

REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MAY 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials Report

PURPOSE: For Receipt

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Operations

PRESENTED BY: Anne O'Sullivan

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Library Board receive this report.

SUMMARY

This report identifies requests made for materials' reconsideration in the London Public Library (Library) collection and the results of these requests during 2022.

BACKGROUND & REVIEW

The Collections Services Department of the Library occasionally receives requests to reconsider materials if a patron feels they are inappropriate. Patrons may request that materials be removed from the collection, or that they be moved to another area or collection, or that they be restricted from use.

All requests are considered in the context of the Library's [Collections Management Policy](#), and the [Library's Intellectual Freedom Policy](#), which were both reviewed by the Board on October 21, 2021.

Importantly, the Library's Collections Management Policy articulates the fundamental philosophy found in the [Canadian Federation of Library Associations Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#). The Statement reads in part:

“Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.”

While this broad statement covers reconsideration requests regarding the collection, the Library addresses individual concerns directly so that a patron may understand why materials are purchased, retained or removed from the Library's collection.

The Collections Management Policy describes the Materials Reconsideration process:

Any person(s) from the community having a question regarding the inclusion of a specific title in the Library's Collections may request information from the Library. Any person(s) recommending the removal of a specific title from the Library's Collections may submit a written Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials. The request will be reviewed by the Reconsideration Response Team, who will decide on the matter.

A report on requests for Materials reconsideration will be provided to the Board annually (if necessary). The names of those individuals requesting reconsideration of a title will be excluded from the report in order to protect their privacy.

THE PROCESS

When a Request for Reconsideration is submitted, the patron is contacted by the Manager responsible for Collections, and apprised of the process for reconsideration, as follows:

- The request is shared with the selection team, comprising of Collections Management Librarians and the Coordinator, Collections Management, to review the original reasons for selection.
- Information on a title in question is collected, including reviews, usage figures, media coverage, collection holdings at other libraries, and any other information relevant to the request.
- The Manager responsible for Collections reviews all supporting material and discusses a recommended course of action with the Reconsideration Response team, which is comprised of all Managers, the Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations, and the CEO and Chief Librarian.
- The Manager responsible for Collections contacts the patron directly and explains the decision and the rationale for the removal or retention of the material in question. The patron is also informed of the process outlined by the Collections Management Policy.

Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) Challenges Survey

Each year the Manager responsible for Collections submits information about requests for reconsideration of library materials to the CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Challenges Survey, as well as the Centre for Free Expression Library Challenges Database. All patron and library information is reported anonymously.

Appendix A:

Requests for Materials Reconsideration – January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022

Date	Title/Author (format)	Concern	Reason(s) for selecting; reconsideration issues	Decision
November 2, 2022	<i>Arab of the Future</i> by Riad Sattouf	Offensive stereotypes Disturbing content Misogynistic representations of women	Award-winning Widely and positively reviewed in many sources such as the New York Times and Library Journal	Retention of material in current locations