



NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

2pm – 4.10pm

10 January 2012

Present: County councillors

Councillor Bradford
(chair)
Councillor Banham
Councillor Bremner (sub
Thomas)
Councillor Fairbairn
Councillor Grahame

City councillors

Councillor Nobbs (vice chair)
Councillor Edwards
Councillor Mooney
Councillor Ward
Councillor Toms

**Co-opted Non Voting
Members:**

District Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council)
Felicity Hartley (Norfolk Contemporary Arts Society)
Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Art Fund)
Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums)

Also present:

Barbara Coe (Costume and textile association)
John Perrott (Finance and business support manager,
Norfolk county council)

Apologies:

City Councillors Thomas and Altman

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Bradford as chair for the ensuing civic year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Nobbs as vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2011.

4. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE

The head of communications and culture, Norwich City Council, by way of introduction said that the Norfolk Joint Museums committee would be considering the report of the head of museums and archaeology on the future management of the Norfolk museums service at its meeting on 13 January 2012. The

purpose for presenting this report to this meeting was to gather views on the options but that this committee was an advisory body and that the city council's cabinet would be responding to the consultation on behalf of the council.

The head of museums and archaeology, Norfolk County Council, presented the report which had been circulated to members of the committee in advance of the meeting. The head of museums and archaeology, together with the finance and business support manager, answered questions on the report.

After lengthy discussion the following concerns remained:

- The number of elected members that would be on the board of a trust which would amount to a maximum of three and a 20% representation of elected members was not sufficient. This was a great concern to everyone that the elected members would be restricted to two or three and it was unclear as to who the other members would be and how they would be selected.
- The financial benefits would be tenuous, gift aid was a relief that the government could change at any time, and charitable relief for business rates could impact on district councils and most funding sources could be accessed under current arrangements.
- The efficiency savings could be achievable under the present arrangement.
- The choice of consultant and the belief that the consultant would benefit from their recommendation
- Only one case study had been quoted and this dated back to better economic times. York was not comparable to Norfolk as it was a unitary authority and all the museums belonged to the same authority. The figures quoted were from 2007 and the economic climate had been very different.
- The York case study showed that a large cash injection had been made to set the trust up and if that was needed in Norfolk the money could be used in other ways.
- Sheffield was referred to as an example of where trust status had not been a positive example.
- More case studies would have been helpful preferably if they had been similar in organisation to Norfolk
- Norfolk had been very successful in securing funding and the friends of Norfolk museums had done a lot of good work.
- More work should be done to explore what can be done within the existing model.
- Staff might be disadvantaged and whilst TUPE rules might protect the existing workforce any new employees could be affected.
- It would have been useful to have the report further in advance to enable more consultation to be had within the various organisations represented on the Norwich area museums committee

- It was unlikely that large sums would be saved and it could need a large sum of money to set a trust up.

It was clarified by the head of museums and archaeology that a trust could be set up for a shorter period of time than the twenty five years in the case study and the arrangement was entirely reversible.

The Theatre Royal was given as a good example of a trust that worked extremely well.

The chair summed up the discussion and said that museums were a vital part of the services delivered by local authorities; closely linked to education services, the records office and libraries, and these were services that local government should deliver.

RESOLVED, with 8 members voting in favour; to recommend to the Norfolk joint museums committee that the current arrangements for the delivery of the Museums and Archeology service in Norfolk remains.

5. GENERAL UPDATE ON NORWICH MUSEUMS

RESOLVED to defer this item for consideration at the next meeting of the committee.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED to hold the next meeting at 2pm on Monday 19 March 2012 at City Hall.

CHAIR