

AT A MEETING of the CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday 22
March 2016.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Anna McNair-Scott
Vice-Chairman:
p Councillor Frank Pearce

Councillors:

p Phil Bailey	
p Zilliah Brooks	p Fiona Mather
p Peter Chegwyn	p Alan Rice
p Shaun Cully	p Tim Rolt
p Brian Gurden	p John Wall
p Mark Kemp-Gee	p Chris Wood

Also in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Gibson – Executive Member for Culture, Recreation
and Countryside

139. **BROADCAST ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

Items to be
actioned on
the
Committee's
work
programme:

140. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received on this occasion, it was noted that Councillor Humby had become an Executive Member and therefore was no longer a Member of the Committee.

141. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting, they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in

accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

142. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21 January 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

143. **DEPUTATIONS**

No deputations were received.

144. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced details of the 'Poppy Pod' camping village for Armed Forces personnel and their families at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre in Brockenhurst. She noted that this project had been made possible by grant funding of £250,000 from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant scheme. A further £50,000 donation from the Brockenhurst Branch of the Royal British Legion would be used to build a communal hub building for visitors to meet, eat and share experiences with other families. Hampshire County Council have invested £150,000 in this provision.

It was confirmed that the work to complete the transfer of Sport Hampshire & Isle of Wight County Sports Partnership (SHIOW) was progressing very well and aiming for a 1 June transfer. SHIOW was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission on 16 February and a bank account for the charity has been opened. Members would be provided with a further update nearer the official launch.

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Gilbert White Museum had been successful in its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and had been awarded £1.6 million towards their three year development programme to improve the site and ensure its long term sustainability.

Members were reminded of the visit to Royal Victoria Country Park on the 6 April. This would be an excellent opportunity to see the proposals for the site and would also be the last

opportunity to climb the Chapel Tower before work commences.

The Chairman thanked the Members and officers who had contributed to the Library Strategy Working Group to inform the development of the new draft Library Strategy.

145. **LIBRARY SERVICE TRANSFORMATION – STRATEGY TO 2020**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding the Library Service Transformation Strategy to 2020.

The report was introduced and the background of the library service and context of the development of a new Strategy was set out. The role of the Working Group in providing input and analysis throughout the process was detailed, as was the process of public consultation. The extremely high response rate to the consultation was noted and a breakdown was presented of its outcomes. In particular it was highlighted that there was support for the need to change and for financial sustainability in the future.

Key proposals in the draft strategy were presented, including the proposal to close the mobile library service. Members heard the rationale behind this and noted that there was considerable public support for doing so, albeit that support was lower amongst users of the service. The alternative measures to replace the mobile service were set out and the Committee welcomed these and noted support for them.

The proposals for the alignment of libraries into a tiered structure were set out. It was confirmed that there would be flexibility between tiers according to the requirements of each area and the facilities available. The potential to work with community groups in a number of areas was described and the recommendations set out. A number of changes to the original draft strategy on the basis of the consultation were set out and detailed to the Committee.

Members discussed the proposals and received clarification on a number of points relating to the consultation. It was confirmed that the relocation of libraries and shared premises was working well and Members asked about the possible use of alternative locations such as pubs and churches. It was noted that changes to the music collection would include the withdrawal of outdated formats such as CDs, but not of score music. Timescales for the reduction in spend on the book fund were clarified and it was heard that this would give the service

an opportunity to gain further knowledge of demand. It was confirmed that the closure of the mobile service would be communicated with all existing customers as well as through other means. Members expressed concern that further reductions in spend would be required in the future.

The recommendations in the report were considered in turn and a vote was held on a number of points, with the following outcome:

- i. 7 for, 6 against
- ii. 7 for, 2 against, 4 abstain
- iii. Agreed (no vote)
- iv. Agreed (no vote)
- v. 7 for, 6 against
- vi. Agreed (no vote)
- vii. Agreed (no vote)

A further recommendation was proposed by Councillor Wood and seconded by Councillor Rolt that:

“The Culture and Communities Select Committee notes that there are no current plans to close any existing libraries or to reduce opening hours.”

A further recommendation was proposed by Councillor McNair-Scott and seconded by Councillor Price that:

“The Culture and Communities Select Committee request an update on the delivery of free online library learning sessions at its next meeting”

Both additional recommendations were agreed as proposed by the Select Committee.

It was therefore RESOLVED:

That the Culture and Communities Select Committee:

Recommends to the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside that he:

- i) Approves the revised draft Library Strategy to 2020.
- ii) Approves the closure of the Mobile Library Service at the end of June 2016 and replaces it with the Home Library Service for those customers unable to access their nearest static library. This will be supplemented by offering free online Library learning sessions delivered in community venues for communities that are losing their mobile library stop. Where possible the Library Service will develop links with voluntary sector groups which provide community transport to help rural communities that are losing their mobile stop access their local library.

Update on delivery of learning sessions to be provided to next Committee meeting

- iii) Notes the public consultation responses on the transformation of the Library Service.
- iv) Notes the plans to achieve the anticipated savings to 2020 and potential for additional savings to be achieved.
- v) Delegates authority to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services to devise and implement the necessary changes required to implement the Library Service Strategy to 2020.
- vi) Agrees the plans to improve access to Library services through investment in IT and buildings.
- vii) Requires an update to be provided in 2017 to confirm achievement of savings and plans to achieve the financial target to 2020 when confirmed.

That the Culture and Communities Select Committee:

- viii) notes that there are no current plans to close any existing libraries or to reduce opening hours.
- ix) requests an update on the delivery of free online library learning sessions at its next meeting.

146. **BASINGSTOKE CANAL**

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding the Basingstoke Canal.

Members heard about the history, purpose and scale of the Canal, noting that it runs for 32 miles through Hampshire and Surrey. Flooding issues and a desire to develop recreational facilities in the 1960s had prompted action to be taken to repair it from a derelict state. It is currently well used by the public and continues to be a flood risk if not maintained as it is crucial for drainage. It therefore requires skilled support and has an inspection regime of banks and trees. The partnership funding arrangements comprising two County and six District Councils was outlined and Members noted that this was under pressure from the current financial situation.

The Select Committee heard that significant capital investment was required to secure the future of the Canal and that an external consultant was evaluating the value of the Canal and its assets, both social and financial. Members discussed possible future options, including a role for the National Trust and the Canal and River Trust, possibilities for lottery funding and options for income generation.

RESOLVED:

That the Culture and Communities Select Committee notes the content of the presentation.

147. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Policy & Governance - Corporate Services, Item 8 in the Minute Book, which set out the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

Chairman: 6 June 2016