

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 11 July 2016

ITEM 7(d)

Title: Draft Library Strategy 2016-21

Portfolio(s): Leisure, Culture and Tourism

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Eddie Darke

Report from Service

Area: Environment, Housing and Leisure

Responsible Officer: Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure (Tel: (0191)6435295)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

In 2011 Cabinet agreed a five year strategy for libraries in North Tyneside. During that five year period the service has been modernised; vibrant public spaces that are flexible and welcoming have been created; and opportunities for people to meet and participate in the social and cultural life of their community have been extended.

The priorities outlined in the *Draft Library Strategy 2016-21* build upon existing practice and experience in North Tyneside and take into account the emerging national strategy for libraries as articulated through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The purpose of this report is to approve a draft strategy for consultation.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) approve the *Draft Library Strategy 2016-21* (Appendix A);
- (2) delegate authority to the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism, to arrange appropriate public engagement on the Draft Library Strategy; and
- (3) agree to receive a final report, following public engagement, at its meeting of 10th October 2016.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 31 May 2016.

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 - See more at: <http://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/470/our-people#sthash.lj98OAtg.dpuf>

Our people will be supported to live healthier and longer lives - See more at: <http://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/470/our-people#sthash.lj98OAtg.dpuf>

Our people will be ready for school giving our children and their families the best start in life – see more at <http://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/470/our-people>

Our people will be ready for work and life, with the skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet the needs of local businesses – see more at <http://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/470/our-people>

Our places will be places that people like living in and will attract others to either visit or live - See more at: <http://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/471/our-places#sthash.kbb61CbB.dpuf>

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

In 2014, the government commissioned William Sieghart to review the public library service in England. The *Independent Library Report for England*¹ recognises the role of libraries in providing “an infrastructure for life and learning”, and offering “support, help, education and encouraging a love of reading”. The review notes that the future of libraries as community hubs is essential for the wellbeing of the nation and libraries could and should play a major role in rectifying literacy standards and creating digital literacy².

Through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) a Leadership for Libraries task force was created in 2015 as a result of the review. In March 2016 the National Libraries Task Force published a comprehensive consultation paper, *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-21*. On the same day the government published its Culture White Paper, the first on the sector in over 50 years.

Taken together these papers represent a significant statement of intent on behalf of the government, in terms of the profile of culture, and in particular the role played by libraries in promoting literature, learning and literacy.

The Task Force report in particular highlights seven areas of ‘purpose’ which outline what libraries can achieve. These purposes are reflected in the objectives of the strategy and are consistent with existing practice in North Tyneside, in positioning the library offer at the heart of community delivery. Consultation on the Task Force report concluded at the

¹ Sieghart, W. et al., *Independent Library Report for England*, DCMS (2014).

² Ibid

beginning of June and a final report will be published in the summer. The final strategy will take account of the conclusions of the Task Force.

Locally, the *North East of England's Case for Culture*³ is a regional framework for investment in cultural activity for the next 15 years, led by the North East Culture Partnership in consultation with the cultural sector in the region.

Libraries are recognised as key focal points for the development of literacy, a love of literature and as centres to enhance learning. In the context of the wider aspirations to engage more of the region's population in cultural activity these are essential starting points.

In relation to the Council's target operating model libraries will be key components of locality based community hubs. The position they occupy will increase their importance in helping to deliver wider public health objectives, particularly around mental health and well being.

There have already been major improvements to library provision in North Tyneside over the past five years. The aspirations for the development of the service over the next five years are set out in six priorities indicated below:-

- Books for the best start in life
- Reading to improve life chances
- Digital literacy
- Information for life
- Learning throughout life
- Libraries for a healthier life

The detail behind these priorities is outline in the *Draft Library Strategy 2016-21* at Appendix One. The priorities reflect those of the Society of Chief Librarians, Arts Council England and the National Libraries Task Force.

Public engagement will be programmed over the summer to test these priorities with customers in North Tyneside. The outcomes from the public engagement process will inform the final strategy to be considered by Cabinet in October.

The process of public engagement, followed by the adoption of a new library strategy, will ensure that the Council will continue to meet its statutory obligation, to deliver a "comprehensive and efficient" library service, as required under the terms of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

To agree the report thus giving the go-ahead for public engagement in developing a new strategy for library services to cover 2016-21;

³ *The North East of England's Case for Culture* - Culture North East (2015)

Option 2

Not to agree the report and, by failing to initiate a process for developing a new strategy, put Council in breach of its statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The initiation of a process to adopt a strategy will ensure compliance with the statutory duty as outlined in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix One: Draft Library Strategy 2016-21 (North Tyneside Council May 2016)

1.9 Contact officers:

Steve Bishop, Senior Manager, Cultural Services, tel. (0191) 643 7410
Yvonne Gorgon, Group Manager, Cultural Services, tel. (0191) 643 5829
Andrea Stephenson, Group Manager, Cultural Services, tel. (0191) 643 5291
Alison Campbell, Senior Business Partner, tel. (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) Independent Library Report for England (DCMS 2014)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388989/Independent_Library_Report-18_December.pdf
- (2) Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Libraries 2016-21 (DCMS 2016)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-2021>
- (3) The North East of England's Case For Culture (Culture North East 2015)
<http://www.northeastcouncils.gov.uk/file.aspx?id=266>
- (4) The Culture White Paper (DCMS 2016)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510798/DCMS_The_Culture_White_Paper__3_.pdf

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

While the Council will continue to meet its statutory obligation to deliver a “comprehensive and efficient” library service, the exact mix of this provision may vary over the lifetime of the strategy, as resources allow and funding streams permit. However the core principles of the strategy will remain the basis upon which the service in the Borough is delivered. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The statutory obligations of local authorities to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service are outlined in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report as it seeks authority to undertake consultation on the Draft Library Strategy 2016-21

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Cabinet Member Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Culture and Leisure Sub Committee
Senior Leadership Team

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The report, if approved, will initiate a process of public engagement.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct Human Rights Act implications arising from the report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

An equality impact assessment on the operation of the library service is currently under review and would be amended as part of the public engagement process subject to the report being approved.

2.6 Risk management

The major risks associated with this report are those of non-compliance with the statutory duty as previously indicated.

2.7 Crime and disorder

Evidence suggests that engagement with books and literacy at an early age is a significant indicator in preventing later risk taking and criminal behaviour.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct environment or sustainability issues arising from the report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

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