

Report of Head of Libraries & Information Services

Report to Chief Officer Culture & Sport

Date: 20th May 2015

Subject: Closure of Methley Library

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Kippax and Methley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

In the context of the Council's budget pressures, this paper details a review of the viability of Methley Library as a continued static library service. It is linked to the Executive Board paper of 15th October 2014 regarding the review of library opening hours.

Following an extensive period of analysis and consultation, including the rejection by the community of an option to relocate the library service into the Methodist Chapel, the paper recommends the closure of the current Methley Library; and the introduction of the Mobile Library Service.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer Culture & Sport is asked to agree the closure of Methley Library and to note that the Head of Library and Information Service will be responsible for implementation.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To outline the outcomes of the consultation regarding the library service in Methley, and to seek agreement to implement the proposed closure of Methley Library and the introduction of the mobile library service.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds Library and Information Service have been asked to make savings, and have looked at a range of options in order to achieve this. A detailed report was presented to Executive Board in October 2014 regarding Library opening hours, which was agreed and implemented in December 2014. Statistical information detailing the use made of Methley Library was looked at as part of this review. The statistics showed that visits and items issued had dropped significantly over the past two years.
- 2.2 Leeds Library and Information Service were approached by members of the Methodist Chapel in December 2013, with a suggestion of moving the current library service into a room in the Chapel. The service would be run by community volunteers, with support from the Library Service.
- 2.3 From December 2013, five community meetings were held in the village, both at the Chapel and at the community centre, to consult with local residents about the proposal and to discuss the viability of the service being run from the Chapel. Ward members were present at some of these meetings. A paper consultation exercise was also undertaken in the library to collect the views of residents who were not at the meetings. The outcome of this consultation was that the community were unable to commit to volunteering to run the service, or to agree on a location, and the option of providing a Mobile Library was suggested.
- 2.4 In response to previous requests a Community Mobile Library was brought to the meeting in November in order for the residents to view the service at first hand. The residents were impressed and, after a majority vote, it was agreed to look at possible locations for a Mobile Library to visit from spring 2015.

3 Main issues

The Mobile Library Service will provide targeted services across a selection of locations around Methley. We provide the vehicle which is relevant to the specific user group: Community Mobile – General vehicle, with stock appropriate for all ages. Older People's Mobile – with library material aimed specifically at older people. All vehicles have public IT provision on board in the form of laptops. The mobile service also offers an At Home service for members of the community who meet the criteria.

- 3.1 Residents have been asked to provide suggestions for locations around the village, and these have been investigated, taking any parking issues / manoeuvrability into account.
- 3.2 The following mobile library stops have been agreed:

Mobile	Location	Times
Community Mobile (weekly)	Savile Road	Wed 16.30 – 18.30
	Lower Mickleton	Fri 9.00 – 11.30
	Nr Commercial Pub	Sun 13.00 – 15.00
Older People (fortnightly)	Emberton Way	Wed 9.00 – 10.00
	Station Road	Sat 15.00 – 16.30

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Consultation with local residents began in December 2013 including community meetings, attended by ward members, and a paper consultation in the library.

4.1.2 Further community meetings were held in March, July, October and November 2014. Following the November meeting ward members were informed of the community's almost unanimous preference for a mobile library service, and confirmed acceptance of this in January.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The findings of the assessment highlighted that although the removal of a static service may affect some users, the use of a Mobile Library service could potentially attract new customers as it will be visiting various locations in the village.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 Implementation of the proposal will contribute to:

Our Best Council objectives and priorities for 2013 to 2017:

- Achieve the savings and efficiencies required to continue to deliver frontline services
- Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council – making the best use of our assets

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The proposed service changes will contribute towards the library service meeting its budget requirements, with a saving of building associated costs of approximately £1,500.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 it is the statutory duty of the local authority, as library authority, to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to people who live, work or study in Leeds. The proposal will ensure that the service continues to meet this statutory obligation whilst achieving the required efficiencies.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Any change to the service is likely to attract some negative attention; however the service has attempted to limit the impact of changes on individuals and amended proposals through the consultation process.
- 4.6.2 As the proposed new service will be delivered by a vehicle, issues may arise due to vehicle breakdown or inclement weather. Leeds Library & Information Service will ensure we communicate as effectively as possible regarding any disruption to the service provided.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Like many services across the Council, the library service has striven to bring forward savings, whilst continuing to meet its' statutory obligations to maintain a comprehensive and efficient library service.
- 5.2 The closure of Methley library and the introduction of the Mobile Library Service to the village will continue to sustain and develop a forward thinking service. We will continue to engage directly with and respond to citizens at a local level.

6 Recommendations

- 7 The Chief Officer Culture & Sport is asked to agree the closure of Methley Library and to note that the Head of Library and Information Service will be responsible for implementation.

8 Background documents¹

- 8.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.