

Executive

24 October 2019

Report of the Director of Children, Education and Communities and the Director of Economy and Place.

Portfolios of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities and the Executive Member for Finance and Performance

Future Libraries Investment Programme

Summary

1. This report sets out a partnership approach between Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual (“Explore”) and the Council for the future delivery and improvement of the city’s library buildings known as the Future Libraries Investment Programme (“the Programme”). It outlines an approach, scope, and governance arrangements for the Programme.

Recommendations

2. The Executive is asked to:
 - a. Approve the approach, scope, and governance arrangements for the Future Libraries Investment Programme.

Reason: To ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear between Explore and the Council for the successful delivery of the Programme.

 - b. Approve a budget of £150k to appoint a project manager and operational budget for the first two years of the Programme, to commission the professional services referred to in paras 18 and 23 of this report, funded from the £4m capital budget.

Reason: To allocate the resources required to deliver the programme’s first phase.

Background

3. In April 2019, Explore were awarded a new 15 year service contract (with associated leases of library premises) to operate the Council’s

library estate (“the Service Contract”). The specification for this Service Contract reflects the Comprehensive Assessment of Need, approved by the Executive on 21 June 2018, which was drawn up following extensive public consultation. It also reflects the Council’s commitment that there will be no reduction in the number of staffed libraries across the city. The vision at the heart of the Service Contract is attached at Annex A. It suggests a move away from stand-alone buildings and, through appropriate partnerships, the creation of improved services co-located with other community amenities.

4. A £4m capital allocation was made by the Council in February 2019 for investment in Acomb and Clifton libraries.
5. The Corporate asset management strategy 2017-2022 was also approved in September 2017 and sets out the Community and Operational Asset Strategy which will importantly guide the Programme.

Consultation

6. Key findings of the library vision consultation were:
 - Residents expressed clear aspiration to enhance the role of libraries as community hubs through improvements to buildings and facilities. The role as a community hub will vary depending on local needs, but residents recognise the key role that the local library can play in social inclusion, providing a neutral place where people can meet and engage in activities.
 - Co-location: There was support for a vision of moving away from stand-alone buildings and recognition of the need for partnerships to create services co-located with other community amenities.
 - Future priorities for services: Users’ top priorities for services are the same for all library types: Borrowing books, reading and studying space, local information, events, computers (together with archives and local history in the case of York Explore).
 - Non-users indicated that the top three things that would encourage them to come to a library in the future were: a reading café on site, better information about services, and more events and activities.

Approach and governance

7. The Programme will be a major capital project. The Service Contract provides for it to be carried out over the first 8 years of the contract term, so a robust governance and project management framework is essential to keep to task and enable effective delivery by the contractual deadline. Annex 2 sets out the governance for the Programme in more detail.
8. A programme board will be set up to direct and lead the Programme, made up from senior officers from both Explore and the Council with reporting that follows the corporate project management approach.
9. The library Service Contract set out clear responsibilities for the future development of library buildings: the Council will take the lead on development of the Explore Library Learning Centres (Acomb and Clifton – Burholme already having been completed) and Explore will lead on the Gateway Libraries.

Gateway Library Programme (9 libraries)

10. Here the task is for Explore to work with communities to create improved facilities through co-location of libraries with other community facilities. This will be a continuation of the work Explore has begun, for example through the relocation of New Earswick library into the Folk Hall, which is home to a café and the local post office and has numerous rooms for community use. This co-location move has resulted in more users, increased opening hours and better integration in the community.
11. Explore are required to complete the process of making satisfactory arrangements for all the community libraries by the end of year 8 of the contract (31 March 2027). It will be for them to bring forward the solution in light of local needs but with the Council having the right to decline any proposal, acting reasonably, should we consider that any proposal does not meet the requirements of the vision and the service specification.

Library Learning Centres Programme (2 buildings)

12. The lead in respect of the two larger Library Learning Centres (Acomb and Clifton) has been retained by the Council. The intention is to look at all options, analyse the options and then report back to the Executive with outline business cases. The imperative here is to address the current high cost of the Library Learning

Centres by moving to a new model which provides Explore with larger buildings and additional income streams.

13. The Centre@Burnholme already delivers this, being forecast to generate a net profit which can be used to cross-subsidise the service. The task will be to invest in Acomb and Clifton subject to appropriate building solutions being available and preparation of detailed business cases.

Process

14. Stakeholder mapping and engagement is going to be key in stage 1 of the Programme for two reasons; (i) the need to identify all possible site options for Acomb and Clifton and (ii) to identify co-location organisations who are willing to work with Explore in these locations.
15. The project manager will work with Explore to consult with all stakeholders identified to ensure relationships are formed early and built upon through this process. This will involve a period of intense stakeholder engagement to include, but not limited to:
 - All Council departments
 - Local Ward Councillors
 - The 'Friends' library groups
 - One public estate, which includes all blue light (emergency) services
 - Partner organisations e.g. Health
 - Community organisations e.g. local scout groups
 - Any other stakeholders identified during mapping
16. Identifying potential co-location partners will be critical to the process and development of a future business case for investment. The Burnholme model has been successful due to the collaborative nature of partners but also the additional revenue income generated from having identified long term tenants.
17. Once all the site options have been mapped and co-location partner requirements understood, an analysis of the options will be done. It

is anticipated some external professional services will be commissioned to support the analysis.

18. The process for the Gateway co-location will be managed by Explore, as set out in Annex 2.

Scope

19. The current library estate has 14 buildings and 2 mobile vehicles. It is also worth noting that a new Gateway library will open at the Community Stadium and a commitment to move Haxby Library from a mobile vehicle into a static library has been given.
20. The following buildings are out of scope of this Programme as they either meet the library vision or are in train to be delivered:
 - York Central Library – significant investment recently and no plans to move
 - Burnholme – New library opened in 2018
 - New Earswick – co-located with the Folk Hall in 2018
 - Library in the Community Stadium

Timescales and budget

21. Anticipated timescales for stage 1 of the eight year programme are set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Stage 1, timescales for Clifton and Acomb Library

STAGE 1	2019			2020									2021											
(Acomb & Clifton projects)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Executive approve approach	█																							
Programme Board established	█																							
Project Manager recruited		█	█																					
Stakeholder mapping and engagement				█	█	█																		
Search for possible sites				█	█	█																		
Search for potential co-location partners				█	█	█																		
High-level analysis of suitability of sites						█	█	█																
Short-list of site options								█																
Develop outline business case for best site options									█	█	█	█												
Consultation and engagement plan									█	█	█	█												
Business case reported to Executive for approval													█											
Consultation and engagement implementation														█	█	█								
Stage 2 - Implementation																		█	█	█	█	█	█	

22. To delivery stage 1, it is proposed that the £150k budget will be used to employ a project manager for two years and provide a budget for commissioning external professional services including; site surveys and investigations, concept designs, valuations and cost estimates to feed into the business case for Acomb and Clifton.

Early Work

23. Officers have already started work to identify potential service integration/co-location opportunities for Acomb and Clifton.
24. An initial review of commissioned services has identified two community based providers whose current facilities are not fit for the purpose intended or for the vulnerable user base.
- Choose 2 Youth based at 68 Centre
 - Snappy based at Door 84
25. Both of these could be located in a future Explore setting. However, the 68 Centre has significant urgent health and safety building issues meaning users need to be relocated. An interim solution has been agreed with Choose 2 Youth to move them into Moor Lane Youth Centre.

26. The 68 Centre by April 2020 will then be vacant but the Council is committed to consult with the local community to explore the appetite for any new community use or asset transfer.
27. The 1st Clifton (York) Scouts group and the Salvation Army are other potential co-location partners, having contacted the Council during the library consultation in 2017/18.
28. In Acomb a parcel of land to the rear of the current library is owned by the Council and earmarked to be included in the option to extend Acomb Explore.

Council Plan

29. This report demonstrates the Council's commitment to maintaining front line services whilst seeking financial efficiencies from service review.

Implications

30. The following implications have been identified:
 - **Financial** – The £150k required for stage 1 would be to appoint a project manager for two years and commission external surveys, valuations etc. required to present back to the Executive the outline business cases for Acomb and Clifton. This would be funded from the £4m capital budget approved in February 2018.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – recruitment of a project manager will be made following HR procedures.
 - **One Planet Council / Equalities** – The completed One Planet Council Assessment can be found at Annex 3.
 - **Legal** – The 15 year Library Contract sets out the requirement for Explore to co-locate all the Gateway libraries by 31 March 2027. The Council have reserved the right to change the location of Acomb and Clifton Library Learning Centres. It is the intention where possible that Explore will lease space in any co-located buildings directly from the owner (rather than the Council taking a lease and then granting a sublease to Explore).
 - **Crime and Disorder** – considered to be no impact.

- **Information Technology (IT)** – Consideration will be given to IT requirements in the outline business cases. No immediate impact identified.
- **Property** – The proposal is in line with the Corporate Asset Management approach approved by the Executive and property officers will feed into the outline business case taking into consideration the property and land issues.

Risk Management

31. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to damage to the Council's reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations. The level of risk is assessed as "Medium".

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Background Papers:

Executive Report - 21 June 2018 - The Library and Archives Service:
Procurement of Operator

Annexes

Annex A - The Council's Vision for the future of its libraries

Annex B – Governance

Annex C – One Planet Council Better Decision Making Tool Impact Assessment

List of abbreviations used in this report

EXPLORE – Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd

CAS – Community and Operational Asset Strategy

PROGRAMME – The future library investment programme