

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY)**

**DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER 2016**



**LEAD OFFICER: ROSE WILSON  
LEAD MANAGER SURREY LIBRARY SERVICE**

**SUBJECT: THE SURREY LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE (WAVERLEY)**

**DIVISION: ALL DIVISIONS IN WAVERLEY**

<p><b><u>SUMMARY OF ISSUE:</u></b></p> <p>This report for information updates Councillors on library services in the borough of Waverley and issues and challenges currently facing the library service.</p>
<p><b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS:</u></b></p> <p><b>The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to asked to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Note the need to develop a single affordable strategy for the library service</li> <li>(ii) Note the proposed way forward for developing that strategy</li> <li>(iii) Note the need to widely engage and consult a wide range of public staff and councillors on its development</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:</u></b></p> <p>The County Council is facing severe and ongoing financial pressures to which services have to respond by making changes in their service offers to Surrey residents and how they deliver them.</p>
<p><b><u>1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:</u></b></p>

**1.1 Libraries in the borough of Waverley**

This report for information updates Councillors on what is happening in their local libraries. The service consists of two Group A – Main town libraries- Farnham and Godalming, two town libraries –Cranleigh and Haslemere, and a community partnered library, Bramley. A snapshot of visitor figures for July this year (a quiet month in terms of use) has monthly visitor figures for Farnham of 13982, Godalming 11194, Cranleigh 6444, Haslemere 4226, and Bramley 1446.

**1.2 Farnham**

Like all libraries in the borough, Farnham proactively encourages local community members to become library users. In February, staff helped with visits from local guides and Rainbows' groups, helping them get their badges

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relating to libraries. March saw a visit from pupils at Edgeborough School who were given a tour of the library, shown how it works and what is on offer to them. St Peter's School also visited and were given a talk by staff on the history of the Culver room for a local history project.

In April staff went to visit the Bungalow, a local community centre in Farnham. The centre is used by families in the Sandy Hill area. Staff held a story session and talked to users about what was available at the library, from which has come a number of new library members.

The Brownies visited again in May, to complete their badges. The Timebank initiative by Surrey County Council (SCC) held some drop in sessions in the library to encourage people to volunteer, and Mindease held a coffee morning in the library.

There were more school visits in June and staff attended school assemblies at Barfield School, William Cobbett Infants and Juniors and Hule school to promote the annual reading challenge Farnham enjoys the benefit of a very supportive and active Friends group, who held a Punch and Judy show in the children's library and Home start held a vintage tea party in the library gardens.

In August, the Friends' group held another event, this time a painting session for children based around Monet. Staff also went back to the Bungalow to hold another story session.

The library service was successful in bidding to the Arts Council England for money to improve Wi-Fi in libraries and so has been able to improve the original Wi-Fi access at Farnham to include the whole building instead of just hot spot provision.

### 1.3 Haslemere

In March they had a Brownie group visit with a story time session and Easter egg hunt. During April the library hosted a visit from the Wey Hill nursery.

In June there was a volunteer drop in session. Staff also went out to local school assemblies to promote the reading challenge.

In July there was a visit from Weyhill Montessori group who enjoyed a craft and story session.

The library service was successful in bidding to the Arts Council England for money to improve wi-fi in libraries and so has been able to improve the original wi-fi provision at Haslemere to include the whole building instead of just hot-spot provision.

### 1.4 Cranleigh

In March the Cranleigh Literary festival took place and to take part the library hosted the Guildford Shakespeare company. Two of the company came along and held a story session of Roald Dahl's "The Giraffe, The Pelly and me". Also in March there was a display in the library for Cranleigh Arts and Crafts. Staff have hosted and been out to various schools including St Cuthbert Mayne Primary and Park Mead.

The Friends of Cranleigh library have continued to be very supportive and are currently looking after the gardens to make sure the library gardens are part of Cranleigh in Bloom.

The library also had a presence at the Cranleigh Carnival, rectory fete and a table at the community showcase, an event to show what's available in the village such as the library, clubs and local societies.

#### 1.5 Godalming

Regular craft events for both children and adults alike are being held, which are proving to be very popular. They have started a scrabble club which meets every Tuesday afternoon and also have a regular knit and natter group that meet in the library. Staff have also been out to local schools to promote the reading challenge and have had visits from local schools and Brownie groups.

The refurbishment last year created a large multi-purpose room which is being used for events, school visits and is hired out to the public

#### 1.6 Bramley Community Partnered Library

Following a refurbishment of the rear meeting rooms including the ex-Post Office and toilets by SCC, Bramley was launched as a community partnered library in December 2014. The library is supported by the local Parish Council and is overseen by a committee comprising Parish Council members, volunteers who support and run the library and a representative of the Friends group. A library operations group of volunteers deals with the day to day running of the library. The group have been successful in increasing the numbers of visits and book issues. The run regular rhymetimes and storytimes, with extra fun sessions over the summer break.

The ex-Post Office is hired out to various groups including a yoga class, knitting groups and book groups. They run author events in the library including a very successful event with the crime fiction writer, Simon Brett. The library has regular displays which are well planned and change frequently and actively support Duke of Edinburgh Award students.

Bramley has a very good presence on social media, receive lots of feedback via their Facebook page and also tweet regularly. This social media presence is championed by one of the regular volunteers who ensures Bramley is promoted as much as possible.

The library service's Community Led Services Team work with the volunteers supporting them to develop services offered, recently a group of volunteers have taken responsibility for their stock management and are selecting and managing the library stock.

Funds raised through events have been invested in a coffee machine, a photocopier, additional tables and chairs to support room hire and events and new notice boards. They are now considering how to support local carehomes with volunteers visiting the homes with books.

They are proud of the fact that they are a Pokestop and Poke Gym and promote this via social media, encouraging visits to the library.

Bramley will also have a new updated self service kiosk before Christmas.

1.7 Marketing and income raising

All libraries in Waverley have to help raise a challenging income target of £1.6million per annum for the library service as a whole which is part of the services' base budget. Libraries do this by a range of activities including fines and charges, rentals, and miscellaneous sales. The service constantly looks for new sales lines and monitors the performance of income raising activities. In November the service began selling a new type of folding shopper bag in libraries- Eco Chic bags. Libraries in Waverley were some of the first to take this up and have been very successful in selling them. On the other side of the coin, compostable bags for food waste caddies were one of our best sellers in Waverley libraries and the change to the use of any plastic bags will hit sales of over 1000 rolls per annum and the income from those sales.

This year the service has introduced a welcome email to all new library members providing additional information about what the library has to offer and how to use it. It also now sends a reminder email to library members who have not been seen for 6 months, and an email just before their library registration expires giving them a chance to renew. These emails are suitable styled to adult or child recipients.

Quarterly account management emails have been introduced to remind anyone with money owing, and the number of times books can be renewed has been reduced from 15 to 10 to encourage library visits and stock turn. Consideration is being given to reducing this further given the reductions in the book fund.

**2. ANALYSIS**

Library Staffing Review

- 2.1 In July 2015 a new staffing structure and working arrangements were launched as a result of a library staffing review. As part of SCC's budget savings in 2015-16 the library service had to reduce staffing costs by £220,000 per annum, and in 2016-17 has had to make further reductions of £400,000 off the staffing in total- £250,000 from front line staffing and £150,000 from staff who work on book selection and stock management, outreach, digital services, new library and refurbishment projects, income raising and marketing. There have also been over the two years a total of £350,000 reduction from the budget for buying books and other resources. In order to keep all libraries open on the reduced staffing the service has had to adopt new ways of working, managing libraries in clusters – all the Waverley libraries are in the same cluster - and having duty managers who work across more than one library.
- 2.2 The review also set out to: introduce new staff training and new roles to meet the challenges of the future on a reducing budget: to increase engagement with customers: introduce more standardisation for greater efficiency: increase the use of volunteer roles: and improve income raising and marketing.
- 2.3 This has been a major period of change for the service which has taken some time to embed and provided many challenges. It is becoming clearer now that having staff working more broadly across several libraries is beginning to show

benefits in upskilling and operational resilience and that the new roles and improved training are beginning to have positive impacts.

- 2.4 The service has just completed a review of the implementation and how far the review has progressed towards its targets. Importance was placed on gathering staff feedback and out of 477 staff, predominantly part time, there were 276 respondents, 115 further face to face interviews, with individuals, teams and senior managers, and 13 email consultations which has produced which is a good level of response.
- 2.5 Taking all the feedback on board, areas where the changes have gone well and not so well, or are behind on implementation have been identified, and an improvement programme for further action has been drawn up. Key topics are
- Continue to increase staff and customer engagement around change and budget reductions
  - Improve communication and team working where weaknesses have been identified
  - Establish the best model for staff rotation from experience
  - Adjust staffing levels in light of experience and business trends
  - Further improve the new training with increased delivery and training frameworks of required skills for each job role and an in house management training scheme.
  - Find innovative ways to ease quite severe recruitment problems

The service will be working on this during 2016-17 and also taking on board any further changes in staffing required by the evolving budget planning for the next four years.

#### Budget 2016/17

- 2.6 The library service, as part of Cultural Services, has been supporting senior officers and councillors in the budget making process for the next four years in the medium term financial plan (MTFP) for the library service. To what extent the library service's budget will be affected by the severe financial pressures on the County Council is not known at this time but will become clearer in the next few months.

### **3 OPTIONS**

#### Developing a single affordable strategy

#### Local Government Association Library Peer Challenge

- 3.1 In 2015 the library service was awarded an LGA peer challenge, only one of Three such awards in 2015-16 funded by the Arts Council and Local Government Association. The library service identified four areas on which to work with the peer challenge team, strategic direction, partnership, budgets and consultation. At the close of the challenge, having identified good practice

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/waverley](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/waverley)

and many strengths in the service and some areas for development, the overarching recommendation of the Challenge was that there needed to be a single affordable strategy for the library service for the future, pulling all the current free standing strategies into one and looking to what can be achieved financially in the future. This would involve getting buy in from other parts of SCC who are budget holders for libraries, e.g. Property, Information Management Technology (IMT), stakeholders such as Education, Adult Social Care, Cultural Services, and public, staff and councillors.

3.2 Initially it was expected that the library service would undergo one of the Public Value Transformation (PVT ) reviews but the strategy will now be developed through a number of strands including further work on scenarios looked at in the peer challenge, the library service’s own research and analysis, support from the SCC Project and Business Analysis team, and work with the Resident’s Experience Board (REB). The REB now has a Libraries Task and Finish Group, which started work in June. The key question the group is aiming to answer is (within the context of affordability)

“What should the Library Service offer to Surrey residents in 2020, and what steps need to be taken to achieve this?”

3.3 The service and the REB officers note that the local committees will wish to be proactively engaged as the future strategy begins to develop. As yet there is not an end date for the Task Force, but it will obviously need to mesh in with the budget so that the service can begin work on changes in the background as soon as possible and taking on board that May 2017 is an election year.

**4. CONSULTATIONS:**

4.1 The Committee will be updated regarding any proposed changes

**5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This has been outlined in the analysis

**6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 As the strategy has yet to be produced at this stage the service notes its obligations to carry out impact assessments on the proposals as they develop and for these assessments to inform decision making.

**7. LOCALISM:**

7.1 The eventual library strategy is likely to have an impact, in one way or another on all libraries in the borough including the community partnered library.

**8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate	It is not yet known if the strategy and budget

Change and Carbon Emissions)	will have an impact on the extent of the library network
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	The library service provides support to carers and looked after children. It is not yet known if there will be an impact on this work due to future changes
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	It is not yet known if the strategy and budget will have an impact on this work

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The likely continuing reduction in budgets will place pressure on the library service to develop a single affordable strategy which may result in considerable change in the service; what services it delivers and how it delivers them. The picture will clarify in the next few months and it will be important to consult and engage with stakeholders in developing the strategy.

## **10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 10.1 The service will continue working with Finance, senior officers and councillors and the REB task force to develop the budget and strategy. A further discussion paper will be brought to the Waverley and other local committees when more firm information is available.

### **Contact Officer:**

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