

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	14 April 2015
Subject:	Report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap - Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Chris Mote - Policy Lead, Community Health & Wellbeing Councillor Kiran Ramchandani, Performance Lead, Community Health & Wellbeing
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report presents the findings and recommendations from 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.

Recommendations:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- I. Consider and endorse the report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review.
- II. Forward the review's report and recommendations on to Cabinet for consideration.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The Scrutiny Leadership Group commissioned a scrutiny review of libraries as part of the scrutiny work programme for 2014/2015. Colleagues at Ealing Council had also asked for a joint scrutiny review of the contract and performance of library services that Ealing Council and Harrow Council share with Carillion Integrated Services.

This review considered Carillion's performance in providing a library service for Harrow and Ealing residents in the first year of the contract (2013/14). It also considered the outcomes of the Take Part consultation on the future of Harrow libraries which ran from November 2014 to January 2015. Given the timeframe for this review, it was not in a position to influence the decisions around budget decisions for 2015/16 but rather inform the strategic direction of library services for 2015/16 and beyond.

The aims and objectives of the review were:

Jointly with Ealing Council:

- To jointly review with Ealing Council the current contract with Carillion Integrated Services for the delivery of library services across the two boroughs.
- To examine the current performance of libraries in Harrow and Ealing, as provided by Carillion.

Harrow specific:

- To consider the changes proposed for Harrow's libraries in light of the proposed budget savings for 2015/16 and the outcome of consultation with residents (November 2014 to January 2015).
- To develop an understanding of what residents want from their local libraries.
- To explore innovative practices in the delivery of library services by councils.
- To identify ways in which Harrow Council can deliver 21st century libraries for residents within the context of the financial challenges facing local government.
- To inform the implementation of a 3-year Harrow Library Strategy and work towards a potential West London Library Strategy with the other library authorities also managed by Carillion (Ealing and Hounslow).

The review meetings fell in a concentrated period of three weeks in March 2015 - a joint committee meeting with Ealing Council on 4 March at Ealing Town Hall and two Harrow-specific challenge panel sessions – on 9 and 17 March 2015. These meetings gathered evidence from council officers (from both Harrow and Ealing Councils), the relevant portfolio holders and officers from Carillion. The review involved a number of external representatives – four library users and two representatives of Harrow Youth Parliament – who were directly involved in the scrutiny sessions and framing final recommendations.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, if the report's recommendations are accepted by Cabinet, the service will need to provide detail of any costs likely to be incurred.

Performance Issues

There are no specific performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There are no specific environmental impact associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Equalities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken as part of the consultation with residents around changes to Harrow's libraries which was considered by the review as evidence.

Council Priorities

This review relates to the Corporate Priority 2014/15 of:

- Making a difference for communities

Ward Councillors notified:	N/A
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Nahreen Matlib, Senior Policy Officer, 020 8420 9204.

Background Papers: Report of the Libraries Scrutiny Review.