

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture, Lifestyle, Sport & Tourism Delegated Powers meeting
2.	Date:	8th March 2011
3.	Title:	Yorkshire Libraries & Information
4.	Programme Area:	Environment & Development Services

5. Summary

Yorkshire Libraries & Information (YLI), of which Rotherham is a member, is a regional community of public libraries working together to offer cost effective, quality services to partners. Its responsibilities include the maintenance of i) a section (authors N-S) of the National Joint Fiction Reserve and ii) a regional Music & Drama loan collection. YLI proposes to discontinue and dispose of the Fiction Reserve collection and to review delivery of the Music & Drama collection.

Additionally several library authorities are considering withdrawing from the Music & Drama service which could increase the costs for those which remain. The YLI constitution requires a full 12 months notice of withdrawal, which means that notice of intent to pull out of the service in the year 2012-13 must be received by YLI by 31st March 2011.

6. Recommendations

i) That Rotherham endorses the ending of the YLI Fiction Reserve collection and its sale to a book dealer and/or a salvage company for the best price available.

ii) That Rotherham gives notice to withdraw from the YLI Music & Drama collection as of 1st April 2012, with the proviso that efforts are made by the YLI consortium to find alternative ways for groups to access the resources they need.

7. Proposals and Details

i) Fiction Reserve

Members of YLI have questioned the continuing value of the joint fiction reserve in the light of severe budgetary pressures.

The YLI collection represents authors of new editions of Adult, Children's and Large Print titles by authors N-S as allocated across participant authorities in England in 1962. (Separate Fiction Reserves exist in Scotland and Ireland.)

The total cost of maintaining the collection is £57,313 p.a. of which Rotherham's contribution is £3,200. In the year 2009-10 a total of 570 loans were made, equating to £100 per loan.

The YLI Committee has made the decision to discontinue adding to the stock and proposes to dispose of the collection by sale to a book dealer with any remainder sold to a salvage company.

RMBC legal department have verbally advised that if the collection belongs to the subscribing members and the members wish to dispose of it then there are no legal restrictions. An enquiry has been made as to whether there is any obligation to any national body attached to discontinuing the N-S section of the collection.

ii) Music and Drama collection

YLI members are also questioning the sustainability of the Music and Drama collection; several participating library authorities have expressed their intention to withdraw, which in turn could have cost implications for any which continue to support the service. Rotherham currently pays £6,727.74 p.a. plus some smaller service charges to help maintaining the service. The latest report is that 18 local groups within Rotherham make use of the service.

Rotherham Library & Information Service has very little contact with the groups which contact and receive sets directly from the service at Wakefield. The service is not considered by YLI Committee members to be an essential service under the terms of the 1964 Libraries & Museums Act and the issues to groups are not added to any statistics of use by the library. Currently it is estimated that only 25% of the Music and Drama collection is used.

A small working group of YLI Committee has been tasked to investigate alternative ways of delivering the service – alternative sources of music and drama sets and different service delivery models. The working group will also consider a fully traded model where the groups would have to pay the full costs without the substantial subsidy from library authorities.

YLI Committee has proposed to increase the hire charges to groups substantially in the coming year and it is unknown whether this will reduce the number of subscribing groups as they obtain the material by other means.

The YLI Constitution requires a full 12 months notice prior to any authority pulling out, which gives a deadline of 31st March 2011 to withdraw from the service in 2012-13. Given that some authorities are likely to withdraw and thus increase costs for others, Rotherham

LIS proposes to announce its intention to withdraw. It is understood that if the situation alters during the course of the year, it would be possible to opt back into the scheme.

8. Finance

i) Disposal of YLI Joint Fiction Reserve will create savings to Rotherham as a subscribing member of YLI:

- a) Part year saving for fee already paid for 2011-12
- b) £3,200 p.a. charge to keep collection maintained in future
- c) Share of income from sale of collection

ii) If Rotherham remains in the Music and Drama scheme there is likely to be a substantial increase on the current £6,727 annual charge as the number of participating authorities decreases. If the service becomes fully traded to groups their expenses will be substantially higher, the more so if groups drop out.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

RMBC legal advice is that YLI own the collection and if agreed can dispose of it. Enquiries are still in progress with regard to disposal of a section of a national collection

The decision to continue or terminate the Joint Fiction Reserve has to be unanimous; Rotherham is in favour of its disposal.

The Music and Drama collection is increasingly expensive to maintain. If we do not withdraw prior to the 31st March 2011 deadline then we will face an unknown and greatly increased cost in 2012.

If the Music and Drama collection becomes wholly or in part a traded service to groups then the risk will be borne by the groups themselves; i.e. costs and the number of participants will be inter-linked

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

YLI consider that neither the Fiction Reserve or the regional Music and Drama collection can be considered as a legal requirement under the terms of the "comprehensive and efficient" phrase in the 1964 Act.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Copies of papers giving more information on the costs can be provided.

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