

## LIBRARIES OPEN ACCESS PROJECT

To: Communities and Partnership Committee

Meeting Date: 8 October 2020

From: Adrian Chapman, Service Director: Communities & Partnerships

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Key decision: No

Outcome: To enable the Open Access project for Cambridgeshire Libraries to progress following a period of project development by the multi-skilled project team, and some site testing.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Agree to the five pilot sites of Sawston, St Ives, March, Rock Road and Soham, going ahead to test drive the model;
- b) Agree to reactive CCTV monitoring to be carried out by First Reaction; and
- c) Agree the priority and commitment to rollout across suitable other libraries.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the business plan members have agreed £1,172k for the installation of Open Access technology across 31 library sites in the County, initially the 9 hubs and then extended to 22 other libraries. We have also included three new libraries in this document, the funding for which will come from the existing development money for each, but they will open with Open Access technology (Darwin Green, Alconbury and Northstowe). The technology allows for additional access to the libraries during unstaffed hours. The bids operate on the basis that they will provide greater access to the library estate where currently 60% is unused during a typical 9-5 working week.
- 1.2 The project will allow the Council to maximise use of the library asset and embrace the Think Communities strategy. Local people will have far greater access to their library and the resources it offers, while Council employees will be able to make more use of libraries to meet residents, partners or simply drop in and work, helping embrace agile working.
- 1.3 A project team with officers from the Health and Safety team, Facilities, I.T, Procurement, Transformation and Libraries has been working through the logistics of installations across the library estate, reviewing best practice from a number of neighbouring services (Peterborough, Norfolk, Bedford and advice from South Gloucestershire) and making recommendations for the roll out.

# 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 St Ives Library has been piloting Open Access since 2016. This has allowed the library to open Thursday afternoons and Sundays. We have used the experience from this and visits to Open Access library services in Bedford, Norfolk and Peterborough. This has helped us develop a portfolio of best practice and common mistakes.

## Key Advice:

- Give each library time to engage the community, to ensure buy in, understanding and good take up. Where services launched multiple libraries they could see real discrepancies in use where they hadn't had the capacity to support the local library in advocacy and engagement.
  - Do not underestimate the building costs, every library is different and some may be ok when staffed, but need significant work to provide safety when unstaffed.
  - Consider impact on not investing early. It is better to buy a new door early than have an original door that then fails repeatedly and needs replacing later.
  - Maintain awareness and training, there can be big drop off in use and understanding a year after launch if new customers are not engaged.
  - Have a good risk assessment, to help reassure staff and users. However the reality is there haven't been any changes in serious incidents and anti-social behaviour experienced in these libraries.
- 2.2 Every library building is different and there is a level of complexity around their age, condition, location, partners, size, lease and costs.

We conducted an audit of libraries to assess the work, a summary of which can be found in **Appendix 1**. This was followed by a professional building survey exercise to develop a more detailed cost for the works across a range of library sites.

Multi floor venues create a unique problem, as we would require 2 staff on site to operate fire lifts for an evacuation to maintain DDA compliance or risk customers becoming stranded in the building. We found three libraries in which it was going to be extremely challenging to isolate the ground floor (Huntingdon, Ely and Central library). Therefore we have quoted a revenue cost for ensuring staff presence during Open Access hours. (Detailed in **Appendix 1** and summarised in 4.1).

Where we have open plan and shared spaces with partners it is also difficult to see how Open Access technology can be used on the existing buildings such as Cambourne's shared entrance with the surgery or Bar Hill with its Post Office.

Given the likely costs of these it may not be feasible to install Open Access in every library unless tied in with an increase in the libraries revenue budget.

- 2.3 This does not mean we cannot extend the use of these assets along the ambitions of the project. Huntingdon has been successfully piloting Thursday afternoon unstaffed opening with their partners in Registration Services, providing the required staff to help evacuate the building. Ramsey and Soham libraries have community use days where volunteers and friends groups are able to open the library.

We are currently looking to extend this at Cambourne library on a Wednesday and exploring if our new Cambridgeshire Skills partnership in Ely library can achieve similar increased use on a Monday afternoon.

- 2.4 The recommendation is to roll out the technology and model in five pilot sites (one per district) with a variety of types of library used.

These would be:

St Ives Library – updating the technology and experimenting with the extended hours. This site should be able to get going relatively quickly as no building works are required.

Sawston Community Hub – The new library has been designed with Open Access in mind, so we anticipate few building costs and quicker install. Plus with our Children's team on site during the week it will have an audience using the building to try out the system.

Rock Road Library – This is an older building where we can test the costs and works required. It has a very engaged Friends group who are keen to embrace the technology, as well as existing use out of hours that could be developed.

March Library – A large hub library to test how a bigger space works. Existing partners with Registration and relatively simple building works required.

Soham Library – Already engaged with the previous Neighbourhood Cares project and a focus on our Civic Future Libraries program, this will test hours in a rural setting and how the pilot can interact with existing projects.

The next phase of roll out would involve those without significant additional revenue costs and where the additional capital spend is within the agreed amount originally forecast: Arbury, Buckden, Burwell, Chatteris, Comberton, Cottenham, Great Shelford, Linton, Littleport, Milton Road, Papworth, Ramsey, Sawtry, St Neots, Warboys, Willingham, and Wisbech.

This would be rolled out over 18 months to give libraries time for work to take place and engage customers in each project. The libraries will rotate in geographical location by district and prioritise those with the least work required to help maintain the implementation momentum.

There are libraries that have planned refurbishments or new builds and it is suggested that Open Access occurs alongside this work to minimise costs and closure of libraries for the work:

Histon Library – Winter 2020/21  
Darwin Green (new build) – Summer 2021  
Cherry Hinton Hub –2021  
Whittlesey Refurbishment 2022  
Cambourne expansion of library and health centre (TBC)  
Barnwell Road (TBC)  
Alconbury Library – new library (TBC)  
Northstowe – new library (TBC)

There are libraries where we would need to confirm the commitment to roll out due to the likely impact on the revenue budgets versus a relatively low increase in opening hours:

Cambridge Central Library  
Ely Library  
Huntingdon Library

Finally there are four libraries where some details over partnership, leaseholds and ownership of the land raise queries that need further clarification before the project could be implemented:

Bar Hill Library  
Linton Library  
Yaxley Library

Full resource implications are summarised in 4.1.

N.B Clay Farm centre has not been in the scope of this project due to the wider centre implications and the fact they are providing access already beyond advertised hours using self-service technology and staff supporting the wider centre.

- 2.5 The team worked alongside colleagues from the Health and Safety team to review our own risk assessments as well as those of the services we visited.

All authorities limited access to users who signed up to conditions, were library members and over 16 years old. This helped dramatically minimise risk and the registration with staff allowing them to be shown key fire safety features. This also allows staff to restrict access to customers who may have caused an incident or recently been banned from the service.

No one reported any increased incidence of stock loss compared to years before Open Access technology was introduced.

Many authorities had experienced similar issues discovered in our building survey. Fire exits were ok when staff were available to assist but additional features would be needed in Open Access. Common items include visual fire alarm (flashing lights to attract attention for customers with reduced hearing), magnetic locks to secure fire exits but allow them to open during alarm, removing steps from fire exits and the problem of evacuating multi floor buildings. These findings were fed into the building survey works.

## 2.6 All authorities used CCTV to help monitor libraries during Open Access, but we came across different models:

Recorded monitoring – where incidents can be reviewed after the event to identify culprits. This would form a high risk strategy based on the example of a member of the public alone in the Library feeling ill or collapsing and not being able to raise any alarm.

Reactive monitoring – live monitoring available but only reviewed in the event of an incident (fire alarm, security alarm or other reported incident). This is also high risk as it relies on the person being able to raise an alarm and this is evidenced by the incident at St Ives Library where a member of the public collapsed but was picked up on the periodic monitoring from the Cambridge Central Library as per the agreed protocol.

Hourly review of building – live monitored cameras that are reviewed hourly to spot any customers who may be in distress, fire or similar incidents. This is currently in place at St Ives where a member of staff at the Cambridge Central Library checks the CCTV hourly. Use of existing library staff may no longer be suitable with a much large Library portfolio in open plus and would not allow us to exceed hours outside of those currently operated at Cambridge Central.

Live monitoring – continuously monitored CCTV with a staff member constantly scanning libraries for potential problems. This may be the safest CCTV model, but the revenue expense would be the same as single staffing the library.

It is recommended that we use the corporate security contract to enlist First Reaction to provide a monitoring service. They would be contracted to monitor libraries hourly and are already the first point of contact in the event of alarms outside of current staffed hours in libraries. This provides a cost effective model that can be scaled up as more libraries come on board and not limited by existing library staff working hours or contracts. It allows us to link in with an existing corporate contract which has an existing monitoring protocol in place.

## 2.7 **Proposed Opening Hours**

During the pilots we want to assess a range of hours to see the costs and benefits of stretching Open Access. This sees an ambition to open at 7.00am and close at 8.00pm during the week, 9.00am to 6.00pm Saturday and 10am to 6.00pm Sunday. In order to clear the building and set up the Open Access sessions there would be a 15 minute break between staff closing and Open Access session starting and 15 minutes between Open Access closing and staff setting up.

A full list of proposed opening hours for the pilots can be found in **Appendix 2**.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

#### 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

Open Access can increase staff availability in a localised area by providing Council staff more local venues open more often to meet with members of the community.

It will increase access to existing library provision including health information, free space to meet people, tackle social isolation and improve access to core library offer of books and Public PCs.

#### 3.2 Thriving places for people to live

Open Access will enable organisations and partners to deliver activities to support residents at advertised times. It will allow communities greater access to an existing asset and give more freedom to make use of them to suit local needs.

It will increase access to existing library provision including access to materials to support education, business (British Library IP resources), IT, which all help breakdown social barriers.

#### 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

Open Access will enable organisations and partners to deliver activities to support children and families at advertised times. Open Access will extend the times that families can access their library, this flexibility is likely to drive participation. Touchdown facilities will increase staff accessibility in a localised setting.

#### 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

The building works will see an improvement to the library infrastructure such as PIR light fittings that could see a reduction in electricity use. Improved use of a corporate asset in the community could help reduce the overall corporate footprint if staff can use touch down space and meeting rooms instead of dedicated office space.

### 4. Significant Implications

#### 4.1 Resource Implications

Costs per library broken down in **Appendix 1**, these are based on building survey by Gleeds who visited 13 sites, an estimate of the hardware costs based on the ESPO framework (procurement of our own framework suspended due to Covid-19 and due to be in place by November 2020) a quote from First Reaction security for CCTV monitoring, the existing maintenance contract for the technology at St Ives library and estimated costs of

new furniture required by the library (e.g. more lockable storage to securely shut down the desk).

The original Capital bids for the project total £1,172,000 and did not anticipate a significant revenue implication.

The cost of the five pilots libraries:

£100,000 Capital expenditure and £16,000 Revenue expenditure.

To meet the ambition of all libraries becoming Open Access there would be the following costs:

£875,000 Capital expenditure and £173,500 Revenue expenditure.

However if we remove Huntingdon, Cambridge Central, and Ely from the project due to difficulties and costs it would result in costs as follows:

£795,000 Capital expenditure and £102,400 Revenue expenditure.

In this model, capital costs could be achieved inside the original budget and allow for contingency. These savings have been made by linking with other Council Capital investment projects to re-build libraries.

Revenue expenditure would have to come from the existing library budget.

#### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The project involves three main contractual areas - building works required, CCTV monitoring and provision of the software/hardware solution to manage access.

The building feasibility survey was tendered against the Council's framework for Surveying work and Gleeds were successful and produced a report to arrive at the estimates quoted.

We recommend using the existing Council Contract with First Reaction for CCTV installation and monitoring. This has recently been renewed and would extend for the life of the Open Access framework. The contract has sufficient extra resource and scope built in to cover these projects as it was created with flexibility in mind to accommodate potential different Cambs 2020 sites.

We undertook soft market testing of the technology solutions in 2019, and subsequently waited for the new ESPO framework to call off from. Unfortunately when ESPO released the framework they chose to restrict to only one supplier. It was felt this did not offer the best flexibility or value for the Council so we have subsequently created our own framework which is out for tender and due for response by the end of October (this was suspended in March due to Covid-19 and released in September 2020 to the market). This will be a framework for up to 4 years.

#### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The project increases access to the statutory library service, however due to limitations on who can use these sessions (notably no one under age of 16) it could not be seen as an alternative to staffed provision, but as an enhanced offering.

Alongside our review of risk assessments we have shared feedback with our insurers and the experience of St Ives to ensure all aspects of the service remain covered.

#### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The tender will ensure that the access solution is DDA compliant and we will ensure the registration process allows staff to consider any implications the user presents with. The building work will help make the libraries themselves better able to meet the needs of all residents with improved access to fire escapes, best practice in alarms and CCTV being rolled out across the network.

#### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

At the beginning of the project the details of Open Access were shared with groups such as library friends, community libraries and library staff through our regular engagement events. We plan for a launch event for each library to help draw attention and ensure an opportunity to engage local users. The pilot libraries will allow us to share best practice and allow staff to rotate around and experience Open Access before it comes to their own buildings.

#### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local communication and engagement came up regularly as key to the successful roll out of the technology. We foresee an important role in letting the community know the system is coming. The plan would include local member engagement alongside key stakeholders such as library friends groups and partners in the building to help them harness the opportunities presented by the increased access. Each library will set up a local implementation group that will draw on these resources, which is why we plan to roll out 1 library per district to ensure these can be adequately resourced from library service capacity.

#### 4.7 Public Health Implications

Cambridgeshire Libraries are used by Public Health to deliver health information. Every library provides access to this resource, as well as working with health partners for drop in's, information stalls and similar. Open Access will increase the availability of this resource.

#### **Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes**

Name of Financial Officer: Kerry Newson

#### **Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes**

Name of Officer: Gus deSilva



**Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes**

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

**Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?**

Yes

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

**Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes**

Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

**Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes**

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

**Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health Yes**

Name of Officer: Val Thomas

## 5. Source documents

5.1 None