

Report to: Place and Economic Development Committee, 1st November 2021

Report of: Managing Director

Subject: ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR POST EP4118 (TOURISM AND EVENTS OFFICER)

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 **That the Committee notes the proposal to fund the post of Tourism and Events Officer from 1 April 2022.**
- 1.2 **That the Committee recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee that the post is funded from reserves for 2022-23.**

2. Background

- 2.1 The Tourism and Events Officer post was created in a temporary capacity in 2016. The role works with local businesses and event organisers, as well as delivering the objectives of the Tourism Strategy and managing key projects for the Council including the Victorian Christmas Fayre and Christmas lights contract.
- 2.2 At the March 2021 meeting, this committee agreed to recommend that the Policy & Resources Committee approve the allocation of £50,000 from the Additional Restrictions Grant fund to temporarily cover the costs of this role in light of the key role played in Covid-recovery efforts.
- 2.3 The recommendation was supported at the Policy & Resources Committee of 23 March 2021 meeting where it was identified that further funding would be required from 1 April 2022.

3. Preferred Option

- 3.1 The preferred option is to fund the post from reserves in line with the above recommendation. This is a one-year solution, pending the appointment of the new Head of Service for Economic Development, the review of the Tourism Strategy and the development of the forthcoming Cultural Strategy.
- 3.2 The role of the Tourism and Events Officer is pivotal to the success of a series of projects to encourage and enable people to visit the city, including the organisation of major events for the city and the facilitation of events organised by external parties.
- 3.3 The Victorian Fayre, in particular, has been highlighted as a key priority for the city and forms a large part of the responsibilities of this post. In addition to this, a busy programme of events is scheduled for the city in 2022, with events related to the Commonwealth Games, the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations, summer festivals, and the return of Worcester Carnival, Worcester Music Festival and more.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative option is not to fund this post. This is not recommended as it would require the reallocation of other staff members to deliver the outputs currently required of this role and lead to a reduction in the services delivered by the Economic Development team towards the objectives of the City Plan and key regeneration projects. It will remove the significant economic benefits generated by this role in the development and delivery of cultural activity for the city. The Victorian Christmas Fayre alone generates over £7m for the economy each year.
- 4.2 Another option is to engage with partners or other agencies to take the lead role in the coordination of events in the city centre and the management of the Victorian Fayre. This is not recommended due to identified issues with quality and control of these key events and the high-profile nature of major events and projects in the city.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

The post is identified on the 2020-21 Pay Chart as being PTC grade which has a salary range of £32,555 to £36,524. The annual cost for the post is £45,040, including on-costs.

The post is required to support the development of the city as a destination for businesses and tourists. The role currently forms part of the Covid recovery programme and will help to secure the economic prosperity of the city in the coming year. It is therefore appropriate to fund the post from the Business Rates Risk Reserve as the work will reduce the risk of loss of business rates income which would otherwise fall to that reserve. The reserve has an estimated balance of £3.392m at 31 March 2022, of which £1.4m is required to be retained under existing policies and the remainder is required to mitigate risk of business rates appeals and loss of income.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

5.3 Risk Implications

If resources are not allocated, this will impact on the ability of the Council to deliver the objectives of the City Plan, Tourism Strategy and forthcoming Cultural Strategy.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The proposed resource allocation will contribute to the delivery of the Tourism Strategy and the forthcoming Cultural Strategy by.

It will also impact on the following priorities as identified in the forthcoming update of the City Plan:

- A Prosperous City, through the positive economic impacts associated with effective tourism delivery and the management of high-profile events such as the Victorian Christmas Fayre and Worcester City Run.
- A Heritage City with a 21st Century Culture, through a vibrant events programme and an engaged cultural sector, chairing the City Events Forum,

5.5 Equality Implications

An equality impact assessment will form part of the delivery plan for the role in 2022-23 to ensure accessibility for events and cultural activities.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

The postholder is currently seconded from another team.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

The role works on projects which focus on health and safety, in particular supporting the safety of events in the city.

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

The vitality and vibrancy of the city centre is key in attracting visitors to the city, boosting the economy, creating jobs and supporting businesses and residents.

Ward(s): All
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Background Papers: Worcester City Tourism Strategy
Worcester City Plan
PED Committee Report, 8 March 2021
P&R Committee Report, 23 March 2021