

CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport, Councillor Linda Symes, at his meeting held on Friday, 11 December 2015 at 9.00 am at the Conference Room A - Civic Offices

Also Present

Councillor Donna Jones
Councillor Lee Hunt
Councillor Julie Swan
Councillor Yahiya Chowdhury

26. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

27. Declarations of interest (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

28. The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection (AI 3)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Claire Looney introduced the report and said that Tim Rusby from the Visitor Attraction Company had been invited to attend today's meeting. Tim has been helping the Council with the development of the Sherlock Holmes Experience idea.

Tim gave a presentation on his findings which included the feasibility process and then went through how the new Sherlock Holmes exhibition might look. Tim's presentation would be added to the agenda papers following the meeting and emailed to the councillors present.

In response to questions from members the following points were clarified:

- With regard to whether there would be value to developing a Sherlock Holmes themed pub/hotel, Tim felt there would be great value to the city in doing this if it were in the right location.
- Members felt that this was a very important matter for the city and that buy in is important.
- Councillor Hunt suggested that it would be beneficial for the signage for the city to be amended to 'Portsmouth the great waterfront city and the home of Sherlock Holmes'. He felt this would be achievable in a relatively short timescale.
- The net building space required was 10,000-15,000 sq feet.
- The Visitor Attraction Company were the enabler and Tim advised there were at least three companies operating in the UK who could operate this exhibition.

- With regard to timescales, it was estimated this would be two years. The Leader commented that this would need a strategic plan to gradually build up to the launch event and a multi-faceted approach was required.
- It was suggested that Portsmouth Football Club could be used as a resource to promote Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle in the city.
- This was an important international opportunity for the city to be promoted across the works particularly as Sherlock Holmes is popular in a number of countries including China.
- History shows that Sherlock Homes will always re-invent itself.

A deputation was heard from Steve Pitt, speaking in favour of the recommendations. He commented that it was fantastic to see all the political parties supporting this project and felt that the integration of the offer is very important. He supported the idea to change the city's brand to include Sherlock Holmes on the signage.

In response to Mr Pitt's suggestion that the exhibition space could include other literary figures, Mr Rusby said that the exhibition needs to be a portal to other things and this could either be to an online portal or using other space in the building.

Members felt that staff were incredibly adept and there were plentiful opportunities to promote Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle through the other events that take place in the city.

DECISIONS: The Cabinet Member:

- (1) Acknowledged the success of the HLF funded 'Sharing Sherlock - Story of a Pompey Lad' project and especially the ability of the project to have such an active volunteering programme.**
- (2) Supported the inclusion of the Conan Doyle Collection in the proposed regional Royal National Institute of the Blind HLF funded project along with other regional museums and heritage collections in the south and south east.**
- (3) Agreed to work with Tim Rusby of the Visitor Attraction Company to develop feasibility options for the delivery of a Portsmouth based Sherlock Holmes Experience.**
- (4) Agreed to explore the development of a new Sherlock Holmes exhibition to be commissioned by the Conan Doyle Trust which will incorporate elements which can be toured to other interested museums and cultural centres.**

29. Outline Events Programme for 2016 (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Claire Looney, Partnership and Commissioning Manager.

A deputation was made by Steve Pitt, in favour of the recommendations. With regard to the Americas Cup event he said that the America's Cup organisers had released a map on their website showing the viewing area but it was unclear where the free publicly viewable area was.

In response to the query on the America's Cup event, Councillor Symes said that an agreement was yet to be reached between the Council and the organisers of the Americas Cup Series on the land use for the event.

Members thanked officers for their hard work with organising events in the city.

DECISIONS: The Cabinet Member:

- (1) Welcomed the early notification of the outline events plan for 2016-17.**
- (2) Granted permission to develop an events strategy.**
- (3) Agreed to continue to work with event organisers to attract events to the city which build on the existing reputation for delivery of a high quality events programme and to request, where practical, an independent economic impact report for larger events.**
- (4) Agreed to work with local business and residents to ensure that they are fully aware of events in their area as early as possible to enable them to maximise the opportunity they present and to adapt their own arrangements in a timely manner.**

30. Library Services for the Vision Impaired (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by David Percival, Learning and Engagement Manager. He advised that he had invited Julie Duffy, Vision Impairment Officer to the meeting to give some examples enquiries she receives.

Julie explained that many of the enquiries she deals with are of a practical nature such as recently visually impaired people asking for guidance on how to make a hot drink for example, how to find the edge of the cup when pouring the hot water. She advised that also deals with emotional enquiries associated with losing sight including adapting to a new way of reading books. Audiobooks are available but there is not same variety of these compared to books and as visually impaired people are not able to read in the same way that they are used to this can distress people.

Members thanked David and Julie for their dedicated work.

DECISION:

That the Library and Archive Service engages with Adult Social Care, Public Health and local disability groups to explore how services to residents with sensory impairments can be further developed in the city.

31. Borrowbox, eBooks and eAudiobooks Update (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Clare Forsyth, Service Development Manager.

In response to a question Clare advised that the stock of books was updated regularly.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

32. Transforming the D Day Museum - Project Update (AI 7)

(TAKE IN INFORMATION REPORT)

The report was introduced by Dr Jane Mee. She advised that she had invited Joanna Watson, Project Manager at Focus Consultants to the meeting to provide a short presentation on the concept exhibition designs. The presentation would be circulated to members after the meeting.

Joanna advised that the project focussed on maximising the experience and making the space work better which meant changing the internal structure of the museum. She detailed the changes that would take place and concept designs of the new museum, were shown and discussed as part of the presentation. Dr Mee went through what some of the new exhibitions would look like and showed images of these. It was hoped that the D-Day story being told using personal accounts and items will give visitors to the exhibition a memorable experience.

Members were very supportive of the new designs and were hopeful that the outcome of the second round of HLF funding would be approved in January 2016. Members thanked officers and Joanna for their hard work on this project.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 am.

Councillor Linda Symes
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport

