

Communities Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Norfolk Library and Information Service – update on Music Sets service
Date of meeting:	25 January 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact This report provides Communities Committee with an update on progress made by Norfolk Library and Information Service (NLIS), in partnership with music groups based in Norfolk, to secure a future for the Performance Sets (Music Sets) service.	

Executive summary

The NLIS delivers a Performance, or 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 insufficient copies of the music in our own collection we make arrangements to borrow further copies from other library services - an inter-library loan. In 2016 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 local music groups, with other library services in the Eastern Region and the NLIS Library Management System Supplier to explore how we can maintain the current range of provision and deliver a service in the longer term.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee note the activity achieved to date and authorises officers to continue to explore and develop opportunities for developing an efficient and effective way of delivering a Performance Sets service.

1. Proposal

- 1.1. The NLIS delivers a Performance, or Music, Sets service to music groups in Norfolk. 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 (Communities Committee [meeting May 2016](#)). 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.
- 1.2. As reported in the Member update of 26 February 2016, it was proposed to make a saving on staff time 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, 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 requires 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 impact of this reduction in service.

- 1.5. At a 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 Performance Sets service, many music groups would struggle to source sufficient sets of affordable music, impacting on their ability to hold performances. In turn the service would start to suffer if there was no further investment in its development.

2. Progress Since May 2016

- 2.1. A number of meetings have been held with representatives from a range of music groups in Norfolk. As a result of these meetings, a Music Library Friends group has been set up. The Music Library Friends constituted itself in Autumn 2016 and the group's priority is to raise funds to contribute to the costs of the running of the service. The aim is that the funds, when added to the income raised from loans in a full year of operation, the service becomes cost neutral.
- 2.2. By contacting Performance Sets Service customers, along with other choirs and orchestras in the county via the organisation 'Making Music', the Friends group has been working hard to raise the profile of the service and rally the support that is needed to keep the service running.
- 2.3. A WordPress 'blog' site - <https://normuslibfriends.wordpress.com> - along with an active Twitter account @normuslibfrens have been set up and are maintained by the group following training delivered by Library Service staff.
- 2.4. The group has been actively fundraising for the service through collections taken at rehearsals and performances by the orchestras and choirs who are customers. In November, the group raised funds through a sponsored 24 hour piano playing marathon in St Peter Mancroft Church. The press release issued about this high-profile activity resulted in interest from both BBC Norfolk and the Eastern Daily Press. December saw the Friends making a collection in the Forum for their Carol singing. The Friends Chair, Peter Lawson, has also been interviewed on Future Radio.
- 2.5. To date £1,762 has been banked and a further £1,140 raised as detailed above making a total of over £2,900.
- 2.6. Discussions have been held with other authorities in the Eastern Region about whether efficiencies can be made by services working more closely together. A number of authorities have expressed an interest and are watching developments.
- 2.7. A shared technical specification aimed at increasing the ability of customers to self-serve has been drawn up in conjunction with Hertfordshire Library and Information Service, in preparation for a meeting to be held in January 2017 with Civica (the Library Service's Library Management System supplier) to develop bespoke amendments to the existing system to increase efficiencies.
- 2.8. Preliminary discussions have been held with Arts Council England (ACE) about the possibility of funding the work. ACE will only fund developments that have the potential to be adopted countrywide.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. The notional costs of managing the Performance Sets services is estimated to

be around £10k of staff time. The original planned savings for the Millennium library have been delivered through staff reductions in other areas, and therefore the cost of the service forms part of the overall library budget.

Income to date in 2016/17 is £2,000, compared with £3,141 in the whole of 2015/16.

- 3.2. A commitment has been made by music groups to help to cover the costs for 2016/17 and future years.

Further efficiencies in the management of the inter-library loan arrangements, as highlighted in paragraph 2.6 would help make the process more cost-effective and reduce the amount of staff time required manage the operation.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. It is possible that delivery of budget reductions by working with other library services, or through improvements in the ICT system may not 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 continue to work closely with the Music Library Friends 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 Performance Sets service can be maintained while a new delivery model is developed.

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:

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