

**CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION CAB339**  
**'FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND – STOCKROOM'**

**Report of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance)**

**1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 1.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 December 2021 considered an update on progress with Stockport's Future High Street Fund project (Stockroom) and sought approval to the proposals. The report updated the Cabinet on the outcome of the recent consultation which had been undertaken, and sought approval to relocate the town centre library from Central Library to Stockroom. The report also provided an update regarding potential future uses of the existing Central Library building and sought approval to the proposed course of action set out in Section 10 to progress these issues.
- 1.2 The Cabinet gave approval to the recommendations contained within the report as set out in the Executive Decision Record previously circulated.
- 1.3 The decision of the Cabinet was published the following day on 8 December 2021 as decision reference CAB339. The 'call-in' deadline was specified as 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 14 December 2021, and the decision would ordinarily have become operative on Wednesday, 15 December 2021.
- 1.4 Prior to the 'call-in' deadline, the decision was 'called-in' by Councillors Lou Ankers, Lisa Smart and Iain Roberts; and also by Councillors John McGahan, Linda Holt and Oliver Johnstone.

**2 THE 'CALL-IN'**

- 2.1 The 'call-in' was considered by the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee at an extraordinary meeting held on Tuesday, 4 January 2022.
- 2.2 At the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor John McGahan outlined his reasons for 'calling in' the decision, in particular that the majority of people who had responded to the consultation were opposed to moving library services from the Central Library building. In addition, a petition had been received by the Council signed by over 7,000 people who opposed moving library services out of the Central Library building, and three of the Council's Scrutiny Committees had passed a resolution opposed to the relocation of library services from the Central Library. The Cabinet had not provided evidence that the award of the Future High Street grant was contingent on the move of library services from the Central Library building. Councillor McGahan moved a motion proposing that the issue be referred to the next Council Meeting for debate.

- 2.3 Councillor Oliver Johnstone contended that the proposals for Stockroom and the transfer of library services from the Central Library were not mutually exclusive. A number of residents did not disagree with the principles of Stockroom but were opposed to moving library services from the Central Library. No evidence had been provided by the Cabinet that moving library services would mean that the Future High Street grant for Stockroom would not be available. The Cabinet had not proved the case that Central Library had to move. In addition, he asserted that the Cabinet did not have the authority to proceed. Despite a major marketing exercise, the majority of the people who had responded to the consultation were opposed to moving library services out of the Central Library and over 7,000 people had signed a petition to that effect. In addition, Councillor Johnstone also referred to the detailed consideration of the issues by three of the Council's Scrutiny Committees and the resolution passed by them at their last meetings opposed to library services being moved out of the Central Library. He contended that the issues raised by the Scrutiny Committees had not been properly addressed by the Cabinet.
- 2.4 Councillor Lou Ankers clarified that she was not opposed to Stockroom, but opposed moving library services from the Central Library. She seconded the motion to refer the issue to the next Council Meeting for debate. Councillor Lisa Smart added that the Scrutiny Committee had a duty to listen to the views of members of the public. Councillor Iain Roberts felt that the option of library services remaining at the Central Library and the Stockroom proposals should be explored. There could be other additional options and he wished for these to be explored as well, including different elements of the library service being located in different buildings. He, and other Councillors who had 'called-in' the decision, supported the Cabinet working with the opposition groups on the Council to explore these options.
- 2.5 The Scrutiny Committee debated the need for library services to be accessible, and adhere to the National Disability Strategy 2021 and the Stockport Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2020-2023. The proposed sensory area, safe area, changing places facility and disabled changing facilities at Stockroom were welcomed, and it was noted that accessibility at the Central Library building would present challenges whatever it was used for.
- 2.6 The Scrutiny Committee did not request the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers to explain the reasons for the decision.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.1 It was:-**

MOVED AND SECONDED – That the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee gives notice to Democratic Services that it requires decision CAB339 Future High Street Fund – Stockroom to be referred to the next Council Meeting so that it can be debated by all Councillors.

For the motion 6, against 3

**MOTION CARRIED**

It was then

RESOLVED – (6 for, 3 against) That the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee gives notice to Democratic Services that it requires decision CAB339 Future High Street Fund – Stockroom to be referred to the next Council Meeting so that it can be debated by all Councillors.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact David Clee on 0161 474 3137 or by email on

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