

FORM 1

NOTICE OF DELEGATION OF DECISION TO CABINET MEMBER BY STRONG LEADER

Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

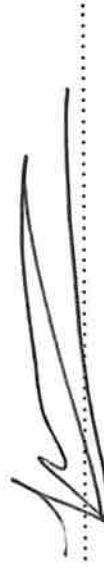
I, J-P Champion, as Strong Leader, delegate the decision regarding the shared museum service, as detailed in the Forward Plan to the Cabinet Member below:

Formally withdraw from the County Council's proposal for Bewdley Museum to become part of the Joint Museum Service for Worcestershire.

Cabinet Member for Community Well Being, Cllr Hardiman

Dated: 14th June 2013

Signed:



Leader of the Council

FORM 2

NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council(delete as appropriate), I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Joint museum service	Formally withdraw from the County Council's proposal for Bewdley Museum to become part of the Joint Museum Service for Worcestershire.	In accordance with officer report	14th June 2013

I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.

Dated: 14th June 2013

Signed:



Councillor:

...Ian Hardiman.....
Cabinet Member

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

To: Leader of Council, Councillor John Campion

From: Kay Higman, Cultural Services Manager, ext 2902

14th June 2013

Potential Joint Museum Service

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress of the feasibility work of the potential addition of Bewdley Museum to the Joint Museum Service and to decide whether to proceed or withdraw the Council's interest in this proposal.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet DECIDES to:

- 2.1 **Formally withdraw from the County Council's proposal for Bewdley Museum to become part of the Joint Museum Service for Worcestershire.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existing Worcestershire Joint Museums Service (WJMS) manages four buildings, of which three are listed buildings open to the public, and the Joint Service comprises Worcestershire County Council and Worcester City Council. These are Worcestershire County Museum (Hartlebury), Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery, the Commandery, and the Worcestershire Regiment Museum. Within the Worcester City Museum are two regimental collections (Worcester Regiment and Worcester Yeomanry) which are covered by formal loan agreements with the City Council with long term arrangements for care and access.
- 3.2 The WJMS has a single joint committee which meets at least 4 times a year. Each existing partner has two voting members, all at Cabinet level. The two Portfolio Holders alternate the Chair. This would need review if the WJMS were to be expanded to three authorities with the inclusion of Wyre Forest. External non-voting members are being recruited. The WJMS is intending to form a Trust for its future management. The rationale for the Joint Service is that the buildings and the collections stay put. Their identity is maintained, but the back room capacity is strengthened and made more efficient. The WJMS employs 72.5 staff and has around 40 volunteers (Volition report 2011).
- 3.3 Bewdley Museum is managed by WFDC through a Trust. The museum has been a major success story for the Council where visitor numbers have soared from 10,000 to over 140,000 in 2012 since the advent of free admission. The quality of the overall experience at the museum has also improved enormously helped by Council investment and the HLF lottery funding. The museum has 3 part time staff and 1 full time staff plus seasonal museum assistants in the current structure, and over 50

volunteers. The museum has cut its budgets and reduced staff by 1FTE and is now trying to realise the potential for income generation.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Worcestershire Joint Museum Service (WJMS) through the County Council approached WFDC for Bewdley Museum to join with the current joint service and for this to eventually become a newly formed Trust. Work has been ongoing since this date, but has not yet been completed, to establish a business case for the extended joint museum service. In the Volition consultants report, commissioned by Worcestershire County Council produced in January 2011 through the WJMS about an expanded shared service, there was a recognition that Bewdley Museum is exceptionally lean and it was difficult to see where any further savings could be made without reducing the service.

4.2 The Volition report highlighted below the possible benefits for extending the service:

Political:

- Museums are once more represented at Cabinet level
- Increases resilience for vulnerable services
- Fits with current political theme of localism
- Local authorities retain ownership of buildings and collections
- Maintains existing museum services to the public

Public benefits:

- Sharing staff expertise between the authorities produces a more professional, but locally accessible service for local users – especially useful where current gaps in expertise can be filled.
- Fragmented collections, although owned locally, are brought together for research and exhibitions to give an integrated picture of the history of the county.
- Safety clauses for reversion can be included in SLA.
- Even closer relationships with independent museums and history societies in the county would be possible.

Financial benefits:

- Will address budget savings (business case needed at stage 2).
- Joint procurement
- Integrated collections management, shared stores, shared staff skills
- Greater opportunity for significant funding bids
- Opportunities to improve facility development

4.3 There has been a lot of background work which has taken place since January 2011 including project groups for finance, legal, property, and HR. A communications plan and business plan is also being progressed and some consultation with staff has taken place.

- 4.4 The work has yet to be completely finalised, particularly financially. Initially there was an expectation that joint storage would be a real benefit for Bewdley Museum. This was investigated but proved to be a more expensive option for WFDC to move from its current location. The Council however managed to make a saving by sharing some of the space at the Store with the Carpet Museum which pays a rent. It does not appear from discussions that there will be any financial savings for the Council arising out of joining the Joint Service and indeed it seems likely that we would pay the County Council for hosting the service. Some savings for WFDC may be possible through consequential savings in support services but these are relatively minimal costs and difficult to achieve when they are very small percentages of people's jobs. Bewdley museum also already enjoys the benefits of being managed through a Trust.
- 4.5 There seems to be a feeling from the very active Friends of Bewdley Museum and locally about not wanting the extended service because of the perception of losing local identity. However, there is an acknowledgement that there are some benefits to an extended museum service including sharing professional staff skills and pooling future external funding.
- 4.6 The WFDC museum service continues to progress and develop independently and provides a major contribution to the local economy and the culture of the area. The museum has a very good working relationship with the County Museum and staff at the County Council generally.
- 4.7 Recently Council officers have become aware that Worcester City is intending to withdraw from the Joint Museum Service which appears to be related to lack of future financial savings. This uncertainty, combined with reservations already outlined in this report, have resulted in the recommendation in 2.1.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no obvious benefits financially for the Council for Bewdley Museum being part of the Joint Museums Service and it seems likely from work to date that a contribution would be required from the County for hosting the service.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal and policy implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If Bewdley Museum becomes part of the Joint Museums Service this could have an adverse effect locally in support for this change. The Museum is also an existing Trust and the complexities of becoming part of a new Trust have not been completely explored.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 8.1 An equality impact assessment will need to be carried out if the Museum was to become part of the Joint Service.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The case is yet to be proven as to whether any tangible benefits would be realised from Bewdley Museum joining the extended museum service and with the uncertainty regarding the probable withdrawal of Worcester City, it would seem prudent to withdraw the Council's interest in becoming part of the Joint Museum Service.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Community Assets and Localism.
10.2 Director of Resources.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Volition consultants report.