

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Cabinet Meeting – 14 March 2016

Title

Library Strategy and Budget Implementation Consultation Plan

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No – this report is not a key decision

Note that the outcome of the consultation and recommended future service model will be a key decision and this is included on the Forward Plan.

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Caroline Bruce, Interim Strategic Director of Environment & Development Services.

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

All wards

Executive Summary

This report sets out Rotherham's draft Library Strategy for 2016 – 2019. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to deliver a comprehensive and efficient Library Service and the Library Strategy supports this requirement by defining the delivery of Library Services in Rotherham for the next three years. The draft Library strategy has informed the current proposals to make savings of £474,000 in the Library and Customer Services budget, whilst still delivering a comprehensive and efficient service as required by law.

Reductions in government grants, increasing inflation and additional demands for services in areas such as adult and children's social care, along with the changing expectations of our service users and non-users, means that the Council must rethink the way that library services are delivered to ensure it complies with the statutory duty. The draft Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 proposes the following vision for Rotherham libraries:

- .1 Our Libraries are well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;

- .2 The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham communities;
- .3 We will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential; and
- .4 Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our library buildings will be recognised community hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology. Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by supporting Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

The savings proposals which underpin the draft Library Strategy have been developed to ensure that the service can have a sustainable future with a reduced annual budget, and that the available financial resources are being targeted to best meet the needs of residents.

The Library Service must now consult with the public on the draft Library Strategy and the proposed options for its future service offer. This will ensure that the service continues to meet the needs of Rotherham residents whilst also meeting Rotherham Council's statutory requirement to deliver a comprehensive and efficient service.

Recommendations;

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Endorse the draft Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and public consultation plan, which are attached as Appendix A and B;
- 2) Agree that the Library Service can begin public consultation. This will inform the final version of the Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and the future service delivery model.

List of Appendices included;

Draft Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 – Appendix A
Library Service Consultation Plan – Appendix B

Background Papers

Library and Customer Services savings proposals - reference number EDS5

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

EDS 5 Savings proposals have been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, by the Managing Director Commissioner, Stella Manzie and by Advisory Cabinet, as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Council Approval Required

No.

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Title: Library Strategy and Budget Implementation Consultation Plan

Main Report

1. Recommendations

1.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Endorse the draft Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and public consultation plan, which are attached as Appendix A and B;
- 2) Agree that the Library Service can begin public consultation. This will inform the final version of the Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and the future service delivery model.

2. Background

2.1 Rotherham's existing library strategy ended in 2015 and the Library Service has developed a draft library strategy for the period 2016 – 2019. The strategy shapes how the Library Service will be delivered over the next three years, taking account of reductions in local government funding, the changing expectations of current service users and non-users, the changing nature of reading and information delivery and also Rotherham's local demographic profile. It is attached to this report as Appendix A. The strategy supports the Local Authority requirement to deliver a comprehensive and efficient Library Service in line with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

2.2 The draft strategy proposes the following vision for Rotherham libraries:

- .1 Our Libraries are well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;
- .2 The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham communities;
- .3 We will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential; and
- .4 Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our library buildings will be recognised community hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology. Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by supporting Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

2.3 The strategy has been developed following a thorough analysis of local need which was informed by feedback from service users, council staff and our partners.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 Thorough public consultation must be completed before the final version of the Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 can be presented to Advisory Cabinet for adoption and before any changes to the Library service offer can be implemented.
- 3.2 Whilst the Council has already completed some public consultation to enable its overall budget to be set, the Library Service must complete extensive consultation with residents, service users, partners and staff on all aspects of service delivery. This will ensure we have provided opportunities for all stakeholders to participate fully in the consultation and allow for an informed decision to be made on the final strategy.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 The service would like to begin a public consultation exercise on both the draft Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and on the existing Library and Customer Services savings proposals (reference number EDS5). The proposed public consultation plan is attached to this report as Appendix B.
- 4.2 No other options have been considered. This is because reduced levels of consultation will increase the authority's risk to a legal challenge and potential for judicial review.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Library Service will need to consult extensively and thoroughly on its draft strategy and proposed savings proposals.
- 5.2 The proposed Library Service Consultation plan is included at appendix B.
- 5.3 Library staff members have been consulted in the development of the library strategy and most staff members are supportive of it.
- 5.4 Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. The Library and Customer Services management team will continue to work with Legal Services throughout the consultation period, to ensure that Rotherham's Library Service is meeting statutory requirements.
- 5.5 A member seminar has been held to provide members with information on the Library Strategy and savings proposals.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 Library and Customer Services will be responsible for implementing the public consultation.
- 6.2 The public consultation exercise will run from 17 March 2016 to 13 June 2016.

- 6.3 A report which details the findings from the public consultation exercise, the proposed final version of the Library Strategy and the proposed future service model will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for scrutiny prior to its submission to Cabinet for approval.
- 6.4 A report on the findings from the public consultation exercise, the proposed final version of the Library Strategy and the proposed future service model will be presented to Cabinet by the end of July 2016, for formal approval.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 A number of proposals have been presented to Advisory Cabinet which would change the Library and Customer Services service offer. These proposals, if accepted following public consultation, will result in a reduction in Rotherham's Library and Customer Services budget of £474,000. The proposals are:
- 7.1.1 Consultation on the withdrawal of the mobile service;
 - 7.1.2 Consultation on changes to the way the Booklink service is delivered;
 - 7.1.3 Consultation on the relocation of services from Maltby Library to Maltby Joint Service Centre;
 - 7.1.4 Consultation on the implementation of alternative Library Service delivery models, including the involvement of communities and partners in the delivery of services;
 - 7.1.5 Consultation on the replacement of the Riverside House face to face cashiering service with payment kiosks;
 - 7.1.6 Consultation on the support customers will require to enable the introduction of electronic benefit applications and an appointment system within Customer Services.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 makes it the duty of every library authority to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof.' In fulfilling its duty, the Council must have regard to the desirability of:
- 8.1.1 securing the facilities are available for the borrowing of and reference to books and other printed material, recorded music and pictures and film to meet the general and special requirements of adults and children; and
 - 8.1.2 encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service and of providing advice as to its use and information as may be required by users of the service.
- 8.2 Extensive public consultation on the Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and on the savings proposals reference number EDS5, must be undertaken so that the Council complies with its duty to act fairly. There are four main principles to be followed to ensure that consultation is lawful. The consultation must:
- (i) be undertaken at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage;

(ii) include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give informed consideration and an intelligent response;

(iii) give adequate time for consultees to formulate a viewpoint; and

(iv) be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is made.

The latest government guidance on consultation principles confirms that the governing principle is proportionality of the type and scale of consultation to the potential impacts of the proposal or decision being taken, and thought needs to be given to achieving real engagement rather than merely following a bureaucratic process. The guidance indicates that the period of consultation will usually last for between 2 and 12 weeks. The amount of time required for a consultation exercise should be decided on a case by case basis and depends on the nature of the proposal (for example, the diversity of interested parties or the complexity of the issue, the capacity of groups being consulted to respond, or external events). Given the nature of this current proposal it is recommended that the consultation should last for 12 weeks. Lawful consultation will provide evidence to inform a final decision on the Library Strategy.

8.3 In addition to the legal requirements for robust consultation as set out in section 5 above, the Council has to ensure it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Under section 1 of that Act, the Council must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. In addition under s149 of the Act, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In dealing with this duty, the Council must have due regard in particular, to the need to:

- (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (ii) take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- (iii) encourage persons who share a relevant characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Protected characteristics include disability, age, race, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 The consultation will be completed using existing Library and Customer Services resources.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 Extensive consultation will be undertaken with children and young people and with vulnerable adults, to ensure that their needs have been fully identified and captured in the final Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and in the recommended future service offer.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 A draft Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The final Equality Impact Assessment will be informed by public consultation.
- 11.2 The final version of the Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 and future service offer will take account of our public sector equality duty.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 Partners and Council Directorates will be included in the public consultation.
- 12.2 The Library Strategy 2016 – 2019 focuses on how Libraries can partner with others to improve services and outcomes for local people. Adult Social Care, Children and Young People's Services and Public Health are currently working with the service to identify opportunities to work in new ways and further develop Libraries as community hubs.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Non delivery of proposals or a delay in implementation of proposals could impact on the achievement of savings targets. This will be mitigated where possible by redirecting existing Customer and Cultural Services budgets.
- 13.2 External factors such as legal challenge could delay the implementation of a future service offer. The service will work closely with Legal Services to mitigate this risk.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

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Approvals obtained from:-

Financial Services: - Peter Bratley, Principal Officer

Legal Services: - Neil Concannon, Principal Officer