



Resident Experience Board
Tuesday 22 November

Developing a Future Strategy for the Library Service

Purpose of the report: Policy development and review

This report updates the Resident's Experience Board on the Library Service's progress against the three recommendations from the workshop on Thursday 17 March 2016 and on the work to date of the Library's Task and Finish group in developing a single affordable strategy for the library service and a view of what the library service offer will be to residents in 2020.

Introduction

1. The Resident's Experience Board held a workshop at Walton Library on Thursday 17 March including Councillors, Library staff and members of the public. This workshop looked at what the library service currently provides for Surrey residents and considered, given rising budget pressures, what it was important for the library service to provide for Surrey residents in 2020. This discussion was set in the context of an earlier Local Government Association Peer Review of the Library Service in January from which the overarching recommendation was that a single affordable strategy should be created for the future of the library service.
2. It was agreed that a Library Task and Finish group should be appointed to examine the service and make recommendations on what the library service offer to Surrey residents should look like in 2020 and this was carried out.

Three initial recommendations

3. The meeting after the workshop produced three initial recommendations:-
 - a) That the library service makes working with social care, health and other public sector partners a key focus for developing this vision
 - b) That the library service explore opportunities for partnership with local business and community resources
 - c) The Board requests an update concerning the various options considered for creating additional revenue and projected income from this activity in six months time.

Social care health and public sector partners.

4. The library service has noted that the Board would like this work to continue as part of the strategy and further activity has been carried out.
5. **Dementia** - The service has been working closely with Adult Social Care (ASC), related third sector parties, and members of the public to enhance awareness of the service offer for those living with dementia and their carers. The service holds and takes part in “coffee mornings” which bring together in an informal situation those living with dementia, their carers plus professionals involved in dementia care. It is an informal way for other agencies to come together, display information and share practices. Since the end of March the service has held a further 25 sessions. The organisations involved include: community wardens, PCSO’s and Police: Community Mental Health Teams: ASC commissioning officers and locality teams: Care providers: Alzheimer’s Society: Age UK: Museums: Day Centres: Befriending Services. This work is now being combined with a new piece of work looking at library services-particularly layout for people living with dyslexia, and autism, as well as dementia.
6. **Locality teams** - The service has attended an ASC Development Co-ordinators meeting and through this is on a programme to attend locality team meetings to talk about synergies between the two services. An early aim is to improve services for those with a learning disability and further joint work is proposed as a result of the meetings with each locality team.
7. **PENfriend** - There has been further progress on this device which uses technology to give independence to those with sight or print impairment using our audio book service in libraries. The service has now brokered a relationship between the PENfriend manufacturer and one of the largest publishers of audio books to see if the process can be made more streamlined. Feedback from users has been positive when the trial was discussed at a disability network meeting.
8. **Services for the under 5s** - Consultation with parents of Rhymetime attendees has proved useful in reviewing our organisation and training for Rhymetime and supporting the branding for under 5 activities. The consultation was done through focus groups and online survey.
9. **Services for parents** - The service is embarking on consultation with parents about future library design and layout which will help them with parenting and will include consultation with the fostering and adoption network, and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
10. **Access ticket** - The service will shortly start consultation with stakeholders on improvements to our “concessionary” borrower category. This is currently limited to those who live with a sight impairment. The service will be consulting organisations such as ASC,

Children, Schools and Families, Sight for Surrey, Disability Forum, Age UK, Alheimers.

11. **Homeless** - Discussions with hostel providers has enabled us to implement a revised strategy for library membership for this vulnerable group. This will be implemented November 2016.
12. **Living and Ageing Well Partnership Board** - The service is now part of this board which brings together ASC, Action for Carers, Fire & Rescue, various borough councils, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People, Alzheimer's Society, various diocese and housing associations among others. At the last meeting the partnership Board was asked to take on the role of the Surrey Dementia Action Alliance and this is being considered.
13. All this partnership working with other bodies in the field of health and well being and social care is strengthening the service's work in this field.

Exploring opportunities for partnership with local business and community resources.

14. As part of supporting local businesses and the Surrey economy and looking at more diverse use of library spaces the service has been investigating the possibility of establishing business start-up hubs in a number of libraries and have engaged specifically with the Economic Development functions of Elmbridge, Reigate and Banstead, Guildford and Tandridge to develop this. The service, working with property colleagues, has been in discussion with a specific company in Weybridge who are looking for a base and other organisations are discussing possibilities. A tour of libraries with suitable space was undertaken with the lead of the "Workary" project which sets up and curates local business and entrepreneurship start ups and this work is ongoing. These activities will also create income streams for SCC.
15. Libraries have an important role in ensuring everyone develops the digital skills they need in life and with their links to education encouraging digital and STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) learning. Following the development of extremely successful "Digital Friday" events and "Geek Week" events based around Guildford the service has built a cohort of enthusiastic and pro-active digital volunteers happy to support digital skills fun and learning via events and the service hopes to extend this to other libraries.
16. As part of rolling this out the service has attracted a significant backer in the form of Marieme Jamme (mjamme.com) who has donated £5,000 of computer equipment with the promise of £45,000 more following a successful pilot, and the service has joined her worldwide network of lamthecode innovation hubs.
17. The library service is also leading on a project to develop a Makerspace at Guildford which would attract significant external funding and be a flagship service development for our major libraries

and the digital strategy for libraries. A Makerspace can take many different shapes and include many different elements depending on local interests, needs and level of funding. It is a space where people with common interests often in computing, digital printing, technology, science, machining, digital or electronic art and creativity can meet, share and learn skills, experiment, socialise and collaborate. They can be sited with business incubator or start up facilities to encourage entrepreneurs to develop businesses. Through this project the service has made significant contacts with local businesses, helping identify makerspace equipment, offering help and guidance and the director of the 5G Innovation Centre at the University of Surrey is on the Makerspace steering group, as is the director of SATRO an educational charity which encourages young people through work experience to take up STEM related careers. Further information on this project can be found at <http://www.guildfordmakerspace.org.uk>. This project would also develop a number of income streams for SCC.

18. The service has also recently had a meeting with the lead of Barclays Digital Eagles, who establish startup "labs" in cities across the country. One of their labs could form part of, or be sited with, a Makerspace and this also has the potential for income streams.
19. In July the service was contacted by Pfizer the pharmaceutical company from Tadworth to ask if a team from there could be digital buddies with the service for a day- volunteers who bring their skills to a library to help people get online. The service has also worked with digital buddies from Barclays and Halifax who have delivered "tea and teach" sessions helping people with their tablets. The Pfizer organiser was very helpful and worked with the service to develop a company volunteering day application pack and volunteer essential information pack. A volunteer agreement enabled the company to state what activities they felt comfortable supporting. The Pfizer volunteers spent a day at Epsom library which had very positive feedback both from volunteers and customers. The Pfizer staff noted how many people lack IT skills and felt they could apply this deeper understanding to their business. The experience from this pilot has given the service confidence in extending this to other companies as a way of building relationships

Creating Additional Income

20. Since the March meeting the service has been carrying out a number of activities to improve income. As all libraries according to size carry a range of items for sale such as bags, pens, bus pass holders, children's posters and work books, reading glasses and cards. The performance of all sales items has been given detailed analysis so that we are moving to stocking only the items which produce the most profit and direct them to libraries where they make the most sales. For example, after Christmas, stamps will only be sold in a few libraries as there is very little profit for the library service in selling them. The money is being reinvested in products that have a better profit margin and sales e.g. Eco Chic folding shopping bags.

21. A member of staff has been tasked with going into libraries and working with the frontline staff to ensure that the library sales items are displayed in the best place with the most impact and potential sales. This work has started in the North of the county where there is the highest concentration of libraries and will roll out across the rest of the library network. The service now has regular meetings with main suppliers to keep up a good working relationship and ensure mark ups are as profitable as possible.
22. The service has begun to work collaboratively with East and West Sussex Library services on income and met with them in August to discuss income, share good practice, successes failures and opportunities. From them the library service has gained useful insight into libraries as parcel collection points, meeting rooms and donations.
23. The library service already has an income stream from hourly hire of meeting rooms but income has started to decline. The service now has a meetings room project developing more attractive and simpler policies, terms and conditions, booking procedures, better market pricing and a marketing plan. This project is in progress.
24. After this the service intends to develop and promote the hire of “pop up shop” space at the front of libraries for local businesses, craftsmen and artists etc to promote or sell their products.
25. The service is also investigating Amazon and In Post lockers, though investigations so far suggest that profit from these is not likely to be high enough to warrant giving up high value retail floor space.
26. The service has just undertaken an in depth exploration around donation boxes for cash, how these are deployed in other library authorities and the pro’s and cons. The Libraries Senior Management Team will be looking at this shortly.

Progress from the Library Task & Finish Group

27. Following the meeting on Thursday 17 March 2016, the Resident Experience Board recommended that a scrutiny task and finish group was established to support the library service’s development of its vision and strategy for what the library service offer will be to residents in 2020.
28. The Task Group was formally approved by Council Overview Board at its meeting on Wednesday 1 June and the first meeting of the Task Group was on Thursday 30 June. From the Board, the membership of the Task Group included Yvonna Lay, Ramon Gray, Karan Persand and John Orrick whilst from the Library Service was co-opted Rose Wilson and Kelly Saini-Badwal. At this meeting Ramon Gray was nominated as the Chairman of the Group and the membership held a wide ranging discussion around the key themes, challenges and risks to a modern library service.

Library Branch Visits

29. It was decided by the Group that in order to better understand the current landscape of Surrey Libraries the group needed to visit a range of library branches to see first-hand the physical nature of the premises, the stock offer available at different branch bandings and general the variances between libraries across the county. It was also agreed that the visits should include Surrey's Community Partnered Libraries as well.
30. Surrey's library branches are grouped into three bands. Band C libraries are the smaller local branches in the county and hold a core offer of vibrant stock that draws heavily on current reading trends and interests that will appeal to readers of all ages. As all library stock is changed on a regular basis, the stock will satisfy a browser looking for a popular and practical read. Band B libraries are larger community branches and will hold an expanded offer providing a wider range and more in depth choice of stock. Finally, Band A libraries are the main town branches and will build on the greater depth and range by holding a wide range of stock, covering all subject areas.
31. On Wednesday 27 July the Group met at Ewell Library to begin what would be the first of two visits. The group visited six branches including Ewell (Band B), Epsom (Band A), Cobham (Band B), Horsley (Band C), Bookham (Band C) and Dorking (Band A); two branches within each Band. The branches visited also differed in appearance as some had benefitted from a recent refurbishment programme. The Group also visited the County's award winning Performing Arts Library which, as a specialist library in music and drama, is outside the banding system of Band A main town library, Band B town library and Band C community library or community partnered library.
32. Members of the Group found that the visits illustrated the wide range of circumstances in which the service operated and began to show the 'feel' of individual styles each branch offers.
33. On Tuesday 23 August the Group visited New Haw, Stoneleigh and Ewell Court Community Partnered Libraries. On this visit Members met many volunteers that support their local libraries. Members of the Group noted some of the strong variances between branches within the Community Partnered Library group, particularly regarding the physical buildings and the options and limitations they present. However, the Members were very impressed and complementary of the high level of service the Community Partnered Libraries model was providing residents and expressed their thanks to the volunteers for their commitment and dedication to the Library Service.
34. At a meeting on Thursday 27 October the Group was informed by Rose and Kelly of the progress made against the three recommendations made by Resident Experience Board in March 2016, as outlined earlier in this report.

35. The Task Group also discussed:
- a. local business sponsorship and investment opportunities and viability within library branches;
 - b. potential, localised, income generation opportunities for library branches;
 - c. library usage statistics and demographics and some of the known trends within the available data;
 - d. how the recent service review had changed ways of working and helped to introduce standardisation and the spread of best practice across the library network through duty managers who work across more than one library;
 - e. how pilot schemes could be trialled in key strategic library branches before opening out new policies and practices across the whole library network;
 - f. the current library service banding arrangements and how this policy shapes the offer each branch provides in terms of stock, staffing, opening hours, services and facilities;
 - g. the Community Partnered Libraries, their supporting team and their supporting arrangements;
 - h. how communities may be interested in supporting their local library through new initiatives and schemes at a local level;
 - i. the policies other comparative local authorities have adopted in recent years.
36. For the next meeting of the Group, Members requested that Officers provided:
- a. further information regarding the current library banding, in terms of visits per branch, usage, stock and digital resources;
 - b. a prospectus of room hire opportunities within Surrey's libraries;
 - c. information on the service models other comparative local authorities are operating for their library services;
 - d. and, an organisation structure of Surrey's Library Service.

Next Steps for the Task Group

37. Referencing the original scoping document for the Task Group, work has progressed well against the original objectives and tasks whilst also in keeping with the proposed timescale. The Group has developed a good understanding of the current landscape for the library service and some of the risks and pressures it faces. However, much work is still to be done to finish with a clear recommended strategy for the service to 2020.
38. Due to personal circumstances, Ramon Gray has stepped down from the Task Group and his role as Chairman for the Group. The remaining membership would like to mark their thanks to Ramon for his work and commitment to the Task Group over the year. The Chairman of the Resident Experience Board has asked John Orrick to take up the role of Chairman for the Task Group which John had accepted.

Suggested recommendations:

39. The Board is asked to:
- a. note the progress the Library Service has made against the recommendations made at the March meeting, and where appropriate, add comment and suggestion for further work;
 - b. note the progress made by the Libraries Task Group and, where appropriate, give comment and recommendations for future lines of inquiry and work.

Next steps:

40. The Library Task Group continues its work programme based on the agreed scoping document and provides another update to the Board in due course.
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Sources/background papers:

- Resident Experience Board – Libraries Task and Finish Group Scoping Document, *Council Overview Board* (June 2016)
- Surrey County Council's Library Service and the Development of a Future Strategy, *Resident Experience Board* (March 2016)