

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

**Your Guide To Proposed Changes To
Rotherham's Library and Information Service**

Rotherham's residents are being invited to have their say on the future of the Library and Information Service. This document provides information on the proposals being put forward; the background to the changes, and how people can get involved in their own communities.

What type of library and information service is the Council required to provide?

The Council has a statutory duty to provide a library service. The Public Libraries and Museums Act of 1964 states that: "*It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof.*" The duty arises in relation to persons who are resident, work in or are in full time education in the borough.

Why is the Library and Information Service so important here in Rotherham?

We believe it is the role of an effective Library and Information Service to:-

- Promote a love of reading and help to improve literacy
- 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
- Provide a space where people can join 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
- Bridge the digital divide and become, for many people, an essential point of access to online knowledge and information.

Since 2007 Rotherham Borough Council has invested significantly in library buildings, with an ambitious programme of construction, modernisation, replacement and refurbishment, including the opening of six new libraries in as many years. Libraries opened at Thorpe Hesley in 2007, Wickersley in 2008, Mowbray Gardens in 2009, Aston in 2010 and Riverside House and Rawmarsh in 2012.

How have libraries changed in recent times?

Libraries today are very much redesigned with customers in mind. They are open longer, with new computers, furniture and convenient self-service. They are seen as welcoming sources of information; places to relax, learn, meet other people or curl up with a good book. Communities are becoming more involved in the running of their library. A lively programme of events and activities has encouraged adults, children and families to enjoy their visits.

Background to the latest proposals

We believe our library and information services here in Rotherham are of an extremely high standard. However, we can always improve to ensure we are not only delivering a modern and appropriate service, but also one which delivers the best possible value for money.

During 2010 and 2011 we asked people who lived, worked or studied in Rotherham what they liked most about the Library and Information Service and what our priorities should be for the future. They told us:

- Good range and choice of books
- Approachable and knowledgeable staff
- Pleasant library environment
- Choice to access services, including ICT and internet access, without charge
- A library situated conveniently with other local community facilities
- Activities for children

In 2011 we brought out our Library and Information Service Strategy, which said what we would aim to do in the next four years, including:

- Providing easily accessible, welcoming, local libraries, open to suit local needs, supplemented where necessary by mobile services, services delivered to individual homes and services delivered through other existing, non-council outlets
- Helping more people to access skills for jobs and for life - including literacy, numeracy and ICT
- Delivering services for vulnerable adults, young people and their families
- Helping more people access Council and other agencies' services easily, swiftly and locally
- Providing a wide range of high quality reading material for adults and young people, in appropriate formats including large print, audio and digital.
- Providing free access to a range of online information resources including the internet
- Training and supporting staff to ensure they have relevant, up to date knowledge and skills in order to provide an excellent customer service

Since then we have begun to consider, based on everything we know about Rotherham's communities, what we need to do most and what we can afford to do. In other words, we have carried out an "assessment of need" - a thorough review of our services, who uses them, when and where, and how changes could be made to improve and give better value-for-money. However, before any decisions are taken, we want to ask you for your comments and thoughts on our proposals.

What are the changes being proposed?

We believe that there is need for access to a library service in every community in Rotherham. However, every community is different and so we want to make sure that we take account of all the differences in the ways people need and want to use their library service.

- 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 change opening hours, increasing them in a number of libraries in the north, south and town centre, making it easier for you to visit
- We will change opening hours at the remaining libraries according to actual and potential usage. This means that some may be open less than they are now
- We propose to close two small libraries at Kimberworth and Kimberworth Park. However, there will be minimal impact on the numbers of people who live within two miles of a library

- We will continue to deliver mobile library services and services to individuals in their homes. We will change the way this service is delivered to make sure that we improve access across the Borough
- We will look to provide access to other Council services in a number of libraries
- We will reduce the amount we spend on books and other materials for each person in Rotherham from £1.98 to £1.52. This means that we will continue to spend around £390,000 each year. We believe that this means we can continue to provide a wide range and choice of books but still achieve greater value for money
- We will continue to offer free access to the internet and a range of online information sources, including e-magazines
- We will continue to deliver a varied programme of events and activities aimed at children, young people, families, and adults. We want more people to use the library service, more often
- The proposals mean it will cost around £500,000 less to deliver the library service

A summary of how the proposed changes will affect each individual library is attached.

How can you give your views on the changes being proposed?

The Library & Information Service is, by its nature, open to all. Our target audience for consultation therefore is a wide one, made up of all those who live, work or learn in Rotherham, including those who do not currently use libraries.

Copies of all background documents, which are available in alternative formats and languages upon request, can be found at www.rotherham.gov.uk/libraries.

There will be lots of opportunities for people who use libraries – and those who don't at the moment – to get involved as part of the consultation process, which ends on 31st August 2012. For example:

- Call in at one of our drop-in sessions:-
 - 4th July: Aston Library, 2-6pm
 - 5th July: Mowbray Gardens Library, 2-6pm
 - 6th July: Greasbrough Library, 2-6pm
 - 9th July: Maltby Library, 2-6pm
 - 10th July: Brinsworth Library, 2-6pm
 - 11th July: Rawmarsh Library, 1-5.30pm
 - 12th July: Kiveton Park Library, 2-6pm
 - 13th July: Dinnington Library, 2-6pm
 - 16th July: Thurgroft Library, 2-6pm
 - 17th July: Wickersley Library, 2-6pm
 - 18th July: Thorpe Hesley Library, 3.30-7pm
 - 19th July: Swinton Library, 2-6pm
 - 23rd July: Wath Library, 2-6pm
 - 24th July: Kimberworth Library, 2-6pm
 - 26th July: Riverside House, 2-6pm
 - 30th July: Kimberworth Park Library, 2-6pm

- Email us with your views - libraryreview@rotherham.gov.uk
- Contact us by telephone on 01709 823623
- Give us your comments in person at any library

We look forward to hearing your views.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO LIBRARY BUILDINGS

| Library | Current Hours | Visits per yr | Active borrowers | Proposal |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Central | 52.5 | 346335 | 11499 | Increase hours to 55 per week. Rotherham's "flagship" library at Riverside House. |
| Aston | 44.5 | 53155 | 3158 | Increase hours to 49 per week. |
| 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. |
| Greasbrough | 40 | 30678 | 1285 | Reduce opening hours to 32 per week. |
| Kimberworth | 16.5 | 9942 | 643 | Close: develop mobile library service. |
| Kimberworth Park | 17.5 | 10514 | 603 | Close: develop mobile library service . |
| 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. |
| Mowbray Gardens | 32 | 48655 | 1508 | Increase opening hours to 40 per week. |
| 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. |
| Thorpe Hesley | 26 | 12223 | 661 | Retain current opening hrs. Pilot work with volunteers. |
| Thurcroft | 26.5 | 21909 | 655 | Reduce hours to 26 per week, term time only. Additional mobile service during school holidays. |
| Wath | 46 | 113794 | 2979 | Increase opening hours to 49 per week. |
| Wickersley | 45 | 66990 | 3642 | Reduce opening hours to 40 per week. |