

AT A MEETING of the CULTURE, COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle,  
Winchester on Thursday, 21 June 2012.

**PRESENT**

Chairman:  
p Councillor Elaine Still

Vice-Chairman:  
a Councillor Alan Rice, TD

Councillors:

p Alan Broadhurst	p Peter Mason
p Peter Chegwyn	p Alexis McEvoy
p Peter Edgar	p Frank Pearce
a Michael Geddes	p Jenny Radley
a Ron Hussey	p Thomas Thacker
p Roger Kimber	

Also in attendance: Councillor Keith Chapman, Executive Member for Culture and Recreation, and Councillor Ray Ellis, Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs.

117. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Michael Geddes, Cllr Ron Hussey and Cllr Alan Rice.

118. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally at the time of the debate declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

119. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that as agreed at the previous meeting, the Income Generation Panel would be re-convened to consider progress against the income generation recommendations. This meeting was due to take place on 2 October 2012 at 2pm.

The Chairman went on to report that a retired member of library staff had been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Anne Marley joined Hampshire's Library Service in 1984 and was the Head of Children's, Youth and School Library Services until she retired at the end of 2011. She was passionate about children and the importance of reading for their future development. Members welcomed the fact that she had been recognised in this way.

120. **HAMPSHIRE ARTS AND MUSEUMS SERVICE – TOWARDS A FULLY INTEGRATED MERGER WITH SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (ARTS AND HERITAGE) AND WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL (MUSEUMS): UPDATE**

The Director of Culture Communities and Business Services gave a presentation to summarise the key points of the written report (see Item 5 in the Minute Book). It was highlighted that as part of the public consultation on the proposal to merge the three authorities museums services to form a charitable trust, a link to the questionnaire had been circulated by email to all Members of the County Council. Hard copies would be provided to the Members of the Committee.

With regard to the potential benefits of the merger and operating as a Trust, it was indicated that the new arrangements would involve trustees and a board, and therefore there would be opportunity to benefit from the expertise of the individuals brought in to those roles. It was also anticipated that the proposal would enable the new organisation to benefit from economies of scale, to make efficiencies, and be in a better position to access grant funding.

It was acknowledged that there were risks associated with the change, including ensuring the new organisation maintained an appropriate democratic voice. It was also noted that the new organisation may be fragile in the early period and liabilities may need to remain with the constituent Local Authorities initially, to give the new organisation a chance to get established before taking on full responsibility.

It was also highlighted that there was a chance one of the partners would wish to leave the organisation in future. It was reported that a clear exit strategy would be built in to the arrangements to ensure such a situation could be managed appropriately, and that the museums and arts collections would remain in Local Authority ownership.

Hard copies of the museums merger questionnaire be circulated to committee members

In relation to the consultation underway, it was reported that the intention was to gain feedback from both users and non users of the current service, seeking their views on the strengths of the current offer, and the potential benefits and weaknesses of the proposed merger to form a charitable trust.

A Senior Manager for Funding Programmes from Arts Council England was in attendance and presented on the national context for museums services, which had become within the remit of the Arts Council in 2011. It was highlighted that one of their goals for the next 10 years was to support resilient, sustainable, innovative museums. It was suggested that the proposed merger aimed to achieve these ideals for Hampshire arts and museums. Examples were provided of other areas where partnerships had been formed, and had been successful for example in generating additional funding.

Members asked questions to clarify points and gave their views on the principle of the proposal. Some Members expressed concern regarding the lack of direct democratic control the Local Authority would have over the new organisation. Disappointment was also expressed that the proposal did not include Portsmouth City Council, or Winchester City Council Arts Service.

Other Members commented that in order to respond to the current reductions in public sector spending, innovation was a positive response, and therefore that an innovative solution such as the proposed merger should be supported. Members indicated that it was important to develop the arrangements for the proposed Trust with care, to ensure it would be sustainable and mitigate the potential risks.

The Chairman reminded Members that the committee would have the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the detailed Business Case and the outcomes of the public consultation, at the autumn Select Committee meeting, prior to the Executive Member taking a view on the way forward.

Members thanked the Officers and Arts Council representative for presenting to the committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Select Committee supports the current business plan and consultation process to the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation.

That an informal working group of Members be set up, to consider the proposals as they develop in further detail, and provide feedback prior to the November Select Committee meeting:

Cllr Elaine Still  
Cllr Peter Mason  
Cllr Roger Kimber  
Cllr Frank Pearce  
Cllr Jenny Radley

Arrangements be made for the working group to meet between July and October

121. **TOURISM**

The Director of Economy Transport & Environment gave a presentation (see Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding tourism to Hampshire and what the County Council does to support tourism to Hampshire. It was noted that tourism made a significant contribution to the Hampshire economy, including supporting 9.2% of jobs in the County.

A range of data was presented, indicating that Hampshire's day visitor market was the fourth largest nationally, and showing the % of visits to each district of Hampshire, as well as tourism related job concentration and visitor expenditure by area and type.

It was reported that spend on supporting tourism had reduced significantly overall, with reductions nationally, regionally and locally from district and unitary authorities. It was noted that in order to maximise the impact of funding in future it would be important to work with partners to avoid duplication of effort, including increasingly with the private sector.

It was highlighted that while Hampshire included a number of recognised destination brands such as the New Forest, more work could be done to make the link that these areas were in Hampshire, and encourage visitors to explore other areas in Hampshire as part of their trip.

Members heard that 70% of UK residents now book trips online, therefore it was important that Hampshire had a strong tourism presence online. It was highlighted that the 'Visit Hampshire' website was the key focus for the County Council's tourism marketing activity, and data about 'hits' on the website was monitored, which showed increased visits year on year.

It was noted that a new Tourism Strategy was being developed, to outline the County Council's approach from 2013 onwards, linked to wider economic

development activity. It was offered that the draft could be presented to members in due course before it was finalised.

A promotional short film was shown, which had been part of a wider joint project with Film Hampshire and Invest in Hampshire, which showcased the diversity of Hampshire's tourism product. Members were supportive of the film, while comments were made that it was important to cover different aspects to appeal to particular markets such as families.

Members asked questions to clarify points and debate what they had heard. During the course of the discussion the following Members declared a personal interest:

Cllr Peter Chegwyn (organiser of the Wickham Arts Festival)

Cllr Peter Mason (Shareholder of the Watercress Line)

Members commented that it was important to work with the Highways Agency and the Highways section at the County Council, with regard to signage on roads that would alert people travelling through Hampshire about nearby attractions. It was responded that conversations on this issue were taking place with Highways colleagues. Members also commented on the importance of promoting events taking place in Hampshire, and on the impact of travel costs on people's choices of visit, particularly public transport.

Members were supportive of the County Councils work on tourism, recognising that every pound spent on promoting Hampshire would bring in significantly more in economic returns for the area.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs gave a statement, highlighting the potential for the tourism industry to help address unemployment, the need to ensure Hampshire was visible as a destination to overseas visitors, and opportunities to work cross boundary with other Local Authorities. He reported that positive feedback had been received from district council's regarding the County Council's support in relation to tourism.

The Committee requested that the presentation slides and the short film be emailed to all members of the County Council, to highlight the importance of tourism to the Hampshire economy.

The presentation slides and link to the promotional film be circulated to all members of the County Council

RESOLVED:

The Select Committee thanked the Officer for the informative presentation, and supported the activity taking place in support of tourism in Hampshire.

122. **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE: UPDATE**

The Director of Culture Communities and Business Services summarised the content of the report (see Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding developments in the library service.

It was reported that the future of the two smallest libraries in Hampshire had been under consideration for some time. Regarding Stanmore library it was noted that the library was currently open nine hours a week, and book issues had gone down 49% over the past five years. The initial consultation regarding opening hours had a low return rate. At the request of Winchester City Council a further consultation was undertaken to encompass non users, delivered to every house in Stanmore, however the return rate was still low. Following this, the City Council instigated discussions regarding the potential for the library to be provided within a local community facility called the Carroll Centre.

It was being proposed that this option be taken forward, subject to the details being finalised, which would mean the library service providing the books and a self service kiosk, with day to day running by the staff at the Carroll Centre. This was anticipated to generate a saving in the region of £23,000 for the library service. Members asked whether there would be a gap in service between the closure of Stanmore library and the opening of the service from the Carroll Centre, and were assured that there would not.

Regarding North Baddesley Library it was reported the library was currently open for nine and a half hours a week, and book issues had gone down by 33% over the past five years. During the consultation on the future of the library a number of volunteers came forward interested in working in the library, however they had not formed a group capable of taking over the whole running of the facility.

The alternative proposed by the Library Service was to provide a Mobile Library service to North Baddesley, to stop near the current library location. One of the mobile library units visited the area as a taster for local residents and the response was positive. However, it

was highlighted that since the publication of the report, the local Parish Council had approached the service requesting more time to develop a volunteer model. Therefore a revised proposal was due to be put to the Executive Member, that the community have until the end of October 2012 to develop a viable proposal. If this was not possible, the Service would aim to replace the library with a mobile library service from April 2013.

Members were supportive of the proposed solutions for Stanmore and North Baddelsey libraries.

It was also reported that the Library Service had been approached by the company which manages the franchise for Post Offices, regarding the opportunity to operate post offices from within libraries. It had been established that the County Council was legally able to consider such a move due to the 'general power of competence' element of the Localism Act. Two locations were currently under consideration for placing a post office within a library. Members were supportive of the principle, in particular in relation to Gosport.

Regarding the Mobile Library Service, it was noted that following the review of stops in early 2011 (implemented from July 2011), further consideration was being given to changing stops which were under utilised. It was reported that 40 stops were used by 0 or 1 visitors. A list was provided to members of the committee.

It was noted consultation was due to be undertaken regarding those stops, and the service was open to changing the time or location of a stop if it was felt it would improve usage. The information would be circulated to all County Councillors shortly to enable their input to the consultation. It was indicated that following the consultation the Executive Member would take a decision regarding any proposed changes at the Decision Day in September 2012. The Chairman requested that details of the final proposals be circulated to the Members of the Select Committee once agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee supports the following recommendations to the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation:

- The closure of Stanmore Library and the opening of an alternative at the Carroll Centre, Winchester, subject to the details being agreed with the trustees of the Carroll Centre.

Changes to Mobile Library Stops to be circulated to committee members following the decision in September

- The community in North Baddesley have until the end of October 2012 to develop a proposal to run the library with volunteers. If this is not possible, the library will be closed in April 2013 and be replaced with a mobile library stop.
- In principle the provision of a Post Office in a library or Discovery Centre, being run by the Library and Information Service subject to the details being agreed with Post Office Counters Ltd, and a satisfactory business case being agreed with the Director of Corporate Resources.

123. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman invited Members to comment on the Committee's Work Programme (Item 8 in the Minute Book). Members commented that it would be important to allow sufficient time on the agenda at the November 2012 meeting of the committee for scrutiny of the business case and consultation outcomes in relation to the museums service proposal to merge to form a Charitable Trust in conjunction with Southampton City Council and Winchester City Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Work Programme be approved, subject to any amendments raised at this meeting.

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Chairman, 20 November 2012