

JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE 16 NOVEMBER 2017

COMMANDERY DEVELOPMENT FUTURE PHASES

Recommendation

1. **The Museums General Manager recommends that:**
 - a) **The successful grant applications to fund the new education initiatives at The Commandery be noted;**
 - b) **The proposed future developments as set out in the Appendix be approved; and**
 - c) **she be authorised to start discussions on future development with partners and with funding bodies.**

Background

2. With investment from Worcester City Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Worcestershire County Council, Arts Council England and several sponsors, three phases of work have been undertaken at The Commandery, with a relaunch in July of this year:

- Phase 0 - capital repairs following a conservation survey of the Grade 1 listed building
- Phase 1 - new displays telling the Civil War Story of the site and of Worcester, with accompanying rebranding and marketing of the enhanced offer. The work also included a refresh of the shop and the dedication of a suite of rooms for weddings and corporate hire.
- Phase 2 - new displays in the Great Hall and the Queen Anne Wing to tell the story of the US Presidents' visit, along with associated learning activities and events.

3. The investment in the building was accompanied with a business plan for the site to increase its earned income and economic impact for the city. Admissions income to the Commandery at the end of September 2017 is showing a 47% increase over 2016/17; shop income is showing a 42% increase over 2016/17 and school visits are showing a 14% increase over 2016/17. In its first four months of trading, the Commandery Café has already reached 120% of its income target for the year 2017-18.

4. Each of the 3 phases of work has some small areas of work outstanding, particularly the Heritage Lottery Funded elements which are not all due for completion until summer 2018. Outstanding snagging on the first two phases is being pursued by Place Partnership Ltd, but these have created a small delay in launching the wedding and corporate hire suite.

5. The Heritage Lottery Funded elements of the project include two new education projects working with artists and schools to give a contemporary investigation of the site's significant history. Additional funding has been sought and obtained for this work:

- Arts Council England Grants for the Arts £14,950
- Elmley Foundation £3725

6. The priority for The Commandery is to further grow its tourist audience and its income-earning activities, making it more resilient and continuing to contribute to Worcester's economic development. Marketing for the site will concentrate on the strength of the whole offer and the treasures of the building.

7. Future development aims to build on these core strengths, to consolidate the successes of the first year, to open up new opportunities for grant funding and to work closely with partners and the local community to further enhance parts of the site and times of the year that are underutilised.

Supporting Information

- Appendix - Commandery future phases outline document

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

- Commandery Business Plan, approved by Joint Museums Committee 15 March 2017