



Environment and Services Scrutiny
Committee

Monday 30 March 2015

2.00 pm

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2014 IN THE PLOWDEN ROOM, CRAVEN
ARMS COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEWINGTON WAY, CRAVEN ARMS SY7 9PS**

2.00PM - 3.40 PM

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer

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Present

Councillor Vince Hunt (Chairman)

Councillors Keith Roberts (Vice Chairman), Ted Clarke, Roger Hughes,
Christian Lea, Pamela Moseley and Vivienne Parry

34 Apologies for absence and substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Adams, Nigel Hartin and Arthur Walpole.

35 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

36 Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee held on 20 October 2014 and 10 November 2014 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

37 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

38 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

39 **Future Commissioning and Provision of Library Services and Community Hubs**

The CasCA Supervisor led the Committee on a tour of the building and provided information on the facilities available.

On return to the meeting room the Director of Commissioning drew Members' attention to the savings target for Library Services of £1.3M over the three year period 2014/15 to 2016/2017. Members noted that the first year savings had been achieved through a range of efficiency savings, improved operating arrangements as well as through voluntary redundancies.

The Director of Commissioning added that savings in the next two years would be delivered by transferring the operation of a number of libraries (not mobile libraries) to community organisations or Town or Parish Councils and/or by working in partnership with these organisations to manage provision differently. The current provision amounted to 22 libraries and 4 mobile libraries.

The Library Service Manager continued and, with reference to presentation slides, explained that flexible delivery of the service was essential to future proof libraries. [A copy of the presentation slides is included as part of the formal record of the meeting]. He added that local public consultation was being managed at a community level through 'community conversations' that gave local residents the opportunity to help shape the future direction of their local library and customer service points. Members accepted that the status quo was no longer an option.

The Library Service Manager explained that the expectation of 'library' was being broadened to service users; the baseline offer would aim to include customer service, library and registrar activities. Future 'community hubs' would be broadened out as a commercial entity owned and run by the community for the community. Members noted that different offers would be made in different locations and it would not be a 'one size fits all'. The need for continued face to face contact was recognised and any reduction in staff would require the remaining staff to be provided with the necessary skill sets to work in a broader environment. It was noted that staffing costs currently amounted to half of the service budget.

The Library Service Manager stated that he would hold a conversation outside of the meeting to answer a Member's concerns relating to the Ludlow Library building but recognised that the issues related to staff IT issues, cold work environment caused by drafts from the door opening, lack of privacy and addressing damp problems with the fabric of the building. Another Member requested that consideration be given to re-instating the facility to allow service users to make cash payments at the Market Drayton facility particularly as those making payments were often the least likely to have credit/debit cards of their own.

In answer to a Member's concerns on the quality of the future library service offered, the Library Service Manager assured the Committee that a librarian would have oversight of each library in the county, the core collection of material was being maintained and the book request service was to continue. He added that local communities were being given the opportunity to shape their library for the future according to the needs and wishes locally. The Director of Commissioning commented that libraries in future would meet local 'need' and, although the Council may not provide the front line service itself, the local community may do so adding

that the library provision would drive the footfall in a building in which other services would also be on offer. Members noted the need for libraries to constantly re-invent their offer to keep up with the needs of the community.

Some Members commented on possible health and safety concerns over the location of the library at Craven Arms in the front hallway/corridor of the building and the proposed re-location of the Church Stretton library to the school. It was noted that the school's number one priority was safeguarding its pupils and there were no concerns about the proposed relocation of the library particularly given that there would be a separate public entrance. Referring to the books in the entrance hallway at CasCA, the Library Service Manager commented that the facility was well used, CCTV was in operation and enhanced lighting for this area was soon to be installed.

In answer to a Member's query, the Library Services Manager commented that all options were being considered and nothing had been ruled out at this stage; the retention of current assets formed part of future deliberations.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Committee's feedback and comment from the above detailed debate be taken into consideration in the next stages of library redesign work;
- ii) That the co-location of services development in the major market towns be accepted; and
- iii) That a further update on the library redesign and co-location model be made to the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee in the Spring 2015.

40 Date/Time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held at 2.00pm on Monday 2 February 2015.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: