

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

24th January 2022

Present: Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson in the Chair

Councillors Agar, A. Amos, Carver, Cleary, Geraghty, Gregson, Hodges (Vice-Chair), Lewing, Norfolk and Stanley

Officers: Shane Flynn, Corporate Director Finance and Resources
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
Helen Mole, Tourism and City Centre Manager
Corin Beames, Acting Team Leader (Planning Policy)
Rebecca Burridge, Senior Planning Policy Officer

47 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

48 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillor Carver – Additional Funding to Celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee in 2022 (Minute No. 51) – Will be hosting a residents’ meeting with regard to holding a Jubilee street party.

49 Public Participation

None.

50 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

51 Additional Funding to Celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in 2022

The Committee considered a report on the request for additional funding to celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee in 2022.

At its meeting in November 2021 the Committee agreed to recommend an allocation of £10,000 for activities to celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee. At the Policy and Resources Committee, the Committee agreed to request the Place and Economic Development Committee to consider a report on an additional £20,000 allocation to support celebrating the Queen’s Jubilee at its January meeting.

Details of activities already planned were highlighted at paragraph 2.5 of the report, the additional funding is requested to further support and enhance these activities as well as a range of activities including but not limited to:

- Participation in the Big Jubilee Lunch. The Council will encourage communities to come together over the Bank Holiday weekend to celebrate their connections and get to know each other better;
- Funding will be allocated to encourage street parties to take place during the Jubilee period;
- A small grants scheme will be introduced to encourage community groups to organise events and activities relating to the Jubilee;
- We will install street decorations and activations across the city to highlight the special occasion; and
- Events and exhibitions will take place at city museums.

The Elgar Festival will also take place over the June Bank Holiday weekend as it is programmed to coincide with Elgar's birthday on Thursday 2nd June. The Council will support the promotion of this important event.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager, in presenting the report, responded to questions from Committee Members.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommend to Policy and Resources Committee to approve the award of an additional £20,000 from reserves in 2022/23 to be used to fund activities to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in 2022.

52 Review of Christmas in Worcester

The Committee considered a report on the review of Christmas in Worcester, which was presented by the Tourism and City Centre Manager

The report summarised the review of Christmas activities for the 2021/22 season and made recommendations for further action and development in future years.

Following a review of the Christmas illuminations the recommendation is for officers to explore options for extending the existing Christmas light coverage to other parts of the city. The review should include the potential for private sector funding and sponsorship. Once the review is complete recommendations will be presented to Members.

A review was also carried out on the Victorian Christmas Fayre, whereby approximately 125,000 people attend every year which presents an opportunity to generate income through sponsorship and advertising from local businesses, as well as tourism marketing. The recommendation is to conduct a review of income generation both at the Fayre and for the wider Christmas in Worcester programme. It is proposed, subject to agreement, that this will be the subject of a report to a future Income Generation Sub-Committee.

With regard to the Christmas Gifts Market, a review will be carried out, in partnership with the market operator to assess its success and a report will come to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager responded to questions from Committee Members, who thanked her for a thorough report and welcomed the review.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. note the review of Christmas in Worcester activity for the 2021-22 season;**
- 2. agree to officers exploring the options for extending the existing Christmas light coverage to other parts of the city, with recommendations reported to a future committee meeting; and**
- 3. agree to officers conducting a review of opportunities relating to Christmas activities to report to a future committee meeting.**

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

The Committee considered the proposed budgets for Place and Economic Development Services for 2022/23. The Committee reviewed the priorities within each service and the initiatives proposed in the Income and Efficiency plan, and reviewed the City Plan allocations. The Committee also considered the draft Capital Programme to 2026/27. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and responded to questions from Committee Members.

Members were informed that the funding on previously approved budget items by the Committee, set out in the table at paragraph 4.6 of the report, had been approved by Policy and Resources at its meeting on 16th November 2020. With regard to the Skills Officer post, the post holder had submitted notice and it has been recommended that the allocation be broadened to 'Economic Regenerations Officer(s)' to allow flexibility over the use of the funding.

In addition to these proposals the Chair had received the following new items for consideration:

- Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations - £20,000 additional funding for activities to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in June;
- Drink Spiking - £10,000 support for the initiative led by the BID to reduce the incidence of drink spiking; and
- Cultural Strategy - £50,000 implementation fund.

The rationale for each of the items were summarised in the report.

In addition to this the Chair had received three further proposals which were potentially of a capital nature and would need to be built into capital programmes. Members of the Committee were informed that there would be a further report on each item setting out the full design and business case and financial implications during the year. Where these are in relation to pay provision, they should form part of the wider Strategic Play Area Assessment that is underway. The proposals were as follows:

- BMX/Pump Track - £60,000 provision of a new BMX and skate park in the St Peter's area;

- Land off Cotswold Way – 100,000 to bring an unused strip of land into use for the local community with play facilities and environmental enhancements and
- Power Park play equipment - £12,000 proposal received from St Peter's Parish Council for additional play equipment.

Following a debate of the capital items some Members, although in support of the proposals, thought they were premature as the Strategic Play Area Assessment has yet to be carried out and a report is scheduled to come before the Committee. Other Members spoke in support of the proposals and although in agreement with the need to look at the wider play area strategy, felt it should not be used to hold back the investments of the proposals.

Upon being put to the vote, all the proposals were agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:

- 1. note the proposed budgets for the various services identified for 2022/23;**
- 2. note the priorities within each service;**
- 3. note the services' Capital Programme and future projects;**
- 4. recommend the Policy and Resources Committee to agree the following new budget proposals:**
 - **Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations - £20,000 additional funding for activities to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in June.**
 - **Drink Spiking - £10,000 support for the initiative led by the BID to reduce the incidence of drink spiking.**
 - **Cultural Strategy - £50,000 implementation fund.**
 - **BMX/Pump Track - £60,000 provision of a new BMX and skate park in the St Peter's area.**
 - **Land off Cotswold Way – 100,000 to bring an unused strip of land into use for the local community with play facilities and environmental enhancements.**
 - **Power Park play equipment - £12,000 proposal received from St Peter's Parish Council for additional play equipment.**
- 5. redesignate the funding set aside for the Skills Officer to a wider remit of Economic Development Officer(s).**

54 South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme 2021-2024

The Committee considered a report on the South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme 2021-2024.

The January 2022 document was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and its main changes included updates to the timetable of the Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD, which were set out in paragraphs 3.1-3.5 of the report.

Other LDS updates included the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) whereby a review of the South Worcestershire Councils' CIL Charging Schedules will be undertaken 2022.

It is best practice to review the LDS annually and where required to extend/update the work programme for a 12 months period. The revised LDS sets out key milestones up until December 2024 and comes into effect from 1st March 2022.

The Acting Team Leader (Planning Policy) in presenting the report responded to questions from Committee Members in particular around specific site allocations. During discussions, it was pointed out that in Part 3a of the appendix, the Independent Examination (Regulation 24) milestone date should read February to May 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. recommend that Council approve the South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme 2021-2024 set out at Appendix 1 to come into effect from 1st March 2022; and**
- 2. delegate authority to the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor amendments to the LDS prior to publication.**

55 Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021 for the Monitoring Period 1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021

The Committee considered a report on the Infrastructure Funding Statement for the monitoring period 1st April 2020-31st March 2021. The document was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer, in presenting the report, highlighted the key points of the document which has been published on the Council's website in accordance with legal requirements.

Committee Members welcomed the document.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the 2021 version of the Infrastructure Funding Statement has been published on the Council's website.

56 Quarter 3 Performance Report for 2021/22

The Committee received the Quarter 3 performance report for 2021/22 attached as appendix 1.

Officers responded to Committee Members questions, particularly in relation to planning performance and the 5 year housing land supply. The Chair also reported that following attendance at a recent meeting she gave assurance that visitor numbers to the museums were improving.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's Quarter 3 performance for 2021/22.

57 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 8.57p.m.

Chairman at the meeting on
14th March 2022