

22 June 2015

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**Learning and Culture Policy and  
Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities, Culture & Public Realm)

**Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual:  
Performance Update 2014/15 - end of year report**

**Summary**

1. This report updates members on the performance of Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd (Explore) during the second 6 months of 2014/15.

**Background**

2. Explore was set up on 1 May, 2015 as a Community Benefit Society with exempt charitable status, jointly owned by staff and the community, with the aim of delivering a comprehensive and efficient public library service, increasing access to library services by providing excellent services, encouraging everyone to be a library member from birth, and giving York residents universal membership of all public libraries in England and Wales. Explore's vision is *to enable people to live fuller, more connected and engaged lives*.
3. Explore is tasked with making a major contribution to helping the Council engage with its communities, facilitating adult learning, getting people on line, promoting the health and wellbeing agenda, and supporting vulnerable people, e.g. housebound people and people with mental health issues.
4. £450k savings were made immediately on establishing explore with a further £50k saving in 2015/16. This was achieved whilst maintaining paid staff in every library, ensuring no closures, and driving service improvement.

5. The Council has entered into a 5 year contract with Explore for the provision of services. The contract specification sets out the key requirements with respect to service levels including book stock, professional staffing, service points, and the outcomes to be achieved (see Annex 1).
6. The report from the Chief Executive of Explore (see Annex 2) sets out performance issues in the period to 31 March 2015.

### **Options**

7. This report is for information and there are no options to consider.

### **Corporate Objectives**

8. Explore contributes to a number of corporate objectives including developing opportunities for residents and visitors to experience York as a vibrant and eventful city, improving opportunities for learning, and in strengthening York's economy through investment in the tourism infrastructure.

### **Implications**

9. **Finance:** The contract sum for the full year in 2014/15 is £1,942,000 (the actual payment reduced to reflect the 1 May start date).
10. The report has no implications relating to: Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property.

### **Risk Management**

11. This report is for information and there are no risks to consider.

### **Recommendations**

12. That members comment upon the performance of Explore.  
Reason: To help monitor the service received under the contract.

### **Annexes**

1. Schedule 2 of the Contract for the Provision of Services
2. Report of the Chief Executive of Explore
3. Reading Well Books on Prescription for Dementia
4. Explore Digital Inclusion Projects

**Contact Details**

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**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 4.6.15.

**Wards Affected:**

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**