

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 JANUARY 2015

Present: County Councillor Williams(Chairperson)
County Councillors Dilwar Ali, Howells, Javed, Weaver and
Williams

50 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Stubbs.

51 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded that under Article 16 of the Members' Code of Conduct they are to declare interests at the commencement of the agenda item in question. No declarations of interest were received.

52 : MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING 4 DECEMBER 2014

Consideration of this item was deferred until the next meeting.

53 : RECEIPT OF PETITION - RADYR LIBRARY

The Chairperson welcomed Zoe Pearce to the meeting. Ms Pearce was invited to present a petition of 1384 signatories. The petition strongly urged Cardiff Council to reconsider the proposal to withdraw public funding from Radyr Library. A written statement supporting the petition was also tabled. Ms Pearce made a number of further supporting remarks. The Chairperson thanked Ms Pearce for attending. Ms Pearce was advised that the petition was noted and would be given to the relevant Cabinet Member.

54 : 2015/2016 BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Committee received a report providing an overview of those sections of the Cabinet's 2015/16 Budget Proposals that relate to service areas within the remit of the Committee. Members were invited to seek clarification on the budget proposals and to receive evidence from relevant stakeholders before passing observations, comments and recommendations to the Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

The report provided details of the Cabinet's budget proposals for consultation, including details of the mechanisms used to consult with citizens and stakeholders. Members were advised that the results of the consultation exercise will be considered by the Cabinet. Draft budget proposals will be presented to Scrutiny Committees in early February, prior to their consideration by the Cabinet on 19 February 2015. The Cabinet's budget recommendations will be considered by the Council at its meeting on 26 February 2015.

A number of representatives from community groups using services which would likely to be affected by the budget proposals had been invited to the Committee in

order to make representations. The Chairperson welcomed each of the representatives. The representations made are summarised as follows:

- *Whitchurch Library* – Councillor David Groves, Matt Lock and Jody Williams addressed the Committee representing users of Whitchurch Library. Members were advised that the library was an important community educational/social resource used by all sections of the community from young children, teenagers and older people. Members were asked to consider the additional burden placed on other Council provided services if the Council did not continue to support the library. The representatives submitted a letter on behalf of Friends of Whitchurch Library and a number of personal messages. The Committee was asked to urge the Cabinet to consider reworking the budget proposals such that the future of Whitchurch Library could be secured.

Councillor Groves stated that the Whitchurch Ward Councillors profoundly opposed the budget proposals. The facility was much valued by the community and support young and old people in a variety of ways. Whitchurch Library ranked highly in terms of books issued and new members when compared to other libraries in the City. Councillor Groves considered that Whitchurch Library was already acting effectively as a community hub. He felt that local residents had a right and entitlement to local services, and these services should be distributed evenly and equally.

- *Rhiwbina Library* – Robert Lawson and Gillian Lawson spoke in support of Rhiwbina Library. There were residents of Lisvane and a number of years ago they had been involved in the establishment of a community led library in Lisvane. Ms Lawson stated requested Members of the Committee not to confuse the level of service received at a community led library when compared with professional libraries. Members were advised that during the establishment of the community led library in Lisvane many undertakings were given by the Council but none were given. Mr Lawson raised concerns that the consultation process followed was flawed, and in particular, he considered that the £43.8 million saving needed was a meaningless figure unless put in context the authority's overall budget. Mr Lawson questioned whether the savings required could be found by other means.

Ms Lawson stated that the Leader had given an undertaking to listen to the results of the consultation exercise before making any decisions. However, when it was decided to move local history groups from the Central Library to Canton Library, no consultation took place.

- *Radyr Library* – Caroline Noall addressed the Committee. Ms Noall advised that she was now retired but formally she had been the Branch Librarian in Radyr. Ms Noall stated that Branch Librarians are professionally qualified and were supported by experienced members of staff. She considered that the use of volunteer staff undervalues the role of librarians, particularly in terms of dealing with queries. Ms Noall provided examples of the varied types of personal queries she had experienced. She also questioned whether volunteers would have the necessary expertise to deal with the range of administrative tasks that librarians currently discharge. Rhiwbina Library was described as 'extremely busy' and was ranked in the top 7 in Cardiff in terms of visits. The Library also had the highest number of finishers in this year's reading challenge event.

Councillor McKerlich raised concerns regarding the practicality of the budget proposal and felt that it was folly to reduce the subsidy. The Committee was advised that whilst in Radyr and Morganstown, it would be possible to provide a downgraded level of service by increasing the Community Council precept, communities had been given an inadequate amount of time to organise arrangements for taking over responsibility for libraries. Many Library buildings were also in need of significant maintenance. Councillor McKerlich stated that the £250k savings proposed, whilst not insignificant, did not justify the angst felt in those communities affected. He requested that the Committee forcibly points this out to the Cabinet.

- *Canton Community Hall* – Councillor Richard Cook addressed the Committee. Members were advised that Canton Community Hall was one of few facilities in the area. The Hall received approximately £200k funding and provided £100k income. The budget saving therefore was £100k and Members of the Committee were requested to consider what services the hall delivers for that. Councillor Cook said that he was weary of putting the Community Hall into the hands of a management group as they would be incentivised to attract more lucrative bookings at the expense of events that did not generate as much income.
- *Park Ranger Service* – Stephanie Wilkes, Chair of Llandaff North Residents Association and Friends of Hailey Park spoke in response to the budget proposals affecting the Park Ranger Service. Ms Wilkes was concerned that the details of the proposal were not yet available and therefore it was not possible to respond to the consultation in a meaningful way. Ms Wilkes requested further details scrutiny of this proposal. Matt Lock spoke on behalf of Friends of Forest Farm and reiterated the point made by Ms Wilkes.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Member for Community, Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise with the following observations:

- The Committee consider that Libraries are far more to local communities than a place to borrow books as they provide a social meeting point for communities, a place for young people to study, to access the internet and to meet with local Councillors and PCSOs. The Authority is looking to create Community Hubs across the city and Members were concerned that the budget proposals could result in the loss of important community facilities that have naturally evolved into informal ‘hubs’ for the local area over a period of time. Members were also concerned that a number of the libraries proposed for removal of Council funding are some of the most well used libraries in Cardiff and it seemed unusual that these libraries are where the Council is proposing to cease its support.
- The Committee was concerned that there seems to be a focus on creating Hubs in the southern half of the city and that the libraries proposed to have their Council funding removed are mainly located in the northern half of Cardiff. Members are concerned that if no alternative operating model is secured for these libraries, the northern half of the city will be left with limited access to Library services, with the promise of a mobile library service in no way offering the same level of service as the current Library buildings.
- It was clear that there are individuals across Cardiff who were committed to keeping their local Library services, with large campaigns, ‘Friends of’ and ‘Save

our Library' groups being established and organised by these individuals. It is also clear that these individuals are being asked to manage full time jobs and family commitments with attempts to coordinate campaign groups and explore alternative options for their particular library. The Committee feel community groups are unlikely to come forward with suitable alternative operating models for the libraries, in the timeframe provided by the Cabinet's consultation period.

This point was emphasised by Councillor Rod McKerlich in his role as Chairman of Radyr Community Council. Members heard that the Community Council was putting together plans to run the library service in Radyr. Councillor McKerlich considered the quality of any replacement service would inevitably be lower than the service currently provided. Despite having the backing of the Community Councillors and access to funding, Councillor McKerlich stated that was unlikely that the Community Council would be in a position to take over the running of Radyr Library in March 2015. The Councillor stated that more time was required to put robust proposals in place than has been given. This has led the Committee to question whether it is realistic to expect community or friends groups to have the knowledge, skills and access to finance that will be required to take over the running of any of the other Libraries that potentially face having their Council funding removed.

- The Committee was concerned that the role of qualified librarians was being undermined and undervalued. The Committee felt that the role of a librarian was a professional role and one that required an in-depth knowledge of information, customer service and librarianship, dealing with different daily requests of a complex nature. Members did not feel that volunteers would be able to provide the same level of service, and Members held reservations about the prospect of libraries in the city being solely run by volunteers without the support of a qualified librarian.
- During the meeting it was suggested that the relocation of the Local History section of Central Library to Canton Library had been agreed without any consultation with the individuals who regularly access this information. Members were aware that this was included as part of the proposals for consultation in relation to Canton Library, however the Committee would expect that targeted consultation with the individuals who actually use the Local Studies section would have been undertaken. The Committee requests that this be provided.
- The Committee considered that closure of a local library would impact on the local economy, where shops and cafes benefit from the passing trade of those who are visiting the library. Similarly local schools, who direct their pupils to the library for access to the internet or printers, or schedule visits to the library to encourage young people to read, would no longer be able to do so. This may impact on young people achieving literacy targets and reaching their full potential.
- Members feel that the proposals for consultation in relation to Libraries, and in particular the options outlined in the document 'Future provision of Libraries Services in Cardiff' have created significant levels of discontent and unhappiness in local communities. A number of 'Save our Library' groups have been established across the city and two petitions were formally presented to the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee. The Committee question whether the relatively small levels of savings to be achieved through these proposals are worth the large levels of public dissatisfaction created and the potential loss of

important community facilities if no alternative operating arrangement is secured. The Committee considers Libraries are one of the core services provided by local authorities and would have major reservations about proposals which result in Libraries across the city closing if no alternative methods of operation can be found.

Canton Community Hall

- The Committee share the concerns expressed by a local Members that a new management operator could limit the services provided and the groups that are given access to the facility. Members were concerned that less profitable activities for adults with learning difficulties, or volunteer schemes for young people may no longer be provided, or that free access for young people to the outdoor play area could also be limited.
- The Committee heard evidence that the Community Hall generates approximately £100,000 income each year through the activities and services it offers. While this does not cover the operating budget of £200,000, it clearly demonstrates that this is a valued facility and is well used by the communities it serves. Members considered that, if the proposed change in management is to be accepted, the Council should put restrictions in place that will safeguard the access to services for some of the most vulnerable groups of individuals in the area, or must provide access to similar groups being run elsewhere in Cardiff.
- The Committee wishes to see the contingency plans that have been put in place that address the issues raised in the Equality Impact Assessment, where groups with protected characteristics may be affected by the change in management operator.

Further Observations

- The Committee made some more general points in relation to the 2015/16 Budget Proposals – for Consultation following our consideration of this item and having had discussions with members of the public and friends groups.

When considering the budget proposals for consultation, members of the public, and indeed Members of the Committee find it hard to understand the extent of the cuts being proposed because it isn't clear what proportion of the total budget, or of a service area's budget that a saving represents. Similarly it is hard to evaluate or comment on proposed cuts, without knowing what services are being maintained and what levels of money are allocated to other services.

Members of the public also raised concerns about the terminology used throughout the Budget Proposals – For Consultation, which the Committee understands can be confusing if you are unfamiliar with such matters. For example the use of terms such as, 'remodelling' a service, 'alternative delivery models' and 'new management operators' can be vague, and may discourage individuals from commenting or limit their understanding what the proposal actually means for them and their community. The Committee accept that these proposals are early ideas, and work will have been done since their publication to firm up what they mean in reality, and Members expect that more detail is provided on each proposal when final decisions relating to the 2015/16 Budget

are made, and further would expect that such vague terminology is not used in future proposals for consultation.

55 : TOURISM STRATEGY

The Committee received a report on the progress made in developing a Tourism and Heritage Strategy in Cardiff in order to provide Members of the Committee with an opportunity to shape the priorities and assist in the policy development for the Cardiff Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Members were advised that the Tourism and Heritage Strategy will be considered by the Cabinet in early 2015.

The Economic Development Directorate Delivery Plan 2014-17 makes a commitment to develop a Tourism and Heritage Strategy. This also links to the Council's Corporate Plan 2014-17. Furthermore, a key indicator in the Council's achievement of this priority is the number of 'staying' visitors in Cardiff (visitors who stay overnight in hotels). Current figures indicate that whilst Cardiff has 18.3 million days visitors during 2014 and only 1.3 million staying visitors. The Committee was advised that the Tourism and Heritage Strategy aspired to double the number of visitors to Cardiff who are staying visitors.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Phil Bale, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships; Professor Terry Stevens, Tourism Consultant; Ken Poole, Head of Economic Development; and Heledd Williams, Head of Tourism; to the meeting. Councillor Bale was invited to make a brief statement.

Councillor Bale welcomed the opportunity to participate in this timely discussion and there was lots happening in terms of how tourism is managed in Wales. Visit Wales had identified tourism as a key driver for the Welsh economy and Cardiff was well positioned as the Capital City and gateway to the region.

Professor Terry Stevens delivered a presentation on the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan entitled 'Innovation and Partnerships to Deliver Growth'. The presentation provided an overview of the tourism industry, some statistics regarding tourism in Wales and the challenges to be addressed by the Cardiff Tourism Action Plan.

The Chairperson thanks Professor Stevens for his presentation. The Members of the Committee were asked to comment, raise questions or seek clarification on the information provided. These discussions are summarised as follows:

- The Committee asked why there was an imbalance between day visitors and overnight visitors and what was holding Cardiff back.

Professor Stevens stated that the Millennium Stadium had been successful in raising the profile of the City based on the audience attending events which were held there. However, the nature of those events has resulted in Cardiff having a shortfall in brand name hotels. Cardiff was now seen as the capital city of a different country and Professor Stevens considered that the City, therefore, needed to be more confident.

Councillor Bale felt that in terms of marketing, Visit Wales had always placed great emphasis on Wales' rural characteristics. He considered that Cardiff needed to market its exciting urban setting and attractions and it was suggested

that further collaboration with Bristol also needed to be undertaken.

- Members asked whether a conference centre for the city would be addressed in the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Councillor Bale stated that Cathays Park was an important location in terms of Welsh Heritage. He was aware that people attending events in Cardiff were staying overnight in Bristol (leakage) and the Strategy would aim to address that.

Professor Stevens stated that there was not yet a 'critical mass' of conferencing in City Hall. He was surprised that no discussions had been held with Hilton Hotels in terms of managing City Hall as a conference centre venue.

- Professor Stevens was certain that sporting events held at the Millennium Stadium has helped deliver a reputation for the City and an audience of visitors. However, whilst such events delivered volumes, in terms of visitors, they also allowed slippage. In anecdotal terms, Professor Stevens advised that the best event held in the City, from a hoteliers point of view, was the National Eisteddfod, as the event took place over five days and visitors stayed overnight in the City.
- Members were advised that the challenge for the hospitality industry in the City was to improve its food and accommodation offering, with stronger use of Welsh chefs and produce, and to also celebrate the diversity of the City. Professor Stevens felt this is what visitors expect.
- The Committee questioned how the specific proposals contained in the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan will generate revenue as attracting signature events and marketing will need funding. Members were assured that the action plan will contain a number of specific proposals in terms of funding. It was accepted that funding events was likely to present challenges. Officers considered that the City needed to be more innovative. It was anticipated that the finalised Tourism Strategy and Action plan would be considered by the Cabinet in March 2015.
- Officers advised that discussion were taking place with Cardiff Bus with a view to introducing a 'City Card/City Guide' aimed at visitors to the City.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Williams declared a personal interest under the Members Code of Conduct as a Director of Cardiff Bus. Councillor Williams remained in the meeting but took no part in the discussion.

- Councillors raised concerns regarding the cleanliness of the City, particularly in student areas. It was considered that reputation and cleanliness were hugely important to visitors' lasting impressions of the City.
- Officers were asked whether, following the demise of Capital Regional Tourism, Visit Wales could 'fill the void' and not to the detriment of Cardiff. For example, Members were surprised that Cardiff Castle did not feature on the CADW website. Professor Stevens stated that Wales must sell a visitor experience and if Cardiff Castle did not feature on the CADW website then the Council was just as much to blame. Professor Stevens called for an end to silo mentality and for new partnerships to emerge.

Councillor Bale stated that there was a clear need to invest in infrastructure.

Incentives to local authorities, like devolved business rates, will provide an opportunity to grow industries such as tourism. Councillor Bale welcomed suggestions from the Committee with regard to how the City might be able to improve its marketing and increase investment.

RESOLVED – That that the Chairperson write to the Leader, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships with the following observations:

- The Committee enjoyed the presentation given by Professor Stevens and endorse his vision for tourism in Cardiff. Members agree that stadium-based events, held predominantly in the Millennium Stadium and SWALEC Stadium, have been a great boost for the city's reputation and exposure. Members are pleased to see a new drive towards the development of Cardiff's own signature events or unique attractions. Discussions took place around the opportunities available to Cardiff, including Roald Dahl themed events, musical events in the Castle, attracting top Welsh chefs and celebrating the cultural diversity of the city. The Committee was positive about the ideas that put forward by officers and Professor Stevens, and look forward to seeing how they manifest themselves in the final Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
- The Committee are aware that this new direction does not necessarily mean that the number of stadium events will need to decline significantly now that a reputation has been established for this type of tourism. Members heard that these events often attract a large number of business-minded individuals. Members welcome the plans outlined to promote Cardiff as a business destination during such events. It is proposed that the upcoming Wales vs England Six Nations fixture will be a prime opportunity to trial this approach and the Committee would welcome feedback on whether it was successful and will be developed as an ongoing initiative.
- Discussion took place around whether there is confidence that Visit Wales will effectively promote Cardiff, and Members highlighted the fact that Cardiff Castle doesn't feature on the CADW website. Members were assured that the 'urban offer' of Cardiff will be pushed and promoted by Visit Wales, and that CADW also now falls under Visit Wales. It was pointed out that Castell Coch isn't promoted by the Council either and the Committee accepts that there needs to be joint promotion with organisations such as CADW, with Council-maintained historic sites advertised on their website, and also the Council promoting historic sites of interest across Wales on its website and within the Cardiff Castle itself. Members hope to see a clear commitment to this partnership approach within the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
- The Committee does not expect that the promotion of Cardiff will be left solely to Visit Wales, and was encouraged to hear the commitments made for the Council to be developing and promoting the attractions and facilities on offer in the city. Members are aware that there must be a budget available in order for the Council to taking a leading role in promoting Cardiff to national and international audiences, and hope that this has been taken into consideration within the 2015/16 budget.
- It was proposed during the discussions around Cardiff as a business destination, that the Council already owns suitable conference venues within the city in the shape of City Hall and the Mansion House. It was suggested that the Council

could look to work with a private company, such as a major hotelier, to promote and manage the venue as a conference centre. The Members of the Committee can see that this proposition is realistic, but if it is to be taken seriously there will need to be improvements made to the fabric of the building. Members are aware that specialist knowledge is required to run and maintain an old building like City Hall, and as such, care will need to be taken when establishing maintenance responsibilities in any future contract agreements if this is a course of action taken by the Council.

- The concept of a 'City Card', was discussed during the meeting. The Committee wishes to endorse the concept. Members recognise the benefits that such a card can bring to the city, encouraging people to stay for more than one day and making travel around the city simpler for visitors. Members are minded to note that a travel card already exists in the shape of the Cardiff Bus 'lff card' and would recommend that anything developed by the Council should complement this and look to build upon its popularity, rather than creating a completely new card or system that would act as a rival. Members hope that the final Tourism Strategy & Action Plan contains more detail on the development of a 'City Card' and request that this initiative in particular is brought back to the Committee in the future.
- During the meeting there was mention of a mystery shopper review that had been undertaken for Cardiff, which highlighted a number of issues that the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan will seek to address. The Committee requests that a copy of this review is sent through to the Principal Scrutiny Officer, for distribution to the Members.
- The Committee noted that the final Tourism Strategy and Action Plan are proposed to go to Cabinet for approval in March 2015, and request that this Plan is brought to Scrutiny in advance, allowing for pre-decision scrutiny and for Members to comment on the final direction being taken for tourism in Cardiff.

56 : CABINET RESPONSE TO ECONOMY AND CULTURE SCRUTINY INQUIRY - SMALL BUSINESS

The Committee received a report and were asked to note details of the Cabinet's response to the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee inquiry entitled 'Small Business'. Members were advised that the Committee made 16 recommendations: of which 10 recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet; 5 recommendations were partially accepted; and 1 recommendation was rejected. A full copy of the Cabinet response was attached to the report as Appendix A.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the Chairperson write to the Leader, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships, with the following observation:

- The Committee requests that one piece of information mentioned within the Cabinet responses. The response to Recommendation 4 of the Small Business Inquiry states that the Commissioning and Procurement Team are working towards putting in place a system that will enable procurement spend to be reported by the size of organisation, and that it is hoped this system would be in place by Winter 2014. The Committee anticipate this system is up and running,

and request that a report on Council procurement activity by the size of business be sent to the Principal Scrutiny Officer, for distribution to the Members.

**57 : CABINET RESPONSE TO ECONOMY AND CULTURE SCRUTINY
INQUIRY - HIGHER EDUCATION INNOVATION IN CARDIFF**

The Committee received a report and were asked to note details of the Cabinet's response to the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee inquiry entitled 'Higher Education Innovation in Cardiff'. Members were advised that the Committee made 15 recommendations: of which 9 recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet; and 6 recommendations were partially accepted. A full copy of the Cabinet response was attached to the report as Appendix A.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

58 : CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

The Committee received copies of correspondence sent and received in relation to matters previously scrutinised by this Committee.

RESOLVED – That the correspondence report and attached documentation be noted.

59 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 5 February 2015 at 4.30pm