

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 August 2017

Report of the Head of Asset Management

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
West Lancashire East;
Thornton and Hambleton

Proposals relating to Library Buildings

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Executive Summary

This report outlines proposals in relation to the provision of library facilities and also considers options in relation to premises where Community Asset Transfer requests have been received.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No. 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet is recommended to agree:

- (i) The phased re-opening and delivery of a full library service at Parbold Library and Thornton Library.
- (ii) To rescind the decision to declare surplus the following buildings: Parbold Library and Thornton Library.

Background and Advice

At the meeting held on 13 July 2017 Cabinet approved a report setting out proposals for the re-opening of Libraries across Lancashire. This report clarifies proposals in relation to a further two library buildings. Two buildings are subject to live proposals for Community Asset Transfer (CAT). The proposal relating to Thornton Library has been accepted in principle whereas the proposal for Parbold Library has not yet been approved. Both of the community groups that have submitted proposals relating to these buildings have subsequently indicated that they would prefer the County Council to operate a Library Service rather than progress an asset transfer.

If the proposals set out in this report are agreed, the library service will deliver through an additional two buildings bringing the total to 56, each of which will be a staffed facility with appropriate opening hours.

Proposals relating to Buildings

The following buildings have previously closed and so it is recommended to agree a phased re-opening and delivery of a full library service at:

District	Property
West Lancashire	Parbold Library
Wyre	Thornton Library

Implementation Timetable:

The timescale for the reopening of facilities that have closed, and in some cases had been prepared for sale/transfer, requires a significant amount of activity including the following considerations: recruitment of additional staff; purchase of furniture; building and equipment safety checks; building condition works; ICT facilities and infrastructure; and the securing of book stock.

Individual building surveys are now underway which will enable a detailed timeline to be produced in relation to individual properties. At this stage it is anticipated that the timeline for re-opening library facilities will be between November 2017 and April 2018 although Cabinet should note that the practicalities of commissioning and programming works to buildings may result in a slightly longer timescale.

The use of re-instated library buildings will also be reviewed to ensure flexible use of buildings and identify opportunities for other service delivery by County Council services and third parties that will both enhance the benefit offered to communities and support their sustainability.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Finance

The costs of re-opening the libraries detailed within this report are made up of recurrent costs (such as staffing and running costs), and non-recurrent costs (one-off costs such as IT, furniture costs and building checks (e.g. PAT testing and risk assessments)).

This report recommends the retaining and reopening of the libraries within recommendation 1. The estimated costs in 2017/18 (based on those libraries that are closed re-opening from November 2017 and 12 month costs for those that are still operational) total £0.157m, comprised of £0.069m part-year recurrent costs and £0.088m one-off costs. The costs are estimated on an assumption that the closed libraries would all re-open in November. Logistically this is unlikely to be the case, with a number of the libraries likely to be re-open later in the year, and actual costs in 2017/18 will be directly impacted by the actual re-opening date for each individual library. In 2018/19 full year recurrent costs will be £0.166m and there will be no further one-off costs of re-opening.

The Government introduced flexibility for capital receipts to be used to fund revenue expenditure that meets certain criteria. As part of the County Council's budget for 2017/18 a value of £12.500m income from capital receipts is budgeted for with a further £5.000m built into the MTFs for 2018/19. It is important to note that the decision to re-open and retain the libraries within this report may impact on the achievement of the required value of capital receipts. This will be monitored closely throughout this financial year.

The library buildings that are to be re-opened and retained are likely to require some repairs and maintenance and capital works due to their condition. Surveys are currently underway to ascertain the value of these works which will be predominantly capital works. An estimated value of £1.571m was included within the "Revisions to the 2017/18 Budget" paper approved by Full Council in July 2017. It is expected that once the surveys are complete a further detailed report to Cabinet will be provided.

Human Resources

Following the transformation process in 2016, the library service currently carries approx. 20 actual vacancies and is stretched over an additional number of libraries some of which are currently open as an interim measure. Adding the current vacancies to the additional vacancies as a consequence of reopening libraries, could equate to approx. 100 actual vacancies in total which include both part-time and full-time posts across a range of grades. As such there will need to be additional recruitment in order to effectively deliver the service across a greater number of premises. The lead in time for recruitment can take upwards of eight weeks to complete following which the induction and training of new employees will also be required prior to operational delivery.

Property Asset Management

In order to facilitate the delivery of library services as set out above, the Cabinet is asked to rescind the decision to declare surplus the following buildings: Parbold Library and Thornton Library.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
The Property Strategy (Neighbourhood Centres) Response to Consultation	8&26/9/2016	Steve Browne/01772 534121
Community Asset Transfer and Independent Community Libraries	7/12/2016	Mel Ormesher/01772 536966
Community Asset Transfer and Independent Community Libraries	23/1/2017	Mel Ormesher/01772 536966
Community Asset Transfer and Independent Community Libraries	9/3/2017	Mel Ormesher/01772 536966
Property Strategy (Neighbourhood Centres) - Community Asset Transfer and Independent Community Libraries	6/4/2017	Mel Ormesher/01772 536966
Property Strategy - Community Asset Transfer, Independent Community Libraries and vacated Children's Centres on school sites	27/4/2017	Mel Ormesher/01772 536966
Rescinding of the Deputy Leader's Approval to dispose of Fulwood and Barrowford Library and withdraw Fulwood Library, Barrowford Library, Earby Library, Freckleton Library, Whalley Library & Spring Wood Children's Centre & Lostock Hall Library & Children's Centre from the market for Sale	24/5/2017	Gary Pearse/01772 533903
Proposals relating to Library Buildings which were closed/proposed for closure as part of the Property Strategy (Neighbourhood Centres)	13/7/2017	Mike Kirby/01772 533285

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A