

# **ADDENDUM TO ITEM 8 (b)**

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**12 October 2011**

### **STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

#### **COUNTY COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE**

##### **Libraries**

In line with the outcome of the Executive's decision of 14 June 2011 there has been a range of activity within the Library Service. The following provides an update on progress.

Efforts on static libraries have, to date, largely been concentrated on Category 2 and 3 libraries. Intensive work has been ongoing in developing local solutions to enable more community ownership and input into the running of local libraries. This has involved local Members, community groups, County Council staff and independent support from voluntary and community sector organisations. As a result, there are good grounds for optimism that Category 2 libraries will be supplemented by volunteers from the local community and that community led proposals will be forthcoming for Category 3 libraries. There has been a tremendous response and credit should be given to those local communities who are doing their utmost to maintain and enhance the library service that they clearly value. Proposals from all 8 communities with Category 3 libraries are anticipated by 31 October 2011. These proposals will then be reviewed and will form the basis for informing the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive on the future of those libraries on 14 November and 29 November respectively.

Local Members have recently been advised on the new schedule for the Supermobile library which will provide a two hour visit once a fortnight to more remote areas. This visit will also provide a valuable opportunity to bring together a wider range of community activities. We are already working actively with partners to think about using these visits as a focal point to involve other agencies and community activity and I would encourage Members to extend this approach..

Work also continues in exploring library outlets / book corners and "reading rooms" where communities have expressed an interest in running their own collection and there is already demonstrable demand. In addition, further volunteering activities are being pursued including the extension of the already successful Home Library Service. To date all former users of the mobile service who have been unable to access the library service by any other means will now be receiving the Home Library Service.

I am also pleased to note that HRH The Duke of Gloucester performed the opening ceremony at the state of the art Harrogate Library which has undergone a complete transformation thanks in part to Big Lottery Funding. Harrogate Library now has more than 250 square metres of additional space, 37 public access PCs and WiFi throughout the building. Members of the local community have been involved in volunteering from the outset of this project and activities include working on the photographic collections, running computer taster sessions, providing children's story times. The Friends of Harrogate Library Group has been established and has further raised the profile of the library by arranging and hosting an extensive programme of events. Since its opening the library has seen an 80% increase in new members as well as over 50% increase in book borrowing. This type of approach, I hope, will soon be replicated elsewhere around the County.

### **Registration Service**

In the Craven District the registration service in Skipton has now moved into Belle Vue Square along with other County Council and Craven District Council services. This means that the public now have access to a modern and fit for purpose space including a new wedding room and private interview spaces. This demonstrates further the County Council's policy to co-locate and enhance public access to services in partnership with other providers. The first wedding ceremony at Belle Vue Square took place on Monday 3 October.