

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

23 JUNE 2011

SUBJECT:	MUSEUMS LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COUNCIL REVIEW OF WIRRAL LIBRARY SERVICE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR CHRIS MEADEN</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the findings from the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council consultancy report on the stakeholder review of the Wirral Library Service. It discusses Libraries as a service and a place and details a number of actions for the Authority to consider which will be used in the development of the Library Strategy and the development of co-located Libraries and One Stop Shops which the MLA report acknowledges as a positive way forward.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. That Members note the MLA report and also the progress being made in the adoption of the report findings in linking Libraries and One Stop Shops together.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Officers will now be able to use this consultation as part of the development of the Library Strategy that will be linked to the Customer Access Strategy as the two services become linked in providing a key community placed service.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 As part of the outcome of the Wirral Library Review it was identified that an updated Library Strategy was required that would take account of all Library users interests. As part of the process the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) agreed that it would help and support Wirral in a consultation review that would assist the consequential strategy development.
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- 4.2 The MLA appointed and paid for consultants Torkildsen Barclay who met a number of external organisations such as NHS, Connect, Pentra and the Reader Organisation, along with community representatives and individuals such as Friends bodies and campaigners as well as staff, managers and Members.
 - 4.3. At the same time responsibility for the Library service moved to the Finance Department as part of the plan to co-locate Libraries and One Stop Shops to maximise the use of all Council sites.
 - 4.4. The April 2011 report is attached as the appendix to this report.
 - 4.5. The key strengths of the Library service are the buildings themselves seen as the Council in the community and the breadth of support for the service. The key weaknesses are the need for vision and leadership of the service and that the service is seen in some regards as dated. The report then discusses the issue facing Libraries as a Place and as a Service in some detail.
 - 4.6 The key findings were that the recent issues had affected staff morale and led to uncertainty as to future direction. It acknowledged the clear support the service now has and for the next step to be a clear view of its role and purpose, how it communicates that and undertakes that role including its statutory duty. It gave clear indications of how the Wirral Libraries as a Place is important and that linkages with other complementary services is the way forward as exemplified by the One Stop Shop co-location. The service itself is seen to need to expand beyond the traditional buildings and recommends functions to focus on such as; Reading for Pleasure, Information for Study, development of individual literacy and a key role as an information service.
 - 4.7. The specific actions the report suggests are:
 - To agree or amend the functions proposed to be delivered, and then to set out a vision and strategy for the service, including who are the priority target groups and identify performance indicators to measure the outcomes.
 - Review the Library structure and the skills required. Appoint staff accordingly taking account of the changes likely to their roles including the focus on a strategic and commissioning base.
 - Prepare a strategic development plan and a local plan for each building to meet local need.
 - 4.8. Whilst there is still much to do, the report acknowledges the proactive work now ongoing to take the service forward with investment and support and its linking to One Stop Shops. The strategy it proposes will help to maximise Library service delivery in Wirral.
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5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The risk is that without a developed strategy then long term service delivery will not be efficiently focused on the key requirements of the service.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation with internal and external groups and individuals was the substantive part of this work.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 These groups will be consulted on the development of the strategy for Libraries as well as the linkages this has with the Customer Access Strategy.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report although and the development of the Library service will have resource implications.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Library service undertakes a statutory duty in the provision of a comprehensive Library service as prescribed under the Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The strategy is an important requirement to ensure that the legal requirements are met.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? Not specifically as part of this report but one will be undertaken within the development of the Library Strategy.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None.

FNCE/117/11

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15.0 APPENDICES

15.1 Wirral Library Service Review - Torkildsen Barclay - April 2011

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	9 December 2010