

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET – 23 APRIL 2015

REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 APRIL 2015

REPORT FROM THE LIBRARIES SCRUTINY REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report on the findings and recommendations of the Libraries Scrutiny Review. The review examined libraries performance, the changes proposed for Harrow's libraries and the strategy for Harrow's libraries for the next three years.

The Chair introduced the report, stating that three meetings had been held during March 2015 resulting in 14 recommendations. The Vice-Chair reported that a number of the recommendations related to communications and that the Review plan should include longer term objectives and be more ambitious. The effects on local communities and infrastructures arising from any future decisions around the closure of libraries should be more fully considered and there should be increased joining up with other Council activities.

A Member sought information on how it was intended to identify and engage in relation to recommendation 4 that Carillion should undertake further research into 'hidden communities' in Harrow so as to better understand current and future needs around library provision. It was noted that the Review Group had not wanted to be too prescriptive and expected Carillion to respond to the Review Group and for Cabinet to suggest recommendations as to implementation.

The view was expressed that the time horizon was not long enough. It was suggested that a discussion commence to ensure that libraries did not 'disappear'.

A Member expressed the view that the review did not convey a vision of libraries and that libraries performed a variety of roles. Words such as 'envisioning' were unhelpful and greater use of plain English would increase understanding.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review be endorsed;
- 2. the review's report and recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.**

Background Documents:

Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 14 April 2015

Contact Officer:

Miriam Wearing, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 020 8424 1542

Email: Miriam.wearing@harrow.gov.uk