

Question:

Westborough Community Association will not be running Westcliff Library. What is the Council's alternative plan if a community group does not come forward to run either Westcliff or Southchurch Library?

Response:-

Throughout the Library Review, the Working Party has sought to provide future options for the service that involves the safeguarding of a branch network for Southend-on-Sea. It is recognised and acknowledged that the introduction of new ways of operating the library service will be both a challenging and learning experience for the Borough; as it has been for many of the other Local Authorities who have gone through a similar process. There are many examples nationally of how Community Libraries have been implemented from which we can learn.

Implementation of the Cultural Advisory Working Party's proposals will be reliant on the support of the local community through volunteering. We would need to ensure that the forms or style of the management for Southchurch and Westcliff reflects local requirements and addresses issues of capacity unique to each area.

The responses to the consultation on the proposals within the Draft Library Development Strategy are currently being analysed. The responses will be fully considered by the Cultural Advisory Working Party and will help to inform the recommendations they will be putting forward to Cabinet on 5th November. The Working Party will be adopting a pragmatic approach to identifying a realistic solution for each of the branches; including Southchurch and Westcliff and have noted Westcliff Community Association's intention not to take on responsibility for managing Westcliff Library.