

## **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**31st October 2017**

### **NCC – Libraries and Information Service Review 2017**

#### **PURPOSE**

To consider what initial action to take re the Library Service Review .

#### **DETAILS**

Northamptonshire County Council needs to find £115m savings over the next four years predominantly to meet social care costs in the county. The Library and Information Service must share in this financial challenge and seek to reduce costs to the tax payer. The low cost per visit compared to other library services demonstrates that this cannot be achieved by further efficiencies alone, and requires a more fundamental reshaping of the service to ensure it is fit for the future.

The review of the library service will comprehensively examine the current Northamptonshire Library and Information Service as it operates over its current 36 static and one mobile site against four measures of accessibility, quality, availability and sustainability in line with the review approach recommended by the National Libraries Taskforce. It will examine key statistics and trends within the service before setting out options about how a future library service may be shaped. It will test these proposals against the common design principles of library services and consider the impact of the proposals on the residents of Northamptonshire. This consultation and its outcomes will play a significant part in informing the new library strategy 2018-2022.

#### **What might change?**

NCC are consulting upon three options for the future of the Library and Information Service. Each section of the questionnaire gives more detail on what the options mean.

#### **Option 1**

- Develop community-managed library model to be offered to all other current library communities
- Retain countywide digital, information and business offer
- Retain 15 libraries and further develop as community hubs . 8 large libraries, 7 medium libraries
- Investigate potential future library service provision to additional location in Corby
- Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library
- The mobile library would be withdrawn from service.

The remaining libraries would be closed, including the universal Children's Centres services delivered in those libraries. Expressions of interest from community groups,

organisations or businesses wishing to establish a community-managed library are invited via their county councillor. These community-managed libraries would sit outside of the statutory library service offered by the Council.

### **Option 2**

- Retain countywide digital, information and business offer
- Retain 15 libraries and further develop as community hubs . 8 large libraries, 7 medium libraries
- Investigate potential future library service provision to additional location in Corby
- Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library
- The mobile library would be withdrawn from service.
- The remaining libraries would be closed, including the universal Children's Centres services delivered in those libraries.

### **Option 3**

- Retain countywide digital, information and business offer
- Retain 8 libraries and further develop as community hubs
- Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library
- The mobile library would be withdrawn from service
- The remaining libraries would be closed, including the universal Children's Centres services delivered in those libraries

In all three options, libraries with Children's Centre designation are proposed for closure so it is important to consider the full range of services provided at the libraries when thinking about each of the proposals.

Details of the proposals, copies of the Cabinet Paper and information about each library at risk of closure can be found at

<https://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/2922/Committee/399/Default.aspx>

The consultation closes at **5pm on 13th January 2018.**

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL**

The building is listed as an Asset of Community Value. This means that NCC, owners can't dispose of it without:

- letting the local authority know that they intend to sell the asset or grant a lease of more than 25 years
- waiting until the end of a six-week interim moratorium+period if the local authority doesn't receive a request from a community interest group to be treated as a potential bidder

- waiting until the end of a six-month ~~full~~ moratorium+period if the local authority does receive a request from a community interest group to be treated as a potential bidder

NCC does not have to sell the asset to the community group.

No information is known on what the plans are for the building under any option.

No timeframe is given but it is understood that NCC would want to implement the cuts as soon as possible, so it has implications for budget setting for 2018/19.

NCALC have suggested that the Town Council should be leading the community on this issue to find a possible solution.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

A meeting is set up with the relevant officer to find out more information.

The Town Council issues a consultation to gauge the views of the community on retention of the service as well as views on increases to the Council tax to provide it. A draft will be available at the meeting.

Look at holding a public meeting with officers and members from NCC present.

Look at setting up a working group, which will include representation from Friends of Higham Ferrers Library.