

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

13th December, 2006

Members Present:- Councillor Asif
Councillor Bains
Councillor Clifford (Substitute for Councillor Duggins)
Councillor Lee
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Sawdon (Chair)
Councillor Williams

Cabinet Members Present:- Councillor Foster (Cabinet Member (City Services))
Councillor Ridley (Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure and Libraries))

Employees Present:- J. Bolton (Director of Community Services)
G. Carey (Head of Democratic Services)
A. Green (Community Services Directorate)
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

Apologies:- Councillor Duggins

127. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November, 2006, were signed as a true record.

128. Call-Ins Stage 1

The Committee noted that no call-ins had been received yet that week. The deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 4th December, 2006, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 15th December, 2006. Any call-ins received after this meeting and before that deadline would be considered for validity by the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Paragraph 4.5.25.4 of the City Council's Constitution refers).

With reference to Minute 121/06 the Committee considered a letter from the Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure and Libraries) which confirmed that the Cabinet Member would be receiving a report back to a future meeting on the result of the tendering process for the Corporate Event Grant for the Belgrade Theatre and that the tender process would comply with the required reporting within the financial regulations for the Council when the tender was put out for 2007/2008.

RESOLVED that the Committee are satisfied with the response from the Cabinet Member

129. Review of Library Buildings

Further to Minute 113/06, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Community Services which had previously been considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 12th December, 2006 (their Minute 147/06 refers) and responded to the previous consideration of a call-in which was submitted by Councillors Nellist, Windsor and McKay, this Committee had requested the Cabinet reconsider the report with additional information. The Committee noted that at their meeting the Cabinet had confirmed their previous decision to close Holbrooks Library.

The report informed the Cabinet of the progress made towards achieving Government targets that stipulate the level of service that Local Authorities should provide through the use of public library service standards and addressed the concerns raised by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at the initial consideration of this call-in.

The Committee questioned the Cabinet Member and officer on aspects of the report, in particular the methods used to calculate the rankings in the performance table included at Appendix 2 to the report. It was noted that the table had not been the primary factor used to identify Holbrooks Library for closure, the decision was made on the ability to continue to achieve the minimum library standard whilst reducing the number of libraries by one; the officers confirmed that if Holbrooks Library closed the City Council would still be above the minimum standard. With regard to the financial implications of closure the Committee noted that a £10,000 one off cost was necessary to secure the building by the boarding up of windows, upgrades to the alarm system and additional security to the fencing, it was proposed to manage these costs within the Libraries and Information Services Revenue Budget.

The Committee went on to consider the results of the impact assessment that had been carried out. Councillor Clifford was concerned that the environment at the Arena Library was not as safe for young children as Holbrooks Library, parents allowed children to visit Holbrooks Library alone and he felt that this would not be the case with the Arena Library, he also pointed out that the hours of operation at Holbrooks Library were less than at the Arena Library and so like was not being compared with like. The officer confirmed that the Library Service would continue to work with local schools even if the building closed.

With regards to consultation, it was noted that although there was no legal requirement to consult on the closure of a library in excess of 1,000 letters had been written to people who had used Holbrooks Library in the last two years, this had stimulated only one phone call, one letter and four email responses. A petition had been presented to the Cabinet at their meeting on 12th December, 2006 in connection with the Library closure, letters had also been received from two local Headteachers opposing the closure of the library. During consideration of the petition, it had been suggested that the use of the PCs at the Arena Library was restricted to 15 minutes whereas at Holbrook users were permitted one hour, the officer explained that the number of PCs in place at the Arena Library has recently been increased, although some were restricted to 15 minutes access for people to quickly check emails others were allocated for hour long sessions. The Committee suggested that if the Holbrooks Library were to shut the computer terminals could be relocated to the Holbrooks Community Centre, the Cabinet Member

confirmed he was happy to look at this and pointed out that work was already under way to look at the opportunities to use the community centre as a library book drop off point.

Bearing in mind the points raised both at this meeting and during the previous consideration of the call-in as well as the additional information provided the Committee went on to vote on the recommendations of the report, the result was four votes in favour and two votes against the proposals.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee concur with the decisions of the Cabinet at their meeting on 31st October, 2006 and 12th December, 2006.**
- (2) That the Cabinet Member be requested to send a letter to the petition spokesperson who attended Cabinet on 12th December, 2006 to thank her for her valued input.**
- (3) That the Cabinet Member be requested to consider the relocation of the computer terminals in place at Holbrooks Library to the Holbrooks Community Centre.**

130. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Birmingham International Airport Board of Directors

The Committee considered a report of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Taylor, which detailed the work of the Birmingham International Airport Board of Directors over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Airport Board.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate to the Birmingham International Airport Board of Directors.

131. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Lee which detailed the work of the Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate to the Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee.

132. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities Trustees

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Williams which detailed the work of the Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities Trustees over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Trustees.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate to the Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities Trustees.

133. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Connexions Strategic Partnership Board

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People), Councillor Blundell, which detailed the work of the Connexions Strategic Partnership Board over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate to the Connexions Strategic Partnership Board.

134. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (City Services) which detailed the work of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority over the proceeding 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Authority.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate to the West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority.

135. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Tom Mann Centre Trust

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Harrison which detailed the work of the Tom Mann Centre Trust over the proceeding 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Trust. The Committee noted that the Trustees had agreed that the entire Tom Mann collection be relocated to the History Centre which was being created as part of the redevelopment of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and questioned whether this was a donation or exhibit and why the Trust was funding the relocation of the items. Councillor Mutton agreed to discuss this with the report author.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate to the Tom Mann Centre Trust.

136. Coventry Partnership – Minutes

The Committee considered the minutes of the meetings of the Coventry Partnership held on 17th May, 13th July and 13th September, 2006. The Committee went on to debate the role of Scrutiny with regard to the Partnership at the current time and requested that a short report on the likely impact of the Local Government White Paper be submitted to this Committee after further guidance was issued [this was expected in early 2007]. The Committee went on to consider the details of the scoping discussion associated with the review of the Coventry Partnership which had taken place at their meeting on 13th September, 2006, Officers were requested to investigate the status of this review and a copy of the associated report.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That a report be submitted to this Committee on the likely impact of the Local Government White Paper on the Scrutinisation of Local Strategic Partnerships.**
- (2) That details of review of the Coventry Partnership be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.**

137. Report Back on Conference – Partner City Market – Dresden 21st – 24th July 2006

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Policy which summarised the above mentioned conference and benefits to the City Council.

RESOLVED that officers be requested to submit a further report containing additional information on the benefits of the event and the German market referred to in the report.

138. Report Back on Seminar – Centre for Public Scrutiny Parliamentary Seminar Series 2006-2007 Safer and Stronger Communities – 25th June, 2006, London

The Committee considered and noted a joint report which summarised the above mentioned seminar and the benefits to the City Council. Councillor Williams indicated that when witnessing the select committee, he had noted that the Members focused more on questioning rather than stating their views and suggested Scrutiny should operate more in this manner making it more about them rather than us.

139. Outstanding Issues

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services which identified those issues on which further reports have been requested in order that Members can monitor progress. With regard to item 2 of the report submitted it was agreed that this would be considered in conjunction with the half year review of the Cabinet Member Strategic Plan on 7th February, 2007.

140. **Work Programme 2006/2007**

The Committee considered and noted the work programme for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for the 2006/2007 municipal year.