

Cabinet minutes

Friday 10 March 2016 at 5.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor S. Coughlan	Leader of the Council
Councillor Jeavons	Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor Burley	Children's services and education
Councillor J. Fitzpatrick	Community, leisure and culture
Councillor Jones	Clean and green
Councillor S. Coughlan	Social care
Councillor Nawaz	Personnel and business support
Councillor Shires	Agenda for change

3599 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3600 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

There were no items to be considered in private session.

3601 Corporate Budget Plan and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy: Savings reference 32 – Redesign of library service

The reports of the Social Care and Health and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the portfolio holder were submitted:

(see annexed)

In presenting the portfolio holder report, Councillor Fitzpatrick said that the whole process had been robustly scrutinised and that the information in the report responded to the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A discussion took place during which time the Leader made the following statement:

- “(1) We have listened to people's concerns around the original proposals and that is why we have adopted the model agreed by Cabinet on 8 February and approved by Council on 23 February and put £1.5m back into the overall Libraries, Leather Museum and Local History Centre Service. This means that the service will be run at a cost of £2.5m, compared to the original budget proposal of £1m.

- (2) In terms of the recommendations put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, these have been addressed at some length in the report but I will summarise them as follows.
- (3) That cost of decommissioning former library spaces not being taken over by the community will be in the region of £225,000, however, it is anticipated that the capital receipts realised from the sale of the stand alone sites would more than cover this cost and leave a surplus in the region of £125,000.
- (4) There is no budget available to keep any of the nine libraries listed for closure open after 30 June and so these libraries will close on that date. However, we want to work with communities who are working hard on plans to keep their local facilities open in some form, and if their plans are not quite there on 30 June, they will have a short period of time to bring their plans to fruition. We have budgeted for a short period of non-occupancy to manage this scenario.
- (5) The Home Library service exists to provide a valued service to vulnerable people in their homes and currently costs £1.54 per book. On-going efficiencies will bring that cost down to around £1.36.
- (6) As we go forward, government has made it clear that we must expect cuts to public services to continue. Libraries are one part of the network of services which residents can access but let's not forget the many other facilities around the borough run by community associations and the voluntary sector. The budget approved by Council in February included a continued commitment to community associations of some £247,900 along with funding of £169,000 per annum to support the voluntary sector."

It was **moved** by the Leader, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That having considered the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet affirms its previous decision.

The meeting terminated at 5.39 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: