

Date: 11 May 2018



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member, Housing and Communities
Cardiff Council,
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Thorne,

Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee: 10 May 2018

On behalf of the Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee, thank you for attending Committee for pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet '*Building Resilient Communities through the further development of Community Hubs*'. This letter captures our observations and comments.

Members note the report to Cabinet and, at this stage, have no major issues with it. We will be interested in carrying out further scrutiny as proposals develop and, in particular, it becomes clearer where capital funding will be sourced. Members are concerned that the current report to Cabinet is a little vague in this regard but accept that further reports will be brought to Cabinet as and when specific proposals require significant change to current buildings.

Members share your view that the proposals outlined provide an exciting opportunity to protect and enhance library services and the library offer to citizens of Cardiff. Members value our library services and the role they play in improving people's lives, as was aptly demonstrated at our scrutiny of library services earlier this year.

Members note that no formal assessment has been undertaken on the likely impact of proposed changes on Cardiff Council's ability to meet the Welsh Library Standards. However, Members were pleased to hear assurances from Nicola Pitman, Central Library Services Manager, that the changes should have a positive impact on our performance vs. these standards, in particular with regard to

WPLSQ13 - the number of library staff per capita. I am sure that this is something a future Committee will wish to keep an eye on.

Members also note that the proposed changes will realise savings in the region of £200,000, from employee costs, due to management savings and savings from other staff. We note that consultation with staff and trades unions is on-going and that any savings will form part of the Directorate's savings proposals for 2019/20. Further, we note that no decision has been made yet on the size of the proposed Library Strategy & Development team.

With regard to the proposed Library Strategy & Development team, Members are pleased to hear that part of their role will be to take library services out into communities across Cardiff, building on the excellent work to date in this area, and expanding the number of events held to raise awareness of, and access to, library services.

Members note that the next stage will be to undertake area reviews, with these then shaping the future provision of services in the area. As discussed at the meeting, Members recommend that these area reviews take into account public transport linkages, such as branch train lines and bus routes, to ensure that the area boundaries are appropriate. The example cited at Committee was that the bus routes for Creigiau & Pentyrch feed into Whitchurch, rather than Radyr, and therefore their needs would need to be included in the area review covering Whitchurch.

With regard to area reviews, Members discussed the need to work with local communities to ensure that they are clear that library services are not under threat, are being protected from cuts and will be enhanced. Members also discussed the need to ensure a flexible approach is taken to community-based groups that already exist that may not wish to be included in the new approach.

Finally, Members would like to receive a map illustrating the areas covered by each of the 4 Inclusion Officers.

To recap:

- Members wish to carry out further scrutiny as proposals develop, in particular re capital funding and significant changes to current buildings
- Members will recommend that a future Committee scrutinise performance against Welsh Library Standards
- Members recommend that area reviews take into account public transport linkages and that the review boundaries are drawn appropriately to take these into account
- Members would like to receive a map of the areas covered by the 4 inclusion officers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nigel Howells".

**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS
CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
 Sarah McGill
 Jane Thomas
 Nicola Pitman
 Elizabeth Patterson
 Cabinet Support Office