

# Libraries and Archives What's happening?

The Cabinet report on the future of libraries and archives is now available to the public ahead of the Cabinet on Tuesday 16th July. We have copies in all libraries to take and it is available online and on our website.

The Cabinet is a public meeting and you can access it in a number of ways

- The meeting will be live streamed on the internet [www.york.gov.uk/webcasts](http://www.york.gov.uk/webcasts) . We will also be showing it at Acomb and York Libraries so everyone can watch the debate and the decision.
- The meeting also has a twitter feed for comments. Use the hashtag #CYCwebcast
- In person. 5.30pm The George Hudson Board Room , First Floor West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA
- If you wish to speak at the meeting then you should register by phoning Democratic Services on 01904 551088 or emailing [democratic.services@york.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@york.gov.uk) no later than 5pm on the day before the meeting

## The Proposal

We are proposing that we form a Community Benefit Society (CBS) with charitable status to deliver York Libraries and Archives.

This would be called Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual, branded as Explore Libraries and Archives, with the strap line of 'Knowledge and Ideas for Everyone'.

The Libraries and Archives staff who will form the CBS believe that not only is it a viable proposition, capable of maintaining the current service, but that it represents an exciting and enterprising route to developing new forms of service provision.

We are seeking agreement and a five year contract from the Council. The CBS will work in close partnership with the Council to support the provision of a range of services from engaging with its communities, facilitating adult learning, getting people on line, promoting the health and wellbeing agenda, to supporting vulnerable people, e.g. housebound people and people with mental health issues.

## What will the new CBS provide?

Our focus will be on providing a 21st century library service and a world class archive and local history service. We are committed to keeping all libraries open with paid staff in every one.

### Reading and Literacy:

- Promoting the joy of reading
- Provide free books to borrow of all formats for all ages
- Support for adult literacy
- Summer Reading Challenge and other children's reading events
- Support reading through Reading Groups, Big City Read and author events
- Access to any book ever printed through our reservation service

### Learning and Skills:

- Unique flexible learning centres that allow people to learn at their own pace in their own time
- Quiet study spaces
- Access to information on learning and skills opportunities
- National inter library loan scheme offering access to all published material to support adult learning
- Mint Yard Lectures
- Informal learning programme
- Provide free access to the Internet and free printing as part of the children's homework offer

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[explore.york.libraries.and.archives](https://www.facebook.com/explore.york.libraries.and.archives)  
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## Reference and Information:

- Free, Impartial information and advice on any and all subjects
- Free access to Ancestry.com in libraries
- Free access remotely to a range of online reference sources e.g. OED, Oxford reference books, COBRA (business information), Theory Test Pro, Newsbank
- Free access to newspapers and magazines in print and online
- Supporting the business of the council. We provide a service to other council departments giving expert advice and records management and ensuring the sustainability of the historic archive
- Access to local and national government information

## Digital Inclusion:

- All of our services available online – renewing, reserving, joining etc.
- Getting you online for free and supporting your learning
- Workshops on internet safety and the benefits on being online
- E-lending of digital and audio books, with remote access
- Social networking interaction/ engagement opportunities
- A library app to allow full access to all library digital services from mobile devices
- Digital services that work with a range of assistive technology such as speech programmes or magnifiers.
- Free internet access for all and free WiFi in all libraries
- Training in digital information literacy to make the most of the internet, going beyond Google
- Access to digitised local archive and local history resources
- Access to online learning opportunities (citizenship & theory driving tests or language learning etc.)
- Discover mobile devices at our “technology petting zoos” where you have the chance to get hands-on experience with the latest tablets and e-readers

## Community Engagement:

- We are the only community space that is free, impartial, welcoming and open to all with a range of activities, newspapers, books, study spaces, free Wifi, computers to use.
- Supporting individuals to be active citizens and to have their say
- Enabling communities to engage with local democracy
- Providing space for other organisations to access local people

## How can I get involved

The CBS will be one third owned by staff and two thirds owned by the community. There will be a variety of ways to get involved:

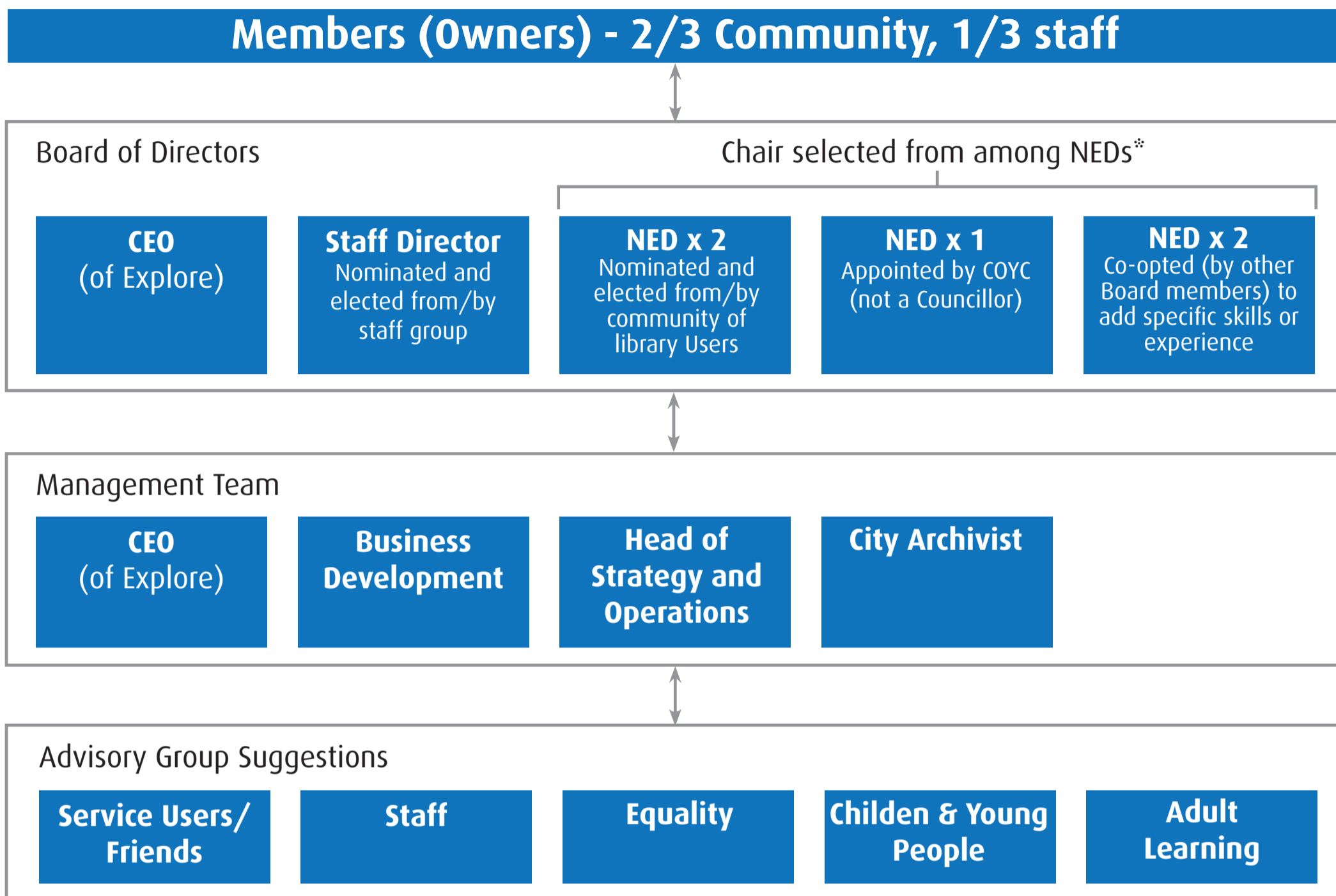
- As a Member of the CBS, with voting rights and the chance to be elected to the Board
- As a Volunteer, supporting paid staff
- As a Friend - we are setting up Friends groups to help us fundraise
- As a Director. wo members of the public will be elected to the Board, giving them direct influence on strategy and operations
- As a member of an Advisory Group, advising on specific areas such as disability or services to older people
- As a member of the library, using and enjoying our services
- As a member of staff, we will be providing job opportunities for all

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# Libraries and Archives **What's happening?**

## How the organisation will be governed



## Funding and Income

The main portion of funding £2.4million will come from the Council. Explore will develop our culture of innovation and enterprise. A growth strategy will be implemented to drive income generation with all staff working to achieve our targets. A Business Development Manager will be appointed to find new income streams and develop existing ones. Below are the areas we are investigating:

- Extension of the reading café concept
- Room hire
- Adult Learning programmes
- Making it easy for people to donate books, money, time
- Friends groups supporting fundraising locally
- Community events, e.g. craft fairs, plant sales, coffee mornings
- Library shops
- Online merchandising using our Collections

Strensall and Dunnington Libraries are already beginning to adopt this enterprising model with increasing success.

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# Libraries and Archives **What's happening?**

## What about these other funding opportunities?

As a charity we will be able to apply for more funding than we can at present. This will be to deliver particular projects and add value. And ensure we can extend services to vulnerable people and communities. Our main funder will remain the Council as it meets its statutory duty to provide a library service and the legal requirements of its archive.

## Consultation and Engagement

We have spoken with lots of people and organisations over the last few months. This is what we have heard

- People are principally concerned about whether any changes would affect their local library, with worries about closures, reduction in opening hours and loss of staff frequently expressed
- There was some suspicion of the Council's motives, with a fear that the transfer to a mutual might enable the Council to make further cuts to the Libraries and Archives budget. A significant number of people wanted to understand more about the plan for financing the new organisation and were relieved when they understood that the Council would still be providing the bulk of the funding.
- When people understood that the proposal was led by staff rather than imposed by the Council they were much more inclined to view the idea positively.
- Many people recognised that the only alternative to making a change would be a managed decline in the current situation. From those who understood and accepted the need to innovate there was considerable interest in the proposed new model and a positive response to the idea of joint staff and community ownership, with many people enthusiastic about becoming actively involved.
- A minority of individuals expressed ideological opposition to any change from Council ownership to mutualisation.
- People were positive about the potential for members of the CBS to have a direct influence and create a more flexible and responsive service.
- There was also a small group who felt that they lacked information to say whether or not the change would be beneficial, and who do not understand why positive changes cannot be achieved under the current model.



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# Libraries and Archives **What's happening?**

## Staff Consultation

Over 70% of staff are in support of this proposal. We thought it would be good to hear from some of them about why that is.



**What are the positive reasons for making this change? How will being independent make things better?** "For me, a really important part of the change is about residents of the City and staff together making important decisions about Libraries and Archives. We will be accountable to the communities we serve, new initiatives will happen more quickly.

In addition, we will have the freedom to agree our own contracts and ways of delivering services. For example we wouldn't need to be tied into the same contractors that the Council uses for repairs. This means we could save money and do things more quickly as we would be cutting out the middle-man."

**Would you be considering this if you didn't have to make cuts?** "The discussions around spinning out of the Council began more than two years ago as we began exploring ways to take Libraries and Archives forward. That was before we were asked by the Council to reduce the amount we spend. Becoming a community benefit society will mean we can use our budget more efficiently. But the main aim is the same as it always has been: greater freedom so Libraries and Archives can thrive and keep on developing."

**Sarah**, Library Service Delivery Manager



**Can we have some more information about the money, with examples?** "We receive around £2.4m from the council to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service, and we will continue to receive funding to provide this statutory service.

After that the sky's the limit. We will have the freedom to develop new revenue streams. We have already identified areas where we can grow including developing what the Explore Cafes offer, offering a catering service and new cafes. We'll extend our room hire service to include online booking. We'll be developing a more enterprising culture in every library, giving staff and communities freedom to test and develop ideas locally."

**Anthony**, Reading & Learning Adviser Acomb and member of the project team



**How are you going to keep people informed and involved in the process?** "We've had displays up in every library and we've been talking to library users and also to the wider community, through a series of focus groups and by visiting every Ward Committee in York. It has been really fascinating to hear people's views and find out how important Libraries and Archives are to so many people. Their views will inform our work as we move forward.

This is the beginning though, not the end. In the coming months we will be stepping up our effort to keep people informed both in libraries and through networks in the community. But we want to move beyond just informing people. We want to ensure that anyone who wishes can play an active part in shaping Libraries and Archives. We shall be introducing friends groups in all our libraries, and organising more focus groups and other events so people can get involved. And don't forget that members of staff in every library are keen to hear your ideas and share their own, so please chat to us whenever you call in."

**Gillian**, Team Leader York and member of the project team

# Libraries and Archives What's happening?



**What will the changes look and feel like and how will it be different?** "I've worked for the council for over twenty years. It used to be a job for life, but things have changed. I am excited about becoming a social enterprise – I think it will make libraries and archives much more open to working with different groups and communities. It will give us a stronger sense of our own identity and we will feel much more free."

**Janet**, Team Leader York Explore



"Lots of the people who use Tang Hall library are enthusiastic about starting a Friends Group and we are going to start a coffee morning each week for people to get together and chat. I already feel that I'm going to have more freedom to make things happen and I'll be able to tailor my library to the needs and interests of my local community. I'm realistic about this: it's a new thing so I'm expecting some ups and downs, but right from the start I knew it was a journey I wanted to go on!"

**Julia**, Group Manager, Tang Hall Library



"I am extremely excited and supportive of the service becoming a community benefit society. I see this as a wholly positive opportunity for all libraries in the city – and for Strensall Library, it will enable business growth, individualism, imaginative income streams, partnership and greater community inclusion. I embrace the challenges that social enterprise will bring, but I firmly believe that social enterprise will allow Strensall Library to deliver a greater range of appealing and rewarding services and events to more people. It can't come quick enough for me!"

**Sarah**, Manager Strensall Library



"The most rewarding part of my job is seeing positive results as a consequence of decisions or actions that I have made. I'm looking forward to taking genuine ownership and responsibility for the future of the service. The onus is on us to remain at the hearts of our communities, but we are the best people for the job! In 2011 when I graduated as a librarian the majority of my peers disregarded public librarianship as redundant; it is endlessly joyful proving the contrary and I see being part of a community benefit society as giving our libraries a fighting chance, and I take pride in the fact that while libraries are closing up and down the country, in York we are opening new libraries!"

**Adrian**, Reference and Information Librarian

**As a community benefit society, Libraries and Archives would also be a charity. You asked us for some more information about this.**

"The money we receive through the council will pay for the day-to-day library and archive service, but we want to raise money for special projects to improve what we offer. I think that becoming a community benefit society would give us a big push towards more creative thinking about funding. More importantly it will give staff and customers freedom to say what they need, design projects, identify pots of money, apply for it and then make stuff happen. This would be part of the ethos of the society, always to be thinking: Who can we work with on that?"

**Victoria**, Civic Archivist

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