was still available to all museums.

RESOLVED that the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2016-17 be approved.

317 Shared Service Hosting Review (Agenda item 7)

The Joint Committee considered the shared service hosting arrangements.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- As part of the discussions about the change of hosting arrangements, consideration needed to be given to the financial and other support the County Council had had to put into Hartlebury Project to prevent the arrangements with the Trust collapsing. The Trustees would be concerned about any change of host as they view it as a County Council scheme
- There was no mention in this report of the pension and TUPE arrangements for staff transferring to the City Council
- Any change to the hosting arrangements should not impact on the existence of this Joint Committee
- The Museums Service was key to Worcester City Council's Strategic Vision and the change of hosting arrangements would provide significant advantages for officer working arrangements. It was now recognised that any transition would involve some additional costs. It was also important to understand other impacts to the service, not just recurring financial costs
- The existing branding for the shared service and the joint management arrangements should be retained. The process for the change-over should be time-limited, preferably for completion by the end of the financial year
- Hannah Needham commented that it was important to ascertain the costs/benefits of the change of hosting arrangements and look at the decision from a City and County Council perspective and see where a balance could be reached which satisfied both Councils. A report would then be brought back to the Joint Committee in early autumn. The Hartlebury Trustees needed to be updated on progress of the arrangements because of the potential impact on the Hartlebury Project
- David Blake commented that the City Council was keen to grow the capacity of the joint service, to deliver efficiencies and improve service provision. It was important to undertake a due diligence check to avoid leaving the two councils open to unanticipated costs. There would need to be a service level agreement for Hartlebury Castle. It was not possible to change the hosting arrangements on a cost neutral basis and therefore the principles to guide the work needed reviewing.
- David Blake queried the need to retain the Joint Committee arrangements or whether there were

other approaches to the governance arrangements that should be considered. The governance arrangements should be considered as part of the hosting review as long as it did not become too complicated. In response, it was commented that the two councils should retain equal status under the governance arrangements and the County Council should not be seen as the guest authority

- David Blake indicated that the Joint Committee should receive an update report at its September meeting with the final decision being made at its November meeting
- Hannah Needham indicated that the interviews for the Interim Museums General Manager would be held on 6 July. In response it was requested that members of the Joint Committee be involved in interviews. The clerk undertook to determine whether the governance arrangements permitted the involvement of members in the interview process.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the proposal to reinstate the proposal to switch the hosting of the shared service be agreed subject to the deletion of the principle that the work would be achieved on a cost neutral basis; and**
- b) the commencement of the process of internal secondment to the post of Museums General Manager from 1 August 2017 – 31 March 2018 be approved.**

**318 Hartlebury
Project Update
(Agenda item 8)**

The Joint Committee received a progress report on the Hartlebury Project.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal point was raised:

- Who would have responsibility for the cost of the maintenance work when the Project was completed? Iain Rutherford responded that the County Council would have responsibility for the maintenance arrangements associated with the lease and the Trust would be responsible for the rest of the site.

RESOLVED that the progress made towards the

319 Hazardous Materials in Museum Collections (Agenda item 9)

completion of the Hartlebury Project be noted.

The Joint Committee considered the arrangements for dealing with hazardous materials in museums collections.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- How many of the Museum Service buildings contained asbestos? Philippa Tinsley commented that there were 3 areas with asbestos in the Museum and Art Gallery and 1 area in the Commandery. All these areas were intact however should circumstances change, the asbestos would be removed. There were also issues with asbestos at Hartlebury Museum
- Would £5,000 be sufficient to fund the specialist asbestos testing? Philippa Tinsley indicated that the work had been costed based on the number of items to be tested and the consultant's daily rate and it was considered that £5,000 would be sufficient to cover the cost of testing at all the sites.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the work undertaken to protect staff working with museum collections containing hazardous chemicals be noted;**
- b) the disposal for Health and Safety reasons of a fire hose from the Worcestershire County Council collection of early twentieth century firefighting equipment be noted;**
- c) the Museums General Manager be authorised to commission advice from a specialist asbestos testing company; and**
- d) £5,000 be released from the Joint Museum Service's reserves to fund this work.**

320 Finance Report (Agenda item 10)

The Joint Committee considered the financial position of the Joint Museums Service.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- What savings would be made for the next financial year? Anne Worboys commented that the actuarial pension costs had reduced and extra

321 Performance and Planning 4th Quarter 2016-17 (Agenda item 11)

income had been received from admissions

- It was queried why the contribution rates varied between the City and County Councils in the budget for 2017-18 with the City Council making a higher contribution. In response Anne Worboys explained that the majority of the costs were shared between the two Councils however Hartlebury costs related directly to the County Council and the County Council had benefited from a reduction in the costs of the Hartlebury Project.

RESOLVED that the financial position of the Joint Museums Service as detailed in the report be noted.

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning information for the 4th quarter 2016-17.

In the ensuing debate the following principal points were raised:

- Helen Large explained that the reason the amount of web site usage had decreased was due to a change in the way the data was measured. The new approach was considered to be more robust. Hannah Needham added that the hosting of the joint service's web page would be an issue for consideration as part of the review of the hosting arrangements
- The number of visits to museums by children and young people had decreased. Was this as a result of a reduction in family school visits? Iain Rutherford responded that the work at Hartlebury Castle had impacted on the number of family visits. School visits had also decreased in number although numbers had now increased in recent months. A marketing survey had been commissioned to understand issues associated with school visits
- In response to a query about the Joint Service's links with the University of Worcester, Philippa Tinsley advised that the Joint Service had an arrangement with the University to receive 3 student placements per year. In addition, staff provided support to the University's teaching modules
- David Blake indicated that the key performance indicators were fine as far as they went but they did not give an indication of progress against targets i.e whether progress was good, bad or indifferent. In addition there was insufficient

benchmarking with which to provide a comparator context to the performance. Iain Rutherford explained that it was difficult to find comparator benchmark information on a like-for-like basis

- Did the performance indicators satisfy the needs of each Council and did they fit into the targets set out in the balanced scorecards? Hannah Needham responded that this was something that needed to be reviewed as part of the change of hosting arrangements.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information for the 4th quarter 2016-17 be noted.

322 Work Programme (Agenda item 12)

The Joint Committee noted its work programme.

Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public shall be excluded from the meeting during items 5 and 6 on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Summary of the proceedings of the meeting during which the press and public were excluded.

323 Museum and Art Gallery - Proposed Restructure (Agenda item 13)

The Joint Committee considered a proposed restructure at the Museum and Art Gallery.

The Joint Committee approved the principles of the proposed restructure at the Museum and Art Gallery and authorised the Museums General Manager to implement the proposals, subject to consultation.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm.

Chairman