



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 1 MARCH 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Halford (Chair)

Councillor Ali (Vice Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Cole

Councillor Dawood
Councillor Shelton

Councillor Solanki

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Also Present:

Councillor Clair – Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

24. 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.

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes for the meeting held on 30th January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

26. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

27. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

28. TOURISM ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Director of Culture, Tourism and Inward Investment submitted a report to the Commission with a progress update on the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025.

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services, introduced the item and relayed to the Commission the plans and investments in place to promote Leicester as a tourist destination of choice in the United Kingdom.

The City Centre Director led the presentation. It was noted that the Tourism Action Plan had been launched at the end of 2019 at the Leicester Business Festival, as a collaboration with Leicestershire County Council. During the presentation, it was noted that:

- Local hotel occupation rates had recovered to 2019 levels since the pandemic. There was a 45% increase in bedspace due to the opening of new hotel franchises.
- 78% of the Tourism Action plan had already been delivered despite pandemic impacts and the predicted 2025 completion date.
- The Action plan was based on four main areas of interest: Product, Place, Positioning and People.
- An extra 1,500 more spaces for outdoor eating and drinking had been brought to the city.
- The Santander Cycle Scheme had achieved over 45,000 trips around the city as of April 2022, with 23 cycle docking stations, which was planned to increase to 30 docks and 300 cycles in 2022.
- There was an increase in overnight stays at Leicester, thanks to efforts from the 'Uncover the Story' promotion and the Leicester trails and itineraries in development, which proposed ideas for half-day to full weekend breaks in Leicester City.
- With assistance from BID Leicester, £4.2 million had been privately funded for Leicester businesses. BID ambassadors were providing a valuable meet and greet service to city centre visitors.
- 'Meet Leicester' free service had been established through the Place Marketing Team to promote business tourism for 50 venues and attractions.
- Businesses had been supported with 'We've Missed You' and 'Make a Date with Leicester' campaigns funded by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant.
- Footfall counters in three areas had recorded footfall as being nearly back to pre-pandemic levels.

Regarding the People aspect in focus, it was noted that:

- Due to the national and local skill shortage, DWP had set up a skills academy where local residents would develop new skills and form connections. Interviews with local employers were guaranteed to those using this prospect.
- The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) careers hub were working with tourism advisors in the City and County to create an 'Open Doors' programme for visitors to Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Next steps include developing a plan to promote the Visiting Friends and Family (VFR) market by recruiting local volunteer ambassadors to become local 'influencers', discovering and promoting what Leicester had to offer, and encouraging public and business communication.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation. Members were invited to ask questions of the officers.

Members questioned the unique points of Leicester, and what aspects would prevent locals and tourists alike from going elsewhere for a weekend away and instead, choose Leicester. Members also questioned the balance of availability for opportunity for adults and children. It was noted that Leicester had a wealth of opportunity and experience for all ages, including but not limited to; the National Space Centre, King Richard III gallery, broadness of culture and cuisine and leisure activities such as escape rooms and crazy golf, alongside the added benefit of Leicester's ease of accessibility through public transport links.

Further discussed was how Leicester compared to nearby competitors, such as Nottingham. It was noted that Leicester was a second-tier city, just below hotspots such as Birmingham and Bristol. Further data and statistics would be provided to the Commission at a later date.

Members discussed the Leicester Heritage Panels and potential errors in the information provided. It was noted that the Panels would be reviewed for any existing errors.

Members looked positively on Leicester's potential in various areas, including the business tourism market, considering its strategic location and public transport accessibility.

The Commission debated the Action Plan's ability to gain the interest of under 35's, due to the heavy importance placed on the historical aspects of the city, which was considered to be less interesting for that age group. It was noted that the student population and nightlife opportunity in Leicester was expansive, but more would have to be considered to keep students in the city after graduation.

Members requested further data on age groups involved in physically attended events or digital campaigns online, as well as data on the targets and indicators for success in achieving the Tourism Action Plan's goals.

It was noted that European grant funding for Covid-19 was provided to local businesses across various sectors, such as hotels, retail, hospitality, leisure, and beauty.

Members discussed untapped potential in the Golden Mile and what would be done to bring it to the forefront of Leicester's tourist aims.

Members considered business tourism events may finish later than the current opening times of facilities and attractions, and therefore consideration for extending opening hours later would be the most effective in targeting the business tourism market. It was noted that opening hours would be extended into the evening on a need basis and approach towards late hour openings would be flexible. It was further noted that the Cathedral area including St. Martins Square was well placed to welcome business events.

Members discussed concerns over the impact in the job market due to Brexit and what areas of the industry marketing was targeting to retain and attract new hospitality staff to Leicester. It was noted that hospitality was a large area in focus for recruitment, with the aim to be a stable career choice. Local agencies were stabilising the shortage in hospitality, therefore Leicester's career hub partnerships with LLEP and DWP would address the hospitality skill shortage over the next few years.

It was noted that Leicester had an opportunity to target group travel such as friendship groups meeting up or business tourism. The brochures in production would assist in targeting that demographic through day trip ideas to local attractions.

Members debated the potential of replicating the current efforts and investments in the city centre in other areas of the city, as current focus in investment felt limited to a specific area. It was noted that the 'Uncover the Story' project covered the exploration of the region, not just the city centre.

It was noted by Members and officers that the sporting market was another area of focus and plans to make the most of Leicester City Football Club, Leicester Tigers Rugby Club, and hosting other sporting events like World Darts, to increase tourism and footfall were underway.

Councillor Clair praised Member input and depth of thought process put forward for the item. He noted the wealth of opportunity and thriving economy of the city compared to 10-15 years ago. The Commission was reminded of the budget cuts in the Council and that all efforts were put forward to achieve the best possible outcome for Leicester despite the budget concerns.

Members questioned the need for additional resources and funding available. It was noted that the Shared Prosperity Fund may be an appropriate funding vehicle and the decision on the allocation would be confirmed in a few weeks' time.

AGREED

1. That Members be kept updated on the progression of the item, including an update to the Commission in six months.
2. That further data and statistics regarding Leicester's place against nearby competitors be provided to the Commission at a later date.
3. That further data regarding age groups involved in physically attended events or digital campaigns, as well as data on targets and indicators for success in achieving the Tourism Action Plan's objectives be presented to the Commission at a later date.
4. That Members comments be taken into consideration for future work.

29. EVENTS CALENDAR 2022

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a presentation detailing the planned festivals and events in Leicester in 2022.

Councillor Clair, deputy Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services, introduced the item. He noted the struggles with Covid-19 and the difficulties encountered to ensure the current Events Calendar was feasible. It was further noted that the events calendar would proceed in three categories: In-house funded, support in partnership and externally delivered events.

The Deputy Festival and Events Manager led the presentation. The presentation laid out an overview of how events and festival projects were run and funded, as well as the events planned in 2022.

It was brought to attention that the Riverside Festival was currently in planning and there was an intention to incorporate elements that referenced the Queen's Jubilee as part of it.

Members questioned where funding would come from. It was noted that core funding required for the events programme had already been approved and other events that didn't require direct funding were also supported with manpower, equipment, road safety and security. Members further asked about the possibilities of sponsorship for events where possible, due to the concerns around budget. It was agreed that sponsorship was a high priority and was proactively sought for events, with the sponsorship secured for Diwali in 2021 being the highest in recent years.

The Commission enquired about the marketing methods used to promote the events being held. It was noted that a variety of methods were in use, including brochures, tourist guides and social media campaigns. Some larger festivals had their own marketing campaigns planned and may include more methods, such as the TV advert used in the Christmas 2021 campaign.

Members probed the availability of funding for community hosted events for the Queen's Jubilee, such as street parties and other similar events. It was noted

that members of the public interested in holding events for the Platinum Jubilee would be referred over to the Festivals and Events Department for further information. There were no costs for road closures or event charges, however members of the public were advised to contact the Highways Department to confirm road closures. Councillor Clair added that members of the public were encouraged to apply for Ward Community Funding.

Members commented on the unique theme of the project: 'The World Re-Imagined' which brought to attention the impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It was noted that a fundraising exercise was underway with local partners. Leicester would be one of eight cities taking part and conducting the event. Members praised the project in making the community more aware of the horrors of the slave trade and Leicester's part in slavery in the 1900's, especially in the hosiery and cotton industries.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation.

AGREED:

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That a follow-up update be provided to the Commission during Summer 2022.

30. 50 YEARS OF UGANDAN ASIANS IN LEICESTER PROGRAMME - VERBAL UPDATE

Councillor Clair, Deputy Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services provided a verbal update on the 50 Years of Ugandan Asians in Leicester Programme.

Councillor Clair relayed to the Commission the importance of the Ugandan Asian community in Leicester and their positive impact on the economic success of Leicester. It was noted that he had been collaborating with different departments across the Council, external partners, and community groups across the city to learn from and glean stories and experiences of the Ugandan Asian community.

The collaboration intended for the Leicester Stories Gallery and the Ugandan Asian Community in Leicester was noted, which involved schools, art groups and communities providing shared memories and artifacts for display. The Museum would be opening July 2022. It was noted that similar artifacts would be used from the 40th anniversary event.

It was noted that £10k funding for the project had been sourced internally within the Council, as well as £100k from the Government Heritage Lottery Fund.

Emphasis was placed on the experiences of the Ugandan Asian community during the tragic circumstances of their migration. The event was intended to be a celebration of the Ugandan community and their successes.

The importance of Leicester being a tolerant city that provided help and support

to all refugees was stressed. It was noted that the Council would be providing personnel and equipment in support, in hopes to ensure the success of the event.

Councillor Clair highlighted the promotion for the event in the Leicester Mercury, as well the ongoing work developed with local artists to create small stories, presented to the public during Summer 2022. A potential BBC radio event was being considered.

Councillor Clair informed the Commission that updates would be provided to future Commission meetings as the project continues.

Members discussed the impact the Ugandan Asian refugees had made on Leicester over the years.

Members expressed concern that representation was not being given to Kenyan Asian refugees.

The Chair thanked Councillor Clair for the verbal update.

AGREED:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That further updates be provided to future Commission meetings.
3. That the comments made be taken into consideration in the ongoing development of the project.

31. SPORTS ENGLAND INITIATIVES AND GOOD PRACTICE

The Director of Public Health submitted a presentation to the Commission on the current best practice for women's participation in sport in the city.

Councillor Clair, the Deputy Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services, introduced the item. It was noted that the project had inspired Leicester's leisure centres, which now provide women's only classes and physical activity sessions.

The Sport and Physical Activity Manager and Sport and Active Recreation Development Manager relayed Sport England's 'This Girl Can' campaign presentation to the Commission, which aimed to inspire and encourage women to participate in sporting and leisure activities.

During the presentation, attention was drawn to:

- The project would be delivered in three phases based on the three main objectives.
- Phase 1 had brought the initiatives directly to women instead of expecting women to travel to them. The campaign had 95 million views worldwide and had brought £66 million to the economy.
- Phase 2 aimed to increase resilience, which had brought 700,000

followers on social media, with 50% of 40-60's recognising at least one of their adverts.

- Phase 3 aimed to challenge and overcome cultural barriers. It was noted that the results of phase 3 would be presented to the Commission once they had been published.

The Commission praised the presentation and commended the efforts to encourage more women's involvement in sports activities.

Members discussed the Council's investment in the sporting and leisure sector and questioned how residents would be encouraged to increase participation and the steps taken to achieve those aims. It was noted that the situation was complex as despite the opportunities and facilities offered, public commitments would interfere with further involvement. The campaign to dispel myths and barriers had been successful in reducing barriers to participation.

Members contemplated the difference in stereotyped perception of non-participating groups and how to best challenge those perceptions, for example, women using weights at a gym.

Regarding the Wycliff Initiative – Active Through Football, which was a five-year series of funded, women's only football sessions in Wycliffe ward for women aged between 18 and 49. Concerns were raised over its April/May start date coinciding with Ramadan, and the impact on the female population of certain cultural groups taking part. Members also requested clarified targets for participation over the project's time period.

Members questioned the intention behind limiting the project to Wycliffe ward, to which it was noted that the pilot area was decided upon due to funding and targeting areas of Leicester with higher deprivation rates. The location wouldn't exclude women travelling to join from different areas of Leicester, and the five-year pilot period would be a period in which to learn from before possible expansion into other areas.

There was confusion among Members about the boundaries of the ward, which wasn't a defined ward geographically, but a political boundary. The comment was noted by the Sport's Services Officers and was to be considered for future reports.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Council increase publicity and raise awareness of Leisure and Sport facilities on offer across the city.
3. That the results of Phase 3 be presented to the Commission upon completion.
4. That the impact of the chosen April/May date and clarified targets for participation over the project time period regarding the Wycliff Initiative be presented to the Commission at a future meeting.
5. That the item be used to inform the ongoing task group review.

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

The Chair provided a verbal update on the Women's Participation in Physical Activity and Sport Task Group.

It was noted that the Task Group had been making good progress, with two informative sessions having been conducted. A further session had been planned for 10th March, which the Women in Sports item would feed into.

It was noted that work on the review would continue over the next few months.

AGREED:

That the verbal update be noted.

33. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission received and considered its current work programme.

Members were recommended to bring any questions or comments regarding the Work Programme to the Chair or the Scrutiny Policy Officer.

34. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair thanked the commission for their hard work and support over the past municipal year.

Councillor Barton thanked the Chair for their hard work chairing the Commission.

Councillor Clair thanked the Commission for their hard work.

There being no further urgent business, the meeting closed at 7:55pm.