

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF HEAD OF LEADERSHIP SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY

A.1 ESSEX FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICES STRATEGY 2019 – 2024 (DRAFT)

(Report prepared by Karen Neath)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable the Committee to put forward comments in response to the consultation being undertaken by Essex County Council on their draft strategy for the future of library services up to 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Essex County Council (ECC) has published a draft strategy on the future of library services over the next five years. Consultation is now being undertaken to enable views to be submitted on the strategy. The strategy is based on views gathered from the public in 2018. The consultation closes on 20th February 2019.
- Essex Libraries currently serve a population of 1.5m through 74 library buildings, eLibrary services, 2 mobile libraries and home library service volunteers. It also supports 8 volunteer run community libraries.
- In the last 6 years use of libraries, both in Essex and elsewhere, has declined. Loans from Essex Libraries have decreased from over 7.1m in 2011/12 to less than 4.1m in 2017/18. Demand for use of network computers in libraries fell by 22% between 2012/13 and 2017/18. Conversely, loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines have risen by 205% in five years.
- The strategy is about library services, both physical and online, and how and where these could be provided in the future. The strategy is not about library buildings and it could be, for example, that library shelves could be in community centres or other public buildings.
- The strategy anticipates that, in the future, community groups and volunteers are more likely to be involved in delivering library services.
- The strategy sets out the overriding ambition for library services and the key points that the strategy will focus on. These focus on keeping books and reading at the heart of the library service offer, embracing digitalisation and technology and working with communities to deliver services locally.
- Each of the existing 74 libraries has been placed in one of four tiers based on assessment against the criteria of: location, usage, population, deprivation and social isolation.
- The four tiers are:-
 - Tier 1 – main or hub libraries which will part of the statutory provision;
 - Tier 2 – library services in areas where there is a need for them to be managed by ECC in partnership with community or other partner;
 - Tier 3 – locations where no library service is needed as part of the statutory provision but where ECC could support the provision of services run locally.

If no suitable offer is received within six months of Cabinet approval of the strategy then ECC intend to re-consult on the future of these libraries;

- Tier 4 – These libraries are proposed for closure but ECC would consider proposals for community libraries in these locations.

- The libraries in Tendring are in the following tiers:-

Library	Tier
Clacton	Tier 1
Harwich	Tier 2
Brightlingsea	Tier 3
Frinton	Tier 3
Manningtree	Tier 3
Walton	Tier 3
West Clacton	Tier 3
Holland	Tier 4

- The full strategy and consultation questionnaire are attached at appendices A and B respectively.
- The comments of the Committee will be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 15th February to agree the final response of Tendring District Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:-

The Committee agrees the comments to put forward to Cabinet in response to the consultation being undertaken by Essex County Council on their draft strategy for the future of library services up to 2024.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

There are none.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019 – 2024 - Draft
Appendix B – Essex County Council Libraries Strategy Consultation