



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 26 NOVEMBER 2019

REPORT OF: MRS JULIE ILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL-AGE LEARNING

LEAD OFFICER: DAVE HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, LIFE - LONG LEARNING and CULTURE

SUBJECT: LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES: OUR NEXT PHASE

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Following comprehensive consultation on the strategic principles for Surrey County Council's Library and Cultural Services in early 2019, a new strategy for Libraries and Cultural Services and a new model for library services has been developed. This report seeks Cabinet approval for this strategy, which takes into account the views expressed in the consultation and detailed impact and community profile, including analysis of service use which has enabled a strategy and new library model to be developed. The report focuses particularly on the strategy and associated model for our library services.

To fully implement this strategy, initially a programme of co-design will take place at a local level with stakeholders including District and Borough Councils, other partners and local people. This will identify the opportunities to modernise our library services in the places that they are delivered, and in line with the new library model. This process of local co-design is starting.

The specific proposals that will be developed through this process will then be, where necessary, consulted upon to ensure that the full impact of any proposed change is understood, and the perspective of local people is taken into account before any final decision for change is taken. We are seeking approval from Cabinet to delegate the decisions to proceed to consultations to the Executive Director and the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet approve the Library and Cultural Services strategy and future model for the library service.

2. Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children, Life Long Learning and Culture to work with the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning to proceed to consultation where necessary over the next 12 – 18 months, as and when the specific proposals for each area become clearer following a process of co-design with local people and key stakeholders.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Surrey County Council established its strategic principles for the delivery of Library and Cultural services in January 2019, following a comprehensive consultation exercise. Concurrently, the Council has additionally developed a new organisational strategy, 'Vision 2030', setting out the priorities for Surrey County Council and the outcomes it is seeking to achieve. Using both of these, a detailed community profile has been prepared through 2019. It is clear that the way in which people are using libraries is changing. There is a pattern of falling usage amongst the adult population, with fewer regular users borrowing more books, while usage amongst children is growing. We must also look beyond how libraries respond to demand reactively, and consider whether they can make a greater contribution, proactively, to Surrey's corporate priorities. Within this context we have developed a new strategy which seeks to set a direction for the modernisation of our Libraries and Cultural Services which maximises their contribution to the priorities of the Vision 2030 and ensures that we continue to deliver our statutory responsibility to provide "a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desirous to make use there of", as set out in Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964.

DETAILS:

Libraries Context and Background

1. In early 2019, Surrey County Council consulted the public on the strategic direction for our libraries and cultural services. The consultation strongly supported the following principles, which were endorsed and adopted by Cabinet in January 2019:
 - Libraries and cultural services provide and enable opportunities for everyone to learn, access information, acquire new skills, literacy and be involved in their communities.
 - There will be a focus on the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, particularly the most vulnerable, to enable them to be resilient, providing touch points and safe spaces.
 - Libraries and cultural services are most effective and efficient when they work in partnership with the public, voluntary, community and private sectors, including through the creation of shared spaces within a financially sustainable network of hubs.
 - New technologies, including digital, enable libraries and cultural services to reach new audiences, and existing audiences in new ways, and offer 24/7 access.
 - Volunteers are crucial community advocates and assets in libraries and cultural services, who also gain valuable skills and relationships through the work they do.

2. Using these strategic principles as a backdrop, further analysis of our current provision has taken place to identify where we need to focus attention, modernise and develop services which are fit for the future. We have assessed current utilisation, sought to understand the likely demographic change over the next 5 – 10 years, assessed the community profile and considered the potential of the buildings from which we operate.
3. While many of our services are excellent and well used, it is evident that some aspects of our service do not meet the immediate needs of the communities they are intended to serve, are less well used than might be and sometimes in the wrong place as demographic change has resulted in changed patterns of demand, for example adult book borrowing has declined, while children's borrowing has risen substantially. The public's expectations of what libraries and cultural services are able to and should offer is changing and this means it is necessary to modernise our offer and put in place a programme of change. To support this, a strategy and a new model – a framework - for library services has been developed.
4. Libraries remain almost uniquely universally accessible and largely free at point of use. The County Council holds some of the most important universally accessible spaces in the county. The 'library brand' goes beyond the bricks and mortar; successive national and international studies have found libraries to be valued by people of all backgrounds as safe and neutral public spaces, and as trusted routes for accessing advice, information, and written material. These places are the County Council's 'footprints in the community' from which we can build. We can utilise the way in which people feel about libraries to create places which are at the heart of the community, enabling and supporting the delivery of a much wider set of positive activities for those communities, where increasingly, local provision is led by local people.

The Strategy for Libraries and Cultural Services

5. The strategy (attached at Annex A) covers libraries, arts, heritage and adult learning provides full detail of the work that has been undertaken to take forward the output of the early consultation on strategic direction and to understand more fully what creates our operational reality.
6. To do this, we have looked at the data and undertaken analysis to work through the themes and patterns which emerge. This analysis has covered the following:
 - a. Library usage and operating costs and associated benchmarking
 - b. Demographic information about Surrey, its communities and future growth
 - c. Where libraries are, the patterns of use by library and cultural services customers, and the populations they serve
 - d. The profile of communities in each library catchment area (including the number of older people, children, along with skill levels and levels of ill-health)
 - e. Contribution libraries make to Surrey's corporate vision, strategy and priorities and how this can be increased. Needs of people with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act.
7. In addition, we have spent time engaging with Councillors and officers from District and Borough Councils across the county, our own staff and wider workforce, the Community Partner Libraries, Friends of Libraries Groups, Surrey Arts Partnership and Surrey Museums Partnerships. Together with the data analysis, this has given

us a rich picture of the current reality and the opportunities that are available to modernise and improve what we do.

8. With this background, we have identified the five strategic objectives to underpin the development of these services and ensure the link with the Surrey 2030 Vision and the County Council's organisational strategy. With each objective, we have considered carefully the data we have collected about the community and library use (presented in the strategy document) to determine how we will work. They are as follows:

Strategic Objective	We will:
<p>1. We will increase opportunities for children, young people and adults to improve literacy levels and acquire skills and knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coordinated programme of service delivery in each locality to meet identified needs • Improve partnership working to provide relevant learning in the right locations • Continue to offer proven activities and initiatives such as the Children's Book Award, Cultural Education Partnership etc. • Work more closely with education partners to develop and target support for children with reading and literacy and family learning • Train and empower staff to deliver our programme and curate our resources • Use volunteers to add value by providing aspects of our service delivery/programme • Review and where necessary amend opening hours to maximise the availability of resources and use
<p>2. We will deliver resources and activities in partnership with communities and other organisations to improve health and well-being of individuals and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the success of rhyme times, reading clubs and code clubs to widen participation by running more activities and events • Work more closely with health providers to ensure our health and wellbeing activities add value and reach those with health and well-being needs • Offer opportunities to health providers to co-locate in our building where appropriate, or for us to co-locate in theirs • Offer communities opportunities to use our buildings and resources, design and deliver services to meet their health and well-being needs
<p>3. We will strengthen our partnership work with the public, voluntary, community and private sectors, including through the creation of shared spaces within a financially sustainable network of hubs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the new model for libraries co-locating with other services where appropriate • Consider our partnership and governance models to ensure long term sustainability • Improve commercial performance where possible, particularly in those services that benefit from fee income
<p>4. We will develop and promote new technologies to increase access and engagement with libraries and cultural services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and develop digital resources that can help inspire the use of the web, apps and digital technologies to facilitate wider access • Provide more targeted learning opportunity to gain new digital skills delivered via volunteers, partners and staff in the right locations • Refine our digital catalogue and website to improve the way people access services • Provide digitally based activities to promote learning and enjoyment for young people

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital technology to encourage communities to come together and participate in discussion
<p>5. We will increase opportunities for community-led services and enable local people to increasingly influence and deliver services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local people in process of co-design to implement the new model of community led libraries • Work with individuals and communities to find ways to ensure they are more closely involved in the design, delivery (including volunteering) and evaluation of what goes on in their local provision

9. In order to deliver this strategy, we seek to preserve the foundations of the universal accessibility. At their core, we want all our libraries and cultural services to have:
- Accessibility and inclusivity;
 - Flexibility and adaptability;
 - Visibility and connectability.

The model for Libraries

10. To deliver our strategy, we aim to deliver services which are:
- Shared – in the widest sense – with the wider community and our partners
 - Feeling vibrant, exciting and at the heart of the community – where people really want to be (and not just say they do)
 - Cost effective or even cost neutral delivering a wider range of activities for local people
 - Places where it still feels like a library, because we’re getting the basics right
 - In the right place, available at the right time and increasingly community-led, offering core library provision alongside things which support and enable the community it serves.
11. The model for libraries will enable the Council to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service by building on our three categories of library service, enabling, encouraging and supporting greater levels of community ownership and leadership over time. This enhances our current library model, which similarly identifies three types of library, and builds on the success of our current community-led library provision. We are seeking places to grow that style of provision so local people are more directly driving the provision in their neighbourhoods, while bringing in a wider range of public, voluntary and community services into the same spaces.
12. The new model proposes that there will be three ‘categories’ of library in the future:
- i Library Plus** – flagship libraries where we co-locate and where possible, integrate our services with others – our public, voluntary and community sector partners, private sector initiatives and potentially new and emerging enterprises. These places will be vibrant dynamic and future-thinking spaces which encourage learning, knowledge and skill sharing and represent places that are safe, encouraging and exciting. They will provide opportunities to access a fuller range of services, not just those of the County Council, but those which are relevant to local people. The service will include the core library services but will potentially be enhanced by additional functions or

services, such as facilities for microenterprises, access to technology like 3D printers and ‘maker spaces’ or specific, tailored provision for young people.

ii Library – meeting local need and delivering our wider outcomes in neighbourhoods, libraries will still offer the core services, but may operate in partnership with other services and the community while maintaining access through the application of technology to enable open access.

iii Community – led libraries – meeting the very local need, supporting people to help themselves in their local neighbourhood, these small libraries will be led and run by the community, with the library service enabling this through the provision of support, help and encouragement. By putting local people in charge, the local community can tailor more precisely what happens with these services and in the spaces that they operate from.

13. Underpinning this model is the clear intent to ensure what sits around the libraries and cultural services is as efficient and productive as possible. This will include work to maximise open access to all the premises we operate from, giving local people the opportunity to access core services on a self-service basis more often than is currently possible. There will be a clear drive to maximise our income streams, to reduce the cost of our back office and to ensure that all aspects of our provision is comparable or better than others in cost terms. The libraries and cultural services workforce are already deeply embedded in the communities in which they work, but to support the new model and to ensure they are driving the local conversation and co-design, a programme will help support their further development.
14. This approach differs from our current model by increasing the focus on sharing our spaces to ensure they are genuinely cost-effective, enable more relevant events and activities and recognition that community-led provision is increasingly important.

Implementation Approach: Co-design and Consultation

15. Our approach to the initial co-design work will also need to take account of the Council’s statutory duty to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service”.
16. To do this well, we intend to work with local communities and our partners – existing and new – to co-design what the model could mean and how it could be implemented. The process of co-design will be open, seeking and developing ideas and opportunities for change from local people, as well as partner organisations. The process will be open to all, allowing local people to participate where they are most interested over the next 12 to 18 months. With this ongoing conversation with people in their communities and neighbourhoods, we will work together with them to develop proposals for change.
17. We will undertake formal consultation on specific proposals where necessary. By designing the proposals with local people before any consultation, we are ensuring that there will be more detail about the proposals for change, and the local implications of change will be better understood, allowing for more meaningful consultation to be undertaken as a result.
18. Throughout the last nine months, dialogue has been undertaken with local partners about the potential opportunities to change or modernise library services. There are opportunities across the whole county to work more closely with our district and

borough partners as well as others to work together to provide excellent, modern services and negotiations will continue within the context of this strategic framework. While the detailed implementation plan will be developed on approval of this report, it is expected that the co-design approach will commence in the early part of 2020 in and will be followed by consultation, where required, later in the year.

CONSULTATION:

19. The council consulted residents, service users and partners on five strategic principles to underpin the development of the strategy. Consultation took place between 30th October 2018 and 4th January 2019. The response to the public consultation demonstrated significant support for the guiding principles.
20. As a consequence, at its meeting on 29th January 2019 Cabinet resolved that proposals be prepared with partners, including district and borough councils, for a future model for library and cultural services in Surrey, based on the five newly adopted strategic principles. It also resolved to undertake further public consultation, setting out the detailed proposals.
21. The County Council has been discussing with district and borough local authorities the proposed way forward for a modernised library service. These discussions have explored opportunities to align library service provision with need, accessibility and local ambitions to improve facilities and services appropriate to the local place. Such opportunities have also been explored with Local and Joint committee chairs and members of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee. These meetings have been largely positive.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

22. There are risks associated with the project and a project risk register has been compiled and is regularly updated. The significant risks associated with this project are set out below.
23. By adopting the strategy and model for libraries as a framework for the process of co-design and consultation, the County Council does risk an unrealistic set of proposals being developed by local communities. To mitigate this, all co-design processes will be undertaken with a series of constraints, including, but not limited to, the already agreed budget provision and the requirement to meet our statutory duties in respect of comprehensive and efficient library services.
24. There is the possibility that following the co-design and consultation, the strategy and model will need to be revised significantly, which may put pressure on current service delivery teams as a result of continued uncertainty. To mitigate this risk, work will continue to involve and support the wider libraries and cultural services workforce in the process of design, in order that they can both contribute and be heard as well as supporting and enabling the participation of local people. It is expected that this will build a sense of ownership and inclusion with the staff, thereby reducing the levels of uncertainty for them.

25. There is a possibility that by co-designing proposals for local provision at a local level, the overarching statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library services for the whole county may be reduced, and any consultation process may not recognise the county-wide implications. To mitigate this, while the co-design process will take place at a local level, the high-level cumulative impact will be assessed, and where appropriate, action taken to ensure any emerging proposals do not put at risk compliance with the Council's statutory duty. Additionally, in testing the requirement for consultation on the proposals emerging from co-design, a county-wide perspective will be taken, and any formal consultation will take this into account, to ensure consultees are able to contribute meaningfully across the whole, rather than in discrete, geographically specific elements.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

26. Resources to progress a process of co-design with local people and key stakeholders, to undertake consultation where necessary on a district and borough basis over the next 12 – 18 months and carry out feasibility studies as required, will be contained within existing agreed revenue budget allocations.
27. As part of this process the financial impacts of the specific proposals developed will be assessed.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY:

28. The intention of the proposed Library and Cultural Services strategy and future model for the library service is to deliver an effective service in a modern cost-efficient way.
29. The Council's medium-term financial outlook is uncertain as it is heavily dependent on decisions made by Central Government. With no clarity on these beyond 2020/21, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the review of the future Library model. The outcome of the review will be factored into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER:

30. The Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 requires the Council "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" who want to make use of it. The Cabinet needs to be assured that what is proposed will enable the Council to continue to do that.
31. A period of co design in accordance with the strategic principles previously consulted upon is now starting. This will enable the Council to formulate specific proposals in relation to existing libraries. All final proposals for change to existing services will need to be the subject of equality impact assessments and full public consultation after which the proposals will be returned to Cabinet for final decisions to be taken.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY:

32. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken for the strategy and it is appended as Annex B of this report and the outcome is shown in the table below. As the co-design processes proceed across the county, this will be updated as any potential positive and negative impacts become clear.

Outcome Number	Description	Tick
Outcome One	No major change to the policy/service/function required. This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken	No major change
Outcome Two	Adjust the policy/service/function to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?	
Outcome Three	Continue the policy/service/function despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact • Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact. 	
Outcome Four	Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay, available here).	
	No specific changes to services are being proposed at this time. Following a process of co-design if there are specific changes to service delivery consultation on these will be undertaken.	

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

33. The next steps will be the development of:
- a. A detailed plan for the co-design and where appropriate consultation will be developed in order to work across the county to determine the specific proposals for each library location over the next 12 – 18 months. The work will be planned to be completed to the conclusion of consultation within this time scale, with implementation being dependent on the nature of the proposals and the scale of any change required.
 - b. The Executive Director and Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning will undertake to agree the detail of this plan.
 - c. Reports will be presented to Cabinet for consideration of the detailed proposals related to the implementation of the library model following the co-design process and any consultation that follows.

Contact Officer:

Liz Mills, Director for Education, Life-long learning and Culture 020 8541 7608

Consulted:

A comprehensive consultation on strategic principles encompassed within the Strategy was undertaken in late 2018 and was reported to Cabinet on 29 January 2019.

Cabinet members and all SCC members through member briefing session and webcast

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee members

Corporate Leadership Team and other staff

District and Borough Chief Officers, Leaders and Portfolio Holders

Local and Joint Committee Chairs

Annexes:

Annex A: Library and Cultural Services Strategy including the community profile and analysis of service use

Annex B: Equalities Impact Assessment for the Library and Cultural Services Strategy

Sources/background papers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021>

Report to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee 12 September 2019; Part A "LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION"

Report to Cabinet 29th January 2019 and Corporate Overview Select Committee 25 January 2019; Part A) "Transformation proposals – Delivering better services for residents" and accompanying

Annex 3: Libraries and Cultural Services Consultation Report, 29th January 2019 and

Annex 3a: Libraries and Cultural Services Equality Impact Assessment, 29th January 2019.
