

**Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place**

Report to:	<b>Councillor C N Worth - Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services</b>
Date:	<b>Between 24 February and 5 March 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Extension to the Greenwich Leisure Ltd Library Contract</b>
Decision Reference:	<b>I021919</b>
Key decision?	<b>No</b>

**Summary:**

This report seeks approval for the extension of the library contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd, in line with the original terms of the contract. This would bring the termination date to 31 March 2026.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services:-

- (1) Approves the extension of the library contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd for a period of five years in accordance with the contract terms; and
- (2) Delegates to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Culture and Emergency Services, authority to determine any changes to existing contracts necessary to give effect to the running of the Library Service.

**Alternatives Considered:**

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| 1. | The alternative is to bring the service back in house as of 01 April 2021. This would include bringing the newly transferred IT back in house also. |
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**Reasons for Recommendation:**

1. Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) have continued to provide an excellent library service for their initial contract term, investing in the sites and bringing new innovative methods for engaging with the customers. GLL have expanded the audiences who utilise the libraries and have grown interactions even through closure periods and the global pandemic.

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| <p>2. In approving the extension period, this will enable the newly installed IT and solutions to be embedded within the service for the next five years.</p> |
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## **1. Background**

The Council's Library Service is managed and delivered by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL). When the service was procured in 2016, the original contract period for the library contract was 1 April 2016 until 31 March 2021, with one extension period for a further five years on the same terms, until March 2026, included within the contract.

There have been no concerns with GLL's ability to deliver the contract and there have been no requirements to intervene. GLL has invested within the sites, on an aesthetics perspective but also technological. Whilst some key performance indicators (KPIs) have not been achieved in the initial contract period, these have been linked to the aging IT that was available at sites and customer needs not being achieved as a result.

On 9 July 2020, the Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services approved the transfer of delivery of IT services for libraries to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), in order to improve the service to be able to deliver the required levels of performance and meet customer expectations.

The extension to the GLL contract until March 2026 is fundamental in realising the benefits of the transfer of IT to GLL. An extension of the GLL library contract for a period of five years will provide value for money and ensure that the economies of scale secured from the transfer of the IT and the resulting cost efficiency is maintained.

The installation of the new IT has been widely welcomed by customers and although it has not long been available, customers are already altering their behaviour and are grateful of the new uses that the changes have enabled. This has been paramount throughout the last year with the restrictions that Covid-19 brought. Customers could still print without needing to use the library PCs.

Without the extension period being granted, this would mean all the IT transferred to GLL in 2020, would need to be returned in house by the County Council in advance of March 2021, alongside the delivery of the wider library service.

GLL's financial reports illustrate, in spite of Covid-19 and the interruption to business experienced as an organisation, the steps GLL has taken to preserve financial stability and plan for recovery. Although GLL's projections are built on a set of assumptions in an environment that continues to change as a result of the pandemic, there are no immediate concerns which are expected to impact on GLL's ability to deliver the library contract across Lincolnshire. This situation will continue to be monitored through normal contract management processes.

## **2. Legal Issues:**

### Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council 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 the 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.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

There should be no specific equality implications arising out of the continued delivery of the library service by GLL in itself. The service will continue to be available to the public without regard to protected characteristics.

Access to library stock, services and equipment is important for sections of the community who would not otherwise have access to such information or equipment which can include groups with a protected characteristic, including older people; people with a disability; people whose first language is not English; and mothers of young children.

### Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health & Well Being Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

Access to library stock, services and equipment is important for sections of the community who would not otherwise have access to such equipment and can help such people to access information and services, which help them to increase health and wellbeing and address such factors as isolation which may adversely impact on wellbeing.

### Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

There is not expected to be any direct impact of the proposed decision on crime and disorder matters. The Library Service has a good relationship with local Police Community Support Officer teams and supports the Police with any enquires over potential misuse of IMT equipment.

### **3. Conclusion**

The library contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) performs well and has recently been varied to include the provision of IT by GLL which is proving successful.

The continuation of the contract for a further five years in accordance with the contract terms will enable the successful service to continue and for the benefits of investment in the IT to be realised.

#### **4. Legal Comments:**

The Council has the power to extend the contract which is specifically provided for within the contract.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor.

#### **5. Resource Comments:**

Funding for the library contract is budgeted for within the Council's approved Revenue Budget and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the normal budget setting process.

#### **6. Consultation**

##### **a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?**

n/a

##### **b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

##### **c) Scrutiny Comments**

The proposal has not been considered by a scrutiny committee.

##### **d) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/a

#### **7. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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