

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| SUBJECT: | LIBRARIES CHAMPION |
| WARD/S AFFECTED | ALL |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF FINANCE |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | COUNCILLOR LESLEY RENNIE |
| KEY DECISION: | NO |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of Members to appoint a Libraries Champion in response to the proposal made in the 2012/13 Budget.

2.0 BACKGROUND ISSUES

- 2.1 Cabinet on 21 February 2012 (minute 317) proposed the appointment of a Libraries Champion specifically to work with the Reader Organisation to oversee work on a new library model based on delivering soft social care, education and community development. This work would be carried out in partnership with the Director of Public Health and piloted at one library with the aim of replicating it across the entire library network.
- 2.2. Libraries are currently undergoing a number of key changes. The ongoing merger with One Stop Shops has already seen two sites open and operates successfully, and more will follow. This is key in maintaining the standard of the Library service.
- 2.3. The Library service has received significant investment over the last eighteen months with the installation of plasma information screens at all sites, wi-fi introduced across the network, an e-Books service and a publicity campaign "More Than Books" to support the work and increase the usage of facilities.
- 2.4. One of the recommended outcomes of the Charteris Enquiry was for Wirral Libraries to have a Library Strategy. An initial strategy has been developed and was approved by Cabinet on 8 December 2011. Further consultation was then undertaken as to how this is developed and reviewed and a report was submitted to Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2012. This detailed the consultation outcomes which are to be taken forward for approval, and which would then be subject to ongoing review.

Libraries Champion

- 2.5. The Library service falls under the remit of the Cabinet portfolio holder of Culture, Councillor Rennie and a Libraries Champion would work with and support the portfolio holder.
- 2.6 The Authority previously appointed a Libraries Champion, Councillor Don McCubbin, on 13 December 2010.
- 2.7 The Libraries Champion would engage with officers as well as with external organisations to support the use and development of the service. The Champion would also engage with the public and users (both individual and groups) to ensure their views are taken on board during the development and change to the service. This could be particularly relevant when reviewing such matters as the Library Strategy and when undertaking consultation with users.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Championing of the Library service would otherwise fall to individual Members and the portfolio holder.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The option is to either have or not have a Libraries Champion.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No consultation has been necessary on this specific decision for Members.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 That a specific person acting as Champion could give these groups a single accessible point of contact on this service area.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING & ASSETS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The appointment of a Champion would be a single accessible point of reference on a number of issues which would include equality issues.

- 9.2. The link to the Equality Impact Assessment for Libraries is below;

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Members decide if a Libraries Champion should be appointed and if so to make a suitable appointment.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

14.1 To allow Members to decide if a Libraries Champion appointment should be made and if so to consider the appropriate appointment.

FNCE/79/12

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APPENDIX

None attached

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None attached

SUBJECT HISTORY (last three years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Cabinet | 21 February 2012 |
| Council | 13 December 2010 |