

FUTURE LIBRARIES INITIATIVE – CIVIC UPDATE

To: **Communities and Partnership Committee**

Meeting Date: **12 March 2020**

From: **Christine May, Assistant Director of Cultural & Community Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To update the Committee on progress with the Future Libraries Initiative.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to:**

Note the progress being made on the Future Libraries Initiative.

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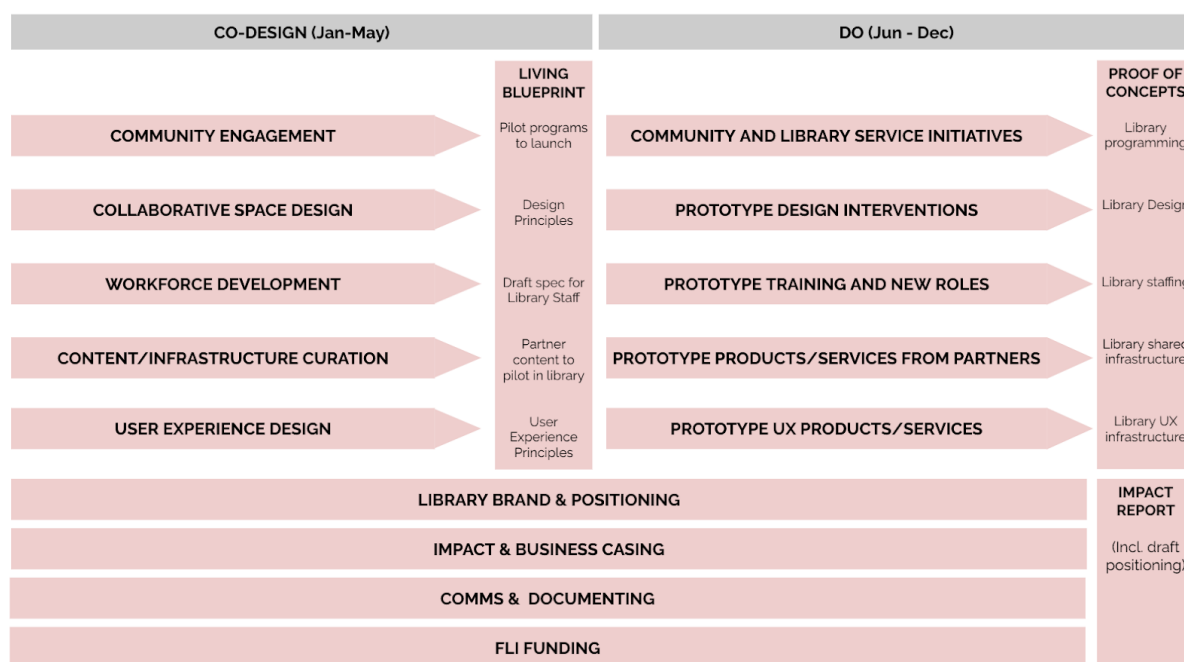
1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** This Committee has agreed to receive quarterly updates on progress with the Future Libraries Initiative project, our partnership work with Civic to develop the libraries of the future, co-designed with communities, stakeholders and experts. This is a three year project and the previous update was reported to Committee in December 2019. This report provides the latest update.
- 1.2** The Future Libraries Initiative is a key enabler for the New Library Vision and Model approved by Committee in December. The new model places libraries within the context of Think Communities and aligned to other Council strategies and priorities, including Cambs2020 (using libraries as community hubs) and the future of the Neighbourhood Cares approach across the county, to clarify and reinforce the role of libraries going forward.

2. FUTURE LIBRARIES INITIATIVE - UPDATE

2.1 Future Libraries Initiative Workstreams

Our workstreams for the Future Libraries Initiative can be outlined as follows:



2.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We have begun the 'Co-Design' phase of the Future Libraries Initiative, where we will work with the communities in the seven prototype areas to collaboratively create a vision for the programming, services, resources, staff training and space design we commit to testing together in the libraries. This process has begun by appointing community engagement staff to the project, furthering our community presence, ensuring we have met with key individuals, visiting existing spaces and groups, and

deepening our 'Club of Unlikely Allies'. The library staff will be integral to this process, given their deep knowledge of current users, local needs and the role the libraries play in the communities. We will be creating an Open House in each library - a living exhibition that allows for the project to have a constant presence for the community. It is a place where we can document our process, share progress and ask questions.

We will be hosting workshops to understand the challenges and assets present in each community. Bringing in stimulus from our internal and external partners, we will work with communities to build a consolidated vision of what they would like to trial in their libraries throughout our pilot phase. The outcome of this 'co-design' phase of work is to have established a 'Living Blueprint' with the community for each library that outlines our commitments for what initiatives we intend to pilot through the rest of the year.

2.3 COLLABORATIVE SPACE DESIGN

We have commenced the design process, working with four sector-leading architecture practices to develop affordable, replicable design principles that have the potential to reimagine the experience of library spaces. The principles that emerge from this exploratory work will be published. Each firm has been allocated one or two of the pilot libraries to focus their study. This work will also surface design and architectural recommendations for each library, which will inform any formal design tenders that are pursued. We are working closely with the Council's property and procurement teams throughout this process.

Students from the University of Cambridge Architecture Faculty have been exploring possible design interventions for our pilot sites as part of their Third Year Studio. This work will continue to the end of the academic year.

2.4 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Civic are working closely with CCC's Library Leadership team, alongside the broader library staff team, to deeply understand the daily reality of working in a library, in order to identify opportunities for training and resources to better support the critical role they play in our communities. We will also look to ensure that this workstream integrates with the overall Think Communities workforce development work.

2.5 CONTENT / INFRASTRUCTURE CURATION

Civic are working closely with the BBC to develop pilots that will bring local radio, archive and Virtual Reality content to our libraries, including the potential to broadcast a weekly show from one of our pilot libraries. We are partnering with the British Film Institute to make their archive platform available from the libraries.

2.6 USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Together, we will be exploring opportunities to enhance the user experience of libraries, while evaluating the current systems that underpin the operation of libraries in order to identify opportunities to develop improved systems. Such systems could

include a space booking system or an enhanced library card (building on the pioneering work undertaken by Cambridge City Council with the 'Culture Card'). With Snook, we will undertake an exploratory phase of work understanding key needs and areas to prototype new solutions.

2.7 LIBRARY BRAND AND POSITIONING

We continue to connect regularly with representatives of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Arts Council England and Libraries Connected to ensure this project is building on the brilliant work being undertaken across the library sector.

Internally, we have progressed our partnerships with teams within both authorities to ensure our work aligns with other programmes of work. The parallels with the Think Communities agenda are clear, and we are aligned on the opportunity for libraries to be a central asset in place-based commissioning and service delivery. We will ensure our work is integrated with the Think Communities' assets, workforce development and data workstreams. We are working with colleagues in Adult Social Care, Best Start in Life, Cambridgeshire Music and Cambridgeshire Skills to co-design pilots for delivering aspects of their provisions through libraries. Next steps include working with the Transformation Team to identify any additional opportunities for internal partnerships.

2.8 IMPACT AND BUSINESS CASING

Civic are working in partnership with the New Economics Foundation to develop our approach to quantifying and communicating the impact of libraries. Through this work, we will build a research methodology allowing us to measure the impact of the pilots in each library. This work will inform the key metrics we benchmark and monitor through our piloting phase, in order for us to understand the impact of libraries at an individual, community and institutional level and to have initial proof of concepts by the end of 2020.

2.9 COMMUNICATIONS AND DOCUMENTING

Project updates will be communicated on the CCC website and through the CCC social media pages. We will be working with library staff in order to build a presence for the seven libraries on social media. This will involve training from the communication team, alongside external support, to build local digital engagement with the libraries. We will begin this work with staff from April onwards.

2.10 FUNDING

Following the roundtable of Foundations hosted by Esmée Fairbairn in July 2019, the Future Libraries Initiative team have progressed conversations with several foundations. Garfield Weston have committed £250,000 across our seven prototypes. The Tudor Trust have committed £71,000, with a focus on work in Peterborough Central Library. We have been invited to ask for a further £830,000 from other foundations, including the Rothschild Foundation, The National Lottery Community Fund, the Foyle Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This charitable funding has enabled us to launch the initiative, and supports our

efforts to build a business case for libraries as the platform for Council-wide service delivery.

2.11 ALIGNMENT TO THE NEW LIBRARY VISION

As described in section 1 of this report, the Future Libraries Initiative programme is a key enabler in our broader work to establish and implement a new vision for libraries across Cambridgeshire. We continue to invest in our libraries, and recognise the significant role they need to play in delivering our Think Communities place-based, people-centred approach.

At the April workshop of this Committee, we will be presenting ideas that demonstrate how we can convert the principle to practice, including for example the role of libraries and their staff in the commissioning of local services, and the ways libraries and their staff can reach all communities including those that are more isolated.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The new vision and model for libraries and communities, and therefore the Future Libraries Initiative – is focused on ensuring a good quality of life for people in Cambridgeshire by providing them with opportunities to develop their individual agency, resilience and prospects, and connecting them to information, resources, activities and other people.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

Part of the new vision and model for libraries and communities, the Future Libraries Initiative is focused on ensuring the communities in which people live are thriving, by providing opportunities for communities to connect in a safe, accessible shared place, and increasing community agency.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children

As part of the new vision and model for libraries and communities, the Future Libraries Initiative will contribute to the objective of providing the best start for Cambridgeshire's children by providing universal free access to early literacy development and encouraging reading for pleasure, proven to be fundamental to improving children's life chances. Library staff and the Future Libraries project team are working closely with the Best Start in Life project to maximise the role that libraries can play.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

Where our work with Civic involves discussions about building-related schemes or use of transport, we will ensure that clear explanations are provided to show how any potential impacts on carbon emissions are minimised.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

External funding is being secured for the project as set out in section 2.10

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Procurement advice is being taken at all stages from the Council's Procurement Team in respect of any work which needs to be tendered.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications in this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

Libraries act as a 'social equaliser' and the Future Libraries Initiative continues this theme in a modern, relevant context. Libraries are free, open and accessible to all. Efforts will be made during the Co-design phase of the Future Libraries Initiative to ensure less-heard voices are engaged and included.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

Plans for community engagement are set out in section 2.9

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local members will continue to be involved during the Co-design and Do stages of the Future Libraries Initiative project, and members of this Committee kept regularly updated. The chairs of relevant committees in both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are members of the project Steering Group.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The new model and vision for libraries and communities, and therefore the Future Libraries Initiative, is expected to bring health and wellbeing benefits for Cambridgeshire people and communities, for example by working with partners to promote healthy living, by reducing social isolation and supporting mental health, and by providing community space for activities including cultural and physical activities.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus de Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Monitoring Officer?	Yes Name of Monitoring Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Sarah Silk / Eleanor Bell
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Val Thomas

Source Documents	Location
None	N/A