



**SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL ON THE PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE
SUPPORT PACKAGE TO COMMUNITY LIBRARIES**

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the findings of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the Proposed Infrastructure Support Package to Community Libraries.

Background

2. The draft infrastructure support package formed part of the proposals that were included as a feature of the 3 month public and stakeholder consultation on the future of Leicestershire's Libraries. The consultation closed in July and the outcomes were reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 September 2014. The proposals consulted on were:
 - (a) 16 major market town and shopping centre libraries funded by the County Council with a 20% reduction in opening hours;
 - (b) An online library service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year;
 - (c) A mobile library service that will provide a regular library service to most villages without a static library;
 - (d) The development of an infrastructure support package which would enable local communities to run their local library in partnership with the County Council.
3. In broad terms, the consultation proposed that if a local community organised itself to run the local library (presumed to be through volunteers) the County Council would offer a support package to enable this to happen.

Establishment of the Scrutiny Review Panel

4. At the Cabinet meeting held on 19 September, a Scrutiny Review Panel was asked to review the proposed support package and to submit its findings to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scheduled for 17 November, and subject to its approval, the Cabinet at its meeting on 19 November. The scope of the Review Panel, which was very specific is set out below:-

To consider proposals for the proposed infrastructure support model to be provided by the County Council for Community Partnership Libraries and make recommendations on the type, level and duration of support therein.

5. The Scrutiny Review Panel was convened in October. The following members served on the Review:

- Mr. R. Camamile CC
- Dr. S. Hill CC
- Mr. D. Jennings CC
- Mr. J. P. O'Shea CC
- Mr. R. Sharp CC

(Mr. D. Jennings CC was appointed Chairman of the Panel)

Methodology of the Review

6. The Panel received a number of suggested amendments to the original proposals put forward by the public and stakeholders. This was as a result of a thorough consultation exercise which included detailed public and stakeholder surveys and a series of County Council-run workshops which were set up to enable groups to help shape the support package that would be made available by the Council. These are contained in **Appendix 1**.

7. These suggestions were circulated with a set of questions to stakeholders for further feedback.

8. The Panel also received oral and written representations during a day-long evidence stakeholder engagement session held on 15 October 2014. Evidence was submitted by Warwickshire County Council (who have introduced community managed libraries) Cumbria County Council and a number of local Leicestershire stakeholder groups, including parish/town councils and library/volunteer groups. Responses to the activity described in paragraphs 7-8 are collated in **Appendix 2**.

Findings of the Panel

9. As a result of the Panel's deliberations, its findings are set out below under the following headings:

A. Suggested amendments to the Infrastructure Support Package to reflect comments from stakeholders as part of the Consultation Process

B. Additional Information and Options to be included in the Infrastructure Support Package

C. Outline Summary of County Council commitments as part of the Infrastructure Support Package

A. Suggested amendments to the Infrastructure Support Package, received from stakeholders as part of the Consultation Process

10. The Panel recognised that it would be unwise to provide a “one size fits all” support package, and that the County Council’s support offer should where possible be tailored to each community wishing to run its library.
11. The Panel expressed its support for some of the key measures outlined in the amendments that were shaped by the consultation feedback. and these were also largely supported by those stakeholders that engaged with the Panel:
 - (a) The provision of a detailed financial appraisal of each library being provided to groups wishing to run their library.
 - (b) An increased level of ongoing help being made available to community groups wishing to run their library, including initial training and ongoing operational support through a dedicated County Council officer contact;
 - (c) A clearly defined level of tapered financial support over 7 years, rather than 5 years for specific categories of premises and some operational expenditure including rent, rates, energy costs and telephone rentals.

B. Information and Options to be included in the Infrastructure Support Package

12. The Panel made the following recommendations in regard to the proposed support package to be made available to those running their library:
 - (a) That where a Community Group or Parish Council takes on the responsibility for the delivery and management of their local library there will be an option for them to buy-back services from the County Council on a contracted basis, including professional library support. Where this is proposed the County Council will provide details of costs and the conditions under which this can happen;
 - (b) The sections of the support package that deal with property leasing arrangements need strengthening and clarification. The two alternatives that were put forward were for an internal repairing lease for a term of no less than 10 years, and a full repairing lease arrangement with the County Council providing a contingency fund of £150,000 per annum were considered to be somewhat restrictive and did not recognise the age and condition of library buildings. A revised suggestion which seeks to address these concerns is proposed;
 - (c) That the County Council makes a clear commitment to a peppercorn rental this be reviewed in line with the lease length (10 years) rather than after 5 years;
 - (d) That a section dealing with exit clauses is made clear as part of the support package. This should detail the processes to be followed in the event that either the community organisation, or the County Council, wishes to terminate any contract between them;
 - (e) That the support package contains a section that deals with developer contributions that might apply to a community, specifying how these are submitted and how any monies would be allocated.

C. Outline Summary of County Council commitments as part of the Infrastructure Support Package

13. As a result of the Panel's deliberations, it is recommended that an Infrastructure Support Package be made available to local groups, comprising the following elements. Recognising that a 'one-size fits all' is not appropriate and that in the initial stages community groups will need more intensive support the following transitional package is also recommended :

Transitional Support Package

- a) All community groups to be offered a one-one meeting with County Council officers to work through their proposals and seek clarification of the offer from the County Council and its implications. There will be a dedicated officer to provide emerging management committees with access to hands on support and advice.;
- b) Provide one-off financial transition support for each community comprising the following elements:
 - Up to £1,000 for initiation costs (eg. local consultation, volunteer recruitment, library plan preparation);
 - Up to £2,000 for set up costs (eg. establishing legal structures, and advice, promotional material);
 - Up to £5,000 for minor capital works that may be deemed essential to the delivery of the library plan (e.g. Equipment, minor refurbishments).
- c) Provide a free fast track training programme to provide emerging management committee members with basic training in areas such as business planning, governance and legal structures, fundraising, managing and recruiting volunteers, community engagement, social enterprise and training.
- d) Provide initial training sessions for local volunteers locally as part of the transition arrangements and following the acceptance of the business plan

Infrastructure Support Package

- a) The County Council, through the one-to one meeting, to negotiate with groups to determine each groups' preferred option in establishing a management group. This would include the option for such groups to "buy back" services from the County Council including library support staff;
- b) Loan library book stock to a level appropriate to the levels of service being provided;
- c) Provide the Library Management System (LMS) to enable computerised loan issues and returns, including one LMS PC within the existing library premises;

- d) Provide Wi-Fi, one or more public access computers (up to the number currently provided) and provide access to the “virtual” library online resources;
- e) Provide ICT infrastructure for relevant equipment;
- f) Provide regular on-going refresher training on either a county wide basis or locally if appropriate. (any further training to this likely to be subject to a charge);
- g) Provide on-going support to management committees with business planning, income generation etc;
- h) Provide day to day operational support via e-mail and telephone for assistance with any issues arising from the use of the library management system or library processes and procedures;
- i) Provide a named liaison officer for each partnership library. These officers will make regular visits to provide library professional support for training and management of volunteers, library operations and as an interface with ICT and property services;
- j) Provide free use of existing fixtures and fittings such as shelving, tables chairs and counters;
- k) Insure the fabric of the building in line with the tapering of funding arrangements (as appropriate depending on ownership arrangements);
- l) Provide tapered financial support over 7 years for specific categories of premises and some operational expenditure including rent, rates, energy costs, and telephone rentals. This would include a 100% contribution of running costs for 2015/16 and 2016/17 and then tapered support as outlined in **Appendix 3** Rent and building insurance costs of leased buildings would be funded in full for 5 years with a review taking place in year 5;
- m) Provide an opportunity to capitalise the County Council’s property running costs contribution as a single payment;
- n) All buildings with a life expectancy of over 25 years will be on a Full Repairing and Insuring Lease basis; all buildings with a life expectancy of under 25 years will be on a Internal Repairing and Insuring Lease basis. Where the County Council is currently a tenant, the subletting arrangements will need to take account of the terms of the County Council’s lease. There will be a contingency fund available of £150,000 for non-routine repairs.

14. Subject to the approval, an information pack setting out the above commitments and support package in more detail will be made available to local community groups wishing to run their local library.

15. As part of the above measures, a partnership body would be required to:

- (a) Provide and manage all staffing resources, presumed to be volunteers to meet the minimum number of opening hours agreed;
- (b) Manage any alternative (community) use of the library;
- (c) Commission and manage any service it considers necessary for the running of the service.
- (d) Arrange insurance cover for the loaned book stock, building insurance (where appropriate) and public liability insurance;
- (e) Be responsible for any maintenance, repairs or replacement of existing fixtures and fittings.

Recommendation

16. That the findings of the Panel in regard to the proposed changes to the type, level and duration of the Infrastructure Support Package for libraries therein (as outlined in paragraphs 11 and 12 under headings **A** and **B**) and the outline summary of the Council's transitional support package and Infrastructure support offer (as outlined in paragraph 13 under heading **C**) be approved for submission to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration at its meeting on 17 November 2014.

Officers to Contact:

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

Derk van der Wardt, Team Leader - Communities & Places
Chief Executive's Department
Tel: 0116 305 7581
Email: derk.vanderwardt@leics.gov.uk

Paul Love, Project Manager – Communities and Wellbeing
Adults and Communities Department
Tel: 0116 305 7376
Email: paul.love@leics.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed changes to support package in light of consultation responses

Appendix 2 – Collated Feedback Responses to the Panel

Appendix 3 – Tapered Funding Support Model