

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)



MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT,
ON WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor D Hardy (in the Chair);
Councillors Bigley; Byrne; McGinnity;
Papworth;;Pearson, (Substitute Member for
Councillor Storey); Shaw (Substitute Member for
Councillor Howe) and Tonkiss.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Booth; Brodie-Browne; Lord Fearn;
Griffiths; Hands; Maher; McGuire; Parry; Porter;
Robertson and Sumner; plus 25 members of the
public.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fenton; Howe; Storey and Weavers; and Councillor S. Mainey (Substitute Member for Councillor Weavers).

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was received:

Member	Minute No.	Interest	Action
Councillor Shaw	28 – Item 'called-in' – Southport Cultural Centre – Temporary Library Service	Prejudicial – his son is employed in the Library Service	Left the room and took no part in consideration of the item.

29. ITEM "CALLED-IN" - SOUTHPORT CULTURAL CENTRE - TEMPORARY LIBRARY SERVICE

The Committee considered (a) the report of the Legal Director; (b) the joint report of the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environmental Services, the Finance and Information Services Director, the Leisure Director and the Head of Regeneration and Technical Services; and (c) a copy of the "call-in" form, in respect of the Southport Cultural Centre – Temporary Library Service, pursuant to Minute No. 196 of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 November 2009. The Cabinet had resolved that that Southport Central Library should be temporarily relocated to the Ainsdale, Birkdale and Churchtown Libraries during the redevelopment of the Southport Cultural Centre.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2009

The Committee also considered a letter received from 11 Southport Market Traders, 2 letters from members of the public and financial information submitted by Councillor Hands.

The Chair invited Councillors Maher, Parry and Robertson to address the Committee on the decision made by the Cabinet.

Councillors Hands, Booth and Sumner outlined the reasons for 'calling in' the item, namely:-

- There had been insufficient consultation with stakeholders and in particular the current market traders, who had overwhelmingly supported the use of part of the Market Hall as a temporary Southport Town Centre Library. Such inadequate consultation was contrary to Overview and Scrutiny Rule 16 of the Constitution;
- the decision of the Cabinet appeared not to have been taken in accordance with correct principles as specified in article 13.02(b) ("due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers");
- failing to provide a central library in Southport Town Centre for 3 years was against the Public Interest; and
- The option of using Southport Market as a temporary library would benefit the Market Traders and the 150,000 plus annual users of Southport Library.

In addition, reference was made to a petition objecting to the non-provision of a central library in Southport for 3 years.

The Chair referred to a recent request made to the Legal Director for the Committee to receive a petition. The request had been made beyond the deadline required by the Council's Constitution and could not be considered.

With the agreement of the Committee, the Committee received representations from Ms. Jean Alexander on behalf of the petitioners.

The Members of the Committee raised a number of issues including finance, consultation with the public, alternative venues, storage of library stock, provision of a temporary IT service and timescales involved in the redevelopment. Officers representing the Leisure, Finance and Technical Services Departments responded, as did Councillor Lord Fearn, Cabinet Member – Leisure and Tourism.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet be advised that this Committee considers:-

1. that the timetable and funding for the refurbishment of the Southport Cultural Centre should not be jeopardised in any way; and

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2009

2. that Party Groups should be invited to include financial proposals for a temporary Southport town centre library in their budgets at the appropriate time, should they wish to do so.

30. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE - STRATEGIC BUDGET REVIEW - 25 NOVEMBER 2009

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee on 15 December 2009.

31. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE - STRATEGIC BUDGET REVIEW - 3 DECEMBER 2009

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee on 15 December 2009.