**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
3RD JULY 2018**

**Library Service Review - Progress Report
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities**

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To update the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the progress with regard to the Library Service review.

2   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1   The Transformation Review of Libraries recommended the retention of all 9 libraries and to make the required £400,000 saving from operational efficiencies particularly in stock management, increased use of volunteers and to introduce Technology Assisted Opening. This report highlights that good progress is being made.

3   RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1   That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the progress in implementing the outcomes from the Transformation Review of Libraries.

4   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

4.1   The Overview and Scrutiny Panel has a role in reviewing the progress being made in relevant transformation reviews.

5   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1   Not applicable. The Chairman of ECC Overview and Scrutiny requested the update.

6   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

6.1   In April 2016 a transformation review of Bracknell Libraries sought to identify £400,000 savings over two years (originally £250,000 in 2017/18 and £150,000 saving in 2018/19). The agreed plan to make this saving was to make substantial efficiency savings mainly from how we manage library stock, to develop a stronger community role within our libraries through the use of volunteers, and to significantly improve access to libraries, something which was identified as needed though public consultation, by introducing Technology Assisted Opening and self-service. Critically all libraries would remain open.

6.2   As previously reported in March 2018, the £400,000 saving is now being profiled as £250,000 in 2017/18, £120,000 in 2018/19, and the final £30,000 in 2019/20.

Technology

6.3   The introduction of kiosks across the borough libraries are designed to enable customers to self-serve on many routine tasks such as issuing, returning, paying fines or reservations freeing up staff to focus on more value added services. In addition to the kiosks, libraries will be structured to enable Technology Assisted Opening (TAO) which will allow registered users to take advantage of extended opening hours when libraries will be unmanned.

6.4   The technology will be deployed in two phases starting with the Self Service Kiosks until a time where staff are confident that customers will be able to use the kiosks independently.   Binfield Library has been identified as a 'pilot' site and will go live with Self Service Kiosks on 2nd July. Preparations are being made for staff to be trained on both the technology and encouraging and supporting customers during the early stages to gain maximum confidence and usage of the kiosks.

6.5   Self Service for the remaining libraries will be deployed in the following order: Sandhurst, Birch Hill, Whitegrove, Crowthorne, Great Hollands, Ascot Heath, Bracknell and Harmanswater.

6.6   The second phase of the project which involves deploying the functionality of Technology Assisted Opening (TAO) will commence on a library by library schedule following the same sequence as the Self Service.   As previously mentioned, TAO is designed to allow registered customers the ability to access libraries outside of the standard opening hours as dictated by the individual libraries. Access is granted via the customer's E+ card which is swiped on a touchpad located at the library entrance. Registered customers will be able to perform the same routine tasks when the library is in TAO mode. The deployment for TAO will commence in autumn. This will allow for customers to become familiar with self service and give time for library staff to promote this feature to the public to obtain a good footfall.

Volunteering

6.7   This programme aims to complement the staffing so that the libraries can retain what customers value so much, knowledgeable library staff, whilst making the required changes. Over 100 volunteers have been appointed and are contributing between 850 and 1000 volunteer hours per month.

Recruitment of volunteers to support Saturday and evening posts has picked up and of the 16 sessions available on Saturday for all branches, we only now have 6 vacant sessions.

There will be an advertisement campaign to try to recruit volunteers for the northern group of libraries, (Binfield, Whitegrove and Ascot Heath), to help to increase the number of volunteers for these branches.

6.8   A volunteer celebration event was held on11th April 2018 which was positively received. The Mayor, (at this time), Tina Mackenzie-Boyle introduced the event. The Director of Environment Culture and Communities attended and gave an informative speech. And Cllr McCracken attended and spoke individually to volunteers. We have since received positive feedback from volunteers.

6.9   In general, then, volunteering is progressing well and they are integrating well into the service. Consequently, the majority of staff welcome the support given although this is not yet universal. Thankfully, there are very few performance issues with the volunteers but where there are any issues staff endeavour to support them back towards better performance.

Service Remodeling

6.10   Remodelling of roles and responsibilities at all levels is essential to achieve the new vision for the service. A review of staffing levels, roles and responsibilities is being carried out and will create a structure capable of this.

This is a two stage process, with the first phase completed, which focussed on management and supervisors levels, as well as the administrative support and stock management team.

The restructure of the frontline staff, which is the second phase of remodelling, proposes to change the way branches are managed across the borough. The consultation process for this began with 4 separate sessions being held for staff and unions to introduce the proposed changes and potential new structure for the service.

A staff consultation period of 4 weeks then took place during 24 April and 24 May. During this time all staff within the service, not limited to those directly affected, were invited to comment upon the new proposals being made. Staff have engaged well in the process and over 60 questions, queries and suggestions were received. As a result of these some changes were made to proposals. Final amended proposals were then presented to staff at another 4 separate sessions where those affected were officially put 'at risk'. The selection process is now underway.

Harmans Water Library

6.11   Preparing revised feasibility plans for a new library at Harmans Water. Capital approval has been agreed and Atkins have been commissioned to commence work on the project plan.

7   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

7.1   Not requested

Borough Treasurer

7.2   The re-profiled savings target forms part of the council's 2018/19 and 2019/20 budget proposals.

Equalities Impact Assessment

7.3   All libraries other than Bracknell Library will be fully accessible during Technology Assisted Opening. A briefing note was taken to the Bracknell Forest Access Group on Wednesday 21st February regarding the unique circumstances relating to this library and based on the facts that Bracknell Library has the longest staffed hours of all libraries and that access will be available at all other libraries concluded that the council's current approach was reasonable and suitably measured.

<u>Strategic Risk Management Issues</u>

7.4   Libraries reach out into the heart of our communities and it is important that services remain accessible

8   CONSULTATION

<u>Principal Groups Consulted</u>

8.1   None relating to this report

<u>Background Papers</u>

<u>None</u>

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