

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL CALL-IN OF DECISION

We 5 non-Executive Members of the Council wish to call in the following decision:-

Reference No: Executive Agenda Item 134 (30th March 2017)
Subject: Relocation of Wokingham Library

1.4.2 Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

- a) Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- b) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers;
- c) Human rights will be respected and considered at an early stage in the decision making process;
- d) A presumption in favour of openness;
- e) Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- f) When decisions are taken by the Executive, details of the options which were taken into account and the reasons for the decision will be recorded.

Reason for Call-In

We wish to call in this item for the following reasons:

- 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 outcomes 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 1324 m² of which 841 m² 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.

Name (please print)

PRUE BRAY

Signature

P. Bray

CLIVE JONES

Clive Jones

IAN PITTOCK

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LINDSAY FERRIS

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Rachelle Shepherd-Rob

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Date 8th April 2017