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| <b>SHAREHOLDER CABINET COMMITTEE</b> | <b>AGENDA ITEM No. 8</b> |
| <b>21 SEPTEMBER 2021</b>             | <b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>     |

|                                |   |                  |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Report of:                     | Adrian Chapman: Service Director for Communities and Partnerships                                   |                  |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Cllr Steve Allen: Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities                               |                  |
| Contact Officer(s):            | Pat Carrington: Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, and CEO for City Culture Peterborough | Tel.01733 293891 |

## CITY CULTURE PETERBOROUGH

| RECOMMENDATIONS  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>FROM:</b> <i>Service Director for Communities and Partnership</i>   | <b>Deadline date:</b> <i>N/A</i> |
| <p>It is recommended that the Shareholder Cabinet Committee:</p> <p>1. Notes the progress and review of the services that City Culture Peterborough manage on behalf of Peterborough City Council.</p> |                                  |

### 1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Shareholder Cabinet Committee as an annual update to the committee.

### 2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on the progress made on delivery of the culture services which were transferred to City Culture Peterborough when the previous contract with Vivacity ended.
- 2.2 This report is for Shareholder Cabinet Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.3.2.

### 3. TIMESCALES

|   |           |                                  |            |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|------------|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | <b>NO</b> | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | <b>N/A</b> |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|------------|

### 4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 City Culture Peterborough (CCP) manages, on behalf of Peterborough City Council, the following services:
- Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery
  - Flag Fen
  - Peterborough Libraries and Archive Service
  - Key Theatre

This arrangement has been in place since October 2020, and was as a result of Vivacity giving notice on their contract with Peterborough City Council as a result of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 4.2 City Culture Peterborough is a trading company of the City College Peterborough charitable foundation. When CCP took over the management of these services, the majority of staff were furloughed and all the services were closed to the public.
- 4.3 Over the past 12 months there has been significant progress in the recovery, growth and transformation of the services, and this forms part of a trajectory that is designed to support the revival of our city post-covid, both in terms of social wellbeing and economic growth.

In addition, CCP have also been successful in attracting new money into the services, identifying efficiencies, attracting new visitors and audiences, and re-forming partnerships with stakeholders whilst developing new partnerships and bringing together non-traditional partners.

CCP have developed a vision, with each service having an identified blueprint of what is required for the next four years.

To date PCC, along with CCP, have been successful in securing funding through two rounds of the Arts Council England Culture Recovery Fund. There is currently a bid into central government for the Community Renewal Fund, a joint project between City College Peterborough and City Culture Peterborough, for circa £0.5m, and there are also plans to apply for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status in 2022. If successful this would see additional funding from the Arts Council to assist in delivering arts and culture across the City.

Even though we are still in the first year of transition, some efficiencies have already been realised with an initial review of the structure and the most senior posts within CCP being shared with City College Peterborough.

The remainder of this report takes each service area and gives an overview of the progress to date.

#### 4.3.1 Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery

After a very short opening in November 2020, the museum fully reopened to the public in May 2021 with a newly styled Café – the Edwardian Kitchen. Return visits from the public were initially very slow but following the development of a Summer Activity schedule with new targeted marketing, the visitor figures for July 2021 have exceeded those of July 2018 and 2019. Events that have taken place include Rotten Romans, Dinosaur Tuesdays, Natural History, and a Colour Carnival.

Schools also returned to the museum and Mondays became full with school visits (until the end of term) and we also have bookings in place for the new term.

Although the museum was mainly closed between October 2020 and May 2021, and some staff remained furloughed, work was undertaken in applying for bids, developing the vision and blueprint and in undertaking outreach and widening participation work.

In addition to the above, CCP are also working on the development of the plan for the museum Bronze Age extension and applications for funding, which will be needed to match fund the partial funding from the Towns Fund.

#### 4.3.2 Flag Fen

The continued preservation of the Flag Fen site and its artefacts has been the key priority, this work being of significant importance as much of what we have at Flag Fen are the only examples in the world (the boats and the causeway) or the earliest known examples (i.e. the wheel).

Working with Heritage England, CCP secured funding from them and PCC to undertake some urgent preservation work on the Must Farm Boats. CCP are now working with York Archaeological Trust to have the boats preserved and conserved. This is a significant piece of work that involves tanking and, in some cases, having the boats transported to York for the work. Once complete the boats will be housed in the new Museum extension.

As the boats were discovered at Must Farm in Whittlesey, CCP and PCC have also been working with Whittlesey Town Council to link up with them and their new heritage centre to ensure a complete tourist trail for the bronze age experience.

CCP have also set up a Flag Fen and Must Farm Advisory Board that consists of specialist archaeologists and stakeholders to help advise and support this internationally significant site.

In addition to the above CCP have also:

- a. Re-engaged with Professor Francis Pryor, the archaeologist who discovered Flag Fen and he has now joined the board of directors of City Culture Peterborough
- b. Opened the site all year round (formerly open between March and September only)
- c. Planned an archaeological dig commencing in the autumn, funded by Heritage England and being undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit
- d. Created plans and investment for a Heritage Farm on the site
- e. Started to develop Flag Fen's produce range (for example Flag Fen Honey)
- f. Engaged with the National Trust for guidance and support, and they are now acting as a critical friend for us
- g. Planned to build the first of two new additional round houses on the site
- h. Ran some successful events on site, including a Summer Solstice family event, a free Key Worker week, Fledgling Fridays, Sticks and Stories, and an Evening with Francis Pryor
- i. Offered work experience to City College 16-19 students in which they have learnt heritage and environmental skills
- j. In conjunction with City College, planned to run some adult course on-site, for example astronomy.

Again, although initial numbers were low when Flag Fen first reopened, July and August, has seen a significant increase in visitor numbers to the site.

What is apparent from the first 12 months is that Flag Fen is a very exciting proposition and has the ability in the future to become a self-sustaining visitor attraction that will have a significant impact on the visitor economy, alongside supporting the wellbeing of local residents.

#### 4.3.3 Libraries and Archive Service

For much of the pandemic, and in accordance with government guidelines, libraries and the archives service remained closed. During that period funding was secured to facilitate a Reading Friends programme aimed to support reading groups through video conferencing and by telephone. Alongside this, an application to be one of five selected local authority libraries was won with the aim to increase engagement of specific audience groups e.g. teenagers, carers and jobseekers. Work will start on this early in 2022.

Once guidelines allowed, CCP started to reopen libraries and the archives service in order to support the local residents of Peterborough. In May all libraries across the City reopened their doors and the mobile library was back on the road. Computer suites were also re-opened enabling people to access public access computers. Libraries have seen a steady increase in visitor numbers and new memberships. In more recent months they have engaged in new activities to promote literacy and reading across the City, along with partners (e.g. the National Literacy Trust). This has involved three main initiatives:

1. The High Street Safari
2. The Summer Reading Challenge
3. The Mini Vine

The archives service re-opened in line with libraries and has seen its highest monthly user numbers since July 2014 and its highest enquiry numbers since July 2017. Despite reduced opening hours, visitor numbers are now on par with pre-Covid visitors.

The Business and Intellectual Property Centre has been relocated and refurbished. This British Library funded provision aims to support new business sign ups, and therefore will be a useful provision for city residents looking at starting their own business post-Covid.

In addition to the above, CCP have also been working with PCC on the development and forward plans for the Vine, which is planned to be the new home for the Central Library. Work and research is currently being undertaken to look at the requirements for a library of the future to ensure that what we offer in the new space meets the local needs of now and the future.

#### 4.3.4 The Key Theatre

The Key Theatre, as with many other services, had to close to the public during the pandemic. Once able to reopen, many shows were still unavailable, and the safety requirements meant that audience numbers had to be kept very low. This had, and still has, a significant impact on ticket sales and income.

However, the Key Theatre are now seeing numbers creep up and shows returning. There is currently a focus on preparing for the pantomime, Cinderella.

Although the Key Theatre could not fully reopen, with the assistance of the Arts Council recovery fund, The Key Theatre has been able to undertake outreach work, digital workshops and planning activities that has widened the participation within local communities. Lost in Translation workshops are an example of this in which the first weekend saw over 450 engage in the workshops that ran in Ifter Park. Other activities have been undertaken in conjunction with libraries (i.e. Summer Reading Challenge, and family films).

#### 4.3.5 The Mini Vine

Although in its first phase and infancy, the Mini Vine already appears to be a hit, with over 2,000 visitors in the first two weeks. City Culture is involved in this project alongside City College and its aim is to present the positive opportunities that Peterborough has to offer.

Phase 1 of the Mini Vine has a mini library space offering rhyme time and story time, book giveaways, promotion of heritage and arts, a uniform exchange, careers and learning and skills advice and some taster sessions.

### **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Formal partnership management arrangements are in place between City Culture Peterborough and the City Council, via a formal Partnership Board. Consultation has commenced with the Friends Groups and a plan is being formulated in which to consult with communities on future provision.

### **6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

- 6.1 To provide assurance to Members of the arrangements in place relating to the management of the services.

### **7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 To give an update on the transfer of services and in helping to improve service provision.

### **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 None.

## **9. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

9.1 Work is underway to fully understand the impacts the pandemic has had on visitor numbers and the resultant impact on income and costs.

### **Legal Implications**

9.2 No implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

9.3 The delivery and design of the future services will be carried out in such a way as to widen participation and be inclusive to all.

### **Carbon Impact Assessment**

9.4 No implications.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 None

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