

**Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of Regeneration & Environment
Overview and Scrutiny to be held on 10 March 2020.**

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Subject:

LIBRARIES SERVICE

Summary statement:

This report provides an update to a previous report of this committee on 9 January 2020 and includes details of the key proposals for the library service which are currently subject to formal public consultation.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Regeneration & Environment

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bradford Council is very proud of the library service across the Bradford District, however like many other local authorities across the country has needed to consider changes to how library services are delivered as a result of significant financial challenges.
- 1.2 The strategic ambition for the Library service is to approach service redesign in a way that builds on the great work we already do with a focus on unlocking the huge potential that libraries have to improve individuals' 'lives' while at the same time, delivering local and national priorities.
- 1.3 When the library service began a review over 12 months ago, it was faced with an agreed saving target of £1.05m to achieve in 2020-21 against a backdrop of a national and local picture showing a declining use of libraries..
- 1.4 To meet this challenge, the service has had to think about libraries in a different way and not just from a position of achieving savings. It is clear that continuing to do things the way we do, at the moment, would inevitably result in a further declining position.
- 1.5 As part of this review, over the last 12 months the service has undertaken a detailed needs analysis and district wide engagement exercise, and received thousands of responses. The feedback indicates that residents expect to see libraries evolving and being more connected to communities and support wider district priorities.
- 1.6 In recognition of this wider impact, in particular in improving health outcomes, tackling poverty, addressing social isolation, assisting people back into employment and helping with school readiness, the service have been exploring wider funding opportunities that would support the ambition to deliver a sustainable library service that meets local needs.
- 1.7 The information gathered, has been central to decisions taken on the future direction for the library service and resulted in a proposal to partly meet the library service savings by a base budget investment of £700k from the Health & Wellbeing budget. The proposal for additional investment was subject to formal public consultation as part of the Council's budget approval process and has now been agreed. The service also anticipates that further funding opportunities are available to help sustain the service longer term.
- 1.8 This means that the service can develop plans for the future without needing to achieve immediate savings. This supports a commitment to retain the existing network of 29 libraries in broadly existing localities subject to local needs supported by a district wide home library service. In recognition of the commitment to retain existing library services, agreements have been reached with community and hybrid managed libraries to extend current contracts for a period of 12 months to 1 April 2021.
- 1.9 To support future strategic ambitions, and using all of the information captured through the review the service have developed a new library service vision which is

underpinned by a set of principles for what a future library service should be. Using the vision and principles, the service has also developed a new “library service model” which builds on the positive work that the library service already does, and provides a framework which will allow the service to evolve beyond 2021.

- 1.10 The proposed vision, principles and library service model are now subject to formal public consultation at a district-wide level over the next 6 weeks and all feedback will be considered as part of a final report to the Executive on 24th March.
- 1.11 If agreed the new library service model will provide the framework to manage a change programme which will focus on individual libraries at a locality level. Where changes are proposed these will be subject to further engagement and consultation with residents and staff during the financial year 2020-201.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members may recall from previous reports, the library service have been considering proposals that would achieve £1.05m savings for the financial year 2020-21 which were agreed by Executive in February 2019.
- 2.2 In order to gather information and the thoughts of residents, staff and wider stakeholders, during 2019 the library service undertook a detailed library needs analysis and district wide public engagement exercise. The detailed findings from both exercises have previously been shared with all Members and staff across the Council and have also been shared publicly on the Council’s website.
- 2.3 Members will recall a report to this Committee on 9 January 2020 provided a summary update on the outcomes of the public engagement exercise. The findings showed that there is currently a comprehensive district-wide library offer that delivers a valuable service for the district’s local communities. However, the current model on its own is not financially sustainable in the long term and residents expect to see libraries evolving and being more connected to communities.
- 2.4 The information gathered, has been key to decisions taken on the future direction for the library service and resulted in a proposal to partly meet the library service savings by a base budget investment of £700k from the Health & Wellbeing budget. The proposal for additional investment was subject to formal public consultation as part of the Council’s budget approval process and has now been agreed.
- 2.5 Since the last report to this Committee, further conversations have taken place with other Council departments including Health & Wellbeing and wider stakeholders including Arts Council England and the wider voluntary sector. There is a growing appreciation of the value that library services have within communities and the opportunities they present for positively impacting on wider district priorities.
- 2.6 In recognition of the positive contribution that libraries make, further research has highlighted that there is the potential for further additional investment in the library service through working collaboratively with other Council services and wider stakeholders, e.g. Adult Social Care, Children Services, CCG’s, Arts Council, NLHF, LEAP, City of Culture 2025 etc. In addition the Arts Council England is

encouraging local authorities to use these opportunities to bid for national grants to enable libraries to grow and be more aligned to local needs.

- 2.7 This additional investment and the potential to secure more, allows the library service to reconsider the approach for future development with a focus on maximising opportunities and developing a library service model that is aligned to local need and not from a position of achieving savings. It also provides the opportunity to consult further with the people of Bradford District about how this investment will be used at both a district and local level to achieve the best possible outcomes for residents.
- 2.8 The revised approach includes a refreshed “vision” which sets out a new strategic direction for the service, establishes some principles for what a future library service should look like and proposes a new library service model, which provides a framework for managing future library changes.
- 2.9 If agreed this new model will mean that the Council can continue to provide the same levels of service via a network of 29 libraries in current locations while, acknowledging that some buildings may change to meet future aspirations. It also means we are able to continue to provide a district wide home library service.
- 2.10 The library service have now presented a proposed new “vision”, “principles” and “model” to residents, staff and stakeholders as part of a formal consultation exercise and the remainder of this report will provide a summary of the proposed new library service model.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has a statutory duty to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service, and to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of their functions in relation to libraries. The Secretary of State has the power to make a remedial order against a library authority following a local inquiry.
- 3.2 Before deciding whether to order an inquiry, the Secretary of State will carefully consider the local authority’s compliance under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. All stages of the assessment and progression of proposals have been discussed with DCMS to mitigate any potential risks of such action by the Secretary of State in the future.

4. PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As referenced earlier in this report, the proposals which are now being consulted on have been developed using a wide range of information gathered during 2019 including how people use Bradford District Libraries and how they should be used in the future.
- 4.2 Using all of the information gathered, the library service have re-considered the approach for future service delivery and are now consulting with residents, staff and stakeholders on the revised approach with a focus on 3 key elements

as follows:-

- a) The future vision
- b) Key design principles for a future library service
- c) New library service model

4.3 The background for this consultation is provided within an information pack developed with key staff from across the library service and wider stakeholders and is included for reference at **appendix 1**. The document provides information to show how the outcomes from previous consultation and engagement have been used to support the development of the proposals which we are now being consulting on and sign post residents to other more detailed information which may help inform the response to this consultation.

4.4 The future vision

4.4.1 The vision for Bradford District library services for 2020 to 2025 is to:-

“develop a 21st century library service that continues to provide a core library service, that is flexible and enables us to enhance the quality of life of people and communities, is inclusive and vibrant, , supports wider district priorities, enables all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities, and is outcomes focused at a local level.

4.4.2 In developing this vision, as well as using local information, the change team have researched models of best practice and looked to align this to the national vision for public libraries set by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's **Libraries Deliver:- Ambition for libraries in England 2016-2021**.

4.4.3 The vision is underpinned by an ambition to retain our current library network with a focus on “re-inventing” and more aligned to community needs. It also recognises the wider impact that libraries have on achieving outcomes at District level with a particular focus on supporting the achievement against four Public Health outcomes.

4.5 Key design principles

4.5.1 Using the national libraries “universal offers” as a guide and data captured from information gathering activities a set of principles for what our library service should be for Bradford People have been developed and include:-

- Inclusive
- Heart of the community
- Retains a core library function
- Connects with other services
- Creative and mindful of wider cultural ambitions
- Partnership approach to working

4.5.2 Further detail on the principles is contained in **appendix 1** attached.

4.6 New library service model

4.6.1 The proposed new library service model is made up of 6 key components as set out in the diagram below. Each level is described in more detail in **appendix 1** and therefore only a summary of the overall approach is set out in this report.



4.6.2 The model essentially provides a framework for how the service should operate and manage the associated change programmes. It sets out the ambition to retain all 29 libraries in current locations and proposes delivery via a mixed approach to staffing and service delivery accountability e.g. community and Council managed arrangements.

4.6.3 The model also includes moving to a service based approach rather than the traditional building base with an acknowledgement that some buildings have a key role within a community and sets out an ambition to maximise the wider funding opportunities that are available to ensure longer term financial sustainability.

4.6.4 Within the model there is a core offer that residents can expect to see as a minimum at Council managed libraries, with an ambition that community managed libraries who don't currently provide the core offer, will sign up to a commitment to delivering a consistent set of core services in the future. This approach will see the whole library network operating as an "ecosystem" of interconnected libraries rather than being seen as 29 individual libraries.

4.6.5 In addition to the core offer there will be a tailored element at each library where additional services will be provided based on the size of the library and local need. The tailored offer will build on existing activities that support health and well being outcomes and may include additional services e.g. housing benefit and debt advice and or co-location of other partners including voluntary sector organisations. The range of services offered will however be subject to wider discussions and agreement.

4.6.6 The proposed model is a menu and does not set out what each library will look like in the future.

4.6.7 The consultation exercise for the proposed library model will be concluded shortly. If agreed by the executive on 24 March 2020, the next steps are to develop options for individual libraries based on the model and taking into account different locality needs. This will involve carrying on the conversation with staff, residents and wider stakeholders and will be completed during.

5. APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

5.1 The approach used to support this consultation takes account of the guidance issued by the Department for Culture Media and Sport "*libraries as a statutory service: guidance*" which says that library services should: *co-design and co-create their services with the active support, engagement and participation of their communities so services are accessible and available to all who need them*

5.2 In addition, a consultation needs to:

- occur when proposals are formative and still at an early stage
- clearly define the scope for stakeholder input, which must be meaningful
- give sufficient information about the proposals to ensure that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses
- give adequate time for consideration and response
- factor in the time taken for the different stages of local processes

5.3 Responses to consultation should be taken into account when finalising any proposal and an explanation given of how these responses have informed the proposal.

5.4 A consultation plan has been developed and approved by the libraries strategic board which provides oversight of proposals for change in this area. Key elements of the overall approach are as follows:-

5.3.1 Staff consultation

5.3.1.1 Two staff consultation sessions were held on 5th and 6th February 2020 and trade unions were invited to attend to support their members.

5.3.1.2 The sessions were chaired by Phil Barker (Assistant Director Sports & Culture) and attendees were asked to share their thoughts on the three areas of consultation, "vision", "principles" and "model".

5.3.1.3 Staff were asked a series of questions relating to the three areas including whether there should be any other information included in the public consultation document.

5.3.1.4 In general, staff felt that the proposed areas for consultation were the correct ones to be consulting on at a strategic level; however they did raise concerns regarding capacity for managing the change programme at a locality level and expressed a desire to continue to be involved in the detailed design of individual library options.

5.3.2 Public consultation

- 5.3.2.3 Following feedback from staff, the consultation plan was refined with regard to timescale and a final document for consultation and supporting survey were agreed. It was also agreed that the public consultation would commence on Monday 10 February 2020 and would close on Sunday 15 March.
- 5.3.2.3 The public consultation information pack attached for reference at **appendix 1** and supporting survey to capture responses attached for reference at **appendix 2**, is available on-line via the Council's library web pages and paper copies are available in all Libraries across the Bradford District.
- 5.3.2.4 Residents can get involved with the consultation by responding via the online consultation, by emailing the dedicated library consultation mail box, or by writing their feedback and dropping it in at their nearest local library.
- 5.3.2.5 There are 5 public consultation drop in sessions covering 5 localities across the Bradford District including Wibsey, Manningham, Eccleshill, Keighley and Shipley and the detail including locations and dates are attached for reference at **appendix 3**. The sessions are chaired by both Phil Barker and Cllr Sarah Ferriby (Portfolio Holder) who will be supported by wider libraries and change management resources and present a further opportunity for residents to share their views and ask questions specific to the consultation.
- 5.3.2.6 To ensure that the public consultation approach is inclusive and takes account of the diversity of the population of the District, there have been a number of meetings with Council officers who are identified as the relevant experts for ensuring that residents who fall within one of the protected characteristic areas are consulted with in a meaningful way. Further detail on the agreed outcomes of those meetings together with other steps that the library service have taken to ensure a fully inclusive consultation process is contained in **appendix 4** attached.
- 5.3.2.7 At the time of writing this report, it is too early to provide an update on the outcomes of public consultation; however Council offers will present indicative findings at the meeting to be held on 10 March 2020 and an additional appendix to this report will be made available to the public following the meeting.

5.3.4 Wider communication activities

- 5.3.4.1 To ensure that all key stakeholders across the district were informed of the consultation, information was provided to MP's and Elected Members.
- 5.3.4.2 Consultation information has been made available on the Council's internal Bradnet pages, a media release was approved by the Leader of the Council and e-mails have been sent to "Stay Connected" subscribers.
- 5.3.4.3 Consultation sessions are also planned with both Community Managed Library Accountable Bodies and Town & Parish councils during the period of

consultation.

- 5.3.5 Feedback from the public consultation will be assessed and where appropriate and within budget , amends will be made to the proposals. Final proposals will then be presented to the Executive for approval at a meeting to be held on 24th March 2020 and prior to implementation from 1 April 2020.

6 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Since the last report to this Committee there has been significant development which has changed the strategic direction and resulted in a two phased consultation process.
- 6.2 The current consultation sets out the ambitions of the library service and the next steps from April 2020 to March 2021 will be focused on developing individual local library options and will involve staff, residents and wider Council services and partners in line with the strategic ambitions for the service.
- 6.3. The scope of the change programme from April 2020 onwards is currently subject to further discussions and planning.

7. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The 2020/21 budget proposal approved additional funding of £700k to be allocated to the Library Service from the Public Health budget. This budget allocation is contingent upon the library model changing and the achievement of key public health outcomes of:-
- Tackling poverty
 - Social isolation
 - Back into employment
 - School readiness
- 7.2 Available funding therefore supports the need for a different model for library provision.
- 7.3 The library service anticipates that further additional funds could be available to meet the ambition for the future of libraries within the District.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- 8.1 A dedicated steering group including resources from Finance, HR, and Facilities Management & Legal has been established to provide oversight to the development of proposals, consultation and subsequent implementation activities and will report directly to the Place Budget Delivery Board.
- 8.2 In recognition of the challenging transformation programme and potential for wider investment on a Council wide basis, a senior level libraries board has been established and is attended by all relevant strategic directors and representatives

from the library service and corporate transformation team. The board is currently meeting weekly and will provide strategic oversight during the development of proposals and wider consultation activities.

- 8.3 The findings and recommendations arising from the library needs assessment and engagement work are embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the district.

9. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 9.1 Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service pursuant to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

- 9.2 Consultation is to be undertaken on the options for the library service. The consultation is to be carried out in accordance with the following well established principles:-

- Consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
- The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
- The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.

- 9.3 Any consultation must be adequate and fair, taking into account what fairness requires in the particular circumstances. The nature of the change proposed by this phase of consultation has been considered by legal services when assessing the duty on the Council for this consultation. As proposals affecting individual libraries are developed, further consultation may be required, depending on what those proposals are. As set out below, where there are proposals for change that affect staff, appropriate staff and trade union consultation should be undertaken.

- 9.4 At the time of writing this report, consultation is on-going and therefore, the findings from this cannot be presented as part of this report. However, officers will be available at the meeting to provide an update on the indicative findings to date.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other known implications for this phase of consultation.

10.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

- 10.1.1 The Council must have due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 in formulating proposals for the future of the library service and have produced an equality impact assessment to support this phase of consultation which is attached for reference at **appendix 5**.

10.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

No sustainability implications from this report.

10.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not considered at this stage

10.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

10.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None

10.6 TRADE UNION

10.6.1 Early staff engagement and consultation has already commenced and key staff, have been included in service re-design sessions, together with invitations to the trade unions to participate.

10.6.2 Consultation with the trade unions will be an on-going process through both informal and formal consultation processes. Where any changes affecting staff are proposed through individual library re-design during 2020-21 these will be subject to further detailed staff and trade union consultation processes.

10.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

10.7.1 No immediate implications noted, however the next phase of development may impact on some wards and any implications will be included in future reports.

10.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None

10.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None

11. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Regeneration and Environment Committee consider the updates provided and advise Officers on any future reporting requirements.

13. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Libraries public consultation Information Pack

Appendix 2 – Response to consultation Survey

Appendix 3 – Public consultation drop in sessions

Appendix 4 – Inclusivity briefing paper

Appendix 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None