

## **THE EXECUTIVE**

### **MEETING, 28<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2011**

Councillor Morris	Strategy and External Relations
Councillor Sherrington	Cleaner, Greener, Safer
Councillor Kay	Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity
Councillor Ibrahim	Regeneration, Housing and Skills
Councillor Bashir–Ismail	Adults Services
Councillor Peel	Children's Services and Safeguarding

#### Non-Voting Members

Councillor A. Connell	
Councillor Burrows	
Councillor J. Walsh	
Councillor Greenhalgh	
Councillor Mrs. Brierley	
Councillor Ashcroft	
Councillor Morgan	
Councillor Swarbrick	As deputy for Councillor Hayes
Councillor D.A. Wilkinson	

#### Officers

Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Ms. M. Asquith	Director of Children's Services
Mrs. M. Stoney	Assistant Director Legal Services
Mrs. S. Crossley	Assistant Director
Mr. A. Donaldson	Assistant Director
Ms. J. Spencer	Head of Service

Mr. A. Jennings

Democratic Services Manager

Councillor Morris in the Chair.

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor Hayes, Mrs. Thomas and Zaman.

## **7. MINUTES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Executive held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2011 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

## **8. AGMA EXECUTIVE BOARD AND COMBINED AUTHORITY**

The Director of Chief Executive's Department submitted a report that detailed the key decisions taken by the AGMA Executive Board and Combined Authority on 24th June, 2011.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

## **9. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT AND AREA WORKING – PROPOSED DEVOLVED BUDGETS**

The Chief Executive submitted a report that set out proposals as to how £842,000 would be devolved and allocated to neighbourhoods and wards, including the methodology and framework as to how the monies should be spent.

The report proposed the following allocation framework:

### **Pot 1 – Targeted Neighbourhood Renewal**

Allocate 25% to the existing neighbourhood renewal areas that were within the 15% most deprived areas. Allocation based on population size to ensure both level of deprivation and the scale of need in the area was taken into account.

As many of the target areas didn't correlate exactly with ward boundaries, the budget would be allocated to the appropriate ward based on population.

### **Pot 2 – Allocation based on wards**

Allocate 50% based on relative deprivation across all wards to ensure that deprivation beyond the 11 target areas was taken into account.

For the remaining 25% this would be allocated at a flat rate across all the wards giving each ward £8,125.

### **Pot 3 – Highways**

Allocate as a flat rate across all 20 wards giving each ward £9,600.

Appendix 1 summarised the proposed allocations based on this methodology and, in terms of how decisions would be made, the following framework was proposed:

#### **Deprivation monies in neighbourhood renewal areas;**

Ward Members would develop proposals that would be brought together into a proposed programme for approval by the Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer to approve in the context of the Council's agreed neighbourhood renewal priorities.

#### **Deprivation monies in non-neighbourhood renewal areas;**

It was proposed that this would be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Ward Members. In normal circumstances, Ward Members would make decisions around spend at a local level with support from Area Co-ordinators.

#### **Flat rate allocation and highways monies;**

It was proposed that this would be delegated to Ward Members in consultation with the Area Forum.

It was explained that the proposed framework would help ensure that decisions were based upon local issues shaped by Ward Members whilst ensuring the Council had appropriate oversight, particularly on those issues related to neighbourhood renewal in the most deprived communities.

**Resolved – That the proposals contained within the report be approved and that the monies be made available from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2011.**

**In accordance with Article 5 of the Council's Constitution this decision was called in by Councillor J. Walsh for consideration by the Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee.**

## **10. LIBRARIES REVIEW – OUTLINE AND ASSESSMENT OF THE OPTIONS**

The Director of Adult Services submitted a report on the recent consultation exercise regarding the review of the library service and detailed proposed options for alternative models of service delivery designed to continue to deliver a library service which was 'comprehensive and efficient' under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, in order to achieve savings targets of between £400,000 to £500,000.

The Executive at its meeting on 24th January, 2011 was informed of the current budget gap for the Council over the next 2 years of £60M in savings. In addition a further £40M in savings had been identified across 2013/14 and 2014/15. As a result, work planned for a comprehensive review of the library network and its sustainability was brought forward to 2011/12, with a view to redesigning the library network and potentially rationalising service points within the constraints of the budget.

The Executive had approved in outline a review and reorganisation of the whole library service using objective criteria, which aimed to save around £400,000 to £500,000 over the next two years.

The proposals contained in the report were designed to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service on a smaller budget. The approach had, therefore, been three fold:-

- analysis of over 3,000 consultation responses received from users and stakeholders;
- data mapping using existing data sources e.g. Library management System (Talis), Public Library User Survey (PLUS) and CIPFA comparative data; and
- a detailed needs analysis, based on a community profile for each existing library, using lower super output data and based on the objective criteria detailed.

The report provided three detailed options for achieving the savings as follows:-

Option 1: Cutting service points, reconfiguring the network and developing new service models;

Option 2: cutting all library opening hours by up to 38%;  
and

Option 3: Cutting all library opening hours except Central by up to 52%.

The financial implication of each of the proposed options was a net reduction in spend as outlined below:

#### Option 1

Staff costs	£300,000	12.85fte
Building costs	£107,000	
Total saving	£407,000	

This option would reduce the size of the network but retain a dynamic platform from which a comprehensive and efficient public library service could be delivered for the people of Bolton.

#### Option 2

Staff costs   £405,140   18.76 fte

No savings from buildings as all libraries remained. This option proposed cutting all library opening hours by up to 38% (average 33%). It was felt that this would not provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

#### Option 3

Staff costs   £418,986   19.11fte

No savings from buildings as all libraries remained. This option proposed cutting all library opening hours except Central, by up to 52% (average 48%). It was felt that this would not provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

The report recommended Option 1 in that it would provide the same and, in some respects, an improved quality of service.

The new library model (Option 1) proposed a tiered approach to service delivery, with the Central Library sitting at the centre of a revised network as the centre of excellence, concentrating staff and expertise, knowledge and resources over longer opening hours. The report proposed a 'tiering' of the libraries that remained below the central library providing a more consistent, understandable and logical pattern of provision, including opening hours.

This approach would involve reduction of opening hours at some libraries, increases at others and some closures, with the option to include a Neighbourhood Library collection in certain areas of the Borough as a replacement both for closed libraries and potential extension to other areas where there was currently no provision.

All libraries would continue to offer free services as defined in the Act plus internet access, as well as the ability to request items delivered to their home service point free of charge. Given the necessity to rationalise the network to maintain a comprehensive and efficient service to fit the budget the proposals also aimed to address any imbalance in the provision of libraries to achieve a more equal spread and to further develop self-service, partner working and 'at home' deliveries to the most vulnerable customers. This would also, subject to budget, offer opportunities to provide services to areas where the services weren't currently available.

The full details of Option 1 were as follows:

### **Central Library in the Crescent**

This was the hub of the library network and 'AskBoltonLibraries', the specialist service which provided expertise and resources to the whole Borough via email and phone. The Library was currently open 60.5 hours per week and it was recommended that this was increased to 65 hours. It was proposed that the Central Library and Museum opened on Sundays 10am – 4pm (6 hours) to meet demand.

### **Community Libraries Tier 1**

These were key community libraries with integrated Bolton Access Points in the major settlements within the Borough, open 46 hours per week. They offered a full range of library stock and access to ICT and information delivered by library staff. The Access Points would act as first point of contact for a range of Bolton Council services, including

advice on Council Tax and Benefits, Housing Services, Free School Meals, Blue Badges and access to all Council Services through the Freephone provided.

These Tier 1 libraries were:

- Farnworth (currently 46 hours per week – no reductions proposed)
- Harwood (currently 52 hours per week – 6 hour reduction proposed).
- Horwich (currently 50.5 hours per week – 4.5 hour reduction proposed)
- Little Lever (currently 46 hours per week – no reductions proposed)
- Westhoughton (currently 46 hours per week – no reductions proposed).

### **Community Libraries Tier 2**

These were Key community libraries which had had major rebuilding and capital investment, located in significant areas of deprivation, open 40 hours per week. The proposal was for each to have an individual focus reflecting their community profile as well as a full library offer. For High Street this would be digital inclusion and for Brightmet, health and wellbeing in recognition of further developing the opportunities offered by the NHS partnership in the shared building. This proposed increase in opening hours addressed the Wirral judgement about ensuring services to deprived communities.

These Tier 2 libraries were:

- Brightmet (currently 36 hours per week - proposed increase by 4 hours per week)
- High Street (currently 39.5 hours per week - proposed increase by 0.5 hours per week retaining Sunday opening).

### **Community Libraries Tier 3**

Community libraries serving areas less geographically accessible, in integrated premises and offering a range of partner services. They had shorter opening hours and more limited stock but access to a full range of materials and ICT and expertise from elsewhere, specifically the central library. They would operate 24 hours per week. These Tier 3 libraries were:

- Blackrod (currently 24.5 hours per week – 0.5 hour reduction proposed)
- Bromley Cross (currently 26.5 hours per week – 2.5 hour reduction proposed)

It was also proposed that current usage patterns and feedback from consultation would be used to inform revision in opening hours. These revisions would be monitored for a six month period and further adjustments made as necessary.

Work had been undertaken to map performance at libraries and on an assessment of needs based on socio-economic data.

Appendix 4 Tables 1 and 2 detailed Key Indicator Summaries for each service point and Table 3 showed actual usage by library, as tracked by Talis. This was considered a useful comparison of how people actually used libraries as opposed to the 'perception' data in the consultation on willingness to use other libraries.

Using the above data, together with the needs assessment, it was proposed that the following libraries be closed:

- Astley Bridge
- Castle Hill
- Oxford Grove
- Highfield

- Heaton

The report concluded that Option 1 preserved overall quality of service albeit across fewer service points. Efficiencies could be taken in a programmed way that did no lasting damage to the overall service offer and that the tiering of libraries and the relationship both to the hub (central library) and of the Neighbourhood Collections to the nearest tiered library ensured access to knowledge, information, electronic media and books and other materials.

With respect to Neighbourhood Collections it was explained that the aim was to provide a gateway to the wider services offered by libraries, acting as a conduit and signpost to a full library offer at the nearest community library. The main focus of neighbourhood collections was to support literacy and to encourage people of all ages and abilities to develop an enjoyment for reading and learning through 'taster' collections.

This would be a phased and varied offer depending on the community, delivered through partners in suitable community venues. The Library Service would provide advice, guidance and training on setting up, administering and maintaining the collection with an initial collection, depending on the size of the building, comprising popular fiction and non-fiction titles, supplemented with additional new titles on a monthly basis.

Furthermore, in order to mitigate the impact of the proposed closures under Option 1 the following were suggested as suitable venues for a Neighbourhood Collection in these localities:-

Astley Bridge – one of the following - Oldhams Estate  
UCAN Centre or a local school;  
Highfield – within the Orchards Centre;  
Castle Hill – Tonge Moor UCAN Centre;  
Oxford Grove – Halliwell UCAN Centre; and  
Heaton – location to be explored.

During the further consultation period views would be sought on the suitability of these venues particularly in areas where there were several options for a Neighbourhood Collection.

The Neighbourhood Collection model could be developed in the future to extend this level of service to other areas of the Borough where there was currently no library presence, equalising and adding provision across the Borough but within the constraints of the budget.

As a result of the feedback from the consultation exercise it was proposed that another period of consultation would be undertaken from 29th July to 9th September, 2011. This would allow time for residents, customers and stakeholders, including unions, to respond to the Executive's preferred option for a new model. A final report would then be submitted to the Executive seeking approval for final implementation.

**Resolved – (i) That the Executive agrees to the adoption of Option 1 as the Council's preferred option for further consultation as this will provide a network which is compliant with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and a service which maintains quality and geographical equity.**

**(ii) That a further period of consultation on the preferred option be undertaken from 29th July to 16th September, 2011 with a view to report back to the Executive in the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2011.**

**(iii) That the Director of Adult Services undertakes further work on developing the Access Bolton offer and neighbourhood collections through partners.**