

**JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE
23 NOVEMBER 2015**

SHARED SERVICE REVIEW

Recommendation

- 1. The Museums General Manager recommends that:**
 - a) the requirements for implementing a change in the hosting arrangements be noted; and**
 - b) the relevant officers be requested to develop proposals in advance of a report to both Member Authorities.**

Background

2. The shared service was established in April 2010, with the functions necessary to manage and develop the joint museums service delegated to this Joint Committee. The shared service has been hosted by the County Council since that date.
3. The partnership agreement between the two authorities makes provision for a regular review of the governance arrangements; the Joint Committee is able to make proposals for any changes which seem to the Joint Committee to be reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.
4. A workshop was held on 29 October for members of this Joint Committee to review the hosting arrangements. A way forward was suggested that the hosting of the shared service should be transferred to Worcester City Council. The reasons for this proposed transfer include:
 - The shared service had been successful, although further partners had not come on board
 - WCityC was now keen to focus on History and Heritage as a unique selling point of Worcester, to drive investment and economic development. They therefore wished to integrate their economic development support with history and heritage
 - WCityC had the majority of the assets in the shared service
 - The Place Partnership had replaced the previous support from WCC property services
 - The financial challenges facing each council were different, WCityC was in a position to invest in History and Heritage, which would increase their proportion of the shared service
 - WCC had asked for an increase in the charge to WCityC for hosting
 - It seemed logical therefore for the hosting arrangements to change and for WCityC to be the host authority.

5. A preliminary report setting out decision-making process and timescales for potential implementation was requested for consideration at this meeting and the main points are set out below.
6. A decision on changing the hosting arrangements for the joint museums service is a matter for the Cabinet meetings of both authorities. To amend the Agreement the Member Authorities must enter into a deed of variation following that decision.
7. There are some key issues to be resolved in relation to the financial arrangements for the 2016-17 year and beyond. These include the impact of VAT and cultural exemption, an agreement on hosting arrangements, treatment of budget reductions and the impact of the Hartlebury funding agreement. Further advice is to be sought on these areas before an agreement can be reached.
8. The switchover associated with IT systems requires a substantial workload and will need additional capacity to resolve.
9. Subject to agreement at the County Council's Cabinet meeting on 4 February 2016, it would be possible to achieve the staff consultation required to complete a transfer on 1 April 2016.
10. The next step requires further discussion by officers from both Member Authorities to identify, in full, the scope of decisions required to be able to complete the switch of hosting from one party to another.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Museums General Manager) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.