

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

8 SEPTEMBER 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Arts, Leisure & Culture – Lead Cabinet Member – Cllr Dixon

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE ASSET RECONFIGURATION

1. Summary

Transformational changes have already been made to Library Service provision across Stockton, which have improved the quality of library services to the customer. Stockton Library Service continues to buck the national trend with an increase of 15% in visits and 9% in issues (2009/10 CIPFA statistics). Library Service provision is a central part of the Corporate Asset Review, which presents opportunities to improve the Service overall whilst achieving efficiency savings. Some of the achievable savings are a consequence of technological advances. This paper sets out a policy principle which, if approved, will inform the detailed analysis of library site options within the Asset Review.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet endorse the principle of a differentiated Library Service based on Town Centre Libraries providing a wide range of services, and community libraries offering services targeted to the needs of local communities.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To inform the detailed analysis of library site options within the Asset Review.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or

giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;

- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet endorse the principle of a differentiated Library Service based on Town Centre Libraries providing a wide range of services, and community libraries offering services targeted to the needs of local communities.

DETAIL

1. A comprehensive public library service is a Local Government statutory requirement.
2. Stockton Libraries sit within the Culture and Leisure section of the Development and Neighbourhood Services directorate. It is a strong and highly rated service both locally and nationally. Local people used the Service over a million times last year.
3. The Library and Information Service assets are:
 - 11 Static Libraries
 - Mobile Library Service with 2 vehicles (outlying districts, schools, residential care homes and individuals who are housebound or carers)
 - 1 Neighbourhood Centre Library (Ragworth run by the Community Officers)
 - 2 Prison Libraries (SLA with HMP OLIS contract)
 - 1 Hospital service (using volunteers)
 - 1 Bibliographical Service area (Thorndale Centre)
4. Stockton Libraries are included as part of the Corporate Asset Review of Community Buildings. The core library offer is a book collection which is refreshed and relevant to the community it serves. Thanks to technology, finding out what books and services are available, and gaining access to them is getting easier, and the means by which people get to the items they want are getting more varied and flexible. Many of the Library functions

can now be incorporated into other public service delivery points, and a small but growing number can be delivered remotely via the internet.

5. E-books, and digital audio books are a growing part of the public library service offer, adding to the range of services available on-line. However, the physical stock of books, the free internet access, and the help and expertise of professional librarians, makes it essential that we maintain a network of library sites.
6. Libraries provide a focal point for communities, frequently offering meeting spaces, a rich and diverse range of activities, and confidential consultation areas for sensitive services such as health information work.
7. Stockton Council delivers a range of services through face to face contact. The more often we can combine these services on a single site the better the experience for the customer. Libraries can provide a base for the delivery of other services, or be integrated into other public service facilities. Refurbishment of Thornaby Library included the incorporation of Customer Services on the same site. With very positive effects for both services. At the same time, Library Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) self issue systems were introduced. 100% of the book issues that can go through the system now do so. RFID releases staff to help customers and deliver a wider range of information services. The same technology can be used to automate other transactions. This transformational change at Thornaby has seen an increase of 210% in actual visits and an 82% increase in the number of items issued, with Children and Young people's issues up by over 300%.
8. Using the differentiated service rationale within the Corporate Asset Review, we would design the Town Centre Libraries to accommodate the enhanced range of Library services. As already demonstrated with Thornaby Town Centre Library, these larger sites with enhanced service provision are more economical to run and can be cost effectively opened for longer hours.
9. Town Centre Libraries would be complemented by a combination of smaller Community Libraries, mobile services, and services provided from within other Council buildings delivering other compatible services to the local community. Community based library provision would be differentiated and targeted directly to the service needs of the community in question (identified using our highly sophisticated and detailed Library local area profiles).
10. The principle of a differentiated service would initially be applied in the Asset Review options analysis, but also over time, allowing for the long term development of the hub and spoke model.
11. In effect we would replicate a system which is commonplace in retail and commercial leisure sectors, where main sites are open longer hours and deliver the widest possible range of services, whilst smaller, staffed satellite points provide a targeted subset of the total range of services, designed through intelligent behaviour/needs analysis of the local customer base. This model also allows for the local delivery point to become a conduit for mobile or 'provided to order' goods or services.

NEXT STAGES

11. Develop an action plan for differentiated Library Service Provision within the Community Asset Review and develop a linked consultation strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. Contribute to the overall achievement of EIT savings of the Asset Review, including through identified 'invest to save' funding for building refurbishment and reconfiguration.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. None directly associated with this report

RISK ASSESSMENT

14. The Review of Libraries and Information Services as part of the Community Asset Review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

15. Contributes to the following Sustainable Community Strategy themes:

- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Culture and Leisure
- Children and Young People
- Adult Services
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety
- Stronger Communities
- Our Organisational effectiveness

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16. The Differentiated Service approach will help us design local library provision to meet the needs of specific local communities, whilst maintaining or extending the range of services available through the larger Town Centre sites and the Service as a whole. The assessment of what should be provided on any given site will be informed by the library local area profiles which show what library and information services people have used and what they have asked for over time. Each existing Library building being considered in the Asset Review will be the subject of an options appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment. SBC will then consult on these site by site options.

CORPORATE PARENTING

17. Not Applicable.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

18. A series of Library Service consultations over a period of years have identified the need to respond to the technological changes and changing habits of Library Service use. The Museums Libraries and Archives Council, Public Lending Rights Library, and specialist library design professionals have been involved in these service improvement exercises. Ongoing customer feedback analysis has also informed the recommendation in this report. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Arts, Leisure and Culture has been consulted in relation to the differentiated provision rationale.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

None

Property

None