

**Science Museum Group Extraordinary Steering Committee**  
**24 June 2020, 14:00–16.00**

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**Present:**

Mary Archer (Chair)  
Sharon Flood  
Iain McIntosh  
Sarah Staniforth  
Steven Underwood  
Dave Phoenix

**In attendance:**

Ian Blatchford, SMG Director  
Sarita Godber, SMG Director of People & Culture  
Roger Highfield, SMG Science Director  
Karen Livingstone, SMG Director of Masterplan & Estates  
Sally MacDonald, Director, Science & Industry Museum  
Judith McNicol, Director  
Shri Mukundagiri, SMG Director of Corporate Services  
Deborah Myers, SMG Director of Development  
Jonathan Newby, SMG Managing Director  
Ciara Wells, Projects  
Lacie Southon, SMG Board Secretary

1 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **Minutes of the Extraordinary Steering Committee on 7 May 2020 and matters arising**

The minutes of the previous Extraordinary Steering Committee were approved.

4 **Chair's Report**

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.

4.1 The Remuneration Committee's decision regarding the Executive pay review was noted.

5 **Director's Report**

The Committee noted the proposed museum opening dates.

A discussion was had regarding the recent DCMS funding announcement and how SMG planned to prioritise the funds.

It was reported that a venue in Germany had signed to take The Sun exhibition.

6 **Masterplan & Estate Committee update**

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. It was reported that the Estates team were working hard to 'wake up' the buildings at each site to ensure they can reopen safely to visitors.

It was noted that the Estates Asset Management Plan had identified the investment requirement across the SMG Estate. It was suggested that a joint Masterplan & Estate Committee and Finance Committee meeting would be useful to discuss the Estates Asset Management Plan in more detail. **(Action: SMu / KL)**

6.1 **York Land Transaction**

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. It was stated that approval was sought for fourteen transactions, of different size, value, complexity, and timing. It was explained that the decisions were being requested at the same time to ensure they are considered within a single consistent framework to help expedite approval from DCMS.

It was noted that the most complex of the transactions (the proposed acquisition of the Bullnose Building) has a standalone business case.

**The Committee approved** the recommendations.

*Ciara Wells left the meeting.*

*Sharon Flood joined the meeting. It was noted that Sharon joined after item 6.1 was discussed due to a potential conflict of interest.*

## 6.2 **Vision 2025 Expenditure**

It was reported that there had been a breach of authority until May 2020 of £0.6m and that improvements to project governance had since been implemented.

The Committee was asked to authorise the next stages of expenditure from June 2020, amounting to £2.1m based on delivery milestones and outcomes, and to note how these requests fit within the overall financial framework of Vision 2025.

It was agreed that the new methodology of financial reporting of projects, programmes and contingency spend would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting. **(Action: KL / SMu)**

It was agreed that visibility of the priorities of the DCMS funding would be presented to the Board. **(Action: KL / SMu)**

**The Committee approved** the £2.1m expenditure from June 2020.

## 7 **Finance Committee and Audit & Risk Committee: Progress Report**

The Committee was informed that the Annual Report & Accounts ('AR&A') would be laid in front of Parliament in October 2020, invoking SMG's 'fallback plan', following the NAO's conclusion that they would not be able to complete their audit procedures on the Greater Manchester Pension Fund in time for pre-recess laying of accounts. It was suggested that reports on the recent industrial action and gender issues should be included in the AR&A.

The changes to the Risk Management Policy were noted and agreed.

It was reported that the GDPR Internal Audit conducted by PwC found two high-risk findings related to storage of data, and that SMG would provide resource to mitigate the risk.

### 7.1 **SMG Finance Report**

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The finance team had worked closely with each department to conduct a thorough review of operational spend, as well as Masterplan and Exhibitions spend, to assess the financial impact of re-prioritising SMG's public programming. This process had identified considerable savings.

It was explained that further mitigating actions, including a thorough review of designated reserves, are being explored to reduce the in-year and potential future year deficits.

The management accounts were noted, and it was explained that the finance team continued to review how to improve cash flow statements going forward.

Concerns were expressed regarding continuing to top-up the salaries of furloughed employees and requests to approve project expenditure whilst there is a risk of redundancies. A view of all financial priorities was requested. **(Action: SMu)**

## 7.2 Chain Bridge Honey Farm investigation

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. It was reported that there were no immediate issues with any other loan railway vehicles.

The incident was reported to the HSE, and to date there has been no response.

The Committee noted that the evidence in report spoke well of how Collections Services is now managed and thanked the team for the improvements.

It was explained that the action plan would be monitored by the Group Health & Safety Committee on a quarterly basis and updates would be regularly reported to the Audit & Risk Committee.

## 8 Collections & Research update

The paper that was circulated previously was noted. It was reported that the ambition for archives remains within the first phase of work underway.

A discussion was had regarding Type Archive, and it was reported that one of the Trustees had passed away. SMG would continue to work with Type Archive to agree the way forward.

### 8.1 Board of Survey Recommendations

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. **The Committee approved** the recommendations.

## 9 Sustainability Strategy, Policy and Action Plan

A discussion was had regarding the sustainability policy. **The Committee agreed** that, provided the statement about sustainable investments were removed, **the policy was approved.**

**It was agreed** that further work was required on the strategy and action plan before the Board would approve it. It was requested that the language used in the strategy be reviewed and more detail on funding and costs be included. **(Action: JK)**

## 10 Transition Pathway Initiative


The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. **The Committee approved** the Transition Pathway Initiative.

## 11 Advisory Board Terms of Reference

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. **The Committee approved** the recommendations.

## 12 Any other business

There was no further business.

Signed by Chair: 

Date: 19/08/2020

<b>Action Tracker</b>				
<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible owner</b>	<b>Due date</b>
June 2020	1.	A joint Masterplan & Estate Committee and Finance Committee to be arranged to discuss the Estates Asset Management Plan in more detail.	SMu / KL	2021
June 2020	2.	Present the new financial reporting of projects, programmes and contingency.	KL / SMu	Aug 2020
June 2020	3.	Identify and present the priorities of how the DCMS funding will be used.	KL / SMu	Aug 2020
June 2020	4.	Present a full list of financial priorities.	SMu	Aug 2020
June 2020	5.	Amend the sustainability strategy and action plan based on the recommendations from ESC. Present a revised version.	JK	Oct 2020