

**CABINET – 16 JUNE 2015**

**FUTURE STRATEGY FOR THE DELIVERY OF LIBRARY SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES**

**PART A**

**Purpose of Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet on the progress made with communities who have been assessed as meeting the County Council's conditions to enable them to manage their community library, and those where no Registration of Interest (ROI) has been received, or submitted and subsequently withdrawn.

**Recommendations**

- 2 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
  - a) Notes the work undertaken with communities who are progressing to operate their library with support from the County Council;
  - b) Notes that the submissions of outline business plans made by community groups from Barrow, Barwell, Castle Donington, Countesthorpe, and Markfield now meet the County Council's conditions and are capable of moving to formal agreements following approval from the Director of the Adults and Communities, and following consultation with the County Solicitor;
  - c) Agrees to allow additional time for community groups in Kirby Muxloe and Thurmaston to undertake the work required to progress their outline business plans to a point where they meet the Council's conditions for support;
  - d) Notes that Quorn has indicated their intention to submit an outline business plan. This will be assessed and if it does not meet the County Council's conditions for support, will be included in a second round of ROI as detailed in paragraph e) below.
  - e) Notes the continued engagement work being undertaken with communities where no ROI has been received, or submitted and subsequently withdrawn and approves a second and final period to invite ROIs and outline business plans for groups to engage with the County Council;
  - f) Does not accept the outline business plans submitted for Mountsorrel and Braunstone Town libraries in their current format and invites ROIs and outline business plans for those libraries in line with the recommendation outlined in e) above;

- g) Requests officers to commence development of proposals for alternative library service provision should no viable ROI or outline business plan come forward for those libraries referred to in e) and f) above;
- h) Receives a progress report in October 2015.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 5 The County Council has a statutory obligation to ensure the provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service. An analysis of the current library service indicates that, whilst it is comprehensive, there are a large number of service points, potentially leading to an inefficient use of resources. Alterations to the service proposed would continue to meet the statutory obligations of the Council whilst contributing towards Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings.
- 6 The proposal is for the Council to enable and facilitate the ongoing provision, wherever possible, of services by closer working with communities and other providers, whilst at the same time sustaining the countywide infrastructure to enable it to meet its statutory obligations and budget challenges.
- 7 The Council seeks to ensure that local communities are given the opportunity to develop a way forward in managing their local library within the framework of a support package provided by the Council over a tapered period of seven years. A very positive response has been received from initial ROIs and the subsequent outline business plans with 29 of 36 communities responding by the initial deadline of 16 January 2015.
- 8 The proposals for community managed libraries are in line with the Community Strategy which was agreed by the Cabinet on 13 October 2014. Priority 2 of that Strategy aims to support community groups to operate community managed libraries and to work alongside the Authority to design and deliver services.
- 9 The submissions from Mountsorrel and Braunstone Town are based on assumptions of financial contributions by the County Council that are not compliant with the County Council's published offer of support as approved by the Cabinet in November 2014. Therefore it is suggested that, at this stage, a further opportunity is given to the existing or alternative groups to submit a ROI to develop an outline business plan that is compliant with the County Council's offer of support.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

- 10 The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report on the 2 June 2015, and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.
- 11 A progress report will be presented to the Cabinet in October 2015.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

- 12 The 2014 MTFS was approved by the County Council at its meeting on 19 February 2014 and identified a reduction in funding for library services, including its supporting infrastructure. This saving consisted of a reduction in opening hours at market town and shopping centre libraries, a reduction in the bookfund, and the implementation of community managed libraries.

- 13 On 5 March 2014, the Cabinet approved a three-month consultation on a proposed remodelling of the library service based on the following elements:
  - 16 major market town and shopping centre libraries funded by the Council with a 20% reduction in opening hours;
  - A support service that will enable local communities to run their local library;
  - An online library service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to those with access to the internet;
  - A mobile library service that will provide a regular library service to most villages without a static library.
- 14 On 19 November, 2014, the Cabinet agreed the proposed infrastructure support package to be offered to local communities wishing to operate community managed libraries.
- 15 On 16 March 2015, the Cabinet authorised the Director of Adults and Communities to assess the outline business plans put forward by community groups that had registered an interest in running their community library, and the County Solicitor to prepare the necessary legal agreements where communities were deemed to have in place a satisfactory outline business plan which was compliant with the County Council's requirements for providing support to community managed libraries.
- 16 It also agreed a further round of engagement with community groups would take place where either no ROI was received by the deadline date of 16 January 2015, or where the ROI had been subsequently withdrawn, or where the initial ROI submitted required further work to be compliant with the County Council's requirements.
- 17 On 11 May 2015, the Cabinet noted the assessments of 27 submissions of outline business plans and authorised the Director of the Adults and Communities, following consultation with the County Solicitor, to enter into agreements for 19 community managed libraries to be run by community groups/organisations, subject to appropriate legal agreements in relation to lease and grant funding being in place. It noted that three of the 19 community groups needed to make only minor adjustments to their outline business plans to meet the conditions for approval.
- 18 The Cabinet also noted the continuing engagement with the five communities whose submissions were identified as requiring further work to seek to progress them to meeting the Council's conditions for providing support, and another three communities where extensions to the submissions of an outline business case was agreed due to particular local circumstances affecting these libraries.
- 19 The Cabinet also noted the second period of engagement was underway, with nine communities, where an original ROI was not received, or submitted, but subsequently withdrawn.

### **Resources Implications**

- 20 Members will be aware of the worsening financial situation which is reflected in the MTFs approved by the County Council on 18 February 2015. Savings of £2.6m will need to be made by the Communities and Wellbeing Service by 2018/19. Delays in implementing this year's savings target means that savings will have to be made

elsewhere within the department's budget and officers are currently considering options to meet this shortfall.

- 21 The annual savings from the community libraries programme remain in line with the initial estimates. For the 21 libraries that are well positioned to become community managed libraries, annual savings are expected to be £0.3m from staff savings and £0.2m from running costs, following the end of the seven year tapering period when the groups assume full responsibility for the costs in question. This will also help to enable further savings from the departmental infrastructure that supports all libraries.
- 22 The County Council has set aside £0.2m to support community groups in the initial set up stage. Latest claim estimates against this amount are slightly below this figure. These implementation costs will be funded from the transformation reserve, as will redundancy and pension costs relating to the staff changes.
- 23 The Director of Corporate Resources and the County Solicitor have been consulted on the contents of this report.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

- 24 As the proposals in this report affect a number of electoral divisions, this report is being circulated to all Members of the Council via the Members' News in Brief Service.

### **Officers to Contact**

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## PART B

### Background

- 25 On 11 May 2015, the Cabinet proposed to provide support to 16 community groups/organisations in the areas listed below to run community managed libraries, subject to appropriate legal arrangements in relation to lease and grant funding:

**Anstey, Bottesford, Desford, Fleckney, Glenhills, Groby, Hathern, Kegworth, Leicester Forest East, Market Bosworth, Newbold Verdon, Ratby, Rothley, Sileby, South Wigston and Stoney Stanton.**

- 26 In addition, three libraries in **Barrow, Barwell and Markfield** were recommended to move to this stage, subject to minor conditions being met.

- 27 The following five communities were identified as requiring further work being undertaken in order for them to progress to a stage where an agreement can be reached:

**Castle Donington, Countesthorpe, Great Glen, Kirby Muxloe and Thurmaston.**

- 28 Extensions to the deadline for submission of an outline business plan were agreed with **Mountsorrel, Braunstone Town and Quorn** due to particular local circumstances affecting these three libraries.

- 29 In addition to the above, a further period of engagement was begun with those nine communities where an original ROI was not received or was submitted, but then withdrawn. These communities are:

**Burbage, Cosby, Enderby, East Goscote, Ibstock, Kibworth, Measham, Narborough and Sapcote.**

### Progress update

- 30 The Appendix to this report details the current status of all the 36 community libraries associated with this work and includes the position with regards to the libraries described in **paragraphs 25-29**.

- 31 Further details on the other libraries described in **paragraphs 26-29** above is set out below.

#### Barrow, Barwell and Markfield

- 32 These three libraries were identified as being capable of moving to a formal agreement subject to minor conditions being met. Sufficient progress has now been made for these three libraries to progress to a formal agreement as detailed in paragraph 4 b) above.

#### Castle Donington, Countesthorpe, Great Glen, Kirby Muxloe and Thurmaston

- 33 The current position regarding these five libraries, which were identified as requiring further work being undertaken to their submissions, in order for them to progress to a stage where agreement can be reached, is detailed in the table overleaf:

<b>Library</b>	<b>Outline Business Plan Status</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Castle Donington	Sufficient progress has been made	Approve for support, subject to minor conditions being met
Countesthorpe	Progress now satisfactory	Approve for support
Great Glen	Plan has been formally withdrawn by the group	Include community in second round of ROI as detailed in <b>paragraph 4 e)</b>
Kirby Muxloe	Progress delayed by Charity Commission requirements	Defer recommendation until October 2015
Thurmaston	Some progress being made	Defer recommendation until October 2015

- 34 On 14 May 2015, Great Glen withdrew their outline business plan due to a lack of support within the community to set up a group to run the library. It is recommended that Great Glen be added to those libraries referred to in **paragraph 39**.

#### Mountsorrel and Braunstone Town

- 35 The outline business plan submissions for Braunstone Town and Mountsorrel have been assessed. In both cases the financial assumptions underpinning the outline business plan do not comply with the published offer of grant funding as approved by the Cabinet in November 2014. Both of the outline business cases submitted assumed an ongoing element of County Council financial support, rather than the approved offer of seven year funding on a tapered basis.
- 36 It is therefore proposed that, in their current formats, the outline business plans for Mountsorrel and Braunstone Town libraries should not be accepted by the County Council at this stage, but are included in a second round of ROI. This will enable other groups or organisations to suggest alternatives that comply with the Council's agreed support offer and for the existing groups to reconsider their submissions.

#### Quorn

- 37 Quorn have a draft outline business plan that is awaiting further consideration by the newly elected Parish Council. It is therefore proposed to allow additional time to complete the work required to progress their plan to meet the County Council's conditions for support, and to submit it for assessment. If this does not meet the County Council's conditions for support, it is proposed to be included in a second round of ROI detailed in paragraph 4 e) above.

#### Burbage, Cosby, Enderby, East Goscote, Ibstock, Kibworth, Measham, Narborough and Sapcote

- 38 The nine communities in this grouping either did not submit an original ROI, or did submit but subsequently withdrew.
- 39 It is proposed that the Council holds a second and final round to invite ROIs in these communities, in order to enable them to further engage with the process and work towards a viable outline business plan for a community-managed library.
- 40 Additional engagement with existing groups and potential interested parties is already continuing with a round of local meetings scheduled for late May/early June 2015. These meetings are facilitated by Voluntary Action Leicestershire and the aim is to support any emerging local groups so that they are able to take part in the second round of ROI.

## **Conclusions**

- 41 Further positive progress has been undertaken to enable the County Council to achieve its aim of supporting local communities to manage their local library.
- 42 It is intended that a further update on this work will be reported to the Cabinet in October 2015. This will include an outline of the final position for each library, final recommendations as to which community managed libraries can be supported and further recommendations for any communities that remain without a plan for a locally managed library service.

## **Background Papers**

Report of the Cabinet to the County Council meeting, 19 February 2014 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2017/18

<http://ow.ly/JmQUZ>

Report to the Cabinet, 5 March 2014 - Consultation on Proposals for Changes in the Delivery of Community Library Services

<http://ow.ly/JmQOC>

Report to the Cabinet, 19 September 2014 - Outcome of Consultation on Proposals for Changes in the Delivery of Library Services

<http://ow.ly/JmQGv>

Report to the Cabinet, 13 October 2014 – Communities Strategy

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004268/AI00039244/\\$8CommunitiesStrategy.docxA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004268/AI00039244/$8CommunitiesStrategy.docxA.ps.pdf)

Report to the Cabinet, 19 November 2014 – Future Strategy for the Delivery of Library Services

<http://ow.ly/JmQwT>

Report to the Cabinet 16 March 2015 – Future Strategy for the Delivery of Library Services

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004360/AI00043156/\\$4librariesreport3.docxA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004360/AI00043156/$4librariesreport3.docxA.ps.pdf)

## **Appendix**

Details the current status of all the 36 community libraries

## **Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

- 43 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) for each of the 36 community libraries was prepared and attached to the Cabinet report of 19 November 2014.
- 44 The EHRIA process is iterative in nature and Equality and Human Rights Improvement Plan, attached to each EHRIA, outlines mitigating actions to be monitored as the move towards community partnerships develops.
- 45 The grant agreement that will exist between the County Council and the local organisation will additionally include an anti-discrimination clause and a requirement for compliance with the articles contained in the Human Rights Act.

- 46 An online interactive community profile for each area has been established which outlines key features associated with each community from a number of criteria. This can be viewed through the following link: <http://ow.ly/JmQgE>. This will help to identify the impact of the delivery model on areas which have higher levels of deprivation and go on to inform any future decision making.