



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
ALL WARDS (CORPORATE ISSUE)

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

CABINET

9 APRIL 2001

**BEST VALUE REVIEW
LEICESTER CITY LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICE
SCOPING OF THE REVIEW - STEP 2**

Report of the Principal Assistant Director Arts, Libraries and Museums

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this paper is to clarify service areas, functions and issues to be included within the Best Value Review theme for Leicester Libraries and Information Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Directors are recommended to:-

- (i) Endorse the work carried out in order to inform the scoping recommendation(s).
- (ii) Agree the scoping recommendation(s) and take it forward to Cabinet endorsement.

3. REPORT

Purpose of the service

The 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act makes it a statutory duty of local authorities to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service". Until the publication of the Library Standards in January 2001, there had been no clear definition of what a "comprehensive" service should include. The Standards underpin the functions and purpose of a public library service, which provides books and other resources to:

- Promote social inclusion by bridging the gap between those who can afford to access information and those who cannot
- Raise educational attainment providing support for school children, students and lifelong learners
- Encourage active citizenship including participation in democracy
- Offer public access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)
- Raises skills leading to employment opportunities

- Provides opportunities for cultural and leisure activities including reading and literature based activities.
- 3.1 This paragraph and sub-headings address the key questions posed as part of the scoping exercise.

(i) How does the theme relate to the Performance Plan and Key Strategies?

Community Plan

Libraries contribute to the main themes of the Community Plan in the following ways:

Education - The Community Plan sets out goals to raise educational standards for all in the city and Libraries make a substantial contribution to achieving these goals, in particular:

- To raise standards of achievement for all, in partnership with all those involved in education, and to close the gap between children from disadvantaged communities, children in public care, underachieving black and other ethnic minority pupils, boys, pupils with Special Educational Needs, and other pupils in the city.
- To raise the importance of education within the community, by increasing access, engagement and participation
- To reflect the diversity of the city by ensuring access for all regardless of race, gender, disability or income.
- To promote and develop strong links and encourage partnerships, especially with parents and carers, to raise standards of achievement
- To secure and promote learning environments for children and young people in and beyond schools

Diversity - The goals within the Community Plan relating to diversity to which Libraries make a substantial contribution are:-

- To promote trust and understanding between the faith communities and good relations among all communities in Leicester
- To work with others to learn lessons from the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and take action, including tackling institutionalised racism
- To develop services and policies that reflect the changing needs of the population

Jobs and Regeneration – Libraries make a direct contribution to the goals in the Community Plan relating to jobs and regeneration, in particular:

- To target disadvantaged groups in the labour market to increase their employability prospects
- To work with community partnerships to develop the capacity of communities to engage in and deliver regeneration programmes

The Best Value Performance Plan

There are four indicators within the Performance Plan to measure use and satisfaction with Libraries.

BVP115 the cost per visit to public libraries

BVP117 the number of physical visits per head of population to public libraries

BVP118 the % of library users who found the book/information they wanted, or reserved it and were satisfied with the outcome.

BVP119 percentage of residents by targeted group satisfied with the local authority's cultural and recreational activities

Performance Management

Libraries have a robust Performance Management framework in place. For the past three years it has been a statutory requirement from DCMS to produce an Annual Library Plan in which each library authority must collect and analyse performance statistics and benchmark performance. Strategies for improvement are built into subsequent plans.

In addition, the recently announced Library Standards, set out minimum levels of service that a library authority must provide. The Annual Library Plan and the Standards are closely linked and strategies to ensure the Standards are met must be demonstrated within the Annual Library Plan.

(ii) What are the strategic imperatives?

The Library and Information Service in all its functions, contributes to the strategic priorities of the Council in relation to raising educational standards, strategies for inclusion, equality and diversity, public access to information and communications technologies (ICT), locally based services and regeneration, democratic renewal and Best Value. In particular, the service relates to the Education Development Plan, Lifelong Learning Plan, Early Years Development Plan

The core imperatives in this review will be:-

- Raising educational standards
- Inclusion

(iii) What are the key issues raised by stakeholders?

Best Value Review:

Feedback from the stakeholders on the scope of Libraries review was in agreement with the scoping. Suggestions for areas for inclusion have all been considered in scoping the review and where appropriate, separate replies have been sent.

Achieving Inclusion Review:

Members of the public and library stakeholders, including schools, were consulted widely during the Libraries Review in September 2000. The consultation took

place at a series of 22 public meetings. The key issues raised during the consultation for the Review were:-

A strong consensus that library buildings are an important part of the local community and neighbourhood services.

The replacement of library buildings by mobiles services or ICT learning centres was unacceptable to local people.

The need to increase promotion of public libraries services and encourage membership through increased contact with schools.

The need to support children's learning through out of school provision in libraries

Support for lifelong learning

Public access to ICT

Ways to increase library use

Detailed evidence of the consultation is available.

Schools will be consulted as stakeholders, in particular as part of Library Services for Education (Service Area 2).

(iv) What is the potential scale of the review?

Service Area 1:

Public Library Network

Following the Review of Libraries, services are provided through a network consisting of the following:-

21 service points across the city. There are 18 dedicated buildings, including the Central Reference and Information Services Library and the Central Lending Library. Three branch libraries are located in community centres and one library is operated in partnership with Age Concern, based at Age Concerns City Centre Headquarters.

Two Children's "Bookbuses" provide a mobile library service – one for under five's and their parents/carers and one for older children. These vehicles are for services to children who find it difficult to access a static library service.

To support the Library needs of adults who cannot travel to and use, a static library service there is a home delivery service. For users with some mobility a library minibus is used to transport them to libraries so that they may access the full range of services.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service". The library standards introduced in 2001 provide the means by which Public Library Services will be judged to be comprehensive and efficient.

Libraries are also required to deliver services which comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

There is some voluntary sector involvement, through Age Concern and the WRVS.

Budget: £3,442,100

Service Area 2:

Library Services for Education (Schools Library Service) - a four-way joint arrangement with City Libraries and Education Department, and County Libraries and Education Department.

Since Local Government reorganisation in 1997 a joint arrangement has existed with Leicestershire County Council to provide library services to schools in Leicester City. Under the Fair Funding arrangements, the budget was delegated to schools. City schools use the budget delegated to them to buy into the service for the loan of learning resources, advice to teachers to support National Curriculum and the wider curriculum and training. Current use by City schools is: Primary and Special Schools 99 (41%) and Secondary Schools 21 (95%).

In addition to the delegated budget Leicester City Libraries also pay £72,680 directly to LSE.

Budget (in addition to schools delegated budget): £72,680

Service Area 3:

Records Office - a joint arrangement with the County Council.

Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland Record Office is based in Wigston. A joint arrangement between the authorities provides for the storage of records and archive material, access to these resources and support from Record Office staff.

Our budget: £199,100

Service Area 4:

Prison Library Service - a joint arrangement with the County Council and Prison Service.

The joint arrangement with Leicestershire Libraries provides for a loan service of books and learning resources and a book reservation service for the inmates at Leicester Prison. In addition the arrangement provides for the delivery of library services training for prison officers.

Our budget: £5,650
(plus contribution from bookstock)

Service Area 5:

Arrangements with the City's university and college libraries – to consider the effectiveness of access to university libraries by the public.

Access arrangement between public and university libraries

An agreement (LAILLAR) between public libraries and university libraries in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland which commits each authority to provide access to information and to develop lifelong learning opportunities for all. In addition the agreement sets out the intention to jointly obtain value for money in library services to users and compatibility in ICT in order to maximise access to each others services.

No specific budget identified

The total budget for services scoped in the review is £3,902,100

Challenge

At local Government Re-organisation in 1997, several joint working arrangements with Leicestershire County Library Service were agreed. In the years following re-organisation the arrangements covering transport and bibliographic services have been terminated and now are provided in house securing value for money and efficiency.

The starting point for the Library Service Review “Achieving Inclusion” was the need to challenge the service in the light of its low level of use and the lack of inclusion of residents from all parts of the city demonstrated in the customer base. This challenge was done in the context of the ability of libraries to deliver services to meet the following:

- Key local strategies
- National Standards for public library Services.
- DCMS Policy Guidance on Social Inclusion
- The Macpherson Report,
- CRE standards
- Disability Discrimination Act

The 'Achieving Inclusion' review opened up areas of service for scrutiny by staff, members, stakeholders and management. Specific service areas challenged by the review are :

- The need for building based library services
- The role of Central Libraries
- Services to children and young people
- Services to the elderly
- ICT services including public access to ICT

The management and delivery of equality and diversity for all areas of service was challenged including the ability of the staffing structure to support the delivery of services to meet the diverse needs of Leicester City.

As part of the above process, elected members, members of the public, other stakeholders and the management team identified additional services not covered by the "Achieving Inclusion" Review but to be included in the Best Value process. These cover the remaining joint arrangements and external relations and are outlined in service areas 2-5 above.

Compete

As part of the Improvement Plans of the Arts and Sports Best Value reviews (Year1), a department wide analysis of management options will be carried out.

Libraries' management information system (ICT system), currently subject to a joint working arrangement with Leicestershire Libraries, will be reviewed during 2001. Supply for a new management information system will be subject to tender.

Supply of books and library resources was subject to the tendering process during 2000 resulting in a three year agreement with a principal supplier.

(v) Are there common areas of function, process, site or others that could assist in the organisation of the review?

None at present.

(vi) Are there areas that could be excluded and if so for what reason?

In drafting the scope of the review, it was felt that the provision of information services by other departments needed to be explored as a potential case for inclusion in the Libraries theme. All Business Units were invited to suggest areas where their public information provision could/should be included. From the responses there was no obvious duplication and considerable examples of services using libraries for information dissemination. It was also suggested that opening this out further potentially covered ground already covered within other reviews including Communications and Customer Care. Finally, as provision of information is an integral part of the public library service it was considered difficult to separate out from Service Area 1 in any meaningful or useful way.

(vii) What are the final recommendations for the scope and why?

Public library network
Library services to Education
Records Office
Prison Library Service
Arrangements with the City's University and College Libraries

The recommendations for the scope are that Cabinet

- i) Notes the work undertaken in the core public library service network "Review 2000 – Achieving Inclusion" and considers this evidence at the Fundamental Challenge stage
- ii) Also reviews:
 - Library Services for Education
 - Record Office
 - Prison Library Services
 - Arrangements with the City's university and college libraries

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Service Area 1: Public Library Network
Budget £3,442,100

Service Area 2: Library Services for Education (Schools Library Service)
Budget £72,680

Service Area 3: Records Office - a joint arrangement with the County Council
Budget £199,100

Service Area 4: Prison Library Service
Budget £5,650

Service Area 5: Arrangements with the City's University and College libraries
No specific budget identified

5. EQUALITIES

The Libraries' Review clearly addressed issues of service equality, inclusion and institutional racism. These are central to the Review recommendations approved by members.

The Best Value review will continue best practice considerations in relation to access, equality, diversity and inclusion.

6. SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. CONSULTATION

For Achieving Inclusion review:

User survey 1999

Non - user survey 1999

Public consultation September 2000, stakeholder consultation including schools.

For Best Value scoping review:

Directors and Trades Unions have been consulted on the draft scope and all Business Units have been consulted on the matter of Information services.

The following sections made a response:

Arts & Leisure: Finance & Systems

Community Development Services
Parks & Grounds Maintenance
Museums & Heritage Services

Town Clerk's &
Corporate Resources:

IT Services
Corporate Support
Members' Services
Corporate HR Management
Development & Occupational Health
and Safety

Commercial Services:

Citywide Cleaning
Leicester Markets

Housing:

Community Care Team
Hostels Section
Housing Benefits
Policy & Development

Social Services:

Resources

Education:

Finance
Development & Review Team
Lifelong Learning Unit

Environment & Development:

Area Traffic Control
Client & Technical Services
Consumer Protection Service
Development Plans
Environment Team
Finance & IT
Highway Management
Pollution & Energy
Public Safety
Regeneration
Urban Design – Development

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These responses are, in some cases, being separately replied to, but all have been considered in scoping the review. As a result, no other business units need to be included in the scope of the review.

8. REPORT AUTHOR

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