

AT A MEETING of the CULTURE, COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS
SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle,
Winchester on Thursday, 8 July 2010.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Elaine Still

Vice-Chairman:
p Councillor Alan Rice, TD

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Margaret Snaith-Tempia, Executive Member for Culture and Recreation, and Councillor Keith Chapman, Chairman of Policy & Resources Select Committee

37. **DECLARATION 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.

Cllr. Alan Rice – declared he is Chairman of the Hampshire Playing Fields Association (Item 5)

Cllr. Alexis McEvoy – declared she is a Member on the Hampshire Playing Fields Association (Item 5)

38. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Culture, Communities & Rural Affairs Select Committee held on 22 April 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of apologies from Cllr Kimber.

39. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- a) The Chairman reminded Members that a briefing on budget and performance issues relevant to the remit of this committee was due to be held on 19 July.
- b) The Chairman reported details of two successful events at Hampshire's Country Parks which had taken place the weekend before. Lepe Country Park held its annual D-Day event attracting over 6000 visitors. On the Saturday the cliff top was transformed into an army camp with military vehicles and tents. On Sunday a parade and service took place, attended by 40 veterans. The same weekend, the annual Culture in the Park event took place at Queen Elizabeth Country Park. This involved artists, entertainers and local school children performing music, art and dance from cultures across the world. The Chairman gave thanks to the park staff and volunteers whose hard work made the events such a success.

40. **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE - UPDATE**

The Director of Culture Communities and Rural Affairs gave a presentation on the Transformation of the Library Service – Restructure Phase 1 (Item 4 in the Minute Book). Hampshire County Council's commitment to supporting the Library Service was re-confirmed, and Members were reminded of the objectives set out in the recently developed Vision and Strategy for the Library Service. The budget split for the service was indicated, demonstrating the greatest expenditure was staffing costs. It was noted that in previous years, overspend had been balanced by use of the book fund, and that this was unsustainable. A £1.3m overspend was predicted for 2010/11, with further budget pressures expected in future years.

Budget pressures on the library service were reported, including increased utilities costs, loss of income from audio visual loans, investment in new technology and the continued need to generate efficiency savings. It was noted that the principles underlying phase 1 of the restructure included a commitment to no library closures and no reduction in opening hours. The impact of the restructure would be that 65 full time equivalent jobs would be lost (however it was noted that 14 posts are currently vacant and 3 are secondments).

The process of consultation with staff and unions was reported, including meetings and the opportunity for staff to make written comments. The majority of concerns raised were HR issues, or queries regarding how

detailed enquiries and specialist collections would be dealt with under the new structure. It was noted that the Executive Member for Culture & Recreation would be asked to approve the new structure at the Decision Day scheduled for 21 July 2010. It was intended to complete the selection process for the remaining posts by mid October, for the new structure to be implemented in January 2011.

It was also indicated that in late 2010, Phase 2 of the restructure would be initiated, covering the mobile library service, with Phase 3, a review of Head Quarters elements of the service, due to take place in spring 2011.

Members asked questions to clarify points and explore the issues. A Member quoted figures regarding the amount of the bookfund used to balance the budget, from 2005/6 to 2009/10, representing an increase year on year. The Member suggested that this indicated the budget for the service was not sustainable and should have been addressed previously. The Executive Member for Culture & Recreation responded that Hampshire was ranked 17 out of 33 across comparable Local Authorities in terms of net expenditure on libraries per 1000 population, and assured the Member that all figures in relation to the budget were in the public domain. The Member requested a written response confirming where the figures in relation to the bookfund were published.

The Chairman requested that the committee receive further detail on Phase 2 of the restructure in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the approach being taken in relation to the restructure is supported by the committee.

41. **HAMPSHIRE PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION**

The Manager of Hampshire Playing Fields Association (HPFA) gave a presentation on the work of the Association, which is supported by a grant from Hampshire County Council. It was indicated that the HPFA exists to promote and support children's play and voluntary sport in Hampshire. This was achieved through:

- Encouraging the provision of facilities for all age groups
- Helping to protect threatened facilities
- Providing technical advice and information
- Specialising in out of school play needs of

A written response be provided to Cllr Chegwyn regarding the bookfund figures.

Scrutiny Officer to add Phase 2 of the Library Service Restructure to the Committee's Forward Work Programme

children, young people and the disabled,
including practical guidance on a range of safety
issues

- Raising funds and making grants and loans
- Co-operating with others

Details were provided of the grants and loans HPFA had given to organisations towards play/sport equipment and facilities in recent years. A breakdown was also provided of the % of total grant money allocated to different sports and to each District. Members noted that Havant District was listed as receiving no funds. The representative from HPFA indicated that he intended to follow this up to find out why.

Members asked questions to clarify points, and learned that HPFA do not work on schools play facilities. It was reported that the guideline of playing space per head of population had been 6 acres per 1000 people, however this was currently under review. In relation to the funding available from District Councils for leisure facilities, it was indicated that HPFA had undertaken a project supporting Parish Councils with their planning, which helped them be successful when applying for funding from the Local Council.

It was reported that HPFA anticipates budget pressures in the future, in line with the situation across the public sector. In relation to future projects, the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge was highlighted, which had been recently announced. The aim of this project was to identify playing fields that would become permanently protected, as a legacy from the 2012 Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Members suggested that the changes in housing development plans brought about by the new Government may present an opportunity to use identified land for playing fields instead. It was indicated that HPFA is able to provide loans to council's, which could be used to buy land for such a purpose.

HPFA appreciated the extent of support it received from the County Council. The Chairman confirmed the committee's support for the work they do.

RESOLVED:

That the representative from Hampshire Playing Fields Association be thanked for his time, and Members support for the work of the Association be noted.

42. **MUSEUMS AND ARTS FUTURE PLANNING**

The Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs presented a report (Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding the proposal to seek to re-shape the Museums and Arts Service, to embed the positive developments achieved through the Find Your Talent and Renaissance programmes, and identify principles that would underpin the response to any withdrawal of central government funding in this area. It was intended to develop and consult upon the proposals over the next 3 to 6 months.

Members were reminded of the heritage assets Hampshire had, including landscapes, historic buildings, documents, artefacts and personal stories, which form Hampshire's collective memory. It was indicated that this heritage can inspire people, and contribute to wider aims such as quality of place, raising educational attainment and aspiration, improving health and wellbeing, and supporting the visitor destination economy and creative industries.

In relation to re-shaping the service, 5 key principles were proposed:

- Widening Participation
- Strategic Collections
- Integrated Working
- Partnership Working
- Income Generation

It was noted that the 'Find your Talent' scheme had enabled the service to work with young people, particularly in deprived areas, to encourage them to engage with cultural activities on offer they wouldn't normally consider. The funding for this programme was being curtailed by the new Government, however it was intended to embed the good practice learned from this experience for the future.

Another programme that contributed significant funding to the Museums budget was 'Renaissance'. It was indicated that at the time of the meeting, the future for this funding beyond March 2011 was uncertain. The Comprehensive Spending Review due to be published 20 October 2010 may provide further information. It was proposed that the service start re-shaping now, in order to mitigate the impact of potential future risks to funding levels.

In relation to next steps in this process, it was indicated that consultation would be undertaken with staff and key stakeholders, and it was anticipated a further report would be presented to the Executive Member for Culture & Recreation in November 2010. A Heritage Asset

Management Strategy would also be prepared, expected to be completed in Spring 2011.

Members asked questions to clarify points, and learned that the posts funded by the time limited funding, were fixed term contracts, therefore liability for ongoing staff costs should the funding cease were minimal. However, it was considered that these programmes had made a significant impact on the work of the service, and that the Department would prefer to continue this good work in some form.

A Member asked if an assurance could be given that no museum buildings would close as a result of the re-shaping of the service. In response it was commented that the location of museums had developed to some extent in an ad hoc manner, and that in some cases it may benefit accessibility to change the location or co-locate with other services. Another member commented that it was misguided to save buildings at all costs, and supported the approach of focusing on the service being provided, and what facilities would encourage people to use the service.

The Chairman requested that the further report on this topic planned for November be considered by this Committee prior to approval by the Executive Member. In addition, the Chairman requested that a briefing be arranged by the Department for Members of this Committee, prior to the proposals being finalised.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and noted and the approach being taken be endorsed by the Committee.

43. **AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN**

The Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs presented a DVD on 'Inclusion in Action', a programme undertaken as part of the government initiative 'aiming high for disabled children'. The programme involved services within the CCRA Department such as arts centres, outdoor centres and libraries, putting on events for disabled children and their families. This gave disabled children the opportunity to try new activities. The DVD demonstrated that the children involved really enjoyed themselves, parents were impressed with what was on offer, and service providers reassured by the support they were provided with in setting up the events.

The events worked well, and addressed any apprehensions service providers had about hosting events for disabled children. Many centres indicated

That the further report on the future of the museums service, due in November, be added to the agenda for the Select Committee Meeting on 4 November.

That the CCRA Department arrange a briefing for committee members on the developing proposals.

they would consider running events of this kind again in future. The eventual aim of this activity was for all Hampshire County Council services to be inclusive, and enable disabled children to participate alongside others in all kinds of activities.

It was noted that the current funding for the 'aiming high for disabled children' programme finishes in March 2011, and it is uncertain what funding will be available for this type of activity in future. The intention was to use the remainder of 2010 to build capacity within services, to support the continuation of this work in future within sustainable resources. To support this, a pack had been developed to provide advice to service providers about the needs of children with disabilities. In addition, it was intended in future to run a similar programme of events for disabled Adults in conjunction with Adults Services.

Members expressed their support for the service, and commented on the positive impact such opportunities can have on peoples well being.

RESOLVED:

That the work in relation to disabled children be commended, and members support for this activity be noted.

44. **HARD TO REACH REVIEW UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented a report (Item 8 in the Minute Book) providing an update on implementation of 2 of the recommendations made by this committee through the 'Hard to Reach' review, undertaken in 2008/9. It was noted that there is much good work going on in relation to understanding the council's customers, however there remains an issue of 'silo' working – activity not being joined up or shared across sections/departments. The report indicated that ongoing work in relation to developing how the County Council relates to and understands its customers, follows the direction of travel highlighted in the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the update is approved by the committee, for response back to Cabinet.

45. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive presented the Committee's Work Programme (Item 9 in the Minute Book). In relation to the potential visit to Basingstoke Canal, Members indicated a preference that this take place in September.

In addition, Members requested that in view of the extent of announcements being made by the new central Government which impact on Local Government, that an update on changes relevant to this committee be reported at each meeting until further notice.

RESOLVED:

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

Scrutiny Officer to add an update on Central Government Announcements to the agenda for future meetings.