



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(WOKING)**

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY PUBLIC VALUE REVIEW

9 FEBRUARY 2011

KEY ISSUE

Cabinet met on 1 February 2011 and agreed a number of recommendations arising from the Library Public Value Review. The most significant was to consult with Parish Councils, community organisations, and groups on the introduction of Community Partnered Libraries in Surrey. Cabinet looks to local committees to lead in driving the community partnering approach at the following libraries and to identify community groups willing and able to take responsibility for the local management of and running of community partnered libraries. Eleven have been identified in the first instance: Bagshot, Bramley, Byfleet, Ewell Court, Lingfield, Molesey, New Haw, Stoneleigh, Tattenhams, Virginia Water and Warlingham.

Progress on consultation is due to be reported back to Cabinet in June and the Council intends that discussions with interested parties are underway by September 2011.

Cabinet also agreed that the mobile library service should be removed but that existing users should be contacted and asked how they would like to access the library service in the future. Alternative means include Community transport, volunteer drivers as well as e readers.

The review recommends increasing the virtual offer- by offering more and more services and content online plus personalization and social interaction for community of virtual users.

SUMMARY:

The Library PVR ran from May 2010 and reported to cabinet on February 1st. The public value review looked how our libraries are used, what may be wanted in the future and the resources available to run the library service.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to note:

- (i) **the contents of the report including the request to assist the Library Service in consulting with and engaging with local community groups and organisations on the viability of establishing a community partnership at Byfleet library.**
- (ii) **that the service will maintain published opening hours and avoid closures by recruiting up to the level of the budget allocated.**

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Library PVR ran from May 2010 and reported to cabinet on 1 February 2011. The public value review looked how our libraries are used, what may be wanted in the future and the resources available to run the library service.
- 1.2 The PVR followed the standard PVR methodology: *challenging why*, how and by whom a function/service is provided;
 - comparing performance with others in the quest to be world class;
 - consulting widely including with residents and specifically vulnerable groups and communities and with staff;
 - collaborating with partners and/or contractors; and
 - testing the market to see if the service could be delivered more efficiently or economically.
- 1.3 The Public Value Review considered all aspects of the service: 52 branches, the mobile service, and the virtual library service.
- 1.4 The total library service net budget for 2010/11 is £10.27 million. Thirteen percent of the service's costs are funded by income.

2. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Cost effective branch network

- 2.1 The Council has a library network of 52 branches, plus a Performing Arts library and a lending library at the Surrey History Centre. Borrowing books remains the most popular reason to visit a library but people also visit to browse, use computers, read newspapers, attend an activity, engage in formal or informal education or seek information. Libraries need to be attractive places to visit and properly integrated with other services.
- 2.2 The review recommends that the service maintains published opening hours and avoids closures by recruiting up to the level of the budget allocated.
- 2.3 In recent years the library service has drafted a property strategy with Estates and Property Management linked to the Council's Asset Management Plan, which recommends the larger Group A libraries are located within large town centre shopping centres, Group B libraries are placed in district shopping centres, and Group C libraries are based in local communities. The PVR supports this strategy as most suited to delivering on the strategic vision for libraries.
- 2.4 The PVR developed an assessment methodology for libraries. Libraries were ranked according to a complex basket of measures, which included: use, cost, proximity to another library, building suitability, and levels of local deprivation. This assessment has been used to help shape the Council's approach to how it manages the network in the future.
- 2.5 The review recommends that the Council should establish community partnerships at selected libraries. Success of this initiative will be dependent upon the outcome of consultation and subsequent interest from Parish Councils, local community groups, and organisations.
- 2.6 The Council will consult about co-design of a local library services at selected libraries through a **community partner approach**. Likely partners could include a broad range of local organisations, community groups, businesses, Parish Councils and local charities. The Council will continue to provide ongoing support to these libraries – through premises, stock and IT provision, as well as training and other support from the service. The County Council believe that its local model for arrangements for community partnered libraries is much more preferable than many of the arrangements elsewhere that have featured in the national press.
- 2.7 The Council will publish its key expectations for community partnerships but will retain a flexible approach in its negotiations with interested organisations so that community partnerships can be best tailored to the local Community. Successful partners are likely to be

organisations, which can demonstrate the capacity to offer a consistent and reliable service to the public.

- 2.8 The library service is experienced in working with volunteers to deliver added-value activities such as Rhymetime sessions for young children and 'computer buddies'. In 2009/10 a total of nearly 590 people volunteered to work with the library service – either through local Friends Groups, the Books on Wheels housebound service, local history societies or to gain work experience. In total, they delivered 8,000 hours of support to the service.
- 2.9 A pilot is shortly to start in two local communities to develop the extended use of volunteers at two local libraries with the aim of extending existing opening hours.

Increased Virtual Offer

- 2.10 Surrey's virtual library Web presence is recognised as one of the top ten in the UK (SOCITM Better Connected 2010 report). In 2008 the service took a risk and focused on an anticipated growth in demand for an enhanced virtual offer and provided dedicated staffing resources. In 2011 the service has a strong platform to develop this innovative offer still further.
- 2.11 Surrey County Council has kept abreast of changes in publishing and the shift of information from print to online resources. The virtual library is a well-established, comprehensive online library and information gateway for Surrey library members to access on a 24/7 basis. Adult reference material is becoming increasingly available in an online format and this offers an opportunity to rebalance the offer between hard copy and online reference stock, with an increasing emphasis on online material. The virtual library allows residents access to information, the catalogue, the ability to complete transactions online, such as paying fines, renewing items and reserving books.
- 2.12 The virtual library is developing a more interactive style whereby users can contribute to discussions and post book reviews. Surrey Library service pioneered interactivity with its members and users, offering the opportunity to rate and reviews titles on the catalogue, as well as pioneering the use of social media (Twitter and Face book) in communicating with its audience.
- 2.13 Surrey Library Service also leads a small consortium of local authorities creating a national training package for library staff in Social Media and Web 2.0 technologies.
- 2.14 In 2009/10 there were over three million web transactions on Surrey's virtual library. In terms of visits, the virtual library is now the fourth biggest library in Surrey and growing year on year. Over 3,000 new e-

borrowers registered with the service in the first three months following the launch of a targeted campaign in July 2010.

2.15 Visitors to libraries are now coming to expect that Wifi will be in place. Introducing WIFI into all libraries will enable the service to:

- Meet customer expectations;
- Continue to provide a cutting edge and modern service;
- Reduce the number of public access terminals in the longer term.
- The cost of introducing Wifi into libraries was part of the Library IT tender and was approved by Cabinet on 21 December 2010.

Mobile Service

- 2.16 In 2009/10 the total cost of running the five public access mobile libraries plus the Residential Homes Service (RHS) was £446,000. The RHS service delivers books to residential homes on a three monthly basis.
- 2.17 The total mobile library membership (as at December 2010) was 3,906 people (less than 0.4% of the resident population). Active membership is around 2,500 people. Survey results suggest that 88% of users are over 65 and entitled to free bus passes. From the same survey, 20% said they considered they had difficulty in getting about.
- 2.18 Whilst the service is highly popular among its users, total monthly issues between April and June 2010 show a 14.6% decrease on the same period in 2009. Increased use of free bus pass by over 60s is contributing to the continuing decline in use of this service, and the service is failing to meet the minimum performance standards adopted by the then Community Services Committee.
- 2.19 Those performance standards required the mobile libraries to serve communities that are more than two miles from a branch library, with an expected minimum of ten book issues per visit and 1.5 book issues per minute. It also recommended a minimum frequency of fortnightly visits. PVR analysis suggests that only 2.2% of stops are currently generating the recommended levels of book issues per minute and almost 40% of stops are generating fewer than 10 issues per stop.
- 2.20 The review recommends that the mobile service should cease and that the existing users should be consulted with to identify those who may need assistance to use the library service in new ways in the future.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 The review team consulted with the following groups:
 The Member Reference Group
 The Safer and Stronger Select Committee
 The PVR Steering Board
 The Library Senior Management Team
 Unison
 Graham Bulpitt, Director of Library and Information Services, Kingston University

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's medium term financial plan commits the library service to annual savings of £195,000 as a minimum by 2013/14 through a combination of savings and increases in fees and charges. These savings are still achievable with the possible exception of £70,000 in 2013/14, which is dependant upon the co-location of services and the Council's Asset Strategy.
- 4.2 Each PVR is required to produce a zero based budget for the service The zero based budget for the service is set out below.

Library Service Zero Based Budget

	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 ¹ £000
2010-14 MTFP	10,212	10,308	10,375	10,375
PVR Recommendations				
Closure of Mobile Libraries	-65	-439	-439	-439
Alternative Provision following Closure of Mobiles	54	109	93	79
Savings from Community Partnering	0	-200	-200	-200
Total PVR Recommendations	-11	-530	-546	-560
Changes to MTFP Inflation Assumptions	25	35	-10	-10
Zero Based Budget	10,226	9,813	9,819	9,805

¹ The current approved MTFP does not extend beyond 2013/14 therefore for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that the 2014/15 budget is identical to 2013/14.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.
- 5.2 No significant implications to climate change or carbon emissions have been identified. However, the removal of mobile library vehicles may lead to a small increase in the number of individual journeys being made to library branches.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No significant implications for crime and disorder.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has been mindful of its equality duties in carrying out its work on the PVR and will need to continue to do so in the ongoing consultation and decision –making relating to this. Given that any proposed changes are due to take effect after the implementation of the public duties under the Equality Act 2010 scheduled for April 2011, the Council should have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it The relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The current equalities duties are effectively included in these provisions- the details are set out in the equality impact assessment (EIA) which has been completed.
- 7.2 An initial EIA screening has been completed in respect of the impact on Library Service staff.
 - a. The EIA identified the following actions to mitigate negative impact:
 - Determine appropriate consultation with equality advisory groups.
 - Complete a separate EIA in relation to staffing issues as part of the staff restructure.
 - If no suitable community partner is found and closure is suggested, consider the need for enhancements to access at libraries where access is inferior to existing provision.
 - Complete planned EIA on Virtual Services.
 - Further EIA required as part of implementation plan to consider the impact of the medium and longer- term recommendations.
 - Set clear standards for community partnered libraries to ensure compliance with equalities legislation and Surrey values.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The review recommends that the mobile service should cease and that the existing users should be consulted with to identify those who may need assistance to use the library service in new ways in the future.
- 8.2 The review recommends that the service will maintain published opening hours and avoid closures by recruiting up to the level of the budget allocate.
- 8.3 The review recommends that the Council should establish community partnerships at selected libraries. Local Committee (Woking) is asked to assist the Library Service in consulting with and engaging with local community groups and organisations on the viability of establishing a community partnership at Byfleet library.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Peter Milton
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01483 543599
BACKGROUND PAPERS: Public Value Review of Surrey Library Service:
 Report to Cabinet, 1 February 2011
 Leader's report to Cabinet, Cabinet 29 June 2009
 Leading the Way: changing the way we do business, Cabinet 14 July 2009.
 Public Value Reviews methodology, July 2009
 Public Library and Museums Act 1964

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