

# Cabinet Supplementary Information



**Date:** Tuesday, 4 December 2018

**Time:** 4.00 pm

**Venue:** Conference Hall - City Hall, College Green,  
Bristol, BS1 5TR

## **Distribution:**

**Councillors:** Mayor Marvin Rees, Nicola Beech, Craig Cheney, Asher Craig, Kye Dudd, Helen Godwin, Helen Holland, Anna Keen and Paul Smith

**Copies to:** Francesca Barclay (Director Assistant of Denise Murray)

**Issued by:** Sam Wilcock, Democratic Services

City Hall, Bristol, BS1 5TR

Tel: 0117 92 23846

E-mail: [democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk)

**Date:** Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018



# Supplementary Agenda

## 6. Reports from scrutiny commission

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## OSMB Statement to the Mayor and Cabinet on the future of Bristol's Library Service

Following our initial disappointment at the proposal to place 'Libraries' in Management of Place alongside Markets, Parks and the Harbour, as a consequence of the decision to delete the Communities Directorate, we are pleased that the Library Service will now sit alongside Culture in the Economy of Place. We see this as a more suitable context for the its new direction.

However, we have three areas of concern, two of which we believe need to be addressed before the planned community engagement is rolled out.

1. The importance of community assets, as distinct from the delivery of our Library Service, needs to be recognised. We believe that those devising and implementing the planned engagement process need to make this clear to the participants. If this does not happen there will be continued confusion about 'libraries' and fewer opportunities for other activities to take place in community buildings (co-location, community hubs, etc.). This could mean solutions that are less sustainable, putting both the buildings and the availability of local services (including library services) at risk.

AND

2. The City-wide Library Strategy needs to be considered as part of a separate process from that of community engagement. This does not mean that citizens should not have a say in the development of the Strategy. However we do need to take a big picture approach. Otherwise we will end up with a list of wants largely based on the current offer. You may be aware of some of the ground-breaking examples of library services from across the USA, such as the New York Public Library service. These have successfully expanded their provision, extended their user base, and revised their public image. The importance of professional library leadership cannot be over-emphasised in the development of the Strategy, resulting in an offer to all communities, from which they can choose what they wish to be delivered in their buildings.

In addition

3. Looking further ahead, we would like consideration to be given to the development of a strategic Information Service. This could sit in the Resources Directorate, with ICT, Digital Transformation, Communications and Strategic Partnerships. It would have an over-arching responsibility for the management of external and internal information. It would facilitate the end of working in silos and any 'them and us' thinking that can affect productivity and performance, both within and outside BCC.

We have an opportunity to do something different in Bristol that would allow us to lead on library and information services world-wide, rather than lagging behind with a dated and declining service. Let's not miss out.