



LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(RUNNYMEDE)

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS  
7th FEBRUARY 2011

**1. Question from Mrs Diana Seaman, Secretary of the Friends of Virginia Water Library**

“We understand that Surrey County Council is proposing cutting support to the branch library at Virginia Water, what action are our councillors involved in by way of protecting the current level of service? “

**Response**

**Mr Mel Few (County Councillor for Foxhills & Virginia Water)**

I have a briefing on the detail of the Library Public Value Review arranged with the Deputy Leader, Mr David Hodge, for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February. When I have the full information from that meeting, I will arrange to meet with the Friends of Virginia Water to explain the rationale for the decisions and work through alternative options that might be available going forward.”

**In addition, Mr Peter Milton, Head of Libraries, Surrey County Council has provided some contextual information on the Library Public Value Review (PVR):**

The recent PVR has recognised that the Library Service is a high performing service that is popular with residents but Surrey County Council, like all other local authorities, faces budget pressures over the next 4 years and across the country, libraries and the model of delivery are being redesigned. The County Council is keen to maintain the network of 52 libraries and the report advocates the maintenance of a core network of libraries run by the authority but, in line with the aspirations of the 'Big Society' agenda, it also recommends opportunities for communities to become involved with the sustainability of the network through the model of community partnered libraries.

Libraries suitable for community partnering have been identified through application of a set of 12 factors covering use, cost and social need. It is inevitable that the smallest also have low levels of use, which will remain so while Surrey County Council can only fund limited opening hours. Community partnering could open the way to extending opening hours, making better

#### ITEM 4 (TABLED)

use of the resources in the library and increasing access to the benefit of the local community ... hence the County Council wish to invite communities to get involved and take on the management of these local libraries through a partnership relationship with the County Council. The county would provide a building, IT and stock; the community would take on responsibility for staffing, either directly or through sponsorship....and, where not already installed, the council will also install self-service to further assist the development of community libraries. The County Council believes that its local model for arrangements for community partnered libraries is much more comprehensive than many of the arrangements that you may have heard about in the national press.

The Friends of Virginia Water have put a lot of time and effort into working to support the library and the County Council greatly appreciate that. The county is now looking to expand this support and county councillors are keen to have conversations with any local community organisations who might be interested in learning more about the proposal for a community partnered library in the community.