

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 7 NOVEMBER 2018

LIBRARIES RE-MODELLING

Summary

1. The Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to consider the attached report on Libraries re-modelling.
2. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities and the Assistant Director, Families, Communities and Partnerships have been invited to attend the meeting.

Background

3. The Cabinet considered the attached report (Appendix 1) at their meeting on 18th October 2018 and the recommendations at paragraph 1 were approved in full.
4. The report highlights that Council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for Worcestershire. It is up to individual Council's to determine how best to deliver this duty taking into account the needs of the local community and the available resources to provide a modern and efficient library service.
5. The report explains that in May 2011 the Cabinet launched its Libraries Transformation Programme which has resulted in considerable progress being made in the modernising of the Worcestershire library service and ensuring Value for Money. Since 2011/12 over £3.7M of efficiency savings have been achieved through a range of approaches including a property re-modelling programme which has seen 14 libraries co-located with other Council services or with a range of partners including Worcester University, schools and health centres.
6. The next phase of transformation continues to build on progress made, but also seeks to address the Library Service's savings target of £1 million for 2018/19 to 2020/2, as outlined in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The savings of £200,000 for 2018/19 are on target to be met so the focus now is on achieving the remaining savings during the period 2019/20 to 2020/21.
7. In order to meet the above savings target a strategic approach has been taken with a detailed Needs Assessment having taken place, based on 4 key characteristics of library need, namely, deprivation; service isolation; exclusive use of home library site and library activity levels. The headline findings of the outcome of this Needs Assessment process are set out in the Cabinet report.

8. In light of the above and in considering further library transformation, the Cabinet report sets out seven recommendations to shape the County's approach towards the continued transformation process going forward, which include prioritising need, addressing poor value for money and ensuring that the public and stakeholders shape library transformation.

9. Prior to the consultation documents being drawn up, each of the library delivery sites has been tested against seven potential delivery options including reducing opening hours, implementing 'Open libraries' and as a last resort, closing libraries. The results of this exercise are detailed in the Cabinet report.

10. The Panel should be aware that the formal public consultation process with residents, stakeholders and staff is proposed to start on 29 October 2018 and be completed on 2 February 2019. It is hoped that the consultation will encourage communities to get actively involved and help to find local solutions towards retaining a library at the heart of their community. The results of the consultation are to be made known in April 2019 with final recommendations being presented to Cabinet in the Spring.

Purpose of the Meeting

11. The Panel is asked to:

- consider the detailed Cabinet report and recommendations
- Agree any comments to be forwarded to the Cabinet Member
- Agree an approach the Panel would wish to take to scrutinise the Consultation exercise for the duration of the process until next Spring.
- Identify specific areas where they might wish to have very detailed scrutiny involvement.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Report to Cabinet on Libraries Remodelling – [18 October 2018](#) (The Needs Assessment is available electronically via the link above, please refer to supplementary papers for agenda items 4,5 & 6 for access)

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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