Libraries Report – Libraries Project

Communities Scrutiny Commission – 10th October 2019

Background - Libraries Project

1. Approval for the work on the Libraries Project ("Extended community offer") was agreed at the October 2018 cabinet with a one-off budget of £359,000. The budget was from a reserve fund from the previous library service revenue underspend on staffing due to the uncertainty over the future shape of the service. This project budget was in addition to the library revenue budget and required the production of an "outline business case" (OBC) to move internally through the council's decision pathway. This was agreed at the Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) 9th July 2019. The next stage of the internal decision pathway is the production of a "full business case" (FBC) which is scheduled to go to CLB for decision on 10th December 2019. The FBC will detail the cost and scope of the project work which will continue until April 2020, with the current project team. Where any additional capital costs are required, these will be flagged in the FBC and be part of the council's annual planning cycle for capital budgets.

2. The Libraries Project OBC is attached to this report.

3. The OBC concerns the work on the Libraries Project only and not the wider work of the Library Service. Specifically it concerns the management of the engagement sessions, production of a Library Strategy, work to enable the community to bring ideas into action and data analysis to evaluate the pilot projects to test and learn from the ideas. The project team will help the service put into place the tools and processes that will enable better promotion of our current offer, ways for the community to book library spaces and contact us and offer an evaluation framework to provide evidence of pilots that can aid future decision making.

4. Options for pilots and the locations will be outlined in the FBC, which is not yet completed.

5. These internal reports do not detail any future shape or number of libraries. The library revenue budget is set annually at the February Full Council budget meeting. This will happen in February 2020. The Library Service is continuing work on the assumption that the Library Service revenue budget 2020/21 will be similar to that of 2019/20 and that all 27 libraries will therefore remain open in 2020/21. It is likely that any changes to the library revenue budget would require citywide consultation depending on the impact and scale.

Library Engagement, January-April 2019

6. Following the decision to remove the savings target for the library service revenue budget in July 2018, Cabinet approved a new approach in October 2018 to engage with the city about

the future of libraries. This was not a consultation, but the start of an ongoing conversation with communities about how to enable them to either extend the library service beyond the current service or the use of the building. We were also keen to hear about any gaps or needs the community could identify that the library service could help with. The focus would be on community-led ideas and action.

7. The aim of this engagement was to build trust in the service after years of difficult conversations about closures, build community confidence that we were listening and able to move into action on some ideas, and to enable the community to lead initiatives they were interested in. It has also enabled us to identify some service and council barriers to supporting the community to get more involved, which has led to some internal work on resolving these.

8. We arranged 12 public meetings: 6 in the daytime and 6 in the evening. Tickets were booked via Eventbrite so we could manage the refreshments and facilitators, but residents who did not book were welcome to attend. The engagement sessions were hosted by Locality as a trusted independent facilitator, and the Community Development Team assisted. Over 280 residents booked tickets to 12 events and at least 40-50 came on the day.

9. We invited all the residents and organisations who had submitted a proposal in the Your Neighbourhoods consultation of 2017.

10. We engaged 12 anchor community organisations to assist in leading the conversations at each event and also follow up any local conversations. The community organisations were:

    - Black Artists on the Move
    - Knowle West Alliance
    - Up Our Street
    - BS3
    - HWCP (Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership)
    - Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust
    - Care Forum
    - St George Community Centre
    - SLAP (South Lockleaze and Purdown Neighbourhood Group)
    - Sea Mills Community Initiatives
    - Stockwood Action Group
    - SCAF (Shirehampton Community Action Forum)

11. We opened an online form, from January to the end of April 2019, for anyone who wished to submit an idea. We had 150 submissions.

12. We also had a citywide partner meeting in April with attendees from the City Office contact list, attended the Youth Parliament and sought ideas from young people via Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) who visited secondary schools and sixth forms. Rising Arts were also commissioned to do specific work with 16-24 year olds at Junction 3 and Southmead. This

will lead to a funding bid for a larger piece of work focused on young people, co-written and supported by the Culture Team.

13. The library staff were invited to attend one of 12 staff engagement sessions in a variety of library locations and also had the opportunity to use a staff online survey to suggest ideas and also use their professional knowledge of the local community to identify gaps or services that could be improved.

14. The community engagement was very successful and we had over 1,200 ideas and suggestions from the sessions and through the online form. These were collated and themed and published on the Bristol City Council website: https://www.libraryideasbristol.co.uk/

15. The ideas can be searched by keyword or by library. We have also replicated the lists of ideas for each local library in a poster form and they have been displayed in libraries until the end of September 2019. This also included a board for further ideas or thoughts and Post-its are being added to each library list. There is also a new email address to channel ongoing suggestions to: library.ideas@bristol.gov.uk

Learning from the engagement

16. The format of the engagement worked well and all the discussions were positive and inclusive, and the majority were well supported.

17. We learnt that many residents did not know what was already happening in libraries or what we already provided. They also did not know how to get involved. As a universal service that provides a myriad of information, signposting services, as well as reading, engagement and events, we are not alone nationally in struggling to promote our resources.

18. There were varied and sometimes contradictory ideas for each library. Some were well thought through and some were quick suggestions. Not all ideas were good ideas and some were not possible in the service.

19. Some of the ideas required funding or were dependant on the library service or council to put into action. There was also a misunderstanding of the remit of the library service and expectations that the whole experience from bus route to pavement to library land to building were all part of our responsibility.

20. It appeared that libraries with higher footfall had more involvement from community. However, as a universal statutory service we are working with our Library Development Officers and Community Development to find out how we can support those with lower use and how they can get involved.

21. There were a mix of ideas about existing services, new ideas and some radical ideas – although not many. We want to explore the new as well as the more radical e.g. community-run at the pace of the community that suggested it.

Outcome of the engagement

22. We had originally imagined that the proposals and ideas would be more formed and fewer. The task of working out how to feedback and then engage again with residents was very different, with so many varied ideas. Some suggestions were very formed and clear, some were thoughts, and some were clearly about what the library service should do. The initial task of even sorting and theming the suggestions was complex.

How the ideas turn into proposals and become implemented

Through Friends Groups

23. As a result of the engagement many new Friends of Library Groups started. We currently have 17 Friends Groups (from an original 10) with interest in at least four more. We ultimately hope for 27 groups. We advertised the current Friends Groups and also suggested that interested residents could form new groups. This gave us a channel for further discussion around the priority of ideas for the community, especially as many residents who suggested ideas were interested in joining or forming Friends Groups.

24. Our Library Development Officers arranged and supported Friends Groups to start discussing the list of ideas for each local library to prioritise the ones to they wanted to try. Our primary role is to enable the community-led actions. This work is ongoing.

25. We held a meeting with existing and prospective Friends Groups from across the city on 21 May 2019 and the attendees identified their own areas of discussion on: resources for running friends groups; IT; promotion; and fundraising. The next Citywide Friends meeting was on 1 October 2019. At this meeting the Library Service introduced a Friends resource pack and announced a Library Innovation Fund of up to £4,000 per library for Friends and community groups to apply for funding to kick start their ideas. This funding is a one-off reserve fund that has been held for development work in libraries. The total fund is £108,000 and is additional to both the library revenue budget and the project budget. Information about the Libraries Innovation Fund is available on Bristol City Council's website at: www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives/apply-for-funding-for-ideas-for-your-library

26. Examples of ideas that Friends Groups have already identified to take forward:

    - Run coffee mornings
    - Help improve library signage and displays e.g. display local art and history in the library
    - Become IT volunteers to support people using public computers
    - Promote existing events and services via social media
    - Run book-focused events, organise a writer in residence and author talks
    - Set up a toy or games library; magazine swap
    - Supervise the library out of hours so the space can be used for homework clubs or other activities
    - Improve look and feel of outdoor space e.g. planters and gardening

Through community discussions

27. For those libraries without a current Friends Group, we are arranging drop-in sessions for the local residents who can come and talk about the ideas put forward. These were planned to start from early September. We have been contacting the local community organisations and ensuring that there are ongoing ways to keep suggestions flowing.

28. We are also considering a call to action citywide by involving organisations linked to the One City Plan where we can show them the ideas suggested, but are lacking a lead in developing them.

Through the library service

29. In parallel, the library service considered the ideas or suggestions that were more about "business as usual". These ranged from cleaning the carpet, to buying new furniture, to installing blinds to larger suggestions such as removing the old CSP desking in Fishponds/Robinson House to create a larger more flexible space. Where these are within the resources, capacity and priority of the service, they are being taken forward.

30. Examples of things the library service has been doing:

    - Opened the Central Library 7 days a week from May 2019
    - Replacing children's rugs, kinder boxes and musical instruments for Baby Bounce and Rhyme

- Replacing tables and chairs and furniture in key libraries
- Working with Reading City to install mini libraries in City Farms and Children's Centres
- Working with IT colleagues on planning to replace all public computers in 2020
- Investigating wifi printing (after the self-service kiosks have been replaced)
- Obtaining approval to remove the redundant Citizen Service Point desking in Fishponds Library (Robinson House) at the request of library customers; this will make better use of the space on the ground floor and complement the repurposing of the meeting rooms
- Discussing the move of Southmead Library
- Working with Rising Arts on two pilot projects to engage young people, which will lead to a further funding bid
- Completed a consultation on the name of Marksbury Road Library
- Opened Extended Access libraries (Westbury, Stockwood and St. George) on a Sunday 1-5pm
- New partnerships e.g. Read Easy

Through strategic decision and pilots

31. A number of the ideas featured in every library conversation or had a citywide theme. These were about access to the library building, opening hours, provision and quality of IT, changes to buildings and toilets. These ideas often came with resource implications and required more strategic conversations. They often involved other council departments.

32. Examples of citywide actions:

- Citywide replacement of public computers from 2020 in line with council replacements due to changes to Windows 10
- Replacing the self-service kiosks with new models in 2020

33. As part of approval of the Libraries Project outline business case, Corporate Leadership Board agreed for the Libraries project to run pilots for innovation and learning. The pilots are intended to help the community and the council learn about what it takes and what difference it makes to deliver some of the potentially more costly, complex or radical ideas from the community. The learning will also help inform future decision making about libraries.

34. Following the initial analysis of the ideas from the engagement, the following are pilots being considered, because they are common themes across all libraries, and/or because they present an opportunity to try out something different to build knowledge for the future.

35. Examples of citywide pilots under consideration:

- Pilot creative ways of engaging with young people in libraries so young people feel libraries are more relevant to them

- Trial different ways to bring other services into libraries (e.g. public health) and what impact that has
- Changes to a library building to enable more use and evaluate impact e.g. considering changes to toilets; cost and location to be confirmed
- Prototype community-led extension of opening hours led by volunteers and what it involves and enables
- Change the library space to create a community living room and learn about the impact of this on the library use and citizen experience

Where, when and how the pilots will run is yet to be defined. Options for these pilots will be developed for decision by Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) as part of the full business case for the Libraries project. The full business case will be discussed on 10 December 2019 at CLB.

36. Ongoing strategic work:

- Working with Property Services on building related projects e.g. Southmead temporary location
- Working with Community Organisations on building related projects e.g. Avonmouth, Filwood, Southmead new development
- Attending Strategic Property Board and other Service Directorate Leadership teams (e.g. Public Health) to understand future opportunities

Partnerships

37. The Library Service is working in partnership with a number of organisations and services in the day-to-day delivery of Bristol's library services:

- Developing new partnerships e.g. Read Easy, Holiday Hunger scheme – Lunch in the Library, Reading City (mini-libraries), Literature Festival in October (Bedminster community led)
- Internal partnerships e.g. Culture Team, Community Development, Extra Care Facility Lockleaze, Strategic Property
- Academic partnerships – Carnegie Trust Research bid has been joint work with UWE and University of Bristol; UWE Open Doors; University of Bristol discussions about their new library and developments in Bedminster Green

38. The Library Service also aims to improve the networks and partnerships it has with the community, residents and community organisations, and facilitate partnerships between the community and others, so that communities are better able to take forward their own ideas through clear guidance, information and processes. The Libraries Project aims to develop the tools the Library Service needs to make this change, e.g. better information about what is happening in libraries, improved guidance for using libraries, and events which help share learning.

Strategy

39. We are working on a draft strategy which is still undergoing changes as we receive feedback from senior managers. The draft 'Strategy on a Page' is a full page in Appendix 1.

40. The vision has been informed by the community engagement; and our key themes reflect the Corporate Plan. The strategy will be a sense of direction and will not specify numbers of libraries in the future. It will be a 5-year strategy from 2019 – 2024 and not library-by-library specific. The cabinet decision in October 2018 gave delegated sign off of the strategy to the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration (Colin Molton) in conjunction with S151 Officer and in discussion with Cabinet Lead for Libraries.

41. We have clarified with our legal services that consultation on the strategy as a whole is not necessary as long as we consult on individual changes that may impact the service or any residents where necessary. We customarily consult on changes to opening hours, locations or services.

42. There will be an Equality Impact Assessment to accompany the strategy and we are currently making plans to hold a round table workshop focusing on protected characteristics hosted by our Equalities Team colleagues.

43. The delivery of the strategy will be planned within the Library Project and in the Library Service Plan for 2020/21. The project is due to run until April 2020.

44. We are aiming for sign off of the final strategy by the end of November 2019 to align with the approval of the full business case, which will be approved by CLB (please see the Background information).

Timeline

45. The timescales below represent the latest project plan as approved by the Project Board on 11 September 2019:

Workstream	Milestone	Date
Community Engagement	Citywide Friends Group meeting	1st October 2019
	Community-led ideas taken forwards	Ongoing
	Councillor Briefings end	4th October 2019
	Establish more new Friends groups (target)	1st December 2019
	Citywide Friends Group meeting	TBC Jan 2020
	Process to support ongoing learning from community-led ideas handed over to Library Service	TBC Mar 2020
Events and culture	Review of Rising Arts Agency report on engaging young people in Libraries	14th October 2019
	New process for capturing and centralising library events information so can be shared & publicised more widely with the public	12th November 2019
	Simplified process for application by public/ external organisation to use the library buildings (e.g. for events or meetings)	TBC January 2020

	Arts Council bid and project to pilot new ways of engaging with young people in libraries	Ongoing from Jan 2020 if application successful
Digital workstream (see ICT section below)	NB The delivery plan of digital projects in libraries is being reported into the project board for oversight and to manage dependencies, but the funding and delivery of the IT projects sits outside the Libraries Project (see ICT section below)	
Building improvements	Analysis of community ideas which require building changes: viability; outline cost & benefit	31st Oct
	Development of viable ideas for options analysis in Libraries Project Full Business Case	29th Nov
	Business cases to relevant capital decision makers as required	Ongoing from Jan 2020
	Physical changes to buildings (if approved and funding agreed)	Ongoing from April 2020
Strategy and Performance	Input from Project Board on draft strategy doc	1st October
	Communities Scrutiny Commission meeting	10th October
	Equalities workshop on draft strategy	22nd October
	Strategy sign off by Executive Director & publish	13th Nov
	Pilot options development for Libraries Project Full Business Case	29th Nov
	Full Business Case to CLB for decision	10th Dec (TBC)
	Data and learning model in place for pilots	Jan 2020
	Pilots/ prototypes/ trials planned and rolled out	From Jan 2020
	Data and performance model handed over to library service for ongoing process	31st March 2020
	Project closure (tools & processes transition into ongoing service complete)	30th April 2020
	Learning and evaluation from pilots continues	Ongoing in 2020
	Completion of all pilot activities & report on learning	Dec 2020

Provision of IT in libraries

46. The following updates to IT in libraries are planned and funded as follows:

- Replacement of the self-service kiosks in libraries (funded internally from PL 25 capital)
- Replacement of the public PCs in libraries (funded within the IT Transformation Programme)
- Replacement of the printers in libraries (funded within the corporate printers project)

47. In addition, wifi printing was a popular idea in the community engagement. Wifi printing means that people can print from their own device to the library printer. A mandate for wifi printing is due to be written by the Library Service to request this work from IT.

48. Updates on the stages for each IT project are as follows:

Self-service kiosks

	Milestones	Dates (Completed by) *unless otherwise stated)*
	ESPO GO LIVE	ASSUMED 01/11/2019
	Tendering/negotiation/contracting/ Full Business Case sign off	November
1	Kick-off meeting	31/12/2019
2	Detailed development plan and timeline agreed between supplier and project teams	31/12/2019
3	Kiosk build	09/03/2020 **(or asap)**
4	Kiosk implementation and set up	29/04/2020
5	User acceptance testing	29/04/2020
6	Staff training completed	06/05/2020
7	Go-Live	01/05/2020
8	Stabilisation and acceptance into BAU support	From Go live to 15/05/2020
9	Review and project closure	By 29/05/2020

Replacement of the public PCs in libraries

49. The ITTP (IT Transformation Programme) is currently working with Microsoft on a new build of public computers for council staff and for the public in libraries.

50. The process is as follows. Timescales for the IT elements of this work are still being planned as this work is at stage 1; however, implementation is expected before December 2020.

1	Confirm Requirements/Use Cases:- Hardware, Applications, Authentication, Configuration, Device security - technical and physical
2	Produce and agree development and deployment plan

3	Create Win10 image
4	Build machine
5	Install and test applications
6	Test security
7	Obtain User sign off
8	IT Operational Acceptance Testing (restoration/recovery, etc.)
9	IT Service Management processes and acceptance into BAU
10	Deployment to libraries

Replacement of the printers in libraries

51. There is a council-wide project to replace printers in the council, which includes in libraries. The project is currently paused due to resourcing issues.

Use of Library Buildings

52. The library buildings also connect communities. They are often the only council asset in local neighbourhoods and through our consultations and engagement we know that local residents feel strongly about changes to this remaining community space. We will work internally with Housing and Property colleagues to ensure that strategic decisions about developments in communities or concerning library buildings will involve the service at every point. We recognise that some of our buildings are in urgent need of upgrading and may not be in the right location or echo the needs of the community today.

53. We are committed to taking opportunities through developments to modernise and adapt our library buildings to offer more than a standalone library service and where possible consider collocation or offer joint services. There is much more opportunity to extend the opening hours and access to the space for all residents, if the service is offered in a shared building or space. Where there are new developments we would take the opportunity to offer more facilities than we are currently able to e.g. libraries would be planned with public toilets and flexible space. However, we also recognise that some shared services require access to private spaces for confidential conversations and this is sometimes difficult to provide in the current buildings.

54. The library service does not manage the buildings nor does it hold the maintenance and repair budget for the buildings. This is managed by Property Service and Facilities Management. The library service leases or rents space for nine libraries. Twenty one libraries are owned by Bristol City Council. We are constrained by the lease agreements in some libraries and must work within what is possible in each site – all of which vary.

Property Asset Strategy (statement from Steve Matthews)

55. Officers have been working together to ensure that any proposals arising from the recent library conversations which impact on the use of BCC operational land or buildings are considered in accordance with the emerging draft property strategy.

56. The strategy seeks to ensure that decisions on future use of assets should not be taken by services in isolation but in a corporate context and ensuring asset requirements are implemented by appropriately qualified property personnel. This is the basis of the Corporate Landlord approach which BCC is seeking to adopt as part of the Property Strategy.

57. The draft Strategy is currently undergoing consultation as part of the decision pathway pursuant to a proposed Cabinet endorsement in November or December of this year.

58. The Strategy sets out the framework for decision making and for undertaking reviews of specific parts of the operational portfolio.

Property Engagement and Asset Management Planning

59. The asset management planning process will start to take place after the strategy is adopted. It is intended that each Service area of the Council will work closely with allocated Property Partner to formulate a 5-year business plan which the Property Partner will translate into a Service Asset Management Plan. A separate plan will be produced for each major Service area. The plans will be consolidated into a single "Corporate Asset Management Plan".

60. The strategy summarises what we are going to do and the asset management plans set out how we are going to do it taking into account the differing and varied requirements of each operational function.

61. Pending formal adoption of the Strategy, Corporate Landlord and Asset Management Plans, Property has been working closely with Library Service through its allocated Property Partner. In response to the recent conversations around the future of Bristol's libraries, the Strategy also recognises libraries as being in the first group of assets for review. Officers are clear that any emerging business case reflects the corporate approach and that any property changes resulting from it are undertaken by Property personnel.

Kate Murray

Head of Libraries

1st October 2019

Bristol Library Strategy (DRAFT) 2019-2024

Our Purpose
Work with partners and communities to build an inclusive city through access to knowledge, information and public spaces

Our Vision
Responsive, relevant and sustainable network of libraries working with communities and partners for the local and city **common good**

For the Love of Reading

Empowering and Caring
Libraries contribute to the **envisioning and empowerment** of individuals, local communities and city partners

Fair and Inclusive
Libraries contribute to **economic inclusion, social mobility and political power** through the development of skills, learning opportunities and public space for gatherings and the provision of services

Well Connected
Libraries help connect **people to people and opportunity**, locally, citywide, nationally and internationally

Wellbeing
Libraries promote **mental & physical wellbeing by connecting** people with each other, knowledge, opportunities and services

COMMUNITY & LIBRARY USER OUTCOMES

Access to: quality resources; knowledgeable & people-focussed staff & volunteers; a welcoming library space

Develop as hubs for community development, organising and empowerment Support further volunteering opportunities Develop Friends Groups in each library to take forward library & community ideas	Partner with businesses and communities to promote existing and increase learning opportunities Support and enable business use of libraries Promote the library as a public space for meetings and services	Partner with the city to reduce levels of digital exclusion and disadvantage Improve accessibility and strengthen community resources and assets by extending the availability of the building outside normal hours Become a hub for quality service offers: self-service kiosks, wifi printing, digital resources e.g. Ancestry & Press Reader and partners services	Become a conduit for Health and Wellbeing Board, initiatives, NHS and other service to build relationships, work with & deliver to individuals and communities Focus funding bids to engage and pilot culture-led opportunities in areas of greatest need Improve library environments to improve cultural and social inclusion

Maintain a sustainable financial position; Maximise value from library & community assets & resources

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP OF COUNCIL'S LIBRARY BUDGET