

Cabinet Member for Education

8th July 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor D Kershaw

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director for People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title: Library Petitions

Is this a key decision?

No, as the report doesn't contain any proposals that would significantly affect residents of the City.

Executive Summary:

A number of e-petitions and written petitions have been presented to the Council asking for the Council to reconsider making cuts to local library services. These include recent petitions specifically related to the community libraries in Aldermoor and Allesley Park. In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with petitions, those relating to library issues are heard by the Cabinet Member for Education.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Education:-

- 1) Notes the petitions and requests that Officers write to the petition organisers to advise them of the Council's current position and assure them that the petitioners will be encouraged to participate in any discussions in relation to the future of library services in Coventry.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Library Petitions

1. Background

- 1.1 An e-petition "Save Allesley Park Library from Government forced cuts" sponsored by Councillor Bally Singh and signed by 168 people closed on 1st June asking:-

"We, the undersigned, urge Coventry City Council to keep the Allesley Park library open in the face of government led cuts. We recognise the difficult decisions that the city council has to make, especially as funding from the Coalition government cuts spending power by nearly 50% in real terms since 2010. However, we believe the shared service model that the Allesley Park library can support, can also help the council keep sufficient library services open in the west of the city during these tough times."

- 1.2 An e-petition "Save Stoke Aldermoor Community Library" sponsored by a local resident and signed by 7 people closed on 8th June asking:-

"Save Aldermoor Community Library as we have very little resources in our Community and we would like our Library to stay open"

- 1.3 The City Council currently operate a Library Service comprising Central Library plus 16 community libraries, a mobile service and an at home service. The petitions refer to individual libraries:

- Aldermoor Library located in Acorn Street, Stoke Aldermoor is one of the City's smaller libraries. The library was re-located to a building previously used as a shop (part of a small retail development) in October 2007.
- Allesley Park Library is a modern purpose built library, part of Allesley Park Neighbourhood Centre in Whitaker Road, Allesley Park. The library opened in July 2011 and the building is shared by a local GP practice and Pharmacy. The Centre is adjacent to the Wilfred Spender Centre.

- 1.4 The petitions relates to genuine concern from local residents regarding the level of service reductions that may need to be considered by Coventry City Council. It is a reality that the City Council has to make significant reductions in the amount of money it spends as a result of Government funding reductions. These reductions have required the Council to carefully consider all the various services it spends money on and this must include libraries.

- 1.5 The way in which library provision is provided across the city may be considered within service reviews. The challenges faced by the City Council present the opportunity to reflect on changing patterns of library use, and the changing needs of library users. The Council is currently exploring whether there are any alternative models of delivery which may retain services but deliver significantly reduced costs to the Council. Options will include the co-location of different services and opportunities to co-operate with statutory and non-statutory partners in the City.

- 1.6 No decisions have been taken regarding the closure of any of the city's libraries. Any future proposals to make changes to the library service will be subject to public consultation. Officers will work over the coming months with the various groups and individuals who have expressed an interest in library services to see if they can work with the Council to deliver a better service at reduced cost.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 There is no current proposal to close any community libraries therefore, there is no further action that Officers are recommending to take in terms of this request.
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member is recommended to request that Officers write to the petition spokespersons to advise them of the Council's current position and assure them that residents and petitioners will be encouraged to participate in any future discussions in relation to library services in Coventry.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 No consultation has been undertaken. Any future proposals about the provision of library services in the future will at a formative stage and prior to any decisions being made be the subject of a full consultation exercise.

4. Comments from Executive Director for Resources

- 4.1 Financial implications
There are no financial implications as a result of this report.
- 4.2 Legal implications
There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

5. Other implications

5.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Not applicable.

5.2 How is risk being managed?

None

5.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

5.4 Equalities / EIA

None

5.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

5.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Diane Jones	Lead Accountant – Business Partner	Resources	20 February 2015	23 February 2015
Julie Newman	Senior Solicitor, Legal Services	Resources	20 February 2015	23 February 2015
Councillor D Kershaw	Cabinet Member for Education	-	12 June 2015	19 February 2015

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