REPORT TO:	Employment Learning Skills and Communities Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	9th January 2013
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Communities
PORTFOLIO:	Neighbourhood, Leisure & Sport
SUBJECT:	Library Services Strategy
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Purpose of this report is to present the Board with information on the review process and indicative timetable for the Library Services Strategy and to feedback the results of the first phase of public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i)   The contents of the report be noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Since the national library standards were abolished local authorities have been able to determine the level and priorities of their own public library service. Several authorities have done this already. However there is a need, as a statutory service to comply with the requirement to provide a "comprehensive and efficient service". A number of authorities have found themselves subject to legal challenge with their proposals for change being overturned in the courts.

3.2 This process aims to ensure that the review of Halton Library Service is carried out with due regard and that a local Library Services Strategy is prepared which identifies the vision, developments and priorities of the service over the next 3-4 years within budgetary constraints.

3.3 **Process overview**

- Establish sufficient staff resources to undertake a proper study and effective consultation. Review team to include, library staff, Policy Unit, Research and Intelligence and legal advisors.
- Analyse current legislation and ensure we meet our statutory

obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.
- Take into account National guidance and reviews including the DCMS select committee report 2012 and Arts Council "Envisioning the library of the future", report due in early 2013.
- Assess current and historical information and data relating to the service including usage levels, costs, analysis of client group characteristics and needs in the static and mobile service.
- Assess the geographical location of static libraries in relation to transport and general accessibility.
- Assess future budgetary implications; identify service priorities and how they contribute the Council's corporate priorities.
- Produce a draft strategy for ELS and Community PPB for March 2013.
- Consult the public, representative groups and service users on the proposals. Highlighting any service changes and alternative methods of service delivery.
- Identify and quantify the impact of the proposals: -
    a. Measure the proposals in the strategy against statutory responsibilities.
    b. Identify the impact on service users.
    c. Examine best practice in other library authorities.
    d. Undertake a formal equality Impact assessment.
- Final draft to ELS and Community PPB June 2013.
- Submission to Executive Board for adoption July 2013

3.4   Public consultation was undertaken in August 2012 to help inform the strategy. 402 people responded to the survey

How people use and view the service:
- Nearly 60% of respondents stated that the libraries in Halton are "Very Good"
- The majority of respondents (329) used the library to "borrow books" on their last visit. "To use the computer for social media and leisure" (95) and to "read newspapers/magazines and books" (82) were the next most popular reasons people last used a library in Halton
- 60% of respondents stated that the standard of customer care is "Very Good" at Halton Libraries
- 22% of respondents stated that the provision of seating and tables is "average" within Halton Libraries

Needs and preferences from a library:
"Book lending" (272), "staff support" (104), "access to computer facilities" (94), "information" (46) and "events and activities for children" (42) were seen as the top five most important services that Halton libraries offer.

4.0   **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1   The Library Services Strategy will provide a framework and direction for the service over the next 3-4 years.

4.2   The implementation of the strategy at a local level will have direct policy implications for the future delivery of services however these are yet to be determined.

5.0   **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1   None at this time

6.0   **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1   **Children & Young People in Halton**

        The Library Service supports the development of reading as a key skill and through the strategy and subsequent action plans will ensure close working relationship with partners to support the Council's priorities

6.2   **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

        The Library Services Strategy will identify the key areas of work to support literacy, learning, access to information and digital inclusion and will ensure a close working relationship with partners to support the Council's priorities

6.3   **A Healthy Halton**

        The strategy will raise the profile of the Service and ensure that the library offer complements the work of partners and becomes an integral part of the work to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

6.4   **A Safer Halton**

        None identified.

6.5   **Halton's Urban Renewal**

        None identified.

7.0   **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1   Developing a Library Services Strategy does not present any obvious risk however, there may be risks associated with the resultant action plans. These will be assessed as appropriate.

8.0　**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1　This is in line with all equality and diversity issues in Halton.

9.0　**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.