



Environment and
Services Scrutiny
Committee

28 September 2015

2.00 pm

Item

3

Public

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2015
2.00 - 3.30 PM**

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer
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Present

Councillor Vince Hunt (Chairman)
Councillors Keith Roberts (Vice Chairman), Ted Clarke, Nigel Hartin, Christian Lea,
Pamela Moseley, Vivienne Parry and Arthur Walpole

5 Apologies for absence and substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Adams and R Hughes.

6 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

7 Minutes of the meetings held on 30 March 2015 and 14 May 2015

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March and 14 May 2015 be approved as correct records subject to the addition of the following text to Minute 1 of the meeting held on 14 May 2015, 'Councillor V Parry was nominated as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year but the nomination did not receive sufficient support'.

8 Public Question Time

No questions had been received from members of the public.

9 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

10 Shrewsbury Swimming Pool Update

The Director of Commissioning presented the update report on the detailed options being worked up by Officers for swimming provision in Shrewsbury.

Members noted the detailed site options as:

- Refurbishment of the existing Quarry pool
- Renovation of the existing Quarry pool
- New build on the site of the existing Quarry pool
- New build at Clayton Way
- New build on land at Ellesmere Road
- New build on land at the Shrewsbury Sports Village
- New build on land at Shrewsbury College

The Director of Commissioning explained that the Council was working closely with Energize, Sport England, the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and the Quarry Swimming Pool and Fitness Forum. He added that the development of a preferred future swimming pool option would be supported by a four month public consultation and detailed public and stakeholder engagement.

Members noted that two of the options related to four pool facilities and the other four, new build options, related to two pools. Referring to the revenue savings detailed for the option of new build on land at the Shrewsbury Sports Village, the Director of Commissioning explained that shared facilities [reception/changing rooms] would result in decreased build costs. He added that the combination of a pool alongside dry side facilities resulted in increased participation levels overall and increased income and cost reduction.

He cautioned that whichever option was chosen there was a risk of potential overspend and project creep in such a significant project. Members noted that the project was being developed by a Project Board chaired by the Director of Commissioning and included relevant internal Officers and external representation from Energize, Sport England and the Amateur Swimming Association. The Director of Commissioning explained that the Board had developed, and kept under review, a detailed project plan, risk management framework and Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA).

The Committee noted the work carried out to inform public consultation on the swimming pool options that included:

- Ongoing liaison with partner organisations
- Building and mechanical and electrical condition survey of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre
- Shortlisting of potential sites for swimming provision
- Contract variation with Shropshire Community Leisure Trust
- Sport England facilities planning model, May 2015
- Site options appraisal report, May 2015

The Committee noted that a four month consultation would end on 25 September and, to date, 621 responses had been received and this figure was rising. The Director of Commissioning explained that the views of current users and non-users were being

captured through a range of engagement and consultation processes and recommendations would be reported to Cabinet in December 2015. A Member commented that a notice on Arriva buses locally may generate additional input into the consultation. It was also suggested that the views of Members in Wards surrounding the town should be sought rather than focussing solely on those Members in the town; this point was accepted.

The Chairman commented on the merits of choosing a site that had easy access and stressed the importance of taking the needs of disabled users into consideration. The Director of Commissioning stated that this was the norm and was an integral part of the project.

Another Member commented on the merits of an Olympic size pool in order to provide training facilities locally for future Olympians, this would require a pool 50m in length [the current pool being 33 m]. Replying, the Director of Commissioning commented that Birmingham University had an Olympic size pool but this had little community use and was the only pool of this size in the region. He added that the Shrewsbury proposals took into consideration the predicted population growth to 2026 and predictions on the level of water space that would be suitable. He drew attention to the danger of comparing facilities in other authorities as the provision was carefully calculated in accordance with the level of local 'need'.

Referring to the transport implications of the various options, the Director of Commissioning explained that these had been factored in to the usage levels detailed in the report at paragraph 6. A member queried the merits of building a new facility on ground that was currently used for sport. The Director of Commissioning assured the Committee that the consultation aimed to be as transparent as possible and to engage with as many people as possible.

Responding to Members' concerns on the level of detail within the report, the Chairman stated that this was an interim report and further detail would be reported to the Committee prior to Cabinet's consideration of the options in December 2015.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the information presented on the options for swimming in Shrewsbury be noted; and
- ii) That a further, more detailed, report be presented to the Committee prior to Cabinet's consideration in December 2015.

11 Update on Future Commissioning and Provision of Library Services

The Library Service Manager presented the update report on the progress made on the county-wide redesign of library services since the Committee's last update received on 8 December 2014.

Prior to the debate, the Chairman drew Members' attention to the judicial review of the decision relating to the Church Stretton library facilities and cautioned Members to limit their comments to the wider implications rather than specific detail. The Director of Commissioning stated that he would be happy to discuss specific issues with any Member outside of the meeting; this was noted.

The Library Service Manager explained that the redesign of the service was being undertaken as a two way process of conversations with local communities; he stated that there was no 'one size fits all' and the aim was to keep libraries open. He added that if a solution could not be found then alternative modes of delivery would be considered.

Several Members commented that the report did not contain a sufficient level of detail relating to the financial implications of the service redesign and requested that the information needed to be provided to Members as soon as possible, the next meeting of the Committee if possible.

The Library Service Manager assured the Committee that the Project Board [comprising representatives from community enabling, customer services and the library service] met regularly to ensure good project management with Key decisions being taken by the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet. A Member commented on the need to avoid getting too preoccupied with back office support and the need to try and retain the valuable service that was currently offered. The Library Service Manager stated that technology was being used in different ways to keep the service that resulted in a slight staffing reduction and stressed that the overarching library service would not disappear.

Referring to the current book stock, the Library Service Manager reported that the book stock was reduced/augmented in line with the population. He stated that Shropshire's very generous book fund had been reduced by 10% to £350K annually. Members noted that libraries had a 10% decline in usage nationally and each library had an Annual Plan of service delivery when stock and assets would be considered. The Library Service Manager added that the national agenda for libraries was to broaden their use to encompass reading facilities, Wifi base, public health, health and wellbeing and an information hub; Shropshire currently had 5 hubs in the county.

Responding to comments from some members of the Committee on the level of detail in the report, the Director of Commissioning gave assurances that greater financial detail and the use put to the Transformation Challenge Award [TCA] grant from the Cabinet Office would be included in the next report to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the update report on the future commissioning and provision of Library services be noted; and
- ii) That a further, more detailed, report on the library service redesign and the development of Community Hubs be made to the Committee as soon as possible and by Spring 2016 at the latest.

12 Shropshire Council's Play Area Provision

The Director of Commissioning provided a verbal update on Shropshire Council's play area provision and the development of a Play Strategy for Shropshire. Members noted that Officers from public health, outdoor recreation and planning policy had met to discuss the issues to be included within the Strategy.

The following points had been agreed:

- The need to understand the current play provision within the county
- The need to update from the last review
- The need to review planning policy relating to outdoor space and recreation
- The need to identify and prioritise key areas where play provision is needed
- The need to look beyond 'play grounds'

Members noted that a further update would be provided to the Committee later in the autumn 2015.

13 Date/Time of next meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held at 2.00pm on Monday 20 July 2015.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: