

**Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee**  
**12<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

**Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services**

**Black Country Library Project**

**Purpose of the report**

1. To update the committee on the planned outcomes and progress of the Black Country Library Project.

**Background**

2. Following the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) Joint Management Team Meeting in September 2010, and a subsequent joint Black Country Cabinet's meeting in November 2010, the Black Country Collaborative Working Group (BCCWG) oversaw the progress of 10 service 'work streams' tasked with identifying options for collaborative working and shared services. One of the work streams related to libraries.
3. The ABCA Chief Executives agreed at their meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 that the work stream relating to libraries should be developed in more detail with a view to implementation.
4. Nationally there is a lot of interest and campaigning about libraries which shows that the project will need to manage consultation and information sharing in a consistent way to prevent adverse publicity and reaction.
5. The project must have clear parameters about what is included – as currently library services in some of the boroughs include/manage archives; schools library services and adult learning services.
6. The project will only be successful if authorities commit to working towards a single service – although at each stage in the scope below each authority can decide whether it wishes to continue to be part of the project.

**Project management**

7. The project sponsor will be Andrea Pope-Smith Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Dudley.
8. The project manager will be Kate Millin, Assistant Director (Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning), who has been seconded from Dudley MBC. Kate will continue to be responsible for the library, archive and adult learning strategic management for Dudley. Administrative support will be provided by Dudley MBC.
9. Each authority will be responsible for providing appropriate support to ensure the library project is successful and that it links with the other Black Country projects that are being developed. This will be co-ordinated through, and supported by, the Black Country Project Manager and the BCCWG.

## **Vision**

10. The current proposed vision for the project is to '***create a completely integrated, accessible, professional and dynamic library service***' providing the full range of appropriate services working with partners and using a range of cost effective methods appropriate to customers and other stakeholders.
11. Services will be delivered in a range of ways including: online using the latest technology; in shared buildings; and delivered to customers in their homes, workplace or schools where appropriate.

## **Principles**

12. The project will work within the clear principles listed below.
  - Borough sovereignty is protected – decisions around priorities and provision are for borough's individually to agree.
  - Resilient, more joined up services will mean that outcomes and satisfaction will both be better than they would otherwise have been.
  - Proposals will achieve better value for the taxpayer.

## **Scope**

13. The project is currently planning to work within the following scope:
  - Define the parameters of a Black Country Library Service
  - Identify and develop a range of implementation models for the Black Country Service
  - Manage the consultation on the agreed potential implementations models
  - Identify the preferred model
  - Facilitate the implementation of the first phase preferred model

## **Finance**

14. There is a total budget for the project of £60k made up of:
  - £43.4k to be paid to Dudley to contribute to the costs of the project manager's salary as Dudley MBC will provide the rest of the salary costs and provide the administrative support.
  - A budget of £16.6 k for miscellaneous costs including the cost of the project manager attending appropriate meetings/ events and the cost of support/ expertise not available within the Black Country authorities.
15. The options developed will include further financial implications for all of the Black Country boroughs involved.

## **Law**

16. Public Library services are provided by each Black Country authority as designated Library Authorities under the terms of the 1964 Public Library and Museums Act. They must provide 'a comprehensive and efficient library service that is available to all who wish to use it'.
17. They meet these requirements when they provide a library service which: serves both adults & children; is available to everyone & meets any special needs required by members of the community; encourages participation & full use of the service; provides materials sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general & specific requirements of those in the community; provides value for money, working in partnership with other authorities & agencies.

## **Equality Impact**

18. The options developed will be done with full regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the appropriate assessments will be completed to support the proposals presented.

## **Recommendation**

19. It is recommended that:-

- The committee note the planned outcomes of the Black Country Library Project



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## **List of Background Papers**

BCCCWG Report for the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) : *Progress Update and Request for Approval to Develop Business Cases*, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011