

Library Service

Cross Party Working Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose:

To contribute to the strategic development of the library service as a community service and to ensure full alignment with County Council priorities, with a focus on equity and access ensuring the service is universal and available to all.

To position the library service at the heart of the Council's approach to decentralisation, improving social mobility, and making our county more equal.

To recognise and value the contribution of volunteers in the provision of library services.

To support the contribution of libraries to health and well-being.

To support the contribution of libraries to digital inclusion and skills with a focus on equality of access and the removal of barriers to participation.

To increase operational understanding of the library service among Elected Members and officers across the whole organisation.

To identify opportunities for external partners to benefit from working with the library service and develop ways of engaging with those partners to realise these opportunities.

To increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the library service including financial challenges, the stretching income target, and sustainability given the expansion of the library service enabled by S106.

To allow for a periodic focus on different aspects of the library service to ensure changes are aligned to demand, needs and County Council priorities e.g. the Mobile Library Service in 2022.

To specifically undertake an initial full review of the mobile library service.

To promote a culture of innovation, trying different approaches, accepting that some changes may initially have a negative impact on performance as changes take time to embed and some changes do not work and when this is the case they should be discontinued.

To promote a wider understanding of the library performance in particular service impact, developing performance outcome indicators that evidence impacts the service has on demand in more costly statutory services.

To pool the collective experience and knowledge of the Cross Party working group to promote service excellence.

To contribute relevant specialist skills and advice and provide relevant contacts and networks.

To act as advocates and champions for the library service within the organisation, partnerships and extended networks.

Remit:

The Cross Party Working Group has no specific decision making powers. Decision making authority rests with COSMIC, although recommendations from the working group to be discussed at Committee are both welcomed and encouraged.

The Cross Party Working Group can inform operational decision making e.g. changes to the mobile library service.

Specific areas of focus for the Cross Party Working Group are:

- Social Mobility, cultural diversity, inclusion and access
- Financial Sustainability
- Service specifics which will vary at different times – e.g. Mobile Library Service

Membership of the Cross Party Working Group:

Officers

Gary Porter – Head of Libraries, Archives and Culture – Co Chair
Andrew Stoter – Library Support Services Manager

Councillors

Cllr Sanderson – Co-Chair
Cllr Cox Condron
Cllr Criswell
Cllr Daunton
Cllr Slatter
Cllr Costello

Additional Officers will attend depending on the focus of the meeting.
Councillors may nominate a substitute if they are unable to attend.

Meeting Frequency and Duration:

Meeting Monthly January – April 2022 thereafter frequency of this advisory group to be reviewed

Meeting maximum of 2 hours in duration

Agendas and papers to be circulated in advance of meetings

Duration of Cross Party Working Group:

1 year Jan 2022 to Dec 2022.

Continuation of Steering Group to be reviewed at end of Year 1.

Context:

The formation of the Cross Party Working Group was agreed by COSMIC December 2021.