

Report Title:	Retendering of Library Stock Contract
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No – Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 September 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Louise Freeth, Assistant Director of Revenues Benefits Library and Resident Services Angela Huisman, Service Lead: Library and Resident Contact (Face to Face)
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report deals with the retendering of the Central Buying Consortium (CBC) contract, that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) has been part of since August 2010 for the supply of library stock, for two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 with the option to extend for a further two years.
2. It recommends that the Council remains a part of the CBC contract for the purchase of library stock and notes the tender process undertaken by CBC.
3. The expected minimum spend would be £200k over two years or £400k over four years. This is a reduction from the current spend of £340k over two years and £680k over four years in part because of RWBM's budget saving proposals and partly due to the expiry of external funding used to buy stock in previous years. If as part of the current budget drafting further funding for library stock can be found this spend could increase under the proposed delegation below to the Executive Director of Resources and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure. It should be noted that the proposed reduction in spend is still being negotiated with the lead authority for the consortium, so this carries an element of risk that the minimum spend proposed is not considered acceptable by them.
4. These recommendations are being made because the contract represents very good value for money for residents whilst offering a comprehensive choice of current books.
5. If renewed, the CBC contract will continue to offer very high discounts for library books with individual suppliers, which would not be possible if RBWM were to approach booksellers on its own.
6. The contract also includes all stock processing which means that books purchased under the contract are delivered pre-prepared for issue. Prior to being part of the consortium, the RBWM library service had an internal stock services team consisting of 8 members of staff who undertook the activities necessary to prepare books for issue. If RBWM were no longer to be part of the consortium, consideration would need to be given to reinstating such a team.
7. The CBC contract offers a central point of contract negotiation continuing to save RBWM the additional staffing resource that would be needed to complete this on a local basis within the Council.

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Notes the retender for the supply of library stock by the Central Buying Consortium under the compliant procurement process.**
- ii) Approves the Council continuing to remain an Associate Member of the Central Buying Consortium for the supply of library stock until 31 March 2028.**
- iii) Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure, to award the tender and exercise the optional extension until 31 March 2028 if CBC pursues the extension.**
- iv) Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for communities and Leisure, to consider increasing the proposed £100k minimum spend should the budgetary opportunity arise during the period of the contract.**

1. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table A: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Continue as an Associate member of CBC until 31 March 2028, note the re-tender exercise and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities to award the tender and exercise the optional extension of the new contract for up to two more years, until 31 March 2028 This is the recommended option	This arrangement has secured significant discounts for book stock for RBWM libraries which is excellent value for money. This is a compliant means of securing the required services, benefiting from commercial and administrative leverage derived from Consortium buying. This option also ensures all book processing is done by the supplier saving on significant staff costs.
Buy stock independently at local level.	Tendering for new contracts alone would involve significant staff resource from the service as well as from Legal and Procurement services. The comparatively very small amount of library stock RBWM requires is unlikely to lead to competitive pricing from suppliers. A stock service team, which was disbanded over ten years ago would need to be re-instated.
Seek to set up a new consortium with members of SELMS (the library management system consortium for which the Borough is the administrative lead)	Most of SELMS are already members of the CBC consortium. There would be costs involved in creating a new consortium and discounts are unlikely to be higher

Option	Comments
	for a smaller number of partners (14 in SELMS, 55 in CBC)
Do Nothing	The council would not be able to fulfil its statutory duty of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks sufficient in number, range and quality, to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 7(2) (a) and (b))

- 1.1 A robust open tender procurement process in compliance with West Sussex County Council's Procurement rules is due to be undertaken.

Membership of CBC provides significant discounts on the purchase of library stock which would not be possible with the lesser buying power of a single small library authority. Membership also reduces the costs associated with procurement.

Cabinet approved joining and continuing membership of the CBC library stock contract in 2010. As this offers excellent value for money, the Council has continued to approve associate membership of CBC and to take advantage of the contracts tendered and negotiated by CBC.

2. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The CBC contract represents excellent value for money as it requires no extra budgetary input but will provide continued savings.
- 2.2 Agreeing to the extension of the existing CBC contract will mean that RBWM Libraries can continue to offer the full statutory comprehensive and efficient library service to residents at a significantly reduced cost.

Table B: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Date of delivery
Discounts applied to new stock purchases	<20% discounts	20-49% discounts	>50% discounts	31 March 2024

3. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 3.1 The estimated spend for physical books via the CBC contract is, at present, approximately £170,600 per year. This proposal includes a recommendation to reduce this to £100,000 per year. The service includes delivery to individual

library locations with the books shelf-ready. The financial administration is managed via EDI (Electronic Data Interchange). As a consequence, there is no need for the council to employ its own Bibliographic Processing or Finance Team. Items are put through return on the self-issue kiosks on receipt and they are immediately shelf ready. Invoicing and payment is fully automated.

- 3.2 As an Associate Member authority using the CBC Library Book contract, RBWM will continue to be charged a 1% fee which is estimated to be £1,000 each year.
- 3.3 The contract is for two years plus an optional extension of a further two years. Were the extension to be utilised, the total spend over four years of the contract is estimated to be £400,000.
- 3.4 This report is to ensure the council secures the best possible discounts.
- 3.5 Library loans are estimated to reach over 700,000 for the current financial year.
- 3.6 Table C below shows how this spend compares with neighbouring authorities.

Table C.

Authority	Budget	Population	Average cost of stock per head of population
Slough	90K (was 220K before the S114)	158k	£0.56
West Berks	£171K	158k	£1.08
Reading	£85K	174k	£0.48
Wokingham	£78K	177k	£0.44
RBWM	£100K	150k	£0.66
Bracknell	£154K	124k	£1.24

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 CBC (Central Buying Consortium) was formed in 1991. It is a non-profit federation of 55 local authority members and associate members. Collective procurement spend is currently in excess of £5,000m with the authorities.
- 4.2 West Sussex is the Lead and Contracting Authority for the Library Supply contract and manages the contract on behalf of Members. At the point of tendering the contract a fully compliant procurement process was implemented.
- 4.3 The market is a specialist library supplier market with limited suppliers to choose from. However, the consortium ensures a robust process is followed with a competitive outcome.
- 4.4 The Council is enabled, by section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. The Council therefore has a general power to enter into contracts for the discharge of any of its functions. The contract will be

let in accordance with the Part 3 of the Council’s Contract Rules and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Cabinet may delegate approval to award the contract to specified officers.

4.5 Procurement have been consulted and their advice has been followed.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table C: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
There is a risk that the appointed supplier’s business fails which could result in no further supply of books...	Moderate	Low	No invoices are paid until after the stock is supplied		Moderate	Low
There is a risk that if the stock budget is cut spend is reduced causing the supplier to withdraw from the contract	Moderate	High	Several authorities are proposing spend reductions this year as a result of budget constraints so RBWM is not an outlier	Senior leaders are made aware of their statutory obligations under the Act	Moderate	Medium
There is a risk of performance failure on the part of the supplier resulting in books not being available to the public	Moderate	Medium	Monitor performance via consortium		Moderate	Low

6. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

6.1 **Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment is available as Appendix A. The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of equalities objectives, such as the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who

share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. The PSED should be considered by councils at all stages of bringing forward library proposals and should be demonstrably embedded in the decision-making process.

- 6.2 **Climate change/sustainability:** Items purchased against the CBC contract are purchased for multiple, repeated use by residents and therefore support the sustainability agenda. The library loan service encapsulates a recycling ethos, discourages single use approaches and provides residents with the opportunity to share resources while ensuring equality of access.
- 6.3 **Data Protection/GDPR:** The levels of discount offered by the contracted suppliers are commercially confidential and are not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 6.4 **Budget Reduction:** The proposed reduction in stock budget is likely to have an impact on the Council’s statutory obligation to secure, by the keeping of adequate stocks sufficient in number, range and quality, to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 7(2) (a) and (b)).
- 6.5 The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has a duty, under the Act, to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by councils in England and to secure the proper discharge by councils of their functions as library authorities. The Act also provides the Secretary of State with the statutory power to intervene and call a local inquiry when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service. What a comprehensive and efficient service means will differ between councils, and will depend on the needs of each area which must be ascertained by councillors:
- in consultation with their communities
 - through analysis of evidence around local needs
 - in accordance with their statutory duties
- 6.6 Library authorities are also required to provide DCMS with such information as the Secretary of State may require for carrying out their duties. DCMS expects councils considering changing their library service to inform the DCMS Libraries team about their proposals before public engagement or consultation. Library authorities should be able to demonstrate:
- plans to consult with local communities alongside an assessment of their needs (including any projections of need)
 - consideration of a range of options to sustain library service provision in their area
 - a rigorous analysis and assessment of the potential impact of their proposals

- 6.7 If a member of the public believes a council is in breach of its duties under the Act they can make an official complaint to the Secretary of State.
- 6.8 DCMS will consider each complaint on its own merits following careful consideration of a number of factors. These include:
- if there is any serious doubt or uncertainty that the council is (or may cease to be) complying with its legal obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service
 - if the council appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way
 - if the decision is (or may be outside) the proper bounds of the council's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community
 - if the council appears to have failed to consult affected individuals or to carry out significant research into the effects of its proposals
 - if the council has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals
 - if the local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy
 - if there is any other good reason why a local inquiry should be ordered

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 No public consultation has been carried out.

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation date if not called in:

Table D: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
1 April 2024	Renewal of CBC contract begins and runs until 31 March 2026 with optional extension until 31 March 2028

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 This report is supported by 2 appendices:
- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
 - Appendix B - Implications of Stock Budget Reduction

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 This report is supported by 0 background documents:

11. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources (S151)	18.09.23	19.09.23
Elaine Browne	Head of Law & Governance/ Interim Monitoring Officer	16.08.23 18.09.23	29.08.23 19.09.23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance/ interim S151 Officer		
Julian McGowan		16.08.23	18.08.23
<i>Mandatory: Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>			
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager	16.08.23 18.09.23	29.08.23 19.09.23
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	N/A	
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	16.08.23	16.08.23
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	16.08.23	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health		
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education		
<i>Heads of Service (where relevant)</i>			
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
<i>N/A</i>			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure	Yes
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Member(s) consulted		
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Angela Huisman, Service Lead: Libraries and Resident Contact (Face to Face) 01628 685641

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	Retendering of Library Stock Contract
Service area:	<u>Libraries</u>
Directorate:	<u>Resources</u>

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

CBC is a Consortium of 55 authorities who go out to tender together to secure excellent discounts for book stock.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) has been part of CBC since August 2010.

West Sussex manages the tender process and the contract which is a significant saving on RBWM staff resource.

The proposal is to re-procure the contract but to reduce this element of the library stock budget by just over 40% from £170,600 to £100,000pa.

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2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

Yes, because there will be a change in the number of physical items that can be purchased for library users to borrow.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal?

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

The adult fiction, adult non-fiction and children's stock budgets will each be reduced significantly spreading the impact over all sectors of the population who borrow or potentially will borrow physical library books.

There is a separate proposal to reduce the digital and special collections (e.g. Large Print) stock budget.

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

A high proportion of library users are young people and older people. Older people who use Large Print books will not be affected by the reduction in the CBC contract. Borrowers who use primarily digital services will also not be impacted. Both groups will however be impacted by the overall reduction in stock budget. With regard to the CBC contract, young people in particular will be impacted. The impact will be similar to those who primarily borrow adult fiction and adult non fiction but the consequences in terms of literacy levels may be much greater. The impact on health and wellbeing as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation will likely be felt across all user groups (see Appendix B)

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

No engagement or consultation has taken place.

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What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?
Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.

Comparisons to the other 5 Berkshire Library Authorities are tabled in the main body of the report.
National reports from CIPFA and DEMOS have been used in Appendix B

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	<p>Large numbers of children use the library. They are less likely to borrow from the digital offer than adults so will be more affected by a reduction in physical bookstock budget. Programmes targeted at children and young people, such as the Summer Reading Challenge, are very popular, and the demand for participation in the Challenge this summer resulted in a significant depletion in the stock available on shelves. A reduction in budget may limit the number of children who can meaningfully participate in the Challenge in future.</p> <p>The large print resources predominantly used by older adults will not be affected by this particular contract, although adult library users who borrow standard fiction and non fiction items may experience an</p>		√

	<p>impact from the reduction in stock budget. There is a significant body of evidence that demonstrates the impact of reading and library use on health and wellbeing and on reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. And overall budget reduction of this nature is likely to have a considerable impact.</p>		
Disability	<p>Large print resources, which may be more used by adults with visual impairment or learning disability, are not affected by this budget reduction, although disabled library users will be affected by the general budget reduction.</p>		
Sex	N/A		
Race, ethnicity and religion	N/A		
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	N/A		
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A		
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A		
Armed forces community	N/A		
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	<p>Free access to books is particularly important to those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are less likely to have books at home. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have also experienced the greatest impact to their literacy, school readiness and educational achievement as a result of the pandemic. There is a body of evidence that demonstrates the impact of participation of the Summer Reading Challenge on maintaining literacy levels over the Summer period. See Appendix B. A reduction in access to library stock, due to budget reductions, may have particular impacts on these groups.</p>		

Children in care/Care leavers	N/A		
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5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

<p>What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it? For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group</p>
<p>A greater reduction in adult books compared to children's books was considered but recent reductions and adjustments to the budget disproportionately impacted adult fiction so this option was rejected to ensure the service continues to meet the requirements of the legislation to meet demand.</p>
<p>Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
<p>Spend against the three area of stock will be closely monitored (Angela Huisman)</p>
<p>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future? See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.</p>
<p>If there is a complaint or challenge to DCMS or the local authority about not meeting demand then it may be necessary to move budgets from another source to ensure the Council's statutory obligations are met.</p>

6. Sign Off

<p>Completed by: Angela Huisman</p>	<p>Date: 30/08/2023</p>
<p>Approved by: Louise Freeth</p>	<p>Date: 18.09.23</p>

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

<p>Reviewed by:</p>	<p>Date:</p>
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Appendix B – Implications of Stock Budget Reduction

The Impact of Libraries and Reading on feelings of loneliness and social isolation and on children’s literacy levels

[Research into how libraries help people with loneliness and isolation | CIPFA](#)

The information was gathered in two ways: Council-led consultation with library users, and DCMS consultation with households via a household survey.

The findings suggest that it is the younger people in the community who experience feelings of loneliness rather than elderly people. This is especially true for those aged under 35, who are twice as likely as those aged 35 and over to always or often feel lonely or isolated.

The propensity for those with a disability or impairment towards feeling lonely is noted, ie they are four to five times more likely to answer always or often compared to those without a disability or impairment.

More than eight in ten respondents, who did state that they often or sometimes have feelings of loneliness, reported that the library helps to reduce these feelings. While those with a disability or impairment are more inclined to always or often experience feelings of loneliness, they are also more inclined to state that the library helps to reduce these feelings. Those aged 25-34 are most likely to experience a reduction in feelings of loneliness and isolation due to library use.

	Yes	No	No. of respondents
Does the library help to reduce your feelings of loneliness and isolation	81%	19%	1331
By Age Group			
16-24	60%		
25-34	90%		
35-49	87%		
50-64	88%		
65-74	89%		
75=+	83%		

A further report undertaken by Demos [A Society of Readers | Reading Agency](#)

1. Many people already use reading to ward off loneliness – and usually quite successfully, as studies find that regular readers tend to be less lonely.
2. Research found that 95 per cent of people who are blind or partially sighted read (through an audiobook, or another technology) at least once a week to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation.

3. The power of bookbased social contact is borne out by evaluations of reading programmes. In a national reading befriending programme including isolated and vulnerable older people, 88 per cent of participants appreciate the increased social contact from reading-inspired conversation.
4. Books have also been shown to be beneficial in supporting mental and physical health.
5. Reading significantly improves common symptoms of both depression and dementia.
6. Reading keeps the mind active, which may even delay the onset of dementia.
7. In addition, books can help us understand our own and others' conditions. For example, many public libraries and schools have a dedicated, signposted section with self-help books, memoirs and fiction to better understand conditions such as ADHD, anxiety and depression. 75 per cent of school pupils reported a better understanding of mental health after such a dedicated book collection on mental health and wellbeing was made available.
8. When it comes to social mobility, reading can work as a powerful boost to life chances. Reading for pleasure is one of the most important predictors of test scores at age 16, regardless of background. In fact, children from disadvantaged backgrounds who read often tend to score better than more privileged pupils who do not read at all. Reading and being read to from a young age sets some pupils up for a successful school career. Book gifting programmes, summer reading programmes and schemes to boost parents' engagement with books can all help. For example, school children on free school meals make 3 months' additional learning progress after receiving a summer book pack.
9. In terms of the social, political and financial pressures of current challenges, reading is no panacea. But upon review of the evidence, there is strong evidence that reading should be part of the solution.

The Summer Reading Challenge

Parents and carers reported the difference the Summer Reading Challenge made to their children who took part:

- 74% improved their reading skills
- 72% read more over the school holidays
- 66% feel more confident reading
- 61% said they enjoy reading more
- 73% used the library more as a family
- 75% agreed reading 'helped them feel better'

Analysis found statistically significant increases in reading frequency, reading enjoyment and reading confidence. Children who took part in the Challenge found

new books they enjoyed, developed their reading confidence, and were inspired to read more books over the summer.

The Reading Agency has undertaken research that shows that:

- Reading for pleasure is more important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education and is a more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background
- analysis from the Department for Education suggests that if all pupils in England read for enjoyment every day or almost every day, the boost to Key Stage 2 performance would be the equivalent of a rise of eight percentage points in the proportion achieving a level 4b (from its current level of 67% to 75%)
- Adults with lower levels of literacy are more likely to experience poor health