

24 February 2015

Memo To: Mayor and Councillors

Memo From: Administration Advisers

**Subject: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 26 FEBRUARY 2015
LATE ITEM**

1. Request for Funding to Pilot Extended Library Opening Hours

Document A1309814

A report titled Request for Funding to Pilot Extended Library Opening Hours is attached to be considered as a major late item at this meeting.

In accordance with section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and Standing Order 3.7.5, a procedural resolution is required before a major item that is not on the agenda for the meeting may be dealt with.

In accordance with section 46A(7)(b)(i) the reason why the item was not on the agenda is because it came to hand after the agenda had been distributed.

In accordance with section 46A(7)(b)(ii) the reason why discussion of this item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting is because a resolution on the matter is required before the next scheduled meeting of the Community Services Committee to enable timely consideration of the extension of library opening hours.

Recommendation

THAT the item regarding Request for Funding to Pilot Extended Library Opening Hours be considered at this meeting as a major item not on the agenda, pursuant to Section 46A(7)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, to enable timely consideration of the extension of library opening hours.

Request for Funding to Pilot Extended Library Opening Hours

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for funding from operational savings for a temporary extension of library opening hours.

2. Delegations

- 2.1 The Community Services Committee has responsibility for the provision and operation of libraries. The decision to increase a level of service is a Council decision.

3. Recommendation

THAT the report Request for Funding to Pilot Extended Library Opening Hours (A1309814) be received.

Recommendation to Council

THAT funding of \$7,500 from other operational savings is approved to extend Saturday opening hours for the Elma Turner Library from early April to the end of June 2015.

4. Background

- 4.1 Council will propose through the Long Term Plan 2015-25 (LTP) to extend library opening hours in response to community demand. Regular feedback over a number of years has been received on this issue through the library's "Have Your Say" forms and in resident and customer satisfaction surveys. If approved, extended hours will be introduced in the new financial year.
- 4.2 The relocation of the Suter Art Gallery to Halifax Street, opposite the Elma Turner Library, means that a 'cultural precinct' has been created. This offers Council an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to creating a vibrant city centre and allows the gallery and library to build on each other's presence.
- 4.3 Elma Turner Library customers are reluctant to leave at 1pm closing on Saturdays. Saturday afternoons are an important family and recreation

time. In addition to lifelong learning, libraries provide a welcoming, neutral and free community space.

- 4.4 Extending opening hours in advance of LTP decisions would provide valuable information to Council for assessing the permanent extension proposed in the LTP.

5. Discussion

Staffing

- 5.1 In order to 'go live' with the changes by early April 2015, Council would need to commence recruitment as soon as possible for any additional staff required. It is proposed that funding for extra staff hours (including any additional training required) be made available from other operational savings for the period up until June 2015.

6. Options

- 6.1. Council could choose to continue with the status quo. There is no cost implication of this option. However that would not take advantage of the Suter's presence and the opportunity it brings to support increased activity in the city centre and it does not respond to community feedback.
- 6.2. Option 2 is to extend Saturday hours until 4pm at Elma Turner Library. Current Saturday hours at Elma Turner are 10am to 1pm.
- 6.3. Option 2 is recommended as a cost effective option to address known community demand for a library service on Saturday afternoons in the central city. The Suter Gallery move provides a cultural connection at this site. Its opening hours are 9.30am to 4.30pm. Extending the hours on Saturday only and at one library site allows the change to be managed in a measured way.
- 6.4. It is envisaged that consideration may be given to extending Stoke Library's Saturday hours following the Nelson pilot phase.

7. Assessment of Significance against the Council's Significance Policy

- 7.1 This is not a significant decision.

8. Alignment with relevant Council Policy

- 8.1 The recommendation aligns with the Council's Draft Property and Facilities Asset Management Plan, approved 20 November 2014. The Plan noted that almost as many customers visit the library during each three-hour opening on Saturday and Sunday as during any eight-hour week day and recommended increased hours be considered in the LTP.
- 8.2 The recommendation is not inconsistent with any other previous Council decision.

8.3 Extended library opening hours are included in the draft LTP budget from 1 July, 2015. The trial extension is not budgeted, but is affordable through other operational savings.

8.4 The recommendation fits with the Nelson 2060 themes of working together to create strong communities built on knowledge and understanding. In particular, extending the library opening hours will reinforce the specific objective that "Accessible and adaptable social and recreational facilities and services abound".

9. Consultation

9.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken but regular customer feedback has indicated a desire for longer opening hours for the library, particularly at weekends, as an extension of service.

10. Inclusion of Māori in the decision making process

10.1 No consultation undertaken.

11. Conclusion

11.1 The Suter Gallery's move to Halifax Street has provided an opportunity to pilot extended opening hours at the library, in line with public demand. The pilot is a cost-effective way to trial the extension to hours in a manageable way ahead of proposed changes in the LTP.

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Attachments

None.