

SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW

Plan for Libraries



Context

The Select Committee review on the Plan for Libraries met on the 15 May 2017. The Committee reviewed the Plan for Libraries and consultation analysis, received representations from the community and Councillors, and have made the following recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet.

Recommendations

Throughout the day, Members of the Select Committee raised significant concerns over the lack of weighting within criteria used to assess libraries. Members felt that where opening hours, number of computers affected the criteria directly; weighting should have been applied to provide a more accurate picture of library use.

Some Members of the committee expressed disappointment over the level of response to the consultation, in particular children and young people.

The Committee agreed –

1. to note the statutory 12-week consultation and independent analysis of the results and that it has been carried out in line with, and has satisfied, the Public Sector Equalities Duty and guidance in relation to the Libraries Act 1964;
2. In future consultation exercises, the council aspires to greatly enhanced consultation activity, with simplified engagement with young people through schools and groups with protected characteristics;
3. Needs assessment criteria should be reassessed to reflect context in which the current library estate operates (e.g. opening times, number of computers available should be a consideration in ranking);
4. Needs assessment criteria should be weighted, with the greater weighting applied to criterion that reflect the aspiration for improved outcomes as a result of the Plan for Libraries;
5. All libraries currently subject to closure should be ranked to additional criteria which could include –

- a. an assessment of accessibility for each building, paying regard to areas of growth within the city;
 - b. information from partner organisations gathered through the consultation;
 - c. the use of libraries by educational institutions and the impact of any closures on the education of Children and Young People and protected groups;
 - d. Sustainability and cost of building leaseholds, and previous investment committed to the estate;

6. When final proposals for changes to Library Services are presented to council they should be accompanied by;
 - a. a high level Equalities Impact Assessment for the entire Plan for Libraries;
 - b. draft performance measures for the new library service;
 - c. delivery plan, to include any transitional measures for customers impacted by proposed closures;
 - d. draft capital budget requirements for improvements to the library estate;
 - e. impact assessment for all staff, including temporary staff;
 - f. draft communications and marketing plan for the future of services.

7. The Plan for Libraries, subject to agreement by council, is scrutinised on an annual basis by the relevant committee.