

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet 9 February 2015

ITEM 5(a)

Review of Library
Provision across the
Borough

Portfolio(s): Leisure, Culture and
Tourism

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Eddie Darke

Report from: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Culture and Leisure Sub-committee in relation to its study into the review of Library provision across the Borough.

In accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet consider and formulate a response to the recommendations presented to it as a result of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development review of Library provision across the Borough.

1.3 Forward plan:

The report was included in the forward plan for the period 3 November 2014 – 31 March 2015 under the matters arising from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub committees heading.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework

The report contributes towards the following priorities of the 2014-18 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People will: Be listened to by services that respond better and faster to their needs.

Our Places will: work with residents, communities and businesses to regenerate the borough.

1.5 Information:

Background information

- 1.5.1 As part of the Culture and Leisure Sub-committee work programme 2014/15, Members agreed to carry out a review in relation to Library provision across the Borough.
- 1.5.2 The main objective was to examine the ability of the Authority to meet its obligation to provide a Library Service, as defined by the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964, which makes public library services a statutory duty for local authorities, stating that Authority's must:
- i) Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it.
 - ii) Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

These obligations were considered in the context of:

- a shrinking financial envelope to meet service delivery;
- the wider review of Authority accommodation and its use;
- changing patterns of consumer behaviour in relation to print and published media;
- greater expectations for partnership working arising from the Authority's change programme.

- 1.5.3 The existing library service includes fourteen libraries spread across the borough; these are made up of 7 branch libraries, 3 based in community facilities and 4 within the Authority's Customer First Centres (CFCs):

Battle Hill	Oxford Centre - Longbenton
Cullercoats	Shiremoor
Forest Hall	Tynemouth
Howdon	Wallsend (CFC)
John Willie Sams - Dudley	Whitley Bay (CFC)
Monkseaton	Wideopen
North Shields (CFC)	White Swan Centre - Killingworth (CFC)

- 15.4 During the review Members of the study group identified several areas that they wanted to investigate in more detail. These included the number and type of buildings required, how engaged the local community were in the library network, partnership working, and the changing pattern of use of books in particular. Members were also keen to explore the breadth of service on offer, including the extent of the use of new technologies and the potential for new innovation.
- 1.5.5 Members held a series of evidence gathering meetings with expert witnesses between September and December 2014.
- 1.5.6 It became apparent during the review that the study group were looking at a complex service, a popular service and a service very much in a process of transformation from its traditional image. Therefore consideration on how this service needs to be developed in the current financial climate and in the context of the Authority's change programme was essential.

1.5.7 As a result of the study the study group has identified six recommendations for submission to Cabinet, they are:-

Recommendation 1: That Cabinet does not proceed with any immediate library closures as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.

Recommendation 2: That Cabinet examines the sustainability of library building assets in the context of the wider accommodation review, being undertaken as part of the Authority's change programme;

Recommendation 3: That Cabinet as part of the accommodation review considers how community facilities can be best used on an area basis.

Recommendation 4: That Cabinet explores the feasibility of expanding alternative delivery models for library services utilising mobile facilities and electronic media.

Recommendation 5: That Cabinet examines the financial model and revenue structure of Customer First Centres.

Recommendation 6: That Cabinet ask the Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee to work with officers to review progress on the above recommendations in the coming year.

1.5.8 The full report which outlines the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review considered by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2015 is attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

This option will meet the statutory duty of Cabinet to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee recommendations within 2 months of receiving them.

In providing its response Cabinet is asked to provide reasons for any recommendations which are not approved. The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee feel that accepting the recommendations set out in the report will help to address how community facilities can be used and developed in the future.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Report: Review of Library provision across the Borough.

1.9 Contact officers:

Yvonne Harrison, Democratic Services Officer (0191) 643 5320
Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager (0191) 643 7038

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author.

- 1) Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Report: Review of Library provision across the Borough (attached at Appendix 1).
- 2) North Tyneside Council's Constitution (web link attached below).
http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=558458

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There could be financial implications arising if any of the Study Group's recommendations were to be accepted by Cabinet. Details will be included in Cabinet's response to this report.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications at this stage.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Members consulted with officers of the Council and library users and staff in completing this work.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct issues relating to human rights arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct issues relating to equalities and diversity arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The Report of the Library Review Study Group includes recommendations to not proceed with library closures in 2015/16 and to examine the sustainability of library building assets in the context of the wider accommodation review. This means that no carbon emission savings will be achieved from library closures during 2015/16. However, libraries continue to be important participants in the Authority's carbon budget process and behaviour change work that is driving down energy consumption across the Council.

PART 3

The following officers and Members have been sent a copy of the report for their information:

- Deputy Chief Executive
- Head(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy