

Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Comments from the ABVCS Meeting held on Friday 15 July 2016.

For Cabinet 19 July 2016 - Item 7 Update on the Libraries Transformation Programme

Members Present: Councillors John Barnes (Vice Chair), Kathryn Field, Laurence Keeley, Carolyn Lambert, Peter Pragnell, Bob Standley

Also Present: Councillor Chris Dowling

The Scrutiny Committee welcomes the final library opening hours proposals which have been amended in response to comments received during the consultation process from library users, stakeholders and Councillors.

It is clear that lot of work has been undertaken to address people's concerns and to mitigate the potential impact of the proposed opening hours.

Consultation Process

It is the Committee's view that Officers have clearly undertaken a well conducted consultation in a fair and balanced way. The Committee welcomes the acknowledgement of its recommendation that when consulting on opening hours, people should be encouraged to propose alternative patterns of opening hours that best meet their needs, which includes swapping the times and days of the week when libraries are open e.g. Saturday afternoon for Monday morning.

It is pleasing to see a positive response to proposals for alternative hours raised during the consultation by respondents, which have led to amendments to the original suggested hours at 11 of the 24 libraries.

The proposed amendments take into account the findings from the consultation and ensure that the final proposals put forward meet the needs of library users

The Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy Scrutiny Review Board and will have its first meeting in the autumn to consider and have the opportunity to comment on the findings from early work to identify need and the strategic priorities.

Concluding Comments

Officers have done all that they can to reduce the impact of the changes by listening to people and by making sympathetic amendments to the proposed library opening hours.

COUNCILLOR JOHN BARNES

VICE CHAIR