

## **JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE**

**15th June 2023**

**Present:** Councillor Adrian Gregson in the Chair  
Councillors Agar and Hart (Vice-Chair)

**Officers:** Philippa Tinsley, Museums Manager  
Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director,  
Communities (Worcestershire County  
Council)  
Helen Large, Museums Audiences Manager  
Mark Baldwin, Head of Finance  
Trina Cassidy, Assistant Accountant  
Deborah Fox, Senior Curator  
Christine Cushway, Strategic Asset Review  
Officer (Worcestershire County Council)

**Apologies:** Councillor Roberts

### **1 Appointment of Substitutes**

None.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillor Hart – Worcestershire County Museum Future Options (Minute Nos. 59 and 62) - As Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Member with responsibilities for Communities.

### **3 Public Participation**

None.

### **4 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **5 Election of Chair**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Gregson be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

### **6 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Hart be elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

### **7 Museums Worcestershire Annual Review and Performance 2022-23**

The Joint Committee considered the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review and Performance for 2022-23.

The proposed Annual Review for 2022-23, required by the Joint Museums Service Agreement, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. This to be circulated to key partners and stakeholders, as well as publishing on the museums services website, it will also be circulated to all City and County Councillors.

A summary of annual performance indicators also gave an account of progress in delivering the work programme against service priorities and targets throughout, this was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. The performance data is used by Museums Worcestershire's management team to shape the priorities of upcoming work.

The Museums Audiences Manager went through each of the appendices with the Joint Committee Members and drew their attention to paragraph 3.2 of the report which highlighted the key points of performance in 2022-23.

It was agreed that the annual review and performance for 2022-23 would be presented to the Place and Economic Development Committee for information as previously.

It was noted that recovery from the Covid pandemic across the heritage and cultural sector continues but performance at some venues is now additionally being hit by cost-of-living increases. However, Worcestershire's museums visitor numbers were on the increase suggesting that the sites are performing much better than the sector as a whole. As a result, the economic impact for the local economy has increased from previous years, up nearly £0.5million to £2.4million.

The Joint Museums Committee Members welcomed this news and also commented on the increased figures for the café. The Museums Manager confirmed that the outdoor space available was a key factor in this, but this was now levelling off.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

- 1. approves the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2022-23; and**
- 2. note the information provided regarding performance in 2022-23 compared to previous years.**

**8 Quarter 4 Finance Report 2022-23**

The Joint Committee received the financial monitoring details, including budget variances for the 4th Quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The report provided information on the year end position at Quarter 4 and transfer to General Reserve at year end, including an explanation of main variances and other reserves.

The Head of Finance presented the report and drew the Joint Committee's attention to paragraph 3.6 which provided an explanation of the major variances and paragraph 3.8 which outlined the transfers made during Quarter 4 and that the forecast year end performance at Quarter 4 is a surplus of £33,393.

In addition there was a year-end surplus of £668 from the County Hartlebury Operations. The surplus would be transferred to the general reserve at year end.

The Museums Manager in response to a question on project reserves, explained that this was for specific projects and museum work.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the financial monitoring details, including budget variances for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.**

## **9 2023-2024 Budget and Museums Reserve**

The Joint Committee considered a report on the 2023-24 budget and museum reserves. The Joint Museums agreement sets out that the Committee should plan the annual budget for the joint service by the end of November each year.

The County Council submitted a saving to the committee in November 2022 for the 23-24 budget, but the City Council did not as the museums service had already accommodated the national pay award within its budget.

The Museums Manager presented the report and informed the Joint Committee Members that an additional reduction to the City's contribution to the museums service in 23-24 of £16,840 has been requested. The City's expectation is that this amount should be achieved through income success at the two city museum sites, rather than by a reduction in service.

The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the preferred option at paragraphs 4.1-4.3 of the report. It was also proposed to allocate £77,500 of the general museums reserve towards the County Museum developments and £63,500 of the general museum reserve towards the Art Gallery and Museum developments.

The Joint Museum Committee Members approved the proposals.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

- 1. approve the proposals set out in the report to meet a requested saving to the City Council's contribution to the service; and**
- 2. designate part of the general museums reserve towards the upcoming major developments at its museums.**

## **10 Collections Update**

The Joint Museums Committee considered the Collections update report.

The Senior Curator presented the report and informed Joint Committee Members that an application to Arts Council England for £79,500 for the Museums Voices Project had been successful. The grant would fund a two year long project at the Art Gallery and Museum, the grant would also fund upgrades to the activity space and associated programming.

Disposal of museum objects is considered within the framework of the Worcester City and Worcestershire County Museum Disposals Procedures, adopted by this committee in 2015. Paragraph 3.4 of the report identified items as suitable for disposal and of low significance. The officer's Collections Panel recommended then for disposal on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. The Joint Museums Committee were being asked to approve the disposal of the objects as listed.

To manage the current project efficiently, it is proposed that the Joint Committee delegates until 2025, the decision to dispose of objects to the Museums Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this committee.

The Worcester City and Worcestershire County Collections Development Policies 2015-2020 were extended until 2023 due to covid in 2021. Both have now been reviewed for the period 2023-2028 and were attached as Appendix 1 and 2 to the report. The Joint Museums Committee were being asked to approve these policies.

In referring to the decision of future items for disposal and the delegation to Chair and Vice Chair, it was suggested that other Members be included too in this process. The recommendation at 1.2 of the report to be amended accordingly.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

- 1. note the successful application to Arts Council England for the community co-curated Museum Voices Project;**
- 2. approve the recommended disposal of the objects listed in paragraph 3.4, and delegate disposal decisions until April 2025 on objects damaged beyond repair or containing hazardous materials to the Museums Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and other Members of this committee; and**
- 3. approves the reviewed Worcester City and Worcestershire County Museum Collection Development Policies for the period 2023-2028.**

**11 Joint Museums Committee Work Programme**

The Joint Committee considered its future work programme.

The Museums Manager in presenting the report highlighted the main items for consideration at future meetings and asked Joint Committee Members whether they wished to change the number or venue of any meetings.

The Committee usually meets four times a year, in March, June, September and November. The Joint Museums Agreement sets out that the committee should hold an annual meeting in June and approve a budget for the following year by 1<sup>st</sup> December.

The Joint Museums Committee Members agreed to amalgamate the September and November meetings and schedule a meeting in October, reducing the number of meetings a year to three.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

1. **note the future work programme; and**
2. **agree to change the meeting pattern from four to three; cancelling the September and November meetings and scheduling a meeting in October instead (date to be agreed).**

## **12 Worcestershire County Museum Future Options**

The Joint Committee considered a report on the Worcestershire County Museum future options.

The Museums Manager presented the report and introduced Christine Cushway, Strategic Asset Review Officer, from County Council Property, who was in attendance to respond to any questions that the Joint Museums Committee Members may have.

The Museums Manager provided background to the proposals which has resulted in the property and museums teams undertaking a review of options for the County Museum. Two phases of review have been carried out, which were supported by property consultants.

The table at paragraph 3.1 set out the options reviewed. Consideration given to each option were outlined in paragraphs 3.2-3.6 of the report. Option D was covered in the exempt appendix, which was not for publication, as it contained commercially sensitive information.

Joint Museums Committee Members were being asked to recommend their preferred option for consideration at a County Council Cabinet meeting in September.

During the discussion, officers responded to questions from Joint Committee Members, and took into consideration the further information provided in the exempt appendix relating to Option D which had been reviewed alongside those in the table at paragraph 3.1 of the report.

Following discussions the Joint Committee agreed to recommend option A to Worcestershire County Council for consideration.

### **RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

1. **note the information regarding options for the future of Worcestershire County Museum; and**
2. **recommend Option A to Worcestershire County Council for consideration at a meeting of the Cabinet in September 2023.**

## **13 Any Other Business**

None.

## **14 Item Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information**

**RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.**

**15 Worcestershire County Museum Future Options Supporting Information**

The Joint Committee considered supporting information, in exempt appendix, relating to Option D which had been reviewed alongside those options in table 3.1 of the main report. The appendix was classed as exempt as the information was commercially sensitive.

Joint Committee Members noted the contents of the exempt appendix.

**Duration of the meeting:** 4.00p.m. to 5.00p.m.

Chair at the meeting on  
26th October 2023