

Procedure in the Event of Possible Closure of a CML

On 6 July 2018, the Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities titled "[Community Managed Libraries](#)" regarding progress made with the implementation of CMLs, arrangements to support their sustainable operation, and the proposed process to be followed should a CML Group no longer be able to run a library. An extract from the report setting out the procedure in the event of a possible closure is set out below -

"It is acknowledged that there may be situations in the future when a CML group decides that it is no longer able to continue the operation of the library. Should this arise it is proposed that the process outlined below would be followed.

The group in question would be obliged to give formal notice to the Council that it could no longer provide library services. The agreements with the CML groups require that six months' notice is given, but realistically it may not be possible for a service to continue to be provided during this notice period. It is therefore proposed that in the case of notice being given:

- a) The Local Member and Cabinet Member would be notified by the Director.
- b) Arrangements for interim library service provision would be put in place until a permanent solution had been agreed. The Director may appoint a group or organisation to act as a 'caretaker' on a time-limited basis, or may agree a replacement mobile library service as a temporary measure.
- c) The public would be advised and any group(s) willing to take over the management of the library would be invited to make submissions to the Council. Where appropriate the Council would assist the formation of a new group, or support the transfer of responsibility from the existing charity/group to the new group. (Depending upon the situation a formal registration of interest or other process may be required to ensure fairness and transparency; this would be a matter for the Director of Adults and Communities to decide).
- d) In the event of a CML group being identified and there being no significant reduction in the services provided, following consultation with the Local Member(s) and Cabinet Lead Member, the Director of Adults and Communities would agree the new arrangements.
- e) Should no community managed solution be found, the Director of Adults and Communities and the Assistant Chief Executive would make the necessary arrangements in order to initiate a public consultation on alternative library provision (e.g. mobile library services).
- f) All proposals received under c) and e) above would be assessed against a 'value for money' framework, which would include an evaluation of the quality of service and community cohesions/resilience factors, and equality and human rights issues, as well as purely financial considerations.
- g) Reference would also be made to the provisions of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, including whether it remained appropriate to continue to offer a library service at the location in question.

- h) The outcome of the public consultation, along with proposals for any alternative community managed solutions or service provision would be reported to the Cabinet, including a full Equality Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) being undertaken to inform decision making. The Cabinet would make the decision on the future of the service.
- i) Should it be decided to close a library the future of the building or site will be reviewed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan."

Minute extract - Cabinet, 6 July 2018

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities regarding Community Managed Libraries, including proposals for a process to be followed should a community group find itself unable to continue to run a library. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Community Managed Library groups throughout Leicestershire be congratulated on their achievements in having developed their local libraries into thriving community hubs;
- (b) That the continued support in place to help Community Managed Library groups to run their libraries, including the availability of temporary support funds be noted;
- (c) That the process to be followed should any Community Managed Library group be unable to continue to provide a library service as set out in paragraphs 28–30 of the report be approved, noting in particular that this includes:
 - (i) Delegation to the Director of Adults and Communities, following consultation with Local Member(s) and Cabinet Lead Member, to agree alternative arrangements if this will result in no significant effect in the level of library provision;
 - (ii) A report to the Cabinet in the event that significant changes to library provision might result.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) are now in place across large parts of the County and are working well. The individual CML groups are responsible for ensuring they are sustainable and well managed and the Council continues to provide support where required. The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure provision of a "comprehensive and efficient" library service as detailed in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

The Council has ensured support is in place to help CML groups to manage their sustainability pro-actively and to advise and support them to deal effectively with emerging issues that may pose a potential risk to the future operation of the service as they arise. Most of the financial support will end in 2021/22.

In situations where a CML ceases operation, the Council will need to act swiftly to consider alternative provision.