

**Management Response to the Internal Audit Report –
Libraries Judicial Review
January 2015**

In reflecting on the management response to the audit report, I would wish to outline the process followed between the Judicial Review and the decision made by Executive on 3 February 2015. Whilst this process did not have benefit of the report, I would reflect that many of its recommendations were implemented. Particular examples I would outline are:-

1. The need to approach the problem with openness as to the possible solutions or options.

This was addressed through specifically seeking alternatives by contact with a range of stakeholders with views to offer as under:-

- Customers and staff of the service;
- Executive and Opposition Councillors;
- Campaigners and opponents to change;
- Other providers of library services and other library authorities.

2. The proper engagement of a wide range of expertise in considering options and approaches was established through a multi-disciplinary steering group.

This group conceptualised, designed and approved all steps of the project, including supporting analysis of the input from the stakeholders described above.

3. Establishing proper tools and frameworks to test options against.

A range of tools and frameworks were developed and applied at various stages of the option appraisal work. These included:-

- Thematic frameworks through which to analyse public views;
- A core objective framework to shortlist more detailed proposals;
- The regulatory framework provided to consider potential Right to Challenge expressions of interest.

4. Developing a clear overall framework for appraisal of final options.

In this case the domains set were:-

- compliance with the Council's legal responsibilities;
- the certainty of affordability of the options; and
- the sustainability of the options in the prevailing conditions.

The two main proposals were evaluated against these domains. Where the appraisal of options presented no obvious conclusion, officers' expert judgement was applied. Where this was the case, this was fully described when the work was presented to decision makers.

It is worth reflecting that some of the steps of the kind of best practice process recommended by the report were not delivered in the work described. For example, the step of engaging decision makers and others at long listing stage was not carried out. This was because a preferred option to use as a reference model for option appraisal had already been selected.

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