

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

12th February 2018



Report of: Andrea Dell, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Title: Libraries Task and Finish Group Update

Ward: City Wide

Officer Presenting Report: N/A

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Recommendation

That the Board note the update from the Libraries Task and Finish group which is to be provided following a workshop scheduled for 7th February 2018.

Summary

OSMB submitted the Libraries Task and Finish group report to Cabinet on 4th December 2017. This update from the group is to set out the activity that has occurred following the report's presentation to OMSB on 1st November.

Links are included to the full OSMB report and the Full Council motion on libraries in November 2017 for supporting information.



BACKGROUND

OSMB – November 2017

OSMB received the report of the Libraries Task and Finish groups on 1st November 2017 and this is available here:

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s16976/Libraries%20Cover%20Report%20for%20OSMB%20011117.pdf>

FULL COUNCIL - November 2017

Details of the motion debated at Full Council on Thursday 14th November can be found here:

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=9528>

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, the motion was CARRIED (32 members voting in favour, 31 against, with 1 abstention), and it was then RESOLVED:

Council notes the proposals by the Mayor to reduce the amount of libraries in Bristol from 27 to 10 libraries.

Council understands the difficult financial situation that Bristol City Council faces and the need to reduce costs during a time of reducing budgets and increasing demographic demand.

Council welcomes the petition by Love Bristol Libraries, various other library groups and campaigners, and believes there is strong public support for maintaining Bristol's library provision.

Council notes the report from the Libraries Task and Finish Scrutiny Group, notes that it had input from all political parties and that the recommendations have the support of councillors from Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. The report also received the endorsement of OSMB.

Council endorses the central proposal to begin work on creating a mutual model for delivery of a comprehensive library service that will be professionally led, volunteer supported and ensures a network of branch libraries is maintained across the city. These proposals will also guarantee the jobs of professional library staff providing them with a secure future working alongside volunteers.

Council calls on the Mayor to bring forward new proposals based on the long term future of Libraries, an important principle for the ambitions of a Learning City. This new proposal to have a strategic approach that delivers a professionally led mutual model that embraces volunteers and secures the future of the library network.

CABINET - December 2017

The report was submitted to Cabinet on 4th December 2017 and this is available here:

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=2560&Ver=4>

The following response was provided by the Mayor in the Cabinet meeting:

As you know, a decision on the future of Bristol's library service is not being made today and the service will remain as it is until a further review is completed.

Following the results of the consultation, which saw a large number of respondents reject all three options and comment 'none of the above', the council has decided to continue the conversation, and explore other options.

We have secured money from Department of Culture, Media and Sport enabling us to commission a consultant to assess whether an alternative delivery model – for example a mutual, trust or commercial provider - could be appropriate for the future service. This is obviously closely aligned to the Libraries Task and Finish Group's report recommendation 1.2.2 to pursue a dialogue with community minded organisations, such as Universities etc.

We will wait until the conclusion of this review, before making a final decision.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None.