

Swindon Libraries – Children’s Library Membership

Cabinet

Date: 26th April 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 Cabinet’s approval of a scheme by which the Register Office staff would make parents more aware of the library service when they come to register their child.
- 1.2 The report is Cabinet’s response to the financial and other implications of a motion tabled at Council on 26th January 2017 that sought to establish a library card scheme where children would automatically become library members when their parents register their birth. Under Standing Order 9(1) this motion was referred to Cabinet without debate.
- 1.3 This proposal contributes 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 Approve the adoption of a scheme to encourage children’s membership of the Library Service.
- 2.2 Invite the Cabinet Member for Communities to report on this to Council.

3. Detail

- 3.1 At its meeting of 26th January 2017 the following motion was tabled: “This Council: (i) Notes its priority to improve educational attainment so Swindon is above the average in England KS4 results.(ii) Believes that public libraries has a role to play in improving literacy rates and contributing towards that important council priority. (iii) Believes that it should do all it can to improve library participation rates. (iv) Agrees to establish a library card scheme where children would automatically become library members when their parents register their birth.”

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- 3.2 Under Standing Order 9(1) this motion was referred to Cabinet without debate as its adoption could have financial implications (Council Minute 78, 2016/17 refers).
- 3.3 Officers from the Library and Registrars’ teams have discussed the most practical ways of encouraging Library membership from the earliest possible age without incurring additional financial or other costs if Cabinet were minded to implement such a policy.
- 3.4 In order to increase awareness and participation in the Library service, it is proposed that parents registering the birth of a child would receive marketing information about Library services in Swindon and how to register their child as a Library member. Parents would then receive an active Library card on the child’s first, or any subsequent, Library visit.
- 3.5 This approach is the most cost effective option, and is similar to that taken by other authorities. The Library service will monitor the extent to which this increases children’s Library membership.
- 3.6 If approved, these arrangements would be put in place to take effect from 1st July 2017.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Cabinet could decide not to implement the arrangements described in this report. These could be a straightforward and cost effective way of encouraging greater Library membership for parents of young children, and the impact of this will monitored to assess whether it makes a material effect.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This scheme will incur marginal additional costs of Library promotional material and marketing information (c£1k), and staff time, which will be absorbed within existing resources.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 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)

- 5.3 None arising from this report

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Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been undertaken for this report. Monitoring of take up of children’s memberships as a result of the arrangements in this report will be undertaken as part of the Library Services regular profiling of its registered users, with impacts monitored.

Risk Management

- 5.5 None arising from this report.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None

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

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for April 2017.