

## **Libraries Modernisation Review**

### **Summary**

This paper updates members on recent developments in the DCMS' Libraries Modernisation Review, and seeks comments on the LGA position.

### **Recommendations**

That members note the recent developments in this area and provide a steer on next steps as requested in paragraph 6.

### **Action**

Subject to members' comments, officers to take forward suggested actions.

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## **Libraries Modernisation Review**

### **Background**

1. On 9 October 2008 the DCMS announced a modernisation review of public libraries. The LGA, along with partners in Museums, Libraries and Archives and Librarians' professional associations wrote to Margaret Hodge offering support for the review and seeking to ensure a central role for local partners. Following the Autumn re-shuffle, the review is now being taken forward by Barbara Follett.
2. The LGA was subsequently asked to represent councils on the review programme board and to nominate sector representatives to its workstreams, which are:
  - Digital services and information literacy
  - A skilled and responsive workforce
  - Capturing the Impact of library services
  - A Community-led service
  - Funding Innovation
3. All five workstreams have now concluded their initial investigations. Outputs from this work have been communicated to the DCMS review team. The programme board is now engaged in developing a "vision" for the public library service to shape the review's further work. A ministerial roundtable is planned for 20 January 2009 which the Chair of the LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport board will attend.

### **Progress**

4. The review has made limited progress so far. At first, we concentrated our efforts on ensuring that the review's terms of reference did not call into question the local democratically-accountable library service, and that it would build on existing excellent practice in council-run libraries. It remains a struggle to keep this focus on a positive vision for the future rather than on identifying problems – staff restructuring or local reprovisioning - which may not, in fact, be anything of the kind. The government remains keen to bring the review to a conclusion in the spring. The Ministerial round table on 20 January will be an important landmark in setting the review's direction of travel.
5. Our own contribution to the recent visioning discussion will be circulated at the meeting. The Board will be updated on progress again at future meetings.

# 23 4

## **Recommendations**

6. The Board is invited to comment on the headings set out in our contribution to the recent visioning discussion and give a steer on where the emphasis of our contribution should lie over the coming weeks.

## **Financial Implications**

7. This work can be managed from existing resources.

## **Implications for Wales**

8. The Libraries Modernisation Review applies only to England.

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