

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 25 MAY 2016

FUTURE PROPOSED CHANGES TO LIBRARY OPENING HOURS

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Localism and Communities and the Head of Service for Communities have been invited to the meeting to discuss the County Council's proposals around the reduction of public opening hours and in turn, the reduction in front line staffing hours.
2. The Libraries and Learning Service has a total of £3.7m savings to deliver from 2012 through to-2018/19. Progress against this target has largely been achieved through innovation and transformation without the need for closing Libraries or having additional day closures. However proposals have been developed based on usage figures to reduce opening hours in some libraries which will contribute approximately £200k towards the Future Fit savings target during this financial year.

Background

3. To date savings have been delivered, primarily through re-negotiating contracts, property remodelling, transforming service delivery, increasing the use of technology and the creation of community led libraries. Staff numbers particularly at Management level have also been reduced.
4. To continue the process of reducing costs the service has identified a number of approaches. These include:
 - a) Increase income generation by generating target income of £65k through a range of initiatives including:
 - increasing hire of library meeting rooms and buildings, particularly to commercial hirers
 - introducing hire/commercial advertising of mobile library
 - raising library fees and charges
 - implementing up-front payments for in library transactions
 - income from Adult Learning fees
 - b) Identify additional co-location opportunities and work with Place Partnership to identify new opportunities to reduce premises costs by sharing library premises with internal and external organisations.
 - c) Introduce un-staffed periods in libraries. This approach will be scoped out during 2016 to test the feasibility of this approach.
 - d) Review and reduce staffing to reflect usage patterns in Libraries.

5. The Libraries and Learning Service are proposing to reduce library opening hours by 76.5hrs in total across the county (excluding The Hive). Libraries performance data indicating daily patterns of library transaction levels and public computer bookings has been analysed and forms the basis of the proposals. Discussions with local library managers have taken place, and using local knowledge of daily patterns of visitor levels and visitor activity the proposals have been reached with the view to minimise disruption to customer service and minimise disruption to co-located services and partners.

6. The total of 76.5hrs includes the re-introduction of a closed day at Stourport Library. Wednesday opening was introduced when the library re-located to the Civic Centre in March 2015, but feedback from the local Library Manager and performance data reveal that activity levels on a Wednesday do not meet those of other week days for the 12 months to end March 2016.

7. The proposals to reduce the opening hours are part of an overall approach to achieve the necessary savings, without the need for Library closures.

Progress

8. The formal staff consultation was launched on 13 April 2016 and was run for 30 days until 13 May 2016.

9. Consultation with key stakeholders, including those partners who are co-located within some of our libraries and our community partners is continuing throughout May 2016.

10. Informal public consultation will take place at individual Libraries during May/early June 2016.

11. We are looking to implement the proposals in July 2016.

Conclusion

12. The Libraries service continues to develop with 14 Libraries that have been replaced with new Libraries or refurbished during the Transformation process. 2015 saw circa 3m users of the service and in many parts of the County the Library is becoming the key community Hub for the area. These proposals have been carefully thought through with the aim of not reducing the service provided and avoiding the need for closures.

13. The details of the proposed reduction of hours for each individual Library is shown below. An analysis of how the hours were arrived at will be available at the meeting.

Library	Proposed reduction in opening hours
Kidderminster	7.00
Hagley	7.00
Evesham	4.50
Broadway	3.00
Pershore	4.00
Malvern	6.00
Upton	6.50
Redditch	4.00
Woodrow	1.00
Droitwich	1.50
Bromsgrove	3.00
Rubery	5.00
Catshill	0.00
Stourport	14.00
Tenbury	2.50
Bewdley	3.50
Wythall	0.00
Alvechurch	2.00
St John's	2.00
Warndon	0.00
total hrs	76.50

Purpose of the Meeting

14. The Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Consider the supporting information and ask questions of the Cabinet Member and Officer;
- Determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny; and
- Agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Localism.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)