



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2015 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dr Barton (Chair)
Councillor Unsworth (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bajaj

Councillor Shelton

Councillor Govind

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14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Liz Blyth, Councillor Thalukdar and Councillor Halford.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or other interest they may have in the business on the agenda.

There were no declarations.

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters Arising:

Item 9 Rugby World Cup

Councillor Barton informed the meeting she would circulate a piece that had been reported for Central News about the Rugby World Cup.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2015 had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

17. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

18. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

19. FESTIVAL AND EVENTS REVIEW

The Head of Museum's gave a verbal update on the Festival and Events review ahead of the full report that would come to scrutiny in February.

The commission were informed that:

- Previously Festivals and Events had been reviewed in 2012 which had resulted in a number of three year funding contracts,
- The next review period had started and the initial report had gone to the executive in July scoping the review process,
- The review was now gathering information and carrying out fact finding from the funded organisations,
- There would then be a consultation period and organisations affected in the review would have an opportunity to respond,
- Festivals were one of the most popular areas of the councils services and the council was mindful of this being an effective review,
- The aim of the review was to ensure money was spent appropriately and that the process was open to scrutiny,
- The review would be looking at events that took place each year rather than one off activities such as the Rugby World Cup or the King Richard III events. Events such as Black History Month had funding every year and so would fall into the review.

The Head of Museums informed the commission that the Festival and Events review would be available for full discussion later in the municipal year once more information had been gathered and consultations carried out.

The Chair concluded that it was important to ensure we celebrated all our communities and there may be a need to include new community events and to consider that those more established may be able to sustain their own events with less funding from the local authority.

RESOLVED:

That the Festival and Events Review be brought to a future meeting of the commission for full discussion.

20. GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY MAIN LINE PROJECT

The Chair introduced the item and invited Lili Tabiner and Bill Ford both from Great Central Railway (GCR) to address the commission.

Bill Ford, the Managing Director of GCR outlined a report setting out the background and an overview of the two projects currently underway which included the following points:

- GCR had undergone major development since 2008; there was a strong team of people behind GCR who had moved the concept on considerably.
- Since 2008 GCR had raised £9.1 million from grants, foundations and supporters including four generous stakeholders. The money raised was invested into the superstructure of the business over the past three years and GCR had begun a programme of expansion.
- The first project “Bridging the Gap” would reinstate a 500 metre section of track in Loughborough to reconnect two sections creating a main line of 18 miles and a link to Ruddington.
- The second project would see the new Heritage Museum built at GCR terminus, Leicester North. The Museum was a partnership between GCR, Leicester City Council, the National Railway Museum (NRM) York and Leicestershire County Council.
- In May 2015 the museum was awarded a Round 1 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund with £10m to be allocated after the successful completion of the Development Stage.
- The vision was to change from steam to theme park and encourage tourism, in 2007 most visitors were steam enthusiasts but since then the “product” had been developed for families who now formed 80% of visitors. GCR intended to continue to develop the tourist trade and the museums location formed a natural Tourism Gateway between the City and the County.
- An important design feature of the museum would be to see actual steam engines coming into it and this would be unique.
- In total the museum project would cost £17.7m and once opened it was expected to: double the visitors to GCR from 130,000 to 250,000 each year, create an additional 10 full time jobs in GCR, support a further 700 jobs across Leicestershire and contribute £44m to the local economy.

Members discussed the project which included the following comments:

- 7 allotments had been “lost” to the development as the scheme ran at a 45 degree angle across the site, however once completed there would be some land at the side of the burial ground that would be reinstated as 12 allotment plots. It was noted that the project did not affect the cemetery or any burial ground at all.
- GCR were looking at the whole of the railway as a living museum with the core at the terminus in North West Leicester and the project would be incorporated through to Quorn and Loughborough. There would be a link between the working railway and the museum which would develop the story of each station: Quorn (Wartime), Rothley (Edwardian) and Loughborough (Victorian).
- It was anticipated there would be no disruption to residents living nearby when the project started as there was an existing access road but the project would also carry out a traffic impact assessment during the development stage.
- GCR were in talks with Vintage Trains Birmingham to look at opportunities to connect to heritage trains.
- The project was being developed as a fantastic day out and would be

encouraging people to come in to Leicester to stay.

- The Delivery stage had earmarked a certain amount, leaving £5.3 million to be secured, GCR were developing a fundraising strategy including trusts, foundations and donors and had a very good track record with experience of putting bids to trusts and delivering on funding. GCR also had several very generous stakeholders, the LLEP had included the museum in its pipeline projects and GCR were confident about securing funding.
- As one of the partners, the National Railway Museum (NRM) were helping with mentoring on running a museum, appointing a senior curator and had agreed to help with collections and archiving. In terms of cash support NRM were restrained because they were public funded but their “in kind” support was second to none.
- Re: curation of museum – Loan agreements would be entered into. Initial research into defining exhibits had started and would be taken further; there would be consultation to establish main stories which would define objects and artefacts.
- GCR were also working on links with schools/universities focusing on science, technology and maths. The museum would have a research facility but not archives. GCR were also looking at how to use Greenacres which had class room facilities and there was a suggestion to develop a foundation course to be studied at Greenacres giving a stepping stone to other universities. GCR also wanted to give opportunities and practical skills to people in woodturning and toolmaking.
- The museum would use modern technology like that used in the King Richard III visitor centre for visual displays, the project would look to procure interactive displays, lighting and a number of services wherever possible from local businesses and hoped to learn by the experiences had by those involved at King Richard III visitor centre.

The Chair thanked Bill Ford and Lili Tabiner for their interesting presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

21. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RICHARD III

Councillor Clair, Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sport introduced the report which had been commissioned by Focus Consultants and funded through the European Regional Development Fund. The report covered the timeframe from the discovery of King Richard III (KRIII) upto March 2015 and deliberately did not include the reinterment.

The City Director outlined the details in the report and explained it was important to commission an objective piece of work which showed that overall the amount spent paled into insignificance when considering the amount it had generated for the city. The report excluded the 2 weeks of the reinterment because figures would have been distorted by the volume of people coming

into the city during that period. The figures in the report were based on the best available data and used industry accepted methods to calculate outcomes.

Members were informed that some of the economic benefits to Leicester as a result of the discovery of KRIII included:

- 1012 full time jobs were created,
- Total Volunteering hour's 11635, this gave a value of £118,566. Volunteers played a significant part during the whole event, trip advisor described Leicester as a very friendly and welcoming city,
- Visitors Numbers to Leicester showed an increase of 2.6% from 2012-2013,
- Retail businesses had increased by 4.42% between 2011-2014 compared to 0.31% in the region,
- Accommodation and Food Services businesses had grown 9.8% compared to 2.56% in the East Midlands,
- Arts and Entertainments businesses had grown 13.48% compared to 0.4% in the East Midlands,
- Leicester was emerging strong and visits to all city museums had increased 11%,
- There had been an increase in hotel occupancy from 2014-15 of 5%,
- PR value alone amounted to £12million,
- There was a long list of companies now interested in coming to Leicester i.e. IBM and Hastings,

The City Centre Director concluded with a number of points:

- The discovery of KRIII had raised the profile of the city in the eyes of the world.
- Now the city needed to upsell and the next challenge would be to open a new hotel in the city as the occupancy figure had reached 85%.
- New jobs had been created though not all were necessarily permanent as that depended on trajectory, however tourism gave opportunities to people who were unable to work full time and those under 30 especially.

Members discussed the report and congratulated the team on the achievements throughout the project.

The ensuing discussion also included the following comments:

- It was hoped that tourists would be encouraged to stay for longer rather than just visit for one day or overnight.
- Visitors to the City were surprised by what was on offer, many thought of Leicester as an industrial city and found instead a very diverse city. Trip Advisor comments were very positive and well worth a read.
- In relation to sustainability, tourism led to the growth of different target markets. When KRIII was found it was unexpected, the council quickly put in place a plan with open days and the temporary exhibition at Guildhall opened which attracted over 200,000 people. The council invested £35k in that and the Guildhall exhibition was closed deliberately 2 weeks before the visitor centre opened to increase interest, it was always known that the exhibitions had to be sustainable. The Cathedral

obtained a HLF grant, interpretation panels were commissioned, the tomb created and the Cathedral gardens re-developed to create a visitor attraction. Since the reinterment visitor numbers had stayed robust.

- Tourism Action Plan had been realised in the Tourism Forum being started.
- The council had now purchased Vaughan College and were taking time to think what to do best and to link to Jubilee Square.
- Interestingly the bid to be a host city for Rugby World Cup (RWC) was secured before KRIII was discovered but it all added to the picture for Leicester and KRIII had secured more visitors to RWC and vice versa.
- Social inclusion was something the project was very aware of at the outset and there were plenty of options for people to participate such as the walking trails and the Cathedral were adamant it would always be free to enter.
- On the Economic side there were also 15 new businesses around the Market Street side of the City Centre.
- For a long time the medieval history of this city was overshadowed for Leicester's industrial history and sporting history. Leicester has many stories because it is such an old city.

The Chair commented that Leicester had shown it was brave enough to invest and that had paid off.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

22. WORK PROGRAMME

A discussion took place on the work programme and the following points were noted:

- Plans for Western Park Golf Club would fall under the remit of Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny and any "plans" would have to be considered under regulatory procedures in Planning and would be guided by the Local Plan.
- Saffron Hill Cemetery – 1st phase had completed and some progress had been made on the 2nd phase with the Director of Enforcement and Local Services putting forward a capital bid.
- It was agreed that a Joint Tourism meeting with the Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission be explored.
- Belgrave Hall – 1st year evaluation to be brought to December meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be updated to reflect the above points.

23. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to take place on 29th October 2015 at 5.30pm in Meeting Room 1, Ground Floor, City Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm