

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

25th July 2022

- Present:** Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson in the Chair
Councillors Altaf (in place of Councillor Bayliss), Cronin, Desayrah, A. Ditta, Geraghty, Laurenson, Lewing, Norfolk (Vice-Chair), Riaz (in place of Councillor Gregson) and Stanley
- Officers:** David Blake, Managing Director
Zoe West, Deputy Director – Economic Development
Philippa Tinsley, Museums Manager
- Apologies:** Councillors Bayliss and Gregson

9 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Altaf for Councillor Bayliss and Councillor Riaz for Councillor Gregson.

10 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Geraghty and Stanley – UKSPF Fund Bid (Minute No. 13) and Museums Worcestershire Annual Review (Minute No. 14) – As County Councillors.

11 Public Participation

None.

12 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13 UK Shared Prosperity Funding Bid

The Committee considered a report on the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) bid.

The UKSPF was launched in April 2022 and is the successor fund to the EU Structural Investment Funds (EUSIF). Worcester has been allocated £2,945,472 which is primarily for revenue purposes, although there are capital elements to support longer term investments. The split per year was highlighted at paragraph 2.2 of the report.

The funding is intended to support projects under three key themes: Community and Place, Local Business, and People and Skills. The Deputy Director – Economic Development in presenting the report highlighted the key activities, which officers felt are the highest priority and impact for the city, for each of the key themes and responded to questions from Committee Members in relation to each of the themes.

The Council will be required to submit an investment plan to access the allocation. The plan would need to cover the headings as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report. The plan must be submitted by 1st August 2022 and will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- Local Context - including challenges and opportunities;
- Selection of outcomes, outputs and proposed interventions; and
- Delivery

The list of proposed interventions is considered for inclusion as set out in the report.

Committee Members considered that an annual review would be useful to ensure delivery of projects and allocation of funding, although the Deputy Director – Economic Development suggested bi-annual would be her preference.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1. confirms the preferred projects and gives permission to submit an application by the deadline of 1st August 2022; and**
- 2. authorises the Managing Director to oversee the final bid documentation in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to ensure timely submission.**

14 Museums Worcestershire Annual Review

The Committee considered the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review, attached as appendix 1 to the cover report, the Museums Manager in presenting the report highlighted the key points of the review.

Committee Members were informed that the Annual Review of Museums Worcestershire activity in 2021/22 was approved by the Joint Museums Committee at their meeting in June 2022. It highlighted the impact that museums make in the city and county, illustrated through information, comments from users and performance figures.

The Museums Manager highlighted that the recovery post-covid to the Museums Worcestershire museums had been more rapid than the national picture and visitor numbers were now back to where they were in 2019. The museums used core council funding to lever an additional £300k in external funding, enabling additional activities in museums and programmes out in the community to support local residents.

Funding from the City Plan Reserve allocated by this Committee has supported the development of an Escape Room experience at the Commandery, due to open later this year and the exhibition Canaletto - A Venetian's View at the Art Gallery opening 1st October 2022.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Committee Members.

Committee Members welcomed the report and gave thanks for the work undertaken by both staff and volunteers.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the activities undertaken in museums in 2021/22 and the impact made.

15 Quarter 1 Performance Report 2022/23

The Committee considered the quarter 1 performance report for 2022/23 for Place and Economic Development, attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Managing Director presented the report and highlighted the main points. The Committee's attention was drawn in particular to the key performance indicators for planning which the Managing Director was pleased to report were now back on track.

Committee Members asked questions and commented on various aspects of the report.

In referring to city centre footfall, it was understood that this was based on car park usage, also footfall counters captured the numbers of passers-by. It was asked if consideration could be given to accessing the data from the footfall counters at the cycle storage in Crowngate for those cycling to the city centre.

In response to a question on how many complaints had been received for non-determination of planning applications within the statutory timescale the Managing Director agreed to check and circulate this information.

Concerns were raised by Committee Members over the progress of the draft Strategic Play Area Development Plan and that a report would not be submitted to Committee until January 2023. The Managing Director in response agreed that it has taken some while but would follow this up as he did not have any further detail to provide at the meeting.

With regard to the Arts and Cultural Strategy for the city it was asked how this would be broadcast. The Deputy Director – Economic Development in response explained that the strategy was out for consultation until the end of August and provided details of stakeholders/partners involved in the process. The link to the consultation was also available on the website. The strategy would be revamped once all comments had been received and the results would be brought to the Committee. As requested, the Deputy Director – Economic Development, agreed to share the strategy consultation link with Members. Committee Members were disappointed that the consultation was not in the City Life magazine.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's Quarter 1 performance for 2022/23.

16 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 8.48p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
31st October 2022