

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

26th July 2021

Present: Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson in the Chair
Councillors Agar, Barnes, Carver, Cleary, Geraghty, Hodges (Vice-Chair), S. Hodgson, Lewing, Norfolk and Stanley

Officers: Philippa Tinsley, Museums Manager
Amanda Lloyd, Economic Development Officer

Apologies: Councillors A Amos and Gregson

12 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Barnes for Councillor Gregson and Councillor S Hodgson for Councillor A Amos.

13 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillor Geraghty – Employment Skills and Strategy Review (Minute No. 17) – As a member of Worcestershire LEP.

14 Public Participation

None.

15 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising:

Minute 5 – Worcester City Cultural Strategy – As a point of information the Committee noted that the City had decided not to bid to become the next City of Culture. It was asked where this decision had been made and recorded. It was confirmed that it had not been a matter for this meeting, but a written response would be provided to Members.

16 Quarter 1 Performance Report 2021/22

The Committee considered the Quarter 4 performance for 2021/22, attached as appendix 1 to the report.

During discussions various questions were raised relating to the report as follows:

- Review of the SWDP - confirmation requested of proposed delay;

- City Centre Masterplan, update requested, also had the archaeology report been completed as the Archaeological Officer had left the City Council?;
- Planning applications determined within 8 weeks, clarity requested on whether due to staff and /or covid; and
- Appeals of major planning decisions allowed, is this just one appeal?

Members were advised that a written response would be provided for these questions.

Officers present responded to other questions from Members relating to key SME's, city centre footfall and admissions and commercial income from city museums.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's Quarter 1 performance for 2021/22.

17 Employment Skills and Strategy Review

The Committee considered a report on the review of the Employment and Skills Strategy.

The report updated the Committee on the following:

- Progress to date on the strategy review;
- Key changes which the refreshed strategy will need to incorporate;
- Timetable for completion of the review; and
- Priorities for the remainder of 2021/22 delivery as a 'transitional year'.

The Economic Development Officer, in presenting the report, stated that the preferred option is to complete the strategy review in 2021/22 and outlined the proposed strategy review schedule at paragraph 3.2 of the report. The key delivery objectives for the remainder of 2021/22 were also highlighted in paragraph 3.3.

In responding to questions from Committee Members on the DWP Youth Hub, long term provision of skills and training to meet future needs of business and key sectors and details of the programme delivered by Young Solutions, the Economic Development Officer agreed to provide additional information in relation to these items to Members.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. note progress to date on the review of the Employment and Skills Strategy;**
- 2. approve the revised timetable to complete the Employment and Skills strategy review with a 2022 – 2025 strategy in place for April 2022; and**
- 3. note delivery priorities for the remainder of 2021/2022 as a 'transitional year' aligned to Economic Recovery.**

18 **Museums Annual Report**

The Committee considered the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review, attached as appendix 1 to the cover report.

The Museums Manager, in presenting the report, informed Committee Members that the Annual Review of Museums Worcestershire activity in 2020/21 was approved by the Joint Museums Committee at their meeting in June 2021. It highlighted the impact that museums make in the city and county, illustrated through case studies, comments from users and performance figures.

The annual review expands on how the Museums team transitioned rapidly to continue to benefit the city and county through new ways of working during the pandemic and limited opening.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Committee Members.

Members welcomed the report and expressed thanks to the work undertaken by both staff and volunteers under such difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the activities undertaken in museums in 2020/21 and the impact made.

19 **Future High Street Fund - Intervention 4: Property Enhancement Scheme (The Cross and Angel Street)**

The Committee considered a report on the Future High Street Fund – Intervention 4: Property Enhancement Scheme – The Cross and Angel Street.

The report explained that the Policy and Resources Committee has been receiving reports related to the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) programme and has approved funding terms as well as acquisitions of certain assets and commitment of expenditure to public realm. The Place and Economic Development Committee also has a remit in respect of the FHSF programme, where decisions relate to the economic outcomes and end uses of these assets. This report relates to the fourth intervention set out in the FHSF programme (The Cross and Angel Street).

It is proposed that the City Council will work with owners to identify and fund remediation works to bring vacant and underused buildings, many of which are historic properties, back into use. Owners would be expected to contribute towards this intervention, with the potential to also work with Historic England. The funding allocated is up to £600,000.

This report set out the proposed terms for the Property Enhancement Scheme, including eligibility, available funding and delivery. Delegated authority is sought to finalise and implement the Scheme in consultation with Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee. The indicative timeline was set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

During discussions questions were raised relating to the report as follows:

- Clarification on the level of funding referred to in paragraph 3.5; and
- What steps would be taken if property owners decide not to take advantage of the scheme.

Members were advised that a written response would be provided for these questions.

Members welcomed the report and expressed support for the proposed scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the Property Enhancement Scheme (The Cross and Angel Street) in the terms set out in this report and delegates authority to the Managing Director and Corporate Director - Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, to finalise and implement the Scheme.

20 Any Other Business

None.

21 Item Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information

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

22 Minutes (Exempt Item)

RESOLVED: That the minutes (exempt item) of the meeting held on 7th June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 8.30p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
6th September 2021