

Joint Museums Committee**Monday, 21 September 2015, Hartlebury Museum - 2.00 pm****Present:****Minutes**

Mrs L C Hodgson and Mr A C Roberts

Officers

Iain Rutherford, Museums General Manager (Museums Worcestershire)

Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums Worcestershire)

Neil Anderson, Head of Community and Environment (Worcestershire County Council)

Wendy Pickering, Principal Finance Officer (Worcestershire County Council)

Ruth Mullen, Corporate Director – Services Delivery (Worcester City 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 10 June 2015 (previously circulated).

A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes.

Mrs L C Hodgson, Vice-Chairman, in the Chair.

237 Named Substitutes (Agenda item 1)

None.

238 Apologies/ Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr M L Bayliss and Mr A N Blagg.

239 Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 3)**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

240 Heritage Marketing Report (Agenda item 4)

The Committee received a presentation and considered the progress made in delivering museums and marketing projects.

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

- Further consideration might need to be given to the location of billboards for advertising exhibitions because it was considered that the recent use of the billboard by Shrub Hill Station had not been effective
- In response to a query, the Marketing and Events Manager explained that the Museums Service had taken part in the first countywide visitor research project which it was hoped would give a clearer indication of the public response to service provision
- How did the public response to the Way of the Warrior exhibition compare with the Secret Egypt exhibition? The Marketing and Events Manager indicated that there had been a 1,000 less visitors to the Way of the Warrior exhibition however it should be noted that the exhibition was shown for less time than the Secret Egypt exhibition.

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

241 Shared Service Review (Agenda item 5)

The Joint Committee considered the progress made in conducting a review of the shared service partnership.

RESOLVED that the progress made in conducting a review of the shared service partnership be noted.

242 Museum Accreditation (Agenda item 6)

The Joint Committee considered an invitation to apply for Museum Accreditation.

The report set out the advantages of Accreditation and indicated that certain policies would require updating and revision with the approval of the Joint Committee as the governing body.

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

- The Museums General Manager confirmed that as part of the Accreditation application process, certain policy documents would need to be approved by the Joint Committee. The

Minutes of the relevant Meeting would then need to be sent to the Arts Council. It was an important process because the Heritage Lottery Fund would check the Service's Accreditation as a benchmark for funding. As part of this process, the Arts Council would make a judgement as to whether the museums service was meeting the required standards expected for a service of its size. The Museums Service was in a good position to provide the necessary information to the Arts Council

- Had the Museums Service been in contact with other museums in the county to share information? The Museums General Manager stated that each museum was invited to apply for Accreditation individually. There was an expectation by the Arts Council that the Museums Service would provide evidence that it was working with other museums to improve the offer for the county and the service was in a good position to provide that evidence.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The invitation to apply for Museum Accreditation be noted; and**
- b) The work required on policies and procedures be authorised for ratification at the next meeting.**

243 Commandery Development - Marketing (Agenda item 7)

The Joint Committee considered the steps required for the delivery of the marketing strategy to deliver phase 1 of the Commandery development plan.

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

- Was it possible that the work associated with the marketing arrangements for the Commandery development plan could be the Museums Service's contribution to the costs of the project? The Head of Community and Environment (Worcestershire County Council) commented that this was a matter that he would need to discuss with officers from the City Council
- Would there be a marketing campaign in advance of the re-launch of the Commandery development? The Marketing and Events Manager explained that the service was looking to

involve local residents and businesses in Sidbury and provide a monthly update in the Worcester News on the progress made.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the decision by Worcester City Council to fund the Commandery development programme be welcomed; and**
- b) **the steps required for delivery of the marketing strategy be authorised to deliver phase 1 of the Commandery development plan.**

244 Performance and Planning Report - 1st Quarter (Agenda item 8)

The Joint Committee considered the performance and planning information provided for the 1st quarter 2015-16.

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

- The Museums General Manager highlighted two key targets in the Service Plan that had received a red RAG rating: the development of services for schools; and the staffing structure at the Museum and Art Gallery (MAG). DCA consultants had been asked to look at the possibility of developing services for schools at the Commandery prior to its re-opening. In relation to the staffing structure at the MAG, work was in progress to develop a closer working relationship with facilities management at the City Council
- Did the revised performance indicators match up with the City Council's Corporate Plan priorities? The Corporate Director – Service Delivery (Worcester City Council) commented that they did match up but further work was required to be done to link the level of detail in the performance indicators with the targets in the Corporate Plan
- Concern was expressed that there was a breakdown in communication over the re-launch of the Commandery between the Museums Service and the project officers responsible for the development of the Cathedral Quarter. The Corporate Director – Service Delivery (Worcester City Council) indicated that there were inconsistencies between the proposals for the Commandery, the Cathedral Quarter and the Worcester Porcelain works. She would liaise with the Head of Community and Environment (Worcestershire County Council) to address these

issues with the relevant project officers

- In response to a query, the Museums General Manager explained that the objective for the development of services to schools related to the need to ensure that teachers were provided with everything they needed to undertake a school visit to the Commandery, eg. breakout areas and lunch facilities
- Had service provision at the Commandery been linked to the curriculum for schools? The Museums General Manager explained that the focus of the offer at the Commandery had been on the English Civil War rather than the school curriculum. This would be reinforced as part of the new plans for the building. It was hoped that over the summer, other parts of the building would be looked at to address the curriculum requirements. The Corporate Director – Service Delivery (Worcester City Council) added that this was an issue specific to the Commandery as other sites did have signposts to the curriculum. The Museums General Manager added that due to restrictions on space, a loan service had been introduced for schools to help facilitate the curriculum
- The total number of enquiries for the first quarter had reduced from 204 last year to 39 for this year. The Museums General Manager explained that the figures did not include the number of enquiries at the Museum and Art Gallery which had yet to be confirmed
- Did the valuation of the City Council oil paintings relate to those held at the Guildhall and the MAG? The Museums General Manager stated that the valuation had been undertaken for insurance purposes and related only to the museums service paintings not those maintained by the City Council
- Was there a possibility of rotating the display of oil paintings at the Guildhall so that they were displayed to the public on a more frequent basis? The Museums General Manager stated that a new performance indicator target for museums would be introduced to ensure that the paintings did get seen by the public. The Corporate Director – Service Delivery (Worcester City Council) added that the problem was that the paintings at the Guildhall had not been curated to the same standard as the MAG or the Commandery. She was arranging a meeting with the Museums General Manager and facilities management at the Guildhall to discuss a way forward for their

curation

- The only other risk in the Service plan appeared to be related to the closure of the Commandery on Mondays. The Museums General Manager explained that this objective had been agreed prior to the receipt of additional funding for the Commandery. A review of this objective would be undertaken next year however such closures might be beneficial in the short term to enable officers to proceed with changes to the building.

RESOLVED that the performance and planning information provided for the 1st quarter 2015-16 be noted.

**245 Finance Report
(Agenda item 9)**

The Joint Committee considered the financial position of the joint museums service.

The report set out the 2015/16 projected outturn as at 31 July 2015, a subjective analysis of the figures, an explanation of the major variances, the surplus/deficit split, and the Hartlebury Café report.

In the ensuing debate, concern was expressed that Hartlebury Café was not performing as well as previously reported. The Museums General Manager explained that the budget had been allocated on the basis that the Café would close in the short term however due to the delay of the transfer of Hartlebury Museum to the Trust, the Café would remain open until October and therefore this had required further investment of funds.

RESOLVED that the financial position of the joint museums service as detailed in the report be noted.

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 the consideration of Agenda item 10 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.

246 Hartlebury

The Joint Committee considered the Hartlebury

**Operations and Funding
(Agenda item 10)**

operations and funding.

RESOLVED that the progress made by the Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust in securing the Harlebury estate and developing the next stage of the project be noted.

**247 Work Programme
(Agenda item 11)**

The Joint Committee considered its work programme.

In the ensuing debate, in response to a query, the Museums General Manager explained that any change to fees and charges would require a decision by the City Council following a recommendation from the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.12 pm.

Chairman