

LEISURE, CULTURE AND LIBRARIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

19 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Mellins (Chairman), Clive Bullock, James Evans and Marion Mills.

Non-members: Councillor Mrs Dee Quick, Councillor John Lenton and Margaret Lenton

Officers Alan Abrahamson, Tony Carr, Robert Cowan, Kathryn Harlow, Michael Llewelyn, Kevin Mist, Christabel Shawcross and Mark Taylor.

PART I

33/13 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Lawless, John Penfold and Claire Stretton. Councillor James Evans kindly substituted.

34/13 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mills declared a personal interest in Item 11.

35/13 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 7th October 2013 be confirmed.

36/13 **SAVINGS 2014/2015**

The Panel received a verbal update from Alan Abrahamson regarding the savings report entitled 'Savings 2014/2015' to be considered by Cabinet on 12 December 2013.

It was noted by the Panel that the only savings to be made regarding Leisure, Culture and Libraries were contained in Item 11, in Part II. Therefore there was nothing to scrutinise at that stage.

37/13 **ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BOARDS**

The Panel received a presentation from Tony Carr, Traffic and Road Safety Manager regarding Electronic Messaging Boards.

The Panel noted a photograph of the boards. It was agreed that the aesthetics of the boards were suitable and 'smart' looking. The boards were considered an improvement on the old boards that were in place in Windsor.

It was noted that since their original conception, technology had moved forwards and as a result a greater variety of displays could be achieved with the boards

than had been possible previously. Furthermore, the boards could predict the number of parking spaces available at a car park by the time a driver arrived, rather than just the number used at that present time. It was noted that the boards could be used to display traffic information and information regarding road works.

Mr Carr informed the Panel that the Borough had funding for 5 large boards, and further, smaller boards would be installed by spring 2014.

The Panel questioned whether the boards could be used to inform residents of cultural events. However Mr Carr highlighted the fact that restrictions were in place on such forms of advertising and that information had to be traffic related. It was noted that for separate boards with cultural information to be installed, planning permission would be required and the boards would have to be safe and not distracting to drivers.

The Panel noted that the 5 large electronic messaging boards cost £30,000 each. This had been paid for in part by a central government grant which had covered 50% of the cost.

The Panel questioned whether the boards could be used to help with traffic on the M4 going to LEGOLAND. Mr Carr informed the Panel that motorways were looked after by the Highways Agency however officers were working with the Highways Agency and LEGOLAND.

Councillor Mills requested the boards show a clear distinction between short term and long term parking to assist tourists in Windsor. Mr Carr agreed to pass on the suggestion to the relevant officer.

The Panel suggested screens be used for events and not just for parking. Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries Arts and Heritage, stated this would be best discussed by the Generation Board and would relay the suggestion to Councillors Saunders and Kellaway. Mr Taylor agreed to consult with Liverpool City Council as it was noted that they had installed similar boards.

RESOLVED: That officers consult with Liverpool City Council regarding events screens.

38/13

ADVANTAGE CARDS

The Panel received a presentation from Kathryn Harlow, Participations and Promotions Officer, regarding RBWM Advantage Cards.

Ms Harlow informed the Panel that the Advantage Card scheme had been running for 20 years and was one of the most successful in the country. It was noted that other Local Authorities contact RBWM for advice on how to set up their own scheme.

The Panel noted 80% of residents had an Advantage Card.

Ms Harlow informed the Panel that officers were looking at moving the service

online to cut costs. It was noted that the e-newsletter had 7000 subscribers and 45% of people who received the e-newsletter opened it, which was relatively high.

The Panel noted that future plans for the Advantage Card included looking at co-promoter operations and business to business promotions, as well as exploiting e-recruitment. Maintaining quality was also a priority for the future.

The Panel noted that the '12 days of Christmas' offer was in its second year.

It was noted that the physical card given in the Advantage Card scheme had to be re-validated every 2 years. Card holders who actively use their cards had their card automatically re-validated when they use their card for Council services, such as leisure centres. However it was noted that private car park machines did not offer this re-validation and therefore it was explained that if a card did not work it was because it had not been re-validated.

It was noted that card holders were not simply issued a new card due to cards costing £1.30 per card to physically replace, and with 80,000 cards in circulation it would be too expensive to replace them. Therefore re-validating a card was a much cheaper option. For the same cost cutting reason, reminder letters were not issued to card holders to encourage them to re-validate their cards as the mail out would be too expensive.

The Panel suggested information boards be displayed highlighting this to card holders at locations such as car parks, Windsor Castle and the Royal Landscape.

Councillor Lenton questioned whether mobile libraries offered the opportunity to re-validate cards. Mr Taylor informed the Panel that officers had explored the possibility however the equipment needed had proven to be too expensive.

Councillor Mills suggested card holders could be reminded through RBWM publications and utilising the phone system.

Councillor James Evans suggested utilising an online database to allow card holders to re-validate their card online, however it was noted that the volume of personal data on the database made public access unworkable.

The Panel noted that a yellow flyer was distributed with all cards which alerted card holders to the need to renew every 2 years.

RESOLVED: That information boards be displayed highlighting the need to revalidate Advantage Cards at locations such as car parks, Windsor Castle and the Royal Landscape.

39/13

UPDATE FROM ANY TASK AND FINISH GROUP/WORKING PARTY

The Panel noted that there was nothing to report from any Task and Finish Groups or Working Parties.

40/13

MAGNA CARTA 800TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Panel received an update on the preparations for the Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Celebrations from Deputy Mayoress Margaret Lenton.

Mrs Lenton advised the Panel that two committees had been organised. One from Wraysbury and one from RBWM. The two committees had subsequently merged and sub-committees had been set up to undertake specific projects.

The Festival was described as one that deserved celebrating, as the rule of law had been in place since 1215. It was noted by the Panel that the Magna Carta was important to the Commonwealth and the USA as well as Britain.

The Panel noted that celebrations were to run across the entire Borough, with each village considering what it had looked like at the time. Furthermore, John Lenton had talked to Thames Alliance regarding a river pageant and a venue had been sourced at a good price for a medieval dinner. The celebrations would focus on primary school children who would learn about heraldry. Also, an activity to involve schools would question 'what freedom means to you' where lawyers would be invited to discuss the question.

The Panel questioned whether the towns could be decorated in 2015. It was suggested that flags could be hung in the towns displaying the three lions coat of arms of King John, as well as the banners of the Barons.

Mr Taylor informed the Panel that RBWM had flag poles which it used for state visits plus additional equipment which had been inherited after the London 2012 Olympic Games had finished.

The Panel noted that a Jousting contest was to be organised and Kevin Mist, Head of Leisure Services was tasked with finding a suitable venue. It was noted that the libraries and museums would also be involved. A new music anthem would be created for the celebrations.

The Panel noted that coordination of events was important and school term timetables and examinations would be considered. Furthermore, a sign with a countdown to the celebration would be erected.

The Panel questioned the costs of the celebrations. It was described as a situation where one had to speculate to accumulate. The Panel also considered the possibility of sponsorship. It was noted that Starbucks were interested in sponsoring the celebration to improve their image in the UK.

Christabel Shawcross, Deputy Managing Director and Strategic Director, suggested a scoping paper be prepared to go to cabinet.

The Panel noted that the National Trust had worked with Runnymede, and the American Bar Association had paid for monument restoration which included resigning and the erection of a new statue of the Barons with King John.

The Panel noted that sponsorship could be received from American companies

and volunteer work could help reduce the costs.

Mr Mist described the difficulty for Local Authorities to raise funding directly. It was noted that if a trust or an independent committee was set up the celebrations would have its own bank account and RBWM could contribute.

It was noted that key dates needed to be finalised for the celebrations moving forward. Members agreed to further consultation on this matter to take place electronically due to their being no meeting of LCLOSP in December.

41/13 WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the work programme as detailed in the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the progress of Boyn Hill library would be considered in the 'Publication of Items and Schemes' at the next meeting.

42/13 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on item 11 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.