

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 26TH MAY 2004

AYRSHIRE LIBRARIES FORUM

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek committee approval for East Ayrshire Council adopting the role of "Lead Authority" for the Ayrshire Libraries Forum.

2. BACKGROUND

The Ayrshire Libraries Forum is a successful cross-sectoral libraries partnership established in 1999 which has grown from a group of Ayrshire public and college libraries in partnership with the University of Paisley Library. The forum carries out co-operative work such as training, has produced an Information Plan for Ayrshire and continues to generate digitised content for the People's Network. The establishment of the partnership was reported to the Community Services Committee on 1st September 1999.

3. CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Ayrshire Libraries Forum has grown from the original partners to include NHS libraries in Ayrshire and the National Library of Scotland. It has reached the point at which a formal structure is recommended to ensure that the interest of East Ayrshire Council and staff are protected. Legal advice suggests that the appropriate way forward for the partnership is to create a legal framework with one of the members taking the role of Lead Authority. As a founder member of the forum East Ayrshire Council has been asked to take on the role of lead authority.

- 3.1.1 The proposed legal framework would ensure that financial and personnel practices are carried out in accordance with East Ayrshire Council's standards and would cover the following areas:

- Membership
- Purpose of project
- Regulation of financial contribution and general financial issues
- Voting rights
- Insurance (what types may be required)
- Liability (in the event of claims etc against the lead authority)
- Exit strategy
- Dissolution
- Disposal of assets

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In terms of section 57 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the parties involved in the Ayrshire Libraries Forum are empowered to form a Joint Committee for the purpose of managing such a project. This provision is supplemented and enhanced by the relevant sections of The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003
- 5.2 Thereafter, East Ayrshire Council, as lead authority for the project, would initially be responsible for the matters detailed at paragraph 3.1.1 above. However, the other parties involved would ultimately share the project's legal responsibilities, howsoever arising,

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Adopting the role of lead authority demonstrates East Ayrshire Council's commitment to achieving best value through cross-sectoral partnership working.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The continuing development of the Ayrshire Libraries Forum would be best served by the establishment of a formal legal structure. East Ayrshire Council adopting the role of Lead Authority will ensure that the correct structure is in place and that the interest of East Ayrshire Council and staff are protected.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Committee are recommended to:-
- (i) agree that East Ayrshire Council becomes the Lead Authority for the Ayrshire Libraries Forum; and
 - (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

William Stafford

Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/GC/KH 16th April 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Minutes of ALF Meeting 12th Feb 2003
2. Minutes of ALF Meeting 11th March 2003
3. Minutes of ALF Meeting 12th June 2003

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 576264 and ask for John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services.

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