



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2017 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Unsworth (Chair)
Councillor Bajaj (Vice Chair)

In Attendance

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor
Councillor Adam Clarke – Assistant City Mayor Energy and Sustainability
Councillor Clair – Assistant City Mayor, Culture, Leisure and Sport

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30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dawood and Halford.

The Chair stated that the meeting was not quorate; the Commission would not be in a position to agree the minutes or make recommendations but instead would receive reports and presentations and note and comment as appropriate.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The meeting heard that the minutes of the previous meeting held 8 August 2017, would be carried forward to the next meeting where Members would be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

33. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

There was no discussion under this item of business.

The Chair stated in view of the meeting being inquorate, he would change the order of the agenda, and take presentations on De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket first.

34. DEVELOPMENTS AT DE MONTFORT HALL

The Commission received a presentation on developments at De Montfort Hall, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

The Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sport introduced the item and stated that De Montfort Hall, which had been looking tired and in need of refurbishment was now looking like a major concert venue. Investment in the venue had resulted in improvements such as new seating and carpets, improved office accommodation and refurbished artists' changing facilities.

The General Manager at De Montfort Hall talked through the presentation; points made included the following:

- In 2009, a Task Group, chaired by Councillor Newcombe had undertaken a review of the Hall and had identified that a significant amount of refurbishment was necessary. That refurbishment had been taking place over the past seven years and had led to improved performance and income.
- Improved performance had enabled further investment in the building.
- Improvements included the following:
 - New seats in the auditorium and a new carpet in the foyer.
 - The replacement of front of house furniture.
 - New lighting – the old lighting had resulted in damage to the De Montfort Hall organ, but fortunately the damage was not permanent and had reversed with the installation of the new lighting.
 - Refurbishment in the offices and back stage (the corridors and dressing rooms).
- Further investment of £582,000 was sought to enable more improvements. These included a landscape plan, an extension to the car park and improvements to the café.
- The recent landscaping works necessitated the removal of some of 50 trees, many of which were coming to the end of their life. The landscaping planned to follow would be a colourful selection of plants and wildflowers to add a show of colour all year round.
- The extension to the car park would result in 50 additional car parking spaces and two new coach parking bays. It was noted that there were already good facilities for disabled parking spaces close to the entrance to

the hall.

- Plans included improved infrastructure for power and water in the grounds which would reduce the cost of staging outdoor events; this would enable those events to be held more frequently thus generating more income.

During the ensuing discussion, a number of comments and queries were raised including the following:

- The Vice Chair commented that he had been part of the Task Group review in 2009 and recalled that much of the venue had fallen into disrepair. He welcomed the improvements already made and the proposals for further work.
- In response to a question, the Commission heard that in relation to the types of shows offered, Leicester was comparable to the Theatre Royal in Nottingham and the Birmingham Symphony Hall. The venue capacity at De Montfort Hall was 1600 seated and 2200 standing. The possibility of increasing the capacity had been investigated but shown not to be possible without significant modification to the building.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and stated that the presentation was noted and he looked forward to De Montfort Hall's regeneration. He asked for the Commission to be updated on any future programme of works.

35. UPDATE ON THE REDEVELOPMENT OF HAYMARKET THEATRE

The Commission received a presentation on the Redevelopment of the Haymarket Theatre, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

The City Mayor introduced the presentation and points made included the following:

- The original strip out of the building some 10 years previously, including the removal of asbestos from the building, had been necessary but had compromised the integrity of the building and had resulted in considerable additional costs for the council as structures had deteriorated since.
- There were exciting proposals from the Haymarket Consortium and prospects looked even better with the regeneration that was taking place in the area.
- The lease on the Haymarket car park was due to expire in four years but consideration was now being given to negotiating an extended lease for the car park which justified a need for investment to restore it to a decent standard. It was noted that if the lease were not extended, the council would face considerable charges for dilapidations.
- There was also an opportunity to invest in a lift to serve the car park on the theatre on two levels, and ideally to the top level of the car park depending

on costings.

- There was the prospect of a new Travelodge Hotel in the Haymarket with a main entrance from the car park as well as from Humberstone Gate.
- The proposals to host E-Sport events in the theatre had generated a great deal of excitement and it was fortunate that there was a major promoter of E-Sport in the City. It was expected that the Haymarket was going to be a venue of national significance.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment then provided a recap of the presentation on the Haymarket that the Commission received on 7 March 2017. An update on progress was given and points made included the following:

- The work on the theatre had commenced in May 2017, the asbestos had been removed and new seats had been designed and were currently being manufactured.
- The original scope of works had proposed leaving some improvements particularly to back of house areas until after the theatre had re-opened. However the strong interest already expressed in the building suggested it would be worthwhile accelerating that investment and improving the finished specification. The additional costs would be about 20% of the original budget. The City Mayor added that the intention was to increase the building's potential for income earning by the increased investment.
- Landscaping and new signage would be needed to enhance the area outside the theatre.
- It was noted that work was needed to the car park to bring it to a better standard; the top level needed to be resurfaced as currently there were drainage problems. This would be addressed by a separate car park works package though it would be integrated with the theatre works.

In response to a question, the City Mayor explained that the owners of the Haymarket had been very helpful and there had also been useful discussions relating to the hotel.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and stated that the presentation was noted.

36. LEICESTER TREE STRATEGY

The Commission received a report and presentation on the draft Leicester Tree Strategy to cover the period 2017 – 2022. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

The City Mayor introduced the presentation and explained that the City Council had approximately 150,000 trees, ranging in variety from fairly common ash

trees to giant redwoods and it was important that there was a proper tree strategy in place. Looking back over the past forty years, the Council had much to be proud of, including tree planting at Western Park, Castle Hill Country Park, Victoria Park and along Evington Lane. The Council wanted to keep the momentum going.

Councillor Clarke, the Assistant City Mayor, Energy and Sustainability commented that the strategy was about the quality as well as the quantity of trees. The strategy was still at the draft stage and was work in progress. Consideration was also being given as to how the strategy could be put into a suitable format for young people.

It was noted that the Council had an industry accreditation from the Arboricultural Association (AA) and the City Mayor explained that this was a particularly special accreditation as only two public sector bodies were AA approved.

The Commission heard that the service had a budget of £1.3m but the turnover was higher because work was carried out for the private sector.

In relation to waste management, the Head of Parks and Open Spaces explained that 100% of waste materials were recycled with woodchip and sold as biofuel and logs were sold on a regular basis to members of the public. Some of the wood products were milled into usable timber and large pieces carved with a chainsaw and the carvings placed in the City parks. Carving was very time consuming and the practice was, where possible, to link tree carving with relevant events taking place in the City, so that members of the public could watch what was happening.

The Commission heard about the actions being taken to support the strategic aims of the service and a Member questioned whether the service was engaging with the local community to support those aims. The meeting heard that some work was highly skilled with health and safety implications so was not suitable for volunteers, but there was a popular volunteering scheme which included tasks such as coppicing. There were also examples where residents had adopted a tree, whereby a volunteer might water a newly planted tree, look after it and plant around it.

Members noted that there were some very experienced staff in the service and questioned how it would be affected as those staff approached retirement. The Head of Parks and Open Spaces responded that there was an ongoing training programme for existing and new recruits and the Trees and Woodlands team were currently developing apprenticeship opportunities.

The Chair referred to the report, stating that nearly 6000 trees had been felled but only 900 – 1000 trees had been replaced and he questioned why there was the difference. The City Mayor responded that it was a relatively small number out of a total of 150,000 and some of those trees had come to the end of their natural life. He said it was important to note that there was now 107 hectares of woodland in addition to the 150,000 individual trees, compared to just 40

hectares, 20 years ago. The Head of Parks and Open Spaces added that while there were accurate records of tree felling, the service did not have accurate records of all tree planting. For example, housing and capital projects included tree planting schemes planted by external contractors, and they were therefore not included in the figures for replacement trees. One of the aims of the Tree Strategy was to improve this data capture.

The City Mayor made a commitment to ensure that there was funding in the capital programme for tree replacement. The City Mayor added that he was minded to take the Tree Strategy to Council for full consideration by Members.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close adding that the report and presentation were noted.

37. TOURISM, CULTURE AND INVESTMENT DIVISION SPENDING REVIEW

It was noted that as the meeting was inquorate, Members would not be able to make any recommendations on the proposed review. However it was agreed that Members would consider the report as the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment advised that their comments would be very useful.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a report that outlined proposals to save £1.08 million as a first phase contribution to the Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment division spending review target of £1.5m. The Director explained that many of the savings would arise from efficiencies resulting from capital investment at De Montfort Hall. There was an expectation that bar takings would increase as customers could now take their drinks into the auditorium; there would be increased income from car parking and more potential for weddings and children's parties.

It was noted that a reduction in Leicester City Council support for Curve and the Phoenix was proposed and the Chair asked whether any feedback had been received from those organisations. The Director explained that Curve, while not happy at the prospect of a 30% funding cut, were realistic and understood the revenue pressures that the council faced. The Phoenix was facing a 10% funding cut, but would increase their income if they were able to expand to four screens. They were also looking to expand their catering option because at the moment they were at full capacity.

The Chair expressed concerns that Curve and the Phoenix's outreach work might be compromised by the funding cuts and heard that both organisations had secured funding from the Arts Council and had to set out their outreach strategy to them, in the knowledge of the forthcoming cuts.

The Director was asked whether progress was being made in publicising and promoting the City's tourism and culture offer. The Director confirmed that progress was being made and that part of the offer from the Arts Council would be for work around digitalisation and community engagement.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close stating that the report was noted.

38. ENGAGEMENT WITH LEICESTER'S ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE OFFER - PROPOSED REVIEW

There was no discussion on this item.

39. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

40. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

41. WORK PROGRAMME

There was no discussion on this item.

42. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.58 pm.



DMH Review

- Brief overview of last few years progress
- Capital Investment opportunities
- Summary and beyond 2019



2009

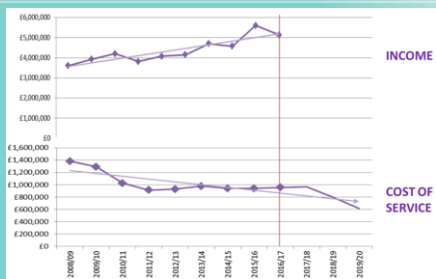


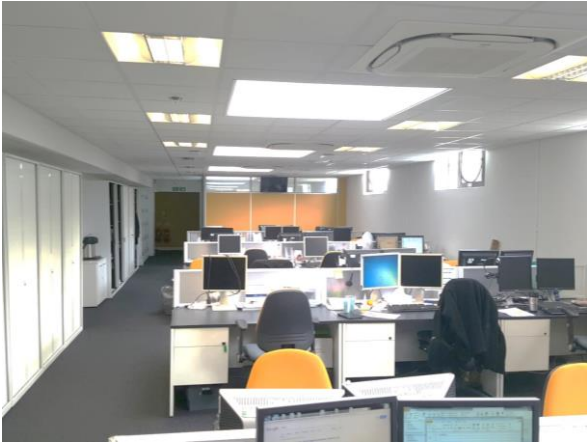
2009 SUMMARY

“The Task Group recognises that there is a significant amount of refurbishment work that needs to be undertaken and will therefore possibly need to adopt a short, medium and long term strategy to enable this to take place, bringing DMH back to a standard which the citizens of Leicester and beyond require and deserve”.



Improved performance





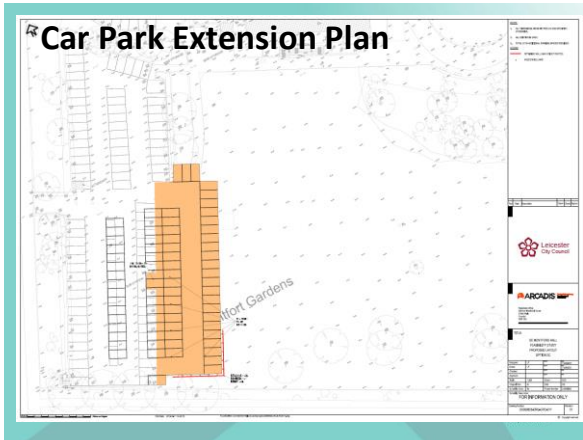


Capital Investment

- Tree works and landscaping under way – essential maintenance. Estimated cost £114k
- Feasibility studies carried out on ideas that could improve revenue performance
 - car park extension & drainage works
 - outdoor event infrastructure
 - development of café space at Vic suite

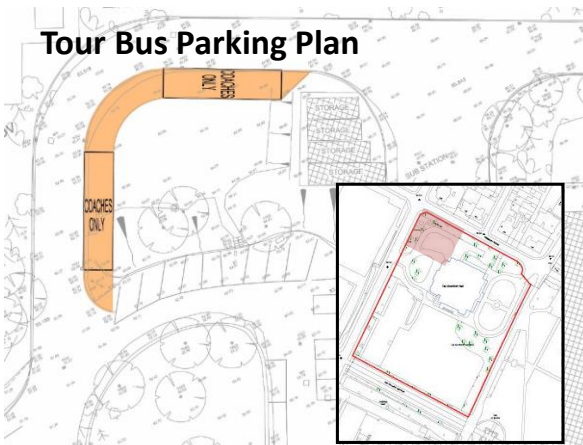






Car Park Extension & Drainage

- 50 additional spaces
- Repair drainage
- £65,200 increased revenue p.a.
- £245,821 investment
- 3.8 years payback period
- Removes 5 trees
 – will be replanted on site

Tour Bus Parking

- Better fire vehicle access
- 'Expected' offer for larger artists
- Better delivery vehicle access
- Less time managing parking
- Chargeable to tour companies
- Same building process as car park





Event Infrastructure

- Currently all power and other utility services is brought in temporarily. Power infrastructure alone costs around £8k per event.
- Cost of installing comprehensive network of utilities points through the grounds estimated at £185,000
- More limited infrastructure incorporating two permanent power distribution points estimated at £50,000.
- Installing two would save approx £5k of the £8k power costs therefore have a payback of around 10 years if just one single event
- However would pay back quicker if more than one event per year – which is the intention



Café – study conclusions

- Expensive compared to likely return. Conversion to offer full menu = £350k
- Full café conversion would reduce bar sales capacity through loss of bar space.
- Council procurement process not conducive to high end café menu.
- Flexibility of space required for core concert business and hires not easily compatible with a cafe ambience
- Requires toilet reconfiguration that could impact core business – fewer dedicated female cubicles



But ...

- A limited food offer located on bar backs keeping existing layout would provide operable compromise.
- Cost would be more in region of £75k
- Defined trial period using existing hall opening hours of 10am - 5pm, Mon – Sat, for eat in and takeaway.
- Flexibility maintained and upgrade should also benefit core business and increase bar income.
- Food procurement process still not conducive to high end café menu.



Total Capital Investment

- Tree works (£47,000)
- Landscaping (£57,000)
- Car park extension & drainage (£245,821)
- Coach Parking (£55,000)
- Power distribution points (£50,000)
- Bars upgrade (£75,000)
- Feasibility costs (£52,365)
- Total capital requirements **£582,186**

Bid being considered as part of new Capital programme



Summary

- Venue will be fully refurbished by March 2019
- Venue subsidy is planned to have more than halved to £615,900 by March 2020.
- £582k investment requested to achieve this target



Minute Item 35

HAYMARKET

- Previously – recap the Feb 2017 presentation
- Progress and Issues on Site
- Completion and Handover Dates
- Developments in scope
- The Wider Opportunities and related works



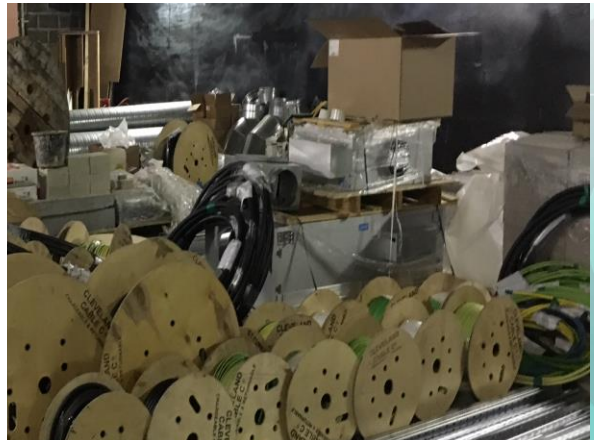
Previously

- Presented to scrutiny members in February 2017
- Outlined the key themes of the business plan
- Noted the basic drivers in terms of costs, dilapidation issues etc
- Introduced the Haymarket consortium members
- Noted the potential of ESL and gaming



Progress and Issues

- Started May – sorting pre-contract issues with Oliveti and asbestos took couple of months
- Air quality issues shut site for couple of weeks
- Is a difficult, complicated refurbishment. Previous strip out 10 years ago left legacy issues.
- More than 20kms of cabling!
- New M&E systems. Lot of stuff you will never see
- Top end audio visual & comms equipment





Handover Timetable etc

- Target was November 2017 but now likely to be January 2018 given additions to scope (described later)
- Aiming for sectional completion to get Consortium in early to finish off some elements e.g. main auditorium
- Plan is for consortium to be operational from Feb 2018 but some works will still be outstanding then (to lift and car park)



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Developments in Scope

- Approved scheme Jan 2017 didn't include for a lift.
- Lift is now proposed to serve both theatre and car park – an extra. Linked to council decision to renew lease of car park
- Works package assumed completion of some elements, particularly back of house areas at a later date
- Strong interest from bookers, particularly ESL now justifies investing in a better finished product earlier – we want to impress new audiences to Leicester
- Extra £613k now budgeted (includes £120k contingency) to complete the scheme (19.5% of original budget)



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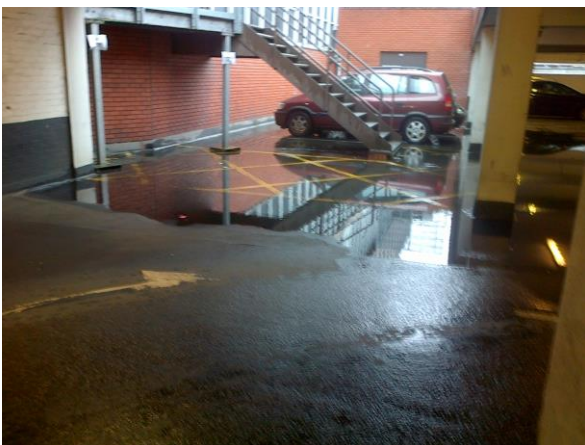
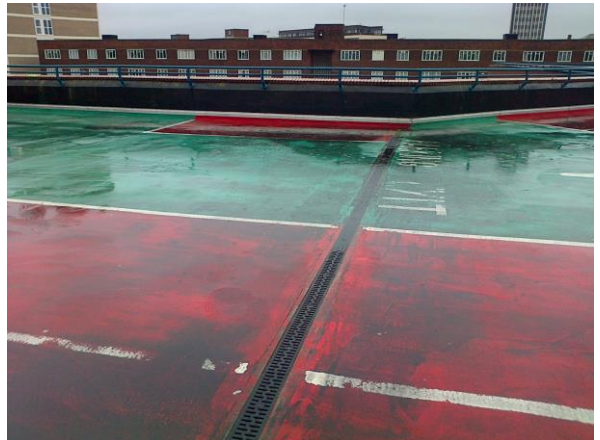
Wider Regeneration Opportunities

- Our investment has triggered others to act
- New Travelodge Hotel will occupy top floors which have been empty for more than 10yrs
- Car park lease renewal will trigger a parallel investment to improve drainage, signage, layout, lighting, safety etc of the car park.
- Connecting Leicester investment planned for Belgrave Gate and Clock Tower areas and to create road link through to Mansfield St



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Tree Strategy

Stewart Doughty
Head Parks & Open Spaces
19 September 2017

Background

- LCC introduced a tree management software system to record all trees and history of inspections and maintenance (1995)
- Allow the resources available to be strategically prioritised, rather than reaction to complaints.
- Reduction in complaints and claims.
- 54% success rate of defending claims
- Agreed in 2016 to develop a Tress Strategy

Overview of Strategy

- First Tree Strategy for Leicester
- Previous Tree Policy (app 1) operational doc
- Strategic approach for management of the Councils tree stock
 - 150,000 trees
 - 107 hectares of woodland
 - 15.69% authority tree canopy cover (1,200 ha)
 - 24 Conservation areas & over 500 TPO's

Strategic aims

1. To ensure the current level of tree canopy cover under the Council's control is sustained and the quality is improved.
2. To ensure trees under the Council's control are managed with the intention of resolving conflicts and problems in a rational., consistent and economic way.
3. To encourage private land owners to manage their tree's, in part through the Council's appropriate use of tree protection legislation.

Tree management assets

- Budget £1.3m (turnover £1.7m)
- Operational staff 28 FTE
- Technical 7 FTE
 - Skills base training
- Depot
 - Specialist equipment & vehicles
 - Waste storage 400 tonnes



Industry accreditation



- Arboricultural Association
- National standard
- Approved 'contractor'
- Only 2 public sector bodies AA approved
- Private clients

Waste management



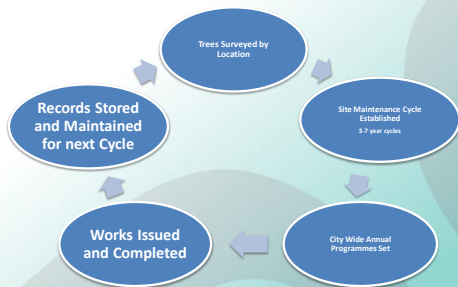
- 100% materials recycled
- 2,000 tonnes a year
- 50% bio mass fuel
- 40% fire wood
- 10% milled
- Small volume carved
- £20k income, saving £170k landfill charge

Sustaining tree canopy

- Replacement policy
- 100 trees felled in 2016/17
- 250 trees planted by T&W in 2016/17
- Additional new capital schemes, developments
- Potential Capital budget
- LEW budget



Management



Improving quality

- Programme of dead wooding
- Crown reduction
- Crown lifting
- Crown thinning
- Pollarding
- Feathering & suckering
- Biodiversity



Supporting Aims



- 33 actions in proposed strategy to support Aims
- 18 actions to support Council tree stock
- 5 actions support private tree stock
- 10 supporting actions
- Monitoring

Actions supporting strategic Aims

- To maintain tree numbers/canopy cover
- Promoting amenity
- Promoting habitat & wildlife
- Enhancing microclimate & land use
- Responding to global obligations
- Fulfil formal obligations
- Manage resources appropriately
- Manage pressure of trees in the private sector

In support of actions

- Ensure the viability of service provision
- Ensure staff have the required capabilities
- Ensure practical means/systems in place

Review & Monitoring Aims

- Planting success rate
- Surveying & work programme cycles
- Quality control
- Resources management
- Staff training & development
- Complaints & compliments
- AA assessments
- Recycling rates
- Management of TPO's & Conservation Areas

Adoption of Strategy

- Comment & feedback from HCL&S Scrutiny
- Agree a final draft
- Format for on-line publication
- User friendly school version to be developed
- Funding being discussed as part of STAR chamber & Capital process

Questions ?

