

AT A MEETING of the CULTURE, COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Monday, 21 January 2013.

**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
Michael Geddes	p Jenny Radley
Ron Hussey	p Thomas Thacker
p Roger Kimber	

Also in attendance: Councillor Keith Chapman, Executive Member for Culture and Recreation.

132. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Alan Rice who was unwell.

133. **DECLARATIONS 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 Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 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.

134. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Culture, Communities & Rural Affairs Select Committee Meeting held on 20 November 2012

were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: The Chairman reported that at the last meeting the Select Committee requested the grant application by The Point in Eastleigh be given further consideration prior to decision by the Executive Member. The Executive Member had accepted this recommendation and the decision on this grant was deferred. The Executive Member was now due to take a decision regarding this grant at the decision meeting following the Select Committee.

135. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman highlighted that Members had been sent by email the dates scheduled for meetings of this committee for the coming year (11 April, 6 June, 21 November).

The Chairman then announced that the Leader of the County Council was opening the new Stanmore Community Library in the Carroll Centre on the day of the committee meeting. The new library would be managed by the staff at the Carroll Centre with the help of library volunteers and would be open 25 hours a week, an improvement on the 9 hours a week that the old library in Stanmore was open for. An Open Day was taking place to celebrate the official opening of the Community Library and Members were encouraged to go along after the Select Committee meeting.

The Chairman went on to inform Members that Margaret Plumridge was retiring as Head of the Community Support Team at the end of January 2013. Margaret had been with the County Council for many years and worked tirelessly to provide support to Community Associations across Hampshire who, in turn, provide services, events and activities to their local communities. In future the Community Support Team would be combined with the Community Safety Team and the officer who was currently Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety was taking over the new role as Head of Community Services. Members wished to record their thanks to Margaret for her hard work over the years, and wished her well for the future.

The Chairman also drew members attention to the fact that the income report intended for this meeting would now be presented to the next meeting of the committee instead. It was planned for the update to include the final quarter three figures and as such it would give members a fuller picture of income performance over the year.

136. **REVENUE BUDGET: CULTURE AND RECREATION  
PORTFOLIO SERVICES FOR 2013/14**

The Director of Corporate Resources gave a presentation to highlight the key points from the written report (see Item 5 in the Minute Book). The presentation gave an overview of the budget position for the whole Council, before going on to the proposals for the Culture & Recreation portfolio services.

Regarding the new Business Rates Retention scheme, Members asked how much of the business rates raised in Hampshire the Council would retain under the new system. It was explained that the County Council would only keep nine percent of the rate revenue, the majority would still be returned to central government (and then distributed back by way of grant). Members asked what % district and borough Councils would retain, and whether rate collecting authorities would have discretion over application of rate relief. It was agreed the answers to these questions would be followed up after the meeting.

A response to the Business Rates questions be circulated to members

Members heard that the Capital Programme for the services within the Culture and Recreation portfolio would remain at the current level of £448,000 for each of the next three years.

It was noted that the budget position for 2012/13 for Culture & Recreation was projected to be a £97,000 overspend at the end of quarter two. Figures were not yet confirmed for quarter three, but it was anticipated management action had reduced the position to less than £20,000 overspend. 96% of the savings planned for 2012/13 had already been achieved.

The Director of Culture Communities and Business Services continued the presentation, to summarise the key challenges for the Culture and Recreation portfolio of services for the coming year.

The savings target for Culture & Recreation services for 2013/14 was 2% of the overall budget, equating to £528,600. The required savings were being applied equally across the different services. It was anticipated that the 2% savings required could be achieved with minimal impact on service delivery.

Key points for each service area were reported:

A Member asked if the savings required of the library service would mean a reduction in the bookfund. It was confirmed the bookfund would not be reduced. The savings were due to be made from staffing costs, by way of vacancy

management. It was anticipated that the reduction in staffing would have minimal effect on service provision as it was also planned to expand the availability of self service technology in libraries, which would free up staff time. Monitoring had shown over 90% of library users were happy to use self service for taking out and returning books.

- It was noted that the Milestones museum was anticipated to not be in deficit at the end of the financial year, for the first time in years
- It was acknowledged that management capacity would be a future challenge, as the reduction in management posts as part of efficiencies meant those managers remaining had a broader remit
- Consideration was being given to further focus on grants, for example encouraging organisations that were close geographically to work more closely together, and for the County to be more robust in terms of the outcomes expected from the funding provided.
- The sports strategy was being revised, which could be brought for consideration to a future meeting of the Select Committee
- The community support function was being combined with community safety
- The archives service was exploring opportunities to sell its services and develop volunteer involvement
- In the Countryside service, the major country parks had reduced their costs by 33% in the last two years, and had a stretch target to aim to be self sufficient by 2016. The income and visitor targets for the past year had been exceeded.
- In the outdoor service, Runways End was 20% up on predicted use by schools.
- The velodrome at Calshot was fully booked until April 2013.
- The mountain centre in the Brecon Beacons had inherited additional customers from a nearby centre that had needed to close.

Members asked questions to clarify points, and commented on the content of the presentation.

Members commented on the importance of corporate working across departments – for example schools making use of outdoor opportunities, and the potential with the increasing older population for Adult Services to link with cultural and recreational services.

Regarding income generation, Members commented that it was important to consider how much cost was incurred in generating extra income and extra visitor numbers. It was acknowledged that extracting the cost of inputs that

generate income was difficult, although it was intended to seek to record this information more clearly in future.

Members asked what the payback period was (in terms of staff salary savings) for the capital investment in self service technology in libraries, and for comparative figures for visits and issues in the library service for 2010/11 to compare to those provided for 2011/12. It was agreed these would be responded to after the meeting.

The Chairman requested that the challenges with meeting customer expectations in terms of countryside access be added to the work programme to potentially come back to the committee in future.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee supports the proposed budget to the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation, as detailed in section 10 of the report.

137. **HAMPSHIRE ARTS AND MUSEUMS SERVICE –  
UPDATE ON THE FULLY INTEGRATED MERGER (FIM)  
PROJECT (TOWARDS A HAMPSHIRE SOLENT  
CULTURAL TRUST)**

The Director of Culture Communities and Business Services summarised the report (see Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding progress with the options for working with Southampton City Council and Winchester City Council to create a Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust.

It was noted that a fully integrated merger was no longer looking likely, as partners budget situation meant they were concerned about the potential upfront costs of this option. Alternatives were being considered of Option B – a partially integrated merger, or Option C – the County Council establishing a Trust directly. These were being compared to a ‘do nothing’ approach.

Members attention was brought to the table at Appendix two to the report, which gave the estimated funding position based on each option up to 2017/18. It was highlighted that the fully integrated merger model (Option A) was predicted to provide the most favourable financial outcome (a potential surplus). The ‘do nothing’ option was estimated to have the least favourable financial position, and to be less attractive to significant external funding bodies such as the Arts Council (compared to a Hampshire - Solent regional brand).

The report was seeking support to undertake further work on Options B and C, with the expectation that a detailed

Response to be circulated by email to committee members

Countryside access be added to the work programme

business case on the options be presented for pre-scrutiny by the committee (and then decision on the way forward by the Executive Member) in early summer 2013.

The shadow lead for Culture and Recreation indicated that the opposition Members were not in favour of a fully integrated merger, and therefore welcomed the fact that this option was not now going ahead. It was reported that the Liberal Democrat group preferred for arts and museums services to remain within local authority control and therefore remain democratically accountable. It was noted that the opposition Members did not support option B or C for this reason, however as a decision was not being taken at this time, did not object to the proposed recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee supports the proposal to undertake further work on options B and C, as detailed in section 5 of the report, noting that the detailed business case was due to be pre-scrutinised by the committee in early summer 2013.

138. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman invited Members to comment on the Committee's Work Programme (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

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

The Work Programme be updated

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Chairman, 11 April 2013