

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1st November 2021

- Present:** Councillor Hodges in the Chair
Councillors Agar, A. Amos, Barnes, Carver, Geraghty, Lewing, Mackay, Norfolk and Stanley
- Officers:** David Blake, Managing Director
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
Helen Mole, Tourism and City Centre Manager
Janey Yates, Economic Development Officer (Business Growth and Enterprise)
- Apologies:** Councillors Cleary, Gregson and Mrs L Hodgson

34 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Mackay for Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson and Councillor Barnes for Councillor Gregson.

35 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillor Geraghty - The Kiln Co-Working Innovation Space Project: Progress Update (Minute No. 39) – As a WLEP Executive Board Member.

36 Public Participation

None.

37 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38 Setting of the Budget for 2022/23 and MTFP to 2026/27

The Committee considered a report on the Budgets for the various services for 2021/22 and progress made in delivering the projects included in the City Plan relevant to this Committee. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and responded to questions from Committee Members.

Officers highlighted that all Members are invited to submit suggestions for potential service improvements. This can be done now so as to be able to feed proposals into the Committee's consideration of the 2022/23 budget at its meeting in January. Members were also asked to consider whether the current capital programme projects are still appropriate for each service and whether there are any further needs that require addressing.

Having considered the report the Committee did not recommend any suggestions for potential service improvements to be included in the services' Income and Efficiency Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. note the Budgets for the various services identified for 2021/22; and**
- 2. note the progress made in delivering the projects included in the City Plan and City Delivery Fund that are relevant to this Committee and confirms the programme of work resourced.**

39 The Kiln Co-Working Innovation Space Project: Progress Update

The Committee received a report providing an update on The Kiln Co-working Innovation Space Project.

The Economic Development Officer summarised the contents of the report for the Committee, highlighting The Kiln's successes despite an extremely challenging external environment due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Economic Development Officer drew the Committee's attention to The Kiln's 'Good News' publication, appended to the report. This included many of The Kiln's successes and positive feedback from its membership.

Officers responded to questions regarding the sustainability of The Kiln's recovery post-pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. note the update on The Kiln Co-working Innovation Space Project, two years into operation; and**
- 2. approve the reprofiling of the Kiln outputs as set out in Appendix 1 and authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance to amend the project legal agreements accordingly.**

40 Allocation of Funding for Skills Officer

The Committee considered a report regarding allocation of funding for a Skills Officer post.

Committee Members queried whether Covid recovery funding could be utilised to fund this post, and the Tourism and Events Officer post (agenda item 8).

Officers clarified that spending from Covid recovery funding had to be completed by March 2022 so it would not apply to the two proposed posts.

Committee Members welcomed the proposal and agreed the post was crucial to the City's future development.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. note the proposal to fund the post of Tourism and Events Officer from 1 April 2022; and**
- 2. recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee that the post is funded from reserves for 2022/23.**

41 Allocation of Funding for Tourism and Events Officer

The Committee considered a report on funding for a Tourism and Events Officer post.

Committee Members agreed that the post was essential and that it was important for the Council to continue to take the lead role in the coordination of events in the city centre and the management of the Victorian Fayre.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. note the proposal to fund the post of Tourism and Events Officer from 1 April 2022; and**
- 2. recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee that the post is funded from reserves for 2022/23.**

42 Commonwealth Games and Queen's Jubilee Events in 2022

The Committee considered a report on events relating to 2022's Birmingham Commonwealth Games, and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Funding was requested to advance collaborative activity with partners, produce promotional materials and support engagement activity. The Tourism and City Centre Manager agreed to provide updates to the Committee as plans progress.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. notes the proposed activities to celebrate the Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Jubilee in 2022; and**
- 2. recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee an allocation of £40,000 from reserves for 2022/23 as an enabling budget to support these initiatives.**

43 Christmas in Worcester: Update

The Committee received a report providing an update on Christmas arrangements in the City.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager confirmed that coach bookings for the Victorian Christmas Fayre were significantly down on previous years, however bookings for stalls at the Fayre were oversubscribed and there was a significant increase in interest on social media, compared to previous years.

Members questioned whether visitors who would normally travel by coach may decide to travel by car instead, and what impact this would have on the City's parking provision for the duration of the Fayre. Officers confirmed that Park and Ride would be operational and alternative forms of transport would be encouraged, e.g. rail and cycle. Members agreed this was a positive approach which would hopefully ensure those who had no choice but to travel by car would be able to find parking.

Members enquired whether local bus companies may be encouraged to put on additional routes, e.g. to surrounding villages, for the duration of the Fayre. The Tourism and City Centre Manager agreed to explore this and update the Committee accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the update on Christmas in Worcester activity.

44 The Arches Worcester Project: Update

The Committee received an update report on the Arches project. Officers confirmed that the Network Rail inspection referenced at 3.8 in the Report had been undertaken and raised no issues.

Committee Members noted that the Arts Council England continued to regard the Arches project as one of the flagships of the Cultural Development Fund, and commended the project team for having made more progress than many of the other projects in the original bidding round. This would further enhance Worcester's credibility nationally.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note progress with The Arches Worcester project.

45 Quarter 2 Performance Report for 2021/22

The Committee received the Quarter 2 performance report for 2021/22 attached as appendix 1.

Committee members noted that the City Centre Masterplan was overdue. Delays in the Planning process were being addressed and processes were being refined.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's Quarter 2 performance for 2021/22.

46 Any Other Business

Councillor Carver requested that Councillor Cleary's apologies be noted.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 8:20p.m.

Chair at the meeting on 24th January 2022