

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February, 2017 (P.M.)

PRESENT: Councillor R. Meirion Jones (Chair)
Councillor Gwilym O. Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Jim Evans, Victor Hughes, Llinos Medi Huws,
Peter Rogers

Members of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Councillors Alun Mummery, Dylan Rees

Portfolio Members

Councillor Ieuan Williams (Leader)
Councillor Kenneth Hughes (Portfolio Member for Education)

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Head of Learning
Library Services Manager (RR)
Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator (BHJ)
Interim Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Lewis Davies, Ann Griffith, R. Llewelyn Jones, H. Eifion Jones
(Portfolio Member for Finance) Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Partnership and
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor John Griffith

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

3 THE DRAFT LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY 2017/22

The report of the Head of Learning incorporating the Draft Library Service Strategy for 2017 to 2022 was presented for the Committee's consideration. The purpose of the Strategy is to seek to ensure that Anglesey's Library Service is placed on firm and sustainable foundations that will allow the service to meet the needs of the Island's residents and fulfil the statutory requirements over the coming years.

The Library Services Manager reported Anglesey County Council is committed to providing a statutory library service that is comprehensive and efficient as required by Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964. The Welsh Public Library Standards are set and assessed by the Welsh Government and are one of the measures of whether a Library Authority is fulfilling its statutory duty. In the context of the Standards the main concern regarding the Service in Anglesey is that staffing levels are below the standards set thus potentially affecting the service provided.

The Isle of Anglesey Corporate Plan for 2013-17 sets forth the aim of reducing the overall costs of Leisure, Culture and Library Services to the Council by 60% over the period of the plan. As a result of this commitment, a Libraries, Youth Service and Museums and Culture Transformation Programme Board was established to oversee the delivery of the priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan to explore options and implement a revised Library provision model.

Anglesey Library Service undertook a Library Service Review in autumn 2015 which looked at a range of topics and which identified several options for the future development of the service. A public and stakeholder consultation was held during October, 2015 to gather views on the options identified and to invite any alternative ideas; details of the consultation are provided in paragraph 3.2 of the report. Although this exercise did not yield a clearly favoured option, there was evidence to suggest that seeking opportunities for community support models, working with social enterprises or alternative providers co-working with the Council to maintain the service was deemed preferable to any potential withdrawal of service.

The draft Library Service Strategy presents a preferred model for consultation and it has been developed to respond to the challenges and needs outlined in the report. Residents' views as summarised in paragraph 4.3 of the report have been noted and embedded within the draft strategy. The strategy outlines a vision for the Library Service and sets out a delivery framework that aims to meet the needs both of the Library Standards and those of the service's customers. Underpinning the vision are the six core aims described in paragraph 5.2 of the report. The draft Strategy advocates moving to a pattern of provision based on Area Libraries; Authority led Community Supported Libraries; Mobile Services and potential Community Access points (dependent on the distribution of the first two modes of provision). Further details on how the proposed 3 tiered provision would work in practice are given in paragraph 5.4 of the report. However, while various papers have been prepared and discussed with regard to the provision of the Library Service on Anglesey, no final decision has been made on its future.

A Library Equality and Needs Assessment (EINA) has been undertaken and this examines the need for the service and the impact of any proposed changes on the population which may want to make use of the service. In developing the proposals for the Draft Library Service Strategy, the considerations listed in paragraph 6.2 of the report as well as other indicators were taken into account as part of the EINA. The Library Service EINA remains a living document and findings from the consultation process on the draft Strategy will be fed into it as appropriate.

In terms of financial considerations, due to the possible variables in relation to the final model of provision within the Strategy the savings as at Section 7 illustrate the two extremes within the strategy i.e. that in which there is maximum community involvement where all Authority led Community Supported Libraries are successful, and that in which there is minimum community involvement where no community involvement has been possible resulting in Tier 3 libraries closing (5 libraries). The table as at paragraph 7.3 shows the potential savings if staffing levels are retained within the service but with a different staffing structure thus mitigating the impact on the Welsh Public Library Standards. The table as at paragraph 7.4 shows the potential savings if staffing levels are not retained within the service. Appendix 4 to the report shows these costings in more detail.

The Library Service is planning to hold a public consultation on the Draft Strategy and to progress discussions with interested parties. Following the public consultation, the Portfolio Member will present the definitive Library Service Strategy to the Executive for a final decision in autumn 2017.

The Committee considered the information presented in the written report and orally by the Officers and it made the following points –

- The Committee sought clarification of the progress made in the consultation with Town and Community councils and the level of interest shown hitherto by the latter in collaborating with the Council to help provide a Library service within communities. The Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator said that all Town and Community Councils had been invited to meet with the Service either individually or in public meetings and that many had taken up the invitation. While discussions are ongoing with several, some have expressed an interest and others are taking steps to place arrangements on a more formal footing. Each town and community council's circumstances are different and the progress of discussions reflects that situation. Also the Committee emphasised

the need to engage with all the community councils and suggested that efforts be made to reconnect with those that have not as yet responded.

- With regard to the table on page 8 of the Equalities Impact Assessment showing data in relation to the use of the static libraries on the Island, the Committee noted that the information provided could be clarified to reflect what exactly the cost per visit does and does not include. This would provide the full picture in a way that can be readily understood.
- The Committee noted that the consultation and engagement held to date as well as the Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment have been thorough, comprehensive and inclusive and reflect a thoughtful and responsive approach to the public views expressed via those processes, which the Committee commended.
- The Committee noted that several Scrutiny members have been involved along the way in reviewing the Library Service provision and developing proposals through the Libraries, Youth Service and Museums and Culture Transformation Programme Board. Scrutiny has therefore in effect been an ongoing process.
- The Committee requested and it was confirmed, that the final Library Service Strategy for 2017/22 will be presented to this Committee prior to its submission to the Executive.

It was RESOLVED –

- **That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the Lifelong Learning Service has undertaken the process of developing the Library Service Strategy as comprehensively and inclusively as possible.**
- **That subject to the clarification of the information provided in the table on page 8 of the Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment (EINA), the Committee is satisfied that the EINA covers all groups and that it has no other concerns on this matter.**
- **That the Committee recommends to the Executive that the Lifelong Learning Service proceeds with the public consultation on the Draft Library Service Strategy 2017/22 with a view to reporting its findings by November, 2017.**

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING

**Councillor R. Meirion Jones
Chair**