

Scrutiny Annual Report: April 2011 to March 2012

Select Committee: Culture Communities & Rural Affairs

Report of Chairman: Cllr Elaine Still

In-depth Reviews undertaken / outcomes being monitored: None this year

Light Touch Reviews undertaken / outcomes being monitored: This year the committee has undertaken two light touch reviews:

Future approach to Grant Aid – in parallel with a review being undertaken by the Department, a task and finish group of Members of the Committee met between July and October to consider the principles under-pining the allocation of grants to cultural and community organisations. The committee made recommendations to the Executive Member in November regarding proposed principles to form the basis of grant allocation in future, which the Executive Member accepted.

Income generation opportunities – a task and finish group of Members of the Committee met between September and November to consider opportunities for cultural and community services to generate income. The committee made recommendations to the Executive Member in December regarding areas that could be explored and data that could be collected to assist with income generation, which the Executive Member accepted.

Pre-scrutiny of Significant Executive Decisions: The committee has pre-scrutinised a number of proposals prior to decision by the Executive Member:

- Changes to library charges
- Reductions in library opening hours
- The Play Strategy for Hampshire
- Grant allocations
- The Arts and Museums Service restructure
- Museums and arts service – towards a Fully integrated merger with Southampton city council and Winchester City council

Call-in of Significant Executive Decisions: None this year

Scrutiny of Budgets and Performance: The committee received a presentation updating Members on the programmes supporting the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sports Partnership Strategy, aimed at increasing numbers of people undertaking physical activity.

The committee continued to consider the proposed Revenue Budget for cultural and community services at the January meeting, as per the agreed budget scrutiny cycle.

Policy Review: The committee received updates during the year regarding the Arts and museums service – Planning for the future: phase 2.

Questioning and exploring areas of interest and concern:

Proteus Theatre Company and Forest Forge Theatre Company gave a presentation regarding the work of their organisations (they were supported by grant funding for this financial year)

The Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services gave a presentation to update the committee on the merger of the former Culture Communities and Rural Affairs Department with the former Property Business Regulatory and IT Services Department.

Members monitored progress with the development of Runways End Outdoor Activity centre, including a number of Members visiting the site in July prior to completion.

Members received an update on maintenance works taking place on the Basingstoke Canal to address flood risk.

Upcoming topics:

Over the coming year the committee will be looking into Marketing and Tourism, and continuing to monitor the development of a potential Merger of the Arts and Museums Service with Winchester City Council and Southampton City Council, developments in the Library service as a result of changes agreed last year, the new grant streams due to come in for the 2013 financial year, and action taken in response to the income generation recommendations.