



Cabinet Meeting

19 July 2017

Report title	Libraries Transformation Strategy 2017 – 2027	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keren Jones, City Economy	
Originating service	Libraries	
Accountable employee(s)	Charlotte Johns Tel Email	Head of Service, City Economy 01902 554240 charlotte.johns@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the 10 year Libraries Strategy (appendix A), having read and considered the appendices in full, including the feedback received in the twelve week consultation period (appendix B) and equalities analysis (appendix C).
2. Agree to review the location of Bilston Library and Gallery at a future Cabinet meeting, pending more detailed feasibility study.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the 10 year libraries strategy and supporting appendices, including the survey analysis following the 12 week public consultation which was held from 27 February to 21 May 2017.
- 1.2 The City of Wolverhampton is committed to library services, and the strategy maintains 16 libraries.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A peer challenge of the library service in 2016 emphasised that there was a need for change to ensure that a vibrant, modern and sustainable library service is delivered. This resulted in developing a draft libraries strategy. A 12 week public consultation then followed.
- 2.2 We have identified the following strategic aims for Wolverhampton Libraries to achieve improved outcomes for the City of Wolverhampton.
 - Supporting reading and literacy
 - Promoting learning & improving skills
 - Increasing the use of digital services
 - Promoting and enabling health & wellbeing
 - Widening access to quality information
 - Broadening access to culture
- 2.3 These six strategic aims form our core offer to all people who live, work and study in Wolverhampton. These aims incorporate the 'National Universal Offer' framework recommended by the Society of Chief Librarians.
- 2.4 The public consultation also gauged public opinion on the following areas:
 - Improve the quality of the physical library spaces
 - Good quality book stock that is well rotated across the network
 - To stop investing in 'old technologies' such as CDs and DVDs
 - Support people to access new and emerging digital technology
 - Increase the opening hours, accessibility and convenience for library users through working with other services and the community to increase co-location, use of self-service facilities and use of volunteers.
 - Hold and promote a variety of events and activities in libraries to support the delivery of our strategic aims
 - Ensure there are professional well trained staff that can support individuals and communities to improve their life chances
 - Increase the number, use and roles of volunteers in the library service to increase skills and employability for local people
 - Increase income generation and commercialisation in the service to improve sustainability of the service.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 Over 800 people participated in the public consultation through completion of an online survey and four consultation events.
- 3.2 Various methods of communication were used to promote the consultation including promotion in libraries and other council buildings, emails, press releases and social media outlets.
- 3.3 Four consultation events took place, one within each constituency area with an additional event at Bilston.

Event	Date	Number in attendance (based on signing in sheet)
Bilston Library	22 March 2017	45
Bantock House	23 March 2017	13
Wednesfield Library	25 March 2017	3
Bilston Library	19 April 2017	18

- 3.4 A further consultation event with City of Wolverhampton's Youth Council took place on 24 April 2017.

- 3.5 The key themes from the consultation were:

- Individuals were very supportive of the library services and believed that it continued to be relevant for a wide variety of reasons.
- Most respondents (82%) indicated that they are satisfied with the current service provided
- At least 78% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the proposed vision statement

Proposed Strategic Aims	% satisfied / highly satisfied
Promoting learning and improving skills	92.92%
Supporting reading and literacy	92.21%
Widening access to quality information	89.89%
Broadening access to culture	85.13%
Increasing the use of digital services	83.83%
Promoting and enabling health and wellbeing	80.86%

- A large proportion of respondents (65.3%) agree with the vision to provide good quality books.
- Over half the respondents (61.7%) agreed that the quality of library spaces should be improved.
- Over half of the respondents (53.3%) agreed to increasing the opening hours across the library service.
- A small proportion of respondents (26.4%) agreed that the library service should stop investing in old technologies such as CDs and DVDs. However, respondents (60.7%) further agreed to invest in new emerging technologies.

- A small number of respondents (9%) that own an e-book access the libraries e-book collection.

3.6 As part of the consultation, over half the respondents (62.8%) were interested in events and activities taking place in libraries.

3.7 A consultation for the Home Library Service has also taken place. The current service is delivered in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, with a contract in place until the end of September 2017. Around half of the users took part in the consultation with 99% of the respondents being satisfied with the service, and providing feedback on the desired frequency and length of visit and the type of resources they wish to receive. This feedback will be used to ensure the Home Library Service meets the needs of customers as part of a review of the delivery arrangements for this service going forward.

3.8 A consultation for the Education Library Service has also taken place. There were 15 respondents to the survey, and this feedback will also be used to review the delivery model of the service in partnership with schools and the Education directorate.

4.0 Bilston Library and Gallery

4.1 Bilston library is currently located at Mount Pleasant with the Gallery. As part of the consultation opinion was sought on the location of Bilston Library and Gallery to another location within Bilston.

4.2 Response to the consultation was mixed, and in the two consultation events people expressed that they wanted more information on a proposed move, including how services would fit into Bilston Town Hall and what would happen to the current Library and Gallery building should these services move.

Preferred location	Total	%
Option 1 - Move to Bilston Town Hall	138	21.7
Option 2 - Remain where it is	167	26.3
Option 3 - Move to another location	26	4.1
No opinion	108	17.0
Blank	196	30.9
Total	635	100.0

4.3 In order to explore these issue more fully and provide this information to the public for consideration, Cabinet will be asked to consider the findings of a more detailed feasibility study in due course.

5.0 Opening hours

5.1 During the consultation people supported extending opening hours at libraries. In order to respond to this, work has taken place with some Community Associations to see how

opening hours can be extended through providing additional 'self serve' only times at some libraries. This is in addition to, and not replacing periods when libraries are staffed.

- 5.2 As a result of this it has been possible to extend advertised opening hours at Ashmore Park and Long Knowle Libraries, to formalise arrangements where the library is accessible for self serve provision when the community hub is open as follows:
- Long Knowle Library – subject to volunteers being available, the library will also open from 12.30pm – 3.30pm on Wednesday increasing the library opening hours by 20%
 - Ashmore Park Library - subject to volunteers being available, the library will also open from 10am until 1pm on Wednesday and Friday increasing the library opening hours by 25%
- 5.3 Through the consultation, volunteers at Collingwood Library requested a change to opening hours to enable them to continue to support the running of the library. As a result, Collingwood library will remain open 15 hours a week but the hours will be spread out across the week.
- 5.4 New opening hours will take place from 31 July 2017.
- 5.5 Consultation is also underway with Low Hill Community Association to review the lay out of Low Hill library to potentially also enable increased opening hours through more self service provision in addition to staffed library hours.
- 5.6 The feedback received on opening hours in the consultation will also be used to inform service provision going forward.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The 2017/18 net controllable budget for the Library Service is £1.9 million. There are currently no savings target included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the service. Ongoing efficiencies and improved income generation will continue to be sought whilst delivering the strategy.
- 6.2 There is no financial impact of the proposed amendment to opening hours as this is being facilitated through partnership with the community and voluntary sector.
- 6.3 Fees and charges were also part of the consultation. No changes are proposed to fees and charges for photocopying. Charges for room hire across the library estate will be reviewed as part of work around income generation.
- 6.4 Responding to feedback in the consultation regarding PC Hire, it is proposed from the 31 July that a two hour limit be introduced for all PC hire, with a charge of £1 per hour after this.
- 6.5 Future changes in the fees and charges for library services will be set in line with the corporate fees and charges review and report to Cabinet Resources Panel. The

proposed variation falls in line with Black Country Libraries Partnership (BCLiP) as detailed in the Cabinet Resources Panel report Fees and Charges review 2017/18.

[HM/07072017/H]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 Library authorities are required to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service for everyone who wants to use it in its area (per section 7 (1) of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964). Section 7 (2) of the Act above also requires an authority to have regard to the “desirability” of securing by the keeping of adequate stocks by arrangements with other library authorities and by any other appropriate means that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to books and other printed matter, pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children. The Council is also subject to a general duty of best value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. Best Value Statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, revised in 2015, makes clear that this duty applies and includes economic, environmental and social value when reviewing service provision. Non compliance with the general duty of Best Value is a potential substantive ground for challenge that can be made against Councils and so this duty must also be considered and borne in mind.
- 7.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 establishes what is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and requires a public authority to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not. A public authority must be mindful of these requirements throughout the course of considering the proposed Libraries Services Transformation in this case up to and at the point of decision. To show the Section 149 PSED duty and requirements have been considered and met, a public authority often completes an equality analysis. Completion of one or more Equality Analysis does not in itself mean that the need to have “due regard” has been met but it does serve as documentary evidence that the duty and need to comply with the s149 PSED has been borne in mind and considered by the public authority in its consideration of the matter and decision making process. An up to date Equality Analysis dated 29 June 2017 in respect of the proposed Libraries Transformation Strategy has been undertaken and the noted positive and negative impacts and solutions (to mitigate any negative impacts) considered. Councillors are asked to analyse this report and all the relevant material referred to within the report and attached as supporting appendices with the specific statutory considerations in mind.

[RB/04072017/R]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 Equalities implications have been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out above. This has included work on equality

analysis on all alternatives for the library service. An equalities analysis has been conducted on the strategy including the consultation findings.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no known environmental implications at this time. A travel survey conducted in October/November 2016 showed that walking is the most popular mode of transport for visiting a library.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 Employee resources will need to be aligned to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are significant implications for Corporate Landlord in terms of potential relocation and investment in certain libraries.

12.0 Schedule of background papers

- 12.1 Cabinet - 22 February 2017