

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 2023

20th November

SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION PROPOSAL – FUTURE OF LIBRARIES IN THE DISTRICT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Steven Colella, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider the request as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of this report and agree to one of the following:

- (a) that the request is included on the work programme and the Board considers the matter as an item of business at its next or subsequent meeting; OR**
- (b) that the request is included on the work programme and a Task Group Review is agreed to enable a more in-depth investigation of the matter, and that the broad terms of reference and timescales for the Review are agreed; OR**
- (c) that further information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation is required; OR**
- (d) that the Board decides to take no further action.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Board are requested to investigate the future of library provision within the District. This follows a Notice of Motion put forward by Councillor H. D. N. Rone-Clarke at the Council meeting held on 19th July 2023 as follows:

“There is a threat to the future of our libraries and the way in which they are to be managed. It is proposed that Bromsgrove, Rubery and Wythall Libraries will be the first in the County to become ‘unmanned.’ There will be serious consequences associated with such changes both for staff and users of this service. Therefore, we call upon the Overview and Scrutiny Board to investigate the consequences of such action.”

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 A request from full Council has been made to investigate the consequences of proposed changes to the library provision in the District.
- 3.2 If the Board decides that it does wish to investigate this topic further, it then needs to decide whether it is appropriate for the Board itself to undertake the investigation at its regular meetings or whether a more in-depth investigation is required in a form of a task group or short-sharp review.
- 3.3 Another option is for the Board to request further information on the topic from a relevant source to assist Members to decide whether an investigation is required.
- 3.4 Alternatively, the Board could decide that it is not a topic it wishes to investigate, in which case no further action would be required.
- 3.5 It is noted that the Review of Libraries Task Group had been carried out in 2021 and Members may wish to consult the final report of that Task Group which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications directly relating to this report, however, if the proposal is accepted, any implications would be considered as part of the subsequent investigation undertaken.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly relating to this report, however, if the proposal is accepted, any implications would be considered as part of the subsequent investigation undertaken.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 Governance underpins all of Council's strategic purposes.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 There are no climate change implications at this stage. The green thread runs through the Council plan.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 There are no equalities implications at this stage.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Not applicable at this stage as this report is asking to consider the various options relating to the investigation of the Notice of Motion.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Final Report of Impact of the Review of Library Services Task Group, 2021.