

LIBRARY SERVICES IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE: DEVELOPING OUR APPROACH FOR THE FUTURE

To: Health and Wellbeing Board

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From: John Onslow, Service Director: Infrastructure Management & Operations, Economy, Transport and Environment

1.0 PURPOSE

The Council as a whole (and where possible in conjunction with public sector partners) is re-defining its approach to how services will be delivered across the county, and developing its future operating model. The future of the Library Service is fundamentally tied in with this approach, supporting cross-council working around themes of community resilience, and early help and prevention.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 We see library services playing a much more significant role in building resilient communities, for example by supporting the preventative and early support offer to people likely to enter the care, helping to keep people healthy, employed, connected – and less reliant on other, more intensive and expensive forms of support. Refocussing library services through community hubs to maximise their use for prevention work is central to the Council's demand management strategies. This is vital to underpin the savings that need to be made across the Council, and to ensure that local communities are resourced and supported effectively to help themselves.

2.2 Whilst much has already been done to work in new ways to deliver savings and improve services, clearly more radical change will be needed in order to realise a similar level of savings again in future years. Our aspiration is to find ways to improve services at the same time as meeting the huge financial challenges we face. We want to design services in partnership with others, tailored for the way people live now and in the future, that better meet their needs and aspirations. The library transformation work will run over three years, and we are keen to engage with partners and stakeholders to seek their views and to help us realise this strategy for the future.

2.3 We have grouped under four key themes how library services will support our communities:

- Building community resilience
- Enabling more than delivering
- Maximising use of our assets
- Digital First

3.0 BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

3.1 We want to work with others to increase our support for the elderly and most vulnerable in society, and help give children the best start in life. Libraries bring a highly trusted 'brand', second only to GPs. They are regarded first and foremost as community facilities rather than Council services.

3.2 By working with other service providers, together we could provide a better, more comprehensive and integrated 'offer' that supports community resilience and facilitates self-help. The Council's community hubs strategy has already moved forwards in this direction through combining public services at Ramsey, Chatteris and Whittlesey Hubs, for example, and with GP surgeries at Cambourne and the planned new Trumpington facility. However, much more could be done, and needs to be done quickly.

3.3 We also want to work with others to increase our support for people to build their skills and employability, building on the large numbers of entrepreneurs, sole traders, returning mums, students and home educators using the library service, and seeking to orchestrate valuable connections and activities between them and the business world – starting with a new Enterprise Centre at Central Library.

3.4 The Service already works with GPs as part of the 'Books on Prescription' and 'Mood boosting books' schemes, and is keen to do more for the future, for example 'social prescribing'.

4.0 ENABLING MORE THAN DELIVERING

4.1 Our aspiration is that at a local community level, the emphasis will be on the co-design and co-production, with communities, of flexible multipurpose centres where a wide range of services can be delivered. The focus will be on moving these facilities to local control, so that communities can determine for themselves how they should be run, what services they require, and make a full contribution to their sustainability. An obvious starting point for exploring co-location options for these local centres is libraries, children's centres, community centre / halls, leisure centres, and GP surgeries.

4.2 Drawing on the success of our award winning volunteering programmes, we will work to co-ordinate a whole council approach to volunteering, facilitating communities to use their own resources to support their most vulnerable members and most valued services.

5.0 MAXIMISING THE USE OF OUR ASSETS

5.1 We will work with others to further develop and maximise the use of assets (people, places and facilities) as the first tier of support for individuals and communities. Sharing buildings – and in some cases, staff - with other public sector partners (including Children's Centres, Adult Day Centres, District Council services, GP surgeries, town and village halls etc.) will make a large and important contribution to the huge savings that need to be made. This work is

already underway through the Making Assets Count and Community Hubs programmes with our public sector partners, but needs to be accelerated to meet savings targets.

5.2 Library services will be a key component of a range of services delivered from integrated service centres or 'hubs'. These are likely to take the form of fewer, better buildings that can accommodate the widest range of services and are well located and connected (both by public transport and IT infrastructure).

5.3 Generic staff roles will be developed based on combining frontline customer service, information and advice, and community engagement roles. Savings will come from the disposal of buildings and a smaller, more integrated staff resource.

6.0 DIGITAL FIRST

6.1 We will continue to take a 'digital first' approach to delivering services, ensuring that our residents can gain the full benefits of our increasingly digital world. At the library people will be able to learn about and experiment with new technologies in a supportive environment. Our aspiration is that very few people will remain unable to carry out routine transactions online. We will seek to improve the digital skills of those who are furthest away from the workplace and who do not benefit from other networks, or those who may struggle to apply for work through digital means (e.g. providers of home care).

7.0 ALIGNMENT WITH THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

7.1 Ensure a positive start to life for children, young people and their families

By working holistically with other providers, together we will develop integrated services for children and families. We will do this by focusing on the customer and combining our resources to provide a better and more joined up offer, whilst eliminating duplication and saving resources. For example, by combining services that are currently duplicated across libraries and children's centres to provide targeted support for parenting skills and literacy in harder to reach communities. .

7.2 Support older people to be independent, safe and well

We propose using libraries as hubs of information, advice and support for older people, to help prevent loneliness and isolation and promote health and participation.

In Cambridgeshire, library staff already provide a wide range of additional preventative activities including:

- Public health promotion resources and campaigns
- Awareness raising for health related issues and agencies e.g. Stroke Support, Macmillan Cancer Care
- Activities and resource for people with depression and mental health

disorders

- Dementia Friendly staff and volunteers
- 'Engage' older people's club sessions including talks, reminiscence, chair based exercise, knit and natter etc.
- Dementia resource packs for loan with support from the Huntingdon Women's Institute

These activities serve to prevent citizens needing to access higher cost services by helping them to manage and improve their own health, literacy and life chances.

7.3 Encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviours in all actions and activities while respecting people's personal choices

There is great scope to build on the services and activities outlined in section 4.2 to promote healthy lifestyle choices for all through hubs. Special displays, information screens, events and health check sessions could all be arranged as required, for example around smoking cessation, exercise and tackling obesity and so on.

7.4 Create a safe environment and help to build strong communities, wellbeing and mental health

Libraries are recognised as safe, trusted and neutral places within communities and the Council plans to utilise this opportunity for a wider range of services to come together in hubs with a focus on building strong communities that have at their heart the health and wellbeing of local residents.

7.5 Create a sustainable environment in which communities can flourish

By working in partnership with other services and organisations and maximising the use of property and people assets, this will help create a sustainable environment for communities.

7.6 Work together effectively

Library services will be a key component of a range of services delivered from integrated service centres or 'hubs'. These are likely to take the form of fewer, better buildings that can accommodate the widest range of services and are well located and connected (both by public transport and IT infrastructure).

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The key driver behind the Library Service transformation and the Council's new operating model is the requirement to find nearly £120M (40% of the budget) in savings over the next 5 years. This cannot be achieved by working in the same way as we have done in the past, and requires a new, holistic and shared approach to business planning. Libraries are a statutory service and there is a high risk of legal challenge if the service is disproportionately cut, so it makes

sense to maximise the use of the opportunities they provide for other services and for the Council's early prevention activities. Initial consultation on the strategy closed on 10 May and a report on the initial findings will be discussed at the Council's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee in June although we will continue to engage with stakeholders in an ongoing discussion about how we take this forward.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION/DECISION REQUIRED

9.1 We cannot realise the ambition set out here on our own; our aim is to build on collaborative working with all public sector partners to deliver benefits for communities at a lower cost.

9.2 HWB views are sought on key areas of collaboration i.e..

1. Developing shared objectives and outcomes
2. Identifying opportunities for joint service delivery
3. Engaging with communities and helping to support vulnerable people
4. Working together to help deliver skills, employment and enterprise opportunities
5. Who in your organisation can we work with to develop and take this forward?

Source Documents	Location
Library services in Cambridgeshire: Developing our approach for the future	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/custom_scripts/consultations-document.aspx/357/Library%20Services%20In%20Cambridgeshire%20Developing%20Our%20Approach%20For%20The%20Future.pdf
Consultation report	http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/committee-document.aspx/committees-new/hci/2015-06-02/Reports/9262/150602-6.doc