

AT A MEETING of the Culture and Communities Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Thursday,
19th September, 2019

Chairman:
p Councillor Anna McNair Scott

p Councillor Christopher Carter	a Councillor John Bennison
Councillor Fred Birkett	p Councillor Jackie Branson
p Councillor Ann Briggs	p Councillor Zilliah Brooks
p Councillor Peter Chegwyn	p Councillor Daniel Clarke
p Councillor Rod Cooper	p Councillor Pal Hayre
p Councillor Dominic Hiscock	a Councillor Mocatta
p Councillor Michael White	

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Cllr Bennison & Cllr Mocatta. Cllr Carew & Cllr Dibbs attended as Conservative Deputies.

77. 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.

78. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

79. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations were received.

80. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that in April 2019 Calshot Activities Centre opened a new Pay & Play facility. The new facility has proved very popular with families looking for a wet-weather activity. This marks a new transition for the Centre, moving towards providing an improved recreational offer to its customers.

Runway's End Outdoor Centre has increased its residential capacity, particularly through the recent opening of 10 glamping pods on the site. Combined with the existing facilities, the centre can now reach out to schools and groups with large numbers of young people.

That Chairman was also pleased to announce the re-opening of the visitor centre and café at Queen Elizabeth Country Park. This has been a hugely successful transformation which has completely changed the space to create an open and airy café and reception area along with a multi use hall. This is the third project to be completed as part of the Country Park Transformation programme.

In addition, the Chairman noted that the Summer Reading Challenge had now come to end and had once again been a great success with 25,710 children from 533 schools taking on the challenge. Research from The Reading Agency shows that finishing the Summer Reading Challenge and regularly reading for pleasure can help children keep up their reading skills during the long summer holiday.

Lastly, the Chairman shared that Basingstoke Discovery Centre had been the recipient of an 'A place to be proud of' award for their partnership work providing digital skills and technology training to those who have never been online or lacked digital confidence. The Library also received a Silver Business Partnership award for commitment to providing work placements for young people with special educational needs and learning difficulties to help prepare them for employment.

81. **TRANSFORMATION TO 2021 – REVENUE SAVINGS PROPOSALS (RECREATION AND HERITAGE)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS) providing an overview of the Revenue Savings Proposals included as part of Transformation to 2021 (T21).

Ahead of the departmental framework, officers detailed the national context and the effect on the County Council as a whole. It was noted the budget was for CCBS as a whole but that the department was split across Executive Member responsibilities. Members heard that the key themes for CCBS for T21 were commercialism, income generation, efficiencies and customer focus. Proposed savings areas included;

- Library Service (£1.76m) – Savings would be provided through reduction to opening hours and reviewing community libraries, potentially closing or relocating some. Alongside this would be efforts for income generation and other efficiencies including digital resources and a rationalisation of the number of public computers.
- Countryside and Rural Affairs (£0.3m) – increased revenue through revised car parking strategy and a general service re-design.
- Archives and Records (£90k) – through income generation and efficiencies
- Grants and efficiencies (£0.432m);
 - Arts & Museums grant funding (HCT)
 - Sport funding (Energise Me)
 - Community & Cultural grants

Officers highlighted the potential risks for the T21 budget, particularly that over 50% of the savings target sits within the library service, a service which the public have previously been resistant to see change. Cllrs also noted that increasing income can be challenging and is impacted by the financial constraints of customers such as schools and other local authorities.

Members also received the headline findings of 'Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget 2019' Consultation.

In response to questions members heard that;

- There were no changes or proposals to change funding for the Basingstoke Canal.
- The number of people visiting country parks had increased due to the increased investment.
- There would be a full consultation on the proposals for the Library service which will allow the public to inform the final decision. It could be that some libraries close or there could be changes to opening hours for all. Officers shared that a review of all libraries was timely as some are too small or not in the right place to be effective.
- There is work being undertaken to increase the use of 'Automatic Number Plate Recognition' alongside improving gates and footpaths in country parks. Officers added that they were indebted to the work of volunteers in relation to footpath maintenance.
- The proposals in relation to the Library service would be covered by a future meeting of the Library Task & Finish group.

The recommendation was proposed, and a vote was held with the following outcome;

For	7
Against	4
Abstain	1

RESOLVED: That the Culture and Communities Select Committee consider the detailed savings proposals and support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage in section 2 of the report.

82. **TRANSFORMATION TO 2021 - REVENUE SAVINGS PROPOSALS (COUNTRYSIDE AND RURAL AFFAIRS)**

This item was considered alongside the previous item.

The recommendation was proposed, and a vote was held with the following outcome;

For	9
Against	3
Abstain	0

RESOLVED: That the Culture and Communities Select Committee consider the detailed savings proposals and support the recommendations being proposed to

the Executive Member for Countryside and Rural Affairs in section 2 of the report.

83. **UPDATE ON LIBRARY STRATEGY 2016–2020 AND DRAFT STRATEGY 2020–2025**

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS) providing an update on the Library Strategy 2016-2020 and an overview of the draft Strategy for 2020-2025.

Members received an overview of the service as it was currently including the number of libraries and staffing details. Details of the strategy to 2020 were provided alongside this to provide the context for the strategy going forwards.

Cllrs received the draft vision to 2025, encompassing three core strands;

- Reading – engaging people through books, focusing on early-stage learning to cultivate reading for pleasure,
- Community – connecting communities through assets, support people to develop skills,
- Digital – targeting digital inequality and providing training and resources for online services.

Officers noted that this vision would be underpinned by a sound financial strategy and a strong commercial focus. This would include the T21 £1.76 million savings target to be achieved through a balance of delivering efficiencies, managing assets, changes to operations and income generation.

In response to questions members found that;

- Any libraries that are proposed for closure following the consultation could be converted to a community run library if volunteers can be recruited and retained. Consideration for Health & Safety, building running costs and organisation would need to be given by any group contemplating this.
- The statutory responsibility for the County Council is to provide a physical book lending facility without cost which is comprehensive for all residents of Hampshire.

RESOLVED: That the Culture and Communities Select Committee recommends that the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage;

- i) Notes the progress made with the Library Strategy 2016-2020.
- ii) Endorses the progress made on the new draft Strategy 2020-2025.

84. **CCBS SPONSORSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS) providing an overview of the objectives and strategy undertaken by CCBS in relation to Sponsorship and Partnerships.

Officers detailed their efforts to explore new business opportunities in order to generate income, and the desire to take a more coordinated and professional approach in order to reach large scale opportunities.

Cllrs heard how the County Council were in a unique position to offer highly effective and competitively priced opportunities for customer target campaigns. It was noted that the department would need to ensure that work was undertaken with suitable partners, in line with the organisation's ethos and priorities.

In response to questions members heard that;

- The strategy provided the opportunity for organisations to engage with the public, and any information captured as part of this would be by those organisations and so they would be responsible for the correct handling of data.

RESOLVED: That the Culture and Communities Select Committee note the update provided in relation to the objectives and strategy undertaken by CCBS in relation to Sponsorship and Partnerships.

85. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Transformation and Governance – Corporate Services which set out the Committee's upcoming work programme. There were no suggested amendments.

RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the Work Programme.

Chairman, Culture and Communities
Select Committee