

LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW

To: Cabinet

Date: 5 July 2010

From: Executive Director: Community and Adult Services

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: 2010/021 **Key decision: Yes**

Purpose: This report sets out the proposals, options and recommendations of the Library Service Review Board in respect of the Library Service Review and the budget savings identified in the Council's Integrated Plan.

Recommendation: Cabinet is asked to agree to the recommendations and proposals set out in the report as the basis for full public engagement and consultation. These are:

- i) To endorse the work underway on alternative options for governance, management and support;**
- ii) To agree to officers urgently pursuing an alternative approach to service delivery based on self service technology and greater community involvement**
- iii) To agree to officers undertaking an urgent review of library provision in Cambridge City and the surrounding area**
- iv) To agree to the approach suggested for identifying libraries for closure, should this be required**
- v) To agree to the implementation of proposals for savings on support for Library Access Points, especially in relation to stock provision**
- vi) To agree to the implementation of proposals for savings on the Mobile Service, based on a move to monthly stops**
- vii) To authorise officers to proceed with full public engagement about library services and consultation on the proposals above**

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contact</i>	
Name:	Mike Hosking	Name:	Councillor Sir Peter Brown
Post:	Director of Libraries, Learning and Culture	Portfolio:	Communities
Email:	Mike.hosking@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Peter.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 727954	Tel:	01223 699173

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The aims of the Library Service Review are:

- To seek positive and innovative outcomes which will benefit customers and embody best practice and modernised services
- To achieve required budget savings in a way that minimises the impact on frontline service delivery, whilst reducing management and overhead costs to the minimum
- To ensure the long term sustainability of services which are fit for purpose and meet community needs
- To support staff and customers through the change and challenges ahead, ensuring they are kept well informed and able to engage and participate in the process

1.2 A comprehensive review of Cambridgeshire Libraries was carried out in Autumn 2009 by Kentwood Associates, with a final report produced in November 2009. Whilst judging the services as performing well when benchmarked against others, the report also made a number of recommendations for the future of the service, both in terms of improvements and ways in which to meet the anticipated budget savings.

1.3 Cabinet and Council agreed savings targets for the Service, at their respective meetings in February 2010, as part of the Council's Integrated Planning (IP) Process. The savings affecting Libraries, Archives and Information are set out in the table below. However, these savings targets may have to be increased given the Budget announcement on 22nd June 2010 that all Government Departments will be required to reduce spending by 25% as part of this Autumn's 3-year Comprehensive Spending Review.

Saving	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	Total £000
Reduce overheads, management & support costs (through the Service Review)		-568	-557	-1125
Mobile library service review	-108	-108		- 216
Renegotiate enhanced pay for Saturday and Sunday working		-200		-200
Increase income	-50	-50	-50	-150
Reduce book fund	-150			-150
Archive service savings	-75	-75		-150
Potential library closures		-40	-60	-100
Reduce running costs (efficiencies)	-32	-32	-30	-92
Reduce support for Library Access Points	-30			-30
Total	-445	-1073	-697	-2,215

Since February, staff and the Project Board¹ have been generating options and proposals to meet the 2010/11 budget targets, and are now in a position

¹ The Project Board is comprised of: Sir Peter Brown, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities; Rod Craig, Executive Director of Community and Adult Services; Mike Hosking, Director of Libraries, Learning and Culture; Pat Harding, Corporate Director of Customer Service and Transformation; Janet Bosworth, Head of HR; Christine May, Acting Head of Libraries, Archives and Information; Chris Heaton, Head of Policy, Planning and Culture; Helen Maneuf, Head of Audit and Risk Management; Evelyn Jarvis, Interim Strategic Support Manager; Sue Hughes, Museums Libraries and Archives Council.

to put these forward to Cabinet for decision and approval, prior to consulting on the proposals with service users, communities and stakeholders. Work has also started on proposals to manage the 'Potential library closures' savings target, since this is anticipated to be a major piece of work.

- 1.4 This Review is taking place in the context of ongoing national debate about the future of libraries in society. The previous government reported on their modernisation review of libraries in a policy statement entitled '*Empower Enrich Inform*', published in March 2010 by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)². This outlined a 'core' offer for all libraries, as a free entitlement for every citizen, as well as suggestions for a 'local' offer at the discretion of library authorities. It also recognised the important social and economic role of libraries that needs to be preserved, their contribution across a wide range of government priorities, and the transformation of services that has already taken place (as evidenced in Cambridgeshire) with the introduction of digital resources and online services, self service, informal learning, and increased community participation. Local authorities are now waiting for the new government's policy steer on libraries. In the announcement on 17th June 2010 cancelling the £2m additional spending commitments made by the previous Government when publishing their "*Empower, Enrich, Inform*" document, it was stated that, "...the Minister for Culture intends to set out his vision for Libraries shortly". This announcement from the DCMS went on to give an indication of the Coalition's future policy direction:

"Government is clear that our public libraries remain as vital as ever. They are the places in every community where people can get information, learn and enjoy reading. But councils know how to get the most from limited resources for their communities. This announcement withdraws an unnecessary central initiative and, particularly in the current climate, gives as much freedom as possible to library authorities to spend their funds to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to their local area".

- 1.5 The County Council is committed to engaging with service users, the wider public, communities and other stakeholders in this discussion about the future of libraries, particularly in the light of the need to redesign services to make the most of diminishing resources, in a way which transforms rather than cuts services. This consultation needs to consider wide-ranging issues such as:

- what people want and need from their library service for the future
- which services remain free and universal,
- how and to whom services should be targeted,
- which services have potential to generate more income;
- how far information technology can be used to a greater extent to deliver services
- how services can be delivered beyond library buildings
- the extent to which communities can become involved in the management and running of local libraries;

² http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6752.aspx

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 **Governance, management and support arrangements.** The IP savings target to be achieved through this element of the Review is £1.125m over the next two financial years. The recommendation of Kentwood Associates's report was to meet these budget savings by externalising the service. Whilst the County Council would retain statutory responsibility for the service, externalisation would place the service at arms length from the County Council, which would commission the service to a set specification. This could provide the expected benefits of a reduction in corporate and management overheads to run the service, National Non-Domestic Rates and tax relief, and greater ability to raise income. If undertaken with partners, there would be additional benefits of rationalisation and economies of scale, with greater centralisation and transformation based on best practice and innovation.

This is essential to prevent wholesale library closures, however externalisation alone will not meet the total savings target, and transformation of service delivery will be required at the same time.

The alternative governance options currently being investigated are:

- 1) Partnership with most of the other library authorities in the East of England, in a project called SPINE (Service Partnership In the East), which is modelling two options:
 - a. One of the Library Authorities delivering (mostly support) services for the others
 - b. A single new independent body (trust, charity or business) to deliver the whole library service for all partners
- 2) A new governance model just for Cambridgeshire, either:
 - a. A Cambridgeshire Trust, probably including other services such as adult learning and cultural services – or:
 - b. Externalisation to a third party. This option will shortly be soft market tested to establish its viability.

Cabinet is asked to endorse the investigation work currently underway on both the shared and single authority approaches, and to note that a paper with full options appraisal and recommendations for a new governance model will be presented at their late September meeting.

- 2.2 **Service delivery framework:** Library services in Cambridgeshire are graduated according to population size and customer demand, as follows:
- 1 Central Library providing unique specialist services (including higher level reference stock, foreign language material, audio visual collections, music scores, local studies and archive film collections, business information, exhibition space and conference facilities, and the most extensive and high profile programme of activities) which are essential to backup libraries across the whole county and attract users from across the sub region, especially Cambridge City, South and East Cambridgeshire, as well as extensive access to technology (64 public internet PCs and Wifi provision) and the widest range of fiction and non-fiction stock

- 6 Hub Libraries, which are located in the County's larger market towns and provide a variety of enhanced services (such as learning centres, substantial numbers of public internet PCs, Wifi, local studies / archive collections, refreshment facilities, meeting rooms and an active programme of events), as well as a good range of adult and junior fiction and non-fiction stock, to population catchments greater than 14,000
- 25 Community Libraries in both urban and rural areas which provide a standard range of services (popular adult and junior fiction and non-fiction and a small number of public internet PCs, regular storytimes for children and some exhibition / display space) to populations between 4000 – 14,000
- 10 Library Access Points (LAPs) which are small community run facilities supported by the Library Service, providing limited access to library services
- A Mobile Service for very small communities not served by a static library
- Targeted services including the Doorstep service for housebound customers, Postal Tape Service for people with visual impairments, Videos for the Deaf, the Link service for residential homes, Books on Prescription, Engage clubs for over-50s, services for the under-5s, services for reading groups etc.
- Remote access services - via the County Council Contact Centre and online 24x7 via the internet - enabling customers to search for and order books and other stock, to renew their loans and to gain direct access to high quality reference, information and e-books.

This graduation is reflected in terms of the size of libraries, the range of facilities on offer, and the levels of stock, staff, opening hours, and performance, as set out in the Library Service's agreed Service Levels Policy, which was originally agreed as Council policy in 1993 and reaffirmed by Cabinet as a result of the Strategic Review of 2002-03. Considering the size of the populations served, the type of services delivered and the high level of performance of the Central and Hub libraries, together with recent investment in them, these libraries are considered outside the scope of the review of community libraries. Targeted services and remote access services are also considered outside the scope of this review, given that the former meet County Council priorities by serving vulnerable citizens with most need, whilst the latter represent service transformation to meet customer needs in modern, flexible ways through the use of information technology.

- 2.3 **Review of community libraries:** Community libraries cover a range of population catchments, locations (urban / rural / proximity to other libraries), levels of use and performance, so assessing them to plan for reduction or growth is complex. Similarly, the service delivery framework as a whole needs to be flexible and able to respond to future change – as resources decline or population growth increases - based on consistent, objective criteria.

A transparent, robust and objective methodology (which has been recognised nationally as best practice) exists for identifying where to set the bar for reductions; it was agreed by Cabinet (at its meeting on 3rd September 2002) for the previous library review. This analyses and compares a range of criteria relating to library performance and community needs for each library, resulting in a ranking of libraries based on these two factors. This enables the identification of libraries which both perform less well and have lower

levels of community need. These can then be further investigated and analysed for potential closure, including public consultation.

The savings target for the community library network is £100k over the two financial years 2011/12 (£40k) and 2012/13 (£60k). The Review Board proposes the following approach for realising these savings:

- 1) Investigate the feasibility and community appetite for transforming service delivery with an innovative new model based on providing self service technology in all community libraries, a reduction in paid staffing to run the service, together with greater involvement and participation by community volunteers. This model has the potential to realise the required savings and prevent library closures altogether, continuing our policy of active involvement of local communities and also responding to central government policy on increased community involvement in local services.

Cabinet is asked to agree to this approach being pursued urgently, in order to establish its viability for implementation from 2011 onwards.

- 2) Urgently review library provision in Cambridge and the surrounding area to reflect the changing size and distribution of the population (due to housing growth) and the enormous, positive impact of the new Central Library. A strategic review of provision in the city was recommended in the Kentwood report and is required for future service planning purposes, regardless of the current requirement for budget savings.

Cabinet is asked to agree to this urgent review taking place as a key recommendation from the Library Service Review report.

- 3) Should externalisation plans fail to prove viable, or to achieve the level of savings required from that element of the Review, it will then be necessary to plan a reduction in the number of community libraries across the county. This process would be based on the tried and tested methodology used previously, which sets the bar for library closures. This methodology is transparent, consistent and fair, providing a clear agreed strategy for the service, and bears scrutiny.

Cabinet is asked to agree to this approach being used, should savings from other parts of the Service Review prove insufficient.

- 2.4 **Review of Library Access Points (LAPs):** The LAPs replaced 10 libraries that were closed as part of the previous Library Service Review in 2002/3 as being 'under the bar' of the assessment methodology. These were continued as community run services following strong representations from local communities. As the smallest and least performing services (according to previous criteria and current analysis) this needs to be reflected in our 'graduated' framework of library provision.

The savings target for reducing support to the LAPs is £30k in the current financial year 2010/11. Most of the cashable expenditure on LAPs relates to the provision of book stock. Proposals for this saving, therefore, seek to

redress the balance of currently providing the same (or in some cases a better) level of new stock and deliveries as to the smallest Community Libraries, and to replace it with existing library circulating stock and selected donations and less frequent deliveries.

It is proposed to revise the current Service Level Agreement with LAPs to this effect, and to place greater emphasis on meeting quality and performance outcomes. It may also be worth considering bringing some of the LAPs 'back into the fold' of the County Council service delivery framework, should Option 1 (in section 2.3 above) for Community Libraries be chosen, as an action for the future.

Cabinet is asked to agree to the implementation of these proposals following consultation, in order to enable part of the IP savings target for support for LAPs to be met this year.

- 2.5 **Review of mobile library service:** The Mobile Library Service needs to be seen as a whole in terms of its reach and use, serving a very large number of (mostly rural) communities. Criteria for the service have been set as part of the Service Levels policy. By its nature the service is relatively expensive to run, but serves the rurally disadvantaged (mainly older people and young families). A thorough review of the existing service has resulted in an innovative set of proposals to transform the service, in a way that retains service to all the communities currently served (and one new one), whilst reducing the vehicle fleet and staffing levels to meet the budget savings target of £216k over the next 2 financial years (£108k in each of 2010/11 and 2011/12).

The proposal is to:

- Reduce the frequency of service from (mostly) fortnightly to (mostly) monthly stops in order to achieve similar levels of use but at lower cost, with fewer, longer stops in each community
- Provide calendar monthly stops in each community (12 visits per year) in an easy to remember format, e.g. 1st Tuesday of the month
- Reduce the fleet from 9 to 4 vehicles, based at 4 sites within easier reach of the communities they serve, thereby reducing travelling time and maximising service delivery time
- Reduce the number of staff required to operate the smaller fleet, and make changes to their pattern of working hours to enable the timetable changes

The proposals incorporate service capacity to enable twice monthly stops to those larger communities where population size and levels of use justify this provision, as well as some flexibility to allow for the impact of further decisions from other parts of the Service Review.

Cabinet is asked to approve these proposals and to authorise detailed consultation with service users and communities ahead of implementation in order to enable the first part of the savings target for the mobile library service to be met this year.

- 2.6 **Other efficiency and transformation measures:** The other 2010/11 budget saving measures are being investigated and implemented as part of the Libraries, Archives and Information Service Plan under the twin headings of Improvement and Efficiency, in a 'no stone unturned' approach. These include: Archive service savings, reducing building running costs, maximising income generation, and maximising the use of a reduced book fund through the further development of information technology in relation to both stock supply and ongoing stock management.

Cabinet is asked to note this work; further details will follow in future reports.

3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Resources And Performance

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- It is important to make timely decisions on these proposals, since any delays will increase the risk of not realising the required savings on an already very stretched budget. The risk of failure to realise the required budget savings within the required timeframe may arise from: the complexity of the proposals, and the time and work required to achieve them; factors outside the Council's control (such as legal processes required to set up a new governance body, or the willingness of partners to enter into new arrangements); and changes to plans due to opposition from the public, staff, unions, Councillors or other stakeholders. The Library Service Review Project Board will manage this risk by continuing to monitor progress closely on each aspect of the Review.
- A significant human resource implication would arise from the adoption of the proposal for an alternative form of service delivery from community libraries (paragraph 2.3 (1) above) since this would change current staffing levels and involve the use of community volunteers for specific, clearly defined tasks.
- In relation to the mobile library service changes in paragraph 2.5, the formal Human resources (HR) staff consultation process for these changes is already under way.
- Possible deterioration in performance – in terms of both the quality and use of library services - may result from reductions which spread resources more thinly. The Project Board will ensure that service specifications and service level agreements are tightly drawn up and enforceable to guarantee a quality level of service for the future.
- The Library Service Review proposals carry the following key risks:
 - a) *A high level of public, staff and union opposition to proposals involving service reductions, staff reductions, and new delivery methods which place greater reliance on technology and community support to deliver services.*

- b) Widespread and potentially misleading media coverage of the proposals, which are likely to be of high public interest, posing risks to the Council's reputation.*

In order to manage these issues a number of mitigating actions are to be taken in accordance with the management action plans prepared by the identified risk owners. Examples of key actions are illustrated below for Members' reference:

Risk (a) *The Project Team and Project Board will endeavour to keep stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the process, with an emphasis on the benefits of transformation and the seriousness of the alternative picture. Unison is represented on the Project Board.*

Risk (b) *A member of the Council's Communications Team sits on the Review Project's Communications and Consultation Team and has developed a Communications Strategy for the Review.*

- Best practice has been factored into these proposals, based on the research in the Kentwood Associates report and research by members of the Project Team.

3.2 Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working

- Public libraries are a statutory service. It is a mandatory requirement on the County Council to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" service under the terms of the Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964.

3.3 Climate Change

There are no significant climate change implications arising from this report.

3.4 Access and Inclusion

- Maintaining inclusion, equality and diversity – whilst also seeking to achieve the agreed Integrated Plan savings - is a key aim which has informed the innovative proposals for transforming Library Service governance, management, support and service delivery set out in detail in section 2 of this report.

3.5 Engagement and Consultation

- The County Council is committed to engaging with service users, the wider public, communities and other stakeholders in the discussion about the future of libraries, particularly in the light of the need to redesign services to make the most of diminishing resources, in a way which transforms rather than cuts services. The wide ranging scope of this consultation is set out in paragraph 1.5 of this report.
- The adoption of the proposal for an alternative form of service delivery from community libraries (paragraph 2.3 (1) above) would have implications in relation to engagement with the voluntary sector since it

would involve the use of community volunteers for specific, clearly defined tasks.

Source Documents	Location
A Strategic Review of the Library, Archive and Information Service for Cambridgeshire County Council by Kentwood Associates, November 2009	Libraries HQ, Room B112, Castle Court Shire Hall, Cambridge