

JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

17th September 2021

Present: Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson in the Chair
Councillors Agar and Roberts

Officers: Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director of
Communities
(Worcestershire County Council)
Philippa Tinsley, Museums Manager
Helen Large, Museums Audiences Manager

Apologies: Councillor Dormer

13 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

14 Declarations of Interest

None.

15 Public Participation

None.

16 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17 Quarter 1 Performance Report 2021-22

The Joint Committee received a report on the performance information for the 1st Quarter of 2021-22. Appendix 1, attached to the report, identified the performance comparisons, of particular note was that the Museums were able to reopen to the public on 17th May 2021. The Museums Manager drew the Joint Committee's attention to the new performance indicators for 2021.

In referring to the Service Plan at appendix 2, the Museums Manager stated that most key targets/work areas were on track, only a few delayed due to the lockdown.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Joint Committee Members on various aspects of the attached appendices.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the performance information for Quarter 1 2021-2022.

18 **Quarter 1 Finance Report 2021-22**

The Joint Committee received the financial monitoring details, including budget variances for the 1st Quarter ending 30th June 2021. The report provided information on the position at Quarter 1, an explanation of main variances and reserves.

The Museums Manager presented the report and informed Joint Committee Members that the forecast year-end position at Quarter 1 is an £8,000, underspend. The forecast year end underspend in the areas hosted by the City Council were explained in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Joint Committee Members, particularly around the explanation of the VAT status of the Commandery admissions.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the financial monitoring details, including budget variances for the 1st Quarter ended 30th June 2021.

19 **City Museums Development**

The Joint Committee considered a report on the City Museums Development.

The Museums Manager informed the Joint Committee that following submission of the Worcester Town Investment Plan through the Towns Fund, the City was awarded £19.6 million towards the plan in June 2021 and the Council confirmed proposals for the allocation of this funding at its Policy and Resources Committee on 7th September 2021. The next stage is the development of detailed business cases for each of the selected projects.

One strand of work aims to make strategic investments in the City's heritage, this was highlighted in paragraph 2.4 of the report. The Joint Museums Committee Members were also informed that a local philanthropist has approached the City Council with a proposal to make a donations of £300,000 for the purchase of art works in the City's collection. Further details were provided at paragraphs 2.6 ad 2.7 of the report. Joint Committee Members acknowledged the significant donation made to the City Museum.

Joint Committee Members were informed that the Council's Head of Property and Asset Management has been reviewing the facilities management across the City. An enquiry has been made as to the museum team taking on the facilities and Officer in Charge responsibility for the City's offices at the Art Gallery and Museum building to add to its responsibilities for the public museum spaces. A budget has been allocated for an additional part-time member of staff.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Joint Committee Members who were informed that further discussions can be held at the members workshop in January 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- 1. note the inclusion of the ambition for future development of the two City Museums within Worcester's Towns Fund plans;**
- 2. note the offer of a significant donation to the City's museum collection and thank the donor for their generosity; and**
- 3. approve the museum team taking on the facilities responsibility for the City's offices in the Art Gallery and Museum building.**

20 Income Generation Report

The Joint Committee received a report on income generation.

The Museums Audiences Manager, in presenting the report, stated that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on income generation for museums, with most income streams halted entirely during lockdown.

The pandemic had also influenced customer demand and expectation. The market has changed with many hire venues discounting and adding benefits to win business and customers.

The Museums Audiences Manager highlighted the key income generation strands, namely retail, café partners, room hire, ticketing and membership and new initiatives relating to the new Escape Room at The Commandery and potential to develop the wellbeing strand of work at the County Museum. A report is planned for the November meeting on this particular aspect.

The Museums Audiences Manager responded to questions from Joint Committee Members, particularly in relation to Memberships and residents free entry to The Commandery. A suggestion was made that an article in City Life would be useful to highlight this as some residents did not seem to be aware. The Museums Audiences Manager agreed to follow this up.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the post-Covid recovery in income generation and next stage of work plan.

21 Museums 2022-23 Fees and Charges

The Joint Committee considered a report on the Museums 2022-23 fees and charges. The proposed fees and charges for 2022-23 were highlighted in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

The Museums Manager, in presenting the report, informed Joint Committee Members that the charges proposed this year are predominantly an inflationary increase. A standard 3% has been used and it is considered that this will ensure museum charges continue in line with equivalent costs elsewhere.

Following advice from a commissioned retail consultant, admission charges have been rounded to the nearest psychological price point. This has resulted in a small number of fees, particularly the Commandery adult admission and the County Museum only adult admission, rising at a higher than inflation rate. A limited benchmark review suggest that the proposed admission charges are competitive.

A small number of new fees at the City Museums are proposed, these were highlighted in blue in the appendix and will be recommended for adoption as part of the wider City Council fee setting process.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Joint Committee Members, particularly around concessions for those on low income.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- 1. approve the proposed package of changes to the Museums' fees and charges and recommends their inclusion in the wider Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council fee setting process; and**
- 2. approve the temporary alteration from 1/1/2022 of any fees to be included in annual calendar-year publicity.**

22 Joint Museums Committee Work Programme

The Joint Committee considered its future work programme.

The Museums Manager highlighted that the next meeting on 19th November 2021 will include an introduction to the Kurt Jackson Clay Country exhibition at the Worcester Art Gallery and Museum at 9.00am. The Joint Committee Members were also reminded of the workshop on future development planning to be held at the Guildhall on 21st January 2022 at 10.00am.

There were no additional items added to the work programme.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the work programme.

23 Any Other Business

None.

24 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 defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.

25 2022-2023 Joint Service Budgets

The Joint Committee considered and approved the Joint Service Budgets for 2022-23.

Duration of the meeting: 10.00a.m. to 11.40a.m.

Chair at the meeting on
19th November 2021