



Communities Select Committee
26 September 2013

Community Partnered Libraries Progress Report

9

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

As part of the Libraries Public Value Review 10 libraries were identified to become Community Partnered Libraries (CPLs).

Cabinet agreed on 24 July 2012 to progress with the implementation of Community Partnered Libraries to ensure a sustainable future for those libraries, based on the county council's model.

The 10 locations identified were Bagshot, Bramley, Byfleet, Ewell Court, Lingfield, New Haw, Stoneleigh, Tattenhams, Virginia Water and Warlingham,

It was also indicated that Cabinet would receive a further progress report in September 2013.

Cabinet is now due to receive the progress report in October 2013, in order to allow time for Committee scrutiny.

Cabinet will not be asked to take a decision on this item.

Introduction

1. Since the Cabinet decision on 24 July 2012, the Library Service has successfully established Community Partnered Libraries at 6 of the 10 nominated libraries: Stoneleigh, Byfleet, New Haw, Tattenhams, Virginia Water and Warlingham.
2. Discussions with the remaining four libraries are at varying stages of negotiation and implementation.

Methodology

3. Steering Groups at the established CPLs have been offered the opportunity to input into this progress review through individual interviews and all accepted. These interviews were conducted in August 2013 by a Policy Manager from Customers and Communities who has no direct involvement with the CPLs.
4. Customer input is also included in the report – via the customer surveys, as well as a selection of comments made to the Policy Manager when talking to customers in the library.

National context

5. Library Services across the UK are looking to respond effectively to the changing ways that customers are using their services, including the expansion in the use of virtual services by library users. Many small libraries are suffering a decline in their traditional use, however they remain valued and supported by their local users.
6. Ongoing financial pressures are equally requiring all local authorities to focus on ensuring their library services are sustainable for the future.
7. Surrey's approach to the challenging economic climate has been to find new ways to sustain the current library network, and to increase community involvement in services.
8. Many other authorities have however made significant cuts to library services. Research published in The Bookseller in July 2013¹ suggested that during 2011/12 more than 200 libraries had been closed across the country and that the trend was expected to continue, with the Library Campaign suggesting at least another 300 are under immediate threat.
9. Research conducted by the Arts Council² has highlighted the growing number of community libraries emerging across England, with more than one in three library authorities now having at least one community library operating within their area. Approximately 5% of all public libraries in England are now run as community libraries, and this figure is likely to increase over the next few years.

Envisioning the library of the future

10. The Arts Council identifies the essential elements that should define a successful public library as having:
 - A safe, creative community space that is enjoyable and easy to use, in both physical and virtual form
 - An excellent range of quality books, digital resources and other content
 - Well-trained, friendly people to help users to find what they want either independently or with support
11. Their four priorities for public libraries in the future are:

¹ <http://www.thebookseller.com/news/library-campaign-warns-library-slaughter.html>

² <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/library-of-the-future/>

- Placing the library as the hub of a community
- Making the most of digital technology and creative media
- Ensuring that libraries are resilient and sustainable
- Delivering the right skills for those who work in libraries

12. This profile of a successful library of the future corresponds closely to Surrey's approach. Surrey is helping CPLs become local providers of access to services; local communities are being empowered and supported in developing the skills and facilities needed to deliver a strong and responsive local service. The CPL provides an opportunity for communities to work in partnership with SCC to develop and embed the libraries as a key community asset and focal point. This is a long term commitment to partnership which will evolve and change over time.

Arts Council Guiding Principles for Community Libraries

13. The Arts Council have also produced Guiding Principles for authorities considering community libraries. Their case studies³ highlight good practice to enable a community library to be part of the local network.

14. The report drew from a number of case studies to highlight a range of ways in which library authorities are proactively working to ensure that community libraries thrive and complement the wider library network. Surrey's approach includes all of these aspects:

- 14.1. *Providing a single point of contact with the authority*
The CPLs in Surrey are supported directly by the CPL Support Team, which provides initial and ongoing training and on-site support, including a member of staff from the CPL team present in the library to train, advise and update for 20% of its opening hours. Volunteers can also contact the support team through a helpline for the remainder of the opening hours.
- 14.2. *Linking with a nearby library as a 'link library'*
Each Surrey CPL is "buddied" with a designated link library for advice, guidance and some administrative functions.
- 14.3. *Providing access to professional librarian support*
In addition to the CPL Support Team, the CPLs and their users have full access to the Library's professional support, including Enquiries Direct, and the Library Services' Property, Environment and Stock Team (PEST) and other cross-service teams.
- 14.4. *Retaining access to the library management system*
Along with other libraries in Surrey, self-service kiosks are used as the book issuing and return system, which is easy for volunteers to learn and reduces the training burden for very large numbers of volunteers. Self-service also avoids data protection issues. The majority of transactions are self-service but if needed users can access their own records independently using the public access terminals or personal device through wifi. They can also access their records with support

³ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/community-libraries-research/>

from a volunteer using the library's laptop. This enables the full range of services still to be provided via self-service.

14.5. *Enabling access to training*

A full programme of initial and ongoing training has been developed, which comprises both 'classroom' based and on-site training. This ensures that volunteers have an understanding of key library, legal and equalities issues. This is supplemented by a procedures manual and other training materials.

14.6. *Including them in wider initiatives e.g. Summer Reading challenge*

The CPLs have all pointed to their success with this year's Summer Reading Challenge. They are also becoming engaged with other library initiatives, such as Reminiscence and outreach to older people.

14.7. *Encouraging adoption of common council policies on IT, staff management,*

All CPLs sign up to a lease or licence and a memorandum of understanding which provide a common framework for working together with SCC and defines which policies and legislation are obligatory. While good practice and legislative requirements, including policies around equalities and access are followed by all CPLs, steering groups have also developed local policies and procedures e.g. recruitment of volunteers. As these libraries remain part of the library system some technical policies, such as minimum IT security standards, are also required to be consistent with the main service.

Overview of the Surrey model

15. Surrey's Community Partnered Library model is one of the best-resourced models nationally.
16. In developing the Surrey approach, officers looked at models emerging across the UK. The level of ongoing support from the local authority that each community library receives varies considerably. Some are required to fund the premises and provide the book stock, and customers at some libraries are unable to access the wider library network. It should be noted that more recently other library authorities have been launching partnerships very close to, or identical to Surrey's model, recognising the high level of support that will help make these libraries a success.
17. Surrey's CPL model is based around providing the customer with the tools they need in order to be able to self-serve, using the self-service kiosks, public access terminals, and wifi. Additional support for those who require it is readily available from volunteers, who can support users to access their records from the CPL laptop or using a public access terminal. As set out in the 24 July 2012 Cabinet report, the revised procedures that have been developed for CPLs mean that there are no processes that cannot be delivered through a CPL as compared to a Surrey County Council-staffed library.
18. Each of the CPLs enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Surrey County Council and the Community Partner, which defines the respective roles and responsibilities for the library. The responsibilities and

duties captured in these documents are set out in greater detail in the 24 July 2012 Cabinet report.

19. Surrey County Council continues to provide:

- The library building and pay its current running costs.
- Stock, including books, talking books and audiovisual items that form part of the prevailing offer (as demand for formats changes). These are refreshed with new and recirculated titles on a regular basis.
- Connection to the libraries IT network, including the resources of the virtual library (access to SCC's interactive catalogue, and full range of self-service borrower account management functions, electronic information resources, e-books and e-audiobooks); connection to the library automation system's self-service system for borrowing and returns, internet connected PCs for public use, and Wi-Fi broadband for public use. SCC will also provide access to IT troubleshooting.
- Professional library development team support for library services and activities, e.g. help with running the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Training and development for the steering group and volunteers, both initial and ongoing.
- Direct access to the Enquiries Direct information service as used by SCC-managed libraries, a telephone, email and fax service for information enquiries, to enable volunteers to support enquirers with their information needs.
- Use of our contact centre for queries about SCC services.

20. Some flexibility is available around the arrangements to manage and run the library. Of the CPLs which have started so far, five have chosen to be entirely volunteer-led and supported. At Warlingham, the model is that Warlingham Parish Council raises funds for a single member of staff to work alongside and supervise volunteers while the library is open. Warlingham Parish Council work to raise the profile of, and increase use of the library services and library building.

The established CPLs

Achievements

21. During interviews, each steering group demonstrated local variation in approach and emphasis but common themes emerged:

Strong support for the libraries which are highly valued by the community

22. The importance and profile of each of these libraries within their local communities has been significantly enhanced through the CPL approach. The fact that the volunteers are local and bring a strong network of contacts and influence is a major benefit in this but all of the libraries have undertaken outreach and promotional work, most notably with schools, and are regarded and well supported by their local communities.

23. The galvanising effect of a perceived threat of closure created a surge of interest and support in 2011 but this could well have ebbed away. Instead, the interest and commitment has sustained and grown. Community focussed events, promotional activities and materials, and the use of the local library as a venue for other community services, have all contributed to the placing of these libraries at the heart of their community:

“The library is a good community resource. It is well positioned in the centre of the village, has good facilities and a welcoming feel. The changeover to CPL has gone well.” (New Haw)

Committed and enthusiastic volunteers and strong recruitment

24. All of the Steering and Management Group Members have been full of praise for the quality, dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers. There has been no difficulty with recruiting and turnover has been very low.
25. A concern expressed at the time during the judicial review was about the quality and resilience of a volunteer force compared to the standards established by paid staff. There are many user quotes that provide evidence the CPLs are responsive to local and individual needs. There have been virtually no complaints received by the library service relating to the CPLs and none of these reflect on the volunteers themselves. The volunteers have consistently met their responsibilities and there have been very few minor problems with opening hours.
26. The training put in place for volunteers has ensured that they are fully competent to deal with most things directly and, when support is needed, this is readily available through the CPL Support Team and helpline, and the link library arrangements, and the volunteers use this support.
27. At each library, there is a strong sense of mutual support and team ownership within each volunteer group, even though they will rarely meet as a group. Skills are recognised and balanced through rotas to ensure the public service is consistent and the volunteers themselves do not feel exposed beyond their personal abilities. Social events for volunteers are attracting near 100% attendance and are embraced with enthusiasm.
28. There are personal triumphs and developments too. One volunteer led her grandchildren through the Summer Reading Scheme to become the first to receive certificates. Another has grown in confidence in just a few months from helping with tea making to taking charge of stock maintenance and being a team leader.
29. A number of volunteers have successfully progressed into employment and the volunteering is seen as an opportunity for learning new skills that can improve their employment prospects. One example highlighted is of a volunteer at one of the CPLs who applied successfully for a post at one of the council's branch libraries. She had previously had school library experience but not worked in the public library sector. The period as a volunteer allowed her to acquire experience and successfully adapt her own knowledge and skills to the different working environment. She sees her appointment as a positive step towards a career in the UK library system.

30. Most of the CPLs advised that while recruitment is not seen as a challenge, Saturdays and to a lesser degree Fridays, are less popular days for volunteering, but this is being managed effectively.

“Joining the library has transformed my life,” (Comment from a volunteer who was dealing with bereavement).

“Thank you for creating such a positive, enjoyable volunteer environment (I almost said “work environment”, but that really would be a misnomer) – it’s a great addition to my life!” (Virginia Water volunteer)

Positive ‘environment’ and welcome

31. Many of the public comments reflect the “buzz” that these libraries have. This is due in part to the enthusiasm of the volunteers, but also to them successfully working with the Library Service’s Property, Environment and Stock team. Internal improvements include coffee machines, reading and social areas and modernisation of children’s areas.

Attraction and use by young people and families

32. All six established CPLs have identified increasing the appeal of the library to young people, children and young families as a major target for development. There is considerable evidence of benefits deriving from a pro-active approach to local schools, with talks at assemblies, involving pupils in library activity and parent representatives who promote the library in schools, and other groups.
33. The Summer Reading Challenge has been a significant success across all of these libraries with typical numbers for enrolment upwards of 25% improved on the previous year. There is a strong belief that this has driven up not just visits to the library from children and young families but also active enrolment and borrowing. Rhymetime and story times for younger children are also a cause for celebration with increased attendance and, at Byfleet, second sessions required to meet demand.
34. The increase in the proportion of male volunteers compared to the proportion of branch library staff is having a positive impact. For example, at least two of the libraries mentioned that the most popular story-tellers were male.
35. There has also been some success in recruiting younger volunteers, often from those following the Duke of Edinburgh programme. Stoneleigh in particular has established a young volunteer recruitment process with a dedicated coordinator and have a number of volunteers aged 14-18. Other libraries are also looking to recruit younger people.

“I really like it here. I’ve never been but I definitely will more often! I got a lot of revision and homework done, the books are amazing and it’s a lovely environment to be in.” (Tattenhams young library user)

“Lovely, it’s a homely place and so welcoming.” (8 year old, New Haw)

Highly valued support from CPL Support Team and the library service management

36. Interviews with representatives from the steering groups indicate that the Support Team is delivering a highly valued service to the CPLs. Initial training has been continuously revised and updated following feedback from volunteers. It is now delivered in a highly interactive style and comprises a mix of 'classroom' based and on the job training, supplemented with refresher modules and handbooks.
37. SCC provides 100% support presence during implementation and training, and starts to decrease support hours per week by mutual consent as the volunteers grow in experience and confidence. When fully trained, support is maintained at 20% of opening hours every week with a support team presence.
38. Representatives from the steering groups acknowledge the high levels of ongoing support from the county council.

Learning points

General requirements

39. The CPL process was always recognised as breaking new ground and presenting new challenges for the county council and this has proved to be the case in many instances. For example, the CPL signage is quite different from what the county council usually deals with, with some requiring planning permission, and this has taken longer than expected to deal with.
40. There has been some frustration that the different timescales of the various interdependent separate service inputs required, has meant that sometimes some groups became delayed and communication difficult.
41. To avoid a conflict of interest, the county council's Legal Services were not in a position to be able to provide legal advice to the CPL groups themselves, and this created frustration for some CPLs. Funding was however made available to steering groups needing to obtain their own legal advice.
42. The council's property services have been able to bring forward building repairs and improvements to deal with the concerns of steering groups in most instances, despite pressures on budgets and workloads.
43. Some steering groups have encountered difficulties relating to the ordering and delivering of signage, external display equipment, and a number of smaller works such as removal of reflective window film. Some have also reported delays in SCC securing planning permission. The constraint is some of these were supplier-led processes and the need to take technical advice before reaching decisions.
44. A shared understanding has had to be developed that as these libraries remain maintained by SCC, with very tight budgets and heavy workloads, timescales to effect repairs or deliver improvements are sometimes longer than partners wish and this causes them concern and frustration.

Wider participation in the library network

45. All of the steering groups confirmed that they see themselves very much as part of the wider library service in the county. Relationships with the link libraries are largely positive, though there is scope for closer working for some. One issue was raised in interviews around insufficient links between a CPL and its link library. This was partially due to the telephones not ringing in the public area of the link library and it therefore being difficult for a link library to take calls where a staff terminal was needed. The problem with the phones has now been solved, and the CPL is therefore being supported to re-establish these links.
46. Steering groups suggested that contact with the wider SCC library network is less frequent, although CPL engagement with service wide schemes such as the Summer Reading Challenge has enabled them to meet and be briefed as part of a wider library group.
47. The CPLs have met as a group a few times and local groupings established more frequent contact, particularly while they were developing. Stoneleigh for instance were able to support Warlingham because, at that stage, they had explored options further. Byfleet, the first to go operational, had visits from representatives from New Haw and Virginia Water, enabling hands-on experience and observation prior to their own launches. Warlingham representatives visited New Haw for a similar experience. Facilitating networking and on-line learning for the CPLs are two areas which the library service plans to expand in the coming months.
48. As the remaining CPLs come on stream, the Library Service is planning to increase opportunities for contact across the CPLs. New Haw is planning to organise a conference in Spring 2014 for all of the CPLs.

Status of the CPLs that are yet to be launched

49. The remaining four libraries pursuing community partnered status are at various stages of development and negotiation.
50. Specific issues at each of the remaining four libraries have affected progress. Work is ongoing to resolve these issues.
51. It is hoped that start dates can soon be agreed for Bagshot and Bramley, with further work required to progress implementation at Ewell Court and Lingfield. See annex one for a fuller account.

Performance

Performance management and monitoring

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

52. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding, both SCC and the community partner sign up to a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These are discussed with each group before signing and are tailored for each one but have

a core element which captures the same data for each CPL to allow overall monitoring. KPIs include:

- Book issues,
- Stock,
- Visits,
- Number and profile of borrowers,
- PC usage,
- User satisfaction and feedback,
- Income,
- Training,
- Activities and events,
- Community engagement.
- Equalities

53. SCC is also measured in the partnership against indicators including:

- Training given,
- Day to day support,
- Delivery of underpinning support,
- IT and property support.

54. There is also a requirement on both sides for regular meetings to discuss performance, more formal quarterly meetings and an annual review and report.

Experience of operating the KPIs

55. Pragmatic use of the KPIs over time has led to some simplification and identification of the most useful. Each CPL has developed its own pattern of meetings with the CPL team. See annex 3 for a fuller account of these meetings.

56. The most difficult problem which has arisen in making these meetings useful is providing monthly data against a very tight timescale, and dates of meetings have had to be adjusted to fit in better with data collection but there is more work to be done on this.

Themes arising from KPI discussions

57. The aim of these meetings is to jointly look at how the library is performing, identify problems which can be tackled and take action on them. Successes and improvements are noted and plans for the future discussed.

58. A number of common themes in monitoring discussions have arisen in the first months of operation:

- 58.1. *Set up issues:* Partners flagged up a number of problems with telephones, the CPL help line and link libraries which have been improved. Delays in delivery of new signage has been an issue, as has building repairs and how building works have been carried out, which the support team have pursued. There have been discussions about the role and performance of the support team and what financial and technical support can be obtained for development plans and improvements.

- 58.2. *Provision of data:* As noted above work needs to continue on providing timely and clear data.
- 58.3. *Income generating:* Discussions around income generation to support future investment in the library, the legalities and how best to manage and promote room hire has been prominent.
- 58.4. *Volunteer roles:* For effective management and inclusive volunteering, many of the groups have developed a wide range of roles for volunteers, both "lead" roles eg taking charge of building problems and a wide range of supporting roles as well as face to face contact with the public.
- 58.5. *Children and young people:* Taking on board the steering groups' strongest concerns- to engage with children and young people, and to see real increases in use of their libraries, trends in use and how to engage with different sectors has also featured heavily.

CPL User Surveys 2013

59. User consultation, which is on-going, has comprised two surveys – paper and on-line – at each CPL. One survey is conducted while the library remains a Surrey County Council managed community library⁴, and a second is conducted once the library is operating as a CPL. Five libraries – Byfleet, New Haw, Stoneleigh, Tattenhams and Virginia Water- have completed the process whilst two libraries – Ewell Court and Warlingham - have conducted the first set of surveys.
60. The paper survey is conducted as a census-style survey whereby all users, including children, are invited to complete a questionnaire during their library visit. The on-line survey took the form of a questionnaire, sent with an e-mail to adult members of the CPLs, who had given their e-mail addresses and agreed to be contacted for marketing purposes. Potential respondents had two weeks to complete and submit electronically the completed questionnaire.

Survey Findings

61. Analysis of the surveys is ongoing. Initial findings are very consistent between the two sets of surveys, which suggest that standards and the service offer for the council's CPLs have been maintained at the service points that have moved to the community model. The key findings from these surveys include:
- Libraries are still synonymous with books in the minds of the public as book borrowing is overwhelmingly the most popular activity; followed in popularity by browsing, often an ancillary of borrowing
 - There are some indications that libraries are becoming more community-focused with a percentage increase in the proportion of respondents looking at notice boards and picking up leaflets.
 - Fifteen performance-indicator questions show that in the majority of instances there is very little difference in the percentage of respondents assigning Very

⁴ Known as a 'Group C' library, within the council's three tier service offer

Good/Good ratings in aspects of service provision, including customer care skills of volunteers between SCC managed community libraries and CPLs

- Improvements are apparent; such as the greater level of satisfaction with hours of opening at Byfleet Library where opening hours have increased and changed with a weekly schedule that now includes evening and Sunday opening
- Lifestyle questions relating to book purchase and personal computer/smart phone ownership have produced similar responses in before and after surveys
- The demographics continue to show a relatively elderly user base, a two to one ratio and over, of females to males and an ethnic background that is predominantly White British.

Respondents comments

62. In both surveys, customers were invited to make open comments. The main themes arising from these comments, as well as a selection of comments are detailed below.

Survey 1 – Libraries when they were being managed by Surrey Council⁵

63. The main themes arising were:

- The importance of the library to the community, and particularly for children and the elderly
- The value of the Library Service's paid staff and their expertise and helpfulness, with concerns that volunteers will not be able to provide the same level of support and expertise
- The value of the range of services provided e.g. Rhymetimes, information provision, computers, photocopiers, social events and talks etc
- Wanting to see more, and more consistent, opening hours
- Wanting a wider variety of stock and more frequent rotation
- Wanting more facilities - computer access, more places for quiet study or reading and refreshments
- Wanting the library to have greater investment
- The value of having the library within walking distance for many
- Opposition to closure or perceived downgrading of the library
- Opposition to self-service, and experiences of having to queue to use the self-service kiosks, though equally some comments that self-service works well

It would be a great loss to the village if it were closed

It's a wonderful part of our community! Our children love the experience of using and looking after books from the library!

Much used and a valuable asset to the community

⁵ Comments included from both paper and online surveys at Byfleet, New Haw, Stoneleigh, Tattenhams and Virginia Water. Ewell Court and Warlingham Libraries have to date conducted the first set of surveys only, and are therefore not included in this report.

A lovely place to look at books and meet other like-minded people

It would be helpful if the library was open later in the evening so I could go after work

Open more days and more evenings

We are not happy about the machines used to help us borrow books – a friendly face is so much nicer for children and the elderly.

Survey 2 – Libraries now they are operating as CPLs⁶

64. The main themes arising were:

- Pleased that the library is staying open
- Importance of the library to the community, particularly children and older people
- Well organised, attractive and books are easy to find
- Friendly and welcoming atmosphere
- Value of having meeting facilities for local residents
- Pleased with improvements to opening hours at Byfleet, though some comments that they would like more opening hours, and consistent each day
- Wanting more opening hours and more convenient opening hours at Tattenhams and Stoneleigh
- Wanting more audiobooks and wider selection of stock
- Wanting more investment in the library, specifically more scanners and computers, toilet facilities, tea/coffee facilities etc.
- The value of the library as a place for socialising for many, though also comments that the library is too noisy and should be a place for peace and quiet.
- Feeling that the volunteers could benefit from more training on using the computers
- Disappointment at losing access to the library management system, and opposition to self-service. Also some comments that another kiosk needed for busy times
- Praise for the volunteers, but regret at the loss of paid staff – a couple of respondents said they have not used the library since it became a CPL, due to their opposition to the policy. In addition, some respondents miss the relationships with staff that had built up over many years and who therefore were able to provide a very personal service.

A vital resource for the village. The friends and volunteers, who give their time so freely, do a brilliant job

The Sunday opening has been a real boon

Longer opening hours would make it easier to use

Encouraged by new books in the library. Seems to be working well

⁶ Comments taken from paper and online surveys at Byfleet and Stoneleigh, and online surveys at New Haw, Virginia Water and Tattenhams. Analysis of the remaining surveys is ongoing.

The library is run very efficiently by volunteers – they are professional in their services and so friendly and helpful

A good meeting place for villagers and we can meet up with local councillors on a casual basis

The volunteers have been innovative in introducing new services and activities

I was very anxious as to what the recent changes would mean, but so far, as a library user, everything appears to be going well

More people to ask things since it went voluntary

Well done for maintaining high standards

Visits and Issues

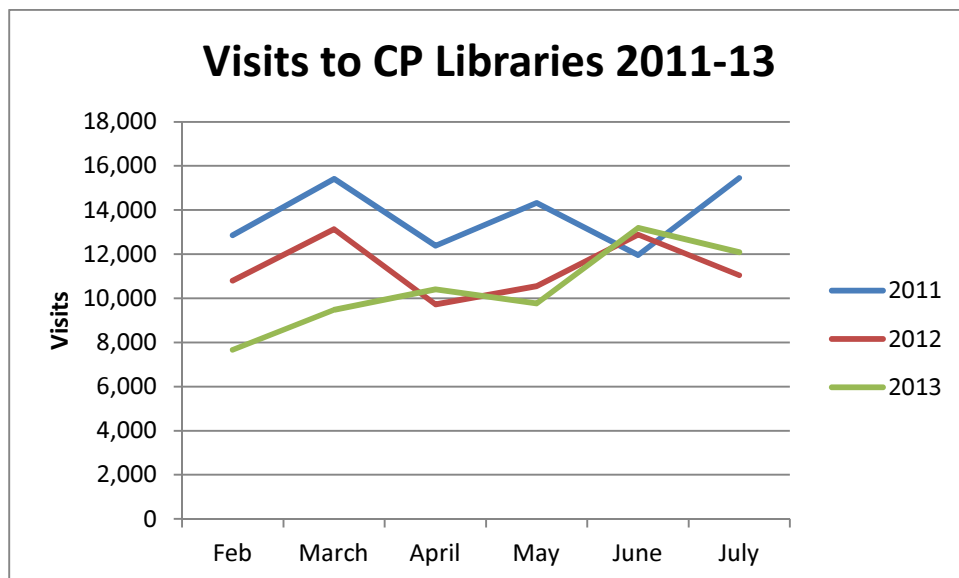
65. Low and declining use was one of the reasons why the 10 libraries were put forward for community partnership. Therefore the steering groups face a challenge to reverse this trend.
66. For the purpose of this report, analysis is based on performance statistics from February to July 2013, by which point all six established CPLs had been launched. Comparisons are therefore based on the same period the previous year. The first six CPLs to launch were:
- Byfleet September 2012
 - New Haw October 2012
 - Tattenhams November 2012
 - Virginia Water January 2013
 - Warlingham January 2013
 - Stoneleigh February 2013
67. There is both a national and local decline in library use. Overall, Surrey's book issues for 2012/13 declined by 1% on the previous year⁷. Whilst book issues are one measure of success, the wide range of activities and services provided by local libraries means that visits are another measure used to monitor performance.
68. Visits to the libraries designated to become community partnered libraries decreased for February to July 2012 compared with the same period in 2011, but following the move to CPLs in Surrey in late 2012, the decline has reduced and since February⁸ a steady upward trend has been achieved by the CPLs.⁹
69. There is evidence from visit statistics that Stoneleigh, New Haw and Tattenhams have seen a consistent increase in monthly year on year visits since April 2013.

⁷ CIPFA

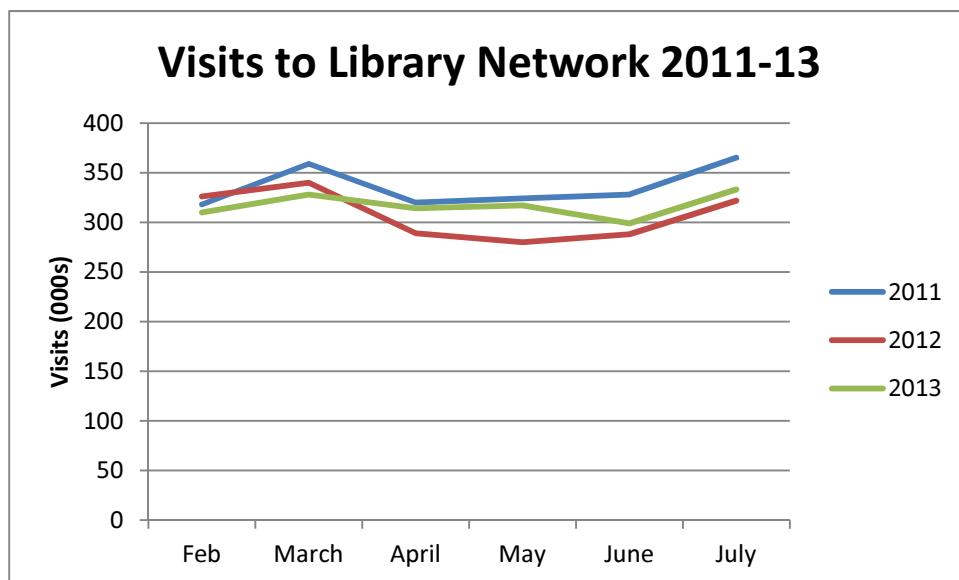
⁸ Data on visits and issues has been taken from a six month period between February to July, as February 2013 was the first month when all CPLs that are now currently running were operational

⁹ Data on visits are to the six CPLs that are active and excludes Virginia Water due to the absence of Plescon beam counter technology.

70. It is important to note that CPLs usually close for a period before launch for training, and some were also closed for refurbishment work, so this will also have adversely affected the final visits statistics. Equally, usage in many of the designated CPLs saw an upsurge from 2011 following the publicity surrounding the public value review, and therefore figures for 2011 do not in all instances represent what the service would expect from a 'typical' year.



71. The chart below demonstrates that the decline in visits experienced by the community partnered libraries in the last three years is a trend recognised across the Surrey library network.¹⁰



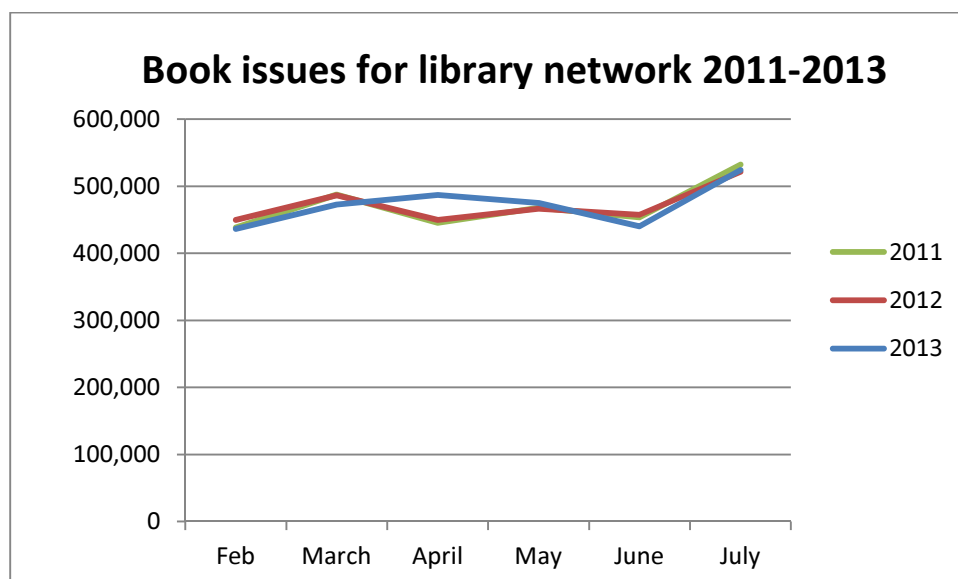
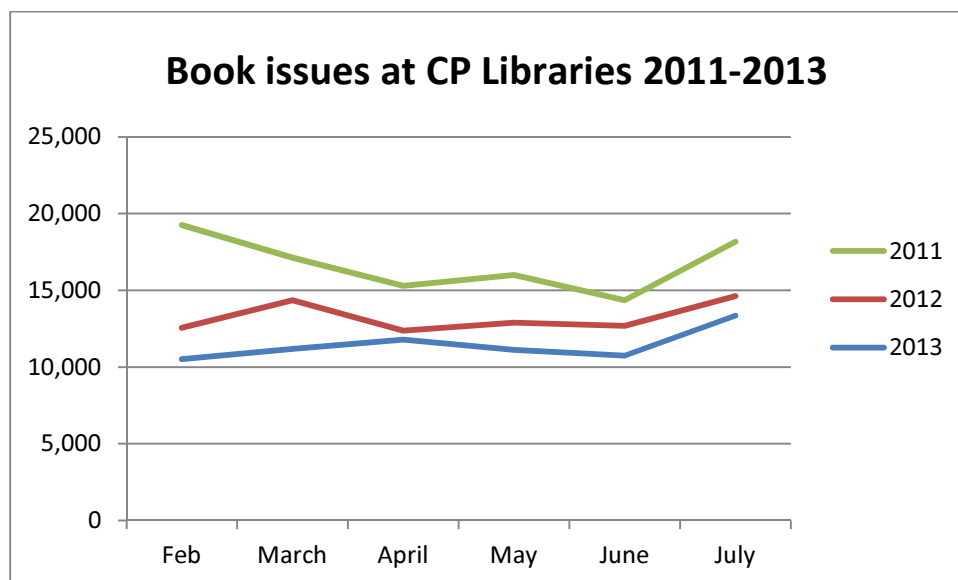
72. The libraries now included in the CPL group have seen an approximate 24% decline in issues over the past 3 years¹¹. Total issues across the library network as a whole have also decreased, but the rate of decline slowed in CPLs in 2013. As the CPLs are dealing with relatively smaller numbers of issues, a change may look large percentage-wise compared with changes across the network as a

¹⁰ The Library Network refers to all 52 libraries plus the Performing Arts Library. In 2012 Woking Library was temporarily relocated leading to an unnatural dip in visit.

¹¹ Based on the 6 established CPLs, February to July 2013 compared with February to July 2010

whole. It is also important to note however that the reduction in issues is mirrored by an increase in use of Surrey's virtual services, such as online renewals, catalogue look-ups, ebooks, and social media. In the last year between 2011/12 and 2012/13 Surrey has experienced a 11.2% increase in the number of virtual visits up from just under 3.7m to over 4.2m.

73. The charts below demonstrate the general trend in issues at CPLs over the last three years, compared to the trend across the library network:



74. Looking at the February to July 2013 period compared with the same period in 2012 shows book issues increased by 0.2% for the library network as a whole. For the six established CPLs, book issues decreased by 14% (compared to a 7% decline for Group C libraries, 5% decline for Group B libraries and a 2% increase for Group A libraries). Whilst the decline was more severe for CPLs than other libraries, the rate of decline is smaller than that seen in 2012.

Current members

75. On average, the established CPLs have seen a 2% decrease in the number of current members¹² since each library became a CPL¹³. This compares to a 1% decrease across the library network as a whole, over the same period (September 2012 to July 2013).
76. There is a notable success at Virginia Water, which became a CPL in January 2013, where there has been a 7.2% increase in membership from under 16s. This is likely to be due to successfully promoting the Summer Reading Challenge, as well as Rhymetimes and Storytimes. Stoneleigh has also seen a 1% increase in the number of current members over this time.

Comments and complaints

77. There has been one complaint about noise levels in CPLs as well as a couple of comments in comment books.
78. Some of this increased noise is likely to be down to volunteers needing to confer with their team more while they are learning. Some is also likely to be related to the greater focus on the library as a social space.
79. Recognising that this is a legitimate issue for the more 'traditional' library user, it can also be regarded as a measure of success, showing the enthusiasm and excitement the libraries are generating. One Volunteer Coordinator responded to a couple of comments in their comment book as follows:

"To those users who are concerned about the noise, the volunteers are still being trained and as such there will be conversations about procedures and there will be additional staff. We also want to encourage use by all members of the Warlingham community, which does include children who, by their nature, produce noise."

80. Other typical comments noted include:

"Wonderful to hear the children doing rhyme time!" (Warlingham)

"The library has a real buzz and energy!" (Warlingham)

"The refurbishment looks much better and it is easier to find your way around." (Stoneleigh)

"This library has been brought to life again! So welcoming the atmosphere, it's tempting to linger and do more than change books – it's a social event as well." (Virginia Water)

81. Two comments in the user surveys noted disappointment at being unable to access their borrowing history from the self-service terminals. Borrower history is not a function on the self-service kiosks at present. In a branch library, a customer can access their borrower history over the past six months by asking a member of staff to access the library management system. As the CPLs do not have access to the library management system, this change was a concern for

¹² Defined as a borrower who has been 'seen' by the library management system in the past 2 years

¹³ This is calculated based on the number of months each CPL has been in operation, starting from September 2012, to the month ending July 2013.

some borrowers, and raised during the judicial review. In designing the processes and procedures for CPLs, the library service has ensured that alternatives are in place so that customers can still access their borrower history, it is just achieved in a different way. Borrower history cannot be accessed from a self-service terminal, but it can be accessed online, either from home, via wifi in the library, through a public access computer, by asking the volunteers to access via the branch laptop, or through a phone call to Enquiries Direct. This provides a year of reading history for that borrower

Support and Training

82. The Community Partnered Libraries Support Team provides initial and ongoing training, advice, guidance and monitoring to the CPLs.
83. Initial training is delivered via 3 classroom sessions, of 2 hours each. Training is aided by the production of handouts, which are given to all trainees, and question and answer sessions as well as practical learning. This training includes essential health and safety, fire, equalities and legal information and takes place before launch. Typically this requires around four hours, over two sessions and is usually delivered to groups of 16-20 people.
84. Pre start 'Speed Training' is delivered to familiarise volunteers with the 'tools' in their library and includes till training, stock overview, kiosk training, on line reference shelf and SCC website. This takes place in a two to three hour session for each volunteer, again usually done in groups of 16-20 and as close to launch day as possible. This 'live' practical training takes place in the library, with volunteers working alongside members of the CPL Support Team.
85. Attendance at the volunteer training delivered to date at the six currently operational CPLs has been nearly 1200 across all sessions and visits.
86. SCC provides 100% support presence during implementation and training, and starts to decrease support hours per week by mutual consent as the volunteers grow in experience and confidence. When fully trained, support is maintained at 20% of opening hours every week with a support team presence.
87. The purpose of the support team presence is to be a regular point of contact to provide ongoing advice, guidance and help, and is not a replacement for the day to day service being provided by the community partnership.
88. Ongoing mini-modules, such as common scenarios and a quiz, supplement and refresh classroom training. Updates are cascaded through Steering Groups and posted in the staffroom where appropriate. There is also a range of ad hoc training delivered by CPL Support Team members as part of their on-site support or in response to specific requests or needs.
89. Each library receives a procedure manual – *Essential Information for Volunteers* – which is maintained and updated by the CPL Support Team.
90. Training is also delivered on other service initiatives and in response to individual CPL priorities. All have received training for the Summer Reading Challenge, but to date training has also been delivered on Rhymetime, leaflet and information management, Frontline, Stock management and the Reminiscence collection.

Visits have also been organised to key resources such as the Surrey History Centre, Performing Arts library and Enquiries Direct.

91. Volunteer and steering group has been consistently appreciative about the quality of the training received.

Financial considerations

92. The Public Value Review of Libraries identified Community Partnered Libraries as one of a number of opportunities to improve the cost effectiveness of the library service and the sustainability of 10 small libraries in the longer term. At this time assumptions were made regarding the achievability of these proposals, the expected timescales for implementation and the estimated financial impact.
93. As at September 2013, six CPLs are up and running, with completion of the remaining four projected to be by March 2014. The delays to implementation have meant that support is being provided by the Library Service for longer than originally expected, these costs are funded from a budget set aside within the service.
94. The costs of the CPL support team have been met from within the service by reconfiguring a number of operational posts.
95. Each of the CPL groups has been provided with a laptop by SCC and had their public liability insurance paid. The public liability insurance is a new cost. These are new policies that the Community Partners are taking out to cover the public liability of their volunteers that SCC has then been funding.
96. Groups had different histories and some started with no funding of their own while others, formed from earlier Friends groups, or supported by a pre-existing Friends group, had some initial funds they could use for marketing etc.
97. Equally, the building size and condition at each CPL library varied, with different facilities. This affects each CPL's ability to fundraise e.g. through room hire. Therefore some small improvements have been carried out by the Library Service and Estates and Property Management to try to level the playing field for them starting out.

Equalities

98. The Equalities Impact Assessment Action Plan, produced in 2012 was reviewed and updated in February 2013.
99. Action was underway or complete on many of the EIA actions; however workload had delayed progress on some items. Written status updates and discussion at the six-monthly EIA review meeting had identified further actions required.
100. Progress against the action plan was again reviewed in August 2013. The updated action plan is provided as annex two.
101. There have been no difficulties arising relating to the concerns raised during or following the judicial review, i.e. primarily concerns that volunteers would not

be able to provide sufficient assistance to enable people to use the CPLs effectively due to inadequate training. On the contrary, the CPL team are reporting that many service users have commented on the helpfulness of the volunteers, and the libraries that are now up and running as CPLs are now offering a wider range of activities.

102. Training is a key area where continuous improvements are being made for both branch staff and volunteers. The service seeks to bring staff and volunteers together for training, as has happened for the service's Rhymetime training. The service is also looking to conduct a mystery shopper exercise to identify where further improvements to customer service can be made. Increased experience and knowledge within the members of the CPL team and extra experience by a team member as a Gamesmaker during the Olympics means the equality and diversity training has been developed further still. The training would still benefit from working with Surrey Association for Visually Impaired (SAVI) and Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) to gain some 'real-life' perspectives, and this has been included in a refreshed list of actions in the EIA Action Plan monitoring document. See annex 2.
103. There has been one safeguarding issue relating to a vulnerable adult, which was dealt with appropriately. The Library Sectors Manager contacted the Safeguarding Board and, as a result, a programme of training was agreed for library staff, including CPLs. The first session has been successfully delivered via an external trainer at Tattenhams CPL.
104. The Property, Environment and Stock Team (PEST) has identified, and responded to, issues arising from CPLs wanting to change layouts where further consideration of the need to keep spaces accessible for wheelchairs etc. needs to be undertaken. These have been addressed as the refits and refurbishments have been implemented and no further actions are identified.
105. Work has been done to update the stock in the CPLs, and the service is looking to offer them additional funding of £1,500 p.a. to select stock of their choice. This has to date been offered to Stoneleigh who are producing a wish list reflecting local priorities.
106. Anecdotal feedback from many volunteers has said that the social inclusion aspect of volunteering has made an important difference to their lives and given them a renewed sense of purpose. The service is setting up an online CPL community through the Knowledge Hub to enable volunteers to share experiences. A couple of volunteers have been able to secure permanent positions within the library service.
107. No equality issues have arisen with the Warlingham paid staff plus volunteer model to date. The service worked with the Steering Group to resolve the issues surrounding the staff terminal and data protection. The staff terminal has not been put back in.

Conclusions

108. Implementing the CPL policy has marked a major step change in how access to library services is delivered in Surrey. It has involved intensive partnership

working with communities which will continue on a long term basis and significant cultural and operational changes within the library service.

109. The implementation has also required substantial support from the council's Legal and Property services, and input from finance, audit and insurance. In addition the implementation has and continues to involve all aspects of the library service. Working with the CPLs is providing new learning experiences; feedback and ideas to the library service and SCC which will help improve services in the future.
110. The successful implementation of CPLs now at six libraries is a reflection on the hard work and dedication of both the council officers involved, and the commitment of the steering groups and volunteers at the CPLs.
111. The evidence from customers and volunteers is that the CPLs are a valued complement to the Surrey library network, operating with a renewed sense of purpose and vigour and with ambitious plans for future development.

Recommendations:

112. The Committee is asked to scrutinise progress on implementing the Community Partnership Library policy, and make comment to Cabinet as appropriate.

Next steps:

- Cabinet to receive progress report in October 2013
- Work continues to implement the CPL policy at the remaining four libraries.

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Sources/background papers:

- Interviews with representatives of each of the six active CPLs using pre-scripted questions and drawing in comments and views from volunteers and library users as well.
- Library Service Performance Data
- Customer surveys
- Envisioning the Library of the Future, Arts Council
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/library-of-the-future/>
- Community Libraries Research, Arts Council
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/community-libraries-research/>
- Report to Cabinet - Public Value Review of Surrey Libraries, February 2011
[http://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/celistdocuments.aspx?MID=467&DF=01%2f02%2f2011&A=1&R=0&F=embed\\$Item 12 - Public Value Review of Surrey Library Service.htm](http://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/celistdocuments.aspx?MID=467&DF=01%2f02%2f2011&A=1&R=0&F=embed$Item 12 - Public Value Review of Surrey Library Service.htm)

- Report to Cabinet - Community Partnered Libraries, July 2012
[http://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/celistdocuments.aspx?MID=485&DF=24%2f07%2f2012&A=1&R=0&F=embed\\$Item 6 - Public Value Review Surrey Library Service - Community Partnered Libraries.htm](http://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/celistdocuments.aspx?MID=485&DF=24%2f07%2f2012&A=1&R=0&F=embed$Item 6 - Public Value Review Surrey Library Service - Community Partnered Libraries.htm)