Appendix 1

Preface:

The document that follows is the product of a number of meetings of the Member-led Review Group. Although our discussions have led to the recommendations listed, it is for the Library Service to take this forward to develop, improve and implement ideas but to achieve this, they need the backing and support of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee to enable and empower them to proceed.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In May 2015, the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee decided for a number of reasons not to pursue plans being developed with Kora for an Enterprise Centre at Central Library. However, this left a shortfall in the budget as a result of the potential loss of income from the Centre and it was agreed to set up a Member-led Review Group to investigate other possible means of improving income across the Library Service as a whole.

1.2 Nine Members offered to sit on the Group and it was decided to also include members of the Friends/Library Campaign groups as well as staff representatives. The first meeting took place on 17th September and the Group has met regularly since. (See Appendix 2 for Terms of Reference and Appendix 3 for Group membership)

1.3 It was felt that there was potential to dramatically increase income in not only Central Library but also service-wide as there are a number of opportunities which are either not being used to full potential or have not been considered. N.B. This is not intended as a criticism of the Library Service, merely an acknowledgement that they are already stretched beyond capacity and lack the time and financial resources to do more.

1.4 As has been stated before, although all our thoughts are based on Central Library: this is only because that is where there is the biggest income shortfall and the greatest potential to move swiftly to introduce new or refined chargeable services. The lessons learned from this can become a template for rolling out around the County on a smaller scale.

1.5 As a result of the interest generated by the Enterprise Centre plans, Central Library now has a Friends Group and membership is growing. (On 6th February, National Libraries Day, the Friends had a table in the main entrance area and enrolled 34 new members). The Friends are working to not only generate income by holding events but also to support the service as required. It is recognised that the Friends Group may, for example, be able to apply for grants not open to the Council.

1.6 Whilst the role of the Group was to identify potential ideas rather than implement them, preliminary steps have been taken in some areas. For selected other initiatives, the Group has

developed strategic frameworks that should facilitate relatively rapid launch when Counci constraints are removed e.g. Sponsorship strategy.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1 The service currently employs a Marketing and Communications Manager whose remit is to manage venue hire and fees & charges. It is understood that the new structure will include a post of Partnerships, Projects and Funding Manager. Given the potential for all Libraries to participate on a greater scale, the postholders will be able to take this work forward by developing the ideas and recommendations of the Group. The new post potentially could be a candidate for the Transformation Fund.

2.2 To help decide what might be achievable, suggestions for income ideas were sought not only from the Group but also the Friends Group, Library Campaign members and the Library staff. We also held a Workshop at Central on 7th November to enable users to offer their ideas – although only 10 people attended, they were full of very useful suggestions, which helps to stress the need for full public engagement with all proposals.

2.3 The 'brain storming' sessions generated nearly 50 suggestions which were then prioritised by importance and potential income. This led to us selecting the top 10 ideas for further work as the lifespan of the Group would not allow time to develop all the ideas in depth. (See Appendix 4 for a selection of ideas considered.)

2.4 On closer inspection it became clear that the ideas specifically relating to Central Library fell into three distinct areas: The Cafe, the Third floor space and Sponsorship/advertising etc. so we agreed to look into these in more detail to identify a number of recommendations to report back to Committee.

3 The Third floor space

3.1 Background

3.1.1   The 3rd floor houses the Learning Centre, Adult Careers Service, the Youth Careers Service and Cafe@TheLibrary, the latter being covered under a separate heading. There is also a desk for Parking Services which deals with residents parking permits etc and is only open for part of the week. It also houses collections of stock: the 'Arts', Music Scores and Music CDs as well as computers for customer use, study tables and comfortable seating. There is also a separate, 'walled' area currently used by BFI Mediatheque which enables up to 10 people to access the BFI collection on individual PCs using headphones.

3.1.2   As part of the planning process for the Enterprise Centre, detailed work was done to explore the possible ways the 3rd floor could be reconfigured to house it. The plans included moving the stock collections to the other two floors and making external services more prominent. It was also planned to remove the Parking Services desk after discussion with the service Manager, who is now keen for this to go ahead from the start of the new fiscal year. The Mediatheque space will 'shortly' become available for an alternative use as the BFI are planning on upgrading their facility so it can be installed on every PC in the building, doing away with the need for a separate space.

3.1.3   The space remaining after the above have been achieved offers a great deal of potential as an events space, either for small individual events/activities or for large exhibitions, festivals etc. The close proximity to Cafe@ gives the opportunity to offer catering facilities as part of the hire package. N.B. Restrictions in the lease mean we can only offer space on an 'irregular' basis.

3.1.4   Libraries already charge for a number of events and activities and hire space to outside groups, organisations etc. but are hampered by lack of space. Central Library has the potential to offer space for a) more events and, b) larger ones which at present can't be considered. e.g. a Science Fair, Children's' Festival, Writers' Workshops.

3.2 Recommendations

3.2.1   We believe that the Learning Centre and Careers Services can remain in their current position as they are easily accessible from both the lifts and the escalator. However, the space used by all three seems under-utilised and consideration should be given to looking at ways to combine/reduce their areas or offer the Careers Services bookable space when required. Given the potential for income, every inch of space counts.

3.2.2   The existing public access PCs can remain in situ, given that they are placed along the outside walls. This would remove concerns expressed last year at either the possible loss of computer spaces or their being crammed into the 2nd floor with the resulting loss of privacy and elbow room. (I have observed their use at various times of day and they are always busy.)

3.2.3   The stock collections should be rehoused on the 2nd floor as per the original plan for the Enterprise Centre.

3.2.4   When Parking Services move out their desk can be removed for use elsewhere which will create additional space.

3.2.5   Mediatheque could become chargeable 'quiet study' space, using the 10 work stations currently in place. Alternatively it could be demolished to extend the Conference Room or kept as an additional small meeting room.

3.2.6   The Cafe@ space should remain at its current size but as a result of customer feedback, it is felt that there is a need for an extra area of comfortable informal seating and low tables with an adjacent children's 'play park' i.e. safely enclosed. This could be located in the area freed by removal of the Arts collection – there are public toilets along the rear wall which need easy access and would preclude using the space for events.

3.2.7   The space created would be available for hire for exhibitions, craft events, markets etc. either in small 'parcels' or the entire area for large scale events with Cafe@ as a major attraction for future hirers. (See appendix 5 for possible activities)

3.2.8   The scale of charges for hiring meeting rooms/exhibition space etc. should be revised upwards, with a sliding scale giving preferential rates to local community groups. At present we sell ourselves short, particularly at Central Library where their location could generate a premium charge.

3.2.9   There is also the potential to create new meeting rooms or hireable study spaces and, if felt necessary, to enlarge the Conference Room so it could hold much larger gatherings.

4. Cafe@CentralLibrary

4.1 Background
4.1.1   The cafe is provided by the County Council's Cambridgeshire Catering Services and has been running since the Library reopened after a major refurbishment in 2009.
4.1.2   Set up costs were met from an 'Invest to Transform' loan and profits were used to pay this off until 2012/13. It was expected that 25% of profits plus a 'rental' contribution would be payable to the Council. There is also a management fee set at 8%. To date, NO income has been made from the cafe services which seems curious given that enough existed to clear the loan in the initial period.
4.1.3   The cafe operates as a result of a Deed of Variation to the lease and there are strict restrictions on potential tenants, advertising etc. e.g. it cannot advertise in the Grand Arcade, merely on Library premises.
4.1.4   Cafe@ is located on the 3rd floor of Central Library, opposite the Conference Room and adjacent to the Cambridgeshire Collection and the small meeting rooms. It offers a selection of light snacks and drinks, hot soup, 'dish of the day' and a small selection of cakes and buns. Pricing 'carries a historical leaning towards subsidised catering for public service users' and is substantially lower than competitors in the vicinity e.g. John Lewis, Costa, Eat, etc.

4.1.5   There is a servery and refrigerated cabinet, small tables and chairs and some sofa seating in a clearly delineated area.

4.1.6   The cafe is highly valued by library users as demonstrated by numerous comments made during the 2015 consultation on the library strategy. Typical comments included: "It is a service to the community and much valued" "Please keep the cafe whatever you do. It is a great benefit to people" "The cafe is very popular and a most welcome change from the national chains that have swamped Cambridge" "We need the cafe as it is – suitable for families, singles, and those like me who use a powered wheelchair."

4.2 The problems

4.2.1   No money has been spent on upgrading/improving the cafe since it opened. The lighting has been poor, due mainly to lack of maintenance (the responsibility of Central Library) as a large number of the ceiling lights were out (these have now been fixed). The furnishings look tired and the sofa seating needs replacing. The overall impression is that it is drab and in need of a major update.

4.2.2   The lack of profit is obviously a major concern and it is not entirely clear at whose door this can be laid. What is indisputable is that a large part of the problem lies in staffing costs. The cafe's contract expired during the period when the Enterprise centre plans were being finalised. As a result, they have been unable to fill vacancies with permanent staff and have instead been employing agency staff to cover gaps. Staffing costs are £2,500 p.w. as they need a minimum of three staff, including a chef to produce main meals, soup, homemade quiche etc.

4.2.3   Cafe@ looks what it is, a facility provided by external suppliers. There is little sense that it is part of the services offered by Central Library and more could be done with branding etc to provide a sense of belonging, rather than as an utilitarian add-on.

4.2.4   The low pricing of food is a plus BUT charges could be higher and still give an edge over nearby competition.

4.2.5   There is no children's menu; portions are designed for adult appetites.

4.2.6   There is no safe area for children to play whilst parents etc. are eating/talking.

4.2.7   The cafe is poorly advertised, due in part to the lease restrictions mentioned previously. However, there is a distinct lack of prominent advertising both within the Library itself and on the internet which means that many regular library users and local residents are unaware of its existence and of the good value food that it provides. Whilst appreciating the staff's lack of motivation due to the uncertainty over their future, this should not be regarded as acceptable. The Central Library web pages could give the cafe more prominence and use should be made of the Newsletter to promote the offer.

4.2.8   Although there lease strictly limits advertising within the Grand Arcade, there is scope for increasing footfall by intelligent marketing further afield.

4.2.9   Opening hours should be more aligned to those of the Library. The cafe originally matched Library opening hours which contributed to the lack of profitability. Rebranding/revamping could make this much more achievable, given the large number of customers using the building after 5 p.m.

4.2.10 **N.B.** Following a meeting with Library management before Christmas, I understand CCS have recently produced a business proposal to improve the cafe and possibly rebrand it

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1   Refurbishment and redecoration should be considered priority. It has been suggested by the cafe Manager that furniture and servery equipment from the Bailey Rooms could be used short-term to improve the overall appearance; however a permanent solution would need to be found.

4.3.2   Staffing costs need to be reduced or managed differently if there is to be even a slight hope of a profit. There is a suggestion from CCS that removing the 'main meal' offers would mean a chef need not be employed but we feel on the basis of feedback from users that freshly cooked hot food is a major plus factor and that a purely 'coffee shop' menu would give us no edge over the competition. The biggest hurdle to overcome is the fact that CCS want a new contract before making any changes whereas Central Library is obviously reluctant to do this whilst there is no guarantee that it will benefit from it. There is scope for restructuring the menu and this should be given serious consideration.

4.3.3   A large number of children's activities are regularly held in Central Library. The introduction of a small selection of foodstuffs purely for children would increase use.

4.3.4   Constructive dialogue between both parties is key to moving forward and meetings should be held regularly to review progress. We would suggest that CCS are given 3 months to make necessary changes to staffing, menus, proactive advertising etc., followed by a further 3 months to demonstrate an improvement in profit. If this does not happen, Central Library should tender the operation of the cafe, with CCS being invited to participate together with other organisations including local independent and social enterprise providers. The alternative is to retender the service straight away as it may be difficult to recruit permanent staff when we are only guaranteeing 6 months of operation.N.B. It should be noted that if the cafe were subleased, 50% of any rent received would be payable to the Landlord. It is therefore evident that it is in Central Library's best interests to work closely with CCS to ensure they are compliant with any imposed conditions.

4.3.5   One of the options considered by the group is that the cafe could be adopted as an in-house operation run by the Library Service (as is the case in some other UK services). This has a range of potential advantages including increasing cafe customer loyalty through stronger identification with the Library, enabling the recruitment of volunteers to help in the cafe which would remove the need to pay a management fee etc. We therefore recommend that scoping work is carried out to explore the feasibility of this option.

4.3.6   A 'lounge' area could be created in the space vacated by moving stock to the 2nd floor. This would remove the need for comfortable seating in the main cafe area, freeing space for several more tables/chairs. The lounge area should have low level seating and tables for a more informal meal or snack but still be clearly marked as being linked to the cafe. This area would be enhanced by providing a safe, secure area for children to play (under parental supervision – it is not intended that Library staff would be involved). This would not only provide a welcoming space for families but would also encourage people to stay longer if their child is occupied.

4.3.7   A suggestion has been made that lockers (either purchased or leased through a sponsorship arrangement if desirable) could be provided for people either studying or visiting the cafe. Given the problem of theft regularly experienced in the building these would make people feel more comfortable and encourage them to stay longer if not burdened by bags of shopping etc. A bank of lockers could be situated on the wall where the Parking Services desk currently stands. N.B. The security risk this could provide should be investigated before any final decision is made.

4.3.8   Advertising should be prominent on all 3 floors, with menus highlighting the day's 'specials'. Although external advertising is severely restricted by the lease, there should be no possibility of any customer being unaware of both the cafe's location and what it has to offer. The cafe should also be promoted to nurseries, secondary schools, sixth form colleges, reading groups, library and other council staff etc and advertised to the public through the usual Council advertising routes.

4.3.9   The cafe and the catering facilities should be marketed more vigorously as part of the room hire offer or in conjunction with pop up sales (e.g. in addition to on the day discounts for event participants, those who hire a room or run a pop up event could be given a voucher for the café to be used within a month).

4.3.10 Consideration should be given to new catering offers and events. For example, a stronger brunch offer on Sunday mornings would be likely to be popular and could be combined with author events/discussions/debates. The cafe could also provide an 'old fashioned' afternoon tea on Sundays (the cafe currently shuts at 3pm, an hour before the library does, and this seems a missed opportunity.)

5.   Sponsorship

5.1 Background

5.1.1   Cambridgeshire Libraries already partner with many organisations and individuals to provide a wide range of activities and events. Current sponsorship ranges from Friends groups funding small items of furniture, Parish Councils funding medals and rewards for the Summer Reading Challenge to free books from nationals sponsors such as Bookstart (under fives) and World Book Night (adults).

5.1.2   Valuable though this sponsorship may be, it is relatively small-scale in comparison to what could be offered to customers with sufficient funding.

5.1.3   Libraries have traditionally not actively sought private sponsorship from local companies or large organisations, probably a legacy of being a public service funded by residents i.e 'we pay for this through our Council Tax, so why should we pay more'.

5.1.4   Sponsorship is increasingly being used by both private and public organisations as a means to enhance their services.

5.1.5   It is high time libraries took advantage of what is out there by actively going out to look for it, rather than hoping someone will turn up on the doorstep with fistfuls of money. We need to both explain our financial situation in detail to potential sponsors (rather than being embarrassed at the idea of holding out a begging bowl) and be clear about the benefit/offer from the partnership.

5.1.6   Cambridgeshire has a wealth of large companies and organisations which would be the envy of most Local Authorities. Whilst they add to the County's and country's economy, most of their staff are local people using local services and we believe a number of these bodies would be prepared to 'give something back', be it financial or in kind if the right approach is made.

5.1.7   CCC is currently developing a sponsorship strategy and for this reason we have held fire on plans for contacting potential sponsors until we know exactly what will be permitted. The CCC Sponsorship Strategy is currently in draft form and should be finalised in the very near future. This is key to the way ahead and it should be stressed that any strategy needs the flexibility to adapt to 'local' circumstances – this can no longer be a 'one size fits all' policy.

5.1.8   Pending release of the strategy, the Group has drafted a document tailored to the identification of and strategic engagement with potential sponsors across the County.

5.1.9   The sponsorship strategy will also sit within the wider context of the commercialisation and transformation programme. This approach is emerging but is likely to involve the establishing of a corporate resource team that would support service areas, such as the Library Service. As a result of the work done by the Group, the Library Service is better placed than most departments to 'road test' the strategy.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to progress this, we need to take a strategic, planned approach to potential sponsors, carefully targeting who we approach and for what. We are NOT walking around with a begging bowl but hoping to find strategic sponsors who will be glad to support what the Library Service would like to offer because it matches with what their organisation does. We would suggest the following as a way forward:

5.2.1   The new post of Partnership, Projects and Funding Manager should develop and implement a sponsorship package in association with the corporate team. Library staff may be brilliant but lack the knowledge and expertise to take this project forward. We need someone who can concentrate all their time on setting policy, making approaches etc. The post holder will then:

5.2.2   List all current sponsorship with financial details, duration etc) to avoid duplication and ensure we don't upset current relationships by approaches to a similar sponsor.

5.2.3   Identify key strategic partners e.g. PLCs with Cambridgeshire Head offices, commercial organisations with local budgets

5.2.4   Identify potential partners for individual libraries, based on proximity, historical connections, alignment with Council values and outcomes, etc.

5.2.5   Clearly identify who not to approach, to avoid potential damage to CCC/ Libraries' brand.

5.2.6   Use the expertise of the various Friends group across the County to identify local candidates.

5.2.7   Consider potential areas of conflict/overlap e.g. physical limitations for branding/display, commercial rivalries.

5.2.8   Develop a means of approach by researching potential sponsors. We need to know if they operate community projects that we could tap into, previous charitable giving etc. to ensure we are targeting the right people for the right project.

5.2.9   Make use of local business forums e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Rotary.

5.2.10   Approach Parish/District Councils to see what they might be prepared to fund rather than lose a service.

5.2.11   Develop the 'funding toolkits' e.g. letters of approach, accompanying documents listing what we want, why we have chosen them and how we will use their funding/time etc. for use by the Library Service AND Friends Groups.

5.2.12   Make better use of social media by running campaigns round events such as National Libraries Day to raise Libraries profile and solicit sponsorship/donations/income generation ideas.

5.2.13   Improve our Website. At present it looks very corporate but in order to attract sponsors, Libraries need the ability to develop their own site(s) and refresh them regularly.

All of the above can only be achieved when the County sponsorship strategy is decided and then adopted. Given that it is a new departure for CCC and that this work has already been done, we would suggest that whoever is charged with taking this forward uses some of our suggestions as a pilot project. However, it should be stressed that if a new post is created in Libraries to deal with sponsorship, the postholder should be the person to decide what projects to pursue and where the approach should be made.

Potential projects

- The Mobile Library Service: the plans to remove this service have been deferred for 1 year in order to explore potential sponsorship. We would expect Parish Councils to make some financial commitment to supporting the service and would therefore need sponsors to cover the shortfall. We could offer potential sponsors the ability to fund one or more of the vehicles in

return for branding via livery, which could provide valuable advertising given that the fleet of 4 vehicles covers the whole County. Approaches could be made to, for example, firms engaged in transport services or vehicle sales and repairs. In addition there is the opportunity to explore what other services could utilise the resource of mobile delivery County-wide.

- IT provision in all libraries: there are a large number of hi-tech companies in the County who would regard our IT, both staff and public, as decrepit to put it mildly. If we are prepared to accept logos/branding on computers, tablets etc. it should be regarded as a small price to pay although there may be constraints on what can be supported by LGSS IT.

- The Library At Home service: this depends entirely on volunteers who give very freely of their time to ensure that housebound customers still have the opportunity to access library services by delivering books etc. whilst at the same time maintaining vital contact with the outside world. The elderly/disabled/rural customers lack the opportunities most of our users have to physically visit the Library and are often isolated to the extent that their library visitor may be the only person they get to talk to. The Library Service has a paid co-ordinator who allots clients to visitors and generally masterminds the whole service. Given our current financial position, we could actively seek sponsorship to fund this post, rather than CCC, so that a much-loved and valued service can continue to grow. A number of organisations operate community projects and although these usually work on staff contributing time to projects, many may be prepared to offer financial support to ensure that this often neglected part of the community continues to feel both included and valued.