

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 68

Subject: **Libraries Strategy 2022-25** - Extract from the Proceedings of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee meeting held on the 25th November 2021

Date of meeting: **3 February 2022**

Report of: **Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources**

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Ward(s) affected: **All**

For general release

Action Required of the Committee / Council:

To receive the report from the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee for consideration and the recommendations for approval.

Recommendations:

- (1) That the Libraries Strategy 2022-25 as set out at Appendix 1 be approved;
- (2) That the importance of public libraries to our city and the contribution they make to education, tackling loneliness and isolation and community cohesion be noted; and
- (3) That a commitment to lifting barriers to access wherever possible, especially to those of low or no income be agreed.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

TOURISM, EQUALITIES, COMMUNITIES & CULTURE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 25 November 2021

MINUTES

Present Councillors:

Powell (Chair), Osborne (Co-Chair), Grimshaw (Joint Opposition Spokesperson), Evans (Joint Opposition Spokesperson), Simson (Opposition Spokesperson), Rainey, Littman, Ebel, Childs, and Brown

Co-Optees:

Joanna Martindale (Community Voluntary Sector), Nick Dias (Sussex Police), Stephanie Prior, and Harpreet Kaur (BHCC CCG).

PART ONE

44 LIBRARIES STRATEGY 2022-25

- 44.1 Sally McMahon and Kate Rouse introduced the report starting on page 53 of the Agenda.
- 44.2 Councillor Childs was informed of the following points:
- The strategy is based on the continuation of all 14 of the city's libraries.
 - Wheelchair accessibility is being looked at for libraries, but there are challenges for libraries in school locations due to safeguarding of children.
 - Stock levels have been lower due to the pandemic but are now almost at normal levels.
 - Internet streaming services are the alternatives to CDs.
 - The libraries budget includes £1 million above the local government grant which supports libraries through insurance of buildings, utilities, stock, and facilities management.
 - There are no plans to pursue the Libraries Extra project at the Jubilee Library.
- 44.3 Councillor Ebel was informed that a plan would be drafted to provide more books to suit people that speak English as a second language, including simple English books and books in foreign languages.
- 44.4 Councillor Brown stressed the importance of retaining volunteers and that she was happy to see the introduction of library apprentices.
- 44.5 Stephanie Prior was informed that the Business and IP centre offering in libraries is free.
- 44.6 The Chair noted the Labour Group Amendment and invited Councillor Childs to move the amendment.

44.7 Councillor Childs moved the amendment and it was seconded by Councillor Evans.

44.8 The Committee voted to agree the recommendations in the Labour Group Amendment.

44.9 **RESOLVED:**

That the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee:

1. Recommends to Full Council that it approves the Libraries Strategy 2022-25 set out in Appendix 1.
2. Approves the Libraries Stock Policy as set out at Appendix 2.
3. Notes the importance of public libraries to our City and the contribution they make to education, tackling loneliness and isolation and community cohesion.
4. Commits lifting barriers to access wherever possible, especially to those of low or no income.

Therefore, the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee requests a further libraries report come back to a future meeting of this committee to explore;

- a) A well-publicised two-week annual fee amnesty to maximise book return and encourage increased use.
- b) Ceasing with immediate effect all inter-library loan charges for under 18s, as these raise negligible funds but act as a barrier to borrowing and access.
- c) A review of all charges to under 18s with a view to ending these wherever possible.
- d) A review of options for providing library services to areas such as Kemp Town, Queens Park, Hanover, Hollingdean and others where provision has been lacking since the closure of the mobile library service.

That Full Council:

5. Approves the Libraries Strategy 2022-25 as set out at Appendix 1.
6. Notes the importance of public libraries to our City and the contribution they make to education, tackling loneliness and isolation and community cohesion.
7. Commits lifting barriers to access wherever possible, especially to those of low or no income.

