

## **CABINET MEETING – 13 FEBRUARY 2013**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

Future Library Services

**Author(s):**

Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide an overview of library services in Sunderland and feedback from the recent engagement exercise.

To outline the new Vision for Future Library Services based on the engagement and propose the approach for consultation to inform the future service offer

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Note the information with regard to the current Library service
- (ii) Adopt the proposed new Vision and approach to develop a new and modern future Library service
- (iii) Agree to implement a two stage consultation approach with residents – including children and young people, users and non-users, staff, partners, voluntary and community groups and members to inform the future service design.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?      Yes**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

This approach is being recommended to Cabinet as it allows the council the best chance to consult with significant numbers of stakeholders about the future of Library services. This in turn means we can use valuable insight to specifically inform how the council can increase the use of library services whilst reducing costs.

The council has decided to use evidence of recent trends in usage, survey results, good practice discussions with other local authorities and through initial engagement with staff and residents to form a draft Vision. This provides all stakeholders involved in the consultation a reference point for discussion, debate and ideas generation

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

Use the same consultation process but with no reference point for future services. This approach was dismissed as it was considered this may be too vague and may not stimulate debate or bring focus to discussions.

A one stage approach has also been considered that uses all the evidence of recent trends in usage, survey results, good practice discussions with other local authorities and through initial engagement with staff and residents the council has gathered to date. This option was also dismissed given the limited stakeholder engagement arrangements.

**Impacts analysed:**

Equality ☐ Privacy ☐ Sustainability ☐ Crime and Disorder ☐

As part of the consultation process the council will carry out a full equalities impact assessment.

**Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution?**  
Yes

**Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?**  
Yes

**Scrutiny Committee**

**FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of library services in Sunderland and feedback from the recent engagement exercise.
- 1.2 To outline the new Vision for Future Library Services based on the engagement and propose the approach for consultation to inform the future service offer

**2. Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (i) Note the information with regard to the current Library service
  - (ii) Adopt the proposed new Vision and approach to develop a new and modern future Library service
  - (iii) Agree to implement a two stage consultation approach with residents – including children and young people, users and non-users, staff, partners, voluntary and community groups and members to inform the future service design.

**3.0 Background and Context**

- 3.1 The Library Service is a statutory function of local government. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 states:

“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.”

The library service must:

- Serve both adults and children
- Be available to everyone and meet any special needs required by members of the local community
- Encourage participation and full use of the service

- Provide materials in sufficient number, range and quality to meet general and specific requirements of those in the community
  - Provide value for money, working in partnership with other Authorities and agencies
- 3.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 does not state a minimum number of libraries nor does it have any guidance on geographical distribution or specific levels of access.
- 3.3 Due to recent strides in technology, changes in reading habits and the wide availability of affordable reading materials the number of active users and book lending has been reducing over a number of years both within Sunderland and nationally. The Library service however continues to offer the council and its partners opportunities to use the statutory nature of the service to further support reading, learning and access to information in the future, in particular, targeting resources towards our residents who need the most support.
- 3.4 In response to this declining demand and budget challenges many councils, nationally and regionally are reducing the number of Libraries and/or changing the way Libraries operate. This has manifested itself in a variety of outcomes including Library closures as well as new models of delivery.
- 3.5 Some of these decisions have seen the creation of new organisations to operate Libraries and there have also been a number of challenges to councils, particularly where Libraries have closed and the community has not been appropriately consulted or seen viable alternative provision.
- 3.6 In November 2012 a Commons Select Committee on Library Closures finalised its report having investigated:
- what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - the extent to which planned library closures are compatible with the requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1961 and the Charteris Report
  - the impact library closures have on local communities
  - the effectiveness of the Secretary of State's powers of intervention under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

Key findings included:

- Nationally in 2009 -10 there were 322 million visits to libraries and 309 million book loans. The number of visits exceeded book issues in each of the last seven years.
- Visitor numbers to libraries have fallen in each year between 1993/94 to 2011/12 from 391 million to 318 million. The total number of books issued has decreased steadily from around 650 million a year in the early 1980's to fewer than half this number.

- Many witnesses to the enquiry argued that data on footfall and issues were too crude a measure of the use the public makes of libraries, emphasising the importance of work with specific groups including children and vulnerable adults and highlighting the importance of the free access to the internet and information technology provided by libraries particularly for the unemployed and socially excluded.
- The report notes that 'Local authorities are having to take decisions now about the funding and shape of the library service but a number appear insufficiently aware of the available guidance on the definition of comprehensive and efficient'.

3.7 In April 2009 the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport commissioned a local inquiry into a local authority's compliance with the duties imposed upon it by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The inquiry was asked to consider:

- whether the authority made a reasonable assessment of local needs in respect of library services, and in any event, what were those needs?, and
- on assessment of local needs, did the authority act reasonably in meeting these through their proposals in the context of available resources and their statutory obligations?

The inquiry found the decision to restructure the library service to be in breach of the statutory duties to provide a "comprehensive and efficient service". The primary reason given was that the authority failed to make an assessment of local needs and could therefore not have reasonably met such needs. The inquiry considered that a decision to close some libraries had been made in the absence of a strategic plan for or review of the library service and without a clear understanding of the extent and range of services being provided in libraries. The report noted that without an assessment of needs and a strategic library plan the council had displayed a lack of logic around why some facilities were recommended for closure and not others. Additionally a further key concern was the absence of an adequate plan for and commitment to a comprehensive outreach service, without which the service as a whole would not be compliant.

#### **4.0 Financial Context**

- 4.1 The council has made efficiency savings of approximately £100m over the last 3 years and now faces a similar, further amount in savings to be made over the next 3 years.
- 4.2 The council has achieved the savings whilst maintaining the quality of services, however, recognises that to continue to make the scale of efficiencies required further modernisation and transformation of services will be necessary. Within this period all council services will be reviewed to deliver further efficiencies whilst maintaining the quality of services wherever possible.

- 4.3 Over the past 3 years, like all council services, the libraries revenue budget has reduced, however, the council has continued over an extended period to invest in new and improved provision. Examples include refurbishment of libraries in Houghton, Hetton and Washington in addition to new developments at Ryhope and Silksworth.
- 4.4 The 2012/13 budget for libraries is £4.6m. In 2011/12 the Library Service released efficiencies of £553k and as part of the council's draft budget setting proposals there is a target of a further £850k to be achieved in 2013/14.

## **5.0 The Current Provision**

- 5.1 There are currently 20 static libraries in Sunderland. These are distributed within the following localities:

### **East:**

City Library and Arts Centre  
Hendon Library and Customer Service Centre  
Doxford Park Library and Customer Service Centre  
Ryhope Library and Customer Service Centre

### **West:**

Kayll Road Library  
East Herrington Library  
Silksworth Library and Customer Service Centre  
Sandhill Centre Library and Customer Service Centre

### **North:**

Bunny Hill Library and Customer Service Centre  
Fulwell Library  
Southwick Library  
Monkwearmouth Library

### **Coalfields:**

Easington Lane Library  
Hetton Library and Customer Service Centre  
Houghton Library and Customer Service Centre  
Shiney Row Library and Customer Service Centre  
Fence Houses Library

### **Washington:**

Washington Green Library  
Washington Town Centre Library and Customer Service Centre  
Washington Millennium Centre

Ten of these facilities offer colocated services with partner organisations and were chosen to ensure local accessibility to services. These facilities were developed over the last 7 years and as a result Sunderland now benefits from a spine of library and multi service points across the main conurbations of the city.

5.2 Previously the library service was required to report to DCMS on Public Library Service Standards (this ceased in 2008) on 10 standards relating to access, services and stock. At the time of reporting, the service overachieved the standard relating to all residents being able to access a library service point within a two mile radius.

5.3 The table below details service points open 10 hours or more and includes both static and mobile provision.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>No. of service points</b>	<b>Population per service point</b>
<b>Neighbour Authorities</b>		
Sunderland	21	13,110
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	18	15,506
Gateshead	17	11,782
North Tyneside	15	13,413
South Tyneside	9	16,467
<b>Comparator Authorities</b>		
Sunderland	21	13,110
Plymouth	16	16,038
Bolton	11	25,209
Tameside	14	15,693
St Helens	13	13,492

5.4 The Library Service has five main areas of focus:-

- Transactional Services - eg membership, issues, returns and renewals, reservations along with some customer service functions such as support for customers with processing and verifying documentation.
- Access to Information - working with customers to understand their information needs and respond to this appropriately examples being - enquiries, Local Studies, information advice and guidance.
- Education and Outreach - is one of the core functions of the Library Service and consists of : Digital Services, Adult and Family Learning Development, Children and Young People Learning Development, Reading and Literacy activity and programme and Community Engagement. Collectively these services provide over 200,000 hours of customer contact and services with over 167,000 hours relating to digital and ICT services. This is a strong starting point to build upon for future services as many of these services could be provided at non traditional venues.

- Non Static Services – being the Patient Library Service, Mobile Library Service, Schools Library Service, Books on Wheels – currently delivered in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, LiaZe (Libraries and Information Access Zone). Some of these services offer further opportunities for expansion in the future, particularly for functions such as book reservation, delivery and collection.
- Support Services - consists of all the organisational processes which support the delivery of the other four service offers.

## 5.5 Current Usage and Customer Profile

The table below shows the active membership and visitor counts for all libraries for 2011/2012.

<b>Library</b>	<b>Active Membership 2011/12 *</b>	<b>Visits 2011/12 **</b>
Bunnyhill	1,822	48,698
City Library	16,380	597,259
Doxford Park	867	21,778
East Herrington	657	16,109
Easington Lane	308	9,487
Fence Houses	198	4,300
Fulwell	2,578	54,766
Hendon	762	24,557
Hetton	1,303	38,492
Houghton	3,130	82,368
Kayll Road	1,719	29,019
Monkwearmouth	342	26,355
Ryhope	1,142	31,035
Sandhill	1,116	26,936
Shiney Row	1,458	40,601
Silksworth	838	23,558
Southwick	844	25,389
Washington Green	259	9,515
Washington Millennium	975	37,781
Washington Town	6,391	129,051
Mobile	638	6,474
LIAZe		1,354
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43,727</b>	<b>1,284,882</b>
* Active usage is defined as a customer who has borrowed an item within the past year and is recorded against library of registration. ** Visits counts are based on 4 sample weeks taken across the year and include all visitors accessing library services ***Total loans for 2011/2012 were 1,121,707		



5.6 Current user statistics indicate the number of active users is reducing as is book lending. In relation to customer patterns, the most popular times to visit a library in Sunderland are between 10.00am and 12noon and between 14.00pm and 16.00pm by most age groups. Young people tend to use the library after school, from 16.00-18.00pm. The popular days of the week vary but Mondays are most consistent.

5.7 Based on research into current membership we know that the main users of Libraries by customer type are:

- Older people living on moderate incomes in better social housing estates or in areas of better quality, privately owned terrace housing. Many of these people are/were employed.
- Older people from areas of low quality social housing and limited income, with many residents are unable to afford charges which are typically levied for the use of Libraries.

5.8 Recent research with 989 residents included questions on Libraries and found that:

- 18% of respondents were frequent users and 57% users with 43% of respondents not having used a Library within the last year
- The most frequent users are residents age 75+ (33%), those with a disability and those who are retired (both at 26%), women (23%)
- Non-users are most likely to be men (50%) , residents aged 55 – 64 years (50%) and people without children in the household (48%)
- Resident satisfaction with libraries was 65% and user satisfaction was 73% which is in line with other North East authorities surveyed

## **6.0 Proposed New Vision, Service Model and Approach**

6.1 Based on evidence of recent trends in usage, survey results, good practice, discussions with other local authorities and through initial engagement with staff and residents there are opportunities to increase the overall use of service particularly within communities who would most benefit and to reduce the overall cost of the service. The proposed vision of the new library service is:

*“The Library Service will become a beacon of excellence in the community for reading, learning and information. Library Services will support the development of confident individuals and communities who can realise their full potential and contribute to the broader vision of the city”.*

6.2 Realising this vision will include targeting families and children to enable them to access high quality learning environments through reading material, training and education opportunities. This approach is consistent with the Marmot Report – Fair Society – Healthy Lives (2010) which recommended the following:

- Ensure expenditure on early years development is focused progressively across the social gradient.
- Support families to achieve progressive improvements in early child development, including developing programmes for the transition to school.
- Provide good quality early years education and childcare proportionately across the gradient. This provision should be combined with outreach to increase the take-up by children from disadvantaged families

6.3 This proposed refocusing of resource would mean services would be taken to communities, in particular, those that need the most support to engender reading and learning. Locations such as schools, children's centres, community centres, and other neighbourhood venues that local people have affinity with and that are accessible to them will be used to deliver these services. This approach has the potential to increase the overall number of locations where the Library services are accessible.

6.4 The new service model will also promote access for all to high quality reading materials and learning environments, that will embrace modern technological and e-based service developments and incorporate these within the overall service offer .

6.5 It is consider that this can be achieved by:

- Working with current users, children's services, schools and other partners to target underachieving young people to encourage book lending, supported reading sessions and support to parents to increase confidence to read with children
- Establishing a volunteer base of confident readers to work with parents and children who need the most support
- Focussing on outreach and community based provision
- Providing wide access to reading materials and reading related activity and promotions in a much wider set of community venues
- Maintaining relationships with communities and partners to build and share information resources and to help ensure that those customers who are most in need have prioritised access to services
- Providing opportunities for social engagement and inclusion, particularly in our most deprived communities
- Maintaining a level of qualified librarian support and knowledgeable staff to work more in communities than in static provision
- Tailoring services to meet the needs of both customers and communities
- Investing to save by refurbishing key sites where necessary
- Seeking opportunities to engage with key partners who may consider developing and delivering a service offer

6.6 The service model would provide a reduced number of static libraries or "Library Hubs", some of which would provide a range of colocated services. These "Hubs" would support the community outreach programmes, other local service provision and provide an extended offer over the current arrangements with

- enhanced opening hours to reflect the local communities needs,
- a comprehensive range of reading materials in a variety of formats a
- access to high quality learning environments, support and materials
- Information and advice, customer service and digital services including ICT provision
- access to community space.

6.7 This new operating model will contribute to increased use of Library services across all sectors of the community and as a result a range of positive outcomes including:

- Supporting improvements in literacy levels
- Supporting improvements in digital and information literacy
- Improving social confidence and skills
- Supporting improvements in employability skills
- Encouraging informal/formal learning

## **7.0 Community Consultation and Engagement**

7.1 It is important that the Council is able to get a clear view from a sample of all stakeholders about the types of neighbourhood and overall provision that best suit their needs. In this context, stakeholders refer to library users, non-users, residents, elected members, current library staff, other shared service providers and voluntary and community groups.

The consultation needs to take account of the need to increase the overall access and use of the service, particularly amongst those who would most benefit, and the requirement to reduce costs. It is proposed that areas for consultation include:

- Articulating and refining the overall Vision
- Identifying appropriate locations to increase access to services via a community outreach approach which incorporates activities delivered in non-traditional library settings across the city
- Determining the Library Hubs, overall offer and opening hours
- Making appropriate and adequate provision for those otherwise unable to access services in their community
- Advising on reader development activities for all ages and further learning opportunities and related programme
- Enhancing services to schools, for example to include increased structured class visits and library instruction
- Developing a network of volunteers to add value to the overall service offer

7.2 A full consultation plan has been drafted and will be completed upon Cabinet approval.

### 7.3 The key milestones within the two-stage consultation plan are:

Cabinet Report – 13.2.12

Consultation on Vision, service model and approach – 14.2.12 to 20.3.12

Feedback to Cabinet with outline proposals – 17.04.12

Further Consultation on proposals – 18.04.12 to 16.5.12

Cabinet Report on final proposals and implementation – June 2013

New service operational 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013

Arrangements will be in place to ensure engagement with the Scrutiny Committee at each stage of the consultation.

## 8.0 Reason for the decision

- 8.1 This approach is being recommended to Cabinet as it allows the council the best chance to consult with significant numbers of stakeholders about the future of Library services. The valuable insight gathered will inform how the council can improve access to and increase the use of library services, whilst reducing costs.

The council has decided to use evidence of recent trends in usage, survey results, good practice discussions with other local authorities and through initial engagement with staff and residents to form a draft Vision. This provides all stakeholders involved in the consultation with a reference point for discussion, debate and ideas generation.

## 9.0 Alternative Options

- 9.1 Use the same consultation process but with no reference point for future services. This approach was dismissed as it was considered this may be too vague and may not stimulate debate or bring focus to discussions.
- 9.2 A one stage approach has also been considered that uses all the evidence of recent trends in usage, survey results, good practice discussions with other local authorities and through initial engagement with staff and residents the council has gathered to date. This option was also dismissed given the limited stakeholder engagement arrangements.

## 10.0 Impact Assessments

- 10.1 As part of the consultation process the council will carry out a full equalities impact assessment.

## 11.0 Project management Methodology

- 11.1 The Future Library Service Review is being planned and implemented using the council's standard project methodology

## 12.0 Background Papers

- 12.1 A Local Inquiry into the Public Library Service provided by Wirral MBC, Led by Sue Charteris.