

Report of the Director of Environment & Sport to the meeting of Executive to be held on 8th November 2016.

AH

Subject:

Petition referred from Full Council on 18th October 2016 – Save Holme Wood Library from closure

Summary statement:

The Friends of Centrepoint & Holme Wood are petitioning the Council to overturn its decision to establish a community managed library and if a solution cannot be found then the Council would look to close the library. Full Council has referred the matter to Executive for further consideration.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:



1. SUMMARY:

- 1.1 The Friends of Centrepoint & Holme Wood are petitioning the Council to overturn its decision to establish a community managed library and if a solution cannot be found then the Council would look to close the library. Full Council has referred the matter to Executive for further consideration.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council in their budget proposals for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 agreed to withdraw from directly managing Holme Wood Library on 1st April 2017 and to operate the library through a community managed model.
- 2.2 It is not possible to directly manage the current number of libraries in the district within the available budget from April 2017. The community model to operate the libraries and support them as a library network, was considered an affordable and appropriate way forward. The major effect of this change would be to reduce the staff costs associated with libraries, while offering some support to maintain the library through training, events and financial assistance in some instances for service related costs e.g. utilities.
- 2.3 The Library Service are currently engaging with local communities to raise awareness of the opportunity to run a community library and where there is interest a plan is being developed to transfer the library into community management. At present these discussions include a variety of groups and organisations across the district in the library locations of Baildon, Thornbury, Silsden, Burley, Menston, Thornton, St Augsutine's and recent interest has been registered in Great Horton.
- 2.5 Across the District there are currently 150 individuals registering an interest in volunteering and this is steadily rising. Some groups that have registered an interest have indicated that they also have volunteers for there organisation, to support the community library in their area, so the number of volunteers across the district is higher than those registered with the Council.
- 2.6 Further to the Council budget decision during the summer of 2016 the Friends of Centrepoint and Holme Wood started a petition, which was presented to Council on the 18th October and referred to Executive for further consideration.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Budget proposals totalling a significant level of savings in financial year 2017-18 for the library service will require the development and implementation of community managed libraries to meet the budget moving forward.



5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 A decision not to proceed at Holme Wood may increase community opposition at other libraries currently under consideration.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The Executive are asked to consider this petition as exceptional business due to its potential impact upon the current years agreed revenue targets.
- 6.2 Local Authorities are required to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service through the provision of the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

An initial Equalities Impact Assessment was produced prior to the budget setting process.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of community managed libraries will allow a more sustainable library network within the finances of the service.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

No issues anticipated.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

No issues anticipated.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

No issues anticipated.

7.6 TRADE UNION

There is on-going consultation on the impact of community managed libraries.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

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8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

- 9.1 Option 1: Re-affirm the original Council decision to introduce Community Managed Libraries at a number of locations in the district including Holme Wood.
- 9.2 Option 2: Re-affirm the original Council decision to introduce Community Managed Libraries at a number of locations in the district excluding Holme Wood.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the Executive reaffirm the previous Full Council decision to introduce Community Managed Libraries at the locations originally agreed and request officer to engage with representative of Holme Wood to attract volunteers and develop a locally agreed solution within the financial envelop provided through the process.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Extract of Petition presented to Council on 18th October – To Save Home Wood Library from Closure.
- 11.2 Appendix 2: Speech of the Friends of Holme Wood Centre Point and Holme Wood to Council on 18th October 2016

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 Full Petition containing 98 signatures and other correspondences

