

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD**

**17 September 2012**

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the  
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth & Arts**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken  
by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – REVIEW OF LIBRARIES**

**Summary**

**This report draws Members' attention to the County Council's review of its  
Library Service.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Kent County Council has commenced a review of its Library Service to 'deliver a sustainable library service for the future'.

1.1.2 The County Council has identified two key drivers for change as follows:

- the desire to support a process of engagement with communities over the establishment and local delivery of library services; and
- the need to secure affordable local solutions, tailor-made to the needs of each community, which will allow the County Council to continue to provide an excellent local Library Service in these communities.

1.1.3 The approach being adopted by the County Council will enable it to:

- Fund and implement innovative and efficient delivery models in partnership with local communities. These models will be shaped by the community and act to increase community control of and engagement with the services.
- Continue to realign library service priorities to ensure they deliver Kent County Council's new priorities expressed in Bold Steps for Kent.
- Continue to modernise services and exploit opportunities to offer more services on line.
- Meet statutory obligations.

- Deliver revenue savings.

## **1.2 Libraries in Tonbridge and Malling**

- 1.2.1 I have attached at **[Annex 1]** a list of existing libraries in the Borough including information on the number of items borrowed, events, stock and costs. Members will note that there are currently nine libraries in the Borough costing the County Council a total of £844,166 (2010/11 figure). Further detailed information on the review and each of the libraries can be found on the County Council's website – [http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/libraries/future\\_library\\_services.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/future_library_services.aspx)

## **1.3 Local Engagement**

- 1.3.1 A Joint Advisory Panel has been established to consider the review, made up of representatives from County, Borough and Parish Councils. The Borough Council's lead Member for the review is the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts and update reports will, therefore, be reported to this Board.
- 1.3.2 The first Joint Advisory Panel took place on 31 May 2012. At the meeting, Officers and Members from the County Council emphasised that they wished to work with people locally and do not have a "one size fits all" approach. It was noted that no closures of Libraries had been identified as part of the process, and the County has a target to reduce costs across its Library Service by £1M by 2013/14. Whilst no specific savings targets have been identified for individual districts, a guide of £86,000 would be the proportionate saving for Tonbridge and Malling.
- 1.3.3 A number of issues were discussed at the Joint Advisory Panel including enhancing self-service reviewing, opening hours, and the sharing of library buildings with other local agencies such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau. It was also noted that mobile libraries were included in the review and it was the County Council's intention for them to be retained.

## **1.4 Proposed Way Forward**

- 1.4.1 It was agreed at the Joint Advisory Panel that a small sub group of Borough and County Council Members would be established to look at future models of delivery and the Sub Group would then report back to the Joint Advisory Panel. The Borough Council will be represented on the Sub Group by Councillors Maria Heslop, Anita Oakley, Vivian Branson and Sue Murray.
- 1.4.2 I will update Members on progress with the Sub Group meetings verbally at the meeting.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

- 1.5.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out a statutory duty for Kent County Council to “provide a comprehensive and efficient library service”, set in the context of local need.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.6.1 There are no financial implications for this authority as the Library Service is funded in full by the County Council.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

- 1.7.1 The aim of the review is to engage with communities and provide a service in the future which meets local need. The role of the Joint Advisory Panel will ensure that local liaison takes place which worked well during the recent review of the County Council’s Youth Service.

## **1.8 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.8.1 The County Council will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment which will be designed to eliminate any negative consequences against groups of people who share protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2012. The Equality Impact Assessment will be shared with the Joint Advisory Panel.

## **1.9 Policy Considerations**

- 1.9.1 Community, Young People.

## **1.10 Recommendations**

- 1.10.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that this Council’s approach to the Review of Library Services by Kent County Council as outlined in the report be endorsed, and progress be reported to future meetings of the Leisure & Arts Advisory Board.

The Chief Leisure Officer confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Robert Styles

Nil

Robert Styles  
Chief Leisure Officer

Maria Heslop  
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	Yes	This will be covered by an Equality Impact Assessment produced by the County Council.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*