

CABINET - 23 JUNE 2017. Item 19

FUTURE STRATEGY FOR THE DELIVERY OF LIBRARY SERVICES
TRANSFER OF BRAUNSTONE TOWN LIBRARY TO COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Notes to Cabinet from Amanda Hack CC, Braunstone Division.

Whilst welcoming a conclusion to the lengthy process of handover of Braunstone Library, I find it necessary to point out a number of problems thrown up by the County along the way which put in jeopardy the goodwill of volunteers and partners. Lessons must be learnt.

This proposed change suggested in the paper on Braunstone Town Library is yet another change offered to Fabula group that was not extended to other bidders. Had the County had a more flexible approach to the initial proposer the library would have transferred almost 2 years ago.

I'd like to bring to the attention of the cabinet that Paragraph 11, which identifies the '*obligation on the County Council to pay the building running cost*'. This obligation was not included in the criteria of the running of the Braunstone Town Library at the first two open ROI stages – yet was the reason identified to reject the two Braunstone Town community bids. The opportunity to provide a community led service in the 8th largest Leicestershire Community was therefore missed at an early stage.

I would also like to note for the record that the lease agreement was not discussed by the County Council prior to the submission of either of the open ROI processes, yet was raised a number of times by the landlord, Braunstone Town Council.

Paragraph 13 wrongly implies that the third ROI stage was open to all. The third ROI was only open to Fabula a group formed by ex county council colleagues, which has created a huge amount of animosity for the local community action group SOLAG who felt excluded from the ROI process at the third stage.

As the County Councillor I would like to highlight that the community has lost its patience with the County Council over the transfer of the library. The community consultations were well supported with 60 people attending the county led consultation and over 100 attended the community event.

Finally I remain concerned about the on-going volunteering support from the community to the proposed library service. This initial goodwill has been placed in jeopardy due to the actions and decision taken since the process begun over 24 months ago.

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