

**Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy
Review Board** of the Audit, Best Value and Community
Service (ABVCS) Scrutiny Committee



**Comments to Cabinet on the draft Libraries
Strategic Commissioning Strategy (SCS)**

Background

1. The Audit, Best Value and Community Services (ABVCS) Scrutiny Committee formed a Scrutiny Review Board in September 2016 to act as a Reference Group to provide advice and challenge throughout the development of the Libraries' Strategic Commissioning Strategy (SCS), and to ensure that proposals reflect the needs of the community.
2. The Review Board has commented on and made suggestions at each stage of the commissioning process and has considered the existing service, statutory requirements, the needs assessment, gap analysis and potential strategic outcomes. Many of the Board's comments and suggestions have already been taken into account during the development of the draft SCS.

Draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy

3. The Review Board met on 13 September 2017 having had a short period of time to consider the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy and the proposed service changes. The Board welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals for the modernisation of the Library Service and stated its intention to consider a number of aspects of the draft Strategy in more detail.
4. The Review Board welcomed the work that had gone into the production of the SCS and the supporting evidence base, and commends the detailed and constructive approach in producing the report. It is supportive of the overall thrust of a Strategy designed to achieve a sustainable Library Service adjusted for the needs of the 21st century. The Board will hold further meetings to consider and make recommendations on the detailed implications of the draft SCS. So far, the Board has highlighted the following areas of interest:

Number and Location of Libraries

- An examination of the evidence base and proposed mitigations for the proposed closure of the seven libraries, and the impact on local communities. This will include an examination of the impact assessment and accessibility analysis contained in the draft SCS, and the viability of any expressions of interest by communities to take over the management of the libraries proposed for closure. As part of this work the Review Board will invite written submissions, from Members whose Divisions are affected by the proposals, together with an opportunity of presenting evidence to the Review Board.

Mobile Library Service

- An examination of the evidence base and proposed mitigations for the proposed removal of the mobile library, and the impact on local communities.

Book Stock Fund

- A review of the proposal to reduce the Book Stock fund to ensure that there will be sufficient stock for the new services proposed in the Strategy.

Consultation and Engagement

- An examination of the responses to the public consultation on the draft SCS.

Next Steps

5. The Review Board will continue to meet and will provide more detailed comments on the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy to Officers and Cabinet in the light of further scrutiny of the draft Strategy.

Councillor Colin Swansborough
Chair

Review Board Members:

October 2016 to May 2017

Councillor Mike Blanch (Chair)
Councillor John Barnes
Councillor Bob Standley
Councillor Trevor Webb

May 2017 to date

Councillor Colin Swansborough (Chair)
Councillor John Barnes
Councillor Peter Pragnell
Councillor Richard Stogdon