

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE	<b>20 September 2012</b>
ACTING DIRECTOR	<b>Charlie Penman</b>
TITLE OF REPORT	<b>Library &amp; Information Service: New ways of working</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/12/044</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

At the Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February, within the consideration of the Administration's proposals for the General Fund 2011/12, Council instructed the Director of Education, Culture and Sport to report to the relevant committee on new ways of working for the provision of library services within the city. The original proposal involved the closure of up to 8 community libraries, with a potential saving of £452,000 over 5 years. A report considering changes to ways of delivering library and information services in the context of delivering efficiencies and budget savings was presented to Education, Culture & Sport committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011. This report considers progress to date and indicates the way forward for the service over the next year.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee:

- i. Note and endorse the contents of the report
- ii. Instruct officers to consult on the proposed two community library models, reduction of opening hours and options for closure of smaller least used libraries and report back to this committee.
- iii. Agree the proposed structure for the service. Appendix 1
- iv. Agree the revised audio visual charges and fines to be charged under the Residents Discount and Visitors Card Scheme as outlined in section 5.5
- v. Instruct officers to conduct competitive tendering exercises in line with Council Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and EU Legislation for the provision of a Library Café Service as outlined in section 5.6

- vi. Approves delegated authority for the Head of Procurement, in conjunction with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Library & Information Services Manager to award contracts / places on framework to highest scoring compliant bidder, on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer, as set out under Standing Order 7 (6) of the Councils' Standing Orders Relating to Contracts and Procurement.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The original proposal involved the closure of up to 8 community libraries, leaving 8 libraries plus the Central library and had a potential saving of £452,000 over 5 years. The Budget decision was not to progress the proposal, however to consider other ways to deliver services, to reflect online access and also wider use of technology, while also achieving efficiencies and savings.

Withdrawal of the Mobile Library resulted in £13,000 savings in 2012/13 and the project to implement SMS and email communication will result in an estimated £7,500 postal savings.

The staffing redesign is expected to deliver savings in staffing costs. The grading of all new and revised posts will be subject to Job Evaluation.

The café project could provide a Social Enterprise caterer under a profit share agreement thus increasing income generated by Aberdeen City Libraries. Set up costs are minimal as the café areas is already established. It is envisaged that running costs would be undertaken by the caterer.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Legal and policy context:**

Local Authorities have a wide-ranging statutory role to ensure library provision.

The specific legislation includes:

- The Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1887, defined “a library authority” (Section 2), and gave it powers to acquire and maintain land, buildings, and furniture and fittings for public libraries (section 10). It gave powers to manage, regulate and control libraries, including acquiring and disposing of books and other materials, to lend books, to provide reading rooms and to prepare and sell catalogues of the collection (Section 21). Authorities may make byelaws to regulate business and impose penalties for breaches (Section 22). New libraries can be established (Section 31) and it is stipulated that all public libraries are to be open to the public free of charge, and that no charges be made for the use of books or magazines issued for home reading (Section 32).

- The Public Libraries (Scotland) Act 1955 makes provision for library authorities' co-operation in delivering services (Section 2) and extended the powers in Section 21 of the 1887 Act to any other library material which library managers think appropriate.
- The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 states that local authorities had a duty imposed to secure the provision of adequate library facilities for all persons resident in their areas (Section 163, sub-section (2)).
- The Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 incorporates the existing legislation relating to public libraries. It sets out the powers of the new authorities as having all the powers of the Council(s) operating in the area of the new Council before 1 April 1996. In Section 53, it requires local authorities to make "*proper arrangements*" for the preservation and management of their records, in consultation with the Keeper of the Records of Scotland. Section 54 addresses the use, acquisition and disposal of records (which will include culturally significant archives). Section 54(1) (d) in particular gives authorities power to hold exhibitions of records and conduct lectures about them.

### **Personnel implications**

Human Resources support will be required to undertake Job Evaluation work and support throughout the implementation of a new structure, including the matching process.

### **Communications**

Conducting surveys and consultations will require capacity from the Policy and Performance Team in Education, Culture and Sport and the Corporate Communications and Marketing Teams.

## **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

### **5.1 Service provision**

The Library and Information Service has reviewed the original 2001 Service Review proposal, to introduce two different tiers of service for the community libraries and has developed a template for a community library, using the new Bucksburn and Kaimhill community libraries as benchmark models.

Larger community libraries will be open a minimum of 45 hours per week and provide a full range of resources including:

- Aberdeen College Learning Centre/ minimum of 7 public PCs
- Go On basic ICT classes and taster sessions available
- Online Information services
- Health Information Point
- Newspapers and periodicals
- Language courses, DVDs and CDs
- Exhibition and display space
- Space for meetings, author workshops, consultations

Smaller community libraries will open a minimum of 25 hours per week and provide

- A minimum of 3 Public access PCs
- Online Information services
- Books and DVDs profiled to local community
- Newspapers and periodicals

### **Welfare Reform Act**

Changes to the welfare system under the Welfare Reform Act are expected to impact on libraries in particular for support in accessing benefits on line. Libraries currently provide support for job seekers in completing online applications and preparing CVs. Weekly Job clubs are held in libraries in partnership with various agencies e.g. Job Centres, Remploy. Digital literacy needs are addressed via basic ICT skills classes and one to one sessions offered across the service. There are likely to be further implications as elements of the changes are rolled out.

## **5.2 Opening Hours**

Opening hours are continually reviewed and have both been increased and reduced over the last three years. They were last reduced in 2009 to achieve budget savings in response to the decline in visitors in evenings at community libraries. Indications are that patterns of use of libraries have changed considerably since 2009 with significant decline in usage after 5pm at most libraries and in particular at smaller community libraries especially in the winter months. In addition feedback from users and communities suggest that current opening hours no longer meet their needs.

## **5.3 Consultation**

The Library service proposes to undertake further consultation on the proposed two service models for community libraries, opening hours and potential for closing smaller under used libraries.

## **5.4 Staffing**

The current staff structure has been reviewed and officers are in consultation with staff on the structure in Appendix 1. This is the first of a two part phased restructure and reflects the management and professional posts only. Job Profiles have been drawn up and are in the process of being evaluated. It is expected that the job matching process will begin during January 2013 with full implementation by April 2013.

The second phase will determine the number of frontline staff required to deliver services which will be aligned to new opening hours agreed after the consultation.

## 5.5 Revision of charges under Accord Residents Pass Scheme

DVD and CD loans have shown a marked decrease since the Council instruction to withdraw annual subscription and the increase in hire charges per item in 2010 in line with Aberdeenshire charges. Current matching with Aberdeenshire has shown that while they have increased their charges slightly they have also doubled the loan periods resulting in our charges now being significantly higher in comparison.

While loans of DVDs and CDs are decreasing across the market due to the impact of downloadable formats the decrease in Aberdeen has been well above the national trend. Recent library promotions of 2 for 1 have resulted in an increase in issues with income slightly increased. Feedback received from library members and previous borrowers suggests that a reduction in costs would stimulate increased borrowing.

It is recommended that prices are revised; using the Residents Discount Scheme and Visitors Card to counteract this decline and ensure the service is inclusive and accessible for residents. It is planned to decrease charges for DVDs and boxed sets for residents and Visitor pass holders and to increase some of the fines to offset this and encourage borrowers to renew or return their items.

### Current Charges

Charges				Fines/wk
Item type	Loan period	Current Charge	Current concession (over 60s only)	
DVD & Blu-Ray	1 week	£2.10	£1.50	£2.10
DVD & Blu Ray Boxed sets	4 weeks	£4.00	£2.00	£2.10
CDs	4 weeks	£0.90	£0.45	£0.45
Language Courses	4 weeks	£1.00	£0.45	£0.45

**Note:** that full charges were substantially increased in 2009/10 for the year 2010/11 in line with Aberdeenshire charges and the annual audiovisual subscription of £50 ceased. Book fines are 45p per week

### Proposed Charges

Charges				Fines/wk
Item type	Loan period	Full Charge	Residents /Visitors Pass/Concession	
DVD & Blu-Ray	1 week	£2.00	£1.00	£2.00
DVD & Blu Ray Boxed sets	4 weeks	£3.00	£2.00	£3.00
CDs	4 weeks	£0.90	£0.45	£0.45
Language Courses	4 weeks	£1.00	£0.50	£1.00

**Note:** This would provide an incentive for residents to apply for a Resident's Pass. The Visitor Card option is available for non residents at a cost of £10 from the Central Library.

## **5.6 Media Centre Café**

A café area was established within the Media Centre, on its refurbishment in 2005/6. Most recently it was operated by Grampian Racial Equality Council (GREC) as an Upward Steps' project in enabling volunteers to gain practical work experience, improve English language skills, remove social and cultural barriers through customer interaction and enhance the employability skills of the volunteers and paid supervisors. Due to a cut in funding GREC had to reduce the number of their activities and this included the café operation. The café closed in March 2010.

The library service have recently installed a coffee machine within the area in response to customer demand however this is struggling to meet customer expectations and has placed increasing demands on library staff to supervise and monitor its use. Since the café closed there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour within the café area and Council wardens have supported staff in dealing with this.

The negligible level of profits by the two previous operatives of the café, (one commercial, one Social Enterprise,) indicates that the profits generated through the café would be too small to interest any commercial supplier. The library does not have the staff or expertise to efficiently run the café area themselves. After consultation with colleagues in catering services and procurement it was decided to invite Social Enterprise groups to quote to operate the café.

The involvement of a Social Enterprise would be the preferred option to address customer need and at the same time providing additional community benefit.

## **5.7 Progress to date**

### **5.7.1 Online Services**

The Library and Information Service has increased its portfolio of online services both accessible within libraries and via the library web pages. The following have been added during 2012/13:

- E book and audio download service
- Tell Me More Online language course
- Reader Development resource for adults and children – Who writes like? /Who next?
- Britannica, Who's Who and Who Was Who
- Oxford Reference Online, Dictionary of National Biography and English Dictionary

### **5.7.2 Digital content**

The Library and Information Service launched the Silver City Vault on Doors Open Day 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011, funded through the Scottish Governments Public Library Quality Improvement Funding. It has been very successful with a large number of visitors from across the globe and has been instrumental in raising the profile of Aberdeen and the library service across the world.

The service secured additional funding as part of the Scottish Government digital participation initiative to roll out the next phase of the digital archive. The Making History project incorporates community content into the archive by encouraging local communities to contribute images and other content, including reminiscences. The Library Service has been approached by a number of organisations wishing to make their archives available via the Silver City Vault.

### **5.7.3 Partnerships and Shared Services**

Officers continue to explore the potential of joint procurement, consortium and shared service opportunities:

- Libraries are working with colleagues in Customer Service as part of the channel optimisation programme to make services more accessible e.g. bioliners are now available from all libraries.
- Library staff are working with colleagues in Planning to develop support for people accessing planning services online
- Library staff support online applicants to the Accord card Residents Pass scheme and the central Library is the sole point for visitors to purchase a Visitors Pass
- Library Management System (LMS) – currently investigating a joint potential consortia or procurement exercise with Aberdeenshire, and several other authorities across Scotland to reduce annual running costs
- Meetings and visits held with Perth & Kinross and Aberdeenshire have resulted in sharing of professional expertise and training. Meetings with Aberdeenshire, Moray and Dundee are also planned.

### **5.7.4 Business Improvement**

Self issue machines have been installed in the refurbished Lending Library of the Central Library and at Airyhall and Bucksburn community libraries. A further 7 more machines will be installed in the Children's Library, Bridge of Don, Cove, Dyce, Kincorth, Mastrick and Tillydrone community libraries. Library staff are undergoing training in the general operation and in how to engage with users in different ways encouraging reading, answering enquiries and supporting them access information services by walking the floor of the library.

### **5.7.5 Sourcing external funding**

Library and Information Services were successful with their application for funding to encourage digital participation, in support of *Scotland's Digital Future*. A number of projects were identified:

- *Silver City Vault Phase 2: Making History*  
The project will focus on the creation and ownership of content by local history and community groups
- *Reminiscence Work* - On-line reminiscence packs on specific themes and topics will be created from the digital archive for working with new audiences in residential and nursing homes
- *E-Reader* lending project for Home Service users giving access to a huge range of e-books on easily accessible readers
- *Go On...IT* – Library branded courses on basic ICT for first time users delivered in libraries across the city
- *Info 4 you* - Increasing opportunities for accessing online services such as Ask Scotland and databases by taking equipment out into the communities as part of our various outreach programmes

### **Europe Direct**

Library and Information Services were successful in acquiring European Commission funding for 11/12 to continue to operate the Europe Direct Service from the Central Library. The service is preparing its bid to continue the service for the next 5 years after the recent EC call.

### **5.7.6 Income generation**

The library service introduced a coffee machine into the Central library in response to demand after the Media Centre Café operated by GREC (Grampian Racial Equality Council) closed due to lack of project funding. This has proved popular and there are proposals to move the coffee machine to another location once the café is reintroduced.

There are arrangements in place with several companies to dispose of surplus stock that has previously been offered for sale locally.

Officers are currently working on a proposal to use the Media Centre as an exhibition space.

## **6. IMPACT**

This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City':

- We will help every citizen to improve their knowledge and skills, together contributing to our success as a learning city.
- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.
- We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.
- We will provide a high quality education service within our schools and communities which will improve attainment and life chances of our children and young people to achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
- Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills



and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.

- Again, working with partners, we will create a City of Learning which will empower individuals to fulfil their potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities.
- We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

The report relates to Outcomes 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 15 in the Single Outcome Agreement : ‘ We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation’ ‘Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens’ ‘Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed’ We live longer, healthier lives’:‘We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive identity’: ‘Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local peoples needs’

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Revenue Budget: Report to Council, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Library & Information Services New Ways of Working report to Education, Culture and Sport Committee 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Library & Information Services Update in Education, Culture and Sport Committee Information Bulletin 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012

## **8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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