

## **ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL ON 14<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2017**

### **1. PETITION PRESENTED REQUIRING A WRITTEN RESPONSE**

Regarding a petition presented by Mr Nick Gay Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry, University of Cambridge reading:

“To Cambridgeshire County Council Stop their £325,000 planned cut to library books”.

The Chairman of the Highways and Infrastructure Committee indicated that a response would be provided in writing.

#### **Response**

A full written reply was sent on an e-mail on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 reading:

Dear Professor Gay

I write to acknowledge and respond to the petition presented by you to Cambridgeshire County Council at our meeting on 14 February. This petition was entitled: “To Cambridgeshire County Council: Stop their £325.000 planned cuts to library books” and was signed by 1,194 people including 928 Cambridgeshire residents and 204 from outside the county.

The County Council acknowledges and supports the vital role of the Library Service in nurturing and promoting an early and lifelong love of reading and learning, as well the important contribution it makes to the community and cultural life of the county, to economic prosperity and digital literacy, and the health and wellbeing of the county’s citizens.

The cut to the book fund now agreed for the coming financial year was planned with the following principles in mind:

- The intention is that this is a one-off reduction, with most of the funding planned to be reinstated in 2018/19 once other means of meeting savings targets have been established (through service transformation, in particular the development of libraries as community hubs)
- The Library Service has seen a reinvestment in the book fund in recent years (2012-24) following previous short term reductions (in 2011), so the stock is in a ‘healthy’ state currently. Benchmarking data shows that the total number of items of stock per head of population has increased over the past 5 years and the Service is now 12th in relation to 27 comparator authorities, compared to 25th in 2013. This means the service is more able to tolerate a short term reduction in expenditure on stock.
- The service is working to minimise the impact, where possible, by targeting the largest reductions in audio visual materials, lesser used reference materials and hard copy periodicals and newspapers, in line with the findings of a recent customer consultation which highlighted that children’s and adults’ books were the most valued aspect of the service.

In summary, I believe the Library Service in Cambridgeshire will continue to provide a very good service to its users in the year ahead. I also welcome the support the service

receives from individuals and library Friends Groups (including book donations and fundraising) that will help the service to manage this reduction in the short term.

## **2) ACTIONS ARISING FROM ORAL QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.1**

In response to a question from Councillor Jenkins, Councillor Bates, Chairman of Economy and the Environment Committee, agreed that the issue of maximising public transport and cycling access to the new Cambridge North Station for residents in the north of the County should be added as an item to the next Economy and Environment spokes meeting and for an invitation to be extended to Councillor Jenkins to attend and speak on it.

### **Response**

Councillor Jenkins has been invited to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> April Economy and Environment Committee spokes meeting where there will be an oral update.