

LEISURE, CULTURE AND LIBRARIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

23 OCTOBER 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Claire Stretton (Vice Chairman), Clive Bullock, Andrew Jenner, Marion Mills and John Penfold.

Also Present: Councillor Eileen Quick

Officers: Rob Cowan (clerk), Angela Gallagher (Services Manager – Libraries), Margaret Kirby (Service Manager: Heritage and Arts), Kevin Mist (Head of Leisure Services), Mark Taylor (Head of Libraries, Arts and Heritage Services) and Julia White (Visitor Manager).

PART I

36/14 WELCOME

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

Recordings are available at the following link:

<http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/minsys3.nsf/AMByMonth?OpenView&y=2014&m=10>

37/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Alan Mellins gave his apologies. Vice Chairman Claire Stretton Chaired the meeting in Councillor Mellins' absence.

38/14 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39/14 MINUTES

**RESOLVED: That the part I minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 19 August 2014 be confirmed.**

40/14 KING AND COUNTRY

The Panel received a verbal update from Margaret Kirby, Service Manager: Heritage and Arts.

The King and Country project was a Heritage Lottery funded project which awarded £93,000 funding to spend over an eighteen month period. The project was to produce a website mapping all the memorials in the Borough and tell the story of as many names as possible of those who sadly fell in World War One.

Work on the project had begun in September 2014. There were two members of staff working with Margaret Kirby, they were Kate Pitt and Hannah Sami.

Officers had gotten off to a flying start contacting an enormous amount of people who are already working on World War One projects themselves. There was a great response in June 2013 when the project was announced from various people around the Borough who wanted to make a contribution. There had been a long wait to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery fund, then a further wait to find out if the bid had been successful and then appropriate team members had been appointed.

The Panel noted that draft pages for the website had been produced which was being produced in-house by the RBWM IT team. The website would be available by the 14 November 2014. The website would detail the memorials and as many as names as possible. There would also be stories and the effect on the home front and the effect on Maidenhead. It was noted by way of example that picture of women outside an aircraft factory which had been converted into a munitions factory would be available on the website.

In addition to the website, events had been planned including family history sessions, school sessions, events taking place in libraries and in the museum. There would also be 'bring and share' sessions where people can bring artefacts to a swapping session and tell the story of their family.

The launch event was to take place on 14 November 2014 in the Council Chamber, Maidenhead Town Hall. Invitations had been sent to all Councillors.

An event was also being masterminded to commemorate the Christmas Truce which took place at Christmas time in 1914. Officers were working with Maidenhead Football Club to have a commemorative match. This would perhaps include a choir performance at half time or at the end. It was suggested this might take place on 6 December 2014 when Maidenhead Football Club were playing at home.

The project was described as a partnership project with Maidenhead Heritage Centre, Marsh Family History Society and the Rifles Museum.

Ms Kirby stated that the project was progressing really well and that there was plenty going on. Officers were happy report to the Panel again as the project moved forward.

The Panel made the following comments:

Councillor Clive Bullock noted that officers had given a very complete report.

Councillor Andrew Jenner was keen to see the project involve as many children as possible. He suggested children be taken on trips to visit the memorials to educate children about what the memorials are for. It was noted that one of the staff was an education officer. Officers were working with schools to develop walking trails. It was highlighted that an organisation Cookham already took local children to the memorials and there was plans to work together with them to avoid repeating work other organisations already do.

The Vice Chairman asked how long the project would run for. It was noted that the project had begun in September 2014 and funding would last until March

2016. Ms Kirby however expected that, due to the large amount of interest, the steering group which was the partnership would find a way for the project to be sustainable project. The project could also be adapted to incorporate other wars and conflicts.

The branding and logo for the project which could be found on the website was circulated to the Panel.

The Panel thanked Ms Kirby for the update and stated they would look forward to an update on the project in the future.

41/14

### LIBRARIES SERVICE POLICY

The Panel received a report from Angela Gallagher, Services Manager – Libraries, regarding the Library Service Policy.

Ms Gallagher stated that the number of policies had been reduced. There were now ten. If the Borough already had a policy on something, the library had done away with their own policy on this as it was just duplication. If the library had a standard and the Borough had a relevant policy, then officers had made sure that the Borough policy had been referred to. The format had also been changed to the standard format used across the Borough.

The last full extensive review that had been carried out was in 2009 so it was timely for a full review to take place. It was noted that the policies had been updated in 2012 as well as some further minor updates over time to account for technological changes that took place. The next full review would be 2017.

Officers had endeavoured to use language that provided clarity and tried to make the policies straight-forward. The enquiries standard and stock policy especially had been made shorter and much more concise. The Public Computers and Internet Access policies had also been updated as this had to be constantly updated to stay current.

Ms Gallagher stated that if the policies were approved they would be made available on the website for residents to view.

The Vice-Chairman suggested the Panel consider each policy in turn:

#### Access Policy

The access policy was described by the Vice-Chairman as easy to read and very concise.

#### Child Safety

The child safety policy ensured staff and residents are aware that the library is a safe place for children. It was noted that children as young as 8 years old were allowed into the library without a supervising adult. However library staff did not operate *in loco parentis* and could not be held responsible if children left the library.

The Vice Chairman believed that at the bottom of page 15 of the agenda, the penultimate sentence could be stated with more clarity. Also, the penultimate sentence at the bottom of page 16 of the agenda should read “children between the ages of 12 and 14 are able to access the internet unsupervised when their parent signs an internet permission form”.

The Vice Chairman also highlighted that she had attended the library to find events taking place with, for example, children singing which irritated adults who may be trying to study. In response to this Ms Gallagher informed the Panel that the library was a shared space and there was no official reference library. Library staff made customers aware when noisy session would take place, for example when opera had taken place in the entrance of the library. This had generated a lot of compliments and one complaint. Ms Gallagher also highlighted that staff could not keep silence in the library anymore as this was no longer how libraries operated.

Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries Arts and Heritage, informed the Panel that when noisier events took place, the responses generated were always more positive than negative. He gave an example of the ‘Singing for Dementia’ scheme which was held relatively regularly in the library foyer, following the ‘Bounce and Rhyme Time’. Thus Thursday mornings were said to be less quiet. It was noted that parents of the very young children would join in with the predominantly older residents who attended the singing reminiscent sessions which helped them with their memory capacity, feeling of well being and sense of feeling supported.

Mr Taylor also noted that the two larger libraries in Maidenhead and Windsor offered separate ‘quiet time’ rooms. However in the smaller, community libraries it was not possible to have a quiet and noisy area, instead there were quiet and noisy times.

Councillor Jenner questioned what would happen if a child of 8 was left at the library unaccompanied and misbehaved. He wanted to know if staff would ask the child to leave. Ms Gallagher stated that the library staff had never had this problem. If such a situation did occur however, staff would be expected to contact the child’s parents. Mr Taylor added that if the child was causing disruption and damage the matter would be dealt with in the same way staff would an adult, and use the community radio to contact the CPSO. Ultimately, this would be an operational decision for the duty manager.

The Vice Chairman suggested that raising the age from 8 to 10 might help the situation. Mr Taylor however believed the situation to be so rare it raised the question, what is the level of risk? Ms Gallagher cautioned that raising the age would place on a restriction on children between 8-9 years old who perhaps don’t feel safe at home going to the library which they feel is a safe place.

Mr Taylor informed the Panel that the library’s duty manager had the discretion to ask a child to leave in extreme cases and this was allowed within the bi-laws under which the library service operated.

### Complaints

Ms Gallagher stated that the complaints policy linked directly to the Borough’s

complaints policy.

The Vice Chairman noted that page 24 of the agenda the fifth paragraph should be amended to read “if customers wish to discuss their complaint with their local Councillor, the Councillor’s name must be given to the customer and the Unit Manager, Strategic Director and the Councillor must be informed immediately”. Mr Taylor informed the Panel that this was the case in practice.

### Customer Care Standard

Ms Gallagher stated this standard outlined the standard of customer care users could expect. New staff were expected to read through the document in their first week to get a sense of the standard of service that was expected. It was noted that a lot of new library staff had recently been recruited.

Councillor Jenner questioned how much training was received by staff. Ms Gallagher informed the Panel that formal 1-day training was delivered twice a year. Also, all library staff were given objectives to give three examples of how they had exceeded customer expectations.

The Vice Chairman questioned how volunteers were trained. Ms Gallagher stated that volunteers were invited to all training sessions however they could not be forced to attend. However they were given a thorough induction process and expected to read the customer care standard.

The Vice Chairman also highlighted a typo on page 31 of the agenda.

### Displays

The displays policy was described as useful as complaints were received from time to time regarding displays. These complaints usually derived from conflicting religious beliefs.

The policy was that if the library allowed displays concerning one, then they would allow a display on any belief. Display space can be booked as long as it is legal and not offensive. 27mins 52

### Enquiries Standard

The Enquiries Standard was described by Ms Gallagher as an essential service for the Library Service. Service users should be able to go into any library and get the answer to any question. If the library staff cannot answer the question an enquiry service was available on the website which offered access to a librarian 24/7. RBWM Library Service along with other Library Services across the country staff the enquiry service constantly. The user’s query is dealt with by a qualified librarian and it is hoped that every single question can be answered.

Councillor Jenner questioned who was using the service. Mr Taylor stated that it was a cross section of the community. Enquirers were asked demographic questions so this could be analysed however this information did not have to be given.

All new staff were expected to read this document and understand the importance of not just turning customers away. It was noted that enquiries had been received from as far away as Australia and America.

### Physical Presentation and Appearance of Service

This was described as a detailed policy. This was due in part to the fact most of the libraries had been refurbished over the last ten years and the programme of refurbishment was continuing. This was to ensure all libraries met the required standards and books were available, and for example books in large print were located in areas with sufficient light and large print books were not near to the floor. Therefore it was a practical policy.

The policy also offered guidance to staff on what was appropriate for their personal appearance and dress code.

Councillor Jenner questioned who made the decision as to what was appropriate dress code. Mr Taylor highlighted paragraph 6.8 of the policy and stated that if there was a dispute it would be dealt with as it would any other department of the Council and the Head of Service would make the decision on what was correct. The employee had the right of appeal. Mr Taylor also noted that the Head of Human Resources had recently sent an internal email around the Council which discussed what was the appropriate dress code.

It was noted that most of the staff dress well and the most important point was that they were clean, tidy and presentable. Not having a uniform had proven to be positive as the Library Service offered a service to a very large and varied demographic and the aim was to make everyone feel welcome.

The Vice Chairman noted that paragraph 6.6.2, referring to notices and posters, stated that 'what's on' folders should be available for information that was not possible to display but there was nothing in the policy to say what was acceptable to bring in to display. Mr Taylor said that this was covered by displays and exhibitions policies (available at page 36 of the agenda) which also covered posters. This noted how posters were prioritised, that charities could display but not collect, and advertising and promotions from organisations contravening Council policies would not be accepted.

### Public Computers, WiFi and Internet Access

It was noted that this had to be updated regularly. It was also noted that WiFi was now available in all libraries.

### Reservations and Requests

Ms Gallagher stated that the Library Service carried out this area of the service really well. It was noted that 96% of book requests were fulfilled. The 4% that were not fulfilled was because the book had not been published. The standard was met but it was high.

The Vice-Chairman suggested the indicator should be changed for books that were available as the indicator could never be 100%.

Mr Taylor informed the Panel that there were two distinct issues, the request (things that were not available) and the reservation (things available already). The requested item may not be available for a number of reasons, for example it wasn't bought, it was no longer available to purchase, or was too specialist. Where items were too specialist they could be borrowed through university libraries or the British Library who held a lending copy of every item published in the UK.

Councillor Jenner stated that the difference should be reflected in the standard. The Vice-Chairman agreed with this statement.

#### Stock and Information Policy

This policy was described as previously being very long. It had been significantly shortened.

The Vice-Chairman noted that at paragraph 6.2, requests and reservations, the policy stated "All physically lendable items on the catalogue can be reserved and sent to any library in the Borough for a customer to collect." This included mobile libraries as well and therefore it should be explicitly stated in the policy as this was really good.

The policies as a whole were described as an interesting read and that they were clear and concise.

Councillor John Penfold noted that it was refreshing to hear considering that mostly it was heard that libraries are a dispensable part of a culture. He noted that a great deal of work had gone into the policies and it showed the length and breadth of the work a librarian.

The Vice-Chairman stated that the Library Service in the Royal Borough was exceptional. She noted that she heard stories of other places closing libraries and reducing hours meanwhile the RBWM Library Service went from strength to strength. Congratulations were given to the whole team.

Mr Taylor stated that he would convey the Panel's kind words to the Library staff.

The Vice-Chairman moved that the Policies be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Marion Mills.

**RESOLVED: The Panel voted unanimously that the Library Service Policies be approved.**

42/14

#### THE GUILDHALL: MARKETING AND THE FUTURE OF THE BUSINESS

The Panel received an update from Julia White, Visitor Manager, regarding the marketing and future business plans for the Guildhall. Ms White highlighted that project was a work in progress. It was noted that the Meeting and Event Executive, Gillian Richards, had been appointed. She would start on 10 November 2014. More work would be carried out regarding marketing with her input.

She had previously worked at Wasps Rugby Club, the British Broadcasting Company, Guards Polo Club and Twickenham Stadium. The nature of the venues she had worked in meant she would fit right into the role. The Vice-Chairman stated that her background appeared to make her a good fit. Officers had been delighted at the calibre of candidates who had applied.

The Panel were informed that there were two core markets for the Guildhall. These were weddings and conferences. Although business in the wedding area had declined over recent years it was suggested that it would not take too much work to bump this back up. It was known where a lot of the business was being lost to and officers would be looking at other venues where weddings were provided, considering pricing and what services were offered. It was noted that these other venues were keen to work with the Guildhall.

The Panel noted the papers which had been circulated in the agenda. This included an overview of the wedding market. It was noted that the key strengths and weaknesses were listed in the papers.

It was envisioned that in the future there would be the capacity to offer the 'full package'. One person would deal with the wedding from start to finish, including looking after the Guildhall, liaising with the Registrar, and dealing with accommodation bookings and breakfast venues bookings. The service was hoped to be a one-stop shop.

Councillor Mills noted a wedding she had attended at the Guildhall where everyone one attending left the Guildhall and went on a river boat. Therefore there were opportunities for partnerships such as with the river boat company. Ms White noted that her team had existing business relationships with such organisations which could be exploited, which was why they had been asked to take over the marketing of the Guildhall.

Councillor Jenner was keen for the two car parking spaces at the side of the Guildhall to be controlled by the Guildhall.

Ms White stated that the parking was one of many problems which would be noted when she and Ms Richards went into the building and assessed the situation. The Vice Chairman highlighted the staircase also needed work and Councillor Jenner noted the entrance could be improved.

The Vice-Chairman suggested historical weddings could be offered at the Guildhall, which would be fitting with the portraits. For example, an Elizabethan themed wedding could be offered and support could be provided to select the correct clothing.

Ms White stated that marketing would not necessarily be a very expensive exercise. Social media was noted as the best way of getting to that market. It was also noted that printed pamphlets were also needed to hand out to enquirers who turned up at Guildhall in person.

Councillor Jenner suggested wedding shows would be a good method of promoting the wedding service.



The Vice-Chairman stated that the draft brand positioning statement needed changing. Also, the Target Message Versions, Phase 1, needed clarification as some concerned outdoor and indoor and some did not. She wished to know if officers were investigating how the corn exchange could be used more productively. For example Champaign receptions could take place there. Ms White stated that she would need to consult with an event management company as the Corn Exchange was a public thoroughfare. Other opportunities for the space were evening drinks receptions, a location for tourists to watch the guards marching along the High Street and group lunches.

Councillor Eileen Quick, Lead Member for Leisure and Libraries, suggested that the public thoroughfare could be redirected around the back of the Guildhall. Mr Taylor cautioned that the entrance to the Museum should not be blocked.

Ms White continued her presentation by stating that she was looking at partnerships with hotels, she had updated the Guildhall webpage and she was producing the official venues directory. Officers were looking to be cost effective.

Ms White then considered Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE). It was noted that she looking at the smaller end of the MICE market. This would be meetings, corporate lunches and dinners. Partnerships with hotels were described as key. It was noted that there was a straight room hire fee, outside caterers could then use the kitchen facilities free of charge. Ms White suggested that fee be introduced for using the kitchen.

Discussions had begun with new suppliers. A wine merchant was on board, and there would be a new preferred caterer, florist and AV supplier. The contract will allow for a reasonable mark-up, for example on the wine, or a commission from suppliers.

Councillor Jenner left the meeting as he had another meeting to attend.

The Vice-Chairman noted the Museum's education space in the basement of the Guildhall. It was noted that the room contained a central table for class activities as well as furniture and storage. The Vice-Chairman suggested the room be used for stag nights as part of the wedding package. Mr Taylor noted that room was still being used as an office.

Ms White noted that, concerning the MICE market, the aim was to get buyers through door and host familiarisation visits. There were also exhibitions officers could attend but these could be expensive. It was noted that a number of advisers and organisers were located close by.

The Panel noted that the sales force would need the CRM tool. This would allow officers to track business and have a proper customer relationship management system in place. No customer records were presently held. It was also important to track business that had been turned away. Councillor Mills also stated that enquiries could be tracked.

Councillor Quick highlighted the existing booking system was not fit for purpose and created problems. The new software would professionalise the service.

It was noted that a close relationship with the Registrar would be key. For example streamlining the invoicing for both the room hire and the ceremony into one bill. It was noted that the whole experience needed to be more customer friendly.

The Panel noted the draft terms and conditions which were described as more customer friendly than previously. These were with the finance team and would then need to go to legal officers for consideration.

The Vice-Chairman noted that it was great to see the work regarding the Guildhall progressing.

43/14

BRITISH DESIGN AND CRAFT

The Panel received a verbal presentation from Councillor John Penfold regarding British design and craft.

Councillor Penfold described himself as an art design nerd. He noted that he had done some investigation into the subject matter and was aware that Craft In Focus held exhibitions in a number of areas. He believed Windsor would be an appropriate venue, noting that in the coming month the Contemporary Arts Fair would be taking place but nothing to do with design and craft.

Councillor Penfold noted that he had contacted the Craft In Focus events to discuss this. He learned that the previous event had taken place at Wellington College, Berkshire. Prior to that, an event had taken place in Henley. Councillor Penfold had suggested Eton College as a future venue.

Councillor Penfold requested guidance on the best approach for organising a Craft in Focus event at Eton College. The Vice-Chairman highlighted that one of the Councillors for RBWM was a Master at Eton College. Ms White noted that Eton College had its own arts school which was a beautiful space and would be an appropriate venue.

Councillor Quick noted that the appropriate person to contact at Eton College would be the Bursar of Eton College. The Vice-Chairman noted that the first person to contact would be Craft in Focus to ascertain how much space would be needed for the event.

Councillor Penfold highlighted the positive knock on effect the event would have on local businesses such as cafes. Ms White stated that the RBWM visitor management team could handle the box office as it would be a ticketed event.

Councillor Penfold also noted that the National Portrait Gallery had an exhibition of work by William Morris and the arts and craft movement. The reviews were noted as extremely good. The exhibition lasted until January 2015.

**RESOLVED: Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries Arts and Heritage, and Julia White, Visitor Manager, to work with the appropriate people to facilitate a Craft in Focus Event at Windsor or Eton.**

44/14 TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Vice-Chairman noted that the Panel expected to receive a verbal update from the Chairman regarding the work of any current Task and Finish Groups. However the Chairman had given his apologies as he could not attend therefore the Vice-Chairman provided the update.

She noted that there was one active Task and Finish Group regarding the Eastern Gateway into Maidenhead. One meeting had taken place to decide the focus of the Group. It was noted that the Group had been tasked by Cabinet to bring together the gateway into Maidenhead along the river bridge as well as the missing link and potentially include the sculpture trail.

The Vice-Chairman stated that the Group would be going on a short boat trip up and down the river to consider ways to open the gateway to river boats rather than just traffic coming over the bridge. The Group was investigating the situation so as to make an informed decision.

45/14 WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that a special meeting would take place on 29 October 2014 to consider the award of the contract for the operation of leisure services. This would be Part I (public) and Part II (private).

The following meeting was scheduled to take place on 20 November 2014. This would possibly include an update on the rejuvenation of the Desborough Suite. However it was noted that this item might be delayed for a later meeting. There was also a Part II report concerning the libraries transfer of land.

Members considered the items suggested by not programmed. Ms White noted that she would not be able to offer much of an update regarding the Guildhall by the November meeting, though she might be able to discuss preferred suppliers. It was noted that an update on Braywick Park had been requested.

The items 'Maidenhead Riverside Trail' and 'Thames Path Missing Link' were removed as they had been incorporated into the Task and Finish Group regarding the Eastern Gateway into Maidenhead.

46/14 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 item 12 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.**