

# Report to Scrutiny Commission

## **Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission**

Date of Commission meeting: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

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### **Libraries Printed Music and Drama Service Consultation**

Report of the Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services

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Leicester  
City Council

**Useful Information:**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Adrian Wills Head of Libraries & Information Services
- Author contact details 37 3541

**1. Summary****1.1 The Need for the Consultation**

- The City Council is required to make difficult decisions about its services as a result of significant cuts in government funding. The council's response to this challenge is to work with service users and local communities to develop proposals to make the required savings in ways that will provide a revised but sustainable service offer.
- The Printed Music and Drama Service provided by Leicester Libraries to music groups in both city and county requires a lot of resource to maintain and the subscriptions that are currently charged only cover a very small part of the cost of the service. The numbers of people using the service in the city are low as the majority of users are in the county and beyond.
- The priorities for the City Council library service are to support the development of reading and to provide and support public access to council, government and other essential services that are now only available on the internet. This means that with reduced levels of staffing and increased work in these priority areas, that the established ways of delivering some other parts of the library service can no longer be sustained. New affordable approaches need to be found if these services are to continue.

**1.2 Current Use of the Service**

- Around 90 groups currently subscribe to the service at an annual charge of £50 per year. Only 25% of the use of the service is by city groups. The groups have access to a collection of printed music and drama sets comprising 25,000 individual items. The subscription also provides access to an inter-library loan service to source additional copies and titles from other library authorities around the country.

**1.3 What Sort of Revised Service?**

- Some initial work has been carried out on looking at options for the future of the service, varying from ceasing the service to offering the collection to other organisations to run. The City Council would prefer to develop a revised, but less costly service that can be sustained. A cost effective but more limited service offer was identified with approval from Assistant Mayor to consult on this option. The consultation was run from 15<sup>th</sup> April to 18<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The details of the service offer and the full results of the consultation are laid out in Appendix 1.
- This paper outlines the results of the consultation and identifies next steps on the way to finding a solution to the challenge of there being fewer resources available in this area of work.

#### **1.4 The Response to the Consultation**

- The majority of groups responding to the consultation questionnaire have indicated that they would continue to use the proposed self-service model for the Printed Music and Drama Service.
- There is significant concern amongst most respondents with regard to the withdrawal of two elements of the current service:
  1. Inter Library loans service
  2. Advanced bookings (reservations) service
- A number of respondents put forward suggestions on how the service could be changed to accommodate the need for a reduction in resources which warrant further investigation
- The proposed relocation of the printed Music and Drama service is regarded by most as less of an issue so long as good parking and access are available.

#### **1.5 Next Steps**

- A further period of research is required in order to investigate the feasibility of the suggestions which have been made as a result of the initial consultation
- At the end of this period a further consultation will be held setting out realistic options for the future
- An alternative location for the printed music and drama collection will be considered as part of the ongoing Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme
- A decision will be taken by the Executive following the second phase of consultation.

## **2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny**

1. Note the results of the consultation.
2. Note the proposed next steps and provide any comment on this approach.

### **3. Supporting Information**

### **4. Financial, legal and other implications**

#### 4.1 Financial implications

The service costs £23,000 p.a. in staffing, transport and other costs, towards which the charges currently generate £4,500 p.a. The options to be developed aim to provide a new solution to providing a viable service but at a much lower cost, allowing increasingly scarce resources to be directed towards essential front line service provision in city neighbourhoods.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance ext. 37 4081

#### 4.2 Equality Implications

The report presents a variety of considerations as to how the council can make the financial savings required for the service and yet continue to be able to provide it to current users on a sustainable basis. Access to printed music and drama texts for current users would remain. The proposed model and additional suggestions to explore further have mitigated against most anticipated negative impacts for service users arising from the saving having to be made.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext. 374147

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

Advice on consultation prior to decision making (including DCLG Statutory Guidance on Best Value and Cabinet Office Guidance) has been provided to Culture and Neighbourhood Services. They are now progressing that process by conscientiously taking into account the product of the consultation before finalising proposals, to be presented to the Executive for a decision.

Greg Surtees, Legal Services – 37 1421

### **6. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1: Findings of the Closed Consultation

### **7. Is this a private report?**

No.

## Printed Music and Drama Service

### Findings of the closed consultation As at 16 June 2014

*Prepared by:*

- *Leicester Libraries, Culture and Neighbourhood Services*
- *Research and Intelligence Team*

*This report provides a summary of the findings of the closed consultation.*

*It includes information about:*

- *The issues and options under consideration;*
- *The consultation method;*
- *The public response and views expressed;*
- *Proposed next steps in light of what was learnt..*

## **1. BACKGROUND**

### **Printed Music and Drama Service**

The City Council is required to make difficult decisions about its services as a result of significant cuts in government funding. The council's response to this challenge is to work with service users and local communities to develop proposals to make the required savings in ways that will provide a revised but sustainable service offer.

The Printed Music and Drama Service to groups in both city and county requires a lot of resource to maintain and the subscriptions that are currently charged only cover a very small part of the cost of the service.

Around 90 groups currently subscribe to the service at an annual charge of £50 per year. The groups have access to a collection of printed music and drama sets comprising around 25,000 individual copies. The subscription also provides access to an inter-library loan service to source additional copies and titles from other library authorities around the country.

Some initial work has been carried out on looking at options for the future of the service, varying from a complete ending of the service to offering the collection to other organisations to run. The City Council would prefer to develop a revised, but less costly service that can be sustained.

The following model was proposed through the consultation to provide a sustainable Printed Music and Drama Service which remains accessible to groups and individuals.

- The current subscription service will end. This will be replaced by free access to the existing Music and Drama sets collection.
- Although there will be no subscription charge to use the service daily overdue charges will apply to any items which are not renewed or returned on time. Email alerts will be sent two days before items become overdue.
- Access to the Music and Drama collection will be on a self-service basis. It will not be possible for staff to arrange for the loan or purchase of additional titles or copies from other library authorities, or to set aside sets for collection at a later date.
- The Music and Drama sets collection will be moved out of Southfields Library and relocated to an alternative library building. Adult Learning and Community activities will take place in the space which is freed up in Southfields Library.
- The full collection will be easily viewable online, together with copy availability.
- Music and Drama sets will be borrowed from and returned to the new collection location. It will not be possible to collect or return sets or copies to other libraries. Music sets would be borrowable through library self-service kiosks
- Each Music and Drama group will be given their one library card for the group as a whole. A named individual will take responsibility for all loans made on the card. The following borrowing rights will apply to each group:

<b>Borrowing right</b>	
Maximum number of loans per group (individual copies)	500
Standard loan period	6 months
Number of times each copy may be renewed	1 x 3 months
Total possible loan period including renewal	9 months
Reservations	No
Daily overcharge per copy	Yes

## **2. CONSULTATION METHOD**

### **Objectives and techniques**

Subscribers to the Printed Music and Drama Service were consulted over a four week period between 15th April and 18th May 2014.

All 97 subscribing groups and 4 subscribing schools were contacted by email or letter.

Library staff highlighted the consultation to all groups who visited Southfields Library during the consultation period, or who contacted the service by 'phone or email.

The consultation outlined the financial and staffing pressures upon the existing service and the need to change in order to provide a revised but sustainable service offer. There objectives of the consultation exercise were:

- to consult upon a proposed new model of service which would be sustainable in the future
- to consult on alternative suggestions for a sustainable model of service
- to consult on the relocation of the service with regard to access requirements for groups and individuals

Groups were invited to respond to an online consultation in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire included areas for respondents to write their own comments with regard to the proposed model, and to make alternative suggestions for running a sustainable service.

Some groups preferred not to use the questionnaire format, and submitted their responses by letter and email. These responses have also been included in the consultation results.

## **3. PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **Respondents**

There was a high response rate with 91 individuals responding to the questionnaire. This represented 51 organisations in total. In some cases several members of the same group completed the questionnaire.

In addition to the completed questionnaires 15 individuals contacted the Council by email or letter to register their comments outside of the questionnaire format.

Several groups contacted the "Making Music" association of amateur and semi-professional musicians including choirs and orchestra. A written response was submitted by Making Music and this response was also adopted by some of the subscribing groups. The comments made by Making Music are also included in the consultation summary.

Responses were received from groups of all sizes, as shown in the chart below.

Members	Respondents		Groups*	
	91 respondents		51 organisations	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 20	2	2.2	5	9.8
21 – 40	1	1.1	12	23.5
41 – 60	3	3.3	8	15.7
61 – 80	4	4.4	8	15.7
81 – 100	35	38.5	7	13.7
Over 100	29	31.9	11	21.6

\*Please note that in cases where a different answer was given by responses from the same group, the key points in common have been recorded

## 4. VIEWS AND COMMENTS

### 4.1 Inter Library Loans Service

The most commonly cited issue relating to the proposed self-service model was the loss of the Inter-Library Loan facility which enables groups to source additional copies of music scores from other library authorities. In the question asking about the proposed borrowing rights, representatives from 51% of the groups making a response identified the loss of the service as a significant problem. The majority were concerned that the variety of titles available to their group would be too limited.

The Making Music association commented: “The repertoire you hold in Leicester Libraries is, by necessity, limited both in range and in numbers. Removing the Inter Library loan facility will reduce amateur groups’ access to a wide repertoire. This necessarily has repercussions on their viability: audiences don’t always want to hear the same pieces, nor do players or singers want to perform the same pieces over and over again; thus a reduction in repertoire leads directly to making groups less sustainable”

Members of 29.4% of all groups making a response to the question asking for alternative solutions suggested that Inter Library Loan charges be passed on to the requesting group. The Making Music organisation also acknowledged that there is cost in staff time with regard to Inter Library Loan requests and suggested that dedicated administrative staff take on this role.

### 4.2 Booking facility

The second most commonly cited issue relating to the self-service model was the loss of a booking or reservation facility. Representatives from 41% of the groups making a response to the question regarding borrowing rights identified the loss of the advanced reservation service as a significant limitation. The Making Music organisation commented “78% of our groups plan their concerts 6-18 months in advance. They cannot commit to expenditure, such as on venue



booking, tickets and promotional materials, musicians etc. unless they know they will have access to the required printed music at the right time.”

Members of 23.5% of all groups making a response to the question concerning making requests for items suggested that groups be charged for advanced bookings.

Members of 19.6% of all groups making a response to the question on requests for items suggested using an automated online bookings system.

### **4.3 Proposed borrowing rights**

Although the suggested borrowing rights proposed for a self-service model are broadly acceptable, nearly 30% groups responding to the question on borrowing rights think that a loan period of 9 months is too long. The concern is that this could further reduce the number of titles and copies available due to stockpiling for future performances.

90.2% of groups responding to the question about loans indicated that a maximum loan limit of 500 copies at any one time was adequate for their needs. However some of the largest groups indicated that they would require an increased loan limit due to the number of copies required by their membership.

### **4.4 Change of location**

With regard to the change of location by far the most important access consideration was nearby car parking (78.4% of all responding societies).

The next most important consideration was the availability of evening or weekend opening hours to enable group members to collect the sets outside of working hours (35% of all responding groups).

A further three considerations were also highlighted by 19% of responding groups who are happy with the existing location:

- The current location at Southfields Library works well
- Ground level access to bulky collections of sets is important
- An out of city centre location is preferable

### **4.5 Intention to use service**

Despite concerns, respondents from 78% of the societies said they would continue to use the service. Many acknowledged they had few affordable alternative options but were concerned the quality and variety of performances they would be able to offer would be significantly reduced.

### **Alternative suggestions for a sustainable service**

Of the many alternative suggestions offered in the question concerning requests, the most popular was a proposed increase in the annual subscription fee (55% of all responding groups). Where a figure was suggested this was generally between £100 - £150 per year, and in some cases up to £200 per year. The Making Music organisation suggested an annual subscription fee of £150 per year. 29.4% of groups also suggested charging for Inter Library loans or forward bookings. A further suggestion with regard to fees was to charge for advanced reservations (23.5%).

A number of efficiency savings were suggested. 19.6% of groups suggested the use of an (unspecified) online reservation system. 13.7% of groups suggested utilising existing (non-specialist) staff to administer reservation and Inter Library loans services. 11.8% suggested reducing the opening hours for the service.

11.8% of groups represented suggested transferring the collection to another organisation with the expertise and funding to run it. A further 5.9% of respondents suggested investigating the option for a larger scale service on a national or regional level.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The majority of groups responding to the consultation questionnaire have indicated that they would continue to use the proposed self-service model for the Printed Music and Drama Service.

However there is significant concern amongst most respondents with regard to the withdrawal of two elements of the current service:

- Inter Library Loans service
- Advanced bookings (reservations) service

The proposed relocation of the Printed Music and Drama service is regarded by most as less of an issue as long as good parking and access are available.

### **Next Steps**

A further period of research is required in order to investigate the feasibility of the suggestions which have been made.

At the end of this period a full public consultation will be held setting out realistic options.

An alternative location for the printed music and drama collection will be considered as part of the ongoing Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme.

