

## Meeting: Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

**Date: 28th June 2016**

**Title: Draft Library Strategy 2016 - 2021**

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**Service: Environment, Housing and Leisure**

**Wards affected: All**

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### 1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the priorities outlined in the *Draft Library Strategy 2016-21* and the process for consultation before final approval by Cabinet.

### 2 Recommendations

The committee is invited to note the information indicated in the report.

### 3 Details

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 Draft Strategy followed on from the review of library provision, undertaken by the Sub Committee, with subsequent recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The priorities outlined in the *Draft Library Strategy 2016-21* were considered by the Culture and Leisure Sub Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

The priorities 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).

In 2014, the government commissioned William Sieghart to review the public library service in England. The *Independent Library Report for England*<sup>1</sup> 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 literacy<sup>2</sup>.

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*

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

*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 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.

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 priorities reflect those of the Society of Chief Librarians, Arts Council England and the National Libraries Task Force.

Subject to approval by Cabinet at its meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 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.

#### **4 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) The Independent Library Review for England (DCMS 2014)
- 2) The North East of England's Case for Culture – Culture North East (2015)
- 3) Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 – 2021 (DCMS 2016)
- 4) The Culture White Paper (DCMS 2016)
- 5) Draft Library Strategy 2016 -2021 (North Tyneside Council 2016)