

# **Council Meeting**

16 January 2007

**Booklet 2**

Recommendations

# INDEX TO MINUTES

Page Nos.

Cabinet	
9 January 2007 .....	1

## **CABINET**

9<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Cabinet Members  
Present:-  
Councillor Arrowsmith  
Councillor Blundell  
Councillor Foster  
Councillor Mrs Johnson  
Councillor Matchet  
Councillor H Noonan  
Councillor O'Neill (Chair)  
Councillor Ridley

Non-Voting Opposition  
Representatives present:-  
Councillor Duggins  
Councillor Mutton  
Councillor Nellist

Other Members  
Present:-  
Councillor Clifford

Employees Present:-  
J. Bolton (Director of Community Services)  
F. Collingham (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
C. Green (Director of Children, Learning and Young People)  
C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)  
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
L. Knight (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)  
S. Manzie (Chief Executive)  
J. McGuigan (Director of City Development)  
R. Vaughan (Community Services Directorate)  
C. West (Acting Director of Finance and ICT)  
H. Woolfenden (Children, Learning and Young People Directorate)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **166. "Understanding the Future; Priorities for England's Museums" – Consultation Paper from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Community Services, detailing a proposed response to the consultation document from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which set out its priorities for England's museums over the next decade. The deadline for submitting the response is 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The Cabinet noted that the report had also been considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2007, and a briefing note outlining their views was reported.

The DCMS has the responsibility for central government's relationships with and policy concerning museums in England. It has a direct relationship with the 'national' museums and a relationship with regional museums, which is largely conducted through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

The DCMS is undertaking a three-stage consultation process to arrive at a set of priorities for all museums in England and the public programmes that support them. In 2005, the DCMS published "Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life" which aimed to set out the full range of issues affecting museums. A summary of responses to this paper was published at the end of 2005.

The second paper, "Understanding the Future: Priorities for England's museums", is the result of collaboration between DCMS officials and representatives of organisations "conscious of and committed to the need for further change for the benefit of museum audiences". The paper set out the issues that are at the top of the DCMS's agenda for museums over the next decade and was appended to the report submitted.

Responses to this document are invited by 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and will inform the third stage of the process, which will involve holding a series of five seminars on each of the chapters in the consultation document, learning; identity; collections; workforce; and structures. The DCMS will then ask the MLA to prepare an action plan based on responses to the consultation document and the seminars. This action plan is intended to set out the first steps to deliver the priorities and timescales for developing "an ambitious, long-term project".

Central government policy on regional museums is a key influence on the development and work of museums in Coventry. Both the Coventry Transport Museum (CTM) and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (HAGM) have benefited from central government funding initiatives for regional museums in recent years. The national importance of the collections at the CTM has been recognised and it has benefited from grants from the Designation Challenge Fund. The HAGM is a member of the West Midlands Museum Hub alongside Birmingham, Ironbridge, Stoke and Wolverhampton and receives funding through the Renaissance in the Regions programme.

Grants from the Designation Challenge Fund, since 1999, have enabled the CTM to create a new interpretive strategy for the museum, which then became critical in accessing large grants for its capital re-development; upgrade the security and storage of its collections; and upgrade existing and create new displays for its cycle and motorcycle collections and the 80s and 90s display.

Membership of the West Midlands Museum Hub and the central government funding that this brings with it has enabled the HAGM since 2003 to develop its learning programme work with schools; undertake projects with communities and groups which have been traditionally underrepresented in museum audiences; improve access to its collections by improving the catalogue information on its collections and investing in displays which will be realised as part of its capital redevelopment; and work in partnership with other museums both nationally and regionally to enhance its exhibitions programme.

The DCMS consultation document which is reproduced suggests priorities for museums over the next ten year period in five key groupings indicated below:-

- (i) Museums will fulfil their potential as learning resources;
- (ii) Museums will embrace their role in fostering, exploring, celebrating and

questioning the identities of diverse communities;

- (iii) Museums' collections will be more dynamic and better used;
- (iv) Museums' workforces will be dynamic, highly skilled and representative;
- (v) Museums will work more closely with each other and partners outside the sector.

The report submitted indicated various aims under each of these headings and the Cabinet noted that both the CTM and the HAGM are already tackling many of the issues identified in the DCMS consultation paper. Their ability to contribute towards both local and central government agendas has been considerably enhanced by the capital and revenue investment in both organisations made by the City Council. Both play a role regionally and nationally and this is recognised in the funding received from the Designation Challenge Fund and the Renaissance in the Regions programme.

The proposed response from the City Council to the consultation paper was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and in summary is broadly supportive of the priorities in the DCMS paper; stresses the importance which the City Council attaches to the role of museums as evidenced by the investment which the City Council has made and continues to make in the CTM and the HAGM; and underlines the importance of continued central government funding to regional museums particularly through the Renaissance in the Regions programme and the Designation Challenge Fund.

In considering the briefing note submitted by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, the Cabinet acknowledged the comments made in relation to the short timescale given for responses to the consultation document and agreed to indicate that the Government ought to allow more time for responses to consultation documents in order to enable thorough consideration to be given.

**RESOLVED that the City Council be recommended to approve the draft response as detailed in the Appendix to the report, amended as necessary in light of the comments received from the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and the Cabinet in relation to timescales.**