

Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of Executive to be held on 5 January 2020

DA

Subject:

Response to Petition about Keighley Library

Summary statement:

Executive is asked to note the information contained in this report in response to a petition about Keighley Library that was presented to Council on 8 December 2020.

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Portfolio:

Healthy People & Places

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Regeneration and Environment

1. SUMMARY

A petition about the future of Keighley Library, due to be presented to Council in March 2020, was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic and finally presented to Council in December 2020. As a result of this delay, the petition is out of step with the decisions taken by the Council, and not reflective of the positive new vision and model for the Library Service that has been agreed and is now being implemented.

We can confirm that the Council is not closing Keighley Library, or any other library across the District. Instead, the Council is investing in the Library Service, in recognition of the important role it plays in people's lives and in supporting the Council's priorities, and is seeking to further develop the potential of our libraries to achieve even more.

2. BACKGROUND

A petition concerning the future of Keighley Library was presented to Council on 8 December 2020 by Ms Jane Lee, who chairs the Friends of Keighley Library group. The petition was originally due to be presented to Council on 17 March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The petition contains 1738 signatures and states: *"Bradford Council are looking into making major changes to the way Keighley Library currently functions. This will include making several redundancies and possibly in the near future end with total closure. These changes are being introduced for one purpose only. TO SAVE MONEY. These changes are definitely not in the best interests for the residents of Keighley."*

The petition followed a major review of the Library Service during 2019, which involved a needs assessment and District wide public engagement, with a view to saving £1.05M in 2020/21. Formal public consultation on the draft strategy took place between 10 February - 15 March 2020, and the final report and recommendations were agreed by the Council's Executive on 24 March 2020.

On the date the petition was originally intended to be presented the results of the consultation and the final strategy for the Library Service were not known and therefore had not been presented or agreed. The full details of the consultation response and the agreed new vision and model for the Service were published as part of the papers of the 24 March Executive meeting (Item 14).

The final report clearly articulates a commitment from the Council to retain all existing library services across the District, whilst £700k investment from the Council's Health and Wellbeing budget would enable the service to build on and enhance the work it already does to meet priority outcomes including: tackling poverty, addressing social isolation, assisting people back into employment and helping with school readiness.

The remainder of the £1.05M savings requirement (£350k) was met in 2020/21 from Council reserves, and work is underway to identify sources of funding to cover this

gap in 2021/2 onwards. There have been no further library service redundancies since March, and there are no plans to close any libraries across the District.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Keighley Library has been selected as one of the libraries in which to pilot the 'tailored offer' as part of the new model for the Library Service. The 'tailored offer' will be developed individually for each library in response to specific local needs and circumstances, working with local community groups and partners.

A Working Group is being established for each pilot to meet in January, and it has been confirmed that Ms Lee will be invited to join the Keighley Library Working Group to represent the Friends of Keighley Library.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

No further budget savings are planned for the Library Service in 2021/22, over and above the £350k deferred from the current financial year.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

There are no significant risks.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are no direct legal issues arising out of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Council has committed to further local public engagement and consultation on any changes to libraries as a result of implementing the new vision and model for the Library Service. In doing so, we will seek to include as diverse a range of local groups as possible.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant sustainability implications.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

There are no significant greenhouse gas emissions impacts.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant community safety implications.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no significant implications.

7.6 TRADE UNION

Staff representatives will also be included in the Working Groups piloting the implementation of the new model for the Library Service; staff and Trade Union representatives will be kept regularly involved and informed.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The petition was of particular concern to Keighley Central ward.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

The Keighley Area Co-ordinator has already been engaged with in relation to the Keighley Library pilot work; local ward councillors will also be informed and engaged.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Not applicable.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Not applicable.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the information presented in this report in relation to the petition about Keighley Library be noted-

10. APPENDICES

N/A