

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Improving Places Select Commission</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Customer and Library Services – review of changes to service</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

### 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.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Riverside House</b>	<b>Rawmarsh Customer Service Centre</b>	<b>Aston Customer Service Centre</b>	<b>Maltby Customer and Leisure Centre</b>	<b>Swinton Library</b>	<b>Dinnington Resource Centre</b>	<b>Community Libraries across the borough</b>	<b>Other places</b>
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: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 – Library Service Review**
- **Cabinet: 20<sup>th</sup> 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: 25<sup>th</sup> 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: 21<sup>st</sup> 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: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013 – Customer Service Centres**
  
- **Cabinet member for Culture and Tourism: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013 – Mobile Library service offer**
  
- **Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 – Improving the presentation of books in libraries – Kimberworth library**
  
- **Cabinet: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013 – Customer Service Centres**

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