

Leicester
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 2017 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Unsworth (Chair)
Councillor Bajaj (Vice Chair)

Councillor Dawood
Councillor Halford

Councillor Shelton
Councillor Thalukdar

In Attendance

Councillor Clair: Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sport

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18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from the John Leach, Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Shelton declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 9, "Leicester City Council Sports Services Review", as he was a regular user of the Evington Gym. Councillor Shelton also declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 10, "Arts Council England's Local National Portfolio Organisations 2018-22", as he was a trustee of Phoenix Square.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice Councillor Shelton's judgement of the public interest. He was not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission held on 13 June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

21. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

There was no discussion on this item as there were no actions carried forward from the previous meeting.

22. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had no announcements to make.

23. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

24. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

25. OVERVIEW OF THE MUSEUMS SERVICES IN LEICESTER

Sarah Levitt, the Head of Arts and Museums gave a presentation which provided an update on museum developments; a copy of which is attached to the back of these minutes.

Councillor Clair, Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sport introduced the presentation and explained that there had been considerable investment in the New Walk Museum. Improvements made included the new staircase and a new lift to the first floor. Investment had also been made in other areas including the Abbey Pumping Station and the Jewry Wall Museum.

During the presentation, the Head of Arts and Museums made the following points:

- There had been a steady growth in visitor numbers over the past 15 years.
- The opening of the staircase and the new lift enabled visitors to access the galleries and exhibitions on the first floor. These galleries included the German Expressionist Gallery which had a performance space. This was an Arts Council project.
- The Medieval Leicester Galleries were created at the Guildhall to help to set the context around King Richard and the Visitor Centre. External funding had been received for this.
- External funding had also been received to create the 'House of Memories' in Newarke Houses Museum, a project to help people living with dementia and their carers.
- Temporary exhibitions had been created through engagement with community partners. These included the Rugby World Cup Exhibition (for

which funding had been received from the Heritage Lottery fund), Navratri and the Magna Carta.

- The very successful and popular Fearless Foxes Exhibition had been created in just six weeks when it became apparent that Leicester City Football Club was going to win the premiership. This was a change to the planned event.
- Improvement work was taking place at Abbey Pumping Station which would develop the commercial offer. These improvements included the erection of a marquee which had enabled the Antique Roadshow to be held there recently; an event that attracted about 3500 attendees. The Arts Council had funded both that marquee and another one at Belgrave Hall.

A number of comments and queries were raised in the ensuing discussion, including the following:

- In response to a suggestion for an exhibition to celebrate Leicester's entertainment scene (to include music and the cinema), Members heard that the current Collections, Interpretations and Learning Manager had also considered this. He was due to leave shortly but the suggestion would be raised with his successor when appointed.
- The new staircase at the New Walk Museum was received very favourably by Members.
- Excellent work had been carried out in Leicester museums; a Member questioned how the public were made aware of all that was happening.

The Head of Arts and Museums responded that developments in social media, twitter and Facebook had been of significant help in information sharing and communication. She believed that the increase in visitor numbers related to the use of social media and it was questionable as to whether printed matter was still effective. Members also heard that the Council were much better at promoting Leicester.

The Commission heard that the 'Visit Leicester' website was due to go live in a few days and work was ongoing on the 'Story of Leicester' website which would look at the history of Leicester over 2000 years.

- A Member questioned what was being done to attract collections that would not normally be shown in Leicester. The Head of Art and Museums explained that the Museum Service had been approached by the Royal Collection Trust, with exhibits from Buckingham Palace. Private collectors had also approached the Museum Service.
- In relation to interaction with primary and secondary schools, Members heard that the standard way of bring children into the museums was through school trips; this had changed, possibly because of rules around health and safety. However the Egyptian displays were probably the best in the East

Midlands and attracted many visits from schools.

- Following a request for better signage in the Egyptian display area to make it more child friendly, Members heard that the Collections, Interpretations and Learning Manager had applied for funding for some improvements to the exhibition and Members were encouraged to visit again when the work had been carried out.
- The museum was also setting up a project for people with Asperger Syndrome, whereby they could come and meet up together. This might take place on a Saturday afternoon.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and thanked officers for the presentation.

AGREED:

that the presentation be noted.

26. LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL SPORTS SERVICES REVIEW

The Head of Sports delivered a presentation on the public consultation for the Sports Services Review, a copy of which is attached to the back of these minutes.

Councillor Clair, the Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sports introduced the item and made the following points:

- The Council had invested over £400k in the Humberstone Golf Club and £70k had been spent to enhance the changing rooms.
- The Council proposed to invest £1.8m for improvements in four leisure centres to enhance reciprocity between the services users and the facility.
- These four centres were Aylestone Leisure Centre, Braunstone Leisure Centre, Cossington Sports Centre and Evington Sports Centre.
- There would also be investment to improve the air conditioning and humidity in swimming pools – this would benefit both customers and staff. This investment was not part of the consultation.
- The Council was working with schools to make it easier for them to bring children for swimming lessons and approximately 80% of schools had taken up that offer.
- Gym membership was available and it was hoped to encourage more users to take up membership and pay by direct debit.
- There was an aim to generate more income to bridge the £3.5m gap between the annual revenue budget of £8.6m and income of £5.1m.

- The proposals were open for consultation; views and comments received would be taken on board before decisions were taken.

Points then made by the Head of Sports included the following:

- The proposals in the consultation were about changing the shape of the service and how it was delivered.
- The service provided by Leicester City Council was high cost and low performing when compared to similar local authorities. The aim was to change this to low cost and high performing service.
- Under the proposals in the consultation, there were no plans to close facilities or externalise the leisure centre management.
- The proposal was to invest £1.8m in health and fitness in four leisure centres, which were spread out around the city and were accessible. It was anticipated that it would take three years to achieve maturity to improve the offer and thereby increase membership payments by direct debit from 18% (the current figure) to 85% (as experienced in the top performing local authorities).
- To facilitate this, the membership offer would be revamped to provide better choices; for example gym only or swim only membership.
- There were plans to improve marketing and staff training to ensure the service was relevant to different people.
- Designated spin studios would be created; this would prevent the need to move bicycles in and out of rooms when the sessions were held.
- The review would look at swimming pool opening times; for example it may not be cost effective for all pools to be open early in the morning and late in the evening.

Comments made during the discussion on the report and presentation included the following:

- There were other gyms that were cheaper, but LCC centres offered a variety and number of facilities under one roof.
- Concessions were offered for low income families.
- There were currently approximately 3000 memberships; the aim was to increase this to 5500. The proposals for membership fees would make membership more attractive with options that could reduce the overall cost.
- The proposals for improvements to the Evington Leisure Centre were welcomed.

- The overall investment in sport and leisure was welcomed and deemed necessary to promote better health in the city.
- The Council received a public health grant to promote healthier lifestyles and there was a very successful GP referral scheme. The Council were keen to work with groups that suffered from health inequality and engage with those groups where people who would not normally go to leisure centres.
- Requests were made for unhealthy food to be removed from leisure centre vending machines.
- If the proposed improvements were carried out to the four centres as highlighted in the presentation, any impact on other leisure centres would be reviewed to assess any possible detrimental resource implications. Members heard that there would be an opportunity to share equipment with other leisure centres. Some of the planned changes were general improvements such as marketing and membership offers which were regardless of the level of investment.
- As part of the procurement process, interested contractors would be asked how they would mitigate the impact on the customer whilst improvement works were carried out. The aim was to try to mitigate this as much as possible.
- It was proposed that some of the larger centres such as Aylestone, Braunstone and Evington would have longer opening hours. Prices were mean tested; there were concessions and a new membership structure, all of which would help to mitigate the changes experienced by vulnerable groups.
- A request was made for additional sauna facilities in the centres. Evington for example had just one sauna.

The Chair concluded the discussion and stressed the need to get things right and to encourage others to use leisure centres for their own health and wellbeing. He added that everyone had a responsibility to promote healthier lifestyles. The Chair requested that officers took on board the request to remove unhealthy food from vending machines and also do more to publicise the leisure centre facilities.

AGREED:

that the report and presentation be noted and an update be brought back to a future meeting of the Commission.

27. ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND'S LOCAL NATIONAL PORTFOLIO ORGANISATIONS 2018-22

The Head of Arts and Museums submitted a briefing note which set out the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations 2018-22.

Councillor Clair, Assistant City for Culture, Leisure and Sport introduced the briefing note explaining that he was a member of the Executive Board and had been involved in the funding process. Investment in art and culture attracted more people into the city and resulted in economic as well as social benefits. It was significant to note that for the first time ever, the Arts Council England had come out of London and chosen Leicester to announce its plans for its investment across England for the period between 2018 -2022.

Comments made during the discussion on the report included the following:

- The Arts Council funding would be in addition to the museums core budget. A business case needed to be submitted and funding would have to be used for new projects rather than existing ones.
- The funding would be used to refresh the overall arts and culture strategy.
- New Walk Museum would be actively seeking to engage with young people and inviting their participation.
- The news of the funding award was very good news for Leicester and officers and the Assistant City Mayor were thanked for their hard work in securing the grant.
- The funding would enable every child and young person to have an opportunity to experience the richness of arts and culture offered in the city.

AGREED:

that the briefing note be noted.

28. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair requested that updates on the three agenda items discussed at the meeting be brought back to a future meeting of Commission when appropriate.

In response to a query relating to Arts and Murals in the Cultural Quarter, the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment confirmed that there would be a follow up to the project in November.

It was noted that there was an item on the Blue Plaques Scheme on the work programme and a suggestion was made that the Trade Unions may wish to sponsor a Plaque to commemorate the Trade Union movement.

29. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Museum Developments Update

Sarah Levitt
Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport
Scrutiny Commission
8th August 2017



Victorian Art Gallery,
New Walk Museum



German Expressionist Gallery,
New Walk Museum



Medieval Leicester Galleries,
Guildhall



House of Memories,
Newarke Houses Museum



Animal Stories Exhibition,
New Walk Museum



Jewry Wall Museum Refurbishment Project:
Artists Impression



Rugby World Cup Exhibition,
Newarke Houses Museum



Fearless Foxes Exhibition,
New Walk Museum



Antiques Roadshow,
Abbey Pumping Station



Splendours of
Subcontinent Exhibition,
New Walk Museum



New Staircase,
New Walk Museum




Sports Services Review Public Consultation 8 August 2017

Consultation Proposals



Review Background and Context

- Budget saving £2 million
- Sports Services - Subsidy £3.5 million
- Benchmarking - high cost and low performing service
- Significant data and evidence collated
- Potential and demand to increase health and fitness
- Sufficient supply of Sports Hall's across City
- Up to 40% swimming pool capacity
- Low Pool time usage – early and late evening



Appraisal of options

- Review assessed all options including;
- Governance and externalisation
- Closure and rationalisation
- New build
- Considered experience from other Unitary Authorities
- Under these proposals there are no plans to close facilities or externalise the leisure centre management




Public Consultation – timescales and Proposals

- 12 weeks consultation period
- August 7 – October 30 2017
- Report back by the end of the year
- The consultation will seek feedback on two key proposals;
- **Investment in Health and Fitness**
- **Review of swimming pool opening times**




Proposals

- Proposed to adopt an invest to save approach
- Proposed to invest £1.8m in Health and Fitness in 4 Leisure Centres.
- Grow and develop usage, membership and income
- Business Case for growth
- £400k air handling in 6 leisure centres
- On going maintenance and improvement



Investment Proposals

Sites	Capital Building Costs (ex VAT)	Equipment Costs (ex VAT)	What will the capital fund?
Aylestone LC	£196k	£153k	Health and fitness equipment replacement, removal and conversion of bar in to functional fitness facility.
Braunstone LC	£15k	£16k	Conversion of crèche to create dance studio and new spin studio.
Cossington SC	£424k	£163k	Conversion of Sports Hall to create a 50 station gym and group exercise studio.
Evington SC	£683k	£182k	Expansion of existing gym to create new 75 station gym, new dance and spin studio.
Total	£1.318m	£514k	





Proposed to review of Swimming pool opening times

- Pool times reviewed not opening hours of leisure centres
- Coordinated approach to pool opening times
- Proposals for each Leisure Centre included within consultation
- Early morning and late evening swimming
- Targeted sessions will be reprogrammed to reduce impact
- Proposed to work differently with swimming clubs



Rationale

- Focus on service improvement and growth
- Lots happening to improve the service already
- Invest to Save approach
- More efficient with swimming pool opening hours
- Avoids having to close facilities and services
- Minimise impact of savings on customers
- Creates investment to transform the customer offer
- Projected net saving £1.5 million p.a. after 3 years



NEXT STEPS

- Communicate consultation
- <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/>
- Customers
- General public
- Stakeholders/ partners/Clubs
- Consider feedback
- Report back end of the Year



QUESTIONS



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