

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL



Executive Leader Report

Report of: Executive Director of Communities

Report to: Leader of Sheffield City Council

Date: May 2014

Subject: The Future of Sheffield's Library Services

Author of Report: Dawn Shaw

Summary:

Cabinet agreed a new operating model for community libraries on 19th February 2014 but did not include delegated authority to implement the proposals agreed, which would mean that any steps taken towards implementation would have to be brought back to Cabinet for further approval.

This report seeks delegated authority for the Executive Director of Communities to implement the Cabinet decision on the Future of Sheffield's Library Service and in agreement with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health

Reasons for Recommendations: The delegated authority will enable the efficient implementation of Cabinet's February decision for the future of Sheffield's Library Service.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Leader authorises the Executive Director of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health

- (a) to take all necessary steps, as described in this report, to implement the new operating model for community libraries agreed by Cabinet on 19th February 2014; and
- (b) to instruct the Director of Legal and Governance Services to complete the necessary documentation, this authority to be exercised in consultation with the Director of Capital and Major Projects in respect of property matters.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
There is no change to the financial implications reported to Cabinet on 19 th February 2014.
Legal Implications
There is no change to the legal implications reported to Cabinet on 19 th February 2014.
Equality of Opportunity Implications
There is no change to the equality of opportunity implications reported to Cabinet on 19 th February 2014
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
YES
Economic impact
YES
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
YES - Dave Wood
Area(s) affected

All
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Cllr Mazher Iqbal
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Economic and Environmental Wellbeing
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

REPORT TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

THE FUTURE OF SHEFFIELD'S LIBRARY SERVICES

Summary

The Cabinet decision for the Future of Sheffield's Library Service on 19th February 2014 agreed a new operating model for community libraries but did not include delegated authority to implement the proposals agreed. This would mean that any steps taken towards implementation would have to be brought back to Cabinet for further approval. This report seeks delegated authority for the Executive Director of Communities to implement the Cabinet decision on the Future of Sheffield's Library Service.

What Does This Mean For Sheffield People

Libraries are and can continue to be, key community anchors, connecting the City Centre with local communities. Critical to this role is the importance of a sustainable, flexible library provision which is outward facing, welcoming and inclusive of all. To meet our duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service, care has been taken to address the needs of Sheffield people including a fair geographical spread of hub libraries across the City (including Central lending & children's library, Archives & Local Studies) as well as ensuring a range of services which meet the varying demographic needs of all of Sheffield's residents. School children will still be able to access the school's library service which is commissioned by individual schools.

Alternatively library users may wish to access a co-delivered or independent library, access the e-book service when this is established, or, if eligible, may join the Home Library Service.

The new operating model to achieve these outcomes was described in some detail in the February report to Cabinet.

The recommendations of this report mean that by giving delegated authority to the Executive Director the new library service for Sheffield can be implemented efficiently and effectively working closely with community and volunteer groups interested in running co-delivered and Associate libraries in the city.

Outcome And Sustainability

The February report to Cabinet described how the new operating model will meet the Sheffield City Council Corporate Plan 2011-2014 that states-

as an organisation the Council will focus on four priorities:

1. Standing up for Sheffield
2. Supporting and protecting communities
3. Focusing on jobs
4. Business friendly

The review of the library service considered the drivers for change for both customers and technology and the new operating model and plans for the new service addresses both through extensive customer consultation, a needs assessment and an equalities impact assessment.

The council wants to keep as many libraries open as possible and the cabinet report outlined how through partnership working with voluntary groups and support through an extensive training programme, work with the voluntary sector and council funding of 262k this could be achieved.

Main Body of Report

On 19th February 2014 Cabinet agreed a new operating model for community libraries, to consist of:

- 11 SCC run hub libraries
- Up to 5 co-delivered community libraries
- Retain Tinsley Library as a Council run facility until its rental agreement expires in 2016.
- Up to 10 associate libraries, with support for up to 3 years
- New opening times for Central Library
- Closure of the mobile library service
- Development of the Home Library Service through a volunteer programme
- All other existing library, information and archives services will be retained including the Schools Library Service
- A volunteer programme

Cabinet also noted the resolution of the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, taken at its meeting held on 18 February 2014 which, among other things, requested that the Executive Director, Communities, submit a report on the progress made in implementing the proposals set out in the Cabinet report, to that Committee in 12 months' time.

Although implicit in the resolution of the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet's decision did not include delegated authority to implement the proposals agreed, which would mean that any steps taken towards implementation would have to be brought back to Cabinet for further approval.

As reported to Cabinet in February, officers are working with 15 volunteer/community groups/ who have been invited to submit for evaluation full business plans for the running of the co-delivered and associate libraries. This report seeks delegated authority for the Executive Director of Communities, in consultation with other officers where required, to take the necessary steps to progress the new operating model, including but not limited to evaluating the business plans submitted and making the appropriate arrangements with those groups whose business plans are approved, including negotiation of terms and agreement to grant a three-year lease at a peppercorn rent of Council-owned library buildings to those groups.

Financial Implications

There is no change to the financial implications reported to Cabinet on 19th February 2014.

Legal Implications

There is no change to the legal implications reported to Cabinet on 19th February 2014.

Property Implications

A local authority has the power to dispose of land by virtue of section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 but Secretary of State's consent is required for a disposal for less than best consideration, except for a short tenancy of less than seven years. The proposed leases to the voluntary/community groups will be at a peppercorn rent which represents a market rent as a result of the terms and conditions imposed on the groups to provide a library facility. The proposal to grant three year leases of library buildings at a peppercorn rent to voluntary/community groups does not require Secretary of State's consent. It is proposed that the leases will be contracted out of the provisions of Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 to protect the Council's property interests should the relationship with any group break down.

The February report to Cabinet noted that "The majority of groups have expressed that a 25 year peppercorn lease (subject to conditions) is desirable to help access funding". No such lease will be granted without a further decision in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation.

Alternative Options Considered

All decisions relating to the implementation of the new operating model for community libraries could be referred back to Cabinet, but this would be inefficient and cause delays to decision making and effective implementation of the Cabinet decision with regard to the Future of Sheffield's Library Service.

Reasons For Recommendations

By giving delegated authority to the Executive Director the decisions for the future of Sheffield's Library Service can be implemented efficiently and effectively working closely with community and volunteer groups interested in running co-delivered and Associate libraries in the city.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Leader authorises the Executive Director of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health

- (a) to take all necessary steps, as described in this report, to implement the new operating model for community libraries agreed by Cabinet on 19th February 2014; and
- (b) to instruct the Director of Legal and Governance Services to complete the necessary documentation, this authority to be exercised in consultation with the Director of Capital and Major Projects in respect of property matters.