



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HERITAGE CULTURE LEISURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Halford (Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Cole

Councillor Solanki

Councillor Dawood
Councillor Shelton

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that Covid-19 updates would no longer be a regular agenda item and that Officers could bring relevant updates to the Commission when necessary.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission held on 24 August 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

In response to a question regarding swimming lessons at New Parks Leisure Centre it was noted that swimming lessons for each school had been booked before the start of the academic year when New Parks was closed. Due to the certainty at the time as to when New Parks would be open due to the COVID recovery it was necessary to confirm school swimming arrangements with all the city schools in readiness for the forthcoming academic year. Therefore, schools were programmed at the other leisure centres. Schools would be able

to book New Parks when the booking arrangements with schools early next year for the academic year ahead commenced.

Councillor Shelton noted that he had received interest from other Councillors on the concept of a heritage project on Leicester's historic cinemas.

5. UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST ACTIONS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA)

It was noted that the Haymarket Theatre item had been added to the Commission's work programme and a report would come to a future Commission meeting.

6. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

7. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

8. COVID 19 UPDATE - VERBAL

The Director of Tourism, Culture, and Inward Investment presented an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Heritage, Culture, and Tourism Services. It was noted that:

- De Montfort Hall was now fully back open, due to the number of rescheduled shows the schedule for DMH was very busy. Shows were on average getting 80% attendance.
- Customers were being encouraged to show a Covid pass or a clear lateral flow test result when entering DMH.
- There had been a shift towards last minute booking in venues across the city.
- There was no evidence at Covid spreading at DMH though there was considerable pressure from promoters to ensure Covid safety.
- All museums were now open at normal hours and at full capacity. Social distancing and masks were still being encouraged.
- Attendance at museums was 50-60% compared to pre-pandemic numbers, this was in line with national trends.
- Larger events such as exhibition launches were now possible, and a few were scheduled for the near future.
- There was a large group of front of house staff who were well briefed on Covid safety, to date there had been no issues with staff shortages.
- There was now a full programme of exhibitions for the next couple of years, any ideas for future exhibitions could be discussed.

The Head of Sports presented an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Sports Services, it was noted that:

- Customers had continued to return to Leisure Centres.
- The capital investment in Cossington, Aylestone and Evington leisure centre had helped to fast track the recovery.
- The initial budget pressure had reduced significantly since the last update from a projected £2.1 million to £1.6 million at period 6.

9. AUTUMN WINTER EVENTS PROGRAMME

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services, introduced the item, noting that following the success of the Summer in the City program, an events program for autumn and winter was now being outlined, these events would be delivered in collaboration with local partners.

Chris Hackett, Deputy Festivals and Events Manager, presented the item. It was noted that:

- Festivals plans had been outlined until the end of the financial year.
- A hybrid approach would be taken to Diwali celebrations, removing the stage programme and the fireworks display. These would be replaced with a pre-recorded film to be shown on a loop on a screens in the Belgrave area and a fire garden installation on the Cossington Recreation Ground.
- For Bonfire Night, an event would still be held at Abbey Park, including an entertainment package to encourage early attendance.
- For the Christmas lights switch on, to reduce crowd density there would also be no stage programme and the countdown event would be relayed across a number of places in the city centre.
- Other Christmas activities would include the ice rink and Big Wheel on Jubilee Square, and a Santa's grotto in Green Dragon Square.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that:

- Due to having to close Belgrave Road twice, and the costs of filming and screens, there would not be a significant cost saving for the Diwali events.
- The Council was working closely with the Local Business Association to promote shopping across the period of Diwali celebrations. ERDF funds were being used to support the shopping promotion.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes their praise to the Festivals and Events team for their work on the seasonal programs, and notes they have been assured that crowd control and public safety will be in-place.

2. That the Commission recommends the Festivals and Events team to continue to make efforts to make the public aware of the Autumn and Winter program.

10. BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS PROGRAMME

Pawlet Brookes from Serendipity UK was present to provide an update on the organisation's Black History Month programme which was supported by a Leicester City Council grant. It was noted that:

- The national theme of Black History Month 2021 was 'Proud to Be'.
- There would be a series of films showing at Phoenix cinema celebrating 50 years of Blaxploitation cinema.
- There would be 39 events across the programme, working with 15 partners.
- Measures would be put in place to make all events Covid secure.
- The programme for Black History Month in 2021 had also been outlined.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- School activities were included in the programme, including an event on black educators, and a series of podcasts and education packs provided to schools. It was also noted that Spark Festivals ran Black History Month events in schools.
- There were examples of events with 38% of attendees being Afro-Caribbean, higher than the national figures.
- A National Lottery fund of £680,000 was being applied for to fund a 3-and-a-half-year program, also including a young archivist program.
- Serendipity UK had worked before with the Afro Caribbean Centre and would continue to do so in future.
- Key Performance Indicators were set by stakeholders and were different for every organisation contributing funds.

The Chair thanked Pawlet for the update and wished her the best of luck with the program.

11. HERITAGE PANELS - PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Culture, introduced the item, noting the Commission has previously been updated on the city's Heritage Panels.

Emma Buckler, Heritage and Engagement Manager, presented the item, it was noted that:

- The update covered the period from September 2020 to the present, during that time 34 new Heritage Panels had been installed across the city, making 150 in total. 44 Panels were in development and would be installed by February 2022.
- The Heritage Panels project would be completed in March 2023, with 87

extra Panels being installed from April 2022-March 2023.

- The Panels were colour coded into different themes, such as the race equality Panels.
- There had been a positive response to the Panels on social media.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- The Panels were coated in an anti-graffiti material, and graffiti on the panels was a rare occurrence.
- The process for creating the Panels involved working with community stakeholders and external researchers to ensure accurate information on the Panels. Any inaccuracies on the Panels could be corrected by reskinning the Panels.
- The lifespan of the panels was estimated to be 5-10 years. The newer panels would have higher ultraviolet resistance, leading to them being more durable and potentially having a lifespan longer than 10 years.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission recommends that efforts be made to raise awareness for the city's Heritage Panels.

12. LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Leisure, introduced the item. It was noted that the first phase of Leisure Centre refurbishment throughout the city had exceeded targets on construction, and that it was hoped the second phase could be delivered on time and on budget.

Andrew Beddow, Head of Sports, presented the item, it was noted that:

- Previous support had been provided by the Commission on this area.
- The investment from the Capital Programme was targeted based on a sound return on an investment case
- Whilst there may have been a perceived risk to the business case, this was managed due to the latent demand study that underpinned the business case. The uptake by customers at the 3 centre was significantly higher than the projected demand outlined in the business case.
- There was an anticipated extra budget pressure on the service due to the pandemic, this pressure was lessened due to the 3 new facilities.
- The recently refurbished Evington Leisure Centre had 18% of members coming from the county area. Once the half-price offer had expired 65% of members retained their memberships.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- Over the last 18 months there had been a restructuring giving dedicated

resources for marketing in the Sports Service. There had been more investment in marketing and close work was ongoing with the Comms team on promotion of the new Leisure Centres.

- The service did offer women's only activities and programme times for women as part of its offer.
- Leicester Hockey Club had recently returned to the city, providing more sports opportunities for women.
- Sports Services staff could help support a task group for the Commission on women's sports in the city.
- The City Sports Foundation/Partnership no longer meet or operated.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission recommends taking forward a task group on women's sports in Leicester.

13. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair noted that any suggestions for future items for the Commission should be emailed to herself or the Scrutiny Policy Officer.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no other urgent business, the meeting closed at 7.25pm.