

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet 13 April 2015

ITEM 6(c) Response to the Library Study Review Recommendations

Portfolio(s): Leisure, Culture and
Tourism

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr E Darke

Report from Service Area: Environment and Leisure

Responsible Officer: Phil Scott, Head of Environment, and Leisure (Tel: 643 7295)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

On the 9th February 2015 Cabinet received a report from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee following an in-depth review of library provision in the Borough. The report asked Cabinet to consider six recommendations in accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000.

This report asks Cabinet to endorse the response to the recommendations detailed within this report.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the proposed response to the recommendations from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on the Library Review as set out in Appendix A of this report.

1.3 Forward plan:

This report appears on the Forward Plan first published on the 23rd March 2015. It has not been practicable to give twenty eight days notice of this report. However, it is required to be considered without the twenty eight days notice being given in order to comply with the requirement for Cabinet to respond to scrutiny recommendations with a two month period.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework

This report relates to the following priorities in 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 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, as part of the 2014/15 work programme, prioritised reviewing Library provision as an important issue. Through the Culture and Leisure Sub Committee a study group was established to carry out an in-depth review. Cabinet received the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's Library Review at its meeting on 9 February 2015.

1.5.2 The Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964, makes public library services a statutory duty for local authorities, stating that Authorities must:

- Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it.
- Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

1.5.3 Members of the sub committee agreed the focus of the study was to consider the future approach of the Authority to meet its obligation to provide a Library Service.

1.5.4 The study group considered future service provision 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; and
- Greater expectations for partnership working arising from the change programme.

1.5.5 Members held a series of evidence gathering meetings with expert witnesses between September and December 2014. The study group met on four occasions and received a range of reports and statistical data from officers to inform its considerations. In addition, Members visited a selection of libraries across the borough as part of their evidence gathering.

1.5.6 The sub-group identified a total of 6 recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

1.5.7 A proposed response to the recommendations is set out as Appendix A.

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 3

Cabinet may accept part of the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1.2 above and reject the rest.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 fulfils the statutory requirement for Cabinet to respond to recommendations put forward by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed response to Library Review recommendations

1.9 Contact officers:

Steve Bishop, Senior Manager, Cultural Services, 643 7410
Yvonne Gorgon, Group Manager, Cultural Services, 643 5829
Alison Campbell, Senior Business Partner, 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) Culture and Leisure Sub Committee Report: Library Review Study Group
http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=558067

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The 2015-16 Budget assumes no immediate library closures. Reports on alternative delivery models, accommodation review work and work to review the financial model and revenue structure of Customer First Centres will be brought to Cabinet in due course detailing the financial implications of any proposed changes. The reviews and reports will be deliverable from existing budgets.

2.2 Legal

In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within 2 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.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Members consulted with officers of the Council and members of the public in completing this work. Public responses were based upon an annual survey of library users.

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

There are no direct issues relating to environment and sustainability arising from this report.

PART 3

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