

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 14 September 2017

Report of the Head of Libraries, Museums, Culture and Registrars

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All

Revised Library Strategy which incorporates a revision of Library byelaws and a proposal to consult on Library Opening hours (Appendices 'A' to 'C' refer)

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Executive Summary

This report presents a revision of the Library Strategy, building on the strengths of the existing strategy by encouraging the engagement of communities in the delivery of sustainable library services. The report also proposes a revision of the library byelaws and consultation with the public and staff on library opening hours.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended:

- (i) To consider the revised Library Strategy, as set out at Appendix 'A', and agree that it be submitted to Full Council for approval.
- (ii) To consider the revised Library byelaws, as set out in Appendix 'B', and request the Full Council to approve the submission of the byelaws to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for confirmation by the Secretary of State, and agree that subject to the confirmation being received the byelaws be formally adopted and sealed by the County Council in accordance with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
- (iii) To authorise a consultation exercise on core opening hours and banding for those libraries currently open, as set out in Table 2 of Appendix 'C'.
- (iv) To approve the proposed core opening hours and banding for those libraries currently closed and approved for re-opening, set out in table 3 of Appendix 'C'.

Background and Advice

The proposed library strategy aims to provide direction on the delivery of library services for the next 4 years. The strategy, a draft of which is set out at Appendix

'A', would continue to enable the library service to be delivered in as flexible a manner as possible, working with communities and a range of stakeholders across Lancashire and with a greater emphasis on working in partnership to develop models of service delivery through engaging with communities. It is imperative that the service is as proactive as possible in addressing the opportunities and challenges over the next 4 years. The revised strategy references the reports and guidance which are driving national library policy and helping inform the delivery of library services throughout the country. The Library Strategy is a Policy Framework document which needs to be approved by Full Council.

In conjunction with a revised strategy, it is considered appropriate to bring forward a revision of the library byelaws (set out at Appendix 'B'). The current byelaws were approved on 17th July 1997. Since then technology has developed, society changed and what is delivered by a library service has developed and changed. For example, our current byelaws do not reflect the impact of digital technology and how it is utilised in library buildings. Section 19 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (the legislation that governs the provision of library services by local authorities) makes provision for local authorities to make byelaws for their library services and this is seen as good practice. Byelaws can set out the expectations of library users and aid local authorities in the management of library buildings. Once agreed by a local authority (Full Council), byelaws need to be confirmed by the relevant Secretary of State. In proposing a revision of our byelaws, account has been taken of advice and guidance that is provided nationally by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Society of Chief Librarians and follows a nationally agreed format.

In relation to library opening hours, it is intended that the 11 libraries which are due to reopen between November 2017 and March 2018 will reopen with revised opening hours, which have been modelled around 4 bands depending on the size of the communities being served. This report also proposes that the 47 libraries currently open should also be banded and made available on those 4 bands of opening hours. Details of the proposed bands are set out in Appendix 'C'. The bands of opening hours are also referred to in the strategy and will provide a much more equitable delivery of service across the county than currently exists.

Consultations

Consultation on core opening hours will be required to be carried out for those libraries which are currently open. This consultation will then inform any changes in opening hours which will be applied equitably across the county. It is intended that the Cabinet will be informed of the outcome of the consultation in a further report in January 2018.

Risk management

The implementation of the revised library strategy will support the service in its response to change over the next 4 years. The implementation of new library byelaws will facilitate the use of library services and facilities on a fair and equal basis by all sectors of the community. The implications of the proposed consultation on library core opening hours for 47 libraries are that the council will have a much

more streamlined and efficient service, which at the same time will be a much more equal and consistent service to all communities. There will be an impact on staff in relation to individual working hours, this may be an increase or decrease in working patterns. The detail of this will follow in the January 2018 report to Cabinet and any impact on staff will be managed in line with the established Council employment policies and procedures.

The library strategy needs to be fit for purpose and allow the service to become much more proactive. If the changes are not accepted the service will be restricted in its ability to respond quickly to the inevitable changes that are part of the evolving world of library provision.

Failure to implement the updated byelaws will withhold power from the Council to regulate use of the library services and facilities.

The risk of not carrying out the consultation on core opening hours is that the service delivery will operate on too many different variables which are not conducive to an equitable and consistent delivery of service for all residents within Lancashire.

Financial

The proposed consultation will inform any changes in opening hours which will be applied equitably across the county. Whilst the changes to opening hours proposed in the consultation would see a small overall increase in opening hours across the County Council's libraries of 7 hours per week, changes to opening patterns and consistent opening hours will enable libraries to be staffed in a more effective way thereby potentially reducing staff costs. It is intended that the Cabinet will be informed of the outcome of the consultation in a further report in January 2018 and that this report will include the financial implications of any proposed changes to opening hours.

List of Background Papers

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Byelaws for the County Council of Lancashire for the regulation of the library service 1997	17/7/1997	Julie Bell 01772 536727
The DCMS - Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries In England in 2016 -21	Dec 2016	
The Society of Chief Librarians Universal Offers of Reading, Information , Digital, Health, Culture and Learning	June 2013	
The All-Party group on Arts, Health, and Wellbeing Inquiry – Creative Health; The Arts for Health and Wellbeing	July 2017	

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A