

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Delegated Powers Meeting of Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure Cabinet Member and Policy Advisors briefing
2.	Date:	February 2007
3.	Title:	Big Lottery Fund – Community Libraries Programme
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The Library and Information Service has the opportunity to submit a bid for funding to the Big Lottery Fund, Community Libraries Programme.

Grants of between £250,000 and £2million will be available, with the average grant expected to be around £800,000 for projects running for up to three years.

The proposal to focus on Mowbray Gardens Community Library offers an opportunity to develop services for both children and adults in an area where need for additional services has already been identified.

6. Recommendations

That the Council, along with community and voluntary sector representation, submit a bid to develop Mowbray Gardens Library to provide additional space, services and support for children, families and older people.

That Members encourage community representation within the area, including community involvement in the development, delivery and management of the service.

That the possible implications on both capital and revenue funding are noted, with further reports being submitted for clarity at regular intervals.

7. Proposals and Details

Background information – Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund Community Libraries programme was launched on the 9th October. It is intended to fund capital projects that are more than traditional library services and work with their communities to:

1. Invigorate libraries as centres of wider community learning and development and learning based activities
2. Create, improve and develop library spaces that meet the needs of the whole community
3. Be innovative and promote good practice in the ways libraries are designed and run

All projects must achieve the following outcome:

Communities are actively engaged in the development, delivery and management of library services.

Projects must also achieve two or more of the following outcomes:

1. Increased capacity of libraries to act as centres of wider community learning and development
2. Disadvantaged and non-user groups use libraries more
3. Local libraries are better designed, more accessible and more available to meet the needs of their community
4. Libraries have stronger long-term partnerships with the Voluntary and Community Sector and with other community service providers
5. Library buildings use less energy, pollute less, create less waste and have a reduced contribution to climate change.

The fund will not cover projects solely for the general refurbishment of libraries, or solely for increasing disability access.

The total funding available for the programme is £80 million. This is a competitive programme. Grants of between £250,000 and £2 million will be available, with the average grant expected to be around £800,000 for projects running for up to three years. If more than £1.5 million is applied for then at least 25% of the value of the grant must be provided in match funding. Projects must run for a maximum of three years.

Applications should be submitted by noon on Friday 30th March 2007, with a decision on grants being given in September 2007. Before March 2008, successful services will need to submit business, community engagement and capital project delivery plans. Work should begin by October 2008.

Options for development

Options include: developing a library or multi use building in an area of the Borough currently not served by the library service or developing a current library by expanding or improving services.

Public Library Service Standard 1 includes the requirement for a static library within 2 miles of every resident. Of those areas not currently served by a library (Bramley/Wickersley, Thorpe Hesley and Woodsetts), there are plans in place to develop libraries as part of joint centres during 2007/8 at Wickersley and Thorpe Hesley. This would improve the Service's performance against the standard from around 94% to around 98%, taking performance against Comprehensive Performance Assessment to upper threshold On 2006-7 targets.

Of the existing libraries, plans are being discussed, have been proposed or in place to develop Aston, Brinsworth, Central, Rawmarsh, Swinton and Wath. Dinnington and Thurgroft Community libraries are relatively recent builds/refurbishments. Plans are in place to refurbish Kiveton Park and Maltby.

Of the remaining libraries – Mowbray Gardens is the most appropriate because of its of its size, design, condition, the potential offered by its location, and its current and potential usage.

Following initial discussion with Young People's Services and Community Involvement, the options for development include:

- Services targeted at children and young people, including involvement on the management board, design and delivery of services
- Access to other Council services
- Partnership with the PCT, GPs surgeries, health visitors etc
- Improved service to the residents of Herringthorpe e.g. provision of community transport, home delivery service
- Community facilities – meeting rooms, access to learning opportunities

The application will need to include evidence of linkages to community plans, community consultation and involvement.

8. Finance

Library services are eligible to apply for a small amount of revenue funding from the Big Lottery. This should not exceed 20% of the total grant request. This can be used to cover costs such as marketing, promotion and staff training. There is an expectation that libraries will cover the majority of revenue costs, including the additional costs associated with building improvements, increased opening hours, staffing levels etc.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The deadline for applications to the Fund is March 2007. There is no opportunity to revise financial costs after that date. It is reasonable to expect that the fund will be over subscribed, so there could be a need to consider responses to expectations raised within the community. If Mowbray Gardens is recommended as the option for development, there are implications for the future of the swimming pool, as development has to begin by October 2008.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Library and Information Service contributes to all Corporate Plan priorities. It also offers an important contribution towards meeting the 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 relating to the library service.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

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