
Report of the Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer

Executive Board

Date: 13th October 2010

Subject: A New Chapter: A fresh direction for Leeds Libraries and for integrated services

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the re

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members will be aware of the need to modernize and improve the effectiveness of a number of front line services, particularly in light of the budget challenges that the Council now faces. The Council needs to make optimal use of its resources to ensure that services continue to keep pace with the changes in society and the needs of our customers. Members will note that the Council provides a wide range of front line services from public buildings, many of which are often close together. The ongoing effectiveness of this approach, including the assumption that where there is a definable need for a service this has to be provided from a building, is an area that the Council needs to consider carefully.

In the context of these broader issues, this report looks closely at Leeds Library and Information Service which is a popular and high performing service. Over the last few years the people of Leeds have changed how they use the service and in 2009/10 out of the 4 million annual visits, 1.5 million were made to just 4 libraries and 2.8 million were made to just 13 libraries out of a total of 53 libraries. The uses people make of libraries and the times they want access are no longer met by the large number of small libraries with opening hours of less than 18 hours. Maintaining these libraries means that valuable resources go into stocking them with materials and computers and repairing and managing the buildings. As a result over £1m worth of books is locked away for most of the week. That resource needs setting free. Changes in society, the knowledge economy and the electronic revolution have come together to enable Leeds to write a New Chapter for the Library Service, a new chapter that reflects the change in use.

New Chapter highlights the need to consider the viability of the small libraries which are poorly used and proposes replacing these by extending and improving provision in the popular, large libraries that are well located near shops in district and town centres, many opening 50 – 60 hours a week. It will also seek the views of the public on whether these libraries could, in certain instances, be consolidated with other existing local services, such as day centres, community centres and one stop centres as achieved in Garforth.

People living locally to the small libraries are clearly using the service just not from their local buildings and therefore New Chapter also proposes introducing new, state of the art services, targeted at customer need, and which can go to where that need is - deep into communities. There will be specialist children and family mobile libraries, community mobile libraries and direct delivery to support independent living for older people and those unable to leave their homes easily.

This proposal would add 41.5 new hours of library provision a week and 106,899 bookable computer sessions a year.

It is proposed to consult with local people until December 2010 asking their views on the proposals. The results of the consultation combined with the impact of the comprehensive spending review will be brought back to a future Executive Board.

1 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To make Members of Executive Board aware of the challenges faced in the delivery of the Leeds Library and Information Service, and, taking into account the delivery of other front line services, to put forward new approaches for consultation which reflect the demands of local people to introduce new services and increase access to stock and information. The aim is to create a library service which will enable local people to meet the demands of the knowledge society in the 21st century. The report seeks Executive Board approval to consult on a series of draft proposals to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the Library service for the people of Leeds.
- 1.2 The detail of the proposals can be found in the accompanying document A New Chapter for Leeds Library and Information Service, a copy of which is also located Appendix 1.

2 The Council's Front Line Public Services

- 2.1 Many of the Council's public facing services have an on-street presence including day centres, community centres, leisure facilities, one-stop facilities and libraries. These services often represent the face of the Council in local areas.
- 2.2 However, sometimes the premises that services are delivered from are not in good condition and can at times be poorly located. To address this issue the Council has, for a number of years, been rationalising its portfolio and where possible consolidating its services. This can be into better located premises, often at the heart of district centres or, through innovative service provision such as a state of the art mobile services or online access allowing communities to engage with services from their own doorsteps. Examples include the new extension to Garforth Library to include the One Stop Service, targeted mobiles delivering services to older people and young children and their families, eBooks and the new Compton Centre based in the redeveloped library. Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, it is clear that the Council needs to do more. It needs to continue to modernise its services so that they remain relevant to our customers and also to ensure that front line services maintain their effectiveness

whilst also responding to the budget challenges faced. Leeds Library and Information Service is one area of the Council that faces these challenges.

3 Leeds Library and Information Service today

- 3.1 Leeds Library and Information Service has improved considerably over the last few years and is now one of the most respected services in the country.
- 3.2 There has been major investment of £10.5m in the infrastructure with new libraries being provided for communities in Otley, Rothwell, Dewsbury Road, Ardsley and Tingley, Holt Park, and Middleton. Libraries have been refurbished at Armley, Morley, Calverley, Chapel Allerton, Crossgates, Headingley, Moor Allerton and Wetherby, while Horsforth and Beeston have moved into new premises. Garforth Library has been refurbished and extended with Big Lottery money and has recently opened, sharing the new space with One Stop Services. Compton Road Library has also just reopened following extension and refit as part of a LIFT scheme and Chapeltown and will reopen shortly.
- 3.3 The service has been innovative in its adoption of modern technology offering an electronic reference library available at home, work and in the library, 24/7 access to a wide range of services and is currently rolling out self-service systems (RFID). The public IT has enabled many people to go online who otherwise could not and stay in contact with their families and find information. This is particularly important for older people not 'born digital' and refugees.

4 How the people of Leeds are using libraries

- 4.1 Leeds has 53 library buildings which, in 2009/10, received 4 million visits. Of these visits, 1.5 million were made to just 4 libraries and 2.8 million were made to just 13 libraries.
- 4.2 20 libraries out of the 53 are open 18 hours or less and use of most of these 'small' libraries has reduced significantly. In 2009- 2010 there was a;
 - 4.3% reduction in the use of libraries open 8-15 hours
 - 5.3% reduction in the use of libraries open 17 – 18 hours
- 4.3 Some libraries have seen declines over 50% in some of the borrowing year on year.

5 Issues with the service for the people of Leeds

5.1 £1m worth of stock is not available to borrow

- 5.1.1 Currently the library stock holding of the City is worth £5m¹ To make a small library workable it has to have proportionately more books and Audio visual material (AV) per person than the larger ones. Over £1m worth of this stock is locked away much of each week as are £128,000² worth of computers due to being located in libraries poorly used and open few hours.

¹ Calculated on the average price of a book at £9 to take into consideration wear and tear

² Not including line costs, etc.

5.1.2 Leeds has one of the smallest book and AV holdings in libraries in England but it has been praised on quality grounds by external inspectors. However, the service is not able to maximise the impact of the book fund, as more copies of the same title have to be purchased due to the large number of venues.

5.2 High spend on the property portfolio

5.2.1 Leeds has significantly more library buildings than any other core city. This property portfolio needs constant maintenance resulting in high property related spend. The service has done much to restore, refurbish and replace buildings but the remaining portfolio requires at least £3.5m investment. Some are in particularly poor condition but will be costly to replace. These include Burley, Swillington, Richmond Hill, Lofthouse, Scholes, Methley and Shadwell. Others are subject to repeated vandalism such as Belle Isle and Swinnow. This investment is out of proportion with potential usage. The premise costs of the small libraries are overspending by £21,000p.a. the available premises budget.

£90,000 is spent each year on security and the level of abuse against staff is increasing.

5.3 Staffing costs

Leeds has more libraries (53 to the average 30) than other core cities which stretches the staffing levels. While use of the 'small' libraries by local people doesn't warrant double staffing, all venues should have two staff on duty to ensure their safety. This would require an additional £140k approximately which adds disproportionately to the operating costs and reduces the value for money for Leeds people further. There is also a presumption that the Service will have an 8% staff turnover per year. In fact it is nearer 3%. Without the proposed change further revenue investment is required or there will be continued service reduction.

5.4 Lack of personalisation

The current service is a generic service for everyone and there is limited tailoring to need and yet Leeds is a city of diverse need.

5.5 Alternative methods of provision

5.5.1 Opening hours, lack of accessibility to the library in joint premises and cost of staffing is often cited as a reason why smaller libraries are not used. The Service entered into partnerships to experiment in two libraries in an attempt to test this. Armley Heights and Osmondthorpe Libraries are both run for the Library Service by other agencies. Their hours were extended to 41.75 hours a week and 36.5 hours respectively. They were refurbished, locations improved and staffing provided by the partner. However the steep decline has continued leading to our two most expensive libraries per visit.

5.5.2 The additional issue of these two experiments is that they now distort performance of libraries in the 20 – 34 hour a week grouping and the 40 – 45 hour a week grouping as their performance is so poor.

5.6 Summary of the current position

5.6.1 The service is currently out of balance. Its costs, issuing and visiting patterns are out of alignment with the number of libraries and the hours they are open. This is detailed in Appendix 1.

5.6.2 To maintain the current service:

- £3.5m minimum is required to replace, restore or refurbish the remaining libraries.
- £785,943 revenue increase is required to double staff all sites, manage the impact of equal pay and to manage out income challenges due to customers now returning their books by due date and no longer incurring fines to previous levels.
- The comprehensive spending review will also have implications for the service but the extent of this is not yet known

5.6.3 The public is clearly making choices. The majority of visits are to the better quality, larger, well-located libraries which are open for longer hours. There therefore needs to be a new vision for the future of the library service.

6 A New Chapter for Libraries

6.1 What people say they want

The ambition for strong and relevant library provision can be achieved through a very different service. The library service consults annually with users across the service.³ The public has said they want a service tailored to their individual needs which responds quickly to changing circumstances. They want easy access to knowledge, in print and online, so people can make more informed decisions. They want a wider selection of books in more formats, e.g. e-books, they want longer opening hours, greater access to IT and they don't want to pay to reserve a book that is in a library in another part of the city. A New Chapter for Leeds Libraries sets out proposals for substantially improving and tailoring the library service to meet the 21st century needs of communities.

6.2 Key Principles for the service of the future

A series of principles have been identified for the new approach to maximise usage and make the service even more relevant to the people of Leeds. These are:

- Libraries in places people regularly go, e.g., Town and District Centres.
- Libraries which are well maintained and welcome the user
- Libraries which are busy places with lots going on including learning sessions, groups to join, people to meet
- Expert welcoming staff who help customers with their access to knowledge
- High quality provision tailored to need
- Cost effective libraries offering excellent value for money
- A service which exploits the technology e.g. making reference material electronically available at home, to join up with services across the world to

³ The national PLUS survey is carried out in libraries each year, one year will cover adults, one children and one electronic users.

provide a 24-hour staffed enquiry service, to provide a low cost downloadable fiction loan service.

- Libraries which reflect the needs of users today and in the future and which are continually tailored or personalized to that need. Opportunities to deliver other services and join other services where more appropriate will be constantly reviewed.

6.3 Proposals

6.3.1 It is proposed to locate library buildings in the busiest centres where people regularly go. These libraries will contain a wide range of books which the reader is free to return to any library; fast, internet access pcs with learning support; well trained friendly staff and a wide range of events and information to help with life's challenges. This service could be delivered as part of a consolidation of Council services in a community subject to local circumstances such as the excellent joint provision at Garforth Library. There will be two types of service delivered from buildings:

- Library Extra – large venues with the full range of services and staff. 15 open 60 hours per week and 7 open 50 hours a week
- Library Express – smaller venues in key communities, with smaller focused collections and support for learning and information. 8 open 30 hours a week and 3 open 21 hours a week..

6.3.2 It is also proposed to provide Libraries Direct a state of the art mobile library tailored to each community it visits. It is proposed to offer three types of service: Children's and family mobile; Independent living – either the libraries at home service or the older people's mobile visiting sheltered accommodation and Community mobiles. To help people take full advantage of the wider range provision, the length of the visit to each location will be up to 3 hours There will be an adaptable space containing;

- Books and other materials for all ages
- Space, for impromptu storytime, a learning session or just to sit and chat
- Internet ready pcs with access to Council services and Office systems
- Access to the library catalogue to reserve items for free delivery next visit or to have delivered to home for a small cost
- Help to find information
- The potential is being explored for partners to deliver services through the mobile as well such as Adult Social Care information, benefits and other Council and Partner services etc.

7 Achieving New Chapter for Libraries

7.1.1 A sustainable future can be created which responds to the growing demands of local people and reflects the growing importance of access to information and social networking. By looking at libraries geographically close to each other, with relatively good connectivity and analysing the current user base proposals for the future service are made. In all the proposals those who have severe mobility difficulties or are

housebound will be offered the Library at Home service. The proposals are contained in detail in the Report Appendix 1 and include consultation on a number of issues.

7.2 To consult on the viability of the following libraries.

7.2.1 The use of the libraries listed in Table 1 has dropped significantly over the last 10 years and the costs have increased. Many people living locally to these libraries have transferred their use to libraries which are open longer and which offer a wide range of services.

Library	Hrs	Library	Hrs	Library	Hrs	Library	Hrs
Allerton Bywater	10	Armley Heights	40.25	Belle Isle	22	Broad Lane	18
Cow Close	17	Drighlington	15	Holbeck	17	Ireland Wood	10
Kirkstall	18	Lofthouse	8	Methley	12	Osmondthorpe	36.5
Rawdon	25	Richmond Hill	17	Scholes	15	Shadwell	15
Swarcliffe	12	Swillington	15	Swinnow	10	Whinmoor	17

Table 1 Libraries for consultation on future viability

7.2.2 It is therefore proposed to consult on the viability of the buildings listed above and to consider the existing position against the following options

- replacing the service by extending the opening hours of popular libraries and introducing Libraries Direct
or,
- where circumstances exist and costs are not prohibitive, the potential for more consolidated on-street services with other Council or partner provision.

7.3 To consult on extending the opening hours of major libraries and introducing Libraries Direct

7.3.1 The service offered from the libraries above could be replaced by extending services in the remaining library buildings. This would add a total of 214 hours a week to these libraries. Table 2 below demonstrates how these hours could be distributed.

7.3.2 The introduction of Libraries Direct, a new state of the art mobile service tailored to need would then enable the service to go deep into communities to support those who find it difficult to visit a library building. Appendix 1 outlines the wide range of stops across the city that this service could make. Local people will also be asked for alternative suggestions to these proposals. This would add 178.5 hours library service a week.

Library	Current hours open	Proposed hours	Difference
Ardsley	17	21	4
Armley	53	60	7
Beeston	45	50	5
Boston Spa	21	21	0
Bramley	41	60	19
Burley	20	30	10
Calverley	27.5	30	2.5
Central Library	60	60	0
Chapel Allerton	41	50	9
Chapelton	15	30	15
Compton Road	50	60	10
Crossgates	52	60	8
Dewsbury Road	26	30	4
Farsley	28	30	2
Garforth	43.5	60	16.5
Gildersome	17	21	4
Guiseley	41	50	9
Halton	44.5	50	5.5
Headingley	60	60	0
Holt Park	52	60	8
Horsforth	52	60	8
Hunslet	23.5	30	2
Kippax	28	30	2
Middleton	31	31	0
Moor Allerton	60	60	0
Morley	52	60	8
Oakwood	41	50	9
Otley	60	60	0
Pudsey	52	60	8
Rothwell	52	60	8
Seacroft	41	50	9
Wetherby	52	60	8
Yeadon	41	50	9

Table 2 Proposals for extending the opening hours of remaining libraries

7.3.3 Outcomes of these proposals

Subject to the outcome of the consultation these proposals could lead to :

- 106,899 hours of bookable computer sessions being added per year
- 97.5% of stock being available at any time
- 95.5% of existing visitors – i.e. those who are currently using the major libraries - would receive a better service at these existing facilities, as they would be open longer, with a broader base of stock and more PC's.
- 4.5% of existing users – i.e. those who use the libraries, where viability needs to be reviewed, are likely to receive a better service through replacement provision

7.4 To consult local people on service consolidation

7.4.1 Local people will be asked if there are current, local services they would wish to see consolidated. If library services remain in buildings in the community the benefits identified in 7.3.3 would change.

8 Implementing the Change

The aim of this review is to ensure a sustainable service for the future. The rationalisation of services currently provided would enable staff and resources to be freed up and redirected to other libraries to enable extension to opening hours, improvements to stock and the implementation of new tailored services.

9 Public Consultation

9.1 While these proposals are in response to changing use, it is important to consult local people. For many there will be a vast service improvement, for a small number there will be a negative impact. These views need to be carefully considered and should contribute to the final proposal. It is proposed that public consultation is undertaken after the 'call –in' process is complete and it will continue until December 2010. Local people will be at the centre of the consultation and will be asked to comment on the proposed opening hours for the libraries in the area, the proposed location for mobile library stops, the viability of the libraries which are currently underused and whether some libraries should have cafes. Details of the consultation can be found in the report in Appendix 1.

10 Legal and Resource Issues

10.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for those who live, work and are being educated in the city. These proposals ensure Leeds City Council meets its obligations by providing a better, more targeted service. Staff will be realigned across the remaining service unless they are unwilling to move.

10.2 The report at Appendix 1 sets out draft proposals for the future provision of public library services in Leeds and highlights a need for a step change in the type of provision, to respond to public need, to address increasing operational costs and longer term capital and maintenance costs. The proposals take into consideration the government's latest review of libraries.

10.3 Any staff and operational savings from New Chapter that may be realised will only become known once the outcome of the public consultation exercise is completed and final proposals brought forward for Executive Board to consider. However, based on

the draft proposals outlined they could be up to £700K in a full year, and this will be used to pay for anticipated costs of staff leaving under the Early Leavers and Severance Initiatives, and to reduce income budgets where targets do not reflect current income trends, principally as a result of the changing way the Service is now delivered.

- 10.4 The Comprehensive Spending Review will be announced during the consultation and the impact of this will be taken into consideration in building the final budget. This will be included in the report to Executive Board early in 2011.
- 10.5 Subject to the consultation process, should any council owned library buildings be seen as no longer viable, they will be declared surplus to the needs of the Library Service and be entered into the council's surplus property process. Library buildings not in the ownership of LCC will have their lease agreements terminated.

11 Diversity and Equality Issues - Equality Impact Assessment for New Chapter

11.1.1 These proposals have been drawn up utilising a wide range of management information such as service provision and costs, user take-up, demand and satisfaction levels. Information used includes:

- TALIS library catalogue/ user information
- PLUS user survey results
- Number and geographical location of libraries
- Identification of libraries in areas rated high for Indices of Deprivation
- Analysis of catchment area for each library
- Number of active borrowers
- User profiles for each library compared to community profile e.g. age, ethnicity, disability, employment status
- Specific needs of existing users e.g. language, disability, unemployment, children
- Detailed analysis for each library based on ethnicity, world language book issues, disability, unemployment, retirement, population aged 0 – 15 and aged 65 and over
- Operational costs of building, staffing and additional resource costs e.g. IT
- Costs against use e.g. overall cost per visit/issue and staff cost per visit/ issue
- Opening Hours
- Stock and other resource e.g. IT availability
- Usage comparisons based on visits and issues per hour open
- Core City Comparisons

11.1.2 The analysis of this information has informed a strategic level impact assessment. The analysis has identified which libraries are servicing customers best. However it has also shown that whilst a number of libraries are under-used closing them could be detrimental to the affected communities. It is this analysis which has informed proposals for the development of the Children's and Family Library Service, Libraries at home, Community Library and the new services such as e – books, to ensure that a service at least comparable to the existing one is provided through New Chapter.

11.1.3 There are a small number of libraries which are not performing at a high level but whose surroundings suffer from higher levels of deprivation and lower levels of learning. These libraries contribute much to the cohesion of the community and there are strong arguments for retaining a library building in these communities. These are Dewsbury Road, Middleton, Chapeltown, Hunslet and Ardsley and Tingley Libraries.

12 Recommendation

12.1 Members of Executive Board are asked to consider the operational challenges of the Libraries and Information Service outlined and to approve:

- a public consultation exercise on the detailed proposals outlined in Appendix 1.
- a further report being brought forward early in 2011 outlining the outcome of the consultation process and, in the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review, final proposals Executive Board to consider.

13 Bibliography

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