

Libraries Strategy – Alternative Delivery Models

Cabinet

Date: 8th February 2017

Author: Cabinet Member for Communities
Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to undertake an options appraisal to consider alternative delivery models for the Library Service. It follows the Cabinet meeting of 7 December 2016 at which Cabinet approved the adoption of Swindon's Libraries Strategy that is currently being implemented.
- 1.2 Approval of the recommendations would initiate a formal options appraisal to be undertaken, with recommendations to be brought back to Cabinet for its meeting of 26 April 2017.
- 1.3 The proposals contribute towards the Council's Vision for Swindon, and particularly: Priority Two: offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places; Priority Three: ensure clean and safe streets and improve public spaces and local culture; and Priority Four: Help people to help themselves while always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the update on the Libraries strategy implementation, and the preliminary work to assess the feasibility of taking forward alternative delivery models for the service.
- 2.2 To authorise the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, in consultation with the Board Director Resources and the Director of Law and Democratic Service, to undertake an options appraisal to consider alternative delivery models for the Library Service, and bring recommendations back to the Cabinet meeting of 26 April 2017.
- 2.3 To authorise the sum of £10k to be allocated from Libraries transitional funding to help meet the costs of professional advisers, to be determined in consultation with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

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3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 At its meeting of 7 December 2016, Cabinet approved the adoption of a strategy for the Library Service. This strategy set out a financial framework for the service to 2020, and comprises:
 - 3.1.1 A network of five core Libraries of Central, North Swindon, West Swindon, Highworth and Parks
 - 3.1.2 Professional Library services
 - 3.1.3 Enabling support to develop community-led local Library services
- 3.2 Since the adoption of the strategy in December 2017
 - 3.2.1 Officers are working with parish councils and community organisations to assist with their development of proposals for community-led Library Services. At the time of writing, expressions of interest are due on 31 January, and a further update will be provided at the Cabinet meeting.
 - 3.2.2 The cross-party Member Overview and Scrutiny Library Working Group will continue its work during the implementation of the Libraries Strategy, and will serve in an advisory capacity in the consideration of applications for transitional funding to support the establishment of community-led library services.
 - 3.2.3 The Libraries team is working with WHSmith and the National Literacy Trust to develop joint opportunities for the promotion of literacy and learning in Swindon.
 - 3.2.4 The service has submitted a bid to the national Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund to extend the reach and impact of its outreach services. It is understood that the fund has been oversubscribed, and the Council awaits a decision in March as to the success of its bid.
 - 3.2.5 Officers have developed a project management infrastructure through its Change Programme governance to support the implementation of the Libraries Strategy in accordance with the timescales approved by Cabinet.
- 3.3 The December Cabinet report also contained a recommendation to investigate the feasibility of alternative delivery models for the service. In consultation with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, officers have undertaken a preliminary assessment with Mutual Ventures, an external organisation who specialise in the development of charitable and public service mutual enterprises including Library Services.

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- 3.4 This work has helped clarify definitions and respective advantages of different organisational forms that could be considered for the Library Service and the most appropriate route to establish those. It is clear that there are a range of options that could be feasible, and number of detailed issues to be considered in determining the approach best suited to the Council's Library Service.
- 3.5 There are three key areas to be considered to identify the most appropriate delivery model. Firstly, consideration will need to be given to the specific services to be delivered, the outcomes to be achieved by the service, the ownership and control of the service, its growth strategy, financial model and level of control to be granted in its use of assets.
- 3.6 Secondly, there are different delivery model forms and those considered are:
 - 3.6.1 In-house delivery, whereby the Council continues to run its Library services as at present
 - 3.6.2 A Local Authority Trading Company, wholly owned by the Council and managed at arms-length, with Library services delivered via contract
 - 3.6.3 A Public Service Mutual, whereby a new organisational entity is established that shares ownership of service between the Council, communities and staff, with services delivered via contract between the Council and the PSM.
 - 3.6.4 Outsourcing delivery of Library Services, whereby interest is sought from other providers to deliver Library services on the Council's behalf under contract. This could include existing social enterprises, other local authorities or a for-profit provider.
 - 3.6.5 Establishing a Joint Venture with an existing provider of Library Services
- 3.7 Thirdly, there are options in terms of the legal form that the delivery model could take for example Limited Company, Community Interest Company, Co-operative or Community Benefit Society, and its status as a Social Enterprise or Charity.
- 3.8 Based on an initial options review workshop, the option of outsourcing to a "for profit" provider is not judged to meet the Council's vision for Libraries and is not an appropriate option to be taken forward to the next stage. The remaining options set out in paragraph 3.6 above could all be feasible, and the option of a Public Service Mutual could offer particular benefits in terms of innovation, commerciality and community and staff involvement.
- 3.9 A full options appraisal is required to examine these further, and to take this work forward, officers will consult with colleagues at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to secure appropriate external expertise, and put in place arrangements to involve elected members, Library users, staff and other stakeholders to help inform the most appropriate approach. It is intended that

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this work take place through February and March with recommendations being bought back to Cabinet for its meeting on 26 April 2017.

4. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 4.1 This report recommends the sum of £10k be allocated from Libraries transitional funding to undertake this options appraisal. Financial implications of alternative delivery models considered through the options appraisal will be reported to Cabinet once the detailed work has been undertaken.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 4.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 4.3 None arising from this report

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 4.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is not required for this report.

Risk Management

- 4.5 Any risks arising from the recommendations of this report will be managed as part of their implementation.

5. Consultees

- 5.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 None

7. Appendices

- 7.1 None

8. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 8.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for Month Year.