

Appendix 1

Brent Community Libraries: Working Together

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Brent Council and four Brent Community Libraries: Barham Library, Cricklewood Library, Kensal Rise Library and Preston Community Library

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Brent Council is developing a strategic approach to working with community libraries in the borough. The intention of this document is to recognise the positive partnership work currently taking place between the Council and the four Community Library groups operating in Brent, and express a commitment to continue developing this relationship.

1.2 Secure premises are integral to the existence of community libraries. The current premises for the community libraries are:

- Barham Library, 660 Harrow Road, Wembley HA0 2HB (15 year lease with Brent Council acting in its capacity as a corporate trustee of the Barham Park Trust)
- Cricklewood Library, 152 Olive Road, London NW2 (999 year lease being finalised as of January 2017)
- Kensal Rise Library, Bathurst Gardens, London NW10 5JA (999 year lease being finalised as of January 2017)
- Preston Community Library, 2 Carlton Avenue East, Wembley HA9 8PL. It currently has a temporary lease arrangement but Brent Council holds the freehold and is committed to working with Preston Community Library towards the existence of the community library on this site on a long term basis.

1.3 The provisions set out below represent the potential areas of co-operation and collaboration and are not intended to be prescriptive or compulsory. The Council is committed to offering the support set out below and it will be the decision of each Community Library as an autonomous organisation to take up the offers of interest to them. Signing the document represents an agreement to work in partnership to achieve the objectives of this memorandum in developing the local community sector and to increase cultural opportunities and activity in the borough.

2.0 Background

2.1 There are currently four active community library groups in Brent which have been operating for a number of years. Two of the libraries, Preston and Barham Park, both currently have open premises from which to deliver their services. Cricklewood and Kensal Rise libraries have leases on premises within new developments and are due to open to the public in late 2017.

2.2 Each community library has their own business plan and objectives for their services but work together in partnership and continue to support each other. They all share a commitment to deliver access to books and learning, study space, computers and cultural activities. They have a strong focus on contributing to improving the wellbeing

of residents in the borough and contribute significant social value through their activities.

- 2.3 This is demonstrated through examples such as:
- a successful partnership between Barham Park Library and a local theatre organisation - with rehearsal and performance space on the site
 - hosting of a wide range of classes and events such as a popular film club at Preston Community Library
 - the creation of a significant number of volunteering opportunities for residents to gain skills and employment experience.
- 2.4 Our aim is to make Brent a great place to live and work. The Council is currently working to build on its successes to date while developing a much sharper focus on services designed around the individual and on creating better outcomes for those residents with more complex circumstances. Our vision for Brent in 2020 is centred on five key priorities: Employment and skills, Regeneration, Business and housing growth, Demand management and Raising income. These will have a more significant impact on improving local people's opportunities and life chances. We have selected these priorities based on the key issues facing the borough and on the findings of community engagement activities. We are working more closely across Council services and externally with partners and communities to deliver our vision.
- 2.5 There is a clear opportunity for the work of the Community Libraries to support the Council's vision and the goals of its Culture service, as well as for the Council to support the development of the Community Libraries - as demonstrated through the informal partnership working which has been taking place since autumn 2015. This has taken the form of quarterly meetings for sharing advice, policies and sector information; joint public events; support for funding applications and site visits to the community libraries by Council library officers to advise on design and layout.
- 2.6 The Council is committed to working with and supporting the work of the four community library groups to continue providing social value and to deliver the objectives set out in this document.

3.0 Purpose of the MoU

- 3.1 To clearly set out and formalise the working relationship between the Council and the Community Libraries.
- 3.2 To support community and voluntary sector development, making best use of and within the confines of existing Council resources.
- 3.3 To contribute to the Council's strategic priorities which make up its Brent 2020 Vision, through increased access to culture and learning opportunities.

4.0 Principles of collaboration

- 4.1 The key partners in the MoU will be Brent Council, primarily the Culture Service, and Community Library representatives.
- 4.2 Partners will communicate openly about any opportunities, issues or concerns related to the working relationship.
- 4.3 The offers set out below are not compulsory for each Community Library to adopt but represent the scope of what is available from the Council.

- 4.4 No formal reporting mechanisms are required in the general terms of the MoU. Should any reporting be required as part of one or more of the offers below, such as through joint campaign programmes, this will be agreed on a case by case basis.
- 4.5 This MoU reflects the current position of the Council and the four Brent Community Libraries. In the event of any significant change in either position impacting on the MoU this will be communicated to the other parties as soon as possible for consultation and review.
- 4.6 This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MoU. The assistance and support provided by the Council to Brent Community Libraries is in the exercise of its discretionary powers and over and above its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.
- 4.7 The autonomy and responsibilities of each Party will not be affected by this MoU. This includes any losses and operational risks which may arise through each Parties actions. There is limited direct financial investment required through the offers set out below and unless otherwise arranged, each Party will bear their own costs and expenses incurred through participation in this MoU.
Examples could include:
- Where Community Libraries choose to jointly deliver a reading campaign for which there is a discount on bulk purchased resources, these will be purchased by the Council and the Community Libraries will contribute the cost of their requested resources.
 - Where advice is given by the Council on suppliers which a Community Library then decides to purchase from, the cost and any associated liability will be the responsibility of the Community Library.
- 4.8 Four key areas of mutually beneficial partnership working have been identified, as detailed in sections 5.0- 8.0 below.

5.0 Stock and resources

Brent Council Officers will offer:

- The option for Community Libraries to buy in to any joint purchase of reading campaign resources where this would be mutually beneficial
- Access to the e-library via the Brent website on any public computers
- Outreach loan collection to all libraries where requested
- Advice on stock layout and presentation
- Contacts for suppliers within the sector including library design and supply companies
- To share policies on stock and management systems.

Brent Community Libraries will:

- Promote membership of the Council's library services
- Provide access to the Council's library service catalogue on public internet access computers.

6.0 Operational advice and guidance

Brent Council Officers will offer:

- Invitations to training sessions delivered by the Council library service where relevant and appropriate
- Quarterly group meetings with the Brent Library Management team
- Sharing of key policy documents where the information is not sensitive
- Signposting to appropriate safeguarding training, sharing of information on compliance with Local Safeguarding Children's Board Guidance, Policies and Procedures
- Publicity to be displayed in Brent libraries free of charge where there is capacity
- Information on the Brent Council website – either directly through the library pages, subject to conditions, or via the community directory
- Option for self-listed community events on the Brent website.

Brent Community Libraries will:

- Ensure compliance with safeguarding responsibilities
- Provide information on the Council's library service offer to customers.

7.0 Information Technology

Brent Council Officers will offer:

- Signposting to open sources of LMS (Library Management System)
- Negotiation on simplified LMS for community library use as part of the current procurement process for a new system
- An initial advice and guidance session, to advise on applications and systems the Library service are already using.

8.0 Grant funding and Community engagement

Brent Council Officers will offer:

- Opportunities to promote the community libraries at joint public events
- Support in bids for relevant grant funding.

Brent Council Officers and the Community Libraries will jointly:

- Share relevant contacts with community groups and organisations where appropriate to meet the objectives of the partnership.

9.0 Implementation Process

9.1 The implementation of this MoU will be based on a continuation of the partnership arrangements already taking place, as referenced in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.6 of the background section of this MoU. This process will involve:

- Ongoing quarterly meetings led by the Lead Member, the Council's library management team and representatives of each community library

- Individual meetings between Council officers and representatives of specific community libraries if required to arrange local implementation of any of the above offers
- Ongoing communication for the sharing of documents, policies and other information
- Annual advisory visits by members of the Brent Council library management team to each community library to consult on design, layout, stock presentation etc.

10.0 Review of MoU

- 10.1** The view in formalising the partnership working between the Council and the Community Libraries is to provide a framework for a long term relationship. However in light of changing circumstances within the local government and culture sector, the initial duration of the above arrangement is 3 years before a full review will take place. However, any significant change in the position of either Party in advance of that date which may affect the MoU will be raised for discussion with all Parties at the earliest date as and when the matter arises.