



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

An Extraordinary Meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held at Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **WEDNESDAY 3 MAY 2017 AT 7.00 PM**

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
Published on 24 April 2017

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Simon Weeks (Chairman) | John Kaiser (Vice-Chairman) | Parry Batth |
| David Chopping | Lindsay Ferris | Michael Firmager |
| Kate Haines | Pauline Helliard-Symons | John Jarvis |
| Ken Miall | Philip Mirfin | Shahid Younis |

Substitutes

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Laura Blumenthal | Abdul Loyes | Beth Rowland |
| Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey | | |

| ITEM NO. | WARD | SUBJECT | PAGE NO. |
|----------|---------|---|----------|
| 73. | | APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence. | |
| 74. | | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest. | |
| 75. | | PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions | |
| 76. | | MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any Member questions. | |
| 77. | Wescott | CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION - RELOCATION OF WOKINGHAM LIBRARY To consider the Call-In of the Executive decision relating to the proposed relocation of Wokingham Library. | |
| 77.1 | | Background In accordance with the Council's Constitution, five non-Executive Members of the Council have submitted a formal notice "calling in" the Executive decision to agree in principle to the relocation of Wokingham | |

Library from its current site to the new Carnival Pool leisure centre.

The full decision made by the Executive was as follows:

Decision: That

- 1) it be agreed in principle to relocate Wokingham Library to a new building on the Carnival Phase II site;
- 2) approval to relocate is subject to a full impact assessment and detailed business case being agreed by the Executive Member for Resident Services;
- 3) the proposal be publicised as soon as practical to enable feedback on these proposals and subsequently the design.

The decision has been called in on the following grounds:

- 1) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 a) of the Council's constitution, in that the action being proposed is not proportionate to the desired outcome. It is not clear in fact what the motivation for the relocation or the desired outcome are. Is it to increase library usage? Is it to develop the existing library site to make money?

There is no indication at all as to cost, nor to what the success criteria for the project would be in assessing any business case.

- 2) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 b) of the Council's constitution, in that due consultation has not occurred. There has been no consultation with library users or the public in general about relocation.

We believe members of the town council and ward members may have been informed in the last few weeks, but required to keep the information confidential. However, they were not consulted.

A consultation on the Library Offer was run in 2016. This consultation did not mention relocation of Wokingham Library. Nor did the Executive paper which launched it, in January 2016, make any reference to any need to relocate the library.

Consultation conducted in the past on the leisure uses of the Carnival Pool area did not include the possibility of relocation of the library.

- 3) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 d) of the Council's constitution, in that openness has not been observed. There was no warning whatsoever about the proposal prior to it appearing in the Executive Agenda.

In addition, despite representatives of the Liberal Democrat group having regular meetings with members of the Regeneration team, and discussing all aspects of Wokingham town centre, including what leisure facilities would appear on the Carnival Pool site, no mention has ever been made on relocation of the library.

Members of the town council and Wokingham town borough councillors have also had such meetings. We do not believe this has been raised at those meetings.

Nor has it been mentioned at any of the SDL forums. Nor was it mentioned in the 2016 consultation on the Library Offer.

Nothing has been said in the report about the development potential of the existing site, nor about the finances of the redevelopment of the Carnival Pool area. Nor is the impact on the Denmark Street car park discussed in the report.

- 4) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 e) of the Council's constitution, in that clarity of aims and desired outcomes has not been achieved. There is no evidence provided to justify the sudden decision to move the library.

Money has only recently been invested in the existing building. There is criticism in the report of the fact that the existing library is "on the outer edge of the town centre" – yet the proposed location is further from the town centre.

The report talks about the space within the library, and compares the 1,324 m² of which 841 m² is currently available for books, with the 1000 m² potentially available at Carnival Pool. It makes reference to the existing café taking up space, but not to alternate uses for that space, nor to exactly how big a café might be provided at Carnival Pool;

it also mentions the 180 m2 used by Elevate – but does not explain what will happen to Elevate if the library is relocated. It talks about larger events being able to be held in a bigger undivided space – but does not take into account the fact that book shelves, counters, etc. will occupy the majority of the space, making it unusable in that way.

77.2

Reference Information for Consideration by the Committee

7 - 48

- 1) A copy of the Call-In notice and supporting information;
- 2) Report on the Relocation of Wokingham Library considered by the Executive on 30 March 2017;
- 3) Extract from the Draft Executive Minutes for 30 March 2017, including public questions relating to the issue;
- 4) Report on the Library Offer considered by the Executive on 30 June 2016;
- 5) Report by the Interim Director of Environment on the issues raised by the Call-In.

77.3

List of Witnesses and Indicative Timetable

49 - 50

A list of witnesses and indicative timings for the meeting are attached. The Chairman may vary the timings as necessary.

78.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee consider the Call-In and either:

- a) Confirm the decision of the Executive, or
- b) Recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the Executive, setting out the nature of its concerns.

79.

ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

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