



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Libraries NI – Future Capital Expenditure
Date:	5th August, 2011
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext. 6314)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Barry Flynn, Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6310)

Relevant Background Information

Correspondence (a copy of which is appended to this report) has been received from the Chief Executive of Libraries NI, Ms. Irene M. Knox, advising the Council that significant capital improvement work has been completed within the past year at the Falls Road, Shankill and Whiterock branches. In addition, the restoration project to the external stonework at Belfast Central Library has also been completed, at a cost of £938,000.

However, the letter from Ms. Knox points out also that Libraries NI has been advised by Central Government that previously anticipated capital funding would, given the ongoing spending review, be reduced significantly. This will impinge somewhat on the ability of Libraries NI to make further capital investment over the next four years. Therefore, plans to undertake additional work at Belfast Central Library have been postponed. Ms. Knox has indicated that, whilst the reduction in funding is disappointing, Libraries NI will continue to promote the upgrade of Belfast Central Library as one of its key projects and also emphasise its important role in the future development of the City's North West Quarter. To this end, Ms. Knox points out that Libraries NI will continue to seek funding in this regard and has asked for the Council's continued support.

Finally, Ms. Knox has extended an invitation to the Members of the Council to undertake a site visit to view the work which has been carried out to the libraries under the current redevelopment programme. The Committee may wish to consider if a site visit would be appropriate.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the information provided and to take such action thereon as may be determined.

Decision Tracking

The Democratic Services Manager will implement any decision taken by the Committee.