

Joint Museums Committee

**Friday, 23 March 2018, Activity Room, Hartlebury Museum -
2.00 pm**

	Minutes
Present:	Mr M Johnson (Chairman), Mrs L Denham, and Mrs L C Hodgson Officers: Phillipa Tinsley, Interim Museums General Manager (Museums Worcestershire) Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums Worcestershire) Andrew Round, Director of Place (Worcester City Council) Hannah Needham, Assistant Director of Children, Families and Communities (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 24 January 2018 (previously circulated).
347 Named Substitutes (Agenda item 1)	None.
348 Apologies/ Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 2)	An apology was received from Ms K J May. Mrs L Denham declared an interest as Chair of the Friends of Fort Royal Hill and Commandery Gardens.
349 Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 3)	RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
350 Heritage Marketing Report (Agenda item 4)	The Joint Committee considered the Heritage Marketing Report. The details were set out in the report. In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- In response to a query, Helen Large indicated that visitor attendance at exhibitions had decreased from last year although income had increased. The Events programme for the forthcoming year aimed to increase attendance from within the local market and beyond
- There had been anecdotal evidence of visitors having difficulty finding their way around the Commandery building. It might therefore be beneficial to review the visitor route and signage
- In response to a query, Helen Large stated that a unified offer which included all elements of the site was being promoted for Hartlebury as the grounds of the Castle provided an important aspect of the visitor experience and added to the dwell time of visitors
- Was there commonality in the approach to the marketing of Hartlebury Museum and Worcester Museum and Art Gallery? Helen Large advised that although there would be elements of cross-promotion, the two museums maintained their own separate brands
- In relation to a query about the approach to marketing Hartlebury Museum on social media, Helen Large commented that it was intended to keep the Hartlebury Trust twitter feed separate from the Joint Museum feed although there would be an element of co-promotion of the venue. It was acknowledged that the new Hartlebury Common website would take users away from the Museums Worcestershire website although there were links to it on that site. There was a degree of overlap of information between the websites although Museums Worcestershire website would focus on its collections.

RESOLVED that the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects be noted.

**351 Museums
Worcestershire
Service Plan
2018-19 and
Performance
Indicators
(Agenda item 5)**

The Joint Committee considered the Museums Worcestershire Service Plan 2018-19 and Performance Indicators. The details were set out in the report.

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

- Did the revised performance indicators for the joint service meet the respective objectives of the County and City Councils? Hannah Needham

responded that the indicators were appropriate for the County Council in terms of providing an indication of visitor numbers. Measuring performance was difficult and therefore it was important to examine different approaches. Andrew Round added that the performance indicators satisfied the City Council's corporate objectives in terms of providing an assessment of income and the quality of service

- In response to a concern about the relevance and appropriateness of the Viewpoint Survey as a performance indicator, it was responded that the County Council was keen to continue with the Survey and any relevant information arising from it would be reported to the Joint Committee via the Annual Report
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley explained that work had already started on developing the Strategic Plan 2018-23 which would be reported to the June 2018 Committee meeting. It was agreed that it would be more appropriate to consider the Strategic Plan at the October meeting after the completion of the switch of hosting arrangements
- Concern was expressed that there was a lack of focus on health issues in the strategic objectives. Philippa Tinsley responded that although this version of the Plan primarily focused on education issues, previous versions had had a greater focus on health. She anticipated that health would increasingly become a focal point of the plan in the future particularly in terms of improving the health and well-being offer at the Commandery
- It would be beneficial to include a specific reference in the Plan to access to the disabled. The Joint Service would then be able to promote disability access in its marketing material. Philippa Tinsley responded that reference to disabled access had been included in the Plan but she would look to expand it accordingly
- All City and County Councillors should be invited to a member development session on the future Joint Museums Service offer following the completion of the arrangements for the switch of hosting.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the service plan for 2018-19 be approved;**
- b) **the revised performance indicator schedule be**

**352 Museums Fees
and Charges
(Agenda item 6)**

- approved;
- c) an allocation of up to £5,000 be set aside from the Joint Museums Service's reserve to fund Audience Finder visitor evaluation at all sites in 2018-19;
 - d) consideration of the Strategic Plan 2018-23 be moved to the Joint Committee meeting on 11 October following the completion of the arrangements for the switch of hosting; and
 - e) a member development session on the future Joint Museums Service offer be arranged for City and County Councillors following the completion of the arrangements for the switch of hosting.

The Joint Museums Committee considered its future arrangements for fees and charges. Details were set out in the report.

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

- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley indicated that it had been agreed to review the fees and charges at Hartlebury Museum in the following year after the refurbishment of the building. The same approach had been undertaken at the Commandery
- Were any concessions provided for Looked After Children? Philippa Tinsley explained that Hartlebury Museum was the only joint museums site where all children did not receive free admission. There was an agreement in principle to allow Looked After Children to be admitted for free although a mechanism to achieve this in a sensitive fashion had yet to be determined. Hannah Needham added that the creation of a season ticket was being considered to get round this issue. In addition, ways of providing free admission for all children was being examined for Hartlebury Museum
- In response to a suggestion, Philippa Tinsley undertook to look at possible concessions for disabled visitors and vulnerable children
- Had the Joint Service established the value of its product in the market place to determine the appropriate level of fees and charges? Hannah Needham responded that that fees and charges

**353 Performance
and Planning
3rd Quarter
(Agenda item 7)**

for Hartlebury Museum and the Commandery had been evaluated in comparison with other similar venues

- The value for money indicators from the Audience Finder Survey could be used as the basis of establishing a performance indicator
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley indicated that there would be an element of cross-marketing between the wedding offer at the Commandery and the Guildhall
- The existing list of fees and charges was quite long and complicated. The list would benefit from being simplified which would also help clarify the Joint Service's approach to marketing.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the fees and charges set by each partner authority for 2018-19 be noted; and**
- b) **the annual approach for setting fees and charges for museums be reviewed as part of the redrafting of the Joint Museums Agreement.**

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning information for the 3rd quarter. The details were set out in the report.

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

- Was there any information available to confirm how many visits to the Joint Museum's website had converted into actual visits to museums? Helen Large commented that the visitor feedback had indicated that over 50% of visitors to venues had accessed the Joint Museum's website prior to their visit. Philippa Tinsley added that the Museums Worcestershire website would be updated to reflect the switch of hosting
- Philippa Tinsley confirmed that there had been a steady decline in the performance indicator of the Hartlebury Museum over a number of quarters as a result of the renovation works
- In response to a query, Philippa Tinsley commented that the performance indicator targets had been based on the numbers of expected visitors and projected income levels. These targets had been established based on previous

**354 Work
Programme
(Agenda item 8)**

- performance. A rationale would be provided to support any new targets that were created
- The outcome of the City Council Task and Finish Group needed to be factored into the review of Worcestershire Volunteer Portal.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information proved for the 3rd quarter 2017-18 be noted.

The Joint Committee considered its work programme.

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

- Philippa Tinsley undertook to add a financial element into the Strategic Plan
- Was there any national comparator data to provide a context for the performance of the joint service in relation to other similar services? Philippa Tinsley indicated that the Civic Museums Network had produced comparator information and as a result contact had been made with Staffordshire Museums Service. However many museums services were unwilling to share information, particularly financial information.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.40pm

Chairman