

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7th September 2021

Present: Councillor Marc Bayliss in the Chair

Councillors Allcott, Denham, Gregson (Vice-Chair), Griffiths, Hodges, Mrs L. Hodgson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Stafford, Stanley and Stephen (Vice-Chair)

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
Philippa Tinsley, Museums Manager

33 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

34 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Mitchell – City Plan Refresh (Minute 39) – A non-pecuniary interest insofar as the item relates to Worcester Racecourse as a director of Worcester Racecourse Ltd.

Councillor Bayliss – City Plan Refresh (Minute 39) and Town Investment Plan – Revised Projects (Minute 41) - A non-pecuniary interest insofar as the items relate to Trinity House.

Councillor Hodges - Town Investment Plan – Revised Projects (Minute 41) – As a trustee of Worcester Community Trust.

35 Public Representations

Paul Snookes on behalf of Worcester Environmental Group addressed the Committee and spoke about the need to allocate resources for a hands-on professional ecologist who would work with operatives and supervisors on sites around the city to enhance biodiversity in Worcester. He felt that this is essential now that the Council has declared a biodiversity emergency and he asked for this to be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2022/23. The Chair thanked Mr Snookes for his comments.

36 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37 Minutes of Personnel and General Purposes Sub-Committee

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2021 be received.

38 Minutes of Income Generation Sub-Committee

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2021 be received.

39 City Plan Refresh

The Committee considered a draft version of the refreshed City Plan for consultation. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and explained that a desk top review of the themes, objectives and measures in the Plan had been completed and an all-Member workshop took place on 10 June. Feedback had been taken into account in the refreshed Plan while retaining the overall themes, scope and principles of the original document. Subject to approval, the draft would be published for consultation, which will conclude by the end of November and a revised version will be submitted to the Committee for recommendation to Full Council for approval at its February meeting.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made various suggestions as to items that could be added to the draft Plan:

- A measure of a kind and caring Council
- Encouraging environmentally sustainable businesses
- A dementia friendly city
- Biodiversity measures.

In response, the Corporate Director explained that it is difficult to find national measures or benchmarks for some issues, hence they are not included, but Officers will keep looking.

The Chair concluded that agreeing the draft for consultation should proceed without delay, and that any Member can put forward suggestions as part of the consultation process. Officers noted the points raised above.

In response to a question about the role of committees in the consultation process, the Chair stated that the City Plan can be included on the agenda for each of the policy committee meetings in November. This will be a matter for the respective Chairs and Vice-Chairs to determine.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the draft City Plan for consultation.

40 Process and Timetable for Preparation of Budget 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 - 2026/27

The Committee considered a report on the proposed process and timetable for preparing the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and explained that consultation with Members will follow the approach adopted last year, through an all-Members briefing in October followed by the various committee meetings in November.

In the ensuing discussion, Members were asked if they have a preference for a briefing in person or online. In response, an equal preference for both was indicated.

It was clarified that the Health and Well-being Committee will have the opportunity to scrutinise the draft budget at its meeting on 7 February 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the proposed process and timetable for preparing the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

41 Town Investment Plan - Revised Projects

The Committee considered a report on proposed project confirmation tables. The Deputy Director - Corporate Policy and Strategy presented the report and explained that the Council received an offer and Heads of Terms from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) on 8th June 2021. The Heads of Terms offered an investment of £19.6m and included a number of general and project specific conditions. The Heads of Terms were accepted by the Managing Director under delegation.

A revised funding profile and project content had been developed and was unanimously approved by the Town Deal Board at its meeting on 25th August 2021.

The Council was now required to submit details of the revised projects to MHCLG in order to proceed to the next stage. Following submission of the revised projects, the Council was required to develop business cases for each, which will be brought to this Committee for approval, following which a summary will be submitted to MHCLG for assessment.

Officers responded to questions from Committee Members. It was explained that the Community Skills project has been reduced in cost but remains focussed on the objective of delivering skills training locally in areas of need. The Riverside and Heritage Projects have been amalgamated into a smaller single Heritage and Riverside Destination project. Otherwise the project proposals remain substantially unchanged from the original submission.

Committee Members expressed support for the proposed project confirmation tables. A request was made for delegated authority to be given to the Managing Director to approve minor changes to the documents prior to submission in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

- 1. approve the proposed project confirmation tables for submission to Government;**

2. **delegate authority to the Managing Director in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair to approve minor changes to the documents prior to submission on 10th September 2021; and**
3. **request officers to proceed to preparation of detailed business cases for each project.**

42 Art Gallery and Museum Development

The Committee considered a report on an approach from a local philanthropist to the City Council with a proposal to make a donation of £300,000 for the purchase of art works for the museum collection. The Museums Manager presented the report and explained that the Joint Museums Committee at their meeting on 18th June 2021 had approved in principle the setup of a charitable body to support fundraising for the City and County museums. The donor had set a deadline of December 2021 for the charitable body to be established to accept his donation.

Officers recommended that the proposed donation be accepted and ring-fenced for the purchase of works of art of sufficient importance as to raise the profile of the gallery and form part of its core collection, and that an agreement be drafted to satisfy the donor's requirements as to future development of the art gallery and that meets national museum accreditation standards. The newly established art collection gallery would be named the after the donor, following the building's tradition with galleries.

Committee Members welcomed the offer and expressed support for the proposed way forward, as set out in the report. The Chairman asked for thanks to the donor to be placed on record.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

1. **note the offer of a significant donation to the City's museum and thanks the donor for their generosity;**
2. **authorise the Council's involvement in the establishment of a charitable body that would support fundraising for the City and County museums including managing the donation referred to above;**
3. **delegate authority to the Managing Director in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Committee, and the Chair of the Joint Museums Committee, to enter into all necessary legal agreements to establish the charitable body and receive the donation; and**
4. **approve a property and accommodation review of the Art Gallery & Museum building with a report back to the Committee by Autumn 2022.**

43 Outline Proposals for Annual Survey 2021

The Committee considered proposals for undertaking the Annual Survey 2021. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and explained that it was proposed to take two actions for 2021:

- Run the survey alongside the refresh of the City Plan, including the proposed consultation exercises planned for the latter; and
- Drawing on the experience of engaging people during the Covid 'pop-up' vaccination centre exercises, undertake leaflet drops at previously under-represented areas to highlight the survey.

Committee Members expressed support for the proposed way forward.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the proposed annual survey and consultation timetable for 2021.

44 Member Champions

In accordance with the Motion which was agreed at the February 2021 Council meeting, the Committee considered the appointment of a Children and Young People's Member Champion. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that, as well as making an appointment of an individual Member to this role, it was timely to review the approach taken to Member Champions. Accordingly, the Committee were recommended to consider proposed terms of reference for Member Champions, for referral to Council for adoption into the Constitution.

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

- It was proposed that all Member Champions should submit a summary report to full Council annually, and that there should be an opportunity for Members to ask questions when the report is presented;
- Officers will clarify what format the reports should take and the timetable for reporting;
- There was a debate about the term of office for Member Champions. Various suggestions were put forward. It was concluded that all current Member Champions should continue for the remainder of the duration of their Council term of office, at which point the Committee will review the appointment. Notwithstanding this, a Member Champion should be able to serve successive terms by exception, with the agreement of the Committee.

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

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. agree the terms of reference for Member Champions set out in Appendix 1, amended as follows:**

Paragraph 5 to read: "Member Champions shall be asked to provide the Council with a summary report of their activities annually, which officers will support in preparing, and may be questioned when presenting the report."

Paragraph 4 - delete "A Member Champion may serve successive terms of office, by agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee" and replace with: "Once appointed, a Member Champion shall undertake the role for the duration of their Council term of office, unless decided otherwise by Policy and Resources Committee or where they wish to step down sooner. A Member Champion, may by exception, serve consecutive terms of office by agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee."

- 2. recommend the terms of reference as amended above to Council for adoption into the Constitution; and**
- 3. agree to appoint Councillor Lamb as the Children and Young People's Member Champion.**

45 Any Other Business

None.

46 Items Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.

47 Minutes of Personnel and General Purposes Sub-Committee (Exempt Items)

RESOLVED: That the minutes (exempt items) of the meeting held on 26th July 2021 be received.

48 Minutes of Income Generation Sub-Committee (Exempt Items)

RESOLVED: That the minutes (exempt items) of the meeting held on 28th July 2021 be received.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 8.35p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
16th November 2021