

# Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

Reference Number:

3492

Author:

Terranum Abbas

Department:

Commercial and Operations

Contact:

Terranum Abbas

(Job Title: Service Manager Commercial and Collections, Email: terranum.abbas@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 64963)

Subject:

Transfer of IT budgets to the Library Service

Total Value:

£306,000 (maximum) (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

- 1) To transfer £126,000 currently assigned for IT from Strategy and Resources to the Library Service.
- 2) Subject to meeting budget/business plan targets in the next 5 years, to transfer upto £180,000 to the 'IT Reserve Fund' for Libraries to enable ongoing replacement of Libraries RFID Self Service technology and the replacement of public computers and laptops in the library service.
- 3) Delegate authority to the Head of Culture and Libraries to enable expenditure, in accordance with financial regulations, from the 'IT Reserve Fund' to procure goods and services required to deliver these digital improvements.

**Reasons for the Decision(s)**

**Libraries are now very IT dependent. Public PCs and laptops in libraries are an integral and heavily used element of the service by citizens. The majority of the equipment has now reached the end of its life, so needs replacing over the next three years. In addition, the machines supplier Bibliotheca no longer support RFID self-service machines (enabling citizens to issue and return their own items). The total cost of replacing all this equipment, excluding Nottingham Central Library IT requirements that will form part of the redevelopment programme, is £286,000.**

**Recognising this issue, an 'IT Library Service Reserve' was established, with resources generated from stringent strategic savings, and the current balance is £106,520. This same stringent expenditure control has been followed in 2018/19 to create further savings over and above MTFP and Business Plan of up to £88,000, assisted by a number of one off income gains to the service this financial year. Approval is sought to continue to add to this reserve in order that we can start the replacement programme in 2019/20.**

**The Library Service offers the largest network of free to use Public Computers across the City. This network supports a wide range of needs for our citizens including access to online Housing Benefit and Universal Credit applications, Disability Badge applications and job applications for unemployed citizens. Many children who do not have access to computers at home use the library IT facilities for homework support as well as leisure purposes. The computers are a primary information source for health and welfare, enable access to resources in users' own languages, and enable access to printing and scanning facilities. In addition, libraries also offer a range of digital learning opportunities for its citizens through 1-2-1 and group learning workshops.**

**In total the service has 210 public pcs and 62 laptops. The majority of these library public computers are now 5 years old and their performance and speed has declined considerably. The life of the pcs was extended by replacing the hard drives with SSD drives just under 18 months ago. However, other parts are now failing and IT have advised that we have reached the point at where it is no longer cost effective to fix the machines as they fail and the majority of the machines warranties ended in March 2019.**

**The risk of not replacing the library computers will decrease user satisfaction and doesn't enable us to support and deliver satisfaction in library services by the customer user base currently heavily dependent on library computers as these citizens would be denied access to vital services including services supporting the government's digital by default agenda.**

**RFID Self-service technology was installed in all libraries in 2013/14 as part of a Strategic Choices Invest to Save programme. Self service technology enables citizens to issue and discharge their own books/library materials, manage their own accounts, and also to pay library fines and charges. Introduction of the machines resulted in reduced staffing costs and improved efficiency.**

**There are currently 20 self-service machines across the library network and these are reaching their end of life due to the provider, Bibliotheca, no longer supporting the current models. Bibliotheca will not offer maintenance or software updates to the current units after March 2020. Excluding Central Library, the total cost of replacing the self-serve machines is estimated at £140,000.**

**Replacement RFID technology will need to be procured during the financial year 2019/20 and we are exploring procurement as a joint venture with Nottinghamshire Inspire Libraries who also are looking to replace their own self-service kiosks at the same time.**

**The Library and Information Service will work with the corporate procurement team to ensure value for money for the provision and installation of replacement self-service kiosks and computers to ensure compliance to financial regulations.**

**Finally in order to better consolidate management of the Libraries IT budgets, it is proposed that the sum currently managed by Strategy and Resources will also look to move across directorates to reduce duplication in staff time spent on the management of this budget. It has therefore been agreed with Strategy and Resources that the budget would be better transferred to Libraries. This will enable better direct management of the budget by the Libraries service.**

<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	<b>Not to replace equipment - REJECTED as if not replaced a vital service will no longer be able to be delivered. The customer user base dependent on library computers would be denied access to vital services including many government services. Digital literacy would be impacted and custome satisfaction with libraries would decrease.</b>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>None.</b>
<b>Published Works:</b>	<b>None.</b>
<b>Affected Wards:</b>	<b>Citywide</b>
<b>Colleague / Councillor Interests:</b>	<b>None.</b>
<b>Consultations:</b>	<b>Date: 17/09/2018</b>
	<b>Other: Simon Salmon and Anne Clarke</b>
	<b>Supportive of decision.</b>
	<b>Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.</b>
<b>Crime and Disorder Implications:</b>	<b>Providing computers in libraries supports the reduction of crime as many young people visit libraries to use PCs. Engaging in activities in libraries contributes to the improvement of the quality of life for young people and supports the reduction of crime by offering facilities that will keep young people engaged. Library computers also contribute to the reduction of crime by offering homework support facilities which require use of the IT facilities in libraries.</b>
<b>Equality:</b>	<b>EIA not required. Reasons: The decision is to replace existing IT equipment in libraries. There will therefore be no EIA impact however the failure to purchase new computers would result in disadvantaged citizens who may not be able to afford computers at home and those with no or limited IT skills being denied access to free computers and staff support in developing digital literacy.</b>
<b>Any implications affecting IT:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder</b>
<b>Subject to Call In:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

Call In Expiry date:

15/04/2019

Advice Sought:

Legal, Finance, Procurement, IT

Legal Advice:

This report does not raise any significant legal issues as recommendations 1 and 2 are to authorize an internal budget transfer. Any contract for goods and services for which the Head of Culture and Libraries is given delegated authority in accordance with recommendation 3 must be awarded in accordance with the City Council's Financial regulations and Contract procedure Rules.

Advice provided by Andrew James (Team Leader Contracts and Commercial) on 03/04/2019.

Finance Advice:

This decision seeks approval to transfer from Strategy and Resources directorate to the Sports & Culture directorate, annual revenue budget of £0.126m held specifically for Library Services from 1 April 2019. This transfer has been agreed between the 2 heads of service. The gross budget is £0.146m, though the refreshed 2019/20 medium term financial plan includes a saving of £20k, hence the net transfer value will be £0.126m

This decision also seeks approval to maintain and replenish earmarked reserves held for the Library service IT requirements, with a view to drawing down on these resources to replace obsolete IT equipment. Replenishment of the earmarked reserves will take place over the coming 3 to 5 years, subject to meeting the MTFP, business plan target and approval by Executive Board of the annual year end accounts. This expenditure is in accordance with the 2015-2019 Council plan to address poverty, by providing inclusive and accessible services, in particular for Nottingham's most vulnerable citizens, especially as more services become self serve and digital. The expenditure will take place in accordance with financial regulations and when affordable in terms of the resources available.

Advice provided by Maria Balchin (Finance Analyst) on 28/03/2019.

IT Advice:

The IT Service supports the proposals made in this decision.

The administration of Library Service specific funds will be simpler if these funds are held by the Service. This will allow more efficient budget management and more effective direction of resources.

Advice provided by Paul J. Burrows (IT Change, Projects & Strategy Manager) on 28/03/2019.

Procurement Advice:

The procurement team will assist with any tendering exercises that arise from the transfer of budget and support the recommendation of this decision.

Advice provided by Paul Ritchie (Lead Procurement Officer) on 22/03/2019.

Signatures

David Trimble (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Localities)

SIGNED and Dated: 05/04/2019

**Andy Vaughan (Corporate Director Commercial and Operations)**

**SIGNED and Dated: 05/04/2019**