

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 19th November 2019

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Kath Hey and Councillors Foxton, Hornsey, Kenyon, Stevens, Tillett, Tyler and Wilcox.

Not Present: Councillors Oliver and Powell.

CD2019/20.43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Boulter.

The Clerk reported that he was clerking the meeting because the Deputy Clerk was unwell. He had no apologies to report but it was possible that members had sent them to the Deputy who normally clerks this meeting. He would add any apologies subsequently shown to have been sent.

CD2019/20.44 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

CD2019/20.45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CD2019/20.46 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was proposed by Councillor Tillett, seconded by Councillor Stevens and, with Councillor Wilcox abstaining as he had not been present,

RESOLVED That the minutes of the grants meeting of 23rd September and the meeting of 24th September be approved as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

CD2019/20.47 BRITISH TOURISM AND TRAVEL SHOW 2020

The Chair, Councillor Kenyon, thanked Heidi Chamberlain-Jones from Eat, Sleep, Live Herefordshire for attending the meeting to present her proposal. Heidi gave a brief summary of what she had set out and invited questions. In the following discussion a number of points were made.

Other key players have been approached for funding support and some offers have been received. Nonetheless ESLH are still short of the overall cost, even taking their own (unspecified) contribution into account. There is no data as to how many people have visited Hereford as a result of previous attendances and no way of determining that reliably. Heidi felt that the collection of contacts for a database to follow up was a valid and important part of being at the show and at least as important as direct visitor numbers. Some public gardens have reported an uplift in visitor numbers after exhibiting. The priority is to show people who might be bringing parties to Hereford that there is plenty to see and do and a reason to plan a longer stay. The development of the Green Dragon was mentioned several times as the sort of new venture that

would be particularly important as it fills a gap in the provision. It was confirmed that the Green Dragon is one of the funders.

It was claimed that only around 1% of Herefordshire's visitors come to Hereford itself, and the Cathedral is a well known and established attraction. The Silver Museum at the Town Hall, the improved Cider Museum and many other features could be displayed as worthy of tourism providers seeing this as a longer stay destination, as well as attracting new providers who don't currently offer Hereford as one of their tour destinations.

Last year about 2,900 people attended the show at the NEC and numbers are likely to be the same this year. You can only get in as a visitor if you are a group travel organiser.

Heidi confirmed that she had not yet approached Hereford BID but would be doing so shortly. She was not however optimistic of a positive outcome.

The Chair thanked Heidi for her answers and she left the meeting.

In discussion members expressed concern that this had not been submitted as a grant application and the letter to the Council was in fact a circular that had been sent to many organisations, but the extent of that distribution was not known. The extent of funding already received or pledged was also opaque despite questions on this point. The dearth of data about what this show achieves either for Hereford or as a whole for the businesses that contribute and are represented made a rational decision hard to ground. Councillor Kenyon confirmed from his experience of attending in 2016 that the best bit had been picking up promotional tips from other towns and attractions, but that it was not worth the sum suggested of £2,500 plus VAT. Accountability for spending was important and the Council's TIC Manager when appointed should be part of this event and a grant completion form should be sought.

After careful deliberation, acknowledging the benefits of presenting Hereford as part of a county-wide effort and despite the reservations noted it was

Proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by the Mayor and

RESOLVED

That the Council supports the British Tourism and Travel Show attendance being co-ordinated by Eat, Sleep, Live Herefordshire with a contribution of £500 plus VAT subject to that organisation agreeing that the Tourist Information Centre Manger will attend on behalf of the Council and that a grant completion form is submitted after the event.

CD2019/20.48 HEREFORD BID TERM 2

The Clerk explained that a baseline agreement is normally sought from the main provider of statutory and non-statutory environmental services in this case the unitary authority Herefordshire Council. It is required to make the level of provision of services such as public toilets, street cleaning, repairs etc clear before a BID starts to operate, so that the Council cannot balance the additional income from the BID levy with cuts to their own services, thus leaving businesses with additional cost for no return. There was no legal basis for the City Council to enter into such an

agreement. In answer to a question the Clerk confirmed that if a service was wholly transferred to the City from Herefordshire Council, and the service had been defined in the baseline agreement, we would inherit the commitment to maintain that service level. If the intention is to contribute with additional funds to the joint commissioning of environmental services that would operate in the BID, then the obligation to maintain the baseline level would remain with Herefordshire.

Cllr Stevens suggested that some confusion may have arisen as the same officer who supports the BID here works in Worcester where the City Council is a district council with street cleaning, toilets etc within its remit.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Wilcox and

RESOLVED That the present arrangements for joint working with the BID are satisfactory and no baseline agreement is necessary between the City Council and the BID.

CD2019/20.49 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLA)

Members received a report setting out where SLAs currently exist, and where they might be applied in future. In discussion the following points were noted.

Allotments are in fact covered by the 2009 Allotments Agreement, slightly revised in 2013. Nothing about the arrangements had changed and the next change would be the completion of the long lease and the handover of operational control of contracts. No SLA was necessary here.

CCTV is subject to an agreement and annually awarded funds. The CCTV manager is keen to enter into a longer agreement which this Council has supported in the past subject to the other two funding partners, Herefordshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner making a similar and binding commitment. Members were reminded of the open invitation to view the control room and the Clerk will re-circulate this offer to all councillors. Councillor Tyler confirmed that Herefordshire are seeking funding for additional cameras. Whilst the longer term funding position is resolved the present agreement is satisfactory.

Citizen's Advice Bureau in subject to an annual award of funds and presents an annual report. There is no SLA in place and there certainly could be. However, members felt that this was a new version of the CAB with a very high level of dependence on volunteers. It might be onerous to expect them to sign up for service commitments for three to five years in return for funding while they are still establishing themselves and setting their service levels. An SLA would bring the benefit of certainty to their financial planning as well as ours. It was decided not to require an SLA for another year to give time for the CAB to stabilise its staffing levels and capacity, but that after that the matter will be reconsidered by the Committee.

Plynlimon Trust provides a minibus service in replacement for deleted public transport. It has been previously resolved to review this if the usage falls below a level where the cost per trip exceeds the level set by the Committee. This had not occurred and the service was continuing to operate within its parameters. There was no need for a further agreement or SLA.

Hereford in Bloom had presented to the previous meeting of this committee addressing grants. The enthusiasm and commitment of the group and their disappointment at the very creditable silver gilt award had been obvious. The Clerk raised the issue of the £5,000 Floral Features budget which could be earmarked for them to use for new ventures, or rolled into their grant or left as it is. After discussion that there were no proposals to change the budgetary arrangements but that more publicity should be given to the floral features budget as there had been few claims against it for some time. There was no proposal to introduce an SLA.

Country Park Supporters have an SLA in place which is entirely satisfactory.

Close House has a member of Council on their board which provides ongoing contact and scrutiny of how the City Council's money is being spent. There is no need for an additional SLA.

College of Arts already has an agreement. It was reported that the Rotherwas Angel is still in store and has not been installed at the HARC. The Clerk will follow up with those responsible to urge them to move this forward as soon as possible. A statue symbolising movement is to be installed on the Pizza Hut roundabout as soon as Highways England agree, to ensure that some public display is on site where it is very difficult to maintain a floral display.

Including the decisions above regarding future SLA's members noted the report.

CD2019/20.50 RIVER CARNIVAL

It was noted that the River Carnival had presented to the Grants Meeting of this Committee the previous day and had been awarded £10,000 towards next year's carnival, subject to Council agreement. The Clerk introduced the written report concerning other funding issues and a possible SLA.

Members commented that they found this very confusing. The letter was partly a request for retrospective approval for specific items of spending in last year's programme and partly a request for funding for an unspecified series of events other than the carnival itself. It was noted that the City Council is in a position to provide its own events programme now with part of the time of an experienced officer now devoted to that and a budget. Preliminary discussions had taken place about small scale summer events such as the very popular beach and a possible larger event around harvest time ie early October as a celebration of the apple harvest and its local produce. The BID had also been re-elected and were players in this area with their early evening music programme.

Several options for dealing with this issue were discussed without being put to the vote and it was then

Proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by the Mayor and

RESOLVED

That the £10,000 large grant bid goes forward to Council as planned and that any outstanding queries about spending the previous grant be resolved in that same meeting (noting that the grant may have been broad enough to allow for these items anyway).

That no new SLA is considered at this time and that when further discussions have taken place about the City Council's and the BID's capacity a meeting takes place with the River Carnival to see how they might be best supported to make a contribution beyond the main carnival event.

CD2019/20.51 WEBSITE TENDER EVALUATIONS

The Clerk explained that the intention had been to have all four members of the working party to present the report but the other officer was unwell and the two members were not present. The conclusions had been that it was vital to get a state of the art as opposed to a standard website that would support the Council in expanding services and raising its profile to a far greater extent than had been previously possible. Accordingly, a weighted procurement scoring system had been used to allow for the key factors to be given more prominence compared to others. On this basis the preferred Bid One had been recommended although it was substantially more expensive. Bid Two had failed to meet basic criteria and should not be further considered. Bid Three was a competent bid that would meet our current and probably some of our future needs. It was in widespread use among parish councils but had no "wow factor" compared to Bid One.

It was confirmed in answer to questions that both the bids proposed for consideration were compliant with GDPR and website accessibility standards. Bid One is offering to work with users and had conducted some thorough analysis of our existing provision, Bid Three simply offer their standard product as an off the shelf solution to our needs. This had been important in the group's assessment. It was also confirmed that only Bid Two was local, as in from a provider based in Hereford.

It was also noted that the members who had undertaken this review had done so conscientiously and thoroughly and their recommendations should be respected. However, with only one group member here it was difficult for Councillors to get a feel for what they would be getting for the extra cost and whether this established a value for money outcome.

After considering options as to how to proceed it was

Proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hornsey

To defer to allow for a retendering to include the current bids but specifically seek further local suppliers willing to make a bid. The final decision to be taken at full Council.

However, this proposal was withdrawn in favour of the next one. It was

Proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Tyler and

RESOLVED That the matter is deferred to the Committee's next meeting in February to allow all the members of the working party to be present and that the agreed preferred proposal be presented live to Council for a final decision.

CD2019/20.52 CYCLE TRACK UPDATE

Councillor Kenyon presented an oral report.

British Cycling is now putting more emphasis into community cycling initiatives rather than elite sport. HALO have therefore altered the plan for the track, although it will still be suitable for competitive events as well as community cycling and cycle training. This means the physical layout will change and in some detail and will be slightly outside the original footprint, therefore a new planning application will be required. A funding application is in for £480k, local sponsorship has yielded £50k and the Council has committed £50k as an earmarked reserve to be released when funds are ready for construction to begin. An application for S106 money (up to £200k) is being actively pursued and initial signs are good that this will be accepted. If the S106 and the large grant application to British Cycling are successful there will be sufficient funds to start the project.

In answer to a question it was stated that HALO is a charitable delivery agent operating at arms length from Herefordshire Council. It does not make a profit, any operating surplus is ploughed back into the trust.

It was also confirmed that the nature of the changes to design will give improved access with several entry points rather than everyone being funnelled into one route. There will be direct access to the track for people arriving on site on bikes.

The cost of the new planning application is not known but it is unlikely to be more than the basic fee as the ecological, flood, mineral and other assessments done are likely to be accepted as still relevant and will not need to be repeated.

Councillor Hornsey raised the possibility of a new funding source and will speak directly to HALO to see if that would be helpful.

Councillor Kenyon's report was noted.

CD2019/20.53 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Website tender evaluation, the whole working group to be invited to the February meeting.
- Ward asset inspection.
- Churchill Gardens – a possible bid for funding for improvement and/or new floral features.
- Proposal for a water feature at the Fosse duck pond site.
- Parkour facilities presentation.
- Possible graffiti art wall on Eign underpass.
- Some consideration of timing of meetings and spreading grants meetings further apart from main meetings.

CD2019/20.54 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Main agenda Tuesday 4th February 2020

Grants agenda Monday 10th February 2020

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Signed

Date