

**REPORT TO THE: COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE  
ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY  
PANEL**

**DATE OF MEETING: 14 MARCH 2017**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: UPDATE REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
LIBRARIES AND CHILDREN'S CENTRES  
(COMMUNITY ACCESS REVIEW)**

**TOWN OR PARISH: ALL**

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: MANDY BISHOP**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the panel receives and comments on the progress being made with regards to the delivery of the agreed outcomes of the Community Access Review.

### **1. SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides an update for Members on activities to deliver the agreed outcomes of the Community Access Review (CAR).

### **2. POLICY**

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision for North Somerset as: *a great place to live where people communities and businesses flourish*, and for the organisation to provide: *modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset*.

The review is part of the Council's transformation programme and cuts across all four themes of the programme with a particular emphasis on 'Delivering Together' and 'One Council'.

#### **Corporate Strategies and Policies**

Key internal strategic documents and will ensure these are considered as the project progresses. These documents include:

- The Medium Term Financial Plan
- The Customer Access Strategy
- The Corporate Asset Management Strategy (and Asset Management Plan)
- The Digital Access Strategy

### **3. DETAILS**

This report provides an update on activities to deliver the outcomes agreed as part of the Community Access Review (CAR). Members may wish to refer to the 1 November 2016 update presented to this Panel and the report considered by the Executive on 6 December 2016.

#### Staff Consultation

During January/February 2017 a comprehensive consultation exercise has taken place with all children's centre and library staff. Teams were consulted upon changes to staffing structures and the future delivery arrangements.

Managers received 145 responses, which included 22 team and 123 individual replies. All the feedback was considered and a number of changes were made to the initial proposals, including:

- Changes to management structures supporting children's centre service provision
- Changes to front line service delivery structures
- Re-naming of posts
- Changes to the groupings of libraries and children's centres
- Changes to some of the staffed hours in dedicated library sites

Individuals and staff groups also provided a wide range of feedback on the proposed service delivery arrangements. Managers will be working further with recognised trade unions and staff groups to jointly develop a range of operational practices and procedures, particularly in relation to:

- The self-service arrangements
- Workloads and service priorities

#### Self-Service Arrangements

The introduction of self-service arrangements in seven localities is one of the key outcomes arising from this review. It will enable us to significantly increase opening hours and services in the following communities:

- Worle
- Pill
- Long Ashton
- Clevedon
- Portishead
- Winscombe, and
- Yatton

We have recently conducted a tender process, led by South Gloucestershire Council. A provider for these services has been appointed.

## Property Changes

Service managers have been working closely with colleagues in Property and Asset Management to put in place plans to deliver the property changes and support co-location of services in Pill, Yatton and Worle. These works will be undertaken between April and July 2017. There will be some disruption to services during this time period and communities will sign-posted to alternative localities and our on-line services.

In addition, highway engineers have visited both Pill and Worle to review existing signage, lighting and access arrangements.

## Service transfer

Several meetings have been held with Congresbury Parish Council to progress the transfer of the library service. The locality will remain part of the North Somerset library offer, delivered through the parish council by volunteers. Subject to all agreements being in place, the parish council will be delivering the service from 1 July.

## Phase 2 Localities (Clevedon, Weston Central, Nailsea and Portishead)

These projects are at a very early stage and officers continue to collect background information on service demand and local needs and priorities.

## Next Steps (March-September 2017)

One of the agreed outcomes arising from the community and partnership engagement exercise undertaken during autumn 2016, was a commitment to on-going consultation with equalities/local groups and community representatives. This second phase of engagement will take place over the coming months. Member input to date has helped inform the future service delivery arrangements. Service managers will continue to liaise closely with ward members and this panel as we implement phase 1 arrangements and as plans begin to be formulated for phase 2 localities.

Interviews and selection processes will take place to populate the new staffing structures in March/April. Work will be undertaken from May onwards to put the new teams in place from 1 July 2017. At this stage it is unlikely that there will be any compulsory redundancies.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This review will deliver revenue savings of £500,000. £50,000 of savings have been cashed in 2016/17. The profile of the remaining savings (Ref: CC5) is as follows:

- 2017/18                      £340,000
- 2018/19                      £110,000 (full year impact of staff savings in 17/18).

At the Executive meeting held on 6 December 2016 it was agreed to invest £820,000 of capital in to buildings and facilities, financed through capital receipts.

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are formal project governance arrangements in place. A risk log has been produced and reputational, legal and financial risk are closely monitored, managed and mitigation actions agreed.

## **6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

The council produced detailed service data to help inform the consultation and engagement process. This information was published online and available to the public. Equality considerations continue to be at the centre of our on-going service re-design. We will continue to engage communities, staff and equality groups as we develop our services.

## **7. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

There are statutory requirements in relation to both library and children's centre services. For example the Public Library and Museums Act 1964 places a duty on library authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service which broadly speaking means a service free of charge for people who live, work or study in their area to borrow or refer to books, printed material and pictures in line with their needs and requirements.

Similarly, the Childcare Act 2006 (reinforced in the 2009 Act) requires local authorities to play an important strategic role in the provision of childcare in their area and places a duty on authorities to provide or commission children's centres.

## **8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Council is faced with a significant financial challenge over the next few years. The Community Access review is one of several key transformational projects which together support the MTFP and ensure we continue to deliver sustainable services with our communities.

The Council is committed to the delivery of Children's Centre and Library services. The alternative to a comprehensive redesign of our front facing services is to rationalise or stop some of our local provision, to support the Council delivery of a balanced budget, which is clearly not the preferred approach. In order to prevent service closures a review of our property, staffing structures and service offer is essential to maintain provision.

## **AUTHOR**

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Reports to the Executive:

8 December 2015 - <http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27043.htm>

21 June 2016 - <http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27427.pdf>

Phase 1 – Consultation and Engagement papers

6 December 2016 - <http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27794.pdf>

Report to the Panel:

1 November 2016 - <http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27669.pdf>