



# City of Westminster Cabinet Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8 April 2019</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Connected Libraries - the Report of the Independent Advisory Board on Libraries to Westminster City Council</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>City for All Summary</b>	<b>The report of this independent advisory board, now presented to Cabinet for it to receive, outlines the group's findings and recommendations to the council for the future of its Library and Archive Services. Retaining public libraries at the heart of our neighbourhoods is a specific City for All commitment in itself, but the board's report and its recommendations have implications and highlight opportunities across all Cabinet portfolios and every City for All theme.</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Mike Clarke</b> <b>Director of Libraries and Registration Services</b> <b>020 7641 2199</b> <a href="mailto:mclarke1@wcc.gov.uk">mclarke1@wcc.gov.uk</a>

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report to Cabinet is to present, for 'receiving' purposes, the final report of the independent advisory board on libraries. It is attached as Appendix B to this report.

- 1.2 The independent Libraries Advisory Board was established to consider the longer term future of Westminster's library and archive services. The board is now ready to publish its findings and are seeking the engagement and acknowledgement of full Cabinet as it does so.
- 1.3 The Board's report is attached in final draft (please note there may yet be minor changes on the publication design).

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet review and acknowledge the report of the independent advisory board on libraries.
- 2.2 That Cabinet Members consider implications and opportunities arising from the report and its recommendations for their portfolios.

## **3. Background, including Policy Context**

- 3.1 The independent Libraries Advisory Board was established to consider the longer term future of Westminster's library and archive services. It was to look at the role they should have in future, the contribution they can make to delivering on the council's strategic priorities, and what it would take to ensure they are fit for the future. The Board has developed some strategic recommendations for an effective and sustainable service vision – one which engages with other council provision across portfolios and can meet the needs of the community, now and in the future.
- 3.2 Board members were invited to join based on expertise and experience. The group was chaired by Chris Cotton DL, former CEO of the Royal Albert Hall. Cllr David Harvey and Cllr Guthrie McKie were observers. In addition, representatives of the voluntary library friends groups participated.
- 3.3 The work of the board was wide in its scope, leading to a set of recommendations that reach right across Cabinet portfolios and the City for All themes. Key areas covered by the recommendations are:
  - Using the trust and accessibility of the library service, adopt the approach of the national Libraries Deliver report, tailoring it to City for All
  - Ensure best use of resources – the right service in the right place at the right time based on a strong understanding of local need
  - Make better use of libraries as a delivery channel and mechanism for City for All
  - Connecting libraries better through digital, business planning and investment
- 3.4 Alongside the main report, the Board intends to make available a precis of its discussions over the many months of its work programme. This is intended to provide background for those who may be interested in the information the board took into consideration and how it reached its conclusions. This will be accessible on a dedicated web page, where the report itself will also be hosted.
- 3.5 Publication of the report will be accompanied by a communications and engagement exercise by the council itself, starting with library staff, and involving service users and partners. The focus of this engagement will be to outline the council's reactions to the

findings of the independent advisory board (to whatever extent or detail this has been developed at the time) and the aim will be to attract as many people as possible into a wide-ranging discussion about the future role of libraries in Westminster's local communities.

- 3.6 To facilitate this, an extensive, multi-media plan of engagement activity is currently being shaped. We seek to ensure local people have plenty of opportunities to engage with actively shaping these services in their own neighbourhood. The engagement programme will be delivered through summer 2019.
- 3.7 From this, it is proposed long term service strategies will be developed that respond to the Board's recommendations and set a clear future direction for the service.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

Mike Clarke – [mclarke1@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:mclarke1@westminster.gov.uk)



**Other Implications**

- 1. Resources Implications – none**
- 2. Business Plan Implications – none**
- 3. Risk Management Implications – none**
- 4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications – none**
- 5. Crime and Disorder Implications – none**
- 6. Impact on the Environment - none**
- 7. Equalities Implications – none**
- 8. Staffing Implications – none**
- 9. Human Rights Implications - none**
- 10. Energy Measure Implications – none**
- 11. Communications Implications – none**



## **Appendix B**

Connected Libraries – Report of the independent board on libraries to Westminster City Council