

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	23rd November 2011
3.	Title:	Library Service Review
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Options have been requested to deliver a modern, vibrant, library service whilst releasing annual efficiency savings of an estimated £500,000.

This paper outlines the current situation and makes suggestions to take forward further detailed work to ensure that the Authority continues to deliver a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof” (Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964) whilst taking account of available resources.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet approves:

- **The endorsement and implementation of the Library Strategy, as a statement of what the Service is trying to achieve**
- **That the Service undertakes an Equality Analysis on both current and proposed service delivery**
- **That the Service undertakes an assessment of needs that the Library Service should meet, sufficient to enable the Council to comply with its duties under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964**
- **That the Service undertakes public consultation in respect of any options for future service delivery**
- **That options for consideration take into account the impact of the Localities Review and Customer Service Consolidation**
- **That a further report be brought to Cabinet detailing proposals for the delivery of a modern, vibrant library service which also sets out options, if any, to demonstrate improved value for money by releasing efficiency savings.**

7. Proposals and Details

Options have been requested to deliver a modern, vibrant, library service whilst releasing annual efficiency savings of an estimated £500,000 prior to March 2014.

Initial discussions have identified potential impact on the location of libraries, opening hours, service delivery to specific groups and the range and number of books purchased.

Further detailed work is needed to ensure that the Authority continues to deliver a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof” (Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964) whilst taking account of available resources.

A letter to Councillors from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (3 Dec 2010) includes a number of key areas for consideration prior to any decisions:

- A statement of what the service is trying to achieve
- A description of local needs, including the general and specific needs of adults and children who live, work and study in the area
- A detailed description of how the service will be delivered and how the plans will fully take into account the demography of the area and the different needs of adults and children in different areas (both in general and specific terms)
- The resources available for the service, including an annual budget

The Library and Information Service Strategy 2011-15 was presented to the Cabinet Member, Lifelong Learning & Culture on July 19th 2011. It was approved that further follow up consultations would take place during August-October 2011, with a follow up report required during December 2011. It was also recognised that there would be a need for separate consultation on individual actions within the Strategy.

Subsequently the document was made available on the Council website for comment. In addition, those members of the public who had expressed an interest in participating in further consultation were contacted during this time. A Members' Seminar was held on October 4th 2011. Amongst other areas covered, this seminar recognised that future investment in opening hours, the materials fund and priorities for the future would be subject to further discussion and approval by Members. This discussion would take account of the statutory nature of the service and the requirement to base decisions regarding service provision on an assessment of local need.

It is therefore proposed that the attached updated Library Strategy is adopted and that this forms the basis of the delivery of a modern, vibrant, library service.

Following discussions with Legal Services, Financial Services and Policy, Performance and Commissioning further work will be needed in the immediate future. This includes:

- Assessment of local need
- Consultation with individual communities, partners, stakeholders and staff
- Equality Analysis of both current and proposed service delivery
- Statement of resources available
- Quality assurance of any potential savings identified

Following the above work, a further report will be presented to Cabinet concerning options for future service delivery

8. Financials

The budget for the Library and Information Service (2011-12) is £3,313,975. This includes:

- Community libraries £1,169,097
- Central Library £378,351
- Mobile libraries £180,585
- Casual staff contracts/additional hours £86,505
- Building maintenance £51,888
- Materials fund £504,101
- Service delivery support £439,209
- Group management £244,770
- Services to communities £259,469

The following savings have currently been agreed and are included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy:

- 2012-13:
 - Opening hours £40,000
 - Materials fund £30,000
 - Children's book festival/reader based events £16,000
- 2013-14
 - Materials fund £50,000

The indicative target for savings has been identified as £500,000, including the above figures (i.e. additional savings of £364,000).

9. Risks and Uncertainties

In order to ensure rigorous and robust decision making, proposals for the future of the service need to take into account its statutory nature, the resources available, existing and projected need for the service, including the consideration of vulnerable groups.

It is unlikely, bearing in mind the requirements for consultation and the need to implement a full service staffing review, that full year savings for 2012-13 would be released. There would be a need to implement the currently agreed savings on a temporary basis, pending decisions on the wider budget.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Libraries contribute to the following priority outcomes :

- More people in our poorest communities are in work and training
- There are more successful new businesses
- More people come to the Town Centre for work, shopping and for things to do and see
- More people are in work or training and less are living on benefits
- People enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure and cultural activities
- More people have formal qualifications and skills
- Babies and preschool children with a good start in life

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation on the Library Strategy, including an extensive survey of library users and non users was carried out during May/June/July 2010, asking them what they valued and what their priorities were for the future. Follow up consultation took place during August-October 2011.

It is envisaged that consultation on the implementation of specific actions within the strategy, taking into account the resources available, would be with users, potential users, partners, stake holders and local ward members.

Cabinet Member, Lifelong Learning and Culture – approval of library strategy: 19.1.11 (Minute F11)

Council Seminar: 4.10.11

Library and Information Service Strategy 2011-15 (updated version)

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