

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: Date: 12th May 2010

Subject: Libraries and Culture Sections' Restructure - Consultation

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise committee of the ongoing restructuring process within the Libraries and Culture sections and to seek committee approval to undertake a consultation process with all stakeholders (including staff, partner agencies and the community) on the physical infrastructure required to deliver effective best value services within the restructured Libraries and Culture section.

2. Background

- 2.1** Members will be aware that an external consultant (Michael O'Neill) undertook a review of the Educational Services department during November 2009 and January 2010.
- 2.2** Specific recommendations were made in this review in relation to the Libraries and Culture sections. These included the merging of the two sections into one and some reductions in staffing, contributing to ongoing savings for the department, whilst strengthening front line service delivery.
- 2.3** The Manager, Lifelong Learning, has held initial briefings and discussions with staff involved who recognise the real potential for innovative service developments within the new section. All staff will have the opportunity to contribute to the restructuring process through briefings and a combined section development session.
Initial discussions have also taken place with the trades unions.

Prior to the development of final proposals it is intended to consult on the number of facilities required to deliver the restructured section's services.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The merger of the two sections is being progressed and has real potential to contribute effectively towards savings and innovative front line service delivery. It is recognised that the joining of two sections together will not achieve this in itself and the improvements to service delivery and financial savings expected will require greater structural change than that necessarily

outlined in the review paper. There is a clear need to examine how Libraries and Cultural services are currently delivered within communities and to ensure this provides best value. This will include consideration of how many local facilities are required to deliver the service and it is this aspect which will require committee approval.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** The combined Libraries/Culture section will have an impact on the number of posts within the staffing structure. This process is ongoing and is being progressed in accordance with the Council's 'Organisational Change' policy.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The combination of reductions in post numbers and some re-grading to account for changes to responsibility within the new section should result in a net annual savings to the department in a full year of approximately £150,000, although exact figures will not be clear until the restructure proposals are fully developed. Should facilities be identified for closure this will reduce property expenditure costs and may create possible opportunities for a capital receipt should the property/properties be in a suitable location.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a clear risk to the authority if a restructure is not undertaken that the required financial savings will not be made. In addition, an opportunity to improve delivery of services will be missed. There is also a risk to the Council's reputation if facility closures are implemented without appropriate consultation being undertaken.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** The consultation process may identify some potential equalities impact as a consequence of the restructure and these issues will be addressed during the implementation period.

8. Conclusion and Officer's Recommendation

- 8.1** The proposal to combine the Libraries and Culture sections is welcomed and presents a real opportunity for positive innovative service developments. This opportunity is also a challenge given the need to combine service improvements with financial savings.
- 8.2** It is recommended that members instruct the Manager, Lifelong Learning to undertake a consultation process with key stakeholders including staff, partner agencies and the community on the physical infrastructure required to

deliver the restructured Library and Cultural section services and the impact this may have on communities within the authority.

- 8.3** It is also recommended that a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee by the Executive Director, Educational Services to advise members on the outcome of the consultation process and to seek approval for any recommendations regarding facilities being made.

Terry Lanagan
Executive Director of Educational Services

Wards Affected: All

Appendix: None

Background Papers: Health Check Review of the Department of Educational Services

Persons to Contact: Ken Graham
Manager - Lifelong Learning
Educational Services
19 Poplar Road
Dumbarton
Tel: 01389 608047

ken.graham@west-dunbarton.gov.uk