

County Council Meeting – 7 February 2012

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 20 December 2011 and 31 January 2012. The report from the meeting to be held on 31 January 2012 will be circulated following that meeting.

In accordance with the Constitution, Members can ask questions of the appropriate Cabinet Member, seek clarification or make a statement on any of these issues without giving notice.

The minutes containing the individual decisions for the 20 December 2011 meeting are attached as an Annexe to this report. The minutes of the 31 January 2012 meeting will be submitted to the next meeting of the Council. Cabinet responses to Committee reports are included in or appended to the minutes. If any Member wishes to raise a question or make a statement on any of the matters in the minutes, notice must be given to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the day before the County Council meeting (Monday 6 February 2012).

For members of the public all non-confidential reports are available on the web site (www.surreycc.gov.uk) or on request from Democratic Services.

1. STATEMENTS/UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS

None.

2. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

20 December 2011

A ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY PARTNERED LIBRARIES

1. Since the proposal to transfer 10 libraries to community partnership was agreed by Cabinet, a number of community groups have come forward and have been working with the Library Service for some months on forming community partnerships to manage the libraries in their localities
2. The Community Partnered Libraries will have the support of a dedicated team (the Community Partnered Libraries Sector Team). The County Council will guarantee to the Community Partnered Libraries that each library will have on-site support from a member of the team for 20% of the library's current opening hours
3. The changing world of libraries regularly requires the service to refocus its work and re-align staffing with developing business needs. Increasing exploitation of information technology and self service in libraries, supported by the implementation of the new contract on 1 December is giving opportunities to further use IT to produce efficiencies which can release staff time for refocusing to form the support team.
4. One recommendation of the Public Value Report was the creation of a strategic core library network as a future planning tool for the delivery of the service. Cabinet agreed this network structure on 27 September 2011.

5. As well as 33 libraries to continue to be managed by SCC as a strategic core, 19 libraries form the Community Libraries element of the structure. Of these, 10 libraries were identified for potential community partnership. 9 libraries [Ash, Caterham Hill, Frimley Green, Hersham, Horsley, Knaphill, Lightwater, Shepperton and West Byfleet] continue to be managed by SCC pending evaluation of the community partnered libraries after a full year of operation ends in April 2013.
6. It is now proposed that these 9 libraries, will continue to form part of the SCC-managed library network, whether or not the evaluation exercise planned for community partnerships finds them to be a success. There are no further plans for this to affect the status of these 9 libraries. The Medium-Term Financial Plan for the Library Service allows for these libraries to continue to operate at their current level of service and opening hours. However, in times of such severe financial stringency for public services, there can be no absolute guarantee that no further reductions in the costs of the Library Service or any service provided by Surrey County Council will be made.
7. This does not change the Public Value Review findings that identified 10 libraries which are at the limits of sustainability, and the recommendation for Community Partnership arrangements as an alternative to closure for these libraries. Many of these 10 libraries have been considered for closure in the past, in some cases more than once, largely due to low level and declining use. In community partnership, SCC has put forward a pragmatic yet innovative proposal to find an alternative to continued uncertainty about their future.

8. The Cabinet agreed:

- (1) That the creation and operation of the Community Partnered Libraries Sector Team, as outlined in paragraphs 2-9 of the Cabinet report submitted, be agreed.
- (2) That the guarantee that Community Partnered Libraries will receive on-site support from this team based on 20% of the current open hours (2011) of each Library be agreed.
- (3) That it be agreed that the nine identified Community Libraries (Ash, Caterham Hill, Frimley Green, Hersham, Horsley, Knaphill, Lightwater, Shepperton and West Byfleet) continue to form part of the SCC-managed Libraries Network irrespective of the outcome of the evaluation of the success of Community Partnered Libraries.

B SAVINGS ACCOUNTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

1. The scheme will support each Looked After Child to open: a current account or other appropriate savings product; and a Government Junior LAC ISA where savings can be securely placed up until the child's eighteenth birthday.
2. An incentive for building up savings will be provided by the Council match-funding the savings accrued each tax year to a capped level of £260 pro rata, not including any Government contribution.

3. Accompanying this initiative will be an education programme that will support our Looked After Children in developing personal financial skills through objectives set in Personal Education Plans.

4. The Cabinet agreed:

- (1) That the Council establish and fund a scheme to support and encourage the saving of money by Surrey's Looked After Children with effect from 1 April 2012.
- (2) That, where eligible, the Council will match fund savings in the Junior LAC ISA or child trust fund up to a cap of £260 (pro rata) per annum.
- (3) That the Council also match fund savings accrued by Looked After Children with a child trust fund.
- (4) That the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and the Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families be delegated authority to agree the details and administration of the scheme.
- (5) That the scheme be reviewed after 18 months to ensure that it supports its original intentions.

C. QUARTERLY REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY ARRANGEMENTS – 1 OCTOBER – 31 DECEMBER 2011

1. The Cabinet is required under the Constitution to report to Council on a quarterly basis the details of decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members under the special urgency arrangements set out in Article 6.05(f) of the Constitution. This occurs where a decision is required on a matter that is not contained within the Leader's Forward Plan, nor available 5 clear days before the meeting. Where a decision on such matters could not reasonably be delayed, the agreement of the Chairman of the appropriate Select Committee, or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Council, must be sought to enable the decision to be made.
2. There has been one such decision during the last quarter as follows:

Approval to award contract for hospital roundabout – Highways Infrastructure Improvements. This was a part 2 item.

Reason for urgency: The decision related to the award of a contract taking place via a joint procurement and could not be delayed until the next meeting.

27 January 2012

**Mr David Hodge
Chairman**