

MAYOR AND CABINET			
Report Title	Mayoral response to the comments of the Healthier Communities Select Committee on the Library and Information Service		
Key Decision	NO	Item No.	
Ward	All		
Contributors	Executive Director for Community Services		
Class	Part 1	Date:	22 February 2012

1. Purpose

This report responds to the comments of the Healthier Communities Select Committee made to Mayor and Cabinet on 18 January 2012, following their meeting of 14 December 2011 where they considered the progress of the community libraries.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Shaping the Future, the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy includes the following priority outcomes which relate to the work of the Library and Information Service and reflect the Council's aspirations for the service:

- Ambitious and Achieving – where people are inspired and supported
- to fulfil their potential.
- Empowered and Responsible – where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities.
- Healthy, Active and Enjoyable – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing.
- Dynamic and Prosperous – where people are part of vibrant localities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond.

2.2 The Library and Information Service also contributes to the following Council Priorities:

- Community leadership and empowerment – developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of people in the life of the community.
- Strengthening the local economy – gaining resources to regenerate key localities, strengthen employment skills and promote public transport.
- Active, healthy citizens – leisure, sporting, learning and creative activities for everyone.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Mayor:

- 3.1 Notes the response from the Executive Director of Community Services to the comments of the Healthier Communities Select Committee as set out in paragraph 4.3.
- 3.2 Agree that this report should be forwarded to HCSC.

4. Background

- 4.1 On 14th December 2011, the Healthier Communities Select Committee considered an officer report outlining progress in implementing the changes to library services, agreed by Mayor and Cabinet on 11th May 2011. The committee also took evidence from the three anchor organisations, currently supporting Lewisham's five community libraries.
- 4.2 The Healthier Communities Select Committee presented a report to the Mayor and Cabinet meeting of 18 January.
- 4.3 The HCSC made the following comments:
 - 4.3.1 *The Committee wishes to record its thanks to the anchor organisations, their staff and many volunteers for all the hard work they have put into developing and providing a wide range of resources and activities for local people. The Committee was impressed with the progress already made in engaging local people, delivering improvements in the buildings and in delivering a wide range of activities and support at each location.*

Response

The Executive Director for Community Resources joins the Healthier Communities Select Committee in congratulating the three anchor organisations, New Cross Peoples Library, Eco Computers and Age Exchange and their staff and volunteers on their work in securing the new service and extending the range and quality of activities being made available from the community library buildings.

- 4.3.2 *The Committee notes that the library and information service is still in transition after the recent restructuring, and that the community libraries are still developing. The Committee also notes that the anchor organisations consider they would benefit from further developing the supportive working relationships they are building across the three organisations.*

Response

The Library and Information Service continues to evolve following the major staff restructuring, the establishment of the five community libraries, the opening of the Deptford Lounge and the introduction of new technologies which further extend the services on offer to users of all the Borough's libraries.

- 4.3.3 *The Committee urges the Mayor and Cabinet to do all it can to keep all the libraries operating fully, and to continue to support the close working relationship between the anchor organisations and the Council's Library and Information Service.*

Response

Library staff will continue to work closely and supportively with the three anchor organisations, and ensure that the necessary systems and networks are supported so as to ensure their success.

5. Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications to this report. The community libraries use the book stock purchased by the Council and occupy their premises rent-free but otherwise receive no financial support.

6. Legal Implications

The Constitution provides that the Executive respond to reports and or recommendations by the overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. Crime and Disorder Implications

There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this response.

8. Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this response.

9. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications in this report.

Background Papers

1. **Mayor and Cabinet Report from HCSC 18 January 2012**
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=7306>
2. **HCSC report 14 December 2011**
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=6983>

For further information on this report please contact Hilary Renwick, Head of Cultural Services on ext 48637.