

Responses to Libraries Transformation Recommendations 220803-19-1 to 220803-19-11

220803-19-1

That a review of the consultation process is undertaken, and lessons learnt are reported back to the Committee

We acknowledge that there are lessons to be learnt, and following O&S feedback we have initiated a lessons learnt review of the consultation process for the Libraries Transformation and engaged the Consultation & Engagement team in the considerations. A particular focus will be on how the Council better engages with underrepresented groups in future consultation exercises.

The consultation approach undertaken did however follow the Council policy and best practice, with support, advice and guidance provided from the Council's Consultation and Engagement Team, as well as using the guidance from other authorities that have undertaken similar reviews and following the principles set out in the DCMS Libraries good practice.

Research and consultation undertaken in Phase 1 of the Library Needs Assessment (The Next Chapter – Nottingham City Council Needs Assessment (Nottingham City Council 2022)) provided the background and context to the changing picture of libraries nationally and locally. It also set the scene for libraries in Nottingham compared to similar library authorities and provided examples and case studies of how other library authorities approached adaptation and change to suit their future library needs delivery.

In terms of access to the consultation process, a number of routes were provided to enable citizens to have their say. In addition to the online questionnaire, a hard-copy paper version of the questionnaire in libraries were printed, to which we signposted voluntary and community sector partners, we also held a number of online consultation meetings at which participants could ask questions about the proposals. These were advertised to voluntary and community sector partners through both NCVS newsletter and email distribution. We held a number of in-person events which were attended by a number of representatives of voluntary and community sector groups, as well as active campaign groups and Trade Unions.

The online consultation portal managed by the Libraries team provided updates on the consultation process and information on meetings, as well as how to get help with any access and inclusion needs to participate in the survey, e.g. if someone needed help with translation. The public could keep track of the consultation through this.

We received a small number of complaints regarding the consultation process, which were addressed quickly by the team and led to improvements in the process. However, none of these complaints came from voluntary or community sector groups or were concerned with the participation (or lack of it) by these groups in the process.

The consultation gathered over 3,000 responses, or just under one percent of the City's population. This is a very robust sample size with a less than 2% margin of error. By contrast the annual Citizen's Survey samples 2,000 responses, and the annual Respect survey samples 2,800. Both of these are used for evidence-based decision-making by the Council.

220803-19-2

Consideration is given to people who might be reluctant to share their details with authorities when considering technology accessed libraries

A library card for access would be required and we will need to work with library members interested in taking up this opportunity, although accept, this is not going to be appropriate for everybody.

Currently to obtain a library card basic details are already taken which are carefully managed and the service has in place data protection protocols to help protect, store and govern the information provided by users to us.

The offer of technology accessed libraries is designed to be in addition to staffed library opening hours and therefore access to a library building during staffed hours would still be possible.

220803-19-3

Consideration is given to who would be an appropriate partner is when considering shared usage

Careful consideration will be given to developing appropriate partnerships. Looking to ensure that where shared usage takes place this is done so that meets both the objectives outlined for the library service (see below) and will add value to the community locally.

- 1. Our library service plays a key role in bringing our communities together*
- 2. Our library service is championing literacy and learning in the City*
- 3. Our library service is helping the City's economy to thrive*
- 4. Our library service is efficient and cost-effective*

220803-19-4

A mapping exercise of other community facilities, such as leisure centres or community centres is carried out

A neighbourhood focus has been included as part of the council's broader transformation programme. The scope for this is currently being finalised but does include mapping all community facilities and how these can better respond to needs of neighbourhoods. This work will include looking at social determinants of health & wellbeing, including financial resilience, independent living/aging well, and addressing inequity in particular with housing, welfare and access to benefits and grants.

220803-19-5

Engagement is undertaken with all schools

As part of the library needs assessment, the following consultation and engagement took place with schools:

- Information was sent to Education Services for circulation to schools and parents including an item placed in school newsletters. The Library Service also directly contacted all schools by email.
- Working with Challenge Nottingham all schools (Head Teacher and admin) were contacted for a response, with a link to the consultation questionnaire.
- A separate workshop and engagement session was undertaken with the Youth Parliament during the phase 1 needs assessment.

220803-19-6

Feedback from the Health and People directorates is shared in full

A response was provided from Public Health in the Executive Board report 18 January 2022, where the transformation proposals were initially discussed. A further response will be provided on the consultation report in order for Public Health to make final comments which will be included in the final Executive Board report. The Director of Education Services attended a focus group discussion as part of the phase 1 needs assessment work. Further feedback will be sought from the People's directorate for inclusion in the final Executive Board report.

220803-19-7

The draft Community Asset Transfer Policy be discussed at a future meeting of this Committee;

A paper is under development regarding a policy for Community Asset Transfer. This is being led by Property Services.

220803-19-8

More context setting be included in consultation responses, and include LGBT+ and disability data, including any themes that were identified particularly with different communities

Following O&S comments we have undertaken some further analysis looking at responses from people from protected characteristic groups including BAME communities, people with a disability and LGBTQ+ people to see if there are any common themes in relation to the transformation themes and closure proposals. The most substantial statistical difference found in the survey was from comments regarding the use of Libraries for I.T and printer usage. This concern was highlighted by significantly more people from a BAME background and also from those who consider themselves disabled.

220803-19-9

That a log of the impact on individual wards of all major decisions, taking demographics into account, is maintained

Corporately this is being considered as to how this can be achieved. This needs to look at how the cumulative impact of all major decisions effecting individual ward/communities can be captured against key deprivation indices including, health employment, education, and income as well as on community profiles e.g. disability and BAME communities.

The citizen survey results is one tool that can be used in helping to understand what factors affect people in different areas of the city. Results from the Citizen Survey can be part of the data used in this process of understanding the impact.

220803-19-10

A mapping exercise of all voluntary and community sector organisations, in particular those serving citizens with protected characteristics, is carried out and relationships established so that they can be easily contacted as a part of any consultation

It has been confirmed from the Consultation and Engagement team that they do not hold a comprehensive list of voluntary and community sector organisations. The landscape of the voluntary and community sector is constantly changing and without a dedicated resource it would be impossible to keep up to date with these changes. However, we do have established channels of communication with voluntary and community sector leaders and networks, which we use whenever we wish to engage a wide audience of organisations and their users.

In this instance, we worked with NCVS to ensure that information about the consultation and a link to the survey was published in NCVS newsletters and updates. We also sent out information to internal teams including Neighbourhoods and Equalities for distribution through their networks of third sector contacts. These email networks reach hundreds of contacts in community-based groups. Our social media campaign to promote the consultation was also widespread and consistent throughout the consultation.

220803-19-11

Ward councillors are consulted before any final decision is made

Prior to any decision, ward councillors will be consulted in order for them to feed into final decisions made.