

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Education and Libraries**

Date: **8 March 2005**

Title: **Library Service Peer Review Action Plan**

By: **Director of Children's Services, Education and Libraries**

Purpose: **To inform the Scrutiny Committee of the progress of the Peer Review Action Plan**

RECOMMENDATION - to note the progress of the Peer Review Action Plan.

1. Introduction

1.1 Members will recall that the Library Service was invited by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) to be the first pilot in a Government funded initiative to assist libraries to develop their services in line with the national vision as detailed in *Framework for the Future*. The Service was offered £70,000 to pay for the review and to fund the actions that would result from the recommendations. Matched funding of £24,000 was identified from existing budgets.

1.2 The offer was accepted and the review was undertaken in June 2004.

2. Peer Review Recommendations

2.1 The initial findings were reported back in a plenary session at the end of the 3 day visit and a draft report delivered during July. The review recommended that:

- the library service ensure it maximises its use of wider directorate support
- the library service develop a greater external focus
- a clear vision for the library service be communicated as soon as possible to all library staff
- the roles and responsibilities required of the senior management team going forward be identified and mapped against the skills base that currently exists, with any gaps being urgently addressed
- the library service ensure it takes a proactive approach to alliance building and monitor carefully the outcomes from it
- plans to maximise the synergy between the education and library services be quickly developed
- the library service ensure it bases the transformation of the service on demographic information and outcomes from consultation with local people, including current, lapsed and non-users
- the library service tap into existing consultation activities or networks both within and outside of East Sussex County Council wherever possible
- a performance management culture be brought about quickly
- SMART targets be developed to facilitate the delivery of strategic aims
- more benchmarking activity be undertaken
- a robust challenge of the existing ways of working be undertaken

3. Action Plan

3.1 In response to the recommendations, the service developed an action plan for submission to MLA. The plan details actions to be undertaken over a six month period, supported by funding from MLA. The plan focuses on three key objectives:

Objective 1: To build leadership capacity at all levels to put libraries at the heart of our communities

Objective 2: To build a service based on the identified needs of East Sussex residents: repositioning the core services to match needs

Objective 3: To build a system of performance measures and targets based on a sound knowledge of performance levels, in order to improve monitoring and achievements

4. Conclusion

4.1 There has been good progress across the three objectives of the action plan to date, apart from a slight delay in appointing a consultant to carry out the consultation as described in Objective 2.

4.2 In particular, the Vision for Library and Information Services 2005-2008 has been developed, the consultation process has begun and an audit has been carried out of our existing performance measures.

4.3 To date, approximately £19,000 of the total funding of £94,000 (which is made up of £70,000 from MLA and £24,000 matched funding) has been spent.

4.4 The attached plan with commentary shows the progress made against individual targets.

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