1. Meeting: Culture, Leisure & Lifelong Learning Cabinet Member

2. Date: 9th January 2007

3. Title: Thorpe Hesley Community Library

4. Programme Area: EDS

5. Summary

The Holy Trinity Church in Thorpe Hesley has been successful in raising funds for a new Community Centre in the village. As part of the fund raising the Church won a competition which provided sufficient additional funds to adapt the current planned building to include a library space.

The creation of a library at Thorpe Hesley will contribute to the library service meeting public library service standards and, in turn, would impact on the Council’s performance indicators and CPA achievements.

Work on the Church owned building is due to begin in the near future, with completion in 2007-8.

The need for a library at Thorpe Hesley was identified through a Strategic review of Community Libraries and a bids for revenue and capital funding have been submitted.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That the implementation of a library space within the building is supported.
7. Proposals and Details

The gap in library provision at Thorpe Hesley was identified in the Strategic Review of Community Libraries, undertaken in 2005 and used to inform planning for capital investment. A bid for funding to implement the review was submitted as part of the capital setting budget process for 2006-2007. This has remained on the 'A' list without being approved as yet. Within that bid was an allocation of £279,000 for a new library at Thorpe Hesley.

Since that bid was submitted, Rev Jan Hardy and the Holy Trinity Church in Thorpe Hesley have been successful in raising funds for a new Community Centre in the village. Having been made aware of the possibility of competing for additional funds (W.R.E.N. Waste Recycling Group Village Hall and Community Centre Challenge) they approached the Library Service to discuss the possibility of adapting the current planned building to include a library space – in response to community demands. After obtaining agreement in principal the Church entered and was successful in the competition.

Agreement has been reached with the Church to adapt part of the building to include a dual use space – combined meeting room and “fold away” library. This is an innovative development which could have possible application elsewhere in the Borough. Colleagues within Property Services have led on behalf of the Service in the proposed design and fit out of the building.

The creation of a library at Thorpe Hesley would contribute to the library service meeting public library service standards and, in turn, would impact on the Council’s performance indicators and CPA achievements.

Work on the Church owned building is due to begin in January 2007 with completion by September 2007.

8. Finance

The cost of the capital work required is £50,000

- Shelving and fit out: £25,000
- IT equipment: £5,000
- Installation of IT: £15,000
- Contingency £5,000

This reduces the RMBC contribution to establishing a new library at Thorpe Hesley by £229,000 and subject to appropriate authorisations will allow other recommendations of the review to be implemented. Clearly this is excellent value for money for the Council.

A BIP for annual revenue costs of £50,000 has been submitted and is being considered as part of the budget setting process for 2007-2008.
9. Risks and Uncertainties

If the project does not go ahead, there would be a negative impact on the performance of the library service and hence the performance of the Council against CPA.

Usage of the library service within the area is currently via an aging mobile library which would need to be replaced in the near future. Thorpe Hesley has been identified as a gap in service provision and there is unlikely to be another opportunity in the medium term to create additional library facilities within this area.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Library and Information Service contributes to all Corporate Plan priorities. It is also offers an important contribution towards meeting E Government targets. The Service’s performance is a significant factor in the scoring of the Culture block for CPA with 7 of the 12 Performance Indicators used relating to the Library Service.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Head of Culture & Leisure have commented on this report.

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