

## **JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE**

**26th October 2023**

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

**Officers:** Philippa Tinsley, Museums Manager  
Helen Large, Museums Audiences Manager  
Mark Baldwin, Head of Finance  
Trina Cassidy, Assistant Accountant  
David Nash, Curator – Social History

**Apologies:** Councillor May

### **16 Appointment of Substitutes**

None.

### **17 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **18 Public Participation**

None.

### **19 Minutes**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### **20 Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023-24**

The Joint Committee received a report on progress in delivering the work programme against targets in the period April-June 2023, in comparison to previous years. Additional recent narrative feedback from visitors to The Commandery was provided for Committee Members to support the understanding of the quality of the service's performance.

The Museums Manager presented the report and highlighted the key points as set out in Appendix 1.

The service's annual work plan is all on track. Information regarding the actions in quarter 1 were highlighted at paragraph 3.5 of the report. The options for the County Museum, considered at the last Joint Museums Committee, was on the County Council Cabinet agenda today and the Vice Chair confirmed that this had been well received.

The Museums Manager responded to a question from the Chair related to the website users sessions figures and clarified how and why they had changed the way these were calculated using Google Analytics.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the performance information for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2023-24.**

## **21 Heritage Marketing Report**

The Joint Committee received the Heritage Marketing report which provided details of progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects.

The Museums Audiences Manager presented the report in conjunction with a slide presentation which focused on a three year audience research project; investment of City Plan funds and core service successes. She highlighted the key points in each area.

The Chair welcomed the positive news and asked for the presentation slides to be circulated to Joint Museums Committee Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects.**

## **22 Tickenhill Collection Trust Annual Report**

The Joint Committee considered the annual report of the Tickenhill Trust, which was appended as Appendix 1, and provided Joint Committee Members with an oversight of the Trust's activities in 2022-23, which are in line with its charitable purpose.

Both income and expenditure for the Trust in 2022-23 were nil, with work undertaken by volunteers and supported by staff funded by Worcestershire County Council.

The Museums Manager, in presenting the report, informed Joint Committee Members that the Tickenhill Collection continues to be managed and cared for as part of the wider Worcestershire County Museum collection. As previously noted the upcoming lease-end dates at the County Museum and the Collections Store will impact on the Tickenhill Collection and the Council's trustee responsibility has been considered within that decision planning. There is an opportunity for the Tickenhill Collection to take a lead at the Collections Store, and this will be integrated into the negotiation of a new store lease.

The Curator – Social History presented the annual report and highlighted the main points of the 2022-23 achievements.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee approve the annual report for the Tickenhill Collection 2022-23, for submission to the Charity Commission.**

## **23 Quarter 1 Finance Report 2023-24**

The Joint Committee received a report on the financial monitoring details including budget variances for the 1st quarter ended 30th June 2023.

The report provided information on the year end position at Quarter 1, an explanation of main variances, draft budget proposals for 2024-25 and reserves.

The Head of Finance, Worcester City Council, presented the report and highlighted the main points. It was noted that the year-end position at Q1 is £30,683 surplus.

The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to draft budget proposals for 2024-25 which were outlined in the report, the Head of Finance stated that an additional recommendation needed to be added to agree the draft budget.

The 2024-25 draft budget for the City Council was being prepared for review by the Policy and Resources Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023, final approval by full Council in February 2024. The County Council budgets will receive final approval by the Council in February.

It was proposed and seconded that the draft budget proposals for 2024-25 be agreed and added to the recommendation. This was agreed by the Joint Committee Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

- 1. note the financial monitoring details, including budget variances for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023; and**
- 2. approve the draft budget proposals for 2024-25 as set out in the report.**

**24 Museums Fees and Charges 2024-25**

The Joint Committee considered a proposed package of changes to the Museums' fees and charges and their inclusion in the wider Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council fee setting process.

The Museums Manager presented the report and explained that the charges proposed this year were predominately an inflation increase. In previous years an average between the retail price index and the consumer prices index at the time of report writing has been used as the inflationary figure. This year that inflation average would be 7.7%. This year a proposal is for 6% average across the board rounded up to a simple figure.

Some new charges had been added, which were outlined in blue in the appendix attached to the report. The proposed charges will be recommended for adoption as part of the wider City Council fee setting process.

It was explained that, while fees and charges are considered by the two authorities on a financial year basis, the majority of publicity for museums is produced annually for a calendar year. It was therefore proposed that 2024 publicity should include any increased prices, rather than delaying changes.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

1. **approves the proposed package of changes to the Museums' fees and charges and recommends their inclusion in the wider City Council and Worcestershire County Council fee setting process; and**
2. **approves the temporary alteration from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 of any fees to be included in the annual calendar-year publicity.**

## **25 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.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the proposed workshop to be held immediately before the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to direct the drafting of the Museums Worcestershire 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. After some discussion it was agreed that the workshop would be held immediately after the meeting rather than before.

The Museums Manager in referring to paragraph 3.3 of the report, highlighted that the museums could choose to apply for a part of the service to become part of the Arts Council National Portfolio. This needs careful consideration which will be the subject of a report at the October 2024 meeting, date yet to be agreed.

There were no additional items added to the work programme by Joint Committee Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee note the future work programme and in particular the workshop to be held immediately after the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.**

## **26 Worcester City Museums Review**

The Joint Committee considered a report on the review of Worcester City Museums.

The Museums Manager presented the report and informed Joint Committee Members that the current opening hours of the two city museums have remained the same for more than 15 years. Opening hours were last formally reviewed in 2018, at which point evidence of need for change was recognised, but not at sufficient enough levels to make a change. The current opening hours were highlighted at paragraph 2.3 of the report.

In 2022-23 the city museums reviewed the pattern of museum visiting, city centre footfall and local business hours to monitor if current museum opening hours are still aligned to visitor need. The findings of the review were highlighted in paragraph 3.1 of the report. The conclusions from the review were outlined in paragraph 3.2.

The preferred option was to propose a review of opening hours to better reflect current visits demand and the opportunity for growth in tourism, particularly at weekends. The proposal is to have the same hours at both museums, as shown in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

To enable the museums to operate at these revised hours would mean a change to the front-line teams at both the Commandery and the Art Gallery and Museum. The proposed staff changes were included in the confidential appendix, as it included information relating to individuals, and was considered in the exempt part of the meeting.

The implementation of this proposal would make the £5,000 savings as set out in the finance report presented at the meeting.

The Museums Manager responded to questions from Joint Committee Members, particularly around a suggestion to open until 4.00pm on a Sunday. The Museums Manager stated that this was considered but there was no evidence, plus do not have the budget, but would keep under review.

The Joint Committee Members welcomed the proposal considering it a very sensible option.

**RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee**

- 1. note the review of visitor patterns relating to the two Worcester City Council museums and the proposal of revised public opening hours for both museums;**
- 2. approve the proposed changes to the staffing at both museums; and**
- 3. authorise the Museums Manager to implement the proposed staffing changes, following Worcester City Council procedures in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint committee.**

**27 Any Other Business**

None.

**28 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 it involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.**

**29 Worcester City Museums Review**

The Joint Committee noted and agreed the proposed staffing changes, in the exempt appendix, to accommodate the revised opening hours as set out in the main report. The implementation of the staff changes would be subject to approval of the proposed change in opening hours by Worcester City Council's Place and Economic Development Committee.

**Duration of the meeting:** 3.00p.m. to 4.00p.m.

Chair at the meeting on  
7th March 2024