



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Halford (Chair)
Councillor Ali (Vice Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton

Councillor Solanki

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12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cole, Dawood and Shelton.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission held on 30 November 2021 were attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

AGREED:

That the minutes from the Commission meeting held on 30 November 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

15. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

16. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

17. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT IN THE CITY REVIEW - PROGRESS UPDATE

The item was heard first due to the late arrival of the Head of Finance, due to present the first item.

The Chair provided an update on the task group looking at Women's Participation in Physical Activity and Sport in the City. The proposed task group dates were as follows:

- Tuesday 25th January at 5pm.
- Wednesday 2nd February at 5pm.
- Thursday 17th February at 5pm.

It was noted that the proposed dates were approved by the Commission.

The Commission questioned the reasoning behind findings being presented prior to interviews, to which it was noted that the arrangement did not matter in the run of things, but the layout could be rearranged if the Commission preferred a different structure.

AGREED:

That the provisional dates be approved, and the update be noted.

18. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23 AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's draft Revenue Budget for 2022/23 and Draft Capital Budget for 2022/23.

The Commission were recommended to consider and comment on the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism element of the budgets. The Commission's comments would then be forwarded to the Overview Select Committee as part of its consideration of the reports before they are presented at the Council meeting on 23 February 2022.

The Head of Finance introduced the report and drew attention to the following points:

- The Budget for 2022/23 was preceded by a number of events: the prior decade of austerity (2010-2020), the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the current Social Care crisis.

- The Spending Review approach had served the Council well achieving savings of nearly £50m between 2014-2020. However, the effects of the Covid pandemic meant a significant programme of savings could not be delivered during 2021/22 and that budget was balanced using reserves.
- It was anticipated that significant additional savings would be required beyond 2021/22 to ensure future financial sustainability.
- Due to past processes to balance earlier budgets, the council's reserves remained healthier than many authorities.
- There were increasing pressures upon budgets due to increased Social Care demand, with Adult Social Care costs estimated to rise by £18m in 2022/23.
- The government's Comprehensive Spending Review provides additional funds for local government in 2022/23, and £9m was expected to be allocated to Leicester City Council, a fraction of the amount necessary to cover increased demand.

The Chair invited Members to comment on the report.

Members expressed concern about the shortfall of the budget and sought response on what steps could be taken to avoid further decline.

Members also expressed concern about the Festival Decoration budget, which was thought to be excessive, in contrast to the budget shortfalls across other areas.

In response to points raised by Members, it was noted that:

- Further shortfalls in the budget were expected in the future, which the Council were taking steps to minimize through further savings. A financial recovery was not expected in 2022-23.
- The budget due to be spent on festive decorations was money set aside and currently had no fixed purpose, future spending in this area may not require the entire amount set aside.
- The Christmas Tableau was no-longer fit for purpose and required replacement in the future, this remained subject to an amount to be determined and a final decision.
- The Festive Decorations budget may be used to cover other festivities; however, this was unclear, and a report providing further details around that would be presented to a future meeting.
- The Investment fund for Shopfronts was a long-standing, separate fund to the COVID-19 recovery fund and details of a top-up to the Investment fund were included in the report.
- Focused works were underway on green initiatives to improve sustainability in the city with the Economic Regeneration Group via Capital Funding.

- The projected £300k figure, set aside for Ugandan Asians 50 Year Anniversary Commemoration, was notional and not a determined figure. This figure had been arrived at after discussions with local businesses and community members.
- The impact of the budget on sport and leisure facilities across the city was currently unknown, however all services were being asked to consider a revision of their budgets in-line with the Managed Reserves strategy.
- Regarding the multi-use game areas budget, a review was being conducted to assess the area's most in need of refurbishment, which included schools and parks.

Members of the Commission noted the upcoming commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Ugandan Asian Community Group and praised their historic contribution and devotion to the city and its development. It was noted the group intended to hold a celebration event in Abbey Park and that a proposal for a memorial had been received.

The Chair thanked officers for their extensive work on the budget report.

AGREED:

1. That the contents of both reports be noted.
2. That the Overview Select Committee be asked to take account of the comments made by this Commission in its consideration of the General Fund revenue budget for 2022/23 and the Capital Programme for 2022/23.
3. That the Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sport be asked to keep the Commission advised of the progress with spending reviews of services or changes to service area budgets falling within the Commission's remit.
4. That the Council be recommended to explore further avenues of funding and sponsorship to assist in combating the shortfall in budget through the Managed Reserves strategy.

19. LEICESTER MUSEUM AND GALLERIES DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a presentation updating the Commission on development projects throughout the Museum Service. A copy of the presentation is attached at the end of these minutes.

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Culture, introduced the item. It was noted that development work on the Abbey Pumping Station was due to be completed in Spring 2022. The Head of Arts and Museums and the Audience

Development and Engagement Manager lead the presentation.

During the presentation, particular attention was drawn to the following points:

- Funding – The museums service was currently an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation which provides annual funding of £407k between 2018-22. The service had recently secured a further year of this funding for 2022/23. Further bid had been submitted for the Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) for £766,000. A decision was expected in February 2022.
- A new *Leicester Stories Gallery* was being developed for Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. This was being co-curated with different communities and faiths across Leicester and was designed to be a fully accessible and inclusive space. Floor plans for the museum were included in the presentation and the layout was depicted as being circular in design.
- Gallery space would be changing every three months to represent the experiences, growth, and changes of the different communities in Leicester, including personal stories of Leicester residents, with over 300 Leicester residents contributing to the project proposal. Conceptual drawings were included in the presentation as an example of the different potential themes.
- The Dinosaur Galley Interactives were noted as a distinctive feature to the museum. An Augmented Reality feature was being added to the dinosaur gallery to put the flesh on the bones of the dinosaurs using digital technology. A Mobile Application was also included, which provided Augmented Reality (AR) education for children and adults inside and outside the museum. The technology was noted to be kept updated and relevant.
- Future steps for development included significant upgrades, potential to relocate the Café and shop, altering opening times to maximise revenue and facilitate public access.
- The Egyptian gallery was moved to the first floor to better make use of the original space it had occupied.
- The ground floor was intended to be linked together as a gallery and art related space, with increased focus on modern social history.
- For Abbey Pumping Station, it was noted that the museum was ideally intended to be a car free location to improve the visitor experience.
- The museum was focusing on health and wellbeing, including the addition of Sound Chairs, which allowed an individual to sit and listen to information, music similar to an interactive radio show.
- At Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, local artists in Leicester would be attending the museum and providing art mentorship and portfolio reviews for members of the public interested.
- The museum would be exploring modern day issues with the work presented in the galleries, reflecting the younger generations growing passion for social issues, such as climate change.
- A potential project was being explored, through collection of items that represented jobs of modern society.

- The original contractor for the Jewry Wall Museum had gone into administration and a new tender process was underway and nearing conclusion.
- The King Richard III Visitor Centre required a refresh to be potentially funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund

Members expressed concern about the past Jewry Wall contractor going into administration and its impact on the cost and timeline of the developments being undertaken. It was noted that a new timeline was being prepared and that, due to a contingency plan, the costs were not affected.

Members enquired about the Women in Textiles project proposal for the museum and which areas of the community were contributing. It was noted that the specific wards with the highest deprivations levels, were targeted but further information will be provided to the Commission.

Members queried the sensory accessibility of the museum, to which it was noted that the museum had been fully designed with sensory and stimulation areas in mind.

The Commission discussed the inclusion of the latest Rutland found dinosaur fossil in the museum, the Ichthyosaur. It was reported that there was an ongoing process to decide where the fossil would be displayed, with the preference being to keep it in the local area.

Members expressed concern with the Carer targeted initiative, which aimed to provide days out to Leicester Museums for carers, as it had not covered the key concern around the patient being cared for should the Carer be given time out for enjoyment. It was recommended that the issue be evaluated in further detail.

After Members stated worries about inclusivity of the technological aspects of the museum, it was noted that in-Museum iPads would be provided for those who didn't have technology access, that would be kept secure and tethered in a display case.

Members highlighted the renovation of the existing Conservation Studio and asked for the status of the existing staff of the studio. They were informed that the Conservation studio had not been in use for a considerable period of time and was a wasted space, so there were no concerns regarding relocation.

It was additionally noted that the German Impressionist Art Catalogue in production would be made available in Easter 2023, after thorough professional design and development.

The Chair thanked the officers for the report.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a list of the wards involved in the Women in Textiles project be submitted to a future meeting.

3. That the Commission be kept up to date on the progression of the projects.
4. That a timeline of the development and its funding opportunities be presented to the Commission in a future meeting.

20. CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES - FEEDBACK

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment provided a verbal update on the Christmas events and activities ran by the Festivals team.

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Culture introduced the item. It was noted that the 2021 Christmas festivities were a resounding success, despite the impact of the national pandemic, and footfall had increased in comparison to 2020.

The Deputy Festival and Events Manager and City Centre Director presented the item. It was noted that:

- The Jubilee Square Ice rink had its best performance yet, which brought in over 43,000 skaters between December 2nd and January 3rd and making up to 60% of the sales for 2021. It was further noted that the ice rinks social media campaign was successful and well publicised.
- The theme of Snowman and Snow dog was recorded as a well-rounded appeal to all ages.
- The Wheel of Light was successful, with 18,000 members of the public having used it, up by 15-20% compared to previous years.
- Public and local residents complemented the Jubilee Square lighting.
- 3,000 children met Santa in the Christmas Grotto and received free gifts. Social media feedback indicated that the public were happy with the quality of the free gifts provided.
- New interactive and technological experiences included: Interactive Adventure Tableau with Augmented Reality(AR) features, free Mobile Application available to download with 6 unique experiences, with the ability to be used at home and outdoors, Snowboard Dodge Application game which allowed children to collect points and redeem them to see Santa and Reindeer flying above the city via AR. Up to 150,000 plays were recorded.
- Social media coverage reached 40,000 people through the efforts of BID Leicester. The TV advert 'It's Showtime' was played on Sky TV, which assisted in the 145,000 recorded website users and reached the

majority of households in Leicester.

- Ongoing graduations at local Universities added to the activity in the area.
- The Festive Adventure Trail highlighted the best locations for Christmas activities through Leicester.
- A 2% increase on 2019 purchases was recorded, with an increase in interest in jewellery and beauty.

It was noted that Plan B measures began on December 2nd due to the impact of the pandemic on the public, which affected hospitality and businesses in the form of cancelled bookings. A grant was paid to all affected businesses. Despite the impact, it was further noted that 16 new businesses had opened in the city.

Members were pleased to hear the impact of social media on the success of the Christmas Activities and that the economy, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic was starting to recover.

AGREED:

That the update be noted and the Festival team and staff be thanked for their hard work to make Christmas in Leicester City a safe and happy experience for all.

21. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission received and considered its current work programme.

Members were recommended to bring any comments and questions regarding the Work Programme to Councillor Halford or Anita Patel, Scrutiny Policy Officer.

22. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting came to a close at 19:23pm.