

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: Renewal and Recreation PDS

Date: 15th February 2011

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Key

Title: LIBRARIES WORKING GROUP - FINAL REPORT

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Chief Officer: Marc Hume, Director of Renewal and Recreation

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS on the 29th June 2010, members agreed to establish a Working Group to consider the future delivery of the borough's library service and that the findings from this Working Group would be reported back to a future meeting of this PDS. As such, this report reports back to the Renewal and Recreation PDS on this work and the findings of the PDS Member Working Group on Libraries with their report being attached at Appendix 1.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 That the Renewal and Recreation PDS note the work of the PDS Working Group on Libraries and in particular their recommendation that the Option (4) around partnership working be explored further as the preferred option for the future management of the borough's library service and as part of this option to also consider if a number of libraries could close or be amalgamated into other service points. The PDS recommend to the Portfolio Holder that a further report with detailed costs and savings on this option be brought to the next meeting of this committee on the 12th April 2011.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Vibrant Thriving Town Centres.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Libraries and Museum
 4. Total current budget for this head: £7.1m
 5. Source of funding: Existing Revenue Budget for 2010/11
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 143FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 2,005,251 visits
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 This report sets out the work and findings of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Working Group on the Library Service and it furthermore makes a number of recommendations for the future shape, structure and composition of the borough's library service.
- 3.2 The objectives of the Working Group were to "Identify further opportunities to modernise and improve the borough's library offer as set out in 'Building a Better Bromley' 2010 to 2012".
- 3.3 Members will be further aware that the report to the Executive on 12th January 2011, and subsequently the Renewal and Recreation PDS on the 24th January 2011, identified two initial areas of savings within the library service:
- i) Tender the services currently provided by the Library Site Officers.
 - ii) Amalgamate Penge and Anerley Libraries.
- 3.5 Members were advised at PDS meeting on the 24th January 2011 that the work required to market test the Site Officer function will be undertaken during 2011/12, with savings being delivered in the financial year 2012/13. The work to amalgamate Penge and Anerley libraries is currently on going and subject to the identification of suitable premises. This work will be subject to further reports to the Renewal and Recreation PH/PDS.
- 3.6 The Working Group has identified four options that could determine the future shape of the Borough's Library Service. These options are not in themselves distinct and separate from each other and ultimately the final shape of the service and the levels of savings achieved will depend on the mix and service model that is selected.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The review of the Library Service are entirely consistent with the council's objectives around Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres and Excellent Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The working Group's report identifies four options: -

Option 1 maintains status quo but includes savings of £140k relating to merging Penge and Anerley libraries providing a 'like for like' service and a review of site officers.

Option 2 involves library service rationalisation and may produce savings of between £500k and £750k depending on the number of libraries remaining and the level of enhanced opening hours. Further work is required to fully cost this proposal in more detail.

Option 3 relates to savings that may be achieved through 'outsourcing' the library service. Actual savings could only be identified following a formal tender process and again depend on the level of service delivery that was specified.

Option 4 is a proposal to provide a joint library service with Bexley. Estimated savings for this option are expected to be between £350k and £550k, although more work is required to fully cost this proposal to identify the actual savings that this option could produce. This would be reported to Members in April. Further savings may be achieved through the expansion of the partnership model to a trust.

- 5.2 The Member working Group is recommending that Option 4 is explored further.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There were a number of pieces of legislation that affected the authorities decision making on the delivery of a library service, in particular:
- 6.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires the authority to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service. The terms “comprehensive and efficient” are not defined within the Act; however the Act requires local authorities to provide, free of charge, access for people who live, work or study in their area to borrow or refer to books and other material in line with their needs and requirements.
- 6.3 The race relations (Amendment Act) (2000), Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Equality Act 2006 further place a duty on a public body to carry out equality Impact Assessments as soon as a new policy, function or service is considered.
- 6.4 The Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act 2007 and the new Statutory Guidance for the Duty to involve as it places authorities under a duty to consider the possibilities for provision of information to, consultation with and involvement of representatives of local persons across all authority areas.
- 6.5 In terms of the option identified by the Working Group whereby the authority would enter into an agreement with another authority for the joint management of library services, there are provisions contained with the Goods and Services Act 1976 and the Local Government Act 1972 that would enable this happen.

7 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The options identified will clearly have a significant impact on staff currently employed within the borough’s library service.

Non-Applicable Sections:	
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Renewal and Recreation PDS – 29 th June 2010 Libraries, The Next Steps