

Communities Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Library and Information Service – Performance Sets (music sets)
Date of meeting:	11 May 2016
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Communities and Environmental Services
Strategic impact This report provides Communities Committee with an update on discussions between the Library and Information Service and representatives of music groups in the County which are aimed at developing a sustainable music sets library service for the future.	

Executive summary

The Library and Information Service delivers a music sets service to music groups in Norfolk. This involves lending out multiple copies of a piece of music so that every performer can have their own copy. If there are not sufficient copies of the music in our own collection we make arrangements to borrow further copies from other library services. This is called an inter-library loan.

Earlier this year it was proposed to stop the inter-library loan facility to make staff and administration savings. This caused significant concern for music groups across Norfolk.

Discussions have been held between the library service and representatives from music groups to explore how we can maintain the current range of provision and deliver a cost-neutral and sustainable service in the longer term.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee authorises officers to continue to explore opportunities for developing an efficient and effective way of delivering a music sets service that is cost neutral.

1. Proposal

- 1.1 The library and information service delivers a music sets service to music groups in Norfolk. This involves lending out multiple copies of a piece of music so that every performer can have their own copy. If there are not sufficient copies of the music in our own collection we make arrangements to borrow further copies from other library services. This is called an inter-library loan. In the 2014/15 budget round, and following public consultation, it was agreed by Councillors that the performance sets service would be stopped or scaled back. The library service increased charges in an attempt to 'scale back' and to make the performance sets service self-financing as this service is not a statutory part of library provision. In the two years since the charges increased, the service has not been able to cover its costs, which include £10,000 for staffing per year.
- 1.2 As reported in the Member update of 26th February 2016, it was proposed to make a saving on staff time at the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library by reducing the service currently provided for the loan of music sets to orchestral groups and choirs.
- 1.3 It was proposed that from June 1st 2016, Norfolk Library and Information

Service (NLIS) would no longer borrow items on 'inter library loan' from other library services for customers, as this is the element of the service that required the most staff input. Music sets that were in stock in the Norfolk Library catalogue would continue to be loaned to customers.

- 1.4 Following communication of this change in service, a number of music groups made contact with the service and with elected members to express their concern at the detrimental impact this reduction in service would have.
- 1.5 At a recent meeting with music groups, they were keen to stress the important contribution that music can make to communities and to supporting NCC priorities. They expressed concern that without the current range of facilities of the music sets service, many music groups would struggle to source sufficient sets of affordable music for their performances which would impact on their ability to hold performances. In turn the service would start to suffer if there were no further investment in its development.
- 1.6 A recent short survey of the 82 music groups that regularly use the music sets service showed that, of the groups that replied, membership numbers range from 20 – 250. Groups give between one and six performances per annum with audience numbers ranging from 50 to 600 people.
- 1.7 The benefits of amateur or community engagement with music are multi-layered:
 - Making music is relaxing and stress-busting, and makes participants feel better about themselves. In scientific terms, there is now a growing body of research which shows that this can amount to better physical and mental health, thus saving the NHS and social services money.
 - People of any age and ability can make music. It can therefore help bring communities together across generations, social classes, income brackets, disabled and not disabled. An obvious benefit is that it reduces loneliness and social exclusion, which are a very real cost to local services. Music groups can also help generate pride in a place and community, helping to transform an area into somewhere people want to live and feel safe and connected in.
 - Making music not only raises health and wellbeing generally for all kinds of individuals, it can actually provide cost effective support for people with a range of chronic conditions. There is scientific evidence to prove these effects.

2. Progress

- 2.1 A meeting with representatives from a number of music groups in Norfolk was held on 16th March 2016. The Head of Service agreed to explore potential ways to retain the inter library loan service while the music group representatives agreed to help the service by raising money to cover the running costs for the coming year.
- 2.2 To date £300 has been raised by two groups – the Framingham Earl Singers and the Wymondham Symphony Orchestra, which is a positive start to meeting the costs.
- 2.3 Senior library staff have visited Nottingham City Council which has recently

started to operate a service on behalf of 4 authorities using a bespoke IT system. The council has achieved economies of scale by working with three other library services. Work has begun to develop a business case to explore whether Norfolk can, and should, adopt the same ICT system.

- 2.4 Arrangements are in place to have early discussions with other authorities in the Eastern Region about whether efficiencies can be made by services working more closely together.
- 2.5 Preliminary discussions have been held with the Library Service's Library Management System supplier to investigate the possibility of bespoke amendments to the existing system to increase efficiencies. More detailed specification work is required.
- 2.6 A further meeting of music group representatives was held on 22nd April at which there was a very positive discussion about how we can work together, including developing more active promotion of the service by music groups as greater use of the service will help to deliver the income targets.
- 2.7 It was also agreed at the meeting to develop a Music Sets Service Friends group which can act as a focus group for service developments as well as helping to suggest ways of increasing income and use.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The music sets service currently costs around £10k a year. The income in 2015/16 was £3,141.
- 3.2 A commitment has been made by music groups to help to cover the costs for 2016/17.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1 The issue for the coming year is covering the costs in 2016/17 while the service makes other budget reductions at the Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library. It is also quite possible that delivery of budget reductions by working with other library services, or through improvements in the ICT system cannot be realised within the coming 12 months and that there will be a need to cover costs for a longer period.
- 4.2 The library service will work closely with music groups to ensure that the commitment to help raise funds is delivered. It will also seek to identify an alternative saving to help to cover any deficit in fund raising so that the existing music sets service can be maintained while a new delivery model is developed.

5. Background

- 5.1 [Communities Committee Fortnightly News Update – 26 February \(Annex D pages 45 to 53\)](#)

<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/sidney-de-haan-research-centre/research-projects/>

<http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/resources/research>

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/>

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

Officer name : Jennifer Holland

Tel No. : 01603 222272

Email address : Jennifer.holland@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.