

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
Citywide

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Cabinet

14th January 2002

Best Value Review of Libraries and Information Services

Service assessments and confirmation of next steps

Report of the Director of Arts and Leisure

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present the Final Reports for:

- Service Area 2 Library Services for Education (LSE)
- Service Area 3 The Record Office

1.2 To seek approval from Cabinet for the recommended options to improve services in Service Areas 2 and 3.

1.3 To present Libraries Service Improvement Plan 2001-2004

2. Summary

The Final Reports provide an analysis of services currently provided by LSE and the Record Office together with options for improvement for Cabinet to consider. Comments from Directors Board, Lead Cabinet Member, Best Value Members Working Party and Scrutiny Committee are noted and attached in the briefing sheet for Best Value reviews (see Appendix 1).

Comments from the joint trade unions and independent consultee are attached at Appendix 2.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

- (i) agree that the current joint arrangement with LSE is discontinued and the savings (after the Best Value saving of £5,548) are redirected to support children's out of school hours learning through the public library network.

Please note; the recommendation of Scrutiny committee to Cabinet was to continue the joint arrangement following renegotiation. However the Director of Arts and Leisure has recommended that the joint arrangement is discontinued and the money is directed to Libraries to support out of schools hours learning after the Best Value saving of £5,548.

- The current joint arrangement does not support the majority of City schools in raising educational attainment. The breakdown for current usage by City schools 2000-01 is as follows:
72% (8) of special schools subscribe to LSE
88% (14) of secondary schools subscribe to LSE
35% (31) of primary schools subscribe to LSE
The majority of secondary schools do subscribe to LSE services whereas 65% of City primary schools do not and therefore get no benefit from the charges made to the City under the joint arrangement
Comparison with national services to schools providers shows that LSE has a low take-up of services from primary schools.
- Stakeholder consultation for the Best Value review revealed charges to schools for LSE services is the main barrier to take up of service. Following LSE's own stakeholder consultation in 1995, the service has been aware of the issue of charges and the inability and willingness of primary schools in particular to use the service .The Best Value review found that since the consultation in 1995 there has been no significant improvement from LSE to introduce competitive pricing and market sensitivity which would encourage increased take up of the service from city primary schools. There is therefore, no guarantee that more city schools will subscribe to the service following renegotiation of the joint arrangement.

The other four options do not deal with the issues raised by the service assessment as adequately as this option.

The savings from withdrawing from the joint arrangement (minus the Best Value saving) would be £67,132. This would be used by Libraries to further develop out of school hours learning opportunities in public libraries across the city to support raising levels of literacy, numeracy and educational attainment for children and young people in Leicester.

- (ii) To agree the following recommendation for the Record Office:
To renegotiate the joint arrangement for records and archive services (after 2% Best Value saving) with a strong emphasis on ensuring improvements for city residents to address the weaknesses identified in the review.
Please note Scrutiny committee agreed the recommendation to renegotiate the joint arrangement for record and archive services with the Record Office in Wigston and to undertake a feasibility study to determine the most appropriate location and management arrangements for the future delivery of the service.

Review of the current joint arrangement has demonstrated that:

- The location in Wigston is difficult for many Leicester citizens to get to
- staffing of the service does not reflect the cultural make up of the city
- Marketing and promotion of the service is extremely poor
- The collection of materials and resources does not reflect the demography of Leicester City leaving many city communities unrepresented.

Renegotiation of the joint arrangement does not address the barrier to city residents of the location of the Record Office but a priority of the renegotiated terms for the joint arrangement will be to consider more innovative ways of making the service accessible to Leicester citizens.

- iii) note the updated (November 2001), Libraries Service Improvement Plan 2001-2004

4. Headline Financial and legal Implications

4.1 Financial implications

Savings from Service Area 1 – the Public Library Network in order to support the departmental budget strategy, were agreed by Cabinet on 21st May in the Final scope report:

Year 1	2001-02	£50,000	1.4% savings
Year 2	2002-03	£120,000	3.4% savings

The Best Value requirement of 2% savings from the remaining Service Areas 2-5 is £5,548. This has been identified from Service Area 2 – Library Services for Education. In addition the reviews identified that there is no scope for savings elsewhere.

4.2 Legal implications

4.2.1 Notice required for discontinuation of the joint arrangements:

Record Office – 2 years

Library Services for Education – 1 year. If option 5 is agreed, savings from the ending of the joint arrangement in 2002/3, will be part year effect.

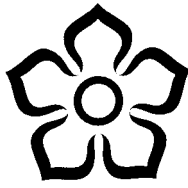
Notice required for renegotiation of the joint arrangement covering the Record Office is :
For renegotiation of charges – 4 months prior to the beginning of the accounting year
For renegotiation of services – 56 days.

4.2.2 In respect of staff already identified as being engaged only because of the joint arrangement, i.e. over and above the County's establishment for the provision of its own services, the City and County are each to use best endeavours to re-deploy such staff. If that fails the City are to indemnify the County against any reasonable costs of redundancy. The County at all times to seek to minimise such costs. In addition the agreement provides the property and equipment listed in the agreement returns immediately to the City.

4.2.3 The author has dealt with the legal issues arising within the report.(Guy Goodman, Assistant Head of Legal services) - ext 7054

Report Author/Officer to contact:

Pat Flynn, Head of Service, Libraries
Ext: 7348



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Best Value Review of Libraries and Information Services

Service assessments and confirmation of next steps

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Service Assessment for Service Area 2 - Library Services for Education

- 1.1 The Review identified that Library Services to Schools are one of the ways that schools can access books and other library resources to support children's learning, literacy and reading development. The contribution that Library Services to Schools can make is outlined in detail in 2.1 of the Final Report. The significant strategic issue for the Review was whether the joint arrangement and payment of an additional subsidy was still appropriate for a service established as a business unit. With the exception of the Libraries subsidy of £72,680, the budget for city schools to support their school libraries has been delegated. The decision to use the service therefore rests solely with individual schools who can choose, if they wish, to use their delegated budget on alternative resources and services.
- 1.2 The Review of Library Services for Education focused on the joint arrangements. The joint arrangement has established a formal partnership with the management of the service being the responsibility of Leicestershire County Council.
- 1.3 Managing diversity and delivering equality were central themes of the Libraries Review 2000. This Service Assessment Review has challenged the ability of the joint arrangement covering Library Services for Education to deliver a socially inclusive service to all communities and citizens of Leicester. The Review demonstrated that:
- Staffing for the service is predominantly white and female and does not reflect the ethnic make up of Leicester City.
 - A key barrier to access for City schools is cost of the service.

- The responsiveness and sensitivity to the market place, which would be expected from a business unit, has not been demonstrated by LSE.

2. Service Assessment for Service Area 3 - the Record Office

- 2.1 The joint arrangement provides for the City's statutory responsibilities for archive and records to be delivered by Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office. Although the Review clearly identified the role that record and archive services can play in achieving national and local strategic aims, the Review demonstrated that the Record Office has failed to address key issues in providing services to Leicester City.
- 2.2 The Review of the Record Office focused on the joint arrangement. The joint arrangement has established a formal partnership with the management of the service being the responsibility of Leicestershire County Council.
- 2.3 The Community Plan for Leicester has identified diversity as a central priority. Managing diversity and delivering equality were central themes of the Libraries Review 2000. The Service Assessment Review has challenged the ability of the joint arrangement covering the Record Office to deliver a socially inclusive service to all communities and citizens of Leicester. Strengthening and celebrating the city's multicultural and multi faith identity can improve the quality of life for all citizens.

"Leicester defines itself as the (harmonious) multicultural city of Europe. There is greater diversity in two or three square blocks here than anywhere I can think of in Europe."

*Prof. Richard Bonney,
Director of Leicester University's
Centre for History of Religious & Political Pluralism*

The acquisition of culturally appropriate material is therefore particularly relevant for Leicester, which is known nationally and internationally as a successful multicultural city. The city's records and archives are incomplete, without such evidence and acknowledgement of the city's diversity.

However the Review demonstrated the following:

- Staffing for the service is predominantly white and is unrepresentative of the cultural and ethnic diversity of Leicester City.
 - There was little evidence to suggest the Record Office is acquiring material, which represents Leicester's diverse cultural communities.
 - The Record Office is located in Wigston, which is a major barrier to use of the service by City residents. In addition, marketing and community outreach work is extremely poor which contributes to low take up of the service by City residents.
- 2.4 Understanding of, and access to, community history is also important for neighbourhood regeneration. Local libraries are key points through which local communities can access this resource. The continuation of small libraries in local neighbourhoods has been a key

outcome of Libraries Review 2000 and is consistent with the Government strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and the City Council's approach to revitalising neighbourhoods.

3. Service Area 3 – the Public Library Network

- 3.1 The Service Improvement Plan for the Public Library Network was included in the Fundamental Challenge Report, which was approved by Director's Board on 17th April, the Best Value Working Party on 2nd May and Cabinet on 21st May.

The Libraries Best Value team have taken valuable advice and guidance from the Best Value Inspection process and has made additions to the core Service Improvement Plan which include:

- To explore the opportunities offered by increased community involvement in management through the Braunstone Library development
- To add to the Improvement Plan Services Areas 4 and 5 –Services to Prisons and LAILLAR
- To add the improvement plans for Library Services for Education and the Record Office subject to the chosen option.

4. Service areas 4 and 5 - Services to Prisons and LAILLAR

- 4.1 These services have been transferred to the Service Improvement Plan, which have identified areas for improvement. The initial assessment of these services under the Best Value process demonstrated that the cost involved for the joint arrangement and covering the delivery of services is small, (Prisons £5,650, LAILLAR no specific budget identified), and that full service assessment was therefore inappropriate. The assessment also demonstrated that the joint arrangement covering Services to Prisons represented value for money.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

1. Financial Implications

- 1.1 Savings from Service Area 1 – the Public Library Network in order to support the departmental budget strategy, were agreed by Cabinet on 21st May in the Final scope report.:

Year 1	2001-02	£50,000	1.4% savings
Year 2	2002-03	£120,000	3.4% savings

- 1.2 The Best Value requirement of 2% savings from the remaining Service Areas 2-5 is £5,548. This has been identified from Service Area 2 – Library Services for Education. The reviews identified that there is no scope for savings elsewhere.

2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 Notice required for discontinuation of the joint arrangements:

Record Office – 2 years

Library Services for Education – 1 year. Savings in 2002/3 will be part year effect.

- 2.2 In respect of staff already identified as being engaged only because of the joint arrangement, i.e. over and above the County's establishment for the provision of its own services, the City and County are each to use best endeavours to re-deploy such staff. If that fails the City are to indemnify the County against any reasonable costs of redundancy. The County at all times to seek to minimise such costs.
- 2.3 In addition the agreement provides the property and equipment listed in the agreement returns immediately to the City.

3. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities		2.3, 2.4	
Policy			
Sustainable and Environmental		2.4	
Crime and Disorder			
Human Rights Act			
Elderly/People on Low Income			

4. **Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972**
Achieving Inclusion
5. **Consultations**
Core Review Team and sub groups
Review Scrutiny Director (Town Clerk)
5. **Report Author**
Pat Flynn, Head of Libraries and Information Services
Ext 7348

Briefing sheet for BV Reviews interim/final reports

Review	Libraries
Lead Cabinet Member	Councillor Roberts
Scrutiny Director	Tom Stephenson
Lead Review Officer	Linden Rowley / Pat Flynn
Facilitator	Rina Singh

Stage: e.g. Directors Board

Date:

Source	Decisions, Recommendations and Comments (e.g. Strategic considerations, contentious issues, route of report)	Date
Scrutiny Director	No additional comments following the views of Director's Board	16 Nov 01
Lead Cabinet Member	<p>Library Services for Education</p> <p>The review has demonstrated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The service is overpriced 2 As an authority we are subsidising a business service and enabling it to continue to charge high prices <p>The Record Office</p> <p>The review has demonstrated that there are a number of very severe deficiencies in the service we currently pay the County to provide under the joint arrangement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 A poor location means that it is difficult for many residents to get to 2 Neither the staffing nor the services reflect the cultural make up of the city 3 Marketing and promotion of the service in the city is extremely poor or non existent 4 The collection of material and resources does not reflect the demographic nature of the city leaving many city communities unrepresented in the collections at the Record Office. There is therefore a loss of present ephemera and records which will have a detrimental effect on the service 	

	for future users of the service as well as failing to engage Leicester's present citizens in what should be a valuable and important resource and service.	
Directors' Board	<p>a) Library Services for Education</p> <p>The recommendations were agreed.</p> <p>A number of issues were raised for inclusion. It was agreed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The covering report needs to be clearer about the positive impact of the service on literacy, reflection, and learning. 2. Options need to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing resources to enable more schools to afford the service but noting the financial implications of doing this - Improving the service by reducing the costs of the service through the joint arrangement. - Withdrawing from the joint arrangement despite the risk of higher changes given that opportunities have not yet been taken by the County to improve the service. 3. The financial recommendations were agreed in the interim pending wider debate on the budget strategy. 4. The review will be considered by the Best Value Members Working group. 	25 Sept 01
Members Best Value Working Party	<p>Library Services for Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A general point was made that reports should be numbered by paragraph. ❖ The final report was presented and option 5 was recommended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members were concerned about the impact on schools of the recommended option and whether this would negate the savings. ➤ Members were also concerned that to continue the subsidy would be supporting an uncompetitive service. ➤ It was agreed to direct the report to the Scrutiny Committee. ❖ Councillor Westley concluded that the aim for the library service is to be at the forefront of providing books to schools. 	10 Oct 01

Leicestershire Records Office

- ❖ The final report was presented and option 4 recommended.
 - Members were concerned at the cost of providing a Records Office with the special conditions and insurance required. The return of papers would need to be negotiated and costs assessed.
 - Members agreed the Records Office provides a poor service to the city and ideally the service should be situated in the city.
 - It was suggested that the first option should be renegotiation of the current agreement.
 - Officers were requested to identify the disadvantages of the recommended option prior to the next stage.

It was agreed to direct the report to the Scrutiny Committee.

<p>Scrutiny Education & Lifelong learning</p>	<p>Extracts from minutes</p> <p>Record Office</p> <p>Pat Flynn reported on the issues that had been considered by the Best Value Working Group at which concern was expressed about the potential high capital costs of discontinuation of the joint arrangement for the Record Office and providing provision within the city.</p> <p>Members comments:</p> <p>The Record Office: Members suggested a variation to Option 3 – to commission a feasibility study during 2003 – 2004 to determine the most appropriate location and future management arrangements for City archives and records.</p> <p>Whilst the feasibility study is carried out, the joint arrangement should be renegotiated to ensure improvements to the current service.</p> <p>Library Services for Education: to support the continuation of the joint arrangement following renegotiation of the current agreement.</p>	<p>1 Nov 01</p>
<p>Cabinet</p>		<p>14 Jan 01</p>

JOINT TRADE UNION COMMENTS ON BEST VALUE REVIEW OF LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Although the Joint Trade Union sees and understands the need for change in arrangements for both the services to Education and the Records Office, there is some concern around the effect this will have on staff in these areas.

The Joint Trade Union hopes that every endeavour will be made in respect of Section 6.2, i.e. staff already identified as being engaged because of their joint arrangement.

The City and County Councils should use their best endeavours to redeploy all staff as stated in Section 6.2 of the Final Report.

The Joint Trade Union will need to be kept informed of decisions made and possible job losses to our members.

Frank Shand (Best Value Co-ordinator)

Ros Melrose (Joint Trade Union Representative for Best Value)

COMMENTS CONCERNING LIBRARIES BEST VALUE REVIEW FROM INDEPENDENT CONSULTEE – (notes recorded from telephone conversation 20 November 2001)

Impressed by the exemplary commitment of the Core Review Group to the Best Value process

Comprehensive information presented which enabled the Core Review Group to make informed decisions during the process

Recognition that larger political issues and political constraints may influence the final decisions

The review was conducted according to the Best Value process and both reviews – Library Services for Education and Record Office, reached logical conclusions in light of the information presented

Pam Hough, Government Office for the East Midlands