



Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee

28 October 2014

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| Title | Libraries Strategy |
| Report of | Family & Community Well-being Lead Commissioner |
| Wards | All |
| Status | Public |
| Enclosures | Appendix A – Libraries options paper Appendix B – Needs assessment Appendix C – Equalities impact assessment |
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Summary

The library service in Barnet is very well thought of by those residents that actively use the service and by the general population as a whole. Library buildings often act as focal points of community activity but there is potential for further integration of services and better use of library spaces to reflect local needs.

Barnet's library service provides children and adults with reading, literacy and learning opportunities. These are through reading and learning materials provided for loan and library use and increasingly through online learning resources. The Council seeks to ensure that at least 95% of Barnet residents can reach their local public library by public transport within thirty minutes. This, along with online access, will ensure that knowledge and information is easily accessible to those that live, work and study in Barnet.

Despite economic growth, public sector cuts will continue until 2020, coupled with rising demand. Barnet has dealt effectively with the first wave of austerity, by anticipating the cuts before they arrived and planning ahead. The Council is now planning for the next 5 years and how a further £72m will be saved.

On 23 June 2014 the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee noted the savings target of £8m allocated by the Policy and Resources Committee and agreed to complete a Commissioning Plan and savings proposals by December 2014. Each Committee has an allocated savings target and there are difficult decisions to make in all areas. The business planning process since then has considered each of the service components within the committee remit to identify possible savings as a contribution to this target and the impact these could have. The process started with investigating the financial contribution libraries could make whilst still delivering a comprehensive and efficient service. As a result of this, the options presented in this report deliver a saving of £2.85m between 2015 and 2020.

Through the development of a new model of library provision, the Council will be able to meet these financial challenges whilst safeguarding services for local people, especially those in more vulnerable groups. This paper updates the vision, outcomes and objectives for the library service and sets out three possible options for consultation with residents and interest groups. Over the next six months, the component parts of these options will be tested and refined and a report will then be brought to the Committee in spring 2014 to update on the outcome of consultation and the further investigatory work.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee agree the proposed vision, outcomes and objectives for the library service as set out in section 1.2 of this report.**
- 2. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee agree that the three options set out in section 1.23 below should be the preferred options for the library service and approve the commencement of consultation on these options in accordance with the consultation plan as set out in section 4.2 of this report.**
- 3. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee agree that an open library will be trialled at Edgware library as detailed in section 4.6 of this report.**
- 4. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee note that following this period of consultation, a report will be presented to a future meeting of the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee. It is intended that this would be in Spring 2015.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Library Strategy was last updated in 2011. The following outcomes and objectives are largely based on those but have been updated to reflect the feedback from consultation since 2011 and the financial challenges now facing the local authority. The updated vision for the library service in Barnet is as follows:

- A library service that provides children and adults with reading, literacy and learning opportunities.
- A library service that engages with communities.
- A library service that makes knowledge and information easily accessible.
- A library service that can withstand current and future financial challenges and safeguard services for vulnerable people.

1.2 In order to meet this vision, draft outcomes and objectives have been devised. The outcomes and objectives are as follows:

- **A library service that provides children and adults with reading, literacy and learning opportunities**
 - Reading and learning materials are provided for loan and library use, in traditional print/hard copy formats as well as provision of e-book, e-audio and online learning resources.
 - The Barnet Digital Library will increase reading and learning opportunities for local people, while the physical library estate continues to offer access to reading, literacy and learning opportunities for children and adults.
 - At least 95% of Barnet residents can reach their local public library by public transport and have access to study space and to learning activities run for communities by communities and by local partners.
 - Outreach and development is targeted at those most in need, with strategic partnerships in Education, Adult and Children's Services, and appropriate local partners.
 - The service continues to deliver onsite and online literacy activities and reading schemes (The National Reading Offer) such as the *Summer Reading Challenge*, *Six Book Challenge* and *City Reads*.
- **A library service that engages with communities.**
 - Library buildings continue to act as focal points of community activity, with further integration of services and use of library spaces which reflects local needs.
 - Opportunities for local people to shape and support library services are increased, through an expanded range of volunteering roles and advisory groups.
 - Social media and new technologies are increasingly used to deliver peer to peer customer interaction and support, offering residents the opportunities to share reading recommendations, advice and support.
 - Local commercial partnership opportunities are exploited where possible.
- **A library service that makes knowledge and information easily accessible.**
 - Local and Council information is provided in both hard and soft copy forms.

- The library service continues to act as a gateway to local services, expanding its use of self-service technology to increase access to those provided by the Council.
 - Online library services, accessible 24:7, offer the library service increased opportunities to deliver literacy, learning and information services out of hours and to those unable to visit static service points.
 - Users of the physical libraries have access to modernised ICT equipment and ICT learning support.
 - **A library service that can withstand current and future financial challenges and safeguard services for vulnerable people.**
 - Barnet's libraries are configured in such a way as to support the Council in meeting these challenges.
 - Income from services, assets, trading and other unique capabilities is maximised in order to take the universal free-to-use library service to the maximum number of people.
 - Opportunities presented by new technology and improved volunteering support are maximised to preserve libraries as physical spaces/community assets.
- 1.3 The options paper at Appendix A provides further detail on the library service, current usage and proposals for future delivery.
- 1.4 The Council must consider how to meet its statutory duty to have a library service in an environment of technological innovations, public finance pressures and localism agenda, including involvement of communities and alternative delivery models for public services. There is no national standard framework for libraries, giving local authorities considerable freedom into how they design services to meet local need and aspirations within available resources.
- 1.5 In considering how to best meet its vision for library services in the current financial climate, consideration has been given to increasing voluntary and community involvement, reduction or re-location of library buildings, changes to opening hours, income generation, closure of library buildings, use of technology and alternative delivery models and cost reduction in the book budget. Having considered these in the light of the financial challenge, a number of conclusions have been reached.
- 1.6 **Use of volunteers**
Increasing the use of volunteers should definitely be pursued to improve the services offered from libraries and / or to help mitigate other changes implemented. This will need the right resource and an improved approach to recruitment, training and volunteer management.
- 1.7 Option 3 provides the most opportunity for some libraries to be run by local communities, although all the options leave open the question of the provider of the core libraries and the capacity of the community to support delivery of services.

1.8 Closures and reductions in size

Options with and without closures need to be tested through consultation to explore potential trade-offs between this and other options.

- 1.9 With regard to a reduction in the size of libraries, it has been concluded that if reducing, it is best to maximise income from the freed up space by leaving around 540 sq. ft. for the library. This would allow all essential services to be delivered on-site and though stock would be limited, the ability to reserve and collect any item from the whole service will significantly mitigate this.

1.10 Re-location and redevelopment

The physical condition of many library buildings means that over the medium term the likely cost of improvements to maintain them is high and it has been concluded that opportunities to create new provision through relocation or redevelopment should be actively identified and explored for feasibility.

- 1.11 Plans already exist for a new library in Colindale, relocating the existing library in Grahame Park and a new library in the redeveloped Gateway House building, relocating the existing library in Finchley Church End.

- 1.12 Any scheme would need to result in a library that compares favourably to the proposed changes in whichever option of change was agreed for implementation. This would mean the new site would need to be at least the same size and in a location at least as well served by public transport, as well as accessible to residents with specific needs.

- 1.13 Opportunities will also be sought for the co-location of libraries with other public services and community facilities. There is greater potential for this to be viable if a library is reduced in size. There should be a presumption that under options that include smaller library sites re-location is likely to secure the best financial return.

1.14 Opening hours

Consultation exercises have consistently shown the value placed on an accessible service open at a range of times to suit various segments of the population. Experience from around the country has shown that when a library's opening hours significantly reduce and do not follow an easy to understand pattern, usage quickly declines.

- 1.15 As such it is the Council's intention that opening hours are extended through the use of technology for all libraries remaining open. The use of technology can now allow the Council to open and close a library without the need for any staff to be on site – the 'open' library. Visitors would access the library during unstaffed periods by scanning their library card and entering a PIN number. Once inside they would be able to use self-serve technology to borrow and return items, use computers, print and photocopy. CCTV would provide additional security.

- 1.16 To achieve the level of savings required from the service will require a reduction in staffed opening hours. Preparing a timetable to allocate staffed hours across the estate will need to ensure a good level of accessibility for all and safeguard usage for groups with additional requirements. Ensuring staffed times provide access for children and young people will be prioritised to ensure priority outcomes of the service can continue to be achieved.
- 1.17 **Income generation**
Additional income generation should definitely be a feature of the response to the challenges facing the service. One significant financial opportunity is to commercialise any freed-up space in the libraries estate and retain this income to subsidise the service.
- 1.18 **Alternative providers**
The initial consideration of the various options for alternative delivery of libraries suggests that either a community or staff owned mutual or outsource option would deliver the greatest level of benefits. The outsourced option could involve a charitable trust or community group. The analysis shows that additional savings can be achieved through these options with the potential for other service improvements. The next phase of work should include a fuller options appraisal to be informed by consultation feedback, engagement with the management team and soft market testing.
- 1.19 For Hendon library the most effective option would seem to be for a partnership with an educational institution given the potential for an enhanced service that meets the needs of the predominant user base whilst also delivering savings. If this option proved unviable following further investigation, Hendon would be considered as part of the whole service as set out above.
- 1.20 Relevant interested parties could express an interest in running a library or a group of libraries to the Council and any expression received would be carefully and properly considered.
- 1.21 **Stock**
If libraries are made smaller, the stock purchasing budget would be reduced accordingly so that the stock level was appropriate to the new level of storage space – all stock would be available from across the library network through the ‘reserve and collect’ service. Given the increasing demand and wide accessibility of digital stock, it is proposed that this purchasing budget is maintained. This will ensure a more efficient library service.
- 1.22 Appendix A sets out further detail of these considerations and sets out three options, which best achieve the vision and objectives for libraries in Barnet.
- 1.23 The detail of the three preferred options are set out in section 9 of Appendix A and are comprised of the following:

Option 1 – Maintain the full reach of the existing library network

- The service would centre on four 'core' libraries, in Chipping Barnet – the busiest of our current sites; in the new libraries in Church End and Colindale, each of which will have state-of-the-art reading, activity and study services, and a smaller library in Hendon.
- Outside these four libraries, the library space within each building would be smaller – around 540 square feet on average. We would let out space within the library buildings for commercial use or income will be secured through redevelopment of sites, ensuring continued provision of a library in each case. It is likely that a number of libraries would move locally but any new sites would ensure equally good if not better access via public transport. Library users will still have access to books from anywhere in the network at their local library through a reserve and collect service.
- This would allow us to maintain the existing library network – no libraries would close. We would extend current opening hours by 50% across the network. Library staff would be present to support library users and provide information and advice for half of current opening hours, including peak usage periods in the late afternoons and at weekends. Overall, hours would be extended using new technology to keep libraries open outside staffed times, with remote access to information, advice and support available by telephone from within the libraries during core business hours.

Option 2 – Maintain the depth and quality of service provision within a consolidated library network.

- The network would consist of eight libraries: the two new libraries in Church End and Colindale and the existing libraries in Chipping Barnet, East Barnet, Edgware, North Finchley, Hendon and Golders Green. Libraries would be concentrated around the Borough's travel hubs – at least 95% of Barnet's population would be able to access a library within 30 minutes' travel from their home. We would review the mobile library's current routes to ensure any less accessible areas would also have the opportunity to access a mobile library stop.
- Each library would provide a full range of activities supporting literacy for all. The libraries would be staffed for 60% of the current opening hours, including peak usage periods in the late afternoons and at weekends. Opening hours would be increased, using new technology to allow access to libraries from 7am to 10pm, outside staffed times.
- Libraries at Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Mill Hill, East Finchley, Osidge and South Friern would be closed and the buildings rented out for commercial use – or alternatively income will be secured through redevelopment of sites.

Option 3 – Community leadership of libraries

- Four libraries (East Finchley, Mill Hill, South Friern and Edgware) would be offered to the community to be run as community libraries. The library space in each community library would be reduced in size to approximately 540 square feet. The library space in Burnt Oak would also be reduced to this size. The libraries in East Barnet and Childs Hill would be closed. In each case, the space released would be let out for commercial use or alternatively income will be secured through redevelopment of sites. It is likely that a number of community libraries would move locally but any new sites would ensure equally good if not better access via public transport.
- Hendon, Burnt Oak, Chipping Barnet, Church End, Golders Green, Colindale (replacement for the current Grahame Park library), North Finchley and Osidge would be maintained as the core library network. The libraries would be staffed for 50% of the current opening hours, including peak usage periods in the late afternoons and at weekends. Opening hours would be increased, using new technology to allow access to libraries from 7am to 10pm, outside staffed times.

1.24 A number of features would be common across all options. These would include maintaining the following elements of the existing service:

- A mobile library service – maintained at current levels and used to ‘top up’ access to the library network for communities across Barnet.
- A home library service – maintained at current levels and used to ensure easy access to the library network for people with mobility issues.
- A Local Studies and Archives service – maintained at current levels.
- Support for adults, children and teenagers, including homework clubs and other activities – available in all staffed libraries.
- The Schools Libraries Resource Service – maintained at current levels, ensuring that school-based literacy activities for children and young people in the Borough continue to develop
- The early years service – maintained at current levels.

1.25 The following elements of the existing service would be expanded or developed:

- Improved self-service online technology – including existing ‘reserve and collect’ service making any book available to collect from any library now made available through new account service on Council website and delivered more efficiently using new Library Management System.
- e-books, e-audio and other online resources and learning materials – maintained at current levels or increased.

1.26 The options also assume:

- A new delivery model for libraries. This could be an employee or community owned mutual, a charitable trust or similar or an outsourced provider. A partnership with an educational institution would be considered to manage the Hendon branch, maintaining a smaller library on that site or nearby and allowing alternative use of some or all areas of the current building.

- Taking opportunities to generate additional income. This would include increasing the use of facilities, potentially including meeting room hire, offering parking spaces for rent, collection points such as Amazon Lockers and businesses advertising in libraries and on the mobile library vehicle. It would also include some increases to fees and charges.
- A greater role for volunteers to enhance the service provided in libraries.
- Continued support to community libraries in Hampstead Garden Suburb and Friern Barnet.

1.27 Library services are important to residents in Barnet and the options involve fundamental changes in the way the library service is delivered, including the role of the community in these services. It is therefore important to consult fully with current users and non-users of libraries as well as other stakeholders, such as voluntary and community groups, residents' associations and town teams. Section 4.2 of this report sets out the detailed plans for consultation on these proposals.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Council has set a savings target for the library service, which means that consideration needs to be given to delivering the service in a different way. Many local authorities have successfully involved communities in delivery of their library service and new technology provides an opportunity to consider how best to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 Options considered but not included are detailed in section 6 of Appendix A.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 If the recommendations of this report are agreed the next steps will be as follows:

4.2 Public consultation and engagement

Previous consultation exercises have shown how important library services are to local people. If the recommendations put to Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee on 28 October 2014 are agreed, a public consultation exercise on these options for the library service will commence on 3 November 2014 and close on 15 February 2015. Members of the public will be able to engage through the following routes:

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| Consultation document and summary | This will be made available online and printed copies will be available from libraries and in locations which target interested groups including JobCentre Plus, Barnet Centre for Independent Living, day centres, schools and public council offices in Burnt Oak and Whetstone. |
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| | |
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| Survey | <p>This would be aimed at the general population – including users and non-users of libraries. It will ask specific questions and provide the opportunity for free text response.</p> <p>This will be made available online at http://engage.barnet.gov.uk and printed copies will be available from libraries and in locations which target interested groups including JobCentre Plus, Barnet Centre for Independent Living, day centres, schools and public council offices in Burnt Oak and Whetstone. Targeted approaches will also be made to groups who may currently be underrepresented among users of the library service.</p> <p>Further submissions can be sent to libraryconsultation@barnet.gov.uk</p> |
| Barnet Citizens' Panel | <p>The survey will also be sent to the 'Barnet Citizens' Panel' – 2,000 residents statistically representative of the population of Barnet. This always provides a very high response rate.</p> |
| Focus groups | <p>Focus groups will be run with communities of interest.</p> |
| Consultation events | <p>A consultation event will be organised in each of the borough's three localities. Invitations will ensure balanced representation generally whilst ensuring the views of those groups most at risk of disadvantage are heard. Members of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee will be invited to attend to hear the feedback of those in attendance.</p> |
| Drop-in sessions in libraries. | <p>A drop-in session will be arranged for three hours in every Barnet library. These will provide a less structured way for local people to feedback their views to an independent facilitator. Notes from discussions will be summarised and included in the consultation report.</p> |
| Targeted survey of users of home and mobile libraries. | <p>Paper copies of surveys available in mobile libraries and to home library users. Survey to be available on request in different formats: large print, easy read and audio.</p> <p>Option to use paper surveys as basis for interviewing home library users if unable to complete survey.</p> <p>Mobile library drop-in sessions.</p> |
| Residents' Forums | <p>The consultation will be presented to each of the residents' forums on 15 January 2015.</p> |

4.3 Engagement with other stakeholders

A targeted survey will be sent to groups and organisations who use libraries for meeting space or to provide activities. A series of information sessions will also be run for voluntary and community groups, residents' associations, town teams and any other organised groups potentially interested in running a community library.

During the consultation process we will work with the groups running the existing community libraries in Hampstead Garden Suburb and Friern Barnet to develop business plans and premises related agreements through to 2020. A detailed plan for consultation and engagement with the library workforce has also been developed. Meetings will be offered to Members to discuss the proposals.

4.4 Full options appraisal for future delivery model

A more detailed options appraisal will be completed to assess the most appropriate future delivery model.

The management team of the library service have expressed an interest in exploring the option of creating an employee-owned mutual to run the service. Over the next three months, work will be done with the management team to develop a business plan demonstrating viability. This will be supplemented by a working group and survey of all staff members. Support will also be obtained for the management team from the Cabinet Office's mutual support programme.

To test out the potential for an outsourced provider to run the library service, we will undertake a soft market testing exercise consisting of questionnaires and interviews, which will establish the true level of viable market interest in the service. This will include work with potential educational institution partners and engagement with possible not-for-profit providers, such as charitable trusts.

4.5 'Open' library pilot

The Council proposed to run a pilot of the 'open' library concept (see section 1.15) during the consultation period and until Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee make a final decision on the proposals. This will serve two purposes – to help inform the consultation response of local people by allowing them to trial the model and secondly to give the Council experience of operating the model to ensure lessons are learned on how best to implement the approach if approved.

If agreed, the pilot will commence in mid-December in Edgware library. For the duration of the pilot it will extend total opening hours – it will not replace current staffed hours.

4.6 Asset options appraisal

An asset options appraisal will be undertaken to assess the relative feasibility of and financial return from rental and redevelopment of sites.

4.7 Implementation planning

Further work will be undertaken to develop a detailed implementation plan for each of the three proposed options, including analysis of the likely capital costs of works required.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Corporate Plan 2013 – 2016 includes objectives to “create the right environment to support families and individuals that need it - promoting independence” and to “improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study”.

5.1.2 Relevant outcomes are “to create better life chances for children and young people across the borough” and “to promote family and community well-being and encourage engaged, cohesive and safe communities”.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The net budget for the Libraries service in 2014-15 is £4,536, 910.

5.2.2 On 23 June 2014 the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee noted the savings target of £8m allocated by the Policy and Resources Committee and agreed to complete a Commissioning Plan and savings proposals by December 2014. Each of the Committees has an allocated savings target and there are difficult decisions to make in all areas. The business planning process since then has considered each of the service components within the committee remit including:

- Education services.
- Children with disabilities, special educational needs (SEN) and high needs, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).
- Looked after children and young people.
- Safeguarding and children in need.
- Family support.
- Youth (incl. youth offending).
- Libraries.

5.2.3 Since the committee meeting, a number of savings within the existing Children’s Service budget proposals totalling £1.87m have been re-profiled from 2015/16 to 2016/17. As a result, the total savings for the CELS Committee between 2016/17 and 2019/20 will be £9.87m.

5.2.4 The options presented in this report are the result of a bottom-up process to identify possible savings in the libraries service, and deliver a saving of £2.85m between 2015 and 2020. Depending on the option proposed, these savings result from different combinations of a reduction in staff across the network, a reduction in premises costs, reductions in the cost of supplies or increasing income from libraries. The proportion of the savings which results

from these areas are set out in the tables in section 9 of Appendix A.

- 5.2.5 The service is staffed (as of August 2014) by 101.82 FTE (150 posts; 73 full time and 77 part time; 33 of the part time posts Saturday and evening assistants only). 85.97 FTE (131 staff members) work across the physical network, including the home and mobile library services, and 15.84 FTE (19 staff members) are in central roles.
- 5.2.6 The consultation and other work required to bring a report back to Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee in April 2015 will require significant effort. Much of this will be delivered using existing resources but the following additional budget is required:

| Resource | Cost |
|--|-----------------|
| Consultation – printing, independent facilitation (focus groups, drop-in sessions, consultation events), analysis of responses | £80,000 |
| Project management | £67,500 |
| Project officer resource – development of April report, delivery of ‘open’ library pilot | £32,850 |
| Commercial advice | £20,000 |
| Total | £200,350 |

- 5.2.7 This resource will need to be approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 2 December 2014 through the budget and business planning report.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides a general duty for library authorities. Section 7 makes it a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use of it. However, whilst there is a power to make facilities available to any person, the duty only applies to those persons whose residence or place of work is within the Borough or those who are undergoing full time education within the Borough.
- 5.3.2 In fulfilling its duty, a local authority must have regard to the desirability of:
- 5.3.2.1 securing that facilities are available for the borrowing of and reference to books and other printed material, recorded music and pictures and film to meet the general and special requirements adults and children;
 - 5.3.2.2 encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service and of providing advice as to its use and information as may be required by users of the service;
- 5.3.3 The duty refers to the requirement to provide a service, it is not a duty to provide this service via library buildings. The meaning of a “comprehensive and efficient library service” has been considered by the courts, specifically in the case of R(Bailey) v London Borough of Brent (2011). This held that the duty does not mean that every resident lives close to a library, but that comprehension means delivering a service that is accessible to all residents,

using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service has been held to mean making the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, whilst recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the service must be made taking account evidence of needs and aspirations across a diverse community within the local area.

- 5.3.4 Case law has confirmed that a local authority cannot meet its statutory duty without having an adequate assessment of need for library services.
- 5.3.5 When making public decisions, local authorities must take account of their overarching duties and public law principles of fairness. In particular, the Council must have due regard to its public sector equality duty, must take account of all relevant information and should not take account of irrelevant information. When deciding to consult on a proposal, this must be carried out in a fair and lawful way.
- 5.3.6 Case law on consultation has confirmed four principles which must be met to ensure that consultation is lawful. These are:
 - 5.3.6.1 Consultation must be carried out at a formative stage. In this case, the committee is being asked to agree preferred options for consultation and the committee will consider at a future meeting, which, if any, of those options are the most appropriate way forward.
 - 5.3.6.2 Consultees must be provided with sufficient reasons for the proposals to allow them to understand the impact and provide an informed response. This would include details of the buildings which may no longer be used as libraries, details of changes to building size, details of changes to the library service offered in each location and details of alternative provider, where this will impact on the delivery of the service.
 - 5.3.6.3 Consultees should have sufficient time to respond to the consultation. The timing and length of consultation should take account of the nature of the decision and the method of consultation. In this case, the consultation will take place during term time and school holidays, when library use may change for children and parents. There are a variety of methods being adopted to engage the community and a period of 12 weeks during which consultees may respond.
 - 5.3.6.4 Consultation must conscientiously be taken into account by the decision maker. At the next committee meeting, Members should expect to see a full summary of the consultation responses. This does not mean that the Council is obligated to make a decision which supports the majority of respondents. When making difficult policy decisions, based on financial constraints, it will be common for consultees to have strong views in support of retaining current provision. Members must consider these views and balance this with other information to decide the most appropriate way forward.
- 5.3.7 Sections 81-85 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced a right for community, voluntary and charitable bodies and local authority employees to “express an

interest” in providing or assisting in providing a service of behalf of the local authority. Upon receipt of such an expression, the local authority must consider it and if it accepts it, must carry out a procurement process for the service. Use of this power was considered in a recent case involving libraries in Lincolnshire. If an expression of interest is made in time by an appropriate body, it must be considered by the local authority when making decisions about the future provision of library services.

- 5.3.8 The Council's Constitution, Responsibility for Functions within the Terms of Reference for the Children's Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee responsibility include:

Development and enhancement of the Library Service

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 Significant risks identified to date include:

| Risk | Mitigation |
|--|--|
| Inability to commercially rent sites results in failure to achieve savings. | Market testing to be undertaken to increase confidence in income modelling. |
| Staff may become demotivated and disengaged through the consultation and implementation process. | Communication and consultation plan in place. |
| Safeguarding or health and safety issues from 'open' libraries model. | Risk assessment for 'open' libraries model has been completed and will be monitored through the pilot phase. |
| Community libraries prove unsustainable. | Discussions with potential groups to be undertaken during consultation period. |
| Implementation of any agreed options is delayed by legal challenge. | Robust review of process and consultation approach. |

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 Equality and Diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in decision-making in the Council pursuant to the Equality Act 2010. This means the Council and all other organisations acting on its behalf must have due regard to the equality duties when exercising a public function. The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality and good relations into day to day business, requiring equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services and for these to be kept under review.

- 5.5.2 The specific duty set out in s149 of the Equality Act is to have due regard to need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct

that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.5.3 The relevant protected characteristics are – age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

5.5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the development of this paper and is attached as Appendix C. This has informed the consultation plan and the options appraisal. The equality impact assessment will be kept under review during the consultation phase and an updated assessment will be submitted to the future committee meeting. The needs assessment also has detailed information about current usage broken down into protected groups, compared with the general population in Barnet.

5.5.2 Previous consultation has indicated that some library buildings are used more by people from specific ethnic groups, that use of self service facilities may be harder or less suitable for people with certain disabilities, children and older people and that certain library buildings are less accessible than others. This has been taken into account in selection of the preferred options, however this will be subject to more detailed consultation and consideration during the next phase.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

The options report found in Appendix A and the needs assessment in Appendix B summarise the consultation undertaken to date. If the recommendations of this report are agreed, consultation will be undertaken as outlined in section 4.2 of this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 *Strategic Library Review*, Cabinet, 26 July 2011, <http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Cabinet/201107261900/Agenda/Document%203.pdf>