

**Joint Meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities & Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committees**



**12<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

**Library Strategy Consultation**

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**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Gerald Tompkins, Head of Social Inclusion**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities and Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committees with supporting information in advance of the Committee's meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

**Background**

2. At the meeting of Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Members considered a report on the Library Strategy. The report identified proposals to deliver Medium-Term Financial Plan savings in respect of library services, public consultation on changes to the County's library services and proposals for future management of library services. Following consideration, Members of Cabinet agreed:
  - The proposed vision and outcomes for the Library Service
  - To undertake public consultation for three months on the proposals within the report, i.e.:
    - Our overall strategy for library services in County Durham
    - To revise the criteria for the settlements that mobile libraries will visit
    - To retain a network of 12 town centre and 27 community libraries; and
    - To reduce opening hours in town centre libraries to 36 hours per week, and in community libraries to 20 per week
  - To receive a further report in July 2012 for a decision on the future of the library service following public consultation.
3. A summary of the Cabinet report and the consultation's questionnaire is attached for information within in Appendix 2. The summary report has been widely distributed for public consumption to inform responses to the consultation. To date, the consultation has generated a high level of public interest and received over 600 responses.
4. The 12 week consultation period commenced on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February. Members are to receive a presentation to outline the Library strategy and

consultation on the above proposals at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March and are asked to formulate a response to the consultation process.

5. The session will lead to a response from the joint Safer and Stronger Communities and Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussion. Facilitated debate will take place focussed on the questions in the library strategy consultation. There are eight questions in the consultation document (see Appendix 2) that relate to for example:
  - The Library Service Strategy's Vision, Aims and Need
  - Proposed changes to Library Opening hours
  - Proposed changes to Mobile Library Service and local communities having a say in the opening of their library

### **Recommendation**

6. Members are asked to note information in the Library strategy consultation (Appendix 2) and agree that the discussion from today's meeting is submitted as the joint Safer and Stronger Communities and Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee response to the consultation.

### **Background Papers**

None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance – None**

**Staffing – None**

**Risk - None**

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None**

**Accommodation - None**

**Crime and Disorder – None**

**Human Rights – None**

**Consultation** – Information within this report and outcomes from the Committees meeting will provide a response from Overview and Scrutiny to Cabinet’s Consultation on Library Services.

**Procurement – None**

**Disability Issues – None**

**Legal Implications – None**