

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

**Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development
Committee**

Meeting held 9 October 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Cate McDonald (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair), Trevor Bagshaw, Alison Brelsford, Jayne Dunn, Terry Fox, Ibrar Hussain, Steve Jones, George Lindars-Hammond, Alf Meade, Tim Rippon, Steve Wilson and Keith Hill (Substitute Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11th September, 2013, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, it was reported that, in connection with the Inquiry on Cycling in Sheffield (a) 190 responses had been received as part of the Call for Evidence, and the deadline in respect of the consultation process had been extended to 18th October, 2013 and (b) the Cycle Action Plan 2006/11, together with the details of outcomes against targets in the Plan, would be circulated to Members of the Committee when the outcomes work had been completed.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. THE FUTURE OF SHEFFIELD'S LIBRARY SERVICE

6.1 The Committee considered a joint report of the Head of Community Services and Acting Head of Libraries, Archives and Information, on the future of Sheffield's Library Service. The report contained a summary of the findings of a review of the Libraries, Archives and Information Service, together with details of the next stage of the process, which would comprise a 12 week consultation period, seeking views of the proposals for the future of the Service.

6.2 The Chair reported on the reasons as to why the report had been submitted to this

Committee, indicating that it was important that Members had the opportunity of providing their views on the proposals set out in the report, as well as being able to seek assurances that the Council had consulted widely on, and followed all the correct procedures regarding, the proposals.

- 6.3 Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion, reported on the background as to why the Council had undertaken a review of the future of the City's Library Service, together with details of the work undertaken to date. He reported that a City-wide consultation exercise had taken place between August and October 2012, which invited both library and non-library users to provide their views and opinions on the review, with 6,037 people having responded. Following an analysis of the responses, it had become apparent that a number of groups and individuals had offered to support the running of library services and that following the issue of a prospectus, inviting further ideas and suggestions and offers of support, 27 registrations of interest had been received. Following the consultation process, and in the light of the registrations of interest received, an outline strategy, comprising a number of different models on the future delivery of the Service, had been developed. Councillor Iqbal also referred briefly to the recent Government cuts, which had forced the Council to undertake such a review.
- 6.4 Also in attendance for this item were Andrew Milroy, Acting Head of Libraries, Archives and Information, Phil Reid, Development Manager, Business Strategy, Lynne Richardson, Project Manager and Dawn Shaw, Head of Community Services Projects, Communities.
- 6.5 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
- As detailed in the Needs Assessment, the Council had looked in detail at all the different aspects regarding accessibility to a library service in the City. It was considered that the current proposals provided such accessibility, including for those residents living in rural areas and/or those without internet access. Whilst appreciating the concerns regarding the move to more IT based library services, there were a number of other organisations that provided IT facilities for those without such facilities in their homes. The Council had recently been to look at a Digital Inclusion Project in Liverpool, and was looking at the possibility of implementing a similar project in the City.
 - The Home Library Service offered an important service for people who were unable to visit a library and did not have any help to do so, and would be available for people who need to live independently. The Service would also be offered to any current users of the Mobile Service who were restricted to their home and, who could not access their local library. As part of the review, it was the aim to develop this Service through a volunteer scheme in addition to existing paid staff.
 - The consultation undertaken had been viewed as being very worthwhile and effective, with over 6,000 people completing the consultation survey. The consultation had targeted hard to reach communities and a number of focus

groups and meetings had been organised as part of the process. It had therefore been considered that the public's views had been taken into consideration when proposing the new structure in terms of the future Service.

- As part of the review, consideration had been given to judgments made in respect of Brent and the Wirral Councils, with regard to decisions made in connection with the future of their library services. It was also believed that the indicators listed in the Needs Assessment, relating to the determination of priorities for comprehensive and efficient community libraries, represented good practice.
- The 11 libraries identified as hub libraries in the proposals had been identified following a detailed Needs Assessment. The five potential community libraries had been identified using indicators of multiple deprivation, in line with the recommendations of the Fairness Commission.
- In April 2013, 27 groups/organisations had expressed an interest in offering to support the running of library services. As part of the current proposals, these and other organisations would be requested to submit a viable and sustainable Business Plan. The Council would arrange workshops in order to help the organisations put together their Business Plans, and they would be provided with all the relevant information required in connection with running a library service.
- All residents in the City, including the BME, and other hard to reach communities, had been given the opportunity to take part in the initial consultation exercise.
- In terms of the community libraries, the volunteer groups/organisations would receive funding in respect of rent, utility costs and building maintenance costs, for a period of two years.
- It was planned to provide wi-fi in the Central Library and the main hub libraries.
- It was believed that, in light of the excellent work undertaken by officers in terms of the review, the robustness of the Needs Assessment and based on the advice following the judgments made in Brent and the Wirral, the Council would continue to provide an efficient and comprehensive library service, in line with its statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Council had drawn strongly from the outcome of the two judgments and adopted an evidence-based approach in terms of the future operation of its Library Service.
- In terms of the plans regarding the five community libraries, an event had been held for those 27 groups/organisations who had expressed an interest and the Cabinet Member and Council officers had visited a number of groups to discuss their plans.

- In terms of having a reasonable spread of provision across the City, as part of the review, the bus and tram companies had been requested to assist with the process, by providing information in terms of bus and tram routes and times, based roughly on a travel time of 30 minutes.
- As part of the review process, Members and officers had visited six different local authorities to see how they had implemented new ways of working in terms of their library services. Investigations had also been made of other local authorities who had co-funded libraries.

6.6 The following comments were also made by Members of the Committee:-

- Consideration should be given, as part of the review, to having 27 hub libraries,
- It is important that Sheffield residents are clear that the recent Government cuts had forced the Council to undertake the review. It is very important that the Council meets its statutory requirements in terms of the provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service and, following the excellent work undertaken by officers, for which they should be commended, the Council believes that this will be the case. It is also considered that having two libraries in each Constituency was a reasonable spread.
- There was insufficient information in the report relating to future proposals regarding the transfer of Archives and Local Studies. Consideration needed to be given to the future of the Archives Service.

6.7 RESOLVED: That this Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made and responses to the questions raised;
- (b) welcomes the review into the future of Sheffield's Library Service and is confident that the approach taken in terms of the review, particularly the range of models formulated following the initial period of consultation and the detailed Needs Assessment undertaken, would result in the Council being able to provide an efficient and comprehensive Library Service; and
- (c) requests (i) the Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion, working with Council officers, to continue look at the different models and planned consultation is undertaken, which is as thorough as possible, in respect of the proposed models, (ii) that the Acting Head of Libraries, Archives and Information reports to a future Committee meeting on the results of the next phase of the consultation process and (iii) that its thanks and appreciation be conveyed to the Cabinet Member and all Council officers involved in the review for the excellent work undertaken in very difficult circumstances.

NOTE: Prior to the passing of the above resolution, an alternative resolution was moved by Councillor Ian Auckland and seconded by Councillor Trevor Bagshaw, as

follows:-

“That this Committee does not agree that the proposals in the report now submitted are the most appropriate way forward for Sheffield’s Library Service”.

Votes on the alternative resolution were ordered to be recorded and were as follows:-

For the resolution (4) - Councillors Ian Auckland, Trevor Bagshaw, Alison Brelsford and Keith Hill.

Against the resolution (9) - Councillors Jayne Dunn, Terry Fox, Ibrar Hussain, Steve Jones, Cate McDonald, Alf Meade, George Lindars-Hammond, Tim Rippon and Steve Wilson).

Abstained (0)

7. SHEFFIELD FOOD STRATEGY

7.1 The Committee noted information, in the form of a presentation, on progress made towards refreshing the current Sheffield Food Plan, and containing details of the new Sheffield Food Strategy.

7.2 Councillor Jack Scott, Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene, reported on the need to refresh the Sheffield Food Plan, referring to the varying levels of food poverty across the City and the need to assist those people living in areas where there were high levels of food poverty, by offering help and advice on all aspects of food. Councillor Scott made specific reference to the high number of visits made to food banks across the City, with the highest being in the “S3.7” area. He reported on the reasons why people in some areas were lower down the food hierarchy than others, which included consequences of welfare reform, increases in food prices and lack of food skills, and stated that the aim of the Strategy was to educate such people in order that they could improve their eating habits.

7.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- The Council was aware that in some areas of the City, there was a higher concentration of takeaways, which had a negative impact as the food was often more expensive and not always healthy. The Council was looking at how steps could be taken to limit the number of takeaways to ensure that there was not a heavy concentration in any specific area. The aim of the Strategy would be to reduce the demand for such take-aways by helping people to choose healthier alternatives.
- Food waste was an important part of the Strategy and biomass had a role to play.

- The Council offered support to local businesses and traders in connection with assisting them in providing healthier options in terms of food. It was accepted, however, that the food they provided was often more expensive than what could be brought in supermarkets, which was a problem for some people.
- It was acknowledged that there was a need to educate people from a young age, particularly those families on lower incomes, and young mothers, in terms of cooking their own meals using fresh ingredients, and making healthy choices in terms of the food they eat.
- Efforts to tackle problems of food waste, which was viewed as a major issue in the City, as highlighted in the presentation, would be dealt with as part of the new Strategy. The Council would look at its waste management contract with Veolia in order to look at what improvements could be made in terms of food waste disposal.
- In terms funding in connection with delivering the Strategy, it was hoped that the Council would be able to use resources from the Council's Fairness Commission Fund to kickstart the Strategy.
- It was accepted that there was a need for improvement in the quality of cookery classes in schools.

7.4 RESOLVED: That this Committee:-

- (a) notes the information set out in the presentation, together with the additional information reported by Councillor Jack Scott, and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) expresses its thanks to Councillor Jack Scott and Jill Lancaster and Dawn Lockley, Place Public Health Team, for attending the meeting;
- (c) agrees to include the new Sheffield Food Strategy on its Work Plan for 2013/14; and
- (d) requests Members of the Committee to forward any further examples of good practice, which could inform the Food Strategy, to Councillor Jack Scott or Jill Lancaster.

8. WORK PLANNING 2013/14

8.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer submitted the Work Plan for the Committee for 2013/14, containing details of topics to be discussed at future meetings of the Committee.

8.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes and agrees the Work Plan 2013/14 now submitted; and

- (b) in the light of the comments raised by Councillor Trevor Bagshaw requests that arrangements be made for Members of the Committee to receive a presentation on the progress being made in respect of the Streets Ahead Project at the earliest possible opportunity, but not at a formal meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 11th December, 2013, at 4.30 p.m., in the Town Hall.

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