

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 May 2018

Report of the Head of Service Libraries, Museums, Culture and Registration Services

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Preston City;

Proposed Delegation Agreement and Establishment Arrangements - Re-imagining the Harris

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

The Re-Imagining the Harris project is a partnership between Lancashire County Council and Preston City Council. It started in 2015 with the aim of transforming the Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library. Since the project's inception one of the main priorities has been to develop a unified service in the building to ensure customers receive the highest quality services, delivered in the most efficient manner. This report identifies the key areas where progress is required.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Authorise officers to progress Option 4 as described in this report.
- (ii) Authorise officers to work with the city council to prepare a delegation agreement for the operation of and staffing arrangements for the Harris Library function.

Background and Advice

The Harris is a Grade 1 listed building owned by Preston City Council. The city council runs the museum and art gallery within the Harris. Lancashire County Council leases 40% of the building to house the Harris library. The relationship between the two councils is governed by an agreement (signed in 1997) "for the use and occupation of the Harris building". This agreement obliges the county council to pay 40% of the building costs, and to give six months' notice if it wishes to vacate the Harris.

Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council established the Re-Imagining the Harris project in 2015, sharing the costs of a project leader and securing support from Arts Council England. One of the project's four priorities is to prepare a business case to support a new joint staffing structure in the Harris.

Progress since autumn 2015

The project leader, supported by the two councils, has put in place a series of measures to ensure that the teams in the Harris work together more effectively:

- The development of a single Harris management team;
- Regular joint team events, including monthly staff meetings, staff briefings, conferences and consultation sessions;
- A single events and exhibition programme;
- Improved communication between the teams, and across the building;
- Joint planning and a single service plan for the Harris.

The Project Leader has direct line management responsibility for the Preston City Council Museum team, and works closely with the county council's library service to lead the Harris Library team. However significant issues still remain with regard to the current arrangements.

- Key funders such as Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England have made it clear that they expect to see a single team running the Harris (for example the Heritage Lottery Fund made the following statement in relation to any future significant bid for capital support. "Concrete progress needs to be made in advancing the transformation process at the Harris – in particular the move to a single team")
- Each council uses the existing Harris user agreement as the basis of their engagement with the other on matters relating to the Harris;
- It is difficult to embed cultural change and maximise operational efficiencies due to the different reporting structures, terms and conditions of service, and organisational priorities and plans.

Developing a Single Team in the Harris

A joint council officer working group, involving representation from the legal, finance and human resources teams, was set up in 2016. The group considered five options for the future delivery of services at the Harris which are summarised below.

1. Staffing situation remains the same at the Harris.
2. Single team for the Harris. Staff retain existing employer, pay and conditions.
3. Single team for the Harris. City council staff transfer to the county council.
4. Single team for the Harris. County council staff transfer to the city council.
5. Single team for the Harris. County council and city council staff transfer to third party.

Officers have assessed the work carried out by this group, as well as the further progress made by the Re-Imagining project, and developed the options appraisal set out at Appendix 'A'. As a result Option 4 Single team for the Harris, (county council staff transfer to the city council), was identified as the preferred option. This would involve transferring the existing Harris Library team and the Harris Library function to

the city council. If Cabinet is minded to approve the recommendations, then a delegation of function agreement is required and the key milestones involved this work will be:

1. Drafting a delegation agreement and securing formal approval to it.
2. Establishing and implementing a single structure at the Harris

Consultations

Informal discussions have regularly taken place with all members of staff at the Harris from both the library and museum teams, and they are well aware of the potential move to a single team and a shared service.

Initial briefings with the relevant unions associated with the county council and city council teams also took place in 2017. Consultation has also taken place with key funding partners such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England in recent months.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial implications

Cabinet agreed on 9th November 2017 to fund the cost of extending the Reimagining the Harris Project Leader post from September 2018 to June 2019 (circa £40,000) and a further £45,000 of non-recurring cost to prepare a funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The cost of delivering a library service from the Harris includes direct staff and non-staff costs and is circa £580,000 per annum which includes a contribution of £325,000 to Preston City Council for building costs. Other costs relating to central support staff and resource costs are incurred across the wider Libraries Service and are not specific to the Harris Library.

Any future restructure or delegation of the library service will not result in increased revenue costs to the county council. A further report to Cabinet will follow once the detail of a delegation agreement has been developed, which will outline the financial implications of this agreement.

Risk management

Personnel

If option 4 is approved, it will require a full transfer of the Library employees based at the Harris from county council employment to city council employment and this will be managed in line with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. The county council has well embedded processes which will be followed in order to manage this transfer effectively and it is envisaged that the transfer will be relatively straight forward given that we are working in partnership

with the city council on the overall Re-imagining project and that this would be a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 transfer between two local authority employers.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
The Harris Museum and Art Gallery (The Harris) Shared Services Initiative	28 April 2015	Phil Barrett/(01772) 34675

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A