

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Education**

Date: **17 September 2003**

Title of Report: **East Sussex Library Service - Position Statement**

By: **Director of Education and Libraries**

Purpose of Report: **To consider the Position Statement prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on 23 September 2003.**

Recommendations:

- (1) to note progress towards meeting the Public Library Standards**
 - (2) to consider any comments which the Committee may wish to make to Cabinet on the Position Statement.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The Library Service budget for 2003/04 is £5,771,000. This includes an additional £100,000 for the bookfund which has been added to the base budget, together with one-off additions of £50,000 to increase opening hours and £25,000 for maintenance. In the capital programme £1,961,000 is allocated to the new Lewes Library up to 2004/05.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 For the last three years all library authorities have had a statutory responsibility to produce an Annual Library Plan. This year a shortened version of the plan is required only from those authorities not designated as "excellent" in the recent CPA Review.

2.2 Though much shorter than the A.L.P. (recommended to be around 15 pages in length), the format is heavily prescribed and based on the recently produced policy document "Framework for the Future". The purpose of the Position Statement is to show how individual library authorities intend to shape and deliver their library services in line with the themes within "Framework for the Future". This information will then be used to give a national picture of library provision. The emphasis in the Position Statement is on current performance and plans for improvement.

2.3 While outlining the recent successes of the service, particularly the successful implementation of the People's Network and progress towards meeting the Standards, the report notes the action being taken to improve the service. In particular it highlights the creation of the new Education and Libraries Directorate and the opportunity this gives to reappraise the service both in terms of its internal organisation and improved service delivery. This will be seen most effectively in terms of Lifelong Learning.

2.4 In assessing the Position Statement, scores will be given relating to the quality of evidence that authorities are "providing excellent policies and practice to implement Framework for the Future" and are "meeting the Public Library standards". The information provided will be collated and made available for the Audit Commission for consideration in the CPA Review.

2.5 Submissions are required by 30 September and should be signed by the Lead Member responsible for Libraries as an indication that the document has the full backing of the local authority.

2.6 The Position Statement itself is given at Appendix 1.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 Much progress has been made since the last A.L.P., especially in terms of the Library Standards. However, this is a challenging time for libraries and the appointment of a permanent Head of Service will be an important catalyst in moving the service forward. Members are asked to recommend approval of the Position Statement.

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