

Report sponsor: Deputy Chief Executive  
Report author: Head of Community Safety and  
Integration

## **Community Managed Libraries - Update**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek the necessary approvals for sufficient time and funding to be provided whilst the findings of the CML review are considered.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To approve grant funding of £104,784, to be funded from the Budget Risk Reserve, for the period from 1st December 2022 to 31st March 2023 for DHA to continue operating the CML provision.
- 2.2 To note that a further report will be brought to Cabinet that will seek approval for recommendations for post-March delivery that come from understanding the implications of the current financial position, and outcomes of the CML review.

### **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 The recommendations will allow opportunities to fully understand the CML review and ensure informed decisions about the long-term provision of CMLs can be made.
- 3.2 To ensure CML provision remains open and accessible to communities between December and March.

### **Supporting Information**

- 4.1 Public libraries play a central role in their communities; as community spaces, offering a range of different services, access to advice, and connecting local people with other important activities.

This is important in a post-COVID setting, with growing importance on local opportunities to connect with others and for access to advice and support services.

- 4.2 Library services should co-design and co-create their services with the active support, engagement, and participation of their communities, so services are accessible and available to all who need them in the context of available resources.

The current CML provision contributes to the aims but it is recognised that they are in addition to the statutory library provision.

- 4.3 During the review financial analysis of each asset was conducted and forecast costs for DCC to operate were analysed. Cost ranges from lowest forecast to highest forecast for the 10 assets are;

Estimated cost range per visit:	£8.46 - £237.02
Estimated cost range per resource accessed:	£9.41 – £102.99
Estimated cost range per ward population:	£1.14 - £5.26

The total annual cost for DCC to operate and maintain access and operations from the 10 CML provisions is forecast to be £562,000, which would result in a revenue pressure of £442,000.

- 4.4 During the review financial analysis of each asset was conducted and forecast costs for DHA to operate were analysed. Cost ranges from lowest forecast to highest forecast for the 10 assets are;

Estimated cost range per visit:	£5.33 - £149.49
Estimated cost range per resource accessed:	£5.93 – £64.95
Estimated cost range per ward population:	£0.72 - £3.32

The total annual cost for DHA to operate and maintain access and operations from the 10 CML provisions is forecast to be £314,352, which would result in a revenue pressure of £194,352.

## **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 The review engaged the public and stakeholders.

## **Other options**

### **6.1 Permanent closure post 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

The existing corporate mandate for CMLs is that the Council grant funds, lease buildings to and, on account of both, have a management agreement in place that justifies the basis on which a grant is made available to DHA.

The CML provision is in addition to the statutory provision required for the city.

The financial implications of closing the CMLs have not been calculated but it would likely result in a saving in the longer term and potentially a capital receipt if the buildings were sold.

A few libraries have received additional grant funding so closure or disposal may not be achievable for all.

## **Financial and value-for-money issues**

- 7.1 Up to date, funding for the CML delivery model through DHA has been a mixture of core funding and drawdown of a reserve that was created to manage the transition of the CML model to one which was sustainable. It is forecast that these funding sources are fully utilised by the end of November 2022. This report requests further one-off funding to continue the provision of CMLs until the end of March 2023. This allows consideration of the service offer and delivery models as part of the annual budget round and agreement of the Council Tax in February 2023. Further funding of £104,784 is required to cover the period December 2022 to March 2023 and it is proposed to use the Budget Risk Reserve. This figure is based on the current monthly payment to DHA of £26,196.
- 7.2 The indicative unit costs detailed in the report indicate marked differences in the usage and Value for Money of the current arrangements and provision. This will be considered alongside wider service outcomes and opportunities that may arise from the emerging community asset approach

## **Legal implications**

- 8.1 As the report indicates, following the comprehensive library review and strategic needs assessment in 2015/16, the Council has a legal obligation to provide five statutory libraries only. The ten libraries that DHA currently operate are not statutory libraries.
- 8.2 In July 2022, Council Cabinet accepted notice from DHA to withdraw from the CML arrangements, ceding its CML operations back to the Council with effect from 30 November 2022. DHA felt they were unable to continue a month-by-month grant agreement. As set out in the July 2022 Report, it was envisaged that by 30 November 2022 the Council would have had sufficient time to understand the outcome of the review of community library provision and would be in a position to bring forward a proposal for library provision going forward; unfortunately, as set out in this Report, this has not been possible and therefore an interim arrangement is required.
- 8.3 Officers have therefore approached DHA to request that the arrangement reached in July 2022 be extended, that the ceding of the CML operations to the Council be suspended and that DHA continues to operate the CMLs between December 2022 and March 2023. Subject to future proposals for the CMLs brought forward by the Council, DHA has agreed that the date on which DHA will cede the CML operations back to the Council will now be 31 March 2023 and that in the interim DHA will continue to operate the CMLs on the basis agreed in July 2022.
- 8.4 It is important to note that this proposed arrangement with DHA is outside the grant agreement established with DHA in 2018. In funding DHA for the period December 2022 to March 2023, the Council will be providing funding to DHA to ensure the CML provision remains functional pending the development of a future proposal for library provision, the finalisation of the budget process for 2023/24 and to allow the CML buildings to form a part of the Council's response to the energy and cost of living crisis.

The existing tenancies at will, which govern DHA's current occupation of the CML buildings, will remain in place.

## Climate implications

9.1 None

## Socio-Economic implications

- 10.1 The CML provision is in addition to the statutory requirement which ensures a comprehensive and efficient library service for all. Residents are encouraged to make full use of the library service where residents can access additional resources for education, skills and knowledge.
- 10.2 Ensuring that the additional CML provisions remain accessible to residents will significantly increase the City's opportunity to respond to the cost of living issues affecting communities. DHA will have to access additional grants to support warm hub opportunities but the assets will play an important part in the collective response.

## Other significant implications

11.1 None

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Emily Feenan, Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services	06/11/2022
Finance Service Director(s)	Claire Davenport, Director of Leisure, Culture and Tourism	07/11/2022
Report sponsor Other(s)	Simon Riley, Strategic Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer	07/11/2022

Background papers:

List of appendices: