



CABINET - 23 JUNE 2017

FUTURE STRATEGY FOR THE DELIVERY OF LIBRARY SERVICES

**TRANSFER OF BRAUNSTONE TOWN LIBRARY TO COMMUNITY
MANAGEMENT**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of some minor changes to arrangements for the transfer of Braunstone Town library to community management and seek agreement to the transfer.

Recommendations

- 2 It is recommended that:
 - (a) The minor changes from the original business plan submitted by Fabula Social Enterprise in 2016 are noted;
 - (b) The transfer of the Braunstone Town library to Braunstone Town Community Library (BTCL), a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. To enable the transfer of the library to the 'Braunstone Town Community Library' charity which has been established by Fabula Social Enterprise (Fabula).
4. In April 2016, the Cabinet accepted the proposal from Fabula Social Enterprise to establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to manage the library. Since then, following advice from the Charity Commission, together with the ongoing progress towards transfer, a number of minor changes have been made to the business plan, mainly that a different name for the CIO - 'Braunstone Town Community Library' be adopted. As this differs slightly from the original proposal agreed, the Cabinet is being asked to confirm the transfer.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The transfer will continue to be progressed as planned, and should be completed by September 2017.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. In September 2014, the Cabinet approved a 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 enabling 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 providing a regular library service to most villages without a static library.
7. Between January 2015 and March 2016, the Cabinet considered several reports regarding the transfer of community libraries across the County. To date, 30 libraries have transferred to community management.

Resource Implications

8. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendations.
9. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

Mrs A. J. Hack CC

Officers to Contact

Jon Wilson, Director of Adults and Communities
 Adults and Communities Department
 Tel: 0116 305 7454
 Email: jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk

Nigel Thomas, Head of Service, Communities and Wellbeing
 Adults and Communities Department
 Tel: 0116 305 7379
 Email: nigel.thomas@leics.gov.uk

PART B**Background**

10. To date 30 libraries in Leicestershire have transferred to community management, supported by a County Council funded package of grants and running costs that tapers over a seven-year period.
11. Braunstone Town library is built on land owned by Braunstone Town Council for which the County Council has a 99-year lease. Whilst there is no lease break clause the lease does allow for other alternative local authority uses in the event the library closes, subject to the agreement of Braunstone Town Council. There is an obligation on the County Council to pay the building running costs as defined within the ground lease, i.e. for a further 92 years.
12. As part of the transition process, local communities were invited to submit a registration of interest (ROI) and an outline business plan to propose how a locally formed group might manage each of 36 local libraries.
13. Three ROI's and outline business plans were submitted for Braunstone Town: two from Braunstone Town Council and one from Fabula, a staff based social enterprise whose focus is on supporting looked after children and reading. The Fabula submission had followed a further period of time that had been agreed to allow groups to revise or re-submit outline business plan proposals, and for a consultation on alternative service provision to take place.
14. In April 2016, the Cabinet agreed to progress the Fabula proposal because it conformed closest to the support package on offer to other community groups and was the most cost-effective option following an assessment that was presented as part of that report.
15. The Council's support package was varied so that funding ended a year later as the Fabula financial model assumed the funding package would begin upon transition, whenever that took place.
16. The original transfer date for Braunstone Town library was March 2017, but this was always dependent on the granting of CIO status to a charitable body established by the Fabula Social Enterprise, which would operate the library through community volunteers and be supported financially by income from events organised and run by Fabula.
17. In order to ensure transparency, a separation of functions, and to avoid confusion about the roles proposed in its plan, the Fabula Social Enterprise decided on the use of a different name from the original 'Fabula Libraries' for the planned CIO. 'Braunstone Town Community Library' was chosen, and was granted CIO status on 22 May 2017.
18. Fabula had intended that Braunstone Town Council Service Centre staff would undertake basic library duties under supervision of a Group representative and these costs were built into its business plan. As this has not proved feasible, its stated alternative, the use of a paid volunteer manager is being pursued.

19. In order to mitigate any conflict of interest in the appointment to that post, a range of operational actions will be put in place and be subject to regular monitoring.
20. One of the three trustees named in the Fabula business plan has stepped down from the library group and, to reduce any perceived conflict of interest between the County Council and community library responsibilities, the other two named trustees intend to step down from the BTCL board once the CIO has been established and an independent chair/management board are appointed.
21. The balance of stock across adults and children will remain unchanged from the current position. This is partly in response to local concerns which had been raised at the proposal in the original business plan to re-align stock in favour of literature for children and young people.
22. With the exception of the minor changes from the original business plan outlined in paragraphs 15-21 above, the purpose and function of BTCL are unchanged from the original business plan submitted by Fabula in 2016.

Conclusion

23. Officers are continuing to work closely with Fabula and BTCL to support them in progressing their plans. The transfer is now expected in September 2017.
24. The variations as outlined in this paper still represent the closest fit to the package of support and model originally proposed for communities as part of the wider libraries transfer project.

Background papers

Report to the Cabinet on 19 April 2016 'Future Strategy for the Delivery of Library Services
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MIId=4601&Ver=4>

Equality and Human Rights Implications

25. There are no equality or human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
26. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment for each of the 36 community libraries, including Braunstone Town was appended to the Cabinet report of 19 November 2014.