

Meeting:	Children, Culture & Communities Scrutiny Committee
Meeting date:	17 October 2023
Report of:	Assistant Director of Customer, Communities, and Inclusion
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

Scrutiny Report: Annual Update – Libraries and Archives

1. This report provides members with an annual update from Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited (Explore) who operate the Council’s libraries and archives service.

Policy Basis

2. Explore in 2022-23 contributed to a significant number of corporate priorities and looking forward the newly adopted ‘One City, for all’ Council Plan 2023-2027 will see Explore’s annual service delivery plan align to the new four core commitments. As can be seen in Explore’s report their work can contribute directly to health and wellbeing, education and skills, economy, and sustainability.

Recommendation and Reasons

3. To note and comment upon the activities of the Explore update report.

Reason: To support the Council’s role in performance management of the library and archives service contract.

Background

4. **Libraries and Archives:** Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited (Explore) is an independent Industrial and Provident

Mutual organisation which entered a service delivery contract with the Council for 15 years on 1 April 2019 and currently operate:

- **York Explore:** the city centre flagship facility where all services are available including the Archive & Local History Centre
- **Explore Library Learning Centres:** Acomb Library, Clifton Library and The Centre@Burnholme in Tang Hall
- **Explore Gateways:** Smaller community libraries are located at; Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Dringhouses, Dunnington, Fulford, Haxby & Wigginton, Huntington, New Earswick, Poppleton, Strensall and York Stadium
- **Virtual Libraries:** E-library services including E-books, E-magazines & newspapers and online reference library.
- **Reading Cafes:** Homestead Park, Hungate and Rowntree Park
- **Mobile Library:** One mobile vehicle covering the smaller settlements around the edges of York on a two-week timetable.

Performance Management Arrangements

5. As part of the contractual arrangements for Explore there is a performance management framework that requires them to report formally to the Council quarterly against a set framework. Each service has a service specification with performance measures around availability of services, required outcomes and where required, measurements.
6. The performance and monitoring framework also acts to financially penalise poor performance or non-compliance, as well as rewarding over achievements.
7. An annual report from Explore is also a requirement of the contract which is being presented at Annexe A to describe the activities against the service specification.
8. In 2022-23 Explore's performance was monitored at each quarter and then finally at the end of the contract year. No financial deductions have been made due to non-compliance or performance issues.

Consultation Analysis

9. In 2022-23 Explore undertook a number of consultation exercises in relation to the Future Library Investment Programme capital projects for a new Clifton Explore Library Learning Centre and a refurbishment of the existing Acomb Explore Library Learning Centre. These are referenced in the Explore report at Annexe A.

Contact details.

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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Background papers

Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee – 21 July 2022. Explore’s annual report for 2021-22.

[Executive meeting 21 June 2018](#) – Item 7. The Library and Archives Service: Procurement of Operator Report

Annexes

Annex A: Explore York Libraries & Archives Report 2022-23