

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet member contracts and assets</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 26 October 2017</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Response to the LGA Peer Review of Museums, Libraries and Archives</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Assistant director communities</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

The report outlines progress in the service areas of museums, libraries and archives in light of the recommendations of the LGA (local government association) peer review; and associated decisions in relation to the services under review.

The report covers key activity relating the delivery of the LGA recommendations specifically in terms of producing plans outlining the service and process for exploring outsourcing the services. The report also seeks agreement of two key expenditure items relating to the services – namely requirements to repair the roof in Hereford to prevent weather damage and one off investment in the homeland project as initiative of national importance.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) the operational plans for services covering museums, libraries and archives in appendix two are approved;**
- (b) proceed with soft market test for museums, libraries and archives;**
- (c) work for Hereford Library roof and maintenance work be undertaken at a cost of no**

more than £200k capital expenditure;

(d) investment of £40k for the Weeping Window project commemorating the end of World War 1 for one-off expenditure of £40k inclusive of £6.4k from the residual Library and Museum Support Fund; and

(e) the reassignment of the capital spend be approved as follows:

	Original costs '000	Revised costs '000
Payment kiosk	11	0
Works at Ross, Leominster and Belmont	55	97
Dedicated PC in Leominster and Ross for payments	14	6
Additional self-service machines at Ross, Hereford, Leominster [Ledbury not included]	28	16
Upgrade of IT and equipment for staff to work flexibly	25	14
Totals	133	133

## Alternative options

1. The alternative option is to reject the recommendations of the LGA peer review, specifically in terms of outsourcing service and production of plans. However, they support the transformation of the service in exploring the alternative governance and management arrangement that could potentially benefit the service and help deliver the medium term financial strategy.
2. The repair to the roof at Hereford Library is needed to prevent continued erosion and prevent leakages. There is the option of delaying the work, which is possible as the roof is structurally sound, but could result in cost of emergency repair if water leaks into the building; also the Woolhope Club are keen to relocate back to the Library and Museum and that is not recommended without repairs to the roof. The other alternative option regarding the Library is to spend considerably more to open-up the roof and skylight. This is aesthetic work and it is proposed to be part of a funding programme.
3. Cease capital expenditure on the libraries. The capital programme has already agreed expenditure ([link](#)) on libraries to mitigate on savings to the service in generating more income from hire of spaces and for more customers to use self-service.

## Key considerations

4. Herefordshire Council, as with many other councils, has needed to consider its support for cultural services, much of which the council does not have a statutory duty to provide – the remaining cultural service part of the council are museums, libraries and archives. The council has taken the approach of transforming services with a combination of generating income, making savings as well as making investment. The council has opened Herefordshire Archives and Record Centre in 2015 as a purpose built centre; redeveloped the Masters House in Ledbury to include a new library opened in 2015; invested in the Black and White House museum in High Town during 2016/17, refurbished Hereford Library with its reopening in 2017; and issued £54k of grants to external organisations as one-off investment to generate revenue to sustain library, museum and

archive services. Further capital investment is planned for the libraries in Ross-on-Wye and Leominster.

#### 5. **Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review**

6. The LGA was commissioned by Herefordshire Council to conduct a peer review of libraries, museums and archives. The LGA team was on site from 15-16 May 2017 speaking to over 45 people from within the council and representatives of external organisations. The review produced nine recommendations as part of their report (background paper) and a response action plan has been produced (appendix one). The below items are notable actions linked to the recommendations:

- Plans – the peer review felt that future delivery of the services as outlined in cabinet reports need to be communicated in a more digestible form and links made to the corporate plan. Therefore, a series of plans have been produced for the services outlining the operational delivery of the services up to 2020 and highlighting how activity delivers the objectives of the corporate plan. These are contained in appendix two.
- Outsourced services – sometimes called “spin-out services” the peer review makes reference to this as a potential option for services. The intention to operate a soft market test during the autumn was a recommendation within the cabinet report entitled Customer Services and Libraries of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016 ([link](#)). This is to understand the potential market for operating the library services external to the council in order to inform any decision to proceed to a full procurement. The recommendation in this report relates to that soft market test to also include museum and archive services with their associated services and sites. This is referred to in a report to cabinet entitled Museums and Archives Services on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 ([link](#)) with the recommendation “a further report on longer term options for future sustainable delivery of the service be developed to include exploration of trust, transfer and shared service arrangements with suitable heritage partners”.

Additionally, Heritage Lottery through the Resilient Heritage programme has funded a review of the operation of the Herefordshire Museum Service. The award has been made jointly to the Museum Services Support Group and Herefordshire Council to commission feasibility regarding the future options of the service to support the services sustainability and development. This could include an option to outsource services. Other aspects of the funded programme include training for staff and volunteers and activity to generate income.

- Align services – one of the recommendations outlines the benefit of bringing services together in one management structure. This is being implemented through a service redesign to be delivered in autumn 2017.
7. The action plan in response to the recommendations made by the peer review team is attached at appendix one.

#### **Hereford Library**

8. Investment was made in Hereford Library as part of refurbishment work after asbestos had to be removed from the site for safety reasons. The remaining funds from the allocation of £1m were to be used to match any funds raised by Hereford Library Users Group to meet their plans to redevelop the site. This commitment was outlined in a cabinet report entitled Hereford Library and Museum Response of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 ([link](#)) –

with the recommendation “following completion of the work at recommendation a) above the balance of the capital allocation be used as match funding for a development scheme, led by HLUG or other partner, subject to the development scheme being approved by the relevant cabinet member within a two year period”. Point 16 of the May 2016 report is also relevant in that it states “as outlined in the cabinet report of 3 December 2015, there is a capital allocation towards addressing the needs of the Hereford library and museum, of £1m. This includes major requirements to address safety concerns, as part of the property maintenance plan over the next five years, and includes replacement of the lift, roof, heating system and other mechanical and electrical works”.

9. HLUG’s proposals had been progressed as part of the “31 Broad Street Project” supported by feasibility work part funded from the council via the Hereford Library and Museum Fund. However, in September 2017, HLUG advised the council they had decided not to proceed with the project at the current time. In addition considering external funds have not been raised for capital works or in plan by the two year anniversary of the 2016 cabinet report, the recommendation is to allocate residual capital to essential works for the site including roof repairs and lighting. This would also allow the Woolhope Club to relocate back to the library as they have been displaced from the site since November 2016.
10. Estimated cost for roof works is £150k-£175k - though a budget allocation has been made of £200k to cover unforeseen circumstances and additional low level improvement works. The work will be tendered which will determine the timescale and final costs. To be avoided is conducting the works in March and April 2018 where a major project will take place in Hereford and having the museum open will support campaigns and events. The project, referred to as Weeping Window, commemorates the ending of WW1 and will involve the museums, library and archive services (see later for financial considerations) and will attract local and national attention.

### Leominster Library

11. As part of the [cabinet report](#) 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016 reference was made to relocation of Leominster library subject to a business plan and financial assessment. This would be a shared site with Halo at the swimming pool and leisure centre with additional build at the front of the centre. However, initial consideration has been found that it is not timely to proceed based on the other demands on the service, financial considerations, and local user group feedback who were generally not in favour. This is based on the following pros and cons of the project.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investment in a new library</li> <li>▪ Ground floor access</li> <li>▪ Shared customer base with potential increased library use</li> <li>▪ Long term sustainability as a shared site at reduced costs</li> <li>▪ Shared staffing</li> <li>▪ Longer opening hours 6.30am-10pm</li> <li>▪ Catchment for children and young people as near the school, children centre and nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cause disruption</li> <li>▪ Existing low rent at current site</li> <li>▪ Local attachment to the current library</li> <li>▪ Considered out of the city centre impacting on user number and use of the town</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for tenant at the current site to offset costs</li> <li>▪ Demands on the service e.g. soft market test, service redesign.</li> </ul>

12. In terms of finance, the library premises is currently low cost – £200 rent, £24,404 rates and £7,858 utilities. The costs saving to the service would therefore be on rates and potentially some utilities. However, at an estimated capital cost of £700k the borrowing (at £3.50%) for 25 years would require a payback of £42,000. Other savings could be achieved by staff sharing which would need to be based on existing staff savings planned for customer services for April 2018.

## Community impact

### General points on community impact

13. Each of the plans contains a section on how the services contribute to the corporate plan. This was an important point made by the LGA peer review to understand and communicate the linkages.
14. The services in question are strongly linked to community use – beginning open access and universal services. The recommendations do not affect immediate usage by the community, however it does set the ground work to support options of their sustainability.

### Health and Safety

15. The council is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and others impacted by the council's funded activities. The Libraries, Museums and Herefordshire Archive and Record Centre (HRC) are all public buildings, highly used by visitors and staff alike. Therefore any work on these sites would be subject to construction health and safety requirements. The council endeavours to ensure that the work they undertake, and the work of partners, does not adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of staff and visitors. This is specifically relevant to the repair to the roof of Hereford Library and Museum and the management of visitors during these works.

### Impacts on Looked After Children

16. The recommendations do not have any negative effects on looked after children. The library services will not see changes to its additional provision for foster carers which is based on:
  - 20 books can be borrowed at any one time compared to 12 for the standard membership
  - Books loaned for a six week period compared to three weeks for the standard membership
  - No fines for overdue items
  - No charge for loaning spoken word and/or language sets compared to £2 for three weeks for standard membership.

## Equality duty

17. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
  - A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to;
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
18. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The recommendations in the report do not have an impact on our equality duty.

## Resource implications

19. As outlined above, it is proposed that the current capital allocation for Hereford Library project is used to implement essential works of up to £200k depending on tender quotes. This will cover remedial works to the roof, improved lighting in the stairwell and other minor capital improvements.
20. The Weeping Window project will use one-off funds of £33.6k, inclusive of the remaining allocation for the Library and Museum Fund of £6.4k. The Library and Museum Fund was agreed by cabinet in a report entitled Museums and Archive Services of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to create a one off fund to support the sustainability of services through revenue generation. The £6.4k is remaining sum from £60k allocation (including unallocated funds or repayments from underspends).
21. Plans to invest in Ross and Leominster libraries were agreed by Cabinet in October 2016 and agreed as part of the council's capital programme in December 2016. These have been revised to take into consideration the following factor with revised costs:
- Withdrawal of payment kiosk for Hereford Customer Services as new PCs already provided at Blueschool House development
  - Additional spend at Ross and Leominster to accommodate maximum use of the spaces for additional use and hire
  - Requirement from DWP for additional space at Ross through the implementation of Universal Credit from March 2018
  - No additional self-serve machine needed in Ledbury
  - Clarity over the staffing IT requirements.

	Original costs	Revised costs
	'000	'000
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<b>Totals</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>133</b>

22. The Ross work is the first phase – the second phase will be part of a proposal via capital programme to accommodate children centre services – reference report entitled Future Use of Children Centre Buildings 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 ([link](#)).
23. IT requirements are included in the costings above.
24. The service redesign will impact on staffing of the service – specifically how services are aligned and the management resource to operate the service.

## Legal implications

25. Section 7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires “every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof.” With regard to capital expenditure local authorities are free to borrow or invest so long as their capital spending plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable under Local Government Act 2003.

## Risk management

26. The following risks and opportunities are relevant to the recommendations:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That delay in repair of Hereford Library roof could create serious harm.	The structural engineer has outlined via a survey the roof is structurally sound but if not repaired could lead to leaks in bad weather.
Lighting in the stairway could cause harm through trips.	That improved lighting is instigated.
That the cost for the roof repairs is much higher than expected.	A full tender to be issued with a costed model.
The timing could impact on a major project coming to Hereford.	To accommodate the timing of the event for works to the roof to take place pre or post the event.
That HLUG wish to proceed with the development project at a later date and request match funding.	This would be subject to request via the capital programme for any long term future development.

27. Risk will be managed at service level.

## Consultees

28. The LGA peer review involved discussion and consultation with over 45 individuals from both the council and external organisation / groups. Additionally the Resilient Heritage programme will include consultation with relevant parties to form the feasibility of the future of the museum service and linked services.
29. The plans have been sent to friends and user groups for their information; though as operational plans for Herefordshire Council have not been for wider public consultation as they do not change council policy or service levels.

## **Appendices**

One: LGA Peer report Response and Action Plan  
Two: Plans for Museums, Libraries and Archives

## **Background papers**

LGA Museums, Libraries and Archives Peer Challenge Herefordshire – Final Reports