

Addendum to the Cabinet Report – Modern Libraries Programme; Community Libraries Approach – Call in response

Consideration of the Call in for E3000

Meeting Date 23rd November 2017

1. Purpose of this Addendum

- 1.1. The report for this Cabinet meeting was published with the agenda and set out the options available to Cabinet.
- 1.2. The report to the October 2017 meeting of Cabinet about Community Libraries, together with the agenda and minutes for the CTE panel on 13th November 2017 form the key background documents.
- 1.3. This Addendum has been drafted in consultation with the portfolio holder to provide a Cabinet response

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Cabinet is recommended to confirm its original decision, as taken on 11th October 2017 (E3000), and agree the following clarifications and amendments which address the three issues raised by CTE at its call-in meeting on 13th November 2017:
 - 2.1.1. In the event that the Council is unable to secure a locally agreed Community Run Library provision in any of the existing five Branch Libraries, an options report will be produced for consideration by Cabinet to determine the approach to be taken in that area, having reference to financial consequences and the outcomes of consultation.
 - 2.1.2. The consultation approach will include the matters and approaches detailed in Section 4 below.
 - 2.1.3. The Mobile Library Service will continue to operate and is not subject to closure .

CTE Panel Issues

3. Clarity over Community Library process and provision

- 3.1. CTE panel was concerned that there had not been enough consultation with Communities to know whether local groups can take on this model for community run libraries or even if there was appetite to do this.
- 3.2. The main purpose of the Cabinet report on 11th October 2017 was to enable meaningful consultation to take place at the earliest stages of the Community

Library Model's development. Therefore the Call-in decision impeded this opportunity as this item was to be discussed at the current round of Forum Meetings, but has now been removed from the agenda.

- 3.3. However, it is acknowledged that Panel Members were not entirely clear as to the process and what may happen, if a community that currently receives a library service was unable to either develop a community led approach or find the appetite for such an approach.
- 3.4. This Panel's concern appears to only apply to the five Branch Libraries which are currently run by the Council (Moorland Road; Weston; Radstock; Saltford; and Paulton). To be clear, in each of these areas there has been some initial engagement with local Members and or interested groups. This took place through Area Forums over a year ago. It has, however, been difficult to move these discussions forwards or commence meaningful consultation without an approved model and funding. This is what was requested in the original Cabinet report in October 2017. In all our other communities the model is aimed at giving the opportunity to improve library services for residents who at present only receive a mobile library visit in some cases of only around 15 minutes every fortnight. It is evident from the early consultation that many areas across B&NES can identify people and places from where they would like to operate a Community Run Library. This model along with a small amount of funding can enable them to do this. ***(A brief update of current engagement is attached along with examples of six successful Community Libraries from across the country Appendix 1).***
- 3.5. The Cabinet report sets out a series of options for the operation of Community Libraries whilst recognising that one size does not fit all. The one-off funding requested in the report is partly to assist with any initial investment required; to assist any financial challenges of transition to a community model; to provide funds to enable meaningful consultation once suitable models have been identified by communities and project management.
- 3.6. The financial targets for this programme are for 2019/20 onwards. If local agreement is not possible Cabinet will need to make decisions about the need for closures, alternative provision or equivalent savings to achieve a balanced budget. Therefore we are adding a clarification to the original recommendations about this.
- 3.7. Details relating to these savings were included in the October Cabinet report and this should be read in conjunction with the overall Modern Libraries Review business case that was submitted to the July 2017 Cabinet meeting.
- 3.8. As each local solution will need to be individual and pertinent to that local community, local engagement will be needed to establish the challenges and potential options. The Community Library Model is scalable, and this means

that innovative and ambitious groups will not be restricted by the model. Alternatives such as self-service may also be possible as part of this model. Throughout this process consultation with users and residents will be carried out once the Council is clear on any viable local proposition.

3.9. The majority of savings from the Community Run Library Model are achieved by staff reductions. Each of the five B&NES run branch libraries are supported by staff from one of the three core libraries.

3.10. The Community Library Model also assumes that the Council is no longer liable to cover costs associated with the buildings such as utility costs, cleaning costs, rent or rates for each of the five branch libraries, except perhaps in the period of transition.

3.11. Once a Community Library is established, the model describes how the Council will continue to provide support including: -

- The provision of book rotation
- Professional advice & support
- Training & Development (including IT training)

4. Consultation Approach

4.1. This section draws on some of the issues raised by CTE Panel in respect of consultation and seeks to clarify information that is contained within the Cabinet report.

4.2. The Community Forums are identified as the best way to initiate consultation. This is as an introduction and will not be the only consultation. It is envisaged that consultation will be developed with the most appropriate partners in each community area. This could be Parish Councils; established voluntary or charitable groups; education establishments, or simply interested parties such as The Friends of the Library. It is also possible in some areas that we may have more than one group wishing to be involved with a Community Library opportunity. We will also work with elected Ward Members and we will ensure users and resident's views are taken in to account.

4.3. When embarking on consultation in either the five existing Branch Library areas, or other areas, officers will provide support. This was detailed in the original Cabinet report and includes things like: -

- A full set of data relating to current usage;
- Details of existing costs and arrangements to ease the transition where necessary;
- Support recruitment and training of volunteers;
- Help to write business cases; and
- Support to make bids for additional funds.

5. The Mobile Library

- 5.1. CTE Panel has requested that Cabinet provides certainty over the Mobile Library as it considered this was not clear in the Cabinet report.
- 5.2. The Cabinet report did not recommend closure of the Mobile Library Service and there are no planned savings targets associated with the closure of the mobile service. It is anticipated that communities with a new Community Library may not need access to the Mobile Library Service but they and other mobile library users will be consulted. At the October meeting, Cabinet confirmed that it had no plans to remove the Mobile Library Service.
- 5.3. Cabinet recognises that the Mobile Library provides not only access to books but also human contact. As part of the consultation process; officers will seek to better understand the needs of Mobile Library users.
- 5.4. CTE Panel also raised concerns about the age and reliability of the current mobile vehicle and therefore it is pertinent to point out in this report that officers will be investigating opportunities to replace the existing vehicle as soon as is practicably possible.