

# COLCHESTER & IPSWICH JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

TUESDAY 22 JANUARY 2019  
GIPPING ROOM - GRAFTON HOUSE  
12.30 PM

**Present:** Councillors: C Jones (Vice-Chair), P Smart, B Oxford and T Young (Chair)

**12. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**13. Unconfirmed Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**Resolved:**

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2018 be signed as a true record.

**14. To Confirm or Vary the Order of Business**

**Resolved:**

that the Order of Business be confirmed as printed on the Agenda.

**15. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**16. JMS/18/05 Performance Update**

16.1. Mr Hargrave (Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service Manager) reported that the Kiss and Tell exhibition had been the most successful in its few weeks of opening; Mr Steward (Ipswich Museums Manager) added that visitor numbers to date were nearly 10,000.

- 16.2. Councillor Jones commented that the admissions targets for 2018/19 had been ambitious and noted that previous targets had not always taken into account planned closures of venues. Mr Hargrave commented that the target was achievable, but had been impacted by the extraordinarily good weather in the summer. Ms Breadman (Assistant Director - Communities, Colchester) added that future targets would take into account any planned closures and also allow for exceptional attendances relating to major exhibitions.
- 16.3. Councillor Jones asked about publicity opportunities when significant loans were returned. Mr Steward reported that press releases would be arranged to highlight the reach of the Museums' exhibits and when they would be back on display.
- 16.4. Councillor Young commented on the disparity of subscribers to the museums newsletters between Ipswich (853) and Colchester (16,675). Mr Steward reported that there had not been a newsletter for Ipswich Museums, or the option to subscribe to it, until recently, but the number of subscribers was on the increase.
- 16.5. Councillor Smart asked about the characteristics of an 'autism-friendly relaxed opening' of the museums. Mr Hodgson (Colchester Museums Manager) reported that on the first Sunday of the month, Colchester Castle was opened up an hour earlier and a calming atmosphere was provided by minimising unexpected noise, e.g. audio elements of the displays were switched off, papers towels instead of hand driers in the toilets; no people were excluded during this time, but visitors were made aware of what equipment would be switched off. Whilst the numbers involved in the autism-friendly pilots held so far were small, the feedback was very positive.
- 16.6. Councillor Smart asked whether there had been an audit of museums venues in terms of being dementia-friendly, e.g. visual layout, use of colours, patterns on flooring. Mr Steward reported that a number of staff had received dementia awareness training, and consulting with appropriate stakeholders would be need to be factored into any future development of the museums services.
- 16.7. Councillor Jones asked whether data could be provided showing a list of events held, number of attendees, income and brief evaluation for all events in Colchester and Ipswich museum venues to see if there were any crossover opportunities. Councillor Oxford commented that this could help with target setting, e.g. what type of events were successful. Ms Breadman commented that this would be considered at a future Portfolio Holders meeting.
- 16.8. Councillor Young commented that other venues in Colchester, e.g. Colchester Arts Centre, Mercury Theatre, were also offering relaxed performances. Mr Steward reported that a film was being produced to help people with autism prepare for a visit to the museum, and this would be made available online.
- 16.9. Councillor Jones highlighted the amount of work that had been done by the Collections Care team, and Councillor Young thanked the officers involved.

**Resolved:**

**that the Performance Update report be noted.**

**17. JMS/18/06 2018/19 Budget for Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service**

17.1. Mr Hargrave reported that a more detailed budget was documented within the Business Plan for the Joint Museum Service. At the beginning of 2018/19, the Joint Museum Service had £37,630 of reserves; at the end of November 2018, a net overspend of £11,100 was forecast, but this was already being reduced, and it was anticipated that this would be cleared by the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the total Colchester Borough Council and Ipswich Borough Council budget contribution to the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service for 2019/20 be agreed as £1,873,800;**
- (ii) that the budget contribution for 2019/20 in relation to Colchester Borough Council be agreed as £1,026,000;**
- (iii) that the budget contribution for 2019/20 in relation to Ipswich Borough Council be agreed as £847,800;**
- (iv) that the total figure and respective partner contributions be recommended to the Cabinet of Colchester Borough Council and the Executive of Ipswich Borough Council for adoption.**

**18. JMS/18/07 Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service Business Plan 2018-2022**

18.1. Mr Hargrave reported that targets set for 2019/20 had taken into account that the Rodin Kiss and Tell exhibition would be ending in April 2019 and no other major exhibition was planned for Christchurch Mansion; likewise, the Colchester Castle targets had been increased for 2019/20 in light of the 'Bling' exhibition (now renamed as 'Adorn') due to commence in July 2019.

18.2. Mr Hargrave reported that Arts Council England had put forward some comments on the Business Plan:

- Encourage sharing of audience data with other National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)
- Include risk implications, especially in relation to more ambitious spending [*the Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register would be reviewed at the June 2019 committee meeting*]
- In relation to the Equality Action Plan, increasing the diversity of the workforce, in particular, trainees and volunteers [*a Community Advisory Group would be set up to help progress the Creative Case for Diversity and Equality, potentially in 2020/21*]

- 18.3. Mr Hargrave reported that officers would be meeting with Arts Council England at the end of the month to further discuss the Business Plan.
- 18.4. Councillor Jones requested that the reference to the last Census on page 3 of the Plan should include the date of the Census, and the visitor profile data on page 4 should include the date when this information was captured.
- 18.5. Councillor Jones commented that whilst the objectives of the Creative Case for Diversity and Equality covered the protected characteristics, it did not include those affected by economic deprivation. Mr Hargrave commented that whilst this was not a protected characteristic, it was a factor that was recognised by Arts Council England, and museums should provide affordable activities for this audience. Ms Breadman highlighted that 'work with disadvantaged families' was included under 'Audiences' within Section 4 – Aims.
- 18.6. Councillor Jones commented that it was not always easy to identify those people affected by economic deprivation as they were often scattered within the community. Mr Steward reported that he would be updating Portfolio Holders on the work being done in conjunction with the DWP in relation to families on low incomes.
- 18.7. Councillor Jones asked whether there was any measure of staff morale. Ms Breadman reported that Colchester Borough Council had recently undertaken a staff survey and the results were currently being analysed.
- 18.8. Councillor Smart commented that on the structure chart it was not possible to tell whether jobs were job-share and the number of people actually employed. Mr Hodgson reported that some posts were split across Ipswich and Colchester, e.g. Exhibition and Display Officers; some roles were a combination of part-time posts in order to provide cover across different times of the day on a rota basis.
- 18.9. Councillor Jones asked whether Ipswich Museums and Ipswich Art Gallery objectives and statistics could be set out separately as the two venues provided a different offer. Mr Steward reported that the data could be provided separately.
- 18.10. The Joint Committee agreed to incorporate the points raised by the Arts Council England, and Mr Hargrave confirmed that the final version would be circulated following the meeting with Arts Council England at the end of January 2019.

**Resolved:**

**that, subject to incorporating the points raised in 18.2 and 18.4 above, the refreshed Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service Business Plan 2018-2022 and the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service Performance Targets 2019/20 be approved.**

**19. Proposed Dates of Meetings for 2019/20**

**Resolved:**

**that the dates of meetings for 2019/20 be confirmed as:**

- **Tuesday 18 June 2019, 12.30pm – Colchester**
- **Tuesday 21 January 2020, 12.30pm – Ipswich**

The meeting closed at 1.25 pm

**Chair**