Local Members' Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

Friday 23rd January 2015 10:00 am

Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire (part 3)

Recommendation

1. To consider and comment on the proposed realigned model for the Library Service, set out in this report; to help to shape and influence the future library service so that it makes a more effective and relevant contribution to the lives of local residents.

Report of Michael Lawrence Cabinet Member for Children, Communities & Localism

Summary

2. To comment upon the revised model for Staffordshire Library Service.

3. To scrutinise the evaluation process which will be used to select community organisations that we will contract with to manage and deliver their local library service.

4. The Library Service welcomes comments from the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee which will feed into the proposals to Cabinet on 18th February 2015.

Report

Report Summary

5. To summarise the results of the public and collective consultation and to outline a proposed future model for the Library Service.

Background

6. The purpose of the report is to update the Select Committee on work that has taken place further to the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee meeting on 12 May 2014 to adapt and reposition the library service through Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire: Part 1 and Part 2, to outline the next steps which will be considered by Cabinet on 18 February 2015.

7. As outlined in Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire: Part 1 and Part 2, the way that people access information and learning, the way they

socialise and interact with each other or with organisations continues to evolve in the digital age.

8. On 18 December 2014 the DCMS Independent Library Report for England was published (Appendix 1). The report highlights the "sustained and severe financial situation" and the "rapid pace of current change" which is impacting on libraries across England.

9. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) statistics also published in December 2014 show that nationally visits to libraries fell by 2%, 2013-14 compared to 2012-13. In Staffordshire visits fell by 2.8%.

10. As identified nationally and experienced locally, expectations of libraries have and will continue to change and the way in which we are transforming Staffordshire's Library Service, working with communities and enhancing our online offer, is in line with the recommendations within the Independent Library Report. Continuing to transform our library service will enable it to remain a sustainable, relevant and valued part of the community.

11. The table below illustrates how library use in Staffordshire has changed between 2004-2014:

Staffordshire Libraries - Then & Now	2003-04	2013-14
Annual Visits	4,582,922	3,849,526
Total Issues of books, CDs & DVDs	5,353,840	3,407,390
Active Library Members who have borrowed an item in the last 12 months	186,881	105,534
Public PCs for the public to use	511	429
NetLoan Reservations (PC use per hour session)	408,718	536,510
Number of Libraries with free Wi-Fi	0	40
Virtual Visits	248,201	988,825
Children taking part in the Summer Reading challenge	Small scale local programme of summer activities	14,098
Reading Groups	Not known	119
Work Clubs	0	22
Volunteers	Volunteers supported the housebound service	20 established volunteer roles with 336 individual volunteers

12. Since 2008 Staffordshire Library Service has changed the way it operates to deliver £1.1 million of savings without any building closures or reductions of opening hours. This has been achieved, through the following:

a. Reducing management and support services
b. Introducing self-service
c. Reducing expenditure on CDs & DVDs

There is now a need to save £1.325 million by 2016/2017 as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). £325,000 per year has been saved so far, and a further £1 million will be realised if these proposals are approved. A saving of £350,000 against the mobile and travelling library service is currently under consideration as part of the 2014-2017 MTFS review, which is separate to this project and these required savings. The mobile and travelling library review will need to be considered in conjunction with the wider libraries review and will also require specific consultation with communities.

13. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 gives the County Council a statutory duty to provide "a comprehensive and efficient library service". The Council is also required to ensure that facilities are available for the borrowing of or reference to books, other printed materials, recorded music and films, of sufficient number, range and quality to meet the requirements of adults and children in the County Council's area. The Council must also encourage adults and children to make full use of library services, and lend books and other printed materials free of charge to those who live, work or study in the area.

14. The library offer in Staffordshire has been reviewed based on this commissioning context, the Arts Council England's report 'Envisioning the Library of the Future' and the Society of Chief Librarian's Universal Offers. The outcome of this review identified a tiered library offer.

15. On 18 June 2014 Cabinet agreed that we should consult on a tiered model for Staffordshire's library offer which included the following:

a. Library Extra
b. Library Core
c. Library Local
d. Library Plus

16. It was proposed that libraries that saw the most use by the public would remain directly managed and delivered by Staffordshire County Council. These 19 libraries were identified as Library Extra and Library Core.

17. Additionally, 24 locations that saw in total only 24% of the overall county use were proposed as forming Library Local. Here it was envisaged that through exploring a range of options, including working with communities to lead, manage and deliver the library service, it would provide the community with the opportunity to maintain or introduce services to meet their local need.

18. Enhancing the online library service would enable all library users to access information and library services at a time and place it is convenient to them. By consulting on these proposals library users and non library users were given the opportunity to influence the future design of this service.

Current Position - Public and Collective Consultation

19. During February 2014 a first engagement phase was held which began the conversation with communities and raised awareness that libraries need to change to better serve their needs. The findings from this exercise contributed to the development of initial proposals which were then subject to formal public consultation later in 2014.

20. The full Libraries public consultation took place between 16th July 2014 and 7th October 2014. The approach undertaken was based on a multi-faceted consultation plan, targeting different groups of interest in different ways in order to secure maximum involvement. This approach has delivered successful results, achieving a total of 4,255 responses to the survey and nearly 3,500 also engaging in organised public events. In addition feedback was received via letters, emails, social media, petitions and a young people's survey. A full summary and analysis of the public consultation can be found in Appendix 2.

21. The public consultation process ensured that the public/residents of Staffordshire, individuals, key stakeholders, including elected members, District and Parish Councils, CCG's, PCC, Schools and the voluntary and community sector, Library users, Library staff and potential users of the whole service had the opportunity to consider and comment on the plans and make their views known before final proposals were developed.

22. 31% of respondents agreed that the current proposals would safeguard the future of Staffordshire's Library Service while 34% disagreed. The main areas of concern raised were related to the proposed 'Library Local' offer. The principal concern related to the availability of and/or the skills of volunteers.

23. These views had been shared by Members of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee at their meeting on 12 May 2014 where Members expressed concern around the number of volunteers available, the time they would be able to give, how knowledgeable they might be in terms of supporting library users and their reliability.

24. The consultation invited views on all three categories of proposed physical static libraries: Library Extra, Library Core and Library Local. 28% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that libraries had been allocated to the correct categories and felt that services could be improved. 34% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, feeling that libraries had been allocated incorrectly. Concern was raised that the geographical spread of libraries (particularly of those allocated to the 'Library Extra' category) should be reconsidered whilst expressing concerns that it would not be feasible for 'Library Locals' to be run entirely by volunteers.

25. More than half (53%) of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the 'Library Extra' and 'Library Core' proposals however less than a third (30%) of overall respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the 'Library Local' proposal. The main concern with this proposal was that libraries could not be run by volunteers alone; consequently the most common suggestion was the need for access to a paid member of staff. It was felt that this, combined with support from volunteers could provide a workable solution.

26. To assess the level of untapped community capacity respondents were asked to what extent they might want to be involved in helping to run a community led library in their area. Approximately 20% of respondents said that they might want to be involved in helping to run a local community library 'a great deal' (4%) or 'a little' (16%). We plan to work with VAST and Support Staffordshire to expand community capacity, promote volunteering opportunities in libraries and support volunteers.

27. 24% of respondents stated the proposals would have a 'significant' effect on them and their families. Results of consultation have therefore been used to directly inform the CIA and have been considered in the development of a realigned model to ensure it minimises any potential negative impact on Staffordshire's communities.

28. In addition to the formal public consultation, 9 petitions with a combined 8,255 valid signatures were received in respect of Staffordshire's Library Service. See Appendix 3. These were acknowledged and debated at Full Council on 11 December 2014. As part of this debate an amendment was proposed by Councillor Maureen Compton for each library to have at least one professional member of staff. The amendment was seconded by Councillor George Adamson and debated, however was defeated with 23 votes for and 32 votes against.

29. Recognising Staffordshire County Councils proposals were at a formative stage and to ensure meaningful consultation with affected staff and their Trade Union representative's collective consultation commenced on 6th November 2014 in accordance with the Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

30. The initial focus of this consultation has been on the development of the model for the Staffordshire libraries service and the formation of final proposals in relation to the model.

31. Through the collective consultation process so far Staffordshire County Council has encouraged and supported affected staff to get involved in designing the new library service, providing the opportunity to present alternative proposals and new ideas.

32. The proposals received were detailed, high quality and presented a range of ideas. Within the proposals there were in excess of 80 ideas/suggestions including one proposal from Unison.

33. The key themes of the proposals put forward as part of the collective consultation have been as follows;

   a. **Closure**: consider reviewing poor performing libraries with a view to possible closure as a vehicle to deliver savings.
   b. **Resourcing**: consider retaining paid library staff capacity to provide a more tactical management to a cluster of libraries.
   c. **Mobile Service**: review the mobile library service in line with the static offer.
   d. **Branding**: remove the naming of Extra & Core.
   e. **Management**: review the management structure and level of authority given locally to empower each library to control their offer.

     f. **Opening hours**: consider seasonal opening hour changes and a general reduction of hours to mitigate redundancies.

     g. **Cost reduction**: multitude of options provided from environmental efficiencies, staff reductions, potential relocations and greater adoption of IT.

34. Submissions were assessed against the following criteria which were judged to make a proposal viable:

     a. The Critical Success Factors
     b. Contribution towards the delivery of £1.325 million savings
     c. Contribution towards the outcomes of the County Council
     d. The vision and values of the County Council

35. Where submissions have been assessed as viable following evaluation they have been incorporated into the development of final proposals and considered alongside and in relation to the findings of the Public Consultation process.

36. The collective consultation process has also highlighted the opportunity for further exploration of a number of themed suggestions that can be developed in parallel to the proposed model as business as usual activity. These are:
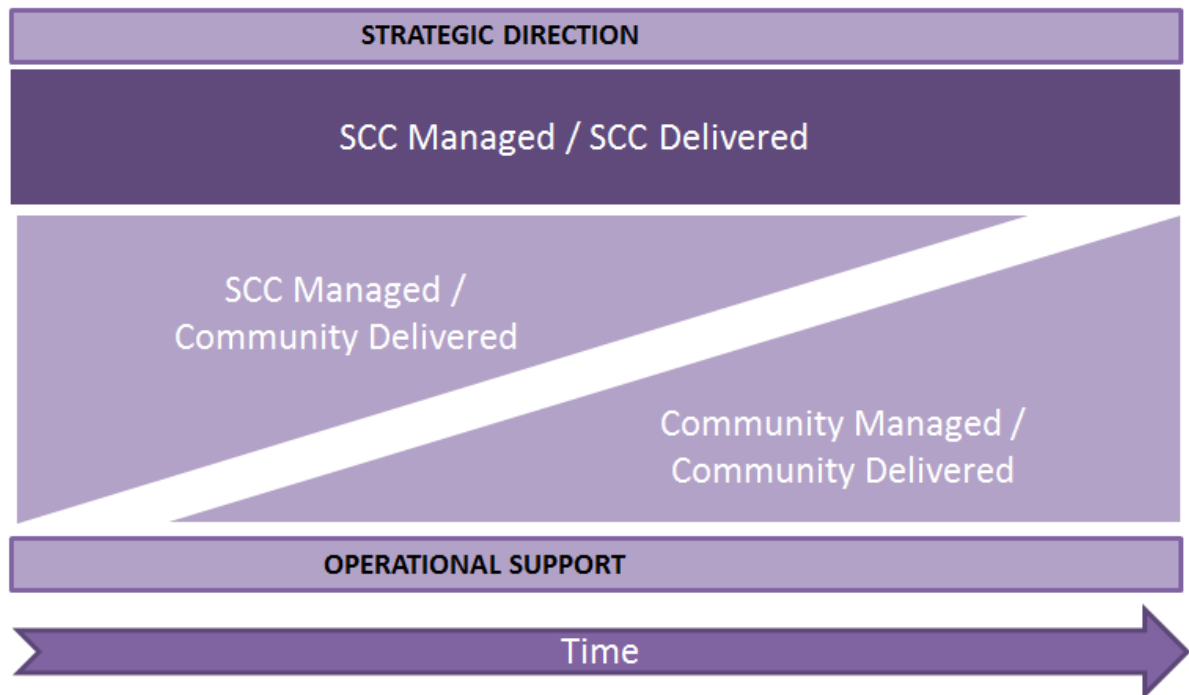
     a. **Income generation** – a range of ideas have been put forward to increase revenue streams in the libraries;
     b. **Stock Management** – the current stock management process has generated a great deal of feedback and highlighted some potential areas of improvement;
     c. **Promotion of the Library service and linked SCC offers –** there is understanding of the need to better advertise and target services to meet the needs of communities.

37. The public and collective consultations alongside the views of the Select Committee have provided a meaningful mechanism for individuals, employees, communities, partners, interested organisations and other key stakeholders to consider and comment on the proposals prior to any decisions being made.

38. We have listened to people's views about the proposed categorisation of libraries and the 'Library Local' proposal and are now proposing a realigned model for the library service to sustain libraries for the future and deliver the required £1.325m savings.

Key Considerations – Proposed Realignment of the Model

39. Visual representation

40. To address the concerns expressed by a wide range of stakeholders regarding the distinction between 'Library Extra' and 'Library Core' and the sustainability of the 'Library Local' proposal we propose a realigned model as follows:

   a. Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries
   b. Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries
   c. Community Managed Libraries/Community Delivered Libraries

41. We acknowledge that there has been confusion around the terms 'Library Extra' and 'Library Core' The original proposal was that Library Extras would have more space for partners to offer appropriate services and we have identified through the consultation that there is greater potential to work with more partners at an increased number of our libraries. Therefore we will remove the terminology of 'Extra' and 'Core' and propose that the following libraries which were initially proposed as 'Extra' or 'Core' are all Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries where Staffordshire County Council will continue to manage and deliver the full library service, sharing space where possible with a wide range of partners to facilitate access to extra services.

42. We believe Community Managed/Community Delivered Libraries offer the greatest flexibility for communities with access to the wider library network and a personalised service co-produced with the community to enable to community to have a library service that fully reflects community need. These libraries will be supported by the County Council and will remain part of our library network.

43. During the consultation community organisations in several locations have come forward and expressed an interest in managing their local library. We will use the final evaluation process, as agreed by the Select Committee, to propose to Cabinet how we will contract with community organisations to manage and deliver their local library service.

44. A consistent theme throughout the public and collective consultation and at the full council debate on 11 December 2014 is the desire to retain a level of paid staff input at proposed 'Library Local'. In communities where no community group has currently expressed an interest in managing their local library we are responding to this and propose that these libraries are <u>Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries.</u>

45. Community Managed/Community Delivered Libraries and Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries will be arranged in clusters will have access to paid members of support staff.

46. The role of the Staffordshire County Council support officers will be to:

   a. Support volunteers and communities to deliver a library service including both operational and strategic advice/assistance.
   b. Facilitate the development of Friends Groups with the potential to be management/ fundraising and support bodies for all of our libraries including Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries.
   c. Be the contact between the Community Managed/Community Delivered Libraries and Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries and the Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries
   d. Enabling Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries to become Community Managed/Community Delivered Libraries.

47. An online portal to support volunteers will also be established with access to:

   a. Training resources
   b. Information to share best practice
   c. Newsletters
   d. Funding opportunities

48. To ensure the long term sustainability of Libraries and safeguard the level of service to all users across the county, an enhanced <u>Library Plus</u> (online service) is also being investigated. The current plans anticipate that upgrades to the service will be made through 2015 and 2016 in a series of managed roll outs.

49. The potential impact of a realigned model for the Library Service will be considered fully through a Community Impact Assessment.

Proposed Next Steps

50. This transformation represents a significant change to the way library services are delivered in Staffordshire. It will therefore require changes to organisational arrangements. We will establish a structure resourced with the relevant functions,

skills and abilities that are required to fulfil the commissioning activities of the County Council whilst enabling the management and delivery of:

    a. Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries
    b. Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries
    c. Community Managed Libraries/Community Delivered Libraries
    d. A mobile & travelling library service – subject to a review in 2015
    e. Online Library Service
    f. Schools Library Service – fully traded
    g. Prison Library Services – funded by the Ministry of Justice

51. We have established the functions that the County Council must ensure it can provide as commissioner of a library service:

    a. Strategic leadership and management
    b. Business planning and policy direction
    c. Community capacity building and development
    d. Service development and improvement
    e. Curated content management of stock, services and activities
    f. Operational management and delivery
    g. Contract management
    h. Performance Management
    i. Workforce development for all libraries in the network
    j. Operational support for Community Managed/Community Delivered Libraries and Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries

52. This will be translated into organisational structures and job roles as part of the transition process should Cabinet agree to the recommendations set out in this report.

53. As part of this process all aspects of the libraries organisation and support structures will be reviewed to ensure that the Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries, Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries and Community Managed/Community Delivered Libraries all meet the requirements of Staffordshire's communities and support wider Staffordshire County Council outcomes.

54. As a consequence staff may experience changes to job roles and structures as the way in which work is organised changes and there may be a reduction in the number of roles that will be required to deliver services, and proposals to dismiss some employees as redundant may emerge in the future.

55. Staffordshire County Council will continue to pursue a clear and transparent consultation process with staff and their Trade Union representatives. Notwithstanding the protections afforded by employment legislation the County Council will apply appropriate organisational HR policies and procedures and a comprehensive approach to staff engagement.

56. As part of the consultation, we consulted upon opening hours at the libraries which were initially proposed as core libraries. The recommendations are based on patterns of library usage and responses from the Libraries consultation.

57. The combination of these two data sources suggest that there are opening hours which are not cost effective for Staffordshire Libraries to maintain because the footfall is so low at these times. However, closing at these times appears to be a significant inconvenience for a few people. The overarching recommendation is to close opening hours where usage is very low, but to offer the community the opportunity to extend the opening hours through volunteers.

58. If Cabinet agree this model for the static library service, we then need to consider the future of the mobile library service.

59. As with static library provision use of the mobile library service is changing as people access reading and information in different ways. In 2013/14 there were 104,763 visits to mobiles and libraries, 2.7% of the total visits made to Staffordshire libraries.

60. We propose to review the Mobile and Travelling Library Service during 2015; we will analyse all use statistics and will make proposals informed by data and equality impact. The review will need to be considered in conjunction with the wider libraries review and will also require specific consultation with communities. We will also need to complete a detailed piece of work to assess the implications of early termination of vehicle leases. If accepted the recommendations with this review will be brought back to the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee during 2015.

Community Managed/Community Delivered Library Service

61. We are still formalising final proposals regarding which libraries are recommended Staffordshire County Council Managed/Delivered Libraries, Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries or Community Managed Libraries/Community Delivered Libraries. However, it remains our aspiration that Staffordshire County Council Managed/ Community Delivered Libraries will become Community Managed and Delivered over a period of time through additional support and volunteer capacity building. Based on the public consultation, we believe that there are a number of communities that will be able to implement a Community Managed and Community Delivered Service as early implementers of this model.

62. During the consultation community organisations worked with us to define the level of support they would require from the County Council to take on the management function and anticipate that this will include:

   a. Strategic support from a Community Managed Libraries lead
   b. Access to community support from an identified member of paid staff – the level to be agreed with each community group
   c. Telephone helpline
   d. Workforce development
   e. Provision of IT & WiFi
   f. Access to the library computer system and catalogue

      g. Access to library stock from across the library network, including online resources, which can be returned at any library

63. To enable the County Council to contract with an appropriate community organisation a procurement process will be used. Full details of the proposed selection and evaluation process can be found at Appendix 4.

64. It is anticipated that the procurement process will commence in June 2015 with a view to contracting with community organisations from September 2015. Between June 2015 and August 2015, we will support organisations to develop their business case. The establishment of Community Managed & Delivered Libraries is anticipated to be phased from October 2015 to January 2016 in recognition of the level of support that might be required by individual organisations.

65. Once Community Managed & Delivered Libraries have been established the Service Level Agreement/Contract will be monitored to ensure that the library service delivered by the community organisation meets required standards.
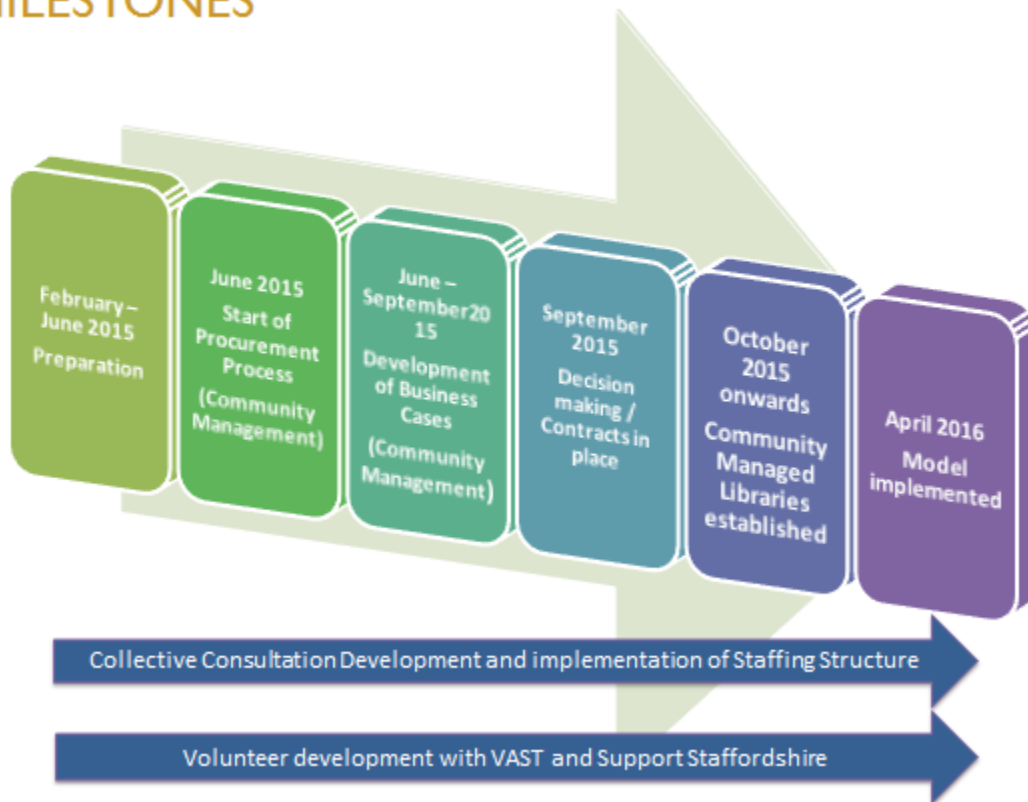
Staffordshire County Council Managed/Community Delivered Libraries

66. Where no community groups express an interest in managing their local library, Staffordshire County Council will retain responsibility for the library building and the service will be managed by a paid member of Staffordshire County Council staff covering a "cluster" of similar libraries for a designated number of hours. Day to day operations and any enhancements to the service will be undertaken by volunteers.

67. Through the public consultation, we are able to identify individuals/organisations who have expressed a wish to volunteer/support their local library. These will be followed up.

68. The County Council will ensure that volunteers are recruited of the right calibre and in sufficient numbers and we will work with VAST and Support Staffordshire to facilitate this.

69. To support the delivery of the library service at these locations, the paid member of staff will also be responsible for the development of Friends Groups. It is proposed that these will support the delivery, promotion and extension of the library service and raise funds, help access external grants to enhance the service and ensure that it is fully reflective of local needs.

Timescale

70. Milestones, should the proposals be agreed

MILESTONES

Appendices

- o Appendix 1 - Independent Library Report for England
- o Appendix 2 – Staffordshire Libraries Public Consultation 2014 – analysis of results
- o Appendix 3 – Petitions
- o Appendix 4 - Selection & Evaluation process

Contact Officer

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