

# Library Service Reconfiguration (694)

## 6 Month Post Implementation Review



# Overview

- Interim 6 Month review to give early indication of progress.
- Information gathered from:
  - Library Community Volunteer Groups
  - Senior staff involved in the Project
  - Elected Members
  - Frontline Library and Stronger Communities staff
- Full review recommended in 2018-19

# Background

- Building on 2012 model - innovative programme to transform the Library Service across the county.
- 33 Council run libraries transitioned to varying levels of community responsibility by April 2017.
- Concurrent staffing restructure.
- Aimed to achieve budgetary savings whilst maintaining provision of services to communities.
- National trailblazer- interest from other Local Authorities and Central Government due to the scale and complexity involved.

# Progress to date

Initial assessments are positive and the programme delivered demonstrable success:

- Appears on track to achieve savings target (£1.4m)
- Hand-over happened as planned on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017
- Library services continue to be available following the transfer (comparable opening hours; no significant fall in business etc)
- No central government challenge / intervention to date despite the high number of libraries involved.

# Progress to date

## Service Performance

- No real change in library use over last 8 years
- Active users have increased by 6.2% (compared with same period 2016-17)
- Book issues have fallen by 7.3% (compared with same period 2016-17). National average shows fall of 14%
- All libraries have access to performance data to track their own performance – competitive spirit developing!
- Grant funding use – computers, smartscreen TVs, refurbishments etc

## Opening Hours

- Opening hours have only reduced by 2% (East Riding have reduced their hours by 28%)
- Only 1 library closed since 2011



# Progress to date

## Summer Reading Challenge

- Completed in the first 6 months post April 17
- 9609 children took part (7823 completed the challenge – 29% of Y&H total)
- 103 volunteers (aged 11 – 24) provided 2028 hours of support to North Yorkshire Libraries (37% of Y&H total)
- 9 Community Libraries increased their number of children starting the challenge this year!
- 3 Community Libraries exceeded their total completers from last year!



# Progress to date

- A strong theme is the huge amount of effort and hard work put in to keep the libraries open. All concerned have worked very hard to achieve this and continue to do so.
- Community groups valued jointly-held feedback sessions to identify and address common issues.
- Positive role of libraries staff (also undergoing restructure) - despite the uncertainty, staff remained professional, supportive and courteous and received universal praise from the management committees.

# Risks and Issues

- Still very new and challenging – immediate priority is to keep the doors open and deliver the basics.
- Frontline and outreach support from Library and Stronger Communities staff still greatly valued and needed.
- Competition for volunteers across a wide range of charities and organisations remains.
- A number of practical issues remain – joint work is ongoing to achieve resolution:
  - Volunteer training
  - ICT
  - Lease agreements
  - Property



# Conclusions and Recommendations

It is recommended that there is:

- Continued support from both Libraries staff and Stronger Communities to fully realise benefits, enable Libraries to become self-sufficient and address remaining issues.
- Continuation of regular communication, networking and knowledge-sharing events.
- A full post implementation review after April 2018 when more data will be available to fully evaluate success.

# Future Vision & Next Steps

- Volunteer & Customer experience
- Longer-term Vision & Sustainability – use by partner agencies (CAB, Age UK, Police)
- Innovation – creative use of resources, cultural activities
- Stronger Community Hubs – social inclusion



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**30<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This document presents the findings and initial recommendations of an early, interim, 6-month review of the North Yorkshire library service following its reconfiguration in April 2017.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 An innovative programme has been implemented to transform the Library Service across the county. Building on the 2012 model, this programme transitioned 33 Council run libraries to varying levels of community responsibility by April 2017.
- 2.2 This transformation ran in conjunction with a staffing restructure and aimed to achieve budgetary savings whilst maintaining provision of services to communities.
- 2.3 There has been interest in this programme from other Local Authorities and Central Government due to the scale and complexity involved in delivering the programme.

### **3. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 3.1 Initial assessments are positive and the programme delivered demonstrable success:
- Financially, the project appears on-track to achieve its savings targets (£1.4m).
  - Handover to community groups happened as planned on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.
  - Library services continue to be available following transition to community management (no significant fall in business).
  - There has been no Central Government challenge / intervention despite the high number of libraries involved (unlike other Local Authorities transitioning fewer / closing libraries).
  - Most community-run libraries have only been open for 6 months – joint work is on-going to further embed services and to resolve remaining issues.
- 3.2 A strong theme is the huge amount of effort and hard work put in to keep the libraries open. All concerned have worked very hard to achieve this and continue to do so.
- 3.3 Community groups reported that they valued jointly-held feedback sessions to identify and address common issues.
- 3.4 It is important to acknowledge the role of the library staff who were also undertaking a staffing restructure such that not all would have a position in the new delivery model. Despite the uncertainty, those staff remained professional, supportive and courteous and received universal

praise from the management committees. The staff restructure resulted in 45.5 FTE taking voluntary redundancy with 7.32 being made compulsorily redundant.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 It is recommended that there is:

- Continued support from both Libraries staff and Stronger Communities to fully realise benefits, enable Libraries to become self-sufficient and address remaining issues.
- Continuation of regular communication, networking and knowledge-sharing events.
- A full post implementation review after April 2018 when more data will be available to fully evaluate success.