



## **DECISION OF COUNCILLOR FELICITY BAKER**

THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SAFETY, TOURISM AND LEISURE, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS, CUSTOMER SERVICES, LIBRARIES AND LICENSING.

WITH ADVICE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

**DECISION NO 16/17 DE 224**

**SUBJECT:** Disposal of library items

### **Background:**

The Library Service has a number of items in its collection that are no longer relevant to its aims or that have deteriorated to an extent where they cannot be fully preserved. Some items also present a risk to health to those handling them. They are not currently available to library users due to condition and/or risk of further damage so there is no justification for retaining them in the library collection. Their disposal would release resources (primarily the cost of storage space) and would also generate income for the Service. Other parties could provide more appropriate conditions to care for the collections.

The points below describe the process of disposal of objects from the collection. The key criteria to meet are:

- The library has ownership of the items and is legally free to dispose of them.
- None of the items has any special conditions attached to it that limit the library's actions.
- None of them were purchased with the help of grant aid, with the obligation to repay any such grant aid if the library ceases to own the item.
- The items are not proposed for disposal solely to generate income.

### **DECISION:**

To authorise the disposal of specific items from North Somerset Library collections that are not relevant to the aims of the library, are of a very specialised nature and/or require controlled storage conditions to preserve their condition. Some items are incomplete or in poor condition, with associated health risks for staff handling them (spores in leather bindings etc). The items have the potential to further deteriorate. The Library Service is not in a

position to provide specialist controlled conditions, so the collections could receive better care if offered to alternative specialist collectors.

Where items relate to the history, topography or geography that may be of interest to neighbouring authorities in the region, they will be offered for retention in their collections for safekeeping. Remaining items will be offered for sale.

### **Reasons:**

It is standard practice for libraries to periodically review and rationalise their stock and collections. The items have not been in circulation or on display for many years, and the majority of the volumes are either out of date, very specialist, or in a poor and/or declining condition.

They also present risks to the health of those who handle them. The collections could be better preserved and further enjoyed if they were purchased for inclusion in external collections and restored.

North Somerset Library Service is unable to provide the recommended environment for storing the items and would prefer to offer them to other institutions, collections or buyers that can best care for them.

### **Other Alternatives Considered:**

Do nothing.

This would not enable storage resources to be released and re-allocated elsewhere. Items that are already in poor condition would also deteriorate further presenting a continued risk to the health of those working in their proximity and de-valuing the items. Public access to the items would not be enhanced. Residents would fail to benefit from additional investment in library resources.

### **Risk Assessment:**

Disposal of material

- Low risk of reduced public confidence in North Somerset Council and North Somerset Library Service
- Items proposed for disposal are not currently in circulation and many are in a very poor condition; some would need specialist restoration to be fit to display for the public to handle (for example, spores from covers could be harmful); no budget is available at North Somerset to do this
- Much of the collection is very specialist or out of date, e.g. Palestine and Theology, and demand for these subjects in a modern public library is extremely low

Non-disposal of material

- Risk of further deterioration damage to items from inadequate storage conditions
- Continued ongoing cost to the local authority to store the collections
- No actual benefit to residents as the items are inaccessible due to their condition
- Risk to the health of those who handle the items

**Financial Implications:**

Any proceeds from the disposal of the items would be allocated to a ring-fenced earmarked reserve to ensure that it would only be used to purchase, repair and maintain library materials and books within North Somerset Libraries.

**Implications for Future Years:**

The disposal and sale of specific items from the library collection would create a ring-fenced earmarked reserve to be used for the development, care, repair and enhancement of library collections in North Somerset.

Rationalisation of the collection will reduce demands on storage. Space and storage is an ongoing issue for the local authority and few alternatives exist to address this topic without incurring substantial costs.

Failure to resolve this would prolong the storage issues and in the longer term the items will continue to deteriorate until their value is nil.

Signed.....Executive Member for Community Services and Safety, Tourism and Leisure, Corporate Communications, Customer Services, Libraries and Licensing.

Dated.....

**Confirmation of Advice Given**

Signed.....Director of Development & Environment

Dated.....