

Joint Museums Committee

21 September 2015

7 COMMANDERY DEVELOPMENT - MARKETING

Recommendation

1. The Museums General Manager recommends 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.

Background Information

2. In June 2015 the Joint Committee approved the development and business plan to reinvigorate the Commandery and improve its visitor offer. The plan was recommended to be referred to Worcester City Council for a decision on investment. (Minute no. 232 refers)

3. Subsequently the City Council approved the Commandery development programme, at the higher of two levels of financial support.

4. The development programme is a phased approach. Phase 1 is focussed on the following:

- Creating a new Battle of Worcester visitor experience
- US Presidents' visit display
- Warming the spaces where the Battle of Worcester experience is sited and the Great hall to an appropriate level
- Creating interpretation for the Great Hall
- Transforming the front window and foyer
- Giving the shop a makeover, sourcing new stock, improving visual merchandising
- Branding and visual identity development; developing a phased marketing strategy around phase 1; and
- Enhancing the Battle of Worcester Heritage Trail with on street way finding

5. Subject to confirmation of City Council investment, approval was given by Joint Committee for the recruitment of an exhibition designer to produce detailed designs for the interpretation elements.

6. It was agreed that development of detailed budget, staffing and pricing proposals would be presented to the joint committee in a further report in November.

Next steps

7. A marketing strategy for The Commandery was commissioned from Blue Sail as part of the Arts Council-funded project 'Strengthening museums and the visitor economy in Worcester'. The strategy addresses the need for enhanced marketing as part of the product-development process, in order to begin to promote the invigorated Commandery as a key visitor destination, an important contributor to the city's heritage offer and a key component of the Civil War City package.

8. The strategic aims of the marketing strategy are:

- To ensure that the Commandery sits at the core of the tourism offer for Worcester as the 'English Civil War City'
- To increase income for The Commandery by increasing visitor numbers and spend from targeting marketing at best prospect segments
- Maximise the potential of investment in the interpretation and visitor experience which will be offered by The Commandery.

9. The marketing strategy aims to shift current marketing practice from promoting The Commandery as primarily a special events destination which predominantly attracts a local audience, to repositioning as a key visitor attraction in its own right delivering excellent experiences which will attract visitors from new markets.

10. The Commandery has been working towards this strategy over the past 6 months through its Year of Liberty & Democracy events programme, which has actively targeted audiences from further afield and achieved 30% of visitors from beyond Worcestershire, significantly increasing The Commandery's economic impact on the city.

11. The marketing strategy recommends the following be undertaken in order to reposition The Commandery and exploit its new visitor-focussed product:

- New brand development
- Improved content on website and social media
- PR campaign
- Launch event
- Print collateral and advertising
- Extended targeted print distribution
- Establishing a heritage package for group visits

12. The marketing strategy recommends an increased level of investment into marketing, including an additional post of a part-time marketing assistant.

13. Work needs to begin immediately on the repositioning of The Commandery and on launching the new destination to the travel trade. A sum of £30,500 is therefore required within this financial year from the City Council investment to support the following actions in the marketing strategy, as set out in the DCA report:

Marketing support post	£8,400
Brand development and style guidelines	£4,500
Content creation (web and other)	£2,000
Video commission	£2,800
Print materials	£4,800
Photography commission	£1,500
Web promotion	£500
PR plan and press trips	£2,000
Leaflet distribution	£500
Guide map	£500
Advertising	£3,000

14. The Commandery marketing strategy will be supported by the commissioning of a new Customer Relationship Management system, funded by the Arts Council Museums Resilience funding stream. The system is expected to be in operation by February 2016.

15. The marketing strategy will be monitored and evaluated through collection of strategic Key Performance Indicators to assess what is working well and delivering visitors.

16. Members are therefore requested to approve the marketing expenditure necessary for 2015/16, including the recruitment of part-time marketing support, prior to receiving a full business plan in November.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Point for this report:

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the Museums General Manager the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Blue Sail Marketing Strategy for The Commandery
 DCA – A development and business plan for The Commandery
 Agenda papers and Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Museums Committee on 10 June 2015