
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2012

COSP.79/12 TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY TRUST BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14 – 2015/16

The Chairman welcomed the Chair of the Tullie House Trust and the Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust to the meeting.

The Director of Community Engagement submitted report CD.57/12 introducing the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust 2013/14 – 2015/16 Business Plan.

He explained that the purpose of the report was to facilitate consideration of the Business Plan in order that the Council may, in due course, agree core funding for the Trust. That was in line with Section 5 of the Partnership Agreement signed at the establishment of the Trust, that the Business Plan submitted by the Trust to the City Council should be used as the basis for agreeing funding.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust thanked the Panel for the opportunity to discuss the Business Plan and some of the issues and challenges that Tullie House faced. The Plan raised a number of financial and non financial issues including the admission charging policy, a fundraising strategy, the Trust's reserve position and partnership working.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust added that it had been a demanding 18 months for the Trust which had produced many achievements such as the opening of the Roman Frontier Gallery in partnership with the City Council. Tullie House had also received project based funding from the Arts Council which would be focused on young people and would last for three years. Tullie House had received a Business Award from Cumbria News for Tourism and Hospitality which was also achieved through partnership working.

She highlighted the admission charges review which would introduce a charge of £7 to visitors who did not have the Tullie Card, concessions and children under 16 would be free and the Tullie Card fee would remain at £1 per annum to Carlisle residents. The new entry charge would provide unlimited admission for a year when the visitor signed up for Gift Aid. The Policy also recommended that there was an additional charge for major exhibitions. The new charges would be introduced in March 2013.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust drew Members attention to the work being undertaken on the Development Plan including the feasibility of acquiring Herbert Atkinson House which was situated next to the Museum and would help meet the physical capacity requirements of the Trust.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust reminded the Panel that the transfer of Tullie House to a Trust opened up the possibility to attract funding from new sources. A Fundraising Strategy was being prepared and would help the organisation focus on both existing and new sources of funding from public, quasi public and private sources. Some new funding had been achieved by giving visitors the option to Gift Aid their admission fee for an additional 10% and it was hoped this would grow further.

He added that the Trust now had a full Trust Board which brought a degree of challenge and scrutiny to the work of Tullie House and injected new ideas.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- In response to a Member's question the Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust confirmed that Tullie House used social media but felt that the website needed to be updated and the use of social media could be developed further.
- Members raised concerns regarding the lack of detail in the proposed budget for 2013/14 to 2015/16 and felt that the Panel had not been provided with adequate details to scrutinise the proposed budget sufficiently.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust responded that the budget held the same amount of detail as the previous year. The capital expenditure had been removed because the Trust had almost no capital expenditure. Capital repairs to the building were the responsibility of the City Council not the Trust. The budget in the Business Plan was at the outline and headline stage and the Trust would continue to work on the budget up to April 2013.

The Director of Resources advised the Panel that the finance team met regularly with the Trust to discuss the budget. A balance sheet was currently being discussed and would be included when the Plan was considered by the Executive on 17 December 2012.

The Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder shared the Panels concerns and agreed that they should receive all of the available information to allow them to help the Executive make an informed decision.

- The report stated that the Trust had a target of attracting 300,000 visitors which would not be achieved until there was a major investment in the museum. Would this target be reached if there was an investment as the target had not been achieved with the investment of £1.4m in the Roman Frontier Gallery.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust explained that the target was an aspirational target and was a challenge for the Trust. The Roman Frontier Gallery had increased the number of fee paying visitors to Tullie House and she believed that the aspirational target could be achieved in the future.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust reminded the Panel that the target had been agreed by the City Council as part of the negotiations for funding from the European Union and

led to the Roman Frontier Gallery. The current climate was harsher than when the target was agreed but it was an aspiration for the Trust to steadily grow visitors to Tullie House and he was also confident that the target could be met.

- The staff structure no longer had a dedicated fundraiser, how successful had the Trust been in completing bids by using existing staff?

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust responded that the Fundraising Strategy envisaged a permanent member of staff for fundraising this, however, would be a large investment for the Trust and they would only be able to move forward with it when the budget enabled it. The Trust did not want to stretch the cash flow more than they ought to but did understand that any major projects would require a dedicated fundraising capability in house. Tullie House staff had been putting together bids for funding and had attended training both externally and internally to help them with the process.

- How was the Trust hoping to enhance the learning programme following the reduction in the staff structure?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust explained that the Cumbria Museums Consortium would be funding the Adult Engagement Officer until 2015 and then consideration would have to be given to the programme after that.

- Did Tullie House make any charges to schools?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust informed the Panel that there was a membership fee for schools to engage with Tullie House and this fee had not been included in the review of the admission charges.

- A Member asked for clarification with regard to the number and type of visitors to Tullie House.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust clarified that there was 20,000 Tullie Card holders. Last year there had been 6,000 new applications for the Tullie Card and there had been 48,000 fee paying visitors to Tullie House. The total figure for visitors to Tullie House included people who visited the restaurant and old Tullie House; they also included any one who just made a pit stop in Tullie House.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust added that old Tullie House had been free to visit but it would be included in the new charges for Tullie House.

- The aim of the Trust was to encourage visitors to return to Tullie House, what was being done to keep the experience fresh and how often were the exhibits changed?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust explained that the Trust were keen to make changes to the Border Gallery and hoped to find additional funding to display a Viking exhibition. A variety of exhibitions was key to ensuring visitors returned. She informed the Panel that there was a lot of material in storage and some of the material was not interesting for display purposes but held a lot of research value.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust added that there was a whole costume display that had not been seen and it was a major objective to increase the gallery space. He highlighted an issue regarding storage and explained that the largest gallery in Tullie House given over entirely to storage. Shaddon Mill also provided storage for Tullie House and it was hoped one day that Tullie House could build accessible storage which would be open to the public to browse.

- How would Tullie House link with English Heritage and the new Alma exhibition?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust confirmed that Tullie House would be working closely with English Heritage for the opening of the new exhibition in 2013. They would also work closely for the preparations of the 100 year anniversary of the First World War.

- Would the City Council's funding for Tullie House be affected by the Budget proposals?

The Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder responded that the Executive had to consider the two large contracts and the grants as part of the budget process. She assured Members that the Executive had no aspirations to stop the grants.

RESOLVED – That the Tullie House Trust Business Plan 2013/14 – 2015/16 be welcomed.