

LEISURE, CULTURE AND LIBRARIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

19 AUGUST 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Mellins (Chairman), Claire Stretton (Vice-Chairman), Clive Bullock, Marion Mills and John Penfold

Officers: Robert Cowan, Dean Graham, Chris Hilton, Steph James, Margaret Kirby, Michael Llewelyn, Kevin Mist, Mark Taylor and Julia White.

Also Present: Jeff Lloyd, Councillors Simon Dudley and Eileen Quick

PART I

18/14 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting would be recorded by the Clerk.

19/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Lawless.

20/14 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21/14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 28 May 2014 be confirmed.

22/14 MUSEUM ACCREDITATION

The Panel received a report from Margaret Kirby, Service Manager for Heritage and Arts, regarding Museum Accreditation. Officers were seeking approval for policy documents. Most of the documents were provided by the Arts Council. Approval had previously been granted in 2009.

The Panel noted that Accreditation was important as it gave the museum standing and helped with funding bids to grant funds for example the Heritage Lottery Fund who had funded the “Behind the Castle Wall” project. The museum was planning to run a World War One project called “For King and Country”.

The Panel considered the documentation. Pages 1-6 offered a summary of the documents to be sent to the Arts Council. Pages 7-25 provided information on what the museum collected. Pages 26-28 set out what information was recorded. The Panel also noted policies regarding conservation and care, and access. The Panel also noted that the museum had a forward plan.

Through questioning by the Panel, the following points were raised:

- The policies had already been submitted. The minutes of the meeting, with the Panel's endorsement, would be forwarded subsequently to the Arts Council. This would not delay funding.
- Accreditation would be retained while the decision to renew was considered.
- At paragraph 19, it was noted that if a person donates an object they could later request it be returned however they had no right to it. A loan system was also available.
- Items could be moved around and sent to other museums if they were not appropriate for the Maidenhead Heritage Centre.
- There was concern that young people were ill-informed about the history of the Borough. It was suggested that something could be done to generate interest, knowledge and civic pride. Officers were trying to promote this with projects such as "Beyond the Castle Wall" and "Caught in the Act" which was a re-enactment for children, however take up had been poor. It was noted that officers would carry out further promotion for Parliament Week. There were also projects to highlight the importance of the Magna Carta.
- It was also noted that it had been 40 years since Windsor and Maidenhead had been joined as one Borough however nothing had been done to celebrate this.
- Financially, the income was noted as negative however this was a minus against the budget which was expected to plateau.
- It was noted that officers were working with Mark Shepherd, Development and Property Manager, to improve storage via mobile racking. The problems with storage were identified as the capacity of the property portfolio and also cost. Shared storage was noted as a preferred solution.
- Promotion and marketing was taking place as part of the promotion for the Magna Carta events.
- A potential source of income was noted as a regular market at the Corn Exchange.
- Performance by officers over recent years was described as impressive.

Councillor Claire Stretton moved approval of the policy documents, this was seconded by Councillor Clive Bullock. The Panel were unanimously in favour of the motion.

RESOLVED: That the Panel approved the Museum Accreditation policy documents.

23/14

LIBRARIES SUNDAY OPENING TIMES

The Panel received a report from Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries Arts and Heritage, regarding the Sunday opening times of libraries in the Royal Borough. The report proposed the continuation of the Sunday openings pilot (except for libraries in Eton which opened on Saturday).

The Panel noted that consultation had taken place with Sunday users to ensure the 3 hours the library was open was the best three hours to maximise the use of the facilities. It was noted that the consultation had highlighted residents approved of the scheme, with Sundays being preferred by many to Saturday.

There was generally a positive uptake, with the best performance shown at the libraries which had been running the scheme the longest. It was noted that a small revenue cost had been incurred for the six month pilot.

The Panel were informed that a report would go to Cabinet in January 2015. The report, which would also be considered by the Panel at a later meeting, would recommend the Sunday openings pilot be made permanent.

Members of the Panel expressed approval of the scheme. The scheme was described as an excellent example and that it was refreshing to see RBWM was doing more where others were doing less. The chart in the report was also complimented as it offered clarity.

Councillor John Penfold questioned whether any research had been undertaken on the demographics of users. Mark Taylor informed the Panel that no demographic work had been carried out however anecdotal reports confirmed that the library users on a Sunday were from a variety of age groups including young families, older young people using the library to study, and older people who may attend, for example, after church. Councillor Penfold expressed that it was encouraging that the libraries were being used by young people. Mr Taylor advised that officers could include a brief demographic section in the consultation document to gather further evidence on this topic. The Chairman believed this would generate useful data.

The Panel all stated they were very happy with the scheme and were unanimous in their endorsement of the officer's recommendations to Cabinet to extend the Sunday opening hours of libraries pilot.

RESOLVED: The Panel endorse the recommendation to Cabinet set out in the report:

- a) That the Sunday opening pilot at eleven libraries (Maidenhead, Windsor, Sunningdale, Container, Cox Green, Ascot, Cookham, Datchet, Dedworth, Eton Wick, Old Windsor and Sunninghill) and the Saturday opening pilot at Eton Library be extended for a further six months supported by additional revenue budget of £28.3K in the current financial year.**
- b) That authority is delegated to the Head of Libraries, Arts & Heritage, in consultation with the Lead Member for Leisure & Libraries, to adjust the Sunday opening hours if necessary for the remaining pilot period after a survey of current and potential users has been carried out.**
- c) That a report containing an analysis of performance of the extended pilot is prepared for Cabinet in January 2015 for a decision on whether or not to make the extended opening hours permanent from April 2015.**

24/14

INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Panel received the Integrated Performance Monitoring Report from Kevin Mist, Head of Leisure Services, and Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries Arts and Heritage.

The Panel noted the following:

- Ground maintenance had dipped below the target of 85%. This was attributed to challenging weather which had made it difficult to cut the grass. The Panel noted that the contractor had a new manager who had already had an impact on productivity and increased output.
- Leisure centres attendance was noted as performing well. January had seen an increase in attendances after which time attendance had dropped off. The school summer holidays also saw an increase in attendance, predominantly for swimming. Winter was described as busier than summer.
- Library and Museum Income was noted as high with obvious peaks in October 2013 and April 2014. The data reflected the transfer of s.106 money. The targets for the next year would be based on the success of the previous year. This would mean targets would be challenging however officers were quietly confident.
- The number of participants in the So Much Improvement with a Little Exercise programme was 9,159 for the first quarter, this was down 18.6% on the quarter's target. The number was also 9% less than the same period of the previous year. It was noted that Kevin Johnson, who had managed the scheme had left to work with Macmillan Cancer Support. Sarah Hill had been appointed internally however she would need a period of time to settle into the role. New equipment had been delivered to many of the SMILE sessions and a new session in Datchet was being planned to increase the performance.
- The number of visitors to museums was 14,115 for the first quarter. This was 2.7% short of the quarter's target. The number was also 15% less than the same period of the previous year.
- The Panel noted that savings had been made by introducing parking charges for all leisure centre users and providing no refunds on car park charges at centres. Also, charges for all cemetery services were set at appropriate levels. Officers were working with the Finance Partner to agree the level of rent to be paid by the Trust for the leisure centre sites. A review of the Museum governance and delivery had taken place. £11,000 had been achieved through the VR of one member of staff in October 2013. Phase 1 of the team reshape was completed. The remaining £7,000 would be covered by additional income raised in 2013/2014 and the second phase of the staffing reshape. It was anticipated further savings would be made through the increased income generated by Outreach activities in the libraries. An initial £25,000 was expected to be met however subsequently it would be tougher. Additional stock for the libraries had been purchased via capital rather than revenue budgets. Relevant s.106 receipts had been identified and passed to the Accountancy Pool for 14/15 budget build.

25/14

GUILDHALL UPDATE

The Panel received an update regarding the Guildhall from Julia White, Visitor Manager, Dean Graham, Front of House Team Leader, and Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries Arts and Heritage.

The Panel noted that repair work needed to take place as there was external damage to the Guildhall. A condition survey had taken place which had highlighted a few issues. The corner of the building was badly damaged and

officers were waiting for the damp to dry out. No stone work had been repaired or any work undertaken on the roof restraints. One of the barriers to the repair work was scaffolding could not be put up in the summer. Also, works had to be agreed by the military and the police. Inside the building, the Chamber needed redecorating which would require the alarms to be taken off.

Additionally, plans were in place for the external illumination of the stained glass windows. Quotes for the cost of the work had been better than anticipated. It was hoped that the Royal Albert Trust would fund a percentage of the costs.

A preliminary survey of the portraits in the civic collection had taken place. It was noted that 4 paintings needed restoration. A full survey would also take place.

Concerning the sales and marketing of the Guildhall, efforts were being made to professionalise the service. This was being achieved through the introduction of a business plan, a new booking process, updated fees and charges, new terms and conditions, and new software suitable for the Guildhall. A Meeting and Event Executive post had been agreed and the position was being advertised at the time of the Panel's meeting. The deadline for applications was noted as 24 August 2014 with interviews scheduled to take place on 9 September 2014. Once this role had been filled, the marketing scheme would be put in place.

26/14

MIDNIGHT MARKETS UPDATE

The Panel received an update regarding the Midnight Markets from Steph James, Maidenhead Town Centre Manager and Mr Jeff Lloyd, who had won the Bright Idea Challenge for his idea for a 'Midnight Market' in Maidenhead town centre.

The Market was generally described as a success. It was noted that approximately 2500 people turned up to the Midnight Market. Organisers were let down by some traders however it was noted that volunteer traders could not be forced to do anything. The weather was good with only five minutes of rain. There was a vibrant atmosphere with the feeling of being abroad. Entertainment was provided by stilt walkers, living statues and a band. The Market would have been improved with a few more stalls. Most people were happy with the event despite a few dissenters on social media. Maidenhead Advertiser attended and reported the event positively.

Early in the evening the attendees were mostly young families with small children. Later the demographic changed, consisting of more couples and people on nights out. The event was well organised in terms of licensing and security.

Looking forward, the Panel heard different opinions on how many future Midnight Markets should be held. It was reported that Smokey Joes, who had run a stall at the Market, were keen for monthly Markets in the summer months. Mr Lloyd advised that if they were held only twice a year it would keep the Markets fresh. It was noted that a reputation for being safe and family friendly needed to be maintained. Officers were looking at how to build on the success of the initial Market.

Comparison of the footfall figures from the night of the Night Market (12 July 2014) and the Saturday before (7 July 2014) showed an increase in footfall as a result of the Midnight Market. On 7 July, footfall fell below 500 by 7pm. At the midnight market, there was a spike in increased footfall at 8pm peaking at just over 2000 and footfall did not fall below 500 until 10pm.

It was noted that the Bright Idea Challenge was accepting ideas for its 2014 competition. Mr Lloyd highlighted the need for the winner to be given greater support. The type of support would depend on the nature of the winning idea. It could be a committee or an officer. It had to be understood however that the winner was putting forward an idea, not putting themselves forward to carry it out to realisation. It was fortunate that Mr Lloyd was proactive and had an existing working relationship with Ms James, however the next winner may not wish to be as involved. This was especially important now the competition had been opened to children.

It was suggested the policy and performance team should support the project once an idea was selected.

27/14

THAMES PATH MISSING LINK UPDATE

The Panel received an update from Kevin Mist, Head of Leisure Services, regarding the Thames Path Missing Link.

Mr Mist informed the Panel that he and Anthony Hurst, Principal Officer - Rights of Way, were working with residents to review the proposals in relation to the car park size to be put in the nearby park for resident parking lost by the proposed path. The number of parking spaces was being negotiated. A decision had not been made.

Councillor Simon Dudley stated that he was the only Ward Member without a pecuniary interest. It was noted that a large amount of car parking in Bridge Gardens would be an unacceptable loss of public open space. The Council's priority had always been there should be safe pedestrian route.

It was noted that the situation could be resolved by agreement or the Council could make an order to resolve matters.

The Panel noted that the decision was to be made by Rights of Way Panel which would meet on 29 September 2014. The Panel were keen for an update on the item to be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: Kevin Mist, Head of Leisure Services, report to the Panel at the next meeting with a further update.

28/14

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Chairman stated that a Task and Finish Group had been created to consider in overview, the gateway project, statues in park and missing link. The members of the group had been identified however the group had not yet met.

Councillor Eileen Quick, Lead Member for Leisure and Libraries, informed the

Chairman that Cabinet were interested to hear the group's feedback on how and if money could be spent.

29/14 WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the work programme as detailed in the agenda and included the following additional items.

RESOLVED: That the following items be added to the work programme:

- **Thames Path Missing Link Update**
- **Riverside Trail**
- **Library Service Internal Policy**
- **British Design and Craft**
- **Member Group to review Braywick Park (to be added to the section entitled 'Items suggested by not yet programmed').**

30/14 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 items 14 - 17 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.