

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

24th May 2022

Present: Councillor Marjory Bisset in the Chair

Councillors Agar, Allcott, Bayliss, Desayrah, Gregson, Mrs L. Hodgson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Stafford, Stanley (Vice-Chair) and Stephen

Officers: **Mark Baldwin, Head of Finance
David Blake, Managing Director
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
David Sutton, Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy**

1 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Desayrah for Councillor Denham.

2 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Bayliss - Minute 5 (Town Investment Plan - "Shrub Hill Regeneration" and "Community Skills And Enterprise" Business Cases) – As a member of Worcestershire County Council and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Councillor Riaz – Minute 7 (Grant Requests 2022/23) – as Chair of Worcester Mela. He indicated that he would not speak or vote on this item.

3 Public Representations

None.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 Town Investment Plan - "Shrub Hill Regeneration" and "Community Skills And Enterprise" Business Cases

The Committee considered the business cases for two projects, Shrub Hill Regeneration and Community Skills and Enterprise. The Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy presented the report and highlighted the main elements. Both business cases had been unanimously approved by the Town Deal Board at its meeting on 12th May 2022.

In summary, the business case for the Shrub Hill Regeneration Project comprised Isaac Maddox House and the adjacent "triangle" including new offices, commercial and enterprise space, housing, a new access route from St Martin's Quarter to Shrub Hill station and adjacent public realm works. The City Council and County Council are working in partnership to procure a development partner to jointly deliver this project.

The proposals had been adjusted from the previously approved project confirmation documents. The principal factors for the adjustment were:

- The bus depot is no longer available, and without an alternative site to relocate the depot compulsory purchase is not a realistic option.
- Further design and feasibility work has been carried out which has informed costed options for Isaac Maddox House refurbishment and public realm works.

The adjustment and the rationale that has been used to prepare the business case were appended to the report.

A Value for Money assessment demonstrated that TIP funding provides excellent value for and there were additional non-quantified benefits.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- The Leader represents the City Council on the steering committee membership, which is not a decision making body. If a Co-Leader is appointed, that person would also be able to sit on the steering committee. One of other party leaders can attend if the Leader is unavailable.
- Officers are working closely with all businesses affected by the redevelopment. Several are on short-term leases with low rents, and it may be difficult to find comparable alternative premises on the same terms.
- First Bus have indicated that they will release the small amount of land required for the new access route

The Community Skills and Enterprise project provides for construction works at a number of Community hubs across the City to facilitate the delivery of skills training. The business case confirmed the feasibility, deliverability, and value for money of this project. The proposals were unchanged from those in the project confirmation documents previously supported by the Board and submitted to Government by the City Council. The Town Investment Plan funding provided excellent value for money and there were additional unquantified benefits. The facilities will support delivery of a range of mainstream funded training to be delivered by a range of providers.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- Officers explained that all funding agreements relating to facilities run by partner organisations will include terms and conditions which identify key deliverables and require external partners to commit to making their facilities available to achieve the key deliverables.

- It is acknowledged that there remains a funding gap of £75k and Officers are working with partners on securing other external grants. Both projects include cost inflation risk and contingency provision and it will become clearer whether these are sufficient to also cover the funding gap as the projects proceed to the procurement stage.
- There is scope to link deliverables for this project with previously approved projects, for example the Severn Centre for Health & Well Being.
- Officers will continue to work closely with the construction trade and businesses to establish what skills should be delivered at each venue.
- In response to questions, Officers will check whether Platform Housing still provide skills training and whether there is the potential for any linkage.

The Managing Director acknowledged that it is appropriate to review the membership of the Town Deal Board now that the last two business cases have been approved.

Committee Members expressed support for both business cases, as submitted.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

- 1. support the business cases and approve the Summary Documents for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities; and**
- 2. authorise the Corporate Director - Finance and Resources and the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance to undertake further due diligence and complete the appropriate funding agreements as detailed within this report.**

6 Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme

The Committee considered a report on the Council's proposed Discretionary Scheme, pursuant to the Government's package of support to households facing significant increases in energy costs. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and summarised the main points of the scheme. He explained that it was proposed to make payments automatically wherever possible. In the event that the costs of the scheme exceed the funding level, the Council will bear any additional costs incurred. All payment must be made by 30 November 2022.

In response to a question about the potential for scamming, the Corporate Director explained that all eligible households will be contacted by letter and there will not be any requirement to provide bank details. This message can be promoted through social media.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

- 1. approve the Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme; and**

2. delegate to the Corporate Director – Finance and Resources authority to make minor technical amendments to the scheme and to apply discretion in individual cases, as required.

7 Grant Requests 2022-23

The Committee considered a report on two requests for funding which fell outside the limits for small grant applications at the date that they were received. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and summarised the two requests.

The report also included a proposal to establish a simplified process for allocating funding from the miscellaneous grants request reserve. Under Financial Regulations, Officers had authority to allocate up to £50,000 from reserves. It was proposed to delegate responsibility to the Managing Director to administer this fund in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) of the relevant committee for each application.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- A number of questions were raised about Worcester Mela, including its status, nomination rights to the governing body and what the proposed amount of grant will deliver. In response, the Corporate Director explained that Worcester Mela has a committee and constitution and an application for charitable status is pending. The application follows the usual process for community grants. It is understood it is intended to support content and performance elements of the event and also ongoing development of Worcester Mela. Officers can investigate and clarify the points raised in more detail.
- It was suggested that a standard application form could be adopted to assist Members in considering applications.
- The Arts and Cultural Strategy has not yet been published. The eligibility for funding through this will be set out when the Strategy is considered by the Place and Economic Development Committee for determination.
- The Managing Director clarified that appropriate checks will be made before grant applications are presented for sign-off by the relevant Chair and Vice-Chairs. However the amount of information required should not be so substantial as to deter small organisations from applying.

In conclusion the Managing Director advised that it would be appropriate to adopt the proposed approach to the allocation of miscellaneous grants to the two applications presented in the report. Committee Members expressed support for this way forward.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

- 1. delegate responsibility for allocations from the miscellaneous grants reserve to the Managing Director in consultation with the Chair and Vice- Chair(s) of the relevant committee; and**

- 2. delegate responsibility to the Managing Director in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) to determine the two prior requests for grant support from Worcester Paint Festival and Worcester Mela.**

8 Corporate Risk Management Report - Quarter 4 2021/22

The Committee considered a report on the progress made against the corporate risks for the period of January – March 2022. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and highlighted the main points. Officers responded to questions from Members on detailed aspects of the report.

In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the SWDP review. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance advised that the delay is not long-term and a revised programme will be presented to Members in the near future.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Corporate Risk Management Report.

9 Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring Report 2021/22

The Committee reviewed the financial monitoring details including budget variances and performance indicators for the 4th quarter ended 31 March 2022. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and summarised the main elements of the year-end forecast surplus.

In response to requests for more information on various aspects of the report, Officers agreed to provide written responses on the deficits in relation to Leisure Services and Bereavement Services, the background to the overspend on vehicle maintenance and repairs, and how the Council's position on Reserves has changed over recent years.

The Corporate Director explained that the 2021/22 year-end out-turn had produced a budget surplus of £27k and it was proposed to create the following reserves:

- Training reserve – a reserve of £35k to cover the costs extra training courses to implement the training agreed in the revised People Strategy published in 2021;
- Arts and cultural events reserve – the creation of a £50k reserve to fund applications for one-off support towards arts and cultural events in the city;
- Equalities Officer post – to create a reserve of £100k to fund for 3 years a new post to support the delivery of the Equalities Strategy.

Committee Members expressed support for these proposals.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the report and agree to the proposals for the creation of three new reserves, as outlined above.

10 Treasury Management Annual Report - 2021/22

The Committee considered the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22. The Head of Finance presented the report and summarised the main points. He responded to questions from Committee Members on detailed aspects of the

Report. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Report would be referred to full Council for information.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

- 1. note the details included within the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22; and**
- 2. refer the Annual Report for 2021/22 to full Council for information, in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.**

11 Annual and Quarter 4 Performance Report for 2021/22

The Committee considered the annual and quarter 4 performance report. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and highlighted the main points. Officers responded to questions from Members on detailed aspects of the report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the Council’s annual and quarter 4 performance for 2021/22.

12 Appointments to Outside Bodies 2022/23

The Committee considered nominations from Group Leaders for appointments to various outside bodies. A schedule setting out details of the nominations was shared at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee confirm the appointments to outside bodies as set out in the schedule appended to the minutes.

13 Appointment of Member Champion for Children and Young People

The Committee considered the appointment of the Member Champion for Children and Young People. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that the Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Lamb to the role. Once appointed, a Member Champion undertook the role for the duration of their Council term of office, unless decided otherwise by this Committee, or where they wished to step down sooner. Councillor Lamb’s term of office had expired at the beginning of May and he was re-elected as a City Councillor at the recent election.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Lamb be appointed as the Member Champion. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to appoint Councillor Lamb as the Member Champion for Children and Young People.

14 Any Other Business

The Chair agreed to consider an item from Councillor Stephen which she considered to be of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Councillor Stephen raised the cost of living crisis and the forecast for this to worsen later in the year. Due to the frequency of policy committee meetings he considered that there will be insufficient time to develop a strategy for supporting local residents. He therefore proposed that this Committee should set up a task and finish group to consider what remedies and support can be put in place.

Other Committee Members expressed support for the proposal and agreed that Officers should draw up terms of reference and agree membership in consultation with Group Leaders.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 9.10p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
4th July 2022

15 **Appendix**

Organisation	Nomination	Term of Office
Age UK	Councillor Agar	1 Year
Amica 24 (formerly Worcestershire Telecare)	Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson	1 Year
Angel Centre Committee	Councillor Allah Ditta Councillor Riaz Vacancy	1 Year
Arches Worcester Steering Group	Councillor Gregson	1 Year
Armchair Project (Management Committee)	Mr Richard Boorn	1 Year
Comer Gardens Hall Association – Management Committee	Councillor Geraghty Councillor Mitchell	1 Year
Conservation Advisory Panel	Councillor Barnes Councillor Bisset Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson	1 Year
Corporate Parenting Board	Councillor Lamb	1 Year
Cranstoun (Formerly Swanswell/Pathways to Recovery Worcestershire)	Jo Hodges	1 Year
Disablement Information Advice Line (D.I.A.L)	Vacancy	1 Year
Disability Sport Worcester	Councillor Allcott Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson (alternate)	1 Year
Elgar Foundation: Management Committee	Councillor Udall	1 Year
Fairfield Centre: Management Board	Councillor Cleary Councillor Desayrah	1 Year
Hallow United Charities (Best and Others)	Christine Cawthorne <i>(other representative is Councillor Mitchell, term of office is to 12.12.2024)</i>	3 years to 30.06.2025

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Udall	1 Year
Historic England	Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson Councillor Piotrowski Councillor Lewing	1 Year
Hopmarket Charity	Councillor Barnes Councillor Lewing Councillor Allah Ditta Councillor Hassan Councillor Stephen Hodgson Vacancy Vacancy Independent Trustees Jo Hodges Vacancy <i>(Other representative is Mr Bill Simpson, term of office to 30.06.2023)</i>	1 Year (Independent Trustees 4 Years)
Local Government Association General Assembly	Councillor Bayliss Councillor Mitchell (Alternate)	1 Year
Lyppard Community Hub	Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson Councillor Stephen Hodgson	1 Year
Mayor's Fund	+ Jo Hodges + Councillor Allah Ditta <i>(Other representatives are The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson to 12.07.2024 and Councillor Agar to 20.05.2025)</i>	5 years to 31.07.2027 5 years to 31.07.2027
PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee	Councillor Cronin	1 Year
Public Art Working Group	Councillor Allcott Councillor Gregson Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson Councillor Lewing	1 Year

St. Martin's United Charities	Councillor Stephen Councillor Riaz Jo Hodges Vacancy <i>(Other representatives are Councillors Denham and Allah Ditta and Mr James Carver to 31.07.2024)</i>	3 years to 31.07.2025 3 years to 31.07.2025 3 years to 31.07.2025 3 years to 01.11.2025
St. Richard's Hospice (Governors)	Councillor Roberts	1 Year
Safer Worcester	Councillor Desayrah Councillor Piotrowski	1 Year
Shopmobility: Management Committee	Vacancy	1 Year
South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	Councillor Stanley	1 Year
SWDP Joint Advisory Panel	Councillor Agar Councillor Allcott Councillor Mackay Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson Councillor Stephen	1 Year
The Kiln CIC Board	Councillor Gregson	1 Year
Thomas Corbett Charity for the Visually Impaired	The Mayor (ex officio)	Mayor – Annually
Town Deal Board	Councillor Bayliss Councillor Denham	1 Year
Transition Worcester	Councillor Mitchell Councillor Lamb Councillor Laurenson	1 Year
Walsgrove Charity	Mr Chris Winwood <i>(Other representative is Mrs Liz Smith, term to 01.07.2024)</i>	4 years to 14.02.2026
West Mercia Police and Crime Panel	Councillor Stanley	1 Year
West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets	Councillor Mitchell Deputy – Councillor Riaz	1 Year

Association		
Worcester Arts Council	Councillor Bisset Councillor Lamb Councillor Stephen Hodgson Edward Kimberley	1 Year
Worcester BID Board	Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson	1/3 of Directors must resign each year on a rota basis but may seek re-election
Worcester Citizen's Advice Bureau/ Housing and Benefits Advice Centre	Councillor Cleary	1 Year
Worcester City Dementia Action Alliance	Councillor Denham	1 Year
Worcester City Parish Relief in Need Charity	Vacancy (formerly Mrs Pam Clayton) <i>(Other representative is Mr Paul Denham to 10.07.2025)</i>	Remainder of 4 years to 26.07.2023
Worcester Crematorium and Cemeteries Forum	Councillor Alan Amos Councillor Bisset Councillor Riaz	1 Year
Worcester Live: Management Committee	Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson	1 Year
Worcester Play Council	Councillor Desayrah Councillor Stanley	1 Year
Worcester Racecourse Ltd.	Councillor Mitchell	1 Year
Worcester River Sports Association	Louise Griffiths Councillor Lawrance	1 Year
Worcester Trade Justice Network	Dr David Tibbutt	1 Year
Worcester Twinning Association	Councillor Mackay Councillor Cookson	1 Year
Worcestershire Health	Councillor Denham	1 Year

Improvement Group		
Worcestershire Leaders Board	Councillor Bayliss (Deputy - Any Other Group Leader)	1 Year
Worcestershire LEP Board	Councillor Bayliss	1 Year
Worcestershire Waste Management Board	Councillor Stafford	1 Year