

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	25th July 2012
3.	Title:	Review of the Library and Information Service
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Following an earlier report to Cabinet (23rd Nov 2011), a review of the Library and Information Service has been undertaken to identify proposals to deliver a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”, Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964 (the Act). The review has considered how the Service can most appropriately meet local need and deliver the best service possible in the current challenging environment.

Proposals for future service delivery included in the report have been based on an assessment of local need for the service and take into account the statutory requirement for the service and available resources. They are informed by the Library Strategy 2011-15, which aims to deliver a modern, vibrant library service.

An equalities analysis has been completed and a plan for structured consultation based on the proposed future service model has been put forward for consideration.

The proposal would release savings to the Council of approximately £500,000.

A recent report to Cabinet (20th June 2012) gained approval to go out to public consultation on the proposed future service model for the Library and Information Service.

6. Recommendations

- 1. Improving Places Select Commission note the draft future service model (Appendix C) and also note that no decisions on the model will be made until the autumn, when a further report will be brought to Cabinet.**
- 2. Improving Places Select Commission makes comment on the draft future service model.**

7. Proposals and Details

The Council has a statutory duty in accordance with section 7 of the Act to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to residents and those who work or are in full-time education in the Borough.

Rotherham MBC strategy since 2007 has been to deliver significant capital investment in library buildings through an ambitious programme of construction, modernisation, replacement and refurbishment. As part of this, new facilities redesigned with customers in mind opened at Thorpe Hesley in 2007, Wickersley in 2008, Mowbray Gardens in 2009, Aston in 2010 and Riverside House and Rawmarsh in 2012.

Libraries have been redesigned with customers in mind. Increased opening hours across the service, convenient self-service, new computers and furniture, places to relax and socialise, local access to wider council services, community involvement in the running of the library and a lively programme of events and activities have all been part of the development.

However, a full review of the service has been requested (23rd November 2011 Cabinet) in order to continue with the transformation and the recent paper to Cabinet outlined the proposals and the way forward.

Proposals for future service delivery have taken account of:

- Consultation on what Rotherham people liked about libraries and what their priorities were for the future
- An assessment of local need for the service
- The service's contribution to corporate outcomes
- Key national, regional and local strategies
- The experiences of other local authorities
- Options presented by the review of customer services
- An analysis of current budgets and the direction of travel for public sector spending

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

An assessment of local need (*Executive summary, key findings and conclusion – Appendix A*) for the service has been undertaken which describes local needs in Rotherham for a Library and Information Service, including the general and specific needs of adults and children who live, work and study full time in the borough.

The needs assessment draws on a wide range of data to establish the demographic composition of communities, the way that communities in Rotherham use their local libraries, how those libraries are managed by the Council, and library users' and non-users' views of the Library and Information Service.

Each substantive section of the assessment details a different aspect of need as follows:

- the borough: need based on social conditions and access; and
- the current service model: need as expressed demand, service usage and performance.

It also draws on other data such as surveys of users and non-users and national performance indicators. It identifies key areas where the library service could have greatest impact and it considers resources available, including staff, buildings and stock.

There is a clear need and demand for libraries to:

- Promote a love of reading and help to improve literacy.
- Provide a space where people can engage in informal learning, develop skills and improve their lives.
- Provide children and young people with a safe, inspiring place to learn, explore their creativity and find their talent.
- Support businesses and contribute to the sustainability and regeneration of our local communities.
- Provide welcoming spaces, open for all to use to improve their lives and their communities.
- Offer information and reading services that can improve the health and well being of customers.
- Bridge the digital divide and become, for many people, an essential point of access to online knowledge resources.

The authority has a statutory duty to provide a library service; the Library & Information Service has a clear, adopted strategy which will continue to shape the delivery of a modern, vibrant service in the future; there is a need across Rotherham for the support which a Library Service can offer in improving literacy, education, employment and life changes, health, cohesion and digital literacy. The needs assessment concludes that there is a need for access to a library service in every community in Rotherham.

However, every community is different. We have therefore considered if the service could be delivered differently in some places, as appropriate, within the overall aim of delivering a modern, vibrant and efficient library service across the Borough. For example, not every community necessarily needs to have a service run from a library building and the present library hours may not be necessarily as appropriate as they once were.

It is also clear when analysing usage and performance of the service that there are opportunities to improve in terms of delivering a “comprehensive and efficient service”.

An equality analysis (See *Equality Analysis Summary, Appendix D*) has been undertaken on the proposals, which includes reference to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, identity, race, sexuality and religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil

partnership. In addition, the proposals have considered the impact on other groups e.g. the unemployed and those with literacy needs.

We believe that the options for consideration will continue to meet the statutory duties of the Council in respect of library services and will provide a modern, vibrant, efficient service based on the Library Strategy.

PROPOSED FUTURE SERVICE PROVISION

The proposed new service issued for consultation is detailed in **Appendices B and C** and is summarised below.

Library provision

- Customers need buildings and services which are accessible, safe, welcoming and well maintained.
- In order to serve all communities, and taking into account the travel habits of current customers, we will continue to aim to provide a library within 2 miles of every resident, with a range of opening hours to suit local need.
- We will close two libraries at Kimberworth and Kimberworth Park. However, there will be minimal impact on the numbers of residents who live within 2 miles of a library.
- We will change opening hours, prioritising a number of libraries in the north, south and Town Centre and improving access to other Council services.
- Opening hours at the remaining libraries will be set according to actual and potential usage. Some may be open less than they are now.
- Where opening hours are reduced, we will work with partners and communities to increase opening hours where possible in the future.
- We will refocus the Mobile Library service to improve access to services across the Borough.
- We will spend £386,193 on books and other materials, reducing expenditure per head of population from £1.98 to £1.52, in line with the changes to service provision. We believe that this means we will be able to continue to provide a wide range and choice of books.
- We will refocus the roles of staff to support the delivery of a modern, vibrant service.
- We will continue to deliver services to our most vulnerable communities, including children, young people, families, and the elderly.
- We will continue to improve e-enabled services.
- The proposals mean it will cost around £500,000 less to deliver the library service.

Closures:

The needs assessment informed us that we could deliver the service to people living in the Kimberworth and Kimberworth Park areas in a different way than present. The population maps show clearly that the existing static library buildings are close to other libraries in terms of the 2 mile radius guideline. Local people are already accessing Greasbrough Library and

could benefit from the new Riverside House service which is now even nearer than the old Central Library. In addition, we plan to supplement this access with mobile/home visit provision as appropriate.

Opening hours:

In terms of proposed opening hour's changes, it is significant that not only are some reductions very small but also that some opening hours will be increased to take account of trends that show the local need. Some examples of this are Mowbray Gardens, Wath, Riverside, Aston and Rawmarsh.

Summary of proposals

Library	Current Hours	Visits per yr	Active borrowers	Proposal
Riverside	52.5	346335	11499	Increase hours to 55 per week. "Flagship" provision for borough
Aston	44.5	53155	3158	Increase hours to 49 per week. "Hub" site for south of borough. Link to customer services
Brinsworth	26.5	10473	670	Reduce opening hrs to 26 per week. Explore potential for new build/community management model with Parish Council
Dinnington	49.5	72843	3709	Reduce opening hours to 49 per week. "Hub" site for south of borough. Link to customer services
Greasbrough	40	30678	1285	Reduce opening hours to 32 per week. Relocate district office and offer access to additional Council services
Kimberworth	16.5	9942	643	Close: additional provision from mobile library
Kimberworth Park	17.5	10514	603	Close: additional provision from mobile library
Kiveton Park	35.5	29252	1252	Reduce opening hours to 32 per week. Pilot seasonal opening
Maltby	50	45156	3559	Reduce opening hours to 40 per week. Link to customer services on "campus" basis
Mowbray Gardens	32	48655	1508	Increase opening hours to 40 per week. Case study on impact and best practice linked to Wickersley
Rawmarsh	32	20236	1039	Pilot for joint Library & Customer Service Centre, involving temporary increase in hours and during which opening hours will be reviewed
Swinton	44	57682	2639	Reduce opening hours to 40 per week. Link to customer services
Thorpe Hesley	26	12223	661	Retain current opening hrs. Pilot work with volunteers to add value to current service

Thurcroft	26.5	21909	655	Reduce hours to 26 per week, term time only. Additional provision from mobile during school holidays
Wath	46	113794	2979	Increase opening hours to 49 per week. "Hub" site for north of borough. Access to additional Council services
Wickersley	45	66990	3642	Reduce opening hours to 40 per week. Case study on impact and best practice linked to Mowbray Gardens

Consultation plan

Consultation will include a programme of:

- Public meetings/workshops in libraries/local centres. These will take place between the 4th and 30th of July
- Online consultation
- Meetings with staff

Feedback will be provided to staff and communities, with a report available on the Council website. The consultation and community engagement plan is attached as Appendix E.

8. Financials

The proposed future service delivery option recommended for consultation would deliver the following annual savings/efficiencies:-

- Library closures and changes to opening hours: £231,199
- Materials fund: £117,807
- Service support and development (staffing): £154,379
- Total savings: £503,385

9. Risks and Uncertainties

In order to ensure rigorous and robust decision making, proposals for the future of the service have taken into account its statutory nature, the resources available, existing and projected need for the service, including the consideration of vulnerable groups.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Libraries contribute to the following priority outcomes:

- More people in our poorest communities are in work and training
- There are more successful new businesses
- More people come to the Town Centre for work, shopping and for things to do and see
- More people are in work or training and less are living on benefits
- People enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure and cultural activities
- More people have formal qualifications and skills
- Babies and preschool children with a good start in life

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation on the Library Strategy, including an extensive survey of library users and non users was carried out during May/June/July 2010. Follow up consultation took place during August-October 2011.

Cabinet Member, Lifelong Learning and Culture – approval of library strategy: 19.1.11 (Minute F11)

Council Seminar: 4.10.11

Cabinet 23.11.11

Library and Information Service Strategy 2011-15 (updated version)

http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6581/library_and_information_service_strategy_2011-2015

Wirral Inquiry Report, DCMS, Sept 2009

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/image/publications/wirral_local_inquiry.doc

Consultation has taken place with colleagues in finance, legal, commissioning, policy and performance and human resources.

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Appendices:

A: Assessment of need – executive summary, key findings and conclusion

B: Rationale

C: Draft service model - public consultation

D: Equalities analysis - summary

E: Consultation plan

Full versions of the assessment of need and equalities analysis are available upon request and will be available at the meeting.