

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

7th June 2021

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

Officers: David Blake, Managing Director
Andrew Round, Corporate Director – Place Helen Mole, Tourism and City Centre Manager

1 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Public Participation

None.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Worcester City Cultural Strategy

The Committee considered a report on the Worcester City Cultural Strategy.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager presented the report and informed Members that Worcester City Council is looking for a consultant to lead the development of a new five year cultural strategy. The successful consultant will be commissioned to deliver the following two pieces of work:

- i) An overarching vision and ambition for culture in the city
- ii) A cultural strategy which can be used to support and develop cultural provision within the city and provide a road map for the Council's cultural investment and partnerships

The development of the strategy will be supported by Council officers as well as a newly formed Cultural Partnership made up of cultural stakeholders in Worcester.

Details of the items for inclusion in the strategy were highlighted in paragraph 2.7 of the report.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager responded to questions from Members in particular around reviews, timescales and monitoring of the strategy. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to involve the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee in developing the strategy. It was agreed by the Committee that an additional recommendation be added.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. agrees to commission a consultant to develop the Worcester City Cultural Strategy;**
- 2. agrees to the formation of a Cultural Partnership to lead the development and strategic engagement of culture in the city.**
- 3. agrees to the Chair and Vice Chair being involved in the development of the Worcester City Cultural Strategy.**

6 Welcome Back Fund

The Committee considered a report on the Welcome Back Fund.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager presented the report and informed Members that the Council had been awarded a total of £180,242 from the Welcome Back Fund and Reopening High Street Safely Fund to put in place additional measures to create and promote a safe environment for local trade and tourism, particularly in high streets as economies open.

The six criteria for eligible projects under the funding were set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report. The spending plan, attached as appendix 1 to the report, was submitted to the Welcome Back Fund team at MHCLG on Friday 28th May 2021. Officers had consulted with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee on the spending plan and submitted it under the Managing Director's urgency powers, as the deadline was prior to the meeting of the Committee.

The plan has been developed in partnership with Worcester BID who will deliver some of the projects. Other stakeholders were consulted throughout the development of the plan. The funding must be spent by 31st March 2022.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager responded to questions from Members on various aspects of the spending plan.

Members commended the Tourism and City Centre Manager and her team for the work that has been carried out through Covid and continues to do so, co-ordination has been very clear on tourism and visitors and contact made with businesses and other local agencies in conjunction with the Environmental Operations team.

RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the plan for spend of the Welcome Back Fund, set out in the Appendix, which has been submitted to Government under the Managing Director's urgency powers.

7 Annual/Quarter 4 Performance Report 2021/21

The Committee considered the annual and quarter 4 performance for 202/21, attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Corporate Director – Place presented the report and highlighted the main points and responded to questions from Members in particular the City Centre Wi-Fi and the City Centre Masterplan – Feasibility Works for Key Sites.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council’s Annual and Quarter 4 Performance for 2020/21.

8 Victorian Fayre and Christmas Markets

The Committee considered a report on the Victorian Fayre and Christmas Markets.

The Worcester Victorian Christmas Fayre is scheduled to take place from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th December 2021. Since 2016 the event has been organised by Worcester City Council with the management of the market stalls contracted to an external supplier, this contract came to an end on 31st January 2021.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager in presenting the report informed Members of the preferred option which is to obtain approval to put in place a one-year contract with Cotswold Markets for management of the stalls at the Worcester Victorian Christmas Fayre on 2021, alongside a wooden chalet Christmas market for the month of December. A single year contract will allow a review of the Fayre and better understanding of the commercial model. A longer term procurement will be carried out after the event.

Discussions have taken place between Council officers and representatives of Cotswold markets about the commercial terms, potential income and costs, details of which are included in the exempt appendix.

The report set out the proposed details for the Victorian Christmas Fayre and the wooden chalet Christmas market, together with the management and arrangements to be put in place via a written agreement. The report also included what each market would need to supply in terms of contact details, risk assessments and insurance etc.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager highlighted the financial and budgetary implications at paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the report.

In responding to questions from Members it was agreed that an update report on the progress of the Victorian Fayre and Christmas Markets would come before the Committee, to include comments on risk management.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agrees to contract with Cotswold Markets for the following:

- 1. management of the market stalls at the 2021 Worcester Victorian Christmas Fayre; and**

2. **installation and operation of wooden chalets on the High Street for the month of December as part of an extended City Centre offer in the pre-Christmas period.**

9 Any Other Business

None.

10 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.

11 Victorian Fayre and Christmas Markets

The Committee noted the contents of the exempt appendix which supported the public report on the agenda. The appendix explained income and expenditure for both the Victorian Fayre and the Christmas Markets. The appendix was not for publication as it contains commercially sensitive information.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 8.45p.m.

Chairman at the meeting on
26th July 2021