

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Tuesday 13 July 2010 at 6.00pm

Panel Members Present Councillor L. Harrison (Chair)
Councillor S. Coughlan (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Bott
Councillor C. Creaney
Councillor G. Perry
Councillor K. Sears
Councillor D. Shires

Portfolio Holders Present Councillor M. Bird - Leader
Councillor A. Harris – Leisure, Culture and
Environment

Officers Present Keith Stone – Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Tracey Evans – Lead Accountant
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

15/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors O. Bennett and R. Martin.

16/10 SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitutions were made for the duration of the meeting:

17/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

18/10 MINUTES

Councillor D. Shires requested that her name be deleted from item '01/10 **MINUTES**' where she was listed as having apologised for the meeting. She was already correctly listed as present.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes, as amended, of the meeting held on 8 June 2010, copies having been previously circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

19/10 FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE

Members considered a report containing options for the future of Walsall libraries.

The Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods) explained to the Members the key issues highlighted in the report (annexed). The following are the principal points from the presentation:

- The current financial situation made it very likely that the current library service offer was unsustainable moving forward. However, libraries provided many valuable services to local residents so it was important to retain a library service.
- Walsall has 16 libraries that provided a range of services that helped to meet the priorities of the Council and its partners. Diverse topics such as early years education, schools, adult education, health and regeneration were all supported through libraries.
- A significant proportion of the library service budget was held in employee costs.
- In terms of remodelling the service there were many options available including, but not exclusive to:
 - Self service machines
 - Use of mobile vehicles
 - Developing multi-service venues
 - Volunteers

Following a proposal by the Chair the Panel agreed to consider the future of libraries along with the leisure centre working group.

Members commented that it was important to take on board the views of service users as part of the working group investigation and that once the working group had reported regular monitoring of recommendations should take place.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

- 1. the future of the library service be considered as part of the leisure centre strategy working group;**
 - 2. the working group consider the views of services users;**
- and;**
- 3. working group dates be circulated to all Panel Members for information.**

20/10 2009/10 FINAL BUDGETARY POSITION PRE-AUDIT

Members considered the outturn revenue and capital position for the ended 2009/10 for services within the remit of the Panel.

The Lead Accountant explained that for services within the Panels remit that

was a revenue underspend of £19,000 and a capital underspend of £241,000.

In response to a question the Lead Accountant advised that one of the budget variances of £36,000 was due to Costa Coffee being designated with an income target twice in error. This had now been corrected.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

1. Councillor G. Perry be provided with further information on the capital funding for Highfield Road North Play Area;

and;

2. Councillor S. Coughlan be provided with a copy of the report on 'Spending Transparency' being considered by the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 22 July 2010.

21/10 WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AUTHORITY CO-OPTED MEMBER

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Part 4.5 paragraph 3 of the Walsall Council Constitution, Mr Phillip Holmes JP be recommended to Council for appointment to the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel as a non-voting co-opted member.

22/10 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 AND FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED:

That the final report of the Leisure and Libraries Working Group be considered at 14 October 2010 meeting of the Panel.

23/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 3 August 2010.

The meeting terminated at 6.31 p.m.

Signed:

Date: