

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

6th June 2022

Present: Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson in the Chair
Councillors Bayliss, Cronin, Desayrah, A. Ditta, Geraghty, Gregson, Laurenson, Lewing, Norfolk (Vice-Chair) and Stanley

Officers: Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources
Zoey West, Deputy Director – Economic Development
Helen Mole, Tourism and City Centre Manager

1 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillor Gregson – The Arches – Worcester Legacy Project (Minute No. 5) – As Chair of the Arches Project.

3 Public Participation

None.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 The Arches - Worcester Legacy Project

The Committee considered a report on The Arches – Worcester Legacy Project.

The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and informed Committee Members that the Council have been approached by Severn Arts, who have been managing the Arches Project, to consider whether the Council will continue in partnership to support the legacy of the Festival strand of the Arches project. This request is part of Severn Arts' bid to become an Arts Council for England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), which if successful would bring £400,000 a year for three years in Arts Council Funding in the City.

A financial commitment by the Council would increase the likelihood of the application being accepted by demonstrating that the proposal has the support of the Council and is aligned with developing the Arts and Culture Strategy, which included commitments to partnership working.

Severn Arts has submitted an application which has a significant focus on the Arches – Worcester legacy project. An information paper had been provided by Severn Arts and was attached as appendix 1 to the report. The paper is requesting a contribution from the City Council to support the recruitment of a Community Producer, who would work alongside the existing Festivals Director. The outcome of the NPO application would be announced in October 2022.

The preferred option is to contribute £20,000 from the Arts and Culture Strategy Implementation Fund as an initial one-off commitment to the role of the Community Producer.

The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources handed over to Elaine Knight, Arts Director of Severn Arts, who gave a presentation to Committee Members on the Arches Festival Legacy. The presentation provided details of the community festivals held so far and details of the legacy plans which are to sustain and evolve the festivals programme. The role of the Community Producer was also explained. Elaine responded to questions from Committee Members in particular relating to its bid to become an Arts Council for England NPO and what this would mean if successful.

The Chair thanked Elaine for her presentation and stated that she was pleased to see that every part of the city is to be involved.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to allocate £20,000 from the Arts and Culture Strategy Implementation Fund to support the Arches – Worcester legacy as part of Severn Arts’ NPO status.

6 Worcester Arts and Culture Strategy

The Committee considered an update report on the Arts and Culture Strategy.

The report sought to update on progress in the creation of the strategy and sets out the next steps ahead of adoption. The draft Strategy was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager, in presenting the report, informed Committee Members that the draft Strategy sets out four key aims and 12 objectives, these were highlighted in paragraph 3.1 of the report. The Strategy will be supported by a delivery plan.

Committee Members were informed that the document will now undergo a period of consultation which will run from June to September 2022 with an updated report to this Committee in October.

The Tourism and City Centre Manager responded to questions from Committee Members in particular around how the consultation process will be conducted, how visitors views would be captured and if the staff involved will have the capacity to carry out the work within the timeframe.

The Deputy Director – Economic Development informed Committee Members that all of the details from the consultancy will form an action plan and will set out the short, medium and long-term plans for the delivery of the objectives of the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the contents of the report updating on progress with the Worcester Arts and Culture Strategy.

7 Annual/Quarter 4 Performance Report for 2021/22

The Committee considered the annual and quarter 4 performance for 2021/22 for Place and Economic Development, attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources presented the report and officers responded to questions from Members in particular around progress on the Strategic Play Area Development Plan; Museums targets; City Centre Footfall/Digital High Street progress and River Severn Partnership and the City Council's involvement.

Following discussions on the projects affecting the High Street i.e. Digital High Street and City Centre Footfall, it was suggested that there may be an opportunity to focus on the High Street and attracting visitors, particularly as more people are working from home. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance welcomed the opportunity for scrutiny, agreeing that officers could prepare a report which would look at funding streams and the possibility of commissioning a piece of work if needed. The report would potentially be prepared for the October meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's annual and quarter 4 Performance for 2021/22.

8 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 8.00p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
25th July 2022