

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision Community & Children’s Services - For information	Dated: 17/7/23 17/7/23
Subject: Artizan Street Library & Community Centre Makerspace Charges	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3,4,7,9,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Decision- CHL For Information- CCS
Report author: Sarah Townsend, Customer Services Manager, and Claire Doolan, Centre Manager, Barbican & Community Libraries	

Summary

In 2021, the City of London made a successful bid to the DCMS/Arts Council England *Libraries Improvement Fund- Round 1*. This resulted in a grant of £226k to refurbish Artizan Street Library, incorporating into it a ‘Makerspace’- a community space for learning new digital creative skills.

This work has now been carried out and the Makerspace is expected to open by September 2023. As part of this project, a scoping exercise has been carried out to develop a sustainable revenue system for the maintenance of the Makerspace equipment and the replenishment of related materials.

It is proposed that the City of London adopts a charge per use system for the Makerspace equipment. This reflects best practice in other library authorities with Makerspaces. Lower fees will be charged to City residents, in order to encourage use by local residents and to ensure that local people have access to new digital technologies that will support their learning and enjoyment within their local community.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Agree to the proposed fees.

Main Report

Background

1. In **Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-21**, a report commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), the Libraries Taskforce committed to support the extension of partnership projects such as makerspaces.
2. To achieve the aims of **Libraries Deliver**, DCMS has funded 3 rounds of a 'Libraries Improvement Fund' (LIF), administered by Arts Council England. This fund is specifically to improve accessibility to new digital technologies within local communities through libraries, as well as increase library footfall.
3. In 2021, the City of London Libraries were successful in the first round of the LIF and received a £226k grant to refurbish and improve Artizan Street Library, creating a modern, vibrant, public library that reflects the textiles heritage of the Portsoken ward and local communities. A digital creative Makerspace has been created as a major part of this project and is expected to open by September 2023.
4. At the beginning of the LIF project, library staff visited Makerspaces in other library services, in particular Hull, Watford and Redbridge. This experience ensured the team were able to make informed decisions on the right equipment to offer in the Makerspace at Artizan Street Library and Community Centre.
5. The library team have also worked collaboratively with library customers and local residents in developing the equipment offer in the Makerspace, to ensure the equipment provided reflects potential user needs.
6. The equipment that will be initially offered in the Makerspace is a 3D printer, Cricut vinyl cutter, electronic sewing and embroidery machines, a heat press and laptops for coding. Library staff have been trained to use all equipment effectively and safely. They have created 'how to' guides for each piece of equipment and will be available to pass on their knowledge and experience through the induction process and beyond. All members of the public using the equipment will receive training and be required to sign an agreement of use.

Current Position

7. The capital phase of the Artizan Street Library transformation has now been completed. However, there are on-going revenue costs associated with the use and maintenance of the Makerspace equipment. An essential part of the development work around the Makerspace has been to scope out a system for recovering these costs, whilst still ensuring that it fulfils the aim of improved accessibility to this new technology.
8. A scoping exercise was carried out to review other library authorities' policies and charges for use of their Makerspaces. These ranged from charging a membership subscription fee for fair use of the equipment and space, to charging

an hourly rate for using a piece of equipment. No authority was found that either made no charge or only charged for material use.

9. As part of the public consultation on the redesign and Makerspace, members of the public were also consulted on their preferences between a subscription model and a pay per use model.
10. Costs for business/group hire of the Makerspace have also been considered within the scope of this exercise. This is to ensure that the Makerspace charges are aligned to the community hall hire function of Artizan Street Library & Community Centre.

Options

There are three options available to members:

- a. Option 1: all equipment is free to use and there is no additional charge for materials used
 - b. Option 2: to charge Makerspace users only for materials used
 - c. Option 3: charge a fee for equipment use, which it is proposed to be lower for City of London residents (Appendix 1)
11. Option 1 would not be considered viable as this would put an unsustainable pressure on the Artizan Street Library & Community Centre budget.
 12. Option 2 has been explored extensively, as the preferred option from the public consultation. However, it has not been possible to find a suitable method to account for materials used, particularly given the range of different equipment that is being offered. This option is therefore not recommended.
 13. Option 3 is the preferred option. This option will ensure an income to cover the maintenance of the equipment and the purchase of new materials for future use. The pricing has been set to ensure costs are still accessible to all and that using the Makerspace is particularly attractive and accessible to those who live in the City of London.
 14. The pricing structure that is being proposed is reflective of the pricing structure for the hireable halls at Artizan Street Library and Community Centre. There is an additional pricing structure for individual users. The aim is to offer customers, especially residents of the local estates, the opportunity to use the equipment at a rate that is affordable and sustainable.
 15. When setting the pricing structure, many variables were considered, including the cost of filament / vinyl / plastic sheets, alongside potential maintenance of the equipment. For each machine, the number of variables such as density of filament, the amount of support material needed, the type of vinyl and size of design could all impact on the amount of material used, the time the machine is use for, the wastage and the cost. Due to this, the pricing structure for individuals has been designed to be clear and easy to understand. A flat fee for using the equipment will result in some individuals paying a little bit more than the potential costs, and others paying a little less. However, this is outweighed by the overall benefit of ease to both customers and staff.

Proposals

16. The proposal is that the City agree to Option 3, approving the hire charges for the Makerspace and Makerspace equipment for group hire and individuals.

Key Data

17. Barbican & Community Libraries' Business Plan 2023-24 KPI to recruit 80 unique adult users of the Makerspace in the first year.
18. Arts Council England has commissioned an external research consultancy to evaluate all its LIF projects. This is expected to measure increases in the following outputs:
 - a. number of visits
 - b. number of visits by users for whom English is a second language
 - c. book issues
 - d. IT use
 - e. participation in learning activities
 - f. number of partnerships.
19. The aim is to achieve higher level outcomes in:
 - a. customer satisfaction
 - b. ratings for the role of libraries
 - c. participation in learning activities
 - d. employment skills for users
 - e. digital creative skills for users
 - f. partner collaborations.

Corporate & Strategic Implications –

20. The refurbished Artizan Street Library and Community Centre is aligned to the three core aims of the City of London's Corporate Plan (2018–23) which are also reflected in the Barbican and Community Libraries' Strategy (2021–23):
 - a. **Contribute to a Flourishing Society**
 - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential - through access to lifelong learning and resources to support skills development, social and digital inclusion and social mobility.
 - b. **To shape outstanding environments**
 - We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive - giving access to excellent quality IT resources and innovative technologies.
 - We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration - through encouraging local people to gain new skills and share them with others in their community

Financial implications - The work that has been carried out at Artizan Street Library makes effective use of partnerships, commissioning and grant funding opportunities and is therefore cost-effective. The proposed charging structure will mitigate pressure on the

Artizan Street Library & Community Centre budget through income generation to cover costs.

Resource implications – N/A

Legal implications – N/A

Risk implications - Robust risk assessments are in place and are reviewed annually. All customers will have to complete an induction before using the equipment and sign a conditions of use form.

Equalities implications – there are no negative implications. The new Makerspace resource will improve digital creative facilities for local residents and library users.

Climate implications - N/A

Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

21. City of London Libraries offer a varied range of services and activities for children and their families, going far beyond the basic library functions. The addition of a Makerspace will enhance this offer and create opportunities that are innovative and cost-effective for people from all our communities.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Pricing Structure

Background Papers

Artizan Street Library Transformation Project, author Rachel Levy - 25/04/2022

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