

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 September 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Wendy Hyde (Chair)	Deputy Tom Hoffman
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)	Ann Holmes
Munsur Ali	Deputy Edward Lord
Randall Anderson	Andrew Mayer
Matthew Bell	Jeremy Mayhew
John Bennett	Wendy Mead
Peter Bennett	Deputy Barbara Newman
Deputy David Bradshaw	Graham Packham (Ex-Officio Member)
Mary Durcan	John Petrie
Deputy Kevin Everett	Judith Pleasance
Alderman David Graves	Deputy Dr Giles Shilson
Caroline Haines	Dawn Wright
Graeme Harrower	

In Attendance

Officers:

Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerk's Department
Nick Bodger	- Cultural and Visitor Development Director, Innovation and Growth
Carol Boswarthack	- Community and Children's Services
John Cater	- Town Clerk's Department
Christopher Earlie	- Head of Tower Bridge, Open Spaces Department
Richard Gentry	- Open Spaces Department
James Gibson	- Chamberlain's Department
Sarah Greenwood	- Community and Children's Services
Tim Harris	- Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department
Graham Nickless	- Chamberlain's Department
Julie Smith	- Chamberlain's Department
Charlotte Scott	- Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department
Rob Shakespeare	- Open Spaces Department
Julie Smith	- Chamberlain's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Michael Mainelli, James Tumbridge, Henrika Priest, Graham Packham, and Mark Wheatley.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were none.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee's forward plan was noted. The Town Clerk undertook to amend the plan so that new or changed items would appear in italics.

5. **CHIEF OFFICERS' REOPENING UPDATE**

Chief Officers were heard in respect of the updates on re-opening City attractions and services. The following updates were noted:

Director of Innovation and Growth

The Corporation's venues had seen a gradual growth in visitor numbers. Guildhall Art Gallery saw its highest visitor numbers on 12 September. The City Information Centre is open for two days a week. The Roman Bath House remained closed after a trial reopening due to negotiations over increased operational costs to ensure it could be run on a cost-neutral basis. Since its launch in June, the Outdoor Arts Programme reported that events and activations in the City had attracted audiences of over 20,000, excluding outdoor exhibitions, and had received funding of £525,000.

There have been a variety of marketing initiatives for City of London destinations, focusing on attracting domestic visitors. Further initiatives are planned, focused on attracting City workers back to the workplace.

Consultation on a strategic destination review had started, aiming to deliver on a vision for the Square Mile to become the world's most attractive destination for workers, residents and visitors.

A Member commented that they had noticed more visitors in the western side of the City. They expressed concern over empty shops in the New Change Shopping Centre, and asked if the Corporation would be able to use its influence to install cultural exhibits in the empty window space. In reply, the Culture and Visitor Development Director said they were aware of this issue. It is difficult to solve in the short-term, although opportunities are sent out to the owners of properties, while in the long run the strategic destination review would look at how to support situations such as this.

Head of Tower Bridge

Tower Bridge had a positive summer, with visitor numbers rising from 4,500 on the week prior to the start of the school holidays to 11,500 per week at the peak in August. These numbers have dropped since the return of schools, but

numbers are still high. The Tower Bridge team have achieved a record 93% in the annual Visit England assessment, meaning Tower Bridge is eligible for accolades moving forward.

The Monument remained closed after the removal of legal social distancing measures. There were re-opening pilots in August and September, with mixed numbers of daily visitors. The numbers make it unfeasible, from an income generation perspective, to fully reopen. Consideration has been given to weekend or school holiday-only openings until visitor numbers recover.

Curator of Keats House

Keats House reopened over the summer and is open three days a week. The House is receiving visitors, but numbers have declined from over the summer. Online and live in-person events are being offered.

Director of the London Metropolitan Archives

London Metropolitan Archives has been open since 10 May and has had a full set of bookings throughout this time. It is about to enter the next stage of reopening with the removal of booking restrictions from 4 October. Guildhall Library and The Small Business Research and Enterprise Centre are extending their opening hours in October and are slowly rebuilding visitor numbers.

Head of Barbican and Community Libraries

All libraries were reopened on 19 July at pre-pandemic opening hours. Footfall is increasing week-on-week. In-library events have begun to restart, with events for children beginning on 20 September.

6. **CAI RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE**

Members considered a report of the Director of Innovation & Growth in respect of the City Arts Initiative Recommendations to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

RESOLVED, that - Members ratify the City Arts Initiative's recommendations in relation to the proposals as follows:

1. Australia High Commission – David Greybeard: approve subject to permission from the landowner and ongoing consultation with Highways and Planning.

7. **DESTINATION CITY: STRATEGIC REVIEW**

Members considered a report of the Director of Innovation & Growth in respect of the Destination City: Strategic Review.

RESOLVED, that – Members agree the approach to the strategic review and the governance arrangements as laid out in the report, noting that they will be formally submitted to the Court of Common Council for ratification at its October 2021 meeting.

8. **LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

It was noted that capital funding has been made since the report was written and is proceeding through the capital bids process.

A Member asked if the decision was dependent on the capital funding bid being approved. In reply, an officer said capital funding is only required if a new provider is selected through the procurement process. The officer confirmed that no contract would be signed until capital funding was approved, if needed. One of the identified risks is that capital funding would not be approved.

RESOLVED, that - the report be received and its contents noted.

9. **BARBICAN & COMMUNITY LIBRARIES - LIBRARY STRATEGY**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

RESOLVED, that - the report be received and its contents noted.

10. **KEATS200 BICENTENARY PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Members received a presentation from the Curator of Keats House.

11. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk relative to decisions taken under urgency.

RESOLVED, that - the report be received and its contents noted.

12. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were none.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

16. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were three non-public questions.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was one item of non-public business.

18. **CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There was one confidential question.

The meeting ended at 3.33 pm

Chairman

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