

Sutherland, Kelly

From: Cabinet (Messages to Head of Policy Support only)
Sent: 20 October 2005 11:44
To: Sutherland, Kelly
Subject: FW: Library Service Review

-----Original Message-----

From: Jones, Chester
Sent: 12 October 2005 22:06
To: Cabinet (Messages to Head of Policy Support only)
Cc: Strong, Bob
Subject: Library Service Review

Dear Democratic Services Team

Please be advised that I wish to ask for the proposal to be called in as the proposals is at variance with the objective of (1) "Getting Closer To Communities" (2) the 69 pages of explanation on the web site only help to confuse and bamboozle the reader.

Chester Jones

Sutherland, Kelly

From: Edwards, Roger
Sent: 19 October 2005 14:51
To: Capjon, Clare; Gray, Clare (Dem.Services); Sutherland, Kelly
Subject: FW: Decision ref CS06.05 Libraries

-----Original Message-----

From: Oxley, Alan
Sent: 19 October 2005 14:03
To: Allen, Bruce
Cc: Davies, Anne (Legal); Edwards, Roger
Subject: Decision ref CS06.05 Libraries

Dear Bruce

As Chairman of the Adult services Overview and Scrutiny committee I wish you to call in the decision to "a consultation process regarding the impact of proposals to close eight community libraries and to seek views on the provision of alternative library services to those communities."

I attach a document I sent in objection to the decision which summarises some of the reasons I believe the decision should be called in and re examined

Alan Oxley (Member for Iver)

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20/10/2005

Objection by A. J. Oxley member for Iver.

I object to the decision to be taken by the cabinet member for community services re a consultation process regarding the impact of proposals to close 8 community libraries.

Whilst not objecting to the principle of consulting it is premature and assumes that conclusions and analysis in the paper "Turning the page" are correct.

The paper is inherently biased to consider big is beautiful. Appendix 1 and 8 use a scoring system that is biased against small library services. 5 of the criteria score according to size. In addition it is biased against those close to other facilities with 2 scores determined by distance from other facilities and only one allowed for transport to these facilities. Only 2 scores relates to the indices of multiple deprivation.

The ultimate decision is clearly made on cost to issue a book. This does assume that the costs and statistics used are correct and not just selected from an appropriate year. Costs vary from library to library where staffing and hours of opening are very similar. See table below. In particular I would highlight the 2 in my area Iver and Richings Park where size and opening hours and single person manning are very similar except for 2 evening hours at Iver where 2 people are on duty and the costs of Iver is double Richings Park. I suspect very similar arguments between Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Giles. I believe these costs are for a single year and obviously include exceptional expenditure. Stoke Poges for example is closed at present (so should have zero costs) and pressure is being put on South Bucks to provide the new premises at a peppercorn rent no doubt why it is not considered for closure!.

	Running costs	Hours open	Staff numbers
Steeple Claydon	18,546	11	1
West Wycombe	18,797	7	1
Ivinghoe	20,413	16	1
Richings Park	23,921	17	2
Wing	24,222	15	2
Stewkley	25,844	14	1
Micklefield	30,388	15	1
Castlefield	35,239	15	2
Iver Heath	36,622	21	2
Chalfont St Giles	40,836	20	3
Thomas Hickman	44,114	18	5
Stoke Poges	44,953	Mobile 9	3
Long Crendon	45,358	22	5
Iver	47,482	18	2
Stokenchurch	49,381	22	3
Farnham Common	51,007	25	3
Flackwell Heath	53,416	20	5
Haddenham	61,474	32	5
Little Chalfont	62,268	25	3
Winslow	62,639	31	3

In addition statistics involving visitor numbers must be suspect where there is no local counting system. See differences below in issues per visitor which highlight some anomalies.

Issues per visit (lowest 8)

Chalfont St Peter	1.14
Flackwell Heath	1.12
Gerrards Cross	1.08
Aylesbury	1.04
High Wycombe	0.97
Stoke Poges	0.94
Iver Heath	0.93
Stokenchurch	0.92

Issues per visit (highest 8)

Winslow	2.81
Wing	2.76
Ivinghoe	2.58
Farnham Common	2.32
West Wycombe	2.30
Steeple Claydon	1.93
Richings Park	1.81
Wendover	1.77

There is some analysis in the DCMS comparisons based on cost of population served. On this basis selection comparisons between libraries bear some examination.

Cost per population served (highest)

West Wycombe	£ 15.98
Iver	£ 15.95
Chesham	£ 14.96
Little Chalfont	£ 14.17
Richings Park	£ 14.08
Beaconsfield	£ 11.30
Hazlemere	£ 11.25
Amersham	£ 10.38
Farnham Common	£ 10.20
Burnham	£ 9.55

Cost per population served (Lowest)

Iver Heath	£ 5.96
Winslow	£ 5.80
Aylesbury	£ 5.76
Thomas Hickman	£ 5.74
Micklefield	£ 5.50
Stewkley	£ 5.43
Castlefield	£ 3.98
Ivinghoe	£ 2.70

Issues per member of population (Highest 8)

Amersham	13.68
Hazlemere	12.30
Wendover	12.21
Beaconsfield	12.13
Great Missenden	11.75
Haddenham	11.55
Burnham	9.91
Bourne end	9.41

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Issues per member of population (Lowest 8)

Gerrards Cross	5.91
West Wycombe	5.90
Stoke Poges	4.56
Chalfont St Giles	4.44
Iver Heath	3.84
Steeple Claydon	3.44
Stewkley	3.30
Ivinghoe	2.52
Micklefield	2.18

According to the Appendix 2 DCMS comparison for 2002/3 staffing numbers for other staff are very high for Bucks at 0.45 per 1,000 population compared with a national figure of around 0.28 per 1,000 population. This implies a support staff of 225 could reduce to 140 a saving of 85 staff at a cost of about around £2million. I have to say my count of staff numbers got nowhere near these staff numbers so perhaps there are oncosts for support from other areas and departments that make the cost and numbers up. Set against the saving of £200,000 by closing 23% of the facilities and offset by the cost of a mobile library I suggest that the wrong end of the library staff chain is being tackled.

Bucks scores very well in comparisons of the quality and take up of the service offered. See issues per 1,000, visits per 1,000, hours of access per 1,000 per week and number of libraries per 100,000. This is a function of the front line staff and number of libraries. It is wrong to cut these services when the expenditure problem appears to be in the cost structure of the support service.

Given the objectives of "Getting closer to Communities" and "Every child matters" the withdrawal of this community service from 8 local communities is clearly wrong.