Report to the Cabinet
Meeting to be held on Monday, 3 December 2018

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

Part I

Electoral Division affected: (All Divisions);

Amendment to Friends of Lancashire Libraries Constitution

Contact for further information:
Shelley Verran, Tel: 07880 139706, Community Library Manager,
shelley.verran@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

This report outlines a proposal to amend the Friends of Lancashire Libraries Constitution and Terms of Reference which were agreed by Cabinet on 18 January 2018. Feedback from friends groups within the county has identified a concern about the prescriptive nature of the membership fee and a wish for the groups themselves to exercise some control over such charges.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve an amendment to the Friends of Lancashire Libraries Constitution and Terms of Reference as described in this report.

Background and Advice

Friends groups have long been one of the ways that cultural organisations engage with their users and there are many functioning friends groups linked to Library and Information Services in the UK. The Strategy for Lancashire's Libraries 2016-21 identifies Friends Groups as of key importance in moving forward as a library service, both as a way of funding additional events and activities, and as a way of engaging with the wider community.

To facilitate this, on 18 January 2018 Cabinet agreed a revised Friends of Lancashire Libraries Constitution and Terms of Reference, which would help to ensure consistency in constitutional and governance requirements for every library friend group within Lancashire. Following this, feedback from every library friend group highlighted a concern with clause 3.2 of the Constitution and Terms of Reference which relates to a membership fee for each group.

Lancashire
County
Council

The current clause is as follows:

"3.2 Members will pay an annual fee of £5.00, and will be listed in the Annual Report as a supporting Friend."

Some groups contend that setting a prescriptive fee of £5 per annum would discourage some members of the community from becoming involved in the groups, due to individual financial constraints.

Feedback indicated that all groups would rather set their own annual membership fee, within a mutually agreed framework. This would allow each group to reflect the individual nature of their own community and the resources available locally.

It is proposed that clause 3.2 be amended a follows:

"3.2 It is recommended that members pay an annual membership fee of £5. [However,] membership fees should be discussed, reviewed and set at each Annual General Meeting and a variation of the recommended fee may be set *if* agreed by majority vote."

Consultations

Comments on the previously approved Constitution and Terms of Reference have been received from Friends groups across the county.

Implications:

There are no direct financial implications for the county council as a result of this report.

Risk management

If the suggested amendment to clause 3.2 is not agreed, there is a significant risk that some of the existing groups will not adopt the 'Friends of Lancashire Libraries Constitution'. This may lead to groups operating under their own constitution, and working towards their own goals and ambitions, which may conflict with the goals and ambitions of Lancashire Library Service. This may also lead to some groups ceasing to function entirely, which could pose a reputational risk to the council.

Agreeing the amendment to clause 3.2 would ensure that the Constitution and Terms of Reference meet the community and friends group aspirations and continue to provide clear advice and guidance for both staff and friends groups, minimising the risk of misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Financial

There are no financial implications for the Library Service budget as a result of this report. The fee that is referred to is paid to the individual groups.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A