



Consultation Paper

The Management of Cultural Facilities *Should you run your local Museum or Library?*

Liberal Democrats in Waltham Forest are serious about our commitment to community involvement in the running of our borough.

In order to provide the services that local residents really want, and to solve the unique problems facing each community, local authorities need the flexibility to come up with creative solutions.

As part of this process, we believe local authorities have a responsibility to let their residents take part in the political process, making choices and determining the public services delivered in their area.

Liberal Democrats across the country have been at the forefront of increasing the involvement of citizens in this decision-making process.

Our promise to Waltham Forest

In our local manifesto for the 2006 council elections, we promised to work hard so that local users could become part of a newly established management board for their community libraries, with each management board allowed to attract external funding and develop the library to meet their communities need within an overarching council plan.

This means real involvement and real responsibility for residents, not a toothless body unable to provide real management and progress.

Liberal Democrats on Waltham Forest Council established Community Councils to give resident's greater involvement in decision-making and an effective voice in their area.

Through better resident-led scrutiny of the council and increased opportunities for direct involvement, we aim to continue our work towards greater community engagement.

The Proposal

In 2006 we pledged to examine the possibility of local management boards for our libraries.

But why stop there?

Local Lib Dem councillors were present in Brighton recently when delegates voted to approve proposals for local management boards at the party's autumn conference. Now we are leading the way in bringing these proposals back to our local communities.

The future of our local cultural services, such as our museums and libraries, is one of great concern to many residents. A glance at the letters page of the local newspaper demonstrates the strength of feeling regarding the E17 Art Trail, book stocks in community libraries and the future of William Morris and Vestry House museums, whilst also offering an example of the valuable expertise and passion that is currently going untapped.

Waltham Forest Liberal Democrats believe we need to harness this energy and commitment to the future role of such facilities in a positive way, by giving those with progressive and ambitious suggestions about how to improve the reach and quality of services a platform to turn their ideas into practical solutions.

- **We want to see local management boards, made up of people who use local services, working with their councils to make decisions over the management of facilities. We envisage a system similar to that in schools, whereby the facility manager would replicate the role of a head teacher in a school governing body.**
- **Working within agreed council parameters, we aim to give real community control over important management issues such as budgets and opening hours, asking boards to make difficult decisions and be accountable to scrutiny by council and fellow residents.**
- **In order to ensure diversity of opinion on such boards, Community Councils could have elected representatives on each body. It is our belief that a more diverse pool of talent in control of such facilities will increase their reach and broaden their appeal within the community.**
- **The council could hold a central pool of money for improvements, with bids made by local management boards in order to fund repairs and upgrades to facilities. This would encourage management boards, on behalf of local residents, to produce imaginative funding proposals and cohesive plans for future work,**

ensuring an end to fragmented, piecemeal improvements. Local management boards could also be free to bid for outside funding for their facility.

Over to you...

We have promised residents an opportunity to have a greater direct say in the running of local services...so what better place to start than right here?

We want your opinions on our proposals.

Do you think local management boards can provide residents with a more effective means of participation in the running of local services?

How should such management boards be appointed? How long should they serve?

What extra powers would you like to see given to such boards?

Should the elected council run the services without such community input?

This is your opportunity to let us know your views.

As a final promise to you, the residents of our borough, we will use the responses made to this consultation paper to shape and influence a policy paper that we will present to council, ensuring that your views are fully represented and that residents are at the forefront in pushing for greater community involvement in important local services.

To take part in this consultation, please send your submission to the Liberal Democrat council group at Waltham Forest Town Hall:

Email:

ben.wright@walthamforest.gov.uk

Post:

**Liberal Democrat Research Unit
London Borough of Waltham Forest
Town Hall
Forest Road
Walthamstow
London E17 4JF**

Phone:

For further information about this consultation and how to take part, please contact 020 8496 4313