



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 28 APRIL 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Halford (Chair)
Councillor Gee (Vice Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Cole

Councillor Dr Moore
Councillor Nangreave

Councillor Shelton

In Attendance

Sir Peter Soulsby
Councillor Singh Clair

City Mayor
Deputy City Mayor, Culture,
Leisure, Sport and Regulatory
Services

Councillor Kitterick

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124. JEWRY WALL REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Chair led on introductions and the procedure for the meeting was outlined.

It was noted that the meeting was held virtually in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales)(Regulations) 2020 (the 2020 Regulations) and in accordance with the Council's own Remote Procedure Rules.

The Chair announced that the agenda items would be taken out of order, with Agenda Item 10. Jewry Wall Redevelopment Update being taken first. It was noted the City Mayor and Councillor Kitterick had been invited to the meeting.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a presentation on the redevelopment of Jewry Wall Museum.

The City Mayor noted the development as an exciting project and welcomed

the opportunity to talk about some of the work being done to share the story of Roman history, which had shaped Leicester over a period of 400 years. This history was still evident in the street pattern of central Leicester, and particularly at Jewry Wall where the remains of the bath house were uncovered by the pioneering work of Kathleen Kenyon, described as one of the most influential archaeologists of the 20th Century. What remained of the bath house was the largest piece of non-military roman masonry anywhere in the UK and it was important this was recognised.

The City Mayor said it had been made possible to extend the old museum from the ground floor of the building, having acquired the closed Vaughan College on the upper floor so that now the full building would be used. He added there was now an increased need to bring people into the city and that this project was an important contribution to securing the future of the city centre more generally.

The Deputy City Mayor, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services further noted that many businesses would not reopen due to Covid19, and that the development of the museum would be a catalyst to boost the city's tourist offer and help to support the city economy. The Deputy City Mayor noted the museum had first opened in 1966. The council had worked closely with consultants Haley Sharp Design, a Leicester company with international expertise, and the plans being shown for the first time were very exciting. It was stated the first stage of building works to the shell of the building had commenced and would be completed December 2021. Phases 2 and 3 would soon follow with the opening of the museum planned for spring / summer 2023.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment informed the meeting it was important that detail of the large, significant scheme be brought to Scrutiny and that it was receiving considerable internal scrutiny also, with a high level project board meeting on a monthly basis to review all aspects of the project, chaired by Richard Sword, Strategic Director.

Joanna Jones, Head of Arts, Museums, Festivals and Events delivered the presentation, and this is attached to the minutes for information. The following points in addition to the presentation were made:

- Jewry Wall remains were an ancient monument.
- Many of Leicester's Roman finds would be on display at the museum including several of the larger mosaics
- A very large element of the overall budget was to make the necessary refurbishments to the building itself which had received minimal investment and was 50 years old and to improve access.
- A visual showed the new walkway currently under construction in Phase 1, scheduled to be completed by July 2021. The new walkway would have views over the archaeological remains of the site and go through a new entrance into the upper floor of the museum.
- Archaeological remains were being protected during work on site.
- A new stairway and lift would connect the lower and upper floors
- It was noted that the Trevor Dannatt's 1960s architecture afforded good

- views through the building to the remains
- Part of the project was to reveal the building architecture as well as create a new museum experience.
 - There were viewing windows in the surrounding hoardings so people can see how the project progresses over time.
 - Under Phase 3, display themes were outlined.
 - A visual was presented on the plan for the building. The previous library would now be the ticketing and shop area, leading into an immersive experience with panoramic projection in the old community hall that would serve as the introduction to the museum and bring ancient Roman Leicester to life. Visitors would then move to the lower floor displays.
 - Visitors would also be able to go out to the archaeological remains.
 - Large object displays would be on the lower floor, for example, mosaics.
 - An All Roads Lead to Leicester was a digital projection, demonstrating the size and scale of the Roman settlement.
 - A series of 'drum' shapes were designed to be mini-theatres, interactive, and displaying collections illustrating different aspects of life in Roman Leicester.
 - The long rear wall would display a chronological display looking at 90 years of excavation in the city, including Kathleen Kenyon's work to excavate the site.
 - The business plan developed in 2017 was currently being reviewed and nearing completion.
 - There would be opportunities in the short return wing for education uses and meeting rooms to generate income. It was noted schools were an important audience.

In response to Members questions, the following points were made:

- It was asked if there would be a cost or be free to enter the museum. It was stated there would be a charge, and work was ongoing on price points. The opportunities for joint ticketing with other attractions in Leicester and beyond was noted
- It was noted there were sceptics around visitor numbers for the Space Centre before it had opened but that it now saw hundreds of thousands of visitors every year and had been an enormous success. It was noted that detailed forecasting for visitor numbers was underway.
ACTION: The issue of visitor numbers and pricing to be brought back to a future meeting.
- It was noted there was a balance to be had between the artifacts and the digital offer.
- Nothing further in terms of important archaeology had been uncovered during the works for the new staircase and lift
- It was noted that it was important to interpret the building itself, an iconic 1960s building designed by celebrated architect Trevor Dannatt who had just very recently died.
- In terms of displays and the experience of the visitors it was noted it would be good to reflect of the diversity of the city in terms of its people, its industry, and the contribution of black people to Leicester's rich heritage.

- It was an opportunity to reflect that Romans were not a bunch of Italians was wrong, because those that ended up in Leicester came from a wide geographic spread, some from Africa, Gaul etc. and it was important to reflect that Leicester in Roman times was already a multi-cultural city.
- It was asked that if stage smoke be used, then water vapour be used rather than anything that caused people to cough.
- Performance events could be an important part of the site, including costume interpretation.
- It was not anticipated that there would be any further need for additional finance. The Council was due to go out soon to tender for the remaining Phase 2 of building works and for Phase 3 of the museum design itself. Hayley Sharpe had developed a high degree of cost certainty for the Phase 3 museum design. There had been prudent allowances in terms of risk and contingency, and there would be a high cost certainty overall before the end of 2021.
- Designers were acutely aware of climate change. More information would be brought back to a future meeting on the designer's plans to climate proof the development, though it was noted there were some constraints due to it being a listed building.
ACTION: Detailed information would be brought back to a future meeting.
- The Council was minded to operate Jewry Wall themselves and not via Trust or third party. It was noted the KRIII visitor centre was now operated directly by the council.
- Everything being done in and around Jewry Wall was being done in consultation with Heritage England as part of the project.
- Officers were keen to work with Friends of Jewry Wall and to strengthen that group, and it was believed the project would create some momentum and give a focus for people.
- In terms of technology, Hayley Sharpe were ensuring technology was future-proof and easy to maintain, update and replace.

The Chair thanked officers and commented there was reassurance that the project would match the budget and asked that the presentation be circulated to members.

AGREED:

That:

1. The Commission support the plans to improve the facilities and museum building and that Members be kept informed of any major changes to the plans and any budget implications for the project.
2. The agenda item should remain on the Commission's work programme to receive regular updates on progress made, including the timescales for completion.
3. That the issue of visitor number targets and admission prices be brought back to a future meeting.
4. Detailed information on climate emergency proofing and how well it could be delivered in the listed building be brought to future meeting.

Suggested a bigger report on how Jewry Wall, KRIII, the Space Centre etc contribute to creating wealth in the city be added as a work programme item

and be reported to the Commission.

The City Mayor agreed that reporting on how Jewry Wall, the KRIII Centre and Space Centre contributed to the wealth of the city was a separate, bigger project, and should be reported back to the Commission alongside reporting on Jewry Wall.

AGREED:

1. That the item be added to the Commission's work programme.

125. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from John Leach, Director Neighbourhood and Environmental Services.

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr. Moore declared an Other Disclosable Interest in that her son worked in the Library Service.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, this interest was not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest. She was not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

127. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission held on 25 January 2021 be confirmed as correct record.

128. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

It was noted that progress on actions would be considered in the new Municipal Year.

129. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for the support she had received as Chair of the Commission. She recognised that it had been a difficult year for the city, and asked that everyone keep positive and continue to support one another.

The Chair thanked management and staff for their commitment and hard work.

130. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

131. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

132. COVID 19- HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE, AND SPORTS SERVICES UPDATE

133. UPDATE ON PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COVID 19 IMPACT

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Service submitted a report which provided an update on how parks and open spaces were being managed in line with current Government Covid19 guidelines and included an update on Parks and Bereavement Services. Commission Members were asked to note the contents of the report and make any comments to the Director or Executive if they so wished.

The Deputy City Mayor introduced the report. It was noted that regular Member briefings had taken place over the course of the pandemic, and that open spaces and parks had been managed in line with government guidelines

The presenting Officers informed the meeting that:

- The Roadmap to recovery had four key steps and dates.
- Step One on 29 March saw outdoor gatherings of up to six people or two households introduced. In terms of the rule changes for parks, it made it more difficult to challenge the large groups as it could not be checked if they were from the same household.
- Additional security staff had been brought in to support park wardens. Static security staff would maintain a presence in some parks during warmer weather to let people know that compliance was still being monitored.
- Various sports and fitness activities would continue to be opened, with governing bodies determining timeframes for organised sports.
- Trials of football/basketball (MUGA) courts opening would continue and be closely monitored. It was reported that throughout the pandemic there had been some regular non-compliance incidents, particularly in Spinney Hill Park and Victoria Park, with people gaining unauthorised access.
- Working from home guidance had been adopted and would continue where possible.
- Step Two on 12 April saw the opening of retail and facilities. It was noted that the use of outdoor gyms remained high.
- Pets Corner on Abbey Park had remained closed due to an announced bird flu epidemic but had been declared safe to reopen.
- Summer events were being planned, for example, Funfair (Covid permitting).
- Step Three planned no earlier than 17 May would see groups of 30 people being allowed to meet outdoors, and large group performances / sporting events to resume.
- An impact on parks was likely, particularly during nicer weather, and there

would be ongoing work in partnership to address larger gatherings over 30 that failed with requests to socially distance.

- Leicester volunteering Group sessions were looking to resume around this period.
- All ball courts would reopen by this date and be monitored for a maximum of 30 people.
- Partnership working with the Police remained consistent. The Police were following the four 'Es' – Engage. Explain. Encourage. Enforce. The Police had worked well with larger gatherings and responding to request and had supported Parks well. Some fines had been given for non-Covid compliance.
- The site closure process remained the same.
- For Bereavement Services, there had not been much change in the service with the Government Roadmap, with funerals still restricted to 30 people, and commemorative events still with restricted numbers.
- A graph displayed the impact of Covid19 on Bereavement Services, with April 2020 seeing the first wave peak. The second wave peak was not as big, but longer and most sustained, with a larger number of deaths recorded from November 2020 through the winter period. Numbers were now beginning to return to more normal levels.
- Webcasting had been introduced at the crematorium to allow people to allow bereaved families to view a service and would remain a permanent installation.

Members of the Commission noted the report, and Officers responded to queries as follows:

- When restrictions were lifted on 21 June it would provide even less clarity for the number of people allowed at a funeral based on premises size and social distancing guidelines at the time.
- It was queried why the death rate peaked higher in April 2020 than during the winter of 2020/21. It was explained that the peak in April 2020 followed on from the first lockdown, when the majority of those that died would have already been infected with Covid and not being tested prior to lockdown. Moving on to the 2020/21 winter period, testing was more widespread and better treatments were involved. Also, with people locked down, it assisted with keeping the death rate down, though the prolonged second wave meant there were more numbers of deaths overall.
- One of the big events in the city from an African heritage point of view was the Carnival. The Deputy City Mayor assured the Commission Members that communication lines remained open with the organiser, but with the present situation it did not look as if big gatherings would be possible. Councillor Cole placed on record his offer of assistance to ensure clear and easy communication between the Council and Carnival organisers. It was not currently known if the carnival event organisers intended to hold an event.
- The situation would be kept under review and all festival and events organisers had been written to, to clarify what they wanted to deliver in 2021.

- A press release had been made that the Riverside Festival would not be taking place in June.
- It was noted the Government was holding test events, and guidance was awaited on what could be done.
- A decision had been made by the organisers of Mela that they were not going to proceed with the event for 2021.

The Chair believed it was too soon for events to be staged and more focus should be on essential services and facilities staying open. With safety first advice should be taken from the Public Health Director and Government Guidelines followed.

AGREED:

1. The Commission noted the report.
2. Councillor Cole to be kept informed of communication with the Carnival event organisers.

134. LEISURE CENTRE & FACILITIES RE-OPENING ROAD MAP

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a presentation to update the Commission on the Leisure Centres & Facilities Re-Opening Road Map. The Deputy City Mayor introduced the presentation.

Officers present gave the following information:

- Three gyms and leisure centres had been opened around the city to provide an even spread of access to the public. The centres were being monitored.
- The city was slightly out of kilter to what was happening in the national programme because the service was committed to supporting the city testing, track and trace programme.
- The Health and Fitness Membership / Children on Learn to Swim programme had seen a significant impact and loss in membership from February 2020 to February 2021.
- The centres would see phased opening. Outdoor sport activities were reported as operating well.
- The golf course was open and very popular.
- Saffron Lane athletics stadium was now open.
- Alongside centres reopening for activities, the presentation highlighted the various centres providing testing support.
- On 12 April 2021 corporately approved was the opening of three leisure centre gyms only (Aylestone / Braunstone / Cossington).
- Staff were still redeployed to ensure there was a continuation of support of the City Reach programmes.
- On 3 May 2021, swimming lessons for young people would be reintroduced at all centres, apart from New Parks.
- Once those services were operating, there would be a period of review of infection rates, hospital admission rates, and vaccination uptake. Assuming everything was aligned, full activities would be open from 21 June apart from New Parks, which was committed to continuing to offer lateral flow

testing.

- The staffing summary showed a phased withdrawal of staff from the City Reach programmes as services were brought back online.
- There was reduced membership fee of £15 per month for April, May and June. From 1 July 2021 the fee would revert to standard pricing.
- Officers were conscious that not all customers would be confident enough to return to an indoor exercise facility and had allowed customers to suspend membership to return to the end of June 2021.
- The gyms had opened with a sales promotion offer. Usage had been really good over the first couple of weeks with over 6k visits from customers, and 150 new joiners in terms of sales.
- Officers were pleased to report on the refurbishment of the Evington gym which would be delivered on schedule and be ready to reopen on 21 June.

In response to Members' queries, the following information was noted:

- It was not yet known when the New Parks Leisure Centre would reopen as staff were still required for the lateral flow unit currently being operated until at least the Autumn. The authority was waiting for Covid rates to fall in the city and were waiting for a steer for when staff could be released back. An update would be brought to the Commission when a date was known.
- There had been a softer launch of the opening of the three gyms; a balance between reduced opening and the non-opening of wider facilities. There would be focused marketing for when leisure centres were fulling open for business in terms of produces, facilities and services from 21 June, and a very targeted campaign for the opening of Evington Leisure Centre following the gym refurbishment. Marketing would take place over 12 months from 21 June as part of the wider recovery plan.
- There was no intention for the New Park Centre to remain closed. As soon as Covid rates fell checks would be made with health services as to what staff they required for the testing programme.
ACTION: Ward Councillors and the wider community to be kept informed.
- It was not known when the AfCab Centre would reopen.
ACTION: Information to be sought from Neighbourhood Services and an answer provided to Commission Members.
- There was no requirement for people to have had vaccinations to enter museums, but customers were required to scan the QR code as part of track and trace to ensure staff and visitors were safe, and was a requirement when entering a public building. For those people unable to scan the QR code there were alternatives, and staff would be on hand to assist.

The Chair thanked everyone for their hard work.

AGREED:

That:

1. The information be noted.
2. Ward Councillors and the wider community be kept informed of the timeline for the reopening of New Parks Leisure Centre.

3. Information to be provided to Commission Members on the timeline for the reopening of the AfCab Centre.

135. COVID 19 - TOURISM, CULTURE, AND INWARD INVESTMENT SERVICES UPDATE

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment provided an update to the Commission on the impact of Covid19, and the roadmap to unlocking Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment Services in the City. It was noted that:

- The pandemic had a major impact on tourism as it had across the country. In terms of hotels and the accommodation sector, it had been hit particularly hard and had also affected a lot of new hotels in the city.
- Attractions such as the Space Centre had suffered, and though some recovery funds have been able to offset income loss, it was known that their reserves had been hit hard by the pandemic, but were still in place would continue to operate.
- Similarly, attractions such as the Great Central Railway had also had a big hit on their finances but were looking forward to reopening.
- The King Richard III Centre had moved in-house to the Council in November / December 2019. Had they still been operated by an independent trust with very limited financial resources, it would have been a real difficult situation for them, but because they were now in-house has given them a degree of protection.
- The cultural sector had been hit hard. Pointed out, though, was some of the innovation seen during the pandemic, particularly from Curve in terms of its digital streaming offer, which had been some of the best in the country. In spite of all the difficulties, Curve's reputation had in some ways improved as a consequence of what they had been able to do.
- Reported before was how innovative some of the festival organisers had been in terms of creating meaningful online content. They were looking forward to going back to public events, but believed digital innovation would continue with more hybrid events in the future.
- With regards to Inward Investment, some interest had slowed during the pandemic, but the team was busier than ever, with an encouraging continued level of interest from investors in the city, both new investors and existing businesses who are seeking new space to expand into.
- How the office sector was going to emerge from the pandemic was a matter of great debate and conjecture. It was believed the sector would see a flight to better quality office space, with fewer people. Being brought to the market was the Gresham Works scheme, which would be open for business in September 2021.
- There was to open the city's museums, King Richard III Centre and Visit Leicester on 21 June, subject to the Government's roadmap for unlocking through the different stages.
- There were over 30 front-facing colleagues temporarily redeployed working on the City Reach Covid testing programme. The Museums service were working with the team organising the City Reach programmes to release employees back to enable the reopening of museums.

- There would be a programme for reopening as buildings had been closed for a while. Covid19 secure building regulations would continue, using track and trace and a booking system to limit numbers to safe levels.
- Museums would be opening with some exciting new exhibitions and galleries, including a touring exhibition on wildlife from the natural history museum, and inclusion of peoples nature photographs.
- In the temporary gallery there would be a round-the-world exhibition with Thomas Cooke, exploring the origins of the Leicester holiday pioneer, using items from the museum collection and from an archive newly acquired.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update and in agreement with the Commission Members made the following recommendations:

AGREED:

That:

1. The 'Covid Update on recovery of services' remained on the work programme for future meetings.
2. The Commission receives a report to a future meeting relating to marketing, publicity and rebranding of activities for culture, leisure and tourism sectors in the city.
3. The public are made aware of the reasons why some services were not opening immediately, and to ensure the public know building needed to be made safe areas for people to use.

136. LEICESTER MUSEUM & ART GALLERY - REDEVELOPMENT PLAN PHASE A

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a presentation on the redevelopment project for Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. The Deputy City Mayor introduced the presentation, which explained what changes and investment needed to be made. During its delivery, the following points were highlighted:

- Concerns from residents had been responded to.
- Investment had been made in some of the galleries, but some areas still needed investment, for example, wild space gallery.
- The café was unable to open at different times to the museum. The café could have a separate access and be open at different times to the museum to generate further income.
- The Leicester Stories gallery would be put in Gallery, currently a back of office space, to maximise use for public benefit. There was funding from the Arts Council to fund the development.
- The current wild space area was no longer fit for purpose and could be better interpreted.
- A gallery of star exhibits could go into a new gallery near to the entrance.
- Designs were being worked on for Areas 1 and 2. Funding needed to be identified to move forward.
- Staff would be located to new offices on the 1st floor. An old conservation area studio has been cleared.

- The ambition was to raise visitor attendance to 300k per annum (currently at 220-230k pre-Covid).

In response to members questions the following information was noted:

- The Capital Projects Team were currently working on the costs involved. The authority would be looking for external funding, for example, Arts Council England were due to shortly release a MEND fund, used for vital infrastructure repairs for museum buildings.
- External funding would also be sought to create new galleries, as previously gained to create the new ancient Egypt gallery (£200k).
- There were no plans to expand the current car park, and people would be encouraged to walk, cycle, or use public transport as part of the Council's public transport strategy.
- One of the key aims was to enhance the architecture of the museum, therefore any designs for the new entrance would be sympathetic in consultation with the Conservation Team.
- Any planned events would be consulted on with local residents and to hear their concerns.
- There was interest in the proposals for changes to the front of the building and the requirement for changes to have listed building consents.
- In terms of the design for what might or might not be for the conservatory had not yet been explored. The architect that would work on the design had experience in working with listed buildings, and when images were available, they would be provided to Members of the Commission. It was further noted that an option might be to stick to the parameters of the building with no external changes.
- There was an advantage for the café and potential shop operation to be independent from the museum.
- The focus on the new social history gallery would be on post-war and modern Leicester, and there would be no conflict with Newarke Museum which tended to focus on older periods.
- It was difficult to compare attendance figures with similar sized museums in the region. When comparing visitor numbers pre-Covid in the East Midlands, including those for events arranged by external organisations, Leicester Museum and Art Gallery compared well.

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and said it would be an improvement to the building. In agreement with Members of the Commission present, recommendations were made.

AGREED:

That:

1. The Commission supported the exciting plans to improve the facilities and museum building and recommended that Members be kept informed of any major changes in the plans, the timescales, and the budget for the works being carried out on the project.
2. The Commission recommended that the agenda item remained on the Commission's Work Programme, and a progress report be

brought to a future meeting.

3. A visit be arranged for Commission Members, once the work had been completed.

137. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair was thanked by the Deputy City Mayor, Mayor and Officers for the way she had chaired the Commission meetings and for the scrutiny of the reports brought to the Commission during a difficult year.

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm.