

Agenda Item 5

Summary of statement from Catherine Wilson OBE (Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee – 23rd July 2019)

Catherine introduced herself as a career museum professional with many years' experience at heritage sites across Lincolnshire. Catherine had been awarded an OBE for her service to museums and galleries and had voluntarily assisted in offering support to Heritage Services around Lincolnshire.

Catherine acknowledged the current financial restraints on the council, and the possible need for a more commercial approach to heritage services across Lincolnshire. However, it was felt that the council's approach should be driven by ambition, enthusiasm and expertise in order to maximise the benefits to the county's heritage service, and that further discussions needed to be held to agree the best solution for the future of the council's heritage service, in particular the Usher Gallery and The Collection Museum.

On behalf of the Save Lincolnshire Usher Gallery campaign group, Catherine raised a number of concerns about the proposed Future of the Heritage Service decision, which included the following:

- There were concerns that the consultation process had been lengthy and complicated.
- Campaigners were of the view that the responses of the consultation results had not been fully reflected in the recommendations set out in the Executive report.
- It was emphasised that the collections in the Usher Gallery had been donated to Lincoln City Council by James Usher on the understanding that the council would care for the material on behalf of the citizens of Lincolnshire. Catherine echoed the concerns held by the Save Lincolnshire Usher Gallery group that the County Council would possibly serve notice to terminate the collections management agreement and return of the collections owned by the City of Lincoln Council to the City of Lincoln Council. Members were urged to consider the future of these collections and their importance to the people of Lincolnshire and its heritage.
- It was felt that recommendation 10 required further consideration, and that in order to for a third party to successfully take ownership of some of the council's windmills, they needed to have an appropriate level of background knowledge and funding.
- It was felt that the Museum for Lincolnshire Life was unheralded and unacknowledged in its representation of the domestic and working lives of Lincolnshire people and the industrial heritage of the county.

- Catherine advised Members to carefully question recommendations 2, 3, 5 and 10 and urged members to reject recommendation 11 to allow Members an opportunity to consider the matter when further information was available.

Summary of statement from Richard Harrison Wood – Chairman of the Usher Gallery Trust (Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee – 23 July 2019)

Richard introduced himself as the Chairman of the Usher Gallery Trust, explaining that his statement would focus in particular of the future of the Usher Gallery.

It was noted that the Usher Gallery Trust had a particular interest in the council's exploration of running the Usher Gallery in conjunction with a third party.

Richard advised Members that the Usher Gallery Trust believed that it was the right time to move the future of the Usher Gallery forward with new ideas, and felt that through partnership working and sufficient timescales, a successful supersite model for the Usher Gallery could be developed.

Furthermore, Richard expressed the views of the Trust that the timescales detailed within the report for a third party to develop a business plan did not provide sufficient time to develop an appropriate model to allow a successful move forward with the Usher Gallery.

Members were urged to reconsider the timescale for putting together an alternative method for running the Usher Gallery.

Email to Councillor Martin Hill OBE, Leader of the Council, from Jean Parsons (Received 27 August 2019)

Hello Councillor Martin Hill,

Re: The Future of the Usher Gallery, Lincoln

I am emailing you with my concern regarding the future of the Usher Gallery. It is an extremely important Art Gallery holding national as well as local archaeological and art collections, and it is my belief that it should remain a fully functioning public art gallery being maintained for the benefit of all the residents of Lincolnshire as well as the many visitors to Lincoln.

In order for the third party to have time to draw up a robust business plan it is necessary to secure the funding for the full management of The Usher Gallery. May I suggest that some of the timescales stated in the proposals are relaxed in order to give the third party enough time to meet the requirements set out in the proposals (Proposals 4 and 5).

Also it is of great concern that the third party may only be offered **part** of the Usher Gallery building to operate as an Art Gallery. Surely the third party should have the responsibility

for the whole of the Usher Gallery building in order to operate fully and professionally as an Art Gallery. Would it be possible, therefore, to remove the phrase which suggest that the third party may only be offered **part** of the building. (Proposals 4, 5, 7)

Should the responsibility for the pre-1974 collections be handed back to the City of Lincoln Council it would result in archaeological and art collections of local and national importance being transferred to an authority that doesn't have the facilities, funds or staffing to take care of them, let alone make them available to the public for viewing. The splitting of the collections would be very expensive and necessary archiving would take several years in order to ensure that everything is suitably catalogues. Can the Council please think again and remove this potentially damaging proposal. (Proposal 3).

Finally, has the Council considered what will happen to the three windmills if suitable third party operators is not secured? (Proposal 10)

I trust you will give these points much consideration.

Jean Parsons

This page is intentionally left blank