



**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2020**

STATUS ON SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARIES

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) and their medium-term sustainability, and which proposed amendments to the current support package on offer. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) It was clarified that the Click and Collect Service enabled registered library members to request a selection of books online by genre or author; once library staff had collected the books a suitable pick up time could then be arranged. Library members that did not have access to online services could make a request to their local CML by phone. In terms of collections made by library members, it was acknowledged that with the social distancing measures currently in place there were limitations to the number of people that could physically make a visit. However, monitoring would continue going forward to ensure the best offer was in place for service delivery.
- (ii) It was confirmed that the mobile library service continued to be paused as a result of the pandemic. However, an extension to the Click and Collect Service was being considered to keep pace with service demand. In response to a member's request, officers undertook to give further consideration to the mobile service options available to residents of the Barwell community in light of its size.
- (iii) Part of scaling up the current baseline offer would include the County Council putting forward an additional support offer that CMLs could choose to buy into which focussed on the management of soft facilities. In response to a question it was confirmed that due to the scale, it was intended that the provision of book stock and ICT equipment would remain the property of the County Council and that the usual book swapping arrangements between the CMLs involved would be able to continue.

- (iv) Members commended the respectable level of contingency which was there to provide additional support to CMLs in unforeseen circumstances such as an emergency roof or boiler failure. The introduction of an additional one-off grant payment for 2020/21 that CML's could apply for to support running costs where there had been a shortfall of income due to Covid-19 was welcomed.
- (v) Looking to the future, it was suggested there could be opportunities arising from the Covid-19 pandemic for CMLs to move to more cost-efficient premises. The Committee requested that officers continue to take proactive action in exploring further possible options to support CMLs beyond 2021-22, including exploring with them any potential alternative premises arrangements.
- (vi) Members noted the good practice examples of work outlined in the report and asked officers to take appropriate measures to ensure these were shared across the library network.
- (vii) The Committee confirmed its support for the service proposals, subject to the comments raised, and welcomed further updates at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the status of support for Community Managed Libraries be noted;
- (b) That the Committee's comments on the proposed amendments to the current support package on offer to Community Managed Libraries be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration;
- (c) That the Director of Adults and Communities be requested to take appropriate measures to ensure that the good practice examples of work outlined in the report is shared across the network;
- (d) That the Director of Adults and Communities be requested to give further consideration to the mobile service options available to residents of the Barwell area.