

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

29 JANUARY 2013

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| SUBJECT: | <i>LIBRARIES AS CENTRES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES</i> |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | <i>ALL</i> |
| REPORT OF: | <i>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE</i> |
| KEY DECISION | NO |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates Members on the actions taken in response to the Council decision of 15 October 2012 asking for an action plan to bring forward recommendations, as to how libraries can have their place as centres of their communities built upon.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 At its meeting of 15 October 2012 (minute 70) the Council recognised the high regard in which libraries are held in Wirral, that they are at the centre of local communities and that this role should be built upon. To that end a number of actions were set out and this report updates on that work.

2.2 Wirral's libraries are already involved in key authority strategies and initiatives such as merging with a number of One Stop Shops and playing an integral role in helping minimise digital exclusion. The work suggested here compliments work that is being undertaken already and will be a positive help in cementing libraries role in each local area. However, libraries are a large Council service and have to play their role in helping meet the very real financial challenge the authority faces, while maintaining an acceptable level of service. It is within that context that this work takes place.

2.3 With the support of the Community Engagement Team each Neighbourhood Forum is being asked, at its next cycle of meetings (February 2013), to work with and advise the library service. Library managers will attend meetings to explain the work of the service. They will ask the Forum to highlight ideas they have, and those of their community, that they would want to include in their own area plan, to enhance the role of the library in their community. Library managers will then discuss with the Neighbourhood Forum if and how best that may be achieved.

2.4 To assist Neighbourhood Forums the library service will detail what is available at sites that currently help meet the particular needs of various groups such as children, older people and people with special needs. As part of this Forums will be asked how they feel those categories can be better catered for in each library.

- 2.5 A key issue will be to show how Libraries continue to engage and develop work with the many external groups and partners. These include The Reader Organisation that delivers significant support to groups, especially on reading initiatives plus others such as Reach Out, Connexions, CAB and our partners in health that support key health initiatives. Added to this the libraries have a well established network of friends and user groups who regularly feed into assessing library requirements, developments and improvements. Their input will further support this work.
- 2.6 To help initiate this work the service has written to each Neighbourhood Forum and detailed what is on offer in their area's libraries. This includes the role of current volunteers who are focused on supporting use of Information Technology at sites, of which there are more than 20 covering 11 sites thus far. The service will also seek ideas on widening that role in supporting our own site staff. Neighbourhood Forums will be asked to encourage this and for ideas as to how they could support this in their own area.
- 2.7 Once these views have been brought together they will feed into the work of the service and an action plan will be drawn up with a timetable. The results will be reported back to this Committee and then to Cabinet with specific recommendations.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The risk is that Neighbourhood Forum expectations of service expansion may be raised beyond what can be delivered. It will be the role of officers to ensure that the context in which developments may be delivered is appreciated.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Engagement with local Friends and User groups continues to be undertaken.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Contact is being made with each Neighbourhood Forum during the February 2013 cycle of meetings.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 These groups are engaged at many library sites already and will continue to be as part of the service's ongoing community work.

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

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report, although the recommendations that arise from this engagement process may and these will be detailed in future reports.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The potential impact of these proposals has been reviewed with regard to equality and an initial impact review is shown below. The overarching assessments for libraries can be found at the following link;

<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 Members note the report and the work being undertaken.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 That Members are aware of the work being undertaken in response to the Council minute and note its place within the overall development work that is undertaken in the library service.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY

| Council Meeting | Date |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Council | 15 th October 2012 |

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Julie Mann
E mail address juliemann@wirra.gov.uk
Head of Section: Julie Barkway
Chief Officer: Peter Timmins
Department: Finance
Date: 9th January 2013

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Library Service engagement with Neighbourhood Forums

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny 29/1/13

And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website

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

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

X **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

The engagement process will not impact on equality. The outcomes of this consultation may do and whilst anticipated that they will be positive, EIA's will be undertaken at that point to assess relative impacts.

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

No (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

| Which group(s) of people could be affected | Potential positive or negative impact | Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact | Lead person | Timescale | Resource implications |
|---|--|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
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Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

Section 7: **Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?**

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If ‘yes’ please continue to section 8.

If ‘no’ please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it’s legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.