

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, ROTHERHAM.
S60 2TH**

Date: Wednesday, 15th January, 2014

Time: 1.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine whether the following items should be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended March 2006) of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item(s) the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of interest
5. Questions from members of the public and the press
6. Communications
7. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 27th November 2013 (Pages 1 - 6)
8. Proposed Response to HM Government Consultation on Parking (Pages 7 - 12)
9. Customer and Library Services - review of changes to services (Pages 13 - 21)
10. Date, time and venue for the next meeting - Wednesday 19th February 2014 at 1.30 pm

Improving Places Select Commission: membership: -

Councillors Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Dodson, Ellis, Falvey (Chairman), Foden, Gilding, Godfrey, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Jepson, Johnston, Pickering, Read, Roche, P. A. Russell, Sims, Swift, Vines, Wallis and Whysall.

Co-opted members:- Mrs. P. Copnell, Mr. T. Roche and Mr. B. Walker.

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
27th November, 2013**

Present:- Councillor Falvey (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor Foden); Councillors Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Gilding, Godfrey, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Jepson, Johnston, Pickering, Read, Sims, Swift, Vines and Whysall; together with Councillor R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Waste and Emergency Planning).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodson, Ellis, Roche and P. A. Russell and from co-opted members Mrs. P. Copnell and Mr. B. Walker.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

31. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

32. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items to report.

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION HELD ON 16TH OCTOBER, 2013

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, held on 16th October, 2013, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That, with regard to item 25 (Planning Obligations, Section 106 Agreements, Updated Accounts Information), a further report be submitted to the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, to be held on 26th March, 2014, detailing the financial transactions of the corporate Section 106 account.

34. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY VIABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 24th July, 2013, consideration was given to a presentation from the Senior Planner concerning the Rotherham Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Viability and Infrastructure Study.

The presentation included the following salient issues:-

- : definition and application of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- : legislative changes and the CIL being the replacement for Section 106 agreements;

- : implementation of legislative changes with effect from April 2015;
- : the requirement to avoid 'double dipping', so that developers must not be charged both for the CIL and for the terms of a Section 106 agreement affecting a single new development;
- : plans showing the CIL charging zones within the Rotherham Borough area;
- : projections of revenue from the CIL, for the duration of the Rotherham Local Plan to 2028;
- : the effect of the CIL upon neighbourhood plans and parishes;
- : details of the CIL (Amendment) Regulations 2013;
- : consultation about the Borough Council's infrastructure priorities during 2014 and also on the draft charging schedule;
- : the various comments received during the initial consultation (Autumn 2013) about the draft charging schedule;
- : the infrastructure delivery mechanism.

After the presentation, Members raised the following issues and questions:-

- : the implications for existing developments which have already received planning permission (eg: the Waverley development); it was noted that the CIL would not be applied to any such development;
- : charging zones and the possibility of sub-divisions within these zones; further sub-division would need to reflect availability or viability evidence – at present neither circumstance exists;
- : review of the CIL charging and delivery mechanism; there would have to be public consultation and examination prior to any changes being approved;
- : the likelihood that the revenue from the CIL will not be sufficient to fund all of the Borough's infrastructure priorities; the public consultation process, taking place during 2014, will include details of the proposed infrastructure priorities; other funding sources will be required, in addition to the CIL;
- : a request for differential charges for greenfield sites and for brownfield sites can be investigated, but would need to rely on the availability of supporting viability evidence;
- : a request that the CIL for large developments (such as Bassingthorpe Farm) be increased;
- : concern that schemes known to be coming forward are demonstrating viability and could warrant higher CIL rates (eg: in the eastern area of Rotherham).

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a further progress report about the Rotherham Community Infrastructure Levy be submitted to a future meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission during February or March 2014.

35. HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 41 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 28th November, 2012, consideration was given to a report presented by the Contract and Service Development Manager, describing the progress of the repairs and maintenance service provided for this Councils Housing Stock during the last twelve months. The report stated that the service is provided the Willmott Dixon Partnership and by Morrison Facility Services. During the past, year, the Mears company has taken over ownership of Morrison Facility Services.

Members noted that, subject to there being continuing satisfactory performance, the contracts with both companies will be extended until 31st March, 2017. Any possible extensions of the contract, in the future, will be subject to review. Contained within the report were details of:-

- : shared financial savings and value for money
- : customer volunteer inspections and mystery shopper exercises
- : key performance indicators and performance management
- : learning from complaints
- : responsive repairs
- : void properties (the 'turn-around time' of these properties for re-letting)
- : gas and cyclical works
- : gas responsive repairs
- : planned and capital works
- : aids and adaptations
- : quality assurance (ie: assessment of the quality of work undertaken)
- : the contractors' corporate and social responsibility.

The Select Commission's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- : void properties being repaired and available for re-letting within 28 days;
- : ensuring that repairs are completed in a timely manner;
- : servicing of gas boilers as part of a planned programme of maintenance (including: (i) the replacement of older boilers for which spare parts are no longer available; (ii) repairs to condensing boilers affected by freezing temperatures; (iii) provision of instructions to tenants about the operation of boilers and (iv) annual gas servicing and certification);
- : ensuring effective communication with housing tenants, when carrying out repairs to their properties;
- : issues concerning planned maintenance and responsive repairs – specifying the trade(s) required for each repair;
- : the 'decent homes' initiative and its emphasis upon the internal refurbishment of properties, rather than external repairs;
- : the use of temporary repairs, in advance of a planned maintenance scheme in a housing area;
- : health and safety issues;
- : selection of contractors for specific projects, such as re-roofing

schemes.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a further report about the progress of the housing repairs and maintenance service be submitted to a future meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, during the Spring 2014 and such report include details of issues concerning the repair of void properties prior to their being available for re-letting.

**36. GROUND MAINTENANCE REVIEW: MONITORING
REPORT/UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 53 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 27th March, 2013, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Director of Streetpride, concerning progress with the implementation of the action plan arising from the scrutiny review of this Council's Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services. A copy of the updated action plan was included with the submitted report.

The report stated that the main areas of progress are:-

- : the adaptation of machinery and equipment (e.g.: the introduction of different mowing machines and street cleansing vehicles);
- : changes to operative working hours (e.g.: trialling of more flexible working hours);
- : changes to methods of operation (e.g.: introduction of wild flower schemes, areas of relaxed maintenance, and alternative approaches to scheduled work);
- : the identification of additional resources to provide a greater number of grass cuts on certain housing sites (nb: the sustainability of this action is uncertain due to budget constraints); and
- : the identification of a budget partially to support employee absences due to leave (nb: this budget will be introduced in 2014/15).

Members noted the following continuing challenges faced by these services:-

- : the capacity to adapt to the impact of weather conditions (e.g.: during times of severe weather, or of fast vegetation growth);
- : the impact of cost increases (e.g.: of fuel and equipment); and
- : the impact of worsening attitudes to littering, fly tipping, etc.

The Select Commission's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- : the use of urban gardening (eg: planting of vegetables) as an alternative to shrub-bed areas – community groups and organisations such as 'Rotherham in Root' are invited to suggested suitable, safe areas for this initiative; an early example exists at the 'walled garden'

- in Clifton Park, Rotherham;
- : the efficient and effective use of limited resources – (i) the trial scheme of street cleansing undertaken in the Clifton area of Rotherham and (ii) the trial of alternative methods of street cleansing undertaken throughout the Borough area, both during 2013; the outcomes of these trials are currently being evaluated;
 - : involving volunteers in the community in street cleansing and litter-picking schemes (eg: at Wath upon Dearne);
 - : completion of street cleansing schedules after temporary delays, for example, due to the breakdown of machinery; it was acknowledged that these schedules and priorities were sometimes altered for specific reasons;
 - : the current review of the method of removing detritus from the highway (a report is soon to be considered by the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Waste and Emergency Planning);
 - : the forthcoming replacement of the street cleansing machinery for use within the Rotherham town centre and in some outlying areas of the Borough; the new machines to be purchased will be capable of being transported to different areas;
 - : the arrangements for the collection of green waste, from households, at intervals of four weeks during the Winter months;
 - : the impact of budget reductions on service delivery (eg: affecting the removal of weeds from the highway);
 - : improvements made to the appearance of certain areas of highway within the Borough (eg: the roundabout at the entrance to Retail World at Parkgate);
 - : the comparative expense of replacing soft ground areas (which require regular and frequent maintenance) with low-maintenance, decorative asphalt;
 - : grass retardant spraying – and ensuring that the products used are effective, but are not harmful to the environment; the need to adhere to regulations issued by the Environment Agency;
 - : the identification of Council-owned sites which may be declared surplus to requirements and eventually offered for sale;
 - : the promotion of the grounds maintenance services to schools;
 - : the use of ‘Billy-Goat’ machines for street cleansing around the Borough area, although because of noise issues, not in the

Rotherham town centre;

- : engaging with the community and supporting community groups in the organisation of volunteer street cleansing and litter-picking (eg: via the Area Assemblies (there are good practices in the Greasbrough/Rockingham area) and with funding from the Councillors' Community Leadership Fund); the role of the volunteer Streetpride champions;
- : Councillors and Council employees being 'ears and eyes' in the community and reporting issues which require attention from the Streetpride service;
- : this Council spends a relatively low amount, per head of population, on street cleansing and grounds maintenance services, in comparison to Rotherham's statistical neighbour local authorities.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a further progress report be submitted to this Select Commission, in twelve months' time, on the progress of the implementation of the action plan arising from the scrutiny review of this Council's Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 15th January 2014
3.	Title:	Proposed response to the Government consultation on parking
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The report sets out the Council's proposed response to the Government's consultation on various issues regarding parking.

6. Recommendations

That the Select Commission comments on the proposed response, prior to it being reported formally to Cabinet Member for approval.

7. Proposals and Details

The Government, and in particular the Communities Secretary, has made public its intention to change the law to ban / restrict the use of CCTV for parking enforcement and introduce other changes to parking enforcement law.

A consultation document <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-parking> has been sent to all Local Authorities and this Council's proposed response is attached as Appendix A.

8. Finance

Although the primary functions of the CCTV enforcement vehicle owned by the Council is enforcement in areas where there are concerns about road safety and prevention of congestion, effective management of parking in these locations inevitably results in the generation of income.

This is income which is over and above that which would be generated by the traditional means of parking enforcement.

It is anticipated that the CCTV parking enforcement regime will generate approximately £36,000 per annum. However, it should be noted that the enforcement activities undertaken by the Council's Parking Service would not generate an overall surplus with this extra income.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

N / A

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The use of the CCTV enforcement vehicle supports the *Corporate Plan* as follows:

Helping to create safe and healthy communities

- Reducing the numbers of children injured or killed in road traffic accidents.
- Improve road safety and deal with concerns in the community, particularly outside schools.

The use of the CCTV enforcement vehicle supports *The Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy 2011 – 2026* as follows:

To maximise safety

- W. To encourage safer road use and reduce casualties on our roads.
- X. To work with police to enforce traffic laws.
- Y. To focus safety efforts on vulnerable groups.

To support economic growth

- L. To reduce the amount of productive time lost on the strategic road network and improve its resilience and reliability.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Department for Transport and Department for Communities and Local Government Open Consultation "Local Authority parking strategies"
EDS, Streetpride, Transportation and Highways Design Section has been consulted regarding the implications for the Council's Transportation Policy.

Contact Name : Martin Beard, Parking Services Manager, Streetpride Service
Extension number 22929

Appendix A – List of questions

Q1. Do you consider local authority parking enforcement is being applied fairly and reasonably in your area?

Yes, even more so following recent amendments to the Council's Parking Enforcement procedures. The Service is very much customer focused and this is demonstrated by the following recent initiatives:

- Increased grace period from 5 minutes to 10 minutes for expired paid parking activities.
- The availability of a cashless payment system which allows "top up" payments to be made by customers who are delayed due to unforeseen circumstances.
- The council has adopted a zero tolerance approach to misuse and abuse of disabled parking permits and facilities; it has been commended for its approach by the DfT and Disabled Motoring UK.

Q2. The Government intends to abolish the use of CCTV cameras for parking enforcement. Do you have any views or comments on this proposal?

Rotherham MBC strongly disagrees with the proposal to abolish the use of CCTV cameras for parking enforcement. The Council confines the use of this vehicle to locations where parking/stopping is forbidden by law **at all times**; for example the key use for the mobile parking enforcement vehicle is to enforce the Traffic Regulation Orders on all school keep clear markings in Rotherham in addition to other waiting restrictions that exist outside schools and in other locations where there are road hazards. In such situations parking enforcement by traditional methods is difficult due to drivers, upon observing a Civil Enforcement Officer, driving their vehicles away in the knowledge that this will result in no punitive action; often the vehicles are driven away at high speed, which is a further hazard to pedestrians, many of which are children.

Enforcement at these locations is also difficult because they are (generally) remote from the normal operating areas of the Civil enforcement Officers (CEOs).

Enforcement using the CCTV vehicle is undertaken by images being taken of illegally parked vehicles thereby allowing evidence to be reviewed and, when appropriate, penalty charge notices to be issued. This enforcement action, together with appropriate publicity, helps to make school "drop off" and "pick up" times safer for children by maintaining a length of road outside schools which is

free from parked vehicles and thereby safer for children to cross the road. It is also probable that enforcement will result in a reduction of car usage for school journeys thereby further safeguarding children against the risk of being involved in collisions. This is demonstrated by a recent intense period of foot patrols by parking enforcement officers at a school that resulted in a dramatic decrease in car usage; there were more than 20 cars in use to collect children on the Monday and by Friday this figure had reduced to 4. This suggests that knowledge of an enforcement presence deters car usage and encourages walking to school. The CCTV enforcement vehicle is highly likely to have a similar effect. CCTV and ANPR cameras are commonly deployed **at the request** of the local communities and schools who want children to be protected from selfish and often dangerous parking. CCTV usage can be highly beneficial in the protection of CEOs and others involved in parking enforcement, whilst at work; their safety should be paramount.

Note: Funding for the CCTV vehicle was provided by the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership specifically to help reduce the number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) near schools.

Q3. Do you think the traffic adjudicators should have wider powers to allow appeals?

No. Adjudicators already have wide ranging powers; they can and do refer cases back to the Chief Executive of the issuing Local Authority with directions to reconsider the case. Adjudicators already have discretion to award costs and the Council believes that the grounds of appeal, set out in the Traffic Management Act, are sufficient and fit for purpose.

Q4. Do you agree that guidance should be updated to make clear in what circumstances adjudicators may award costs? If so, what should those circumstances be?

The current circumstances in which costs can be awarded are sufficient i.e. if the Council or Appellant are deemed to have been "frivolous, vexatious or wholly unreasonable" in bringing or contesting the appeal. This Council has no objection to the updating of guidance to make these circumstances clearer.

Q5. Do you think motorists who lose an appeal at a parking tribunal should be offered a 25% discount for prompt payment?

No. Councils have to spend a significant amount of time in the preparation of appeal cases. The cost of this time to the public purse is not recovered, even in the event that an appeal is dismissed and the appellant pays the full amount of a higher rate PCN.

This is also likely to be costly to implement and operate. It would require significant amendments to Local Authorities' IT systems, which would have financial implications.

It may deter motorists from paying the initial discount payment and it may promote vexatious or extraneous appeals which would overload the adjudication system and add significantly to the costs of the service.

This additional discount undermines the effectiveness of the original penalty charge, since everyone who appeals and loses will, in effect, only pay 75% of the penalty charge.

The actual Penalty Charge set by law is the **higher** amount. This procedure would effectively reward unsuccessful appeals.

Q6. Do you think local residents and firms should be able to require councils to review yellow lines, parking provision, charges etc in their area? If so, what should the reviews cover and what should be the threshold for triggering a review?

The Council already undertakes this work commensurate with overall workload. We act upon requests from residents and businesses regarding the necessity for existing parking restrictions and the requirements for further restrictions. Requests are received to consider amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders via letter, e-mail, petition and telephone. In the event that a petition is received a report is prepared for consideration by the appropriate Cabinet Member. This is a revenue funded activity and no charge is made.

Q7. Do you think that authorities should be required by regulation to allow a grace period at the end of paid for parking?

Yes. Most Councils already allow a grace period and Rotherham MBC recently increased this period from 5 minutes to 10 minutes.

If implemented, this provision should also apply to private car parks.

Q8. Do you think that a grace period should be offered more widely – for example a grace period for overstaying in free parking bays, at the start of pay and display parking and paid for parking bays, and in areas where there are parking restrictions (such as loading restrictions, or single yellow lines)?

We agree, in principle, grace periods could be offered in all **permitted parking** bays; this Council's parking policy offers this already.

However, we strongly object to the introduction of grace periods in locations where parking is **prohibited**. If allowed as this will encourage motorists to occupy kerb space, thereby preventing disabled people and delivery drivers from enjoying their statutory concessions. This would have a negative effect on attempts to revive the High Street nationally.

Grace periods in areas where parking is prohibited for traffic management or road safety purposes is highly likely to encourage people to disregard prohibited parking controls in general.

Q9. If allowed, how long do you think the grace period should be?

Free parking limited stay – 10 minutes grace after the expiry of the permitted time.
Start of pay and display parking – 5 minutes to allow, for example, change to be obtained.

End of paid parking – 10 minutes after expiry of pay and display ticket or cashless payment.

Single / double yellow lines – observation period to allow for loading / unloading – 3 minutes.

Q10. Do you think the Government should be considering any further measures to tackle genuinely anti-social parking or driving? If so, what?

National legislation should be considered to allow enforcement of footway / pavement parking. Councils outside London currently must implement Traffic Regulation Orders in locations where they wish to control footway parking. This is a time consuming and costly way of allowing Councils to act upon parking activities which are the subject of a significant number of complaints from people who need to use wheel chairs and pushchairs / prams.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 15th January 2014
3.	Title:	Customer and Library Services – review of changes to service
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Following earlier reports to Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism between 2011 and 2013, a number of changes have been implemented within Customer and Library Services. This report summarises those changes and provides an initial review of the impact of changes to opening hours and the implementation of the joint library and customer service model.

6. Recommendations

- 1. Improving Places Overview and Scrutiny Select Commission notes and comments on the changes to the delivery of Customer and Library Services**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

During 2012-13 a number of changes have been made to the way the Council delivers Customer and Library Services. These are in line with recommendations endorsed by Cabinet and Cabinet Member, Culture & Tourism and include:

- Closure of Kimberworth Park Library, Swinton and Dinnington Customer Service Centres
- Changes to opening hours in 13 of 15 libraries across the Borough, identifying and prioritising those libraries which serve deprived communities
- Reduction in spend per head on books and other materials
- Changes to the way customer and library services can be accessed in four localities
- Combination of vehicle based library provision into one service
- Implementation of new mobile library timetable
- Refurbishment of customer and library facilities in Kimberworth, Swinton and Dinnington
- Introduction of cash payment machines
- Achievement of savings target of £500,000 (Library & Information Services)
- Achievement of savings target of £160,000 (Customer Services)
- Implementation of full service staffing review with no compulsory redundancies, with follow up cross service training programme

Further changes to service delivery include:

- Launch of e-book service, in response to demand identified during consultation on review
- Delivery of advice sessions in a range of localities in partnership with CAB and Kiveton Park Advice Centre
- Development of new library “offer” based on national models, including support for customers to access online services

7.2 Changes to service delivery

Changes to service delivery were informed by the Library Strategy 2011-15 and the Customer Access Strategy 2011-15. Changes to the library service were based on an assessment of local need for the service and took account of the statutory nature of the service. An equalities analysis was also completed and, with reference to both library and customer services, consultation took place on the proposed service model.

7.2.1 Changes to opening hours

The following changes to opening hours were implemented between June and September 2013. Opening hours had been revised following public and staff consultation.

Library	Original hours	Revised hours	Comment
Riverside	52.5	55	Includes 2 evenings per week + Saturday
Aston	44.5	46	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Brinsworth	26.5	26	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Dinnington	49.5	46	Includes 2 evenings per week + Saturday
Greasbrough	40	32	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Kimberworth	16.5	20	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Kimberworth Park	17.5	Closed	
Kiveton Park	35.5	32	Seasonal opening hours – includes 2 evenings per week + Saturday
Maltby	50	46	Includes 2 evenings per week + Saturday and Sunday
Mowbray Gardens	32	40	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday and Sunday
Rawmarsh	32	46	Includes Saturday
Swinton	44	40	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Thorpe Hesley	26	26	Includes 2 evenings per week + Saturday and Sunday
Thurcroft	26.5	20	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Wath	46	46	Includes 1 evening per week + Saturday
Wickersley	45	40	Includes 2 evenings per week + Saturday

7.2.2 Joint library and customer service model

Implementation of the following service model (approved by Cabinet April 2013) began in July 2013.

Location	Riverside House	Rawmarsh Customer Service Centre	Aston Customer Service Centre	Maltby Customer and Leisure Centre	Swinton Library	Dinnington Resource Centre	Community Libraries across the borough	Other places
Payment facilities	Cashiers desks or self service payment machines	Self service payment machine	Self service payment machine	Self service payment machine	Self service payment machine	Self service payment machine	Self service payment machine at Wath library	Post office or pay point facility, direct debit, payment online.
Help and advice on Council Tax Benefits	Drop in or appointment service Mon – Fri 8.30 – 5.30 Free phones Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online .	Drop in or appointment service during opening hours Free phones Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in or appointment service during opening hours Free phones Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in or appointment service Mon – Fri 9 – 5.30 Free phones Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in service Monday and Wednesday 9 – 12 & 1 – 5 Appointments also available Free phones Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online	Drop in service Monday and Friday 9 – 12 & 1 – 5 Appointments also available Free phones Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online	Drop in service at Mowbray Gardens (Thurs) & Wath (Wed) Libraries 10 – 4 Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online	Specialist helplines: Council Tax: Benefits: 01709 336006
Help and advice on: Housing Licensing Blue badges Parking Submitting planning applications	Drop in or appointment service Mon – Fri 8.30 – 5.30 Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online .	Drop in or appointment service during opening hours Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in or appointment service during opening hours Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in or appointment service Mon – Fri 9 – 5.30 Dedicated housing kiosk to bid online for council properties	Drop in or appointment service during opening hours Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in or appointment service during opening hours Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online.	Drop in service at Mowbray Gardens (Thurs) & Wath (Wed) Libraries 10– 4 Use of kiosks & computers Staff support to get online	Specialist helplines: Housing: 01709 336008 Other services: 01709 336000

Progress to date:

- Joint service model as described above implemented at Aston, Dinnington, Swinton and Rawmarsh, with opening hours determined following consultation
- Changes to layout and refurbishment at Swinton library and Dinnington Resource Centre to ensure that the space is used effectively and that the two services could be sensitively amalgamated whilst also supporting the delivery of a modern, vibrant library service
- Payment machines implemented at Swinton, Dinnington, Aston, Rawmarsh
- Housing advice provided at Riverside House and Maltby

Future developments to April 2014 (pending decisions on future service delivery):

- Changes to layout planned for Aston
- Payment machines to be implemented at Riverside House, Wath, library and Maltby customer service centre
- Drop in service at Wath library to begin February 2014
- Drop in service at Mowbray Gardens to begin March 2014
- Housing advice service in other sites to be rolled out from January 2014

7.3 Impact of the changes to service delivery

The new service models and opening hours have only been in place for a matter of a few months and therefore provide relatively limited evidence in terms of impact. The impact should also be seen in the context of the changing role of both libraries and customer service centres.

In coming months and years an increasing number of customers will expect to do business with RMBC online. With more adults using the internet to undertake everyday activities such as applying for jobs, reading newspapers, looking for information or getting help, we can expect that the digital environment rather than “face to face” will become, increasingly, the first port of call for Council customers.

Within the current economic climate it is also relevant to note the potential financial benefits from the move to digital service delivery – a recent Socitm report (Delivering local public services in the digital age: 2013) includes references to the respective costs per contact for face to face (£8.15), phone (£2.59) and web delivery (£0.09). Whilst these figures should only be used as a broad guide, as they are not based on local data, they could be seen as a useful indication.

However we also need to acknowledge the needs of those customers who do not have the skills, resources and willingness to engage with services in this way.

We will help to bridge the digital divide by providing free, fast, efficient access to the internet for those who need it, in customer service centres and libraries, along with staff who are equipped to offer support, encouragement and advice to those who would be otherwise excluded.

Whilst the traditional “book lending” role of libraries continues to be popular with customers, libraries are also increasingly valued as welcoming, safe spaces, open to all, providing sources of information, places to learn, relax and meet other people. Partners and volunteers are working with us to deliver services within local communities and to widen access.

7.3.1 Closure - Kimberworth Park Library

Kimberworth Park library closed in March 2013. Analysis of usage across the service since then would appear to indicate that customers from Kimberworth Park have migrated to Kimberworth (where hours were increased and the library re-furbished), Greasbrough and, predominantly, Riverside House. Usage of the mobile library facility implemented at Kimberworth Park following the closure of the library is minimal – this may be due to the relative attractiveness of the service offer at nearby libraries.

7.3.2 Changes to opening hours and joint library and customer service model

The following are interim indicators of the impact of the changes:

- A small reduction/increase in the amount of opening hours has not in itself directly led to a reduction/increase in usage, particularly if there was an active trend prior to the change
- The pattern of opening hours is as important as the number of hours in determining take up of the service. These need to be kept under regular review to reflect changes within the local community.
- In comparison with the same period in 2012-13, there has been an increase in “active borrowers” at Brinsworth, Greasbrough, Kimberworth, Kiveton Park and Wath, but a decrease at Aston, Riverside House, Dinnington, Maltby, Mowbray Gardens, Rawmarsh, Swinton, Thorpe Hesley, Thurcroft and Wickersley.
- Whilst the traditional “book borrowing” (particular by adults) may be in decline in some areas, the introduction of e-books is attracting new customers – who, in some cases, are then becoming users of the wider service
- There is the potential to offer a wider range of services in response to demand from customers and other Council (and partner) services. We have introduced a number of new services (notably within Mowbray Gardens) and are assessing the impact on the local community, with a view to rolling out to other areas, prioritising the deprived communities. Examples include the provision of citizen’s advice, legal advice, ESOL classes, drugs & alcohol awareness, expert patient programme, healthy eating, reading groups, growing fruit and vegetables, activities to support young people’s health and wellbeing, arts, music and heritage activities.

- Initiatives have been supported by volunteers, who have also played a key role in engaging with communities
- There has been some migration of customers from the locality customer service centres to Riverside House, particularly with Council Tax queries and transactions – should this continue then it may be appropriate to review the level of services provided within localities
- There is some evidence of movement to alternative channels, demonstrated by an increase in the take up of the “pay point” facility and the Revenues & Benefits telephony service
- As customers move from accessing services “face to face” to online there is increased demand for support for those wishing or needing to access services in this way – including the ongoing provision of free access to the internet, wi-fi services and personal assistance.
- There is a need for major changes in the pattern of opening hours and service models to be supported by effective marketing and publicity

7.3.3 Customer feedback

We welcome comments from customers and have implemented a service-wide rolling programme of customer satisfaction surveys.

From comments, compliments and complaints received in recent months, the following areas have been identified as helping us continue to improve:

Feedback	Actions
Customers continue to appreciate helpful, efficient, welcoming service	We have implemented a service wide training programme based on an audit of staff skills and are prioritising the needs of customers at the newly “merged” sites by supporting staff who are still learning and developing in their roles
There has been a lot of movement of staff as a result of the changes and the implementation of the staffing review. Some customers have missed staff they were familiar with	We have adapted staffing rotas to ensure that, as far as possible, there is a consistent staff presence with appropriate skills
Customers would like to see improvements to the quality of the ICT provision	We are implementing a refresh of the People’s Network service, including the introduction of wi-fi provision and tablets
Some customers have been initially reluctant or experienced some difficulty in accessing services in different ways	Staff have been on hand to support customers and explain the changes to service delivery
The needs and demands of “customer services” and “library” customers are, at times, potentially conflicting	Staff need to be fully aware of the rationale supporting service decisions and be equipped to deal with customer concerns
Customers would prefer similar hours throughout the year rather than seasonal opening hours – this was piloted at Kiveton Park	This will not now be rolled out further unless demand changes

8. Financial

The changes to service delivery reduced expenditure on the services by a total of £660,000 during 2013-14. There are current in-year pressures due to the part year implementation of the service models.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Council has a statutory duty in accordance with section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964, to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to residents and those who work or are in full-time education in the Borough. The service reviews took account of this duty.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Library and Customer services support the delivery of the corporate plan, specifically:

Priority 1: Stimulating the local economy and helping local people into work

The way we will do business:

- Talking & listening to all our customers and treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Supporting and enabling our communities to help themselves, whilst meeting the needs of the most vulnerable
- Getting it right first time, reducing bureaucracy and getting better value for money
- Working with partners to ensure people get the services and support they need as early as possible
- Having the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- **Cabinet: 23rd November 2011 – Library Service Review**
- **Cabinet: 20th June 2012 – Review of the Library and Information Service**
 - **Appendix A: assessment of need**
 - **Appendix B: rationale**
 - **Appendix C: draft service model – public consultation**
 - **Appendix D: equalities analysis – summary**
 - **Appendix E: consultation plan**
- **Improving Places Select Commission: 25th July 2012 – Review of the Library and Information Service**
 - **Appendix A: assessment of need**
 - **Appendix B: rationale**
 - **Appendix C: draft service model – public consultation**
 - **Appendix D: equalities analysis – summary**
 - **Appendix E: consultation plan**

- **Cabinet: 21st November 2012 – Library and Information Service Review consultation feedback report**
 - **Appendix A: library review consultation report (summary)**
 - **Appendix B: equalities analysis of library and information service (summary)**
 - **Appendix C: vision to deliver a modern and vibrant library service (public document)**

- **Cabinet: 16th January 2013 – Customer Service Centres**

- **Cabinet member for Culture and Tourism: 12th March 2013 – Mobile Library service offer**

- **Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism: 26th March 2013 – Improving the presentation of books in libraries – Kimberworth library**

- **Cabinet: 24th April 2013 – Customer Service Centres**

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