



Leicester  
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 4:00 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

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor, Culture Leisure & Sport

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**89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received from Members of the Commission.

**90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dr Moore declared an Other Disclosable Interest in that she supplied books to the Richard III visitor/ reading centre.

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 therefore was not required to withdraw from the meeting.

**91. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission held on 16 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **92. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair requested all Members of the Commission, Officers and Members of the Executive present and anyone else present that would be participating in the meeting to kindly introduce themselves.

The Chair advised the Committee that the meeting was a virtual meeting as permitted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and outlined the procedures for the meeting.

Management and all staff were thanked for their commitment and hard work in supporting and re-opening services, and also supporting ward councillors and the community throughout the Covid pandemic.

## **93. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

## **94. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE**

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

## **95. UPDATE ON COVID-19 RECOVERY PLANS**

The Committee were asked to consider the recommendations of the Directors contained in the reports.

### **(i) UPDATE PARKS & OPEN SPACES COVID-19 IMPACT AND RECOVERY PLAN**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services submitted a report to provide a further update on the impact Covid-19 has had on the Parks & Open Spaces service since the previous update on the 16 July 2020, which for the purpose of the Scrutiny Commission included Parks and Bereavement Services.

#### **All to note – Parks and Opens Spaces:**

- Parks had remained open throughout the pandemic – this provided an opportunity for people to exercise and help with mental wellbeing.
- The presenting Officers informed the committee about the legislation which came into force to protect public health due to the coronavirus, restrictions under several regulations were explained.
- Parks and Open Spaces had remained open in Leicester throughout the lockdown however regulation 4 required a range of park facilities including outdoor gyms, play areas and ballcourts to be initially closed, but were able to later re-open following a deep clean and regular cleaning programme which was introduced.

- The exception was the reopening of basketball courts in Leicester which remained closed as they formed part of a multi-use courts for team sports which were still banned under the guidelines.
- Due to issues around social distancing pets corner remained closed.
- A media campaign took place to encourage and remind the public about appropriate social distancing measures.
- In addition to the core Parks Warden team, additional external security had been employed to act as Covid marshals in parks and required times, of which Leicester was ahead by using these Covid marshals.
- New government measures would determine whether the additional security would need to be increased or decreased. It was noted the Police also had enforcement powers for requirements set out by law if people did not comply.
- No festive season events such as Halloween had currently been planned and were unlikely.

**All to note Bereavement Services:**

- Members attention was drawn to the report charts which highlighted the demand for funeral services.
- Since the last update to the commission, a number of changes to legislation and government guidance on managing deaths and funerals had been announced, including attendance at funerals being now limited to no more than 30 persons which was previously limited to only immediate family. In addition, the mandatory wearing of face coverings had been introduced, discouragement of singing and the resumption of scattering ashes by the crematorium team.
- Bereavement Services were working with the Corporate ICT team in a procurement process to upgrade the multimedia facilities available at Gilroes crematorium which would allow for funeral recording and funeral webcasting services to support bereaved families who could not attend a funeral, amongst other access enhancements.
- Plans were in place for expected excess deaths throughout the winter period.

In response to Commission Members' questions, the following issues were discussed and noted:

- Members were informed of the verbal and physical abuse faced by Park Wardens during the pandemic and the enforcement which had to take place.
- All staff had carried out CMT and alone/ vulnerable training and the agency staff had been trained to do a specific job.
- A Member of the Commission welcomed the webcasting of funeral services and encouraged this as a future service.
- The service had been and would continue to support the public in a range of ways including; the provision of marshals, working

with businesses, support around hygiene, encouragement of face masks, disinfection regimes, firmly discouraging people coming together, staying safe and more.

- In relation to enforcing numbers rule at funerals it was noted there had not been a significant number of breaches, however to ensure compliance on what was a very sensitive area, the service would firstly converse with the associated persons and avoid police enforcement with that being a last resort.
- A Member of the Commission expressed concerns about reported issues in relation to Bede Park such as alleged recent stabbings, late night gathering and music. The officer responded that Bede Park was identified as a hotspot which was why two static security were based there until 10pm weekdays with a dedicated City Warden at the weekends. Various options were discussed as to how this situation could be dealt with. Some Members queried options such as closing the park, curfew closing and additional cameras; officers provided responses with the main reassurance that parks were safe.

**AGREED:**

1. That thanks be passed to all Officers who had prepared reports and answered questions.
2. That further updates be provided with the progress of this work.
3. If Covid-19 cases increased, that LCC continue to increase raising awareness of safety of the services.
4. For the service to consider as to how Bede Park could be made safer.
5. That the service continues to remain sensitive to numbers present at a funeral.

**(ii) LEICESTER MUSEUMS & GALLERIES REOPENING UPDATE**

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a presentation to update Members of the Commission on the reopening of Leicester Museums & Galleries.

During the presentation it was noted that:

- Museums reopened in August.
- Members were encouraged to visit the Lego Brick City exhibition.
- New website had been launched: <http://www.leicestermuseums.org/> and new chevron branding well received.
- A welcome back film had been produced for the public, which also contained Covid safe measures which were now in place in Leicester museums and galleries.
- Autumn and Winter 2020 would see a difference in how events would be delivered compared to previously i.e. Bonfire, Diwali, Christmas Switch On and the Ice Rink would not be delivered due

to Covid-19 restrictions for mass gatherings. Larger events had been cancelled; however, some events have been able to be delivered online.

Members of the Commission discussed the presentation and Officers responded to the queries, as below;

- Organised school bookings were in place for visits to the museums.
- Several Members had concerns about the message and target audience of the film presented. The Officer noted that the film was mostly intended for Member organisations and stakeholders, however, it would not be used as a promotion tool from now.
- A Member of the Commission made reference to an error in the Officers presentation. The Member noted that Leicester Carnival online was delivered by the Leicester Carnival themselves. Opal22 Arts delivered the history of carnival at a different time and date. The Officer agreed with the correction.
- Members of the Commission echoed praises for the work being done and the service provided.

AGREED:

1. That the commission were all encouraged to hear that positive steps were being taken by Officers to accommodate school visits safely. Could the service consider the possibilities of also sharing museum activities and learning history on school websites in the future.
2. That the service continues the good work.

### **(iii) SPORT SERVICES RECOVERY UPDATE**

The Director of Public Health submitted a presentation updating the Commission on the Sports Services Covid-19 recovery update.

- The Committee were informed about the current status of outdoor leisure facilities and community testing.
- It was noted that a phased re-opening would take place for indoor leisure centres and facilities from Monday 14 September 2020.
- Due to the leisure centres only being reopened for one week so far, the Officer recommended that the service came back after two months to provide a clearer report.

Following Members queries:

- Current capacity limits and booking numbers were noted. In addition, Officers explained the impact of the lockdown in Leicester which caused gyms to be closed an extra four weeks. It was expected that over the next 2-8 weeks there could see an increase in attendance as customers regained confidence.
- It was noted that the impact of Covid-19 would have financial implications.

- The service would make a claim to the government as part of the job retention scheme to recoup some costs.
- The Chair requested that the Member contact the Officer directly in relation to a specific membership/ rates query with Humberstone Heights Golf Course.
- A Member of the Commission expressed the importance that gyms represented many people's health and wellbeing.

AGREED:

1. Praises were passed to the Sports and Leisure Centre staff for the good work of reopening services safely.
2. To report a progress report to come back in the next few months.
3. To promote Health and Wellbeing to the public as a priority.

#### **96. PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20 LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL: ARTS AND MUSEUMS, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS SERVICE**

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted the Performance Report 2019/ 20 Leicester City Council: Arts and Museums, Festivals and Events Service.

The report was produced for the City Mayor and Executive to provide information on the strategic objectives and works being done towards achieving these.

The Committee passed thanks to the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment for the report, all the successes and they looked forward to more.

In response to a Member of the Commissions interest in an upcoming Blitz exhibition, the Director noted the new heritage panels which had been put up in recent weeks.

AGREED:

1. To note the contents of the report.

#### **97. JEWRY WALL MUSEUM UPDATE**

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment provided a verbal update on the Jewry Wall Museum.

- Prior to Covid the service were to sign a contract with North Midland Construction to do the first phase of work, however, this was delayed due to Covid pandemic. Since then the company had worked with LCC to review the contract and allow for Covid implications. The contract had now been signed and works would commence in approximately 1-2 weeks. This work would deliver the new ramp access up onto the upper floor of the old Vaughn college and cladding/ repairs on the building.

- Funding was in the place from the Capital Programme, which was approved at Full Council in February 2020, since then the service also secured £2.5m in contribution from the business rates pool.
- Members were assured that this project continued to be a high priority and the service was determined to create something that would be a national attraction.

Responses to queries from Members of the Commission:

- Some Members of the Commission noted the importance of it being a very sensitive time especially when building a museum of this value, the following suggestions were provided; the need for it to be well insulated, full disabled access was required and low energy costs.
- In addition, it was felt that due to the current sensitive time and people who may be facing other issues in life such as financial difficulties, that the Council may need to provide further explanation/ messages to address to the public on; the capital funding streams for building the museum (which differ from government revenue support) and about the length of time that the project had been taking and would take to be completed.  
In response, the Director of Tourism and Inward Investment noted that the Council investing in its various capital programmes could help to drive economic activity in Leicester.
- It was noted that the Economic Regeneration service within the Council which focused on the economic recovery plan, would soon see a focus on the recruitment of young people and apprenticeships for the future.

AGREED:

1. Thanks, were passed to the service.
2. To keep the commission updated on progress.
3. That the service provide a detailed report (probably for next years meeting) including breakdown of spend and benefits to the city.
4. For the service to remain sensitive to the current situation and public perception and that channels of communication were open to sending and receiving messages about what the plans were.

## **98. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

It was noted that the Local Plan Item would be included on the agenda for the next Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission Meeting.

## **99. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 6.15pm.

