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| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>Library Plan 2014/15 - Update</b>   |   |                     |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>23 October 2014</b><br>Economic Development & Culture Committee - 18 September 2014 |   |                     |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Assistant Chief Executive</b>   |   |                     |
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| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>All</b>   |   |                     |

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 To agree the final version of the Libraries Plan 2014-15 following public and stakeholder consultation. The Libraries Plan was first agreed at the Economic Development and Culture Committee on 19 June, prior to the broader consultation process.
- 1.2 The Plan now includes revisions based on the results of the consultation process. These can be found in section 5.3 of this report.
- 1.3 The Libraries Plan sets out the Council's vision for the service, building on recent successes, and outlining the priorities and objectives for the next 18 months, in the context of the overall plans and ambitions for the city as a whole. The Plan demonstrates how Libraries support the Corporate Plan priorities and relates to the Sustainable Community Strategy – the Connected City.
- 1.4 Under council governance arrangements, the Libraries Plan is one of the key strategic documents that require full council approval.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the Libraries Plan for 2014-15.
- 2.2 That the Committee refer the plan onto full Council for approval.

### 3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Libraries Plan sets out the scope of the Library Service in the city, and gives some key performance data:

Jubilee Library is top performing library in the region and the second most popular library in the country, with one million visits each year  
Benchmarked with Comparator Local Authority Group 2012-13, Brighton & Hove Library service is:

- *Best value* - cost per visit (£2.68) (Av £3.33)
- *Most popular* – visits per head of population (6.2) (Av 4.6)
- 2nd highest for total items in stock
- Cost 32p per week per person

3.2 The Libraries Plan demonstrates the value of public libraries and shows how they support priority objectives for the city such as health and well-being; reading and literacy; children and adults learning; supporting elderly and vulnerable people; and providing important, safe and trusted community spaces in local neighbourhoods.

3.3 The vision for the Library Service was articulated in 2009 and remains relevant today: ***‘Libraries at the Heart of our Communities: Broadening Horizons, Improving Lives’***. Public libraries are fundamental to a democratic society, and play a powerful role in supporting community and personal development, that underpins economic activity and enriches people’s lives. Libraries make a difference on an individual level: inspiring people; widening their view of the world and what is achievable; supporting learning, and enabling access to knowledge and information. Libraries also bring people together, providing a focus for community activity and interaction, reducing isolation and supporting social cohesion. Public libraries are at the heart of sustainable communities.

3.4 The main aims for Libraries for 2014-15 are:

3.4.1 To develop the role of libraries as community hubs, and to work more closely with other service providers to deliver the community and council priorities and objectives for the city.

3.4.2 To expand partnership arrangements with other agencies and council departments to ensure that libraries are alive with activity and enabling people to achieve many different things through their local library.

3.4.3 To support health and well-being, reaching out to those who are housebound or who are carers; developing libraries’ services for vulnerable people, including those with disabilities and older people.

- 3.4.4 To improve digital inclusion, supporting people using the Internet, particularly those lacking confidence and skills, and delivering assisted digital services to help people access services (particularly government services) online.
  - 3.4.5 To deliver the four Public Library Universal offers around reading, information, health and digital services.
  - 3.4.6 To develop the role of libraries in encouraging reading as a valuable cultural activity that underpins people's ability to learn, develop and work, and continue to support adults and children to improve their literacy levels as a vital life skill.
  - 3.4.7 To improve customer satisfaction through improving library stock and information services, making best use of new technologies and digital resources.
  - 3.4.8 To modernise and deliver value for money through updating library technology, reviewing and improving the use of resources, and streamlining processes, to ensure that library users receive a high quality service that meets their needs.
- 3.5 Details of service objectives and key actions can be found in section 5 of the Libraries Plan.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Not relevant to this report.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Preparation for the new Libraries Plan has included a review of the results of research and consultation in Libraries Services. Regular and detailed research and consultation has been carried out in a range of ways including:

- Surveys in all libraries
- Library user research using systems thinking method
- Focus group research with some targeted groups
- Feedback from events and activities
- Community profiles giving detailed demographic information
- Libraries profiles and performance information (latest year)
- Customer comments and complaints (reviewed quarterly)

A summary of the results of recent surveys results can be found in section 9 of the Libraries Plan.

5.2 The plan has built on the involvement of members of the Culture, Tourism and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee, through a workshop held in 2012. Members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the future plans and aspirations for the Library Service, and supported the priorities identified through staff workshops:

- Supporting literacy and learning
- Improving and developing stock
- Developing Libraries as Community Hubs
- Inclusion – reaching those in most need
- Digital inclusion and e-service development
- High quality customer service

### 5.3 Results of the Consultation on the Libraries Plan

5.3.1 There was majority support for the Libraries Plan overall, with 78% of respondents saying they tend to or definitely agree with the plan (9% of respondents said they tend to or definitely disagree). There were no areas of activity that did not get strong support (over 70%) from the respondents.

5.3.2 The strongest support was for the encouragement of reading, and supporting adults and children to improve their literacy levels. Improving customer satisfaction through improving stock, information and digital services also received good support. This is similar to the priorities that Councillors identified in their workshop (see section 5.2 above).

5.3.3 A new subject not previously seen much in library consultations that has appeared this time is the need for Libraries to change and respond to the financial challenges that are facing local services. Comments related to this included 'bring in more income'; 'face financial reality'; 'use volunteers' 'take donations'. Other suggestions wanted to see more use of libraries by other council services and organisations.

5.3.4 Other details of the responses to the survey on the Libraries Plan can be found in section 9.6 of the Plan.

5.3.5 Changes have been made to the Libraries Plan following the last committee meeting and the consultation. Four new actions have been added:

- Develop specific services for BME(Black and Minority Ethnic) young people in collaboration with BMECP (Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership) and their youth group

- Promote what libraries can do to support people with learning disabilities in line with the recommendations received from Speak Out in the consultation process
- Revise and re-launch a Reading Strategy for the city in collaboration with Children's Services – to improve reading and literacy for children and adults across the city
- As part of the VFM4 modernisation programme for cultural services, develop options for the future of library services in the context of continuing budget challenges for the council

5.3.6 A link to the full details of the responses to the consultation can be found on the library website and in the Members' room.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Libraries Plan sets out the aims and objectives for the Library Service for 2014-15, building on recent successes, and in the context of the overall plans and ambitions for the city as a whole. The Plan demonstrates how Libraries can help deliver broader corporate objectives, and support the development of sustainable communities.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The Libraries Plan will be delivered within the Libraries Service 2014/15 net budget of £5.3 million and influenced by future budgets in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Value for Money programme.

The partnership approach along with other initiatives are expected to deliver efficiencies and improve value for money.

*Finance Officer consulted: Anne Silley*

*Date 19/08/14*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Part 3 of the council's constitution refers to the council's policy framework made up of various plans and strategies. The Libraries Plan is one such plan and is required to be adopted by Full Council. The plan complies with statutory requirements and does not give rise to any adverse legal implications.

*Lawyer consulted: Bob Bruce*

*Date 19/08/14*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and a summary is included within the plan (see section 10). The full EIA is available in the Members' room.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 *Sustainable Consumption and Production:* Through the modernisation programme, the use new technology and new ways of working will include a reduction in use of paper and other consumable resources.

*Climate Change and Energy:* The regeneration of community libraries is likely to improve the environmental performance of the library buildings.

*Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement:* No implications.

*Sustainable Communities:* The development of community libraries as hubs and the expansion of our community engagement activities will contribute to the development of more sustainable communities.

### Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 Corporate/citywide implications have been included in the plan in that the Library Service is taking actions that support the delivery of Corporate and Community Strategy objectives (see sections 5 and 7)

A risk and opportunity analysis has been completed and a risk register compiled. There are no significant risks identified, and good opportunities to deliver benefits to library users, local citizens and visitors.

## **8. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 8.1 Not relevant to this report.

## **9. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To achieve endorsement of the Libraries Plan by the Economic Development and Culture Committee

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1: Libraries Plan 2014-15
- Appendix 2: Your Libraries Brochure (revised September 2014)

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

- Equalities Impact Assessment (revised)
- Full details of the responses to the consultation

### **Background Documents**

- None