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MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE & CULTURE AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	16 JANUARY 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS HOGG (CHAIR), BARTLETT, ORRELL (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), EVANS AND B WATSON (SUBSTITUTE)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR JONES

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## **25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have had in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

## **26. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Executive Member for Leisure & Culture and Advisory Panel held on 5 December 2006 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **27. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND OTHER COMMENTS**

It was reported that Mr Mark Warters had registered to speak on Agenda Item 4 (Proposal to Designate Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve) and that the Chair had also agreed to hear representations from the Unison representative Andrea Dudding regarding Agenda Item 5 (Library Service Restructure).

Mr Warters expressed his support for the proposal to designate Acomb Wood and Acomb Meadow as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve. He raised concerns that it would still leave York under the recommended level of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and asked when the shortfall was going to be addressed. He expressed the view that everything that had been said surrounding Acomb Wood and Acomb Meadow could also be applied to Osbaldwick Meadows. He asked whether Members would support the Friends Of Osbaldwick Meadow as they had supported the Friends of Acomb Wood. Members said they would bear this in mind.

Andrea Dudding from Unison spoke on Agenda Item 5 and said that the proposed library restructure had significant Human Resources (HR) implications. There was a technical risk of job losses in respect of a number of posts and a real risk of redundancy in one post. With regard to caretaking Ms Dudding asked Members that a strong Service Level Agreement is sought with Neighbourhood Services to ensure that the historic main library building is properly maintained.

## **PART A- MINUTES DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

### **28. PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE ACOMB WOOD & ACOMB MEADOW AS A STATUTORY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

Members considered a report concerning the designation of Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve. The report proposed that Acomb Wood and Acomb Meadow be declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Acomb Wood and Acomb Meadow are situated in the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe Ward of the City, bordering Westfield Ward.

Officers said that the main benefits of declaring this area as a Statutory LNR were to show people how important the site was, to give the site extra protection and to open up the possibility of funding opportunities. Natural England support the designation of Acomb Wood and Meadow as an LNR.

Members asked how long the Friends of Acomb Wood had been in existence and Officers said that they had been established in 2002.

Members asked whether other Councils met the nationally recommended quota of LNR and Officers replied that they were only aware of one Council that met the national recommendations.

Members asked whether the areas would be patrolled and Officers stated that there was no patrolling system but the area would be visited on at least a weekly basis by one of three Community Leisure Officers. The Friends of Acomb Wood would also 'keep an eye' on the area and report any problems that may occur.

Members expressed the view that it was important that this kind of land was supported.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- Agree Option 1 in the report; that Acomb Wood and Acomb Meadow be designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: The advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: The designation as an LNR will bring positive benefits to the local community and to the site itself. It will help preserve and enhance the site for the future years, send a positive message to the local community and ensure good management practices are followed in consultation with Natural England.

## **PART B - MATTERS REFERRED TO COUNCIL**

### **29. LIBRARY SERVICE RESTRUCTURE**

Members considered a report concerning a restructure within the Library Service. Comments were sought from the Executive Member and Advisory Panel on a new staffing structure for the Library Service prior to it being referred to Full Council.

The key elements of the proposed restructure are as follows:

- Three new strategic areas are proposed – Learning; Reading and Information; Children, Young People and Families. These areas will be led by a strategic manager, with the lead for Learning being taken by the Head of Service as it has a wider application across Libraries and Heritage
- It is proposed that these areas will be headed by strategic managers whose role will be key for the development of the service – building partnerships and representing the service locally and nationally. They will also create the bridge between policy and practice – supported by the Area Manager role, ensuring that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and that the service is operating as “one service”
- The Performance and Quality role will ensure that continuous improvement is embedded across the service and will facilitate intelligence led planning. It will also lead on producing community profiles to support the work of community engagement
- The library service has 3 IT networks: the Flexible Learning Centres network, the People’s Network and the Library Management System (Unicorn). These will be managed by the IT Development role, liaising with corporate IT and developing innovative use of IT
- There are a range of specialist roles which will concentrate on areas that have been identified as priorities for the service – for instance, Family and Local History, Read Write York, Schools’ Liaison and Young People
- Community engagement is a priority for the way in which we will deliver our services and the Area Manager role and the Lending Services Manager role will lead on this – they are ideally placed to develop links with their communities. This function will be supported by the Customer Service Managers. This will enable each library to understand its community better and work with local people more effectively
- The Reference and Information function is a key element of a modern library service – providing a high quality enquiry

service that is not available anywhere else. This will be supported by a team of Information Specialists who will be trained to deliver a high level reference and information service

- Extra staffing hours have been put into the community libraries to enable them to better deliver the frontline service. It has also been possible to increase opening hours by 16 hours a week and reduce the amount of single staffing
- To ensure that policy is understood and delivered across the service, there will be a number of “champion roles” within the 3 strategic areas. This concept will be developed after the new structure is in place. It is also designed to give all staff opportunities to develop their skills
- Relief staff will be booked centrally by the administration team at Back Swinegate, thus freeing up staff time to deliver the service

Officers said that in 2005 the Leisure and Heritage Scrutiny Board had given a clear vision of how it wanted the Library Service to progress in the twenty first century. There had been a vast amount of staff consultation as part of this process.

Members asked how many staff were involved in the restructure and Officers clarified that it was 67 full time equivalents.

Members expressed concerns that the restructure was being undertaken for the right reasons and not just for savings and the Officer said that the restructure was a positive way forward and it was important that the staff agreed to it and knew why it was being put forward.

Members asked the Officer to clarify that it was a way forward for the public as well and the Officer stated that the restructure was about promoting reading rather than looking after books. It was about staff interaction with customers and about turning the service around to be more customer focussed.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- Recommend to Council the approval of the new staffing structure set out in Annex B of the report.

#### Decision of the Executive Member:

RECOMMENDED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and the new staffing structure set out in Annex B be approved.

REASON: To align the Library Service with National and Local  
Priorities

Cllr. K Orrell  
Executive Member for Leisure and Culture

Cllr.C Hogg  
Chair of Advisory Panel  
The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 5.40 pm.