

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 15 October 2014

Subject: Review of Library Opening Hours

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): ALL WARDS	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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

1. In the context of the Council's budget pressures this paper details a review of library opening hours in order to ensure the best services are delivered in the most efficient manner to meet our customers' needs. The budget strategy approved by full council in February agreed a savings target to be achieved by a reduction in the opening hours of libraries.
2. Following a period of analysis and consultation, the paper recommends specific reductions in hours for libraries in Leeds in order to minimise the impact on our customers and focus our resources on periods of high demand. The proposals therefore contribute to our Best Council Outcome - *achieve the savings and efficiencies required to continue to deliver frontline services*. The library service has considered these significant budgetary savings whilst mindful of the statutory responsibility to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service, as defined by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
3. The consultation with communities has also allowed us to build new partnerships or develop current partnerships at a local level to help ensure a sustainable and innovative service is provided, which is also responsive to changing local circumstances.
4. Members will note that there is a separate report on this agenda regarding the future roll out of community hubs. Over the medium to longer term these proposals will help to make full use of all Council resources to help mitigate the need for future service reductions. Through work undertaken to date it is proposed that there are no reductions in opening hours at the 3 current pathfinder Hubs (Armley, Compton Road and Middleton). Furthermore, by utilising Customer Services' staff who are already in the

Reginald Centre, a basic library service can be provided for an extended period beyond the current library opening hours. Following the reduction in the total number of libraries in Leeds through implementation of the 'New Chapter' programme in 2011, there is little capacity to make these savings through a complete closure of specific sites without a potentially disproportionate effect on some communities.

5. The proposal to reduce opening hours across the city, rather than close entire libraries, allows the service to target those periods when customer demand is at its lowest. At each individual library the peaks and troughs of usage can be quite different therefore both in-depth analysis and very local consultation has been crucial in developing these final recommendations. The specific proposals therefore are clearly driven by analysing customer demand at each library.
6. In order to determine which hours to remove, the service systematically analysed usage at each library for each hour of opening (as every book loaned or computer used is logged). The resultant proposals for reduction in hours were then tested by a range of stakeholders including Elected Members, staff and customers themselves. The Library Service received over 7200 responses to the proposals from the public. This aspect of the consultation in particular allowed the service to consider times when libraries were being used for activities such as reading groups or other community uses. This paper provides information on the analysis, the feedback to the consultation, and recommends the final proposals to achieve the savings.
7. Alternatives to achieving the required efficiency savings are likely to have a greater impact on the community, for example through further library closures, cessation of services such as mobile libraries or not buying new books. Some of these issues are currently being experienced by other library services in the Yorkshire region

Recommendations

8. Executive Board is asked to agree the changes to library opening hours identified in Appendix 1 with effect from Monday 1st December 2014 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 on the review of library opening hours and to seek agreement to implement the resulting proposed hours and deliver required savings.

2 Background information

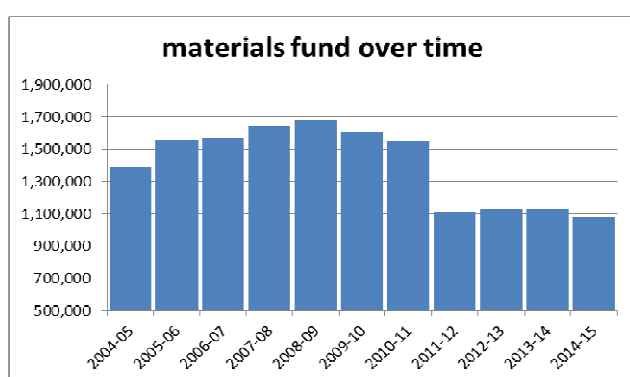
- 2.1 The Library and Information Service provides 36 libraries across the city, including a major Central Library, as well as 6 mobile libraries, Library at Home service, a service for 3 prisons, and a school library service. The principle purpose is to provide access to information, knowledge and varied reading choices through books, online resources and well informed staff.
- 2.2 Libraries respond to the needs of local people regardless of background, giving them the opportunity to live fuller lives, make more of what they have, discover new worlds, support them through life changing experiences and help people to aspire to greater things. Libraries are neutral venues providing a free, open and welcoming space offering creative learning and reading opportunities through a huge range of information resources, knowledge and technology, and are well linked to other services. Many local people believe passionately in the value of their local library which, in many cases, has served generations.
- 2.3 Alongside the network of 36 libraries, the mobile library and at home services provide an important role within the city, linking those less able to travel, for whatever reason, to books, learning, IT and wider council information. Taking the Library Service out to schools, nurseries, older people's homes, local fairs and fetes, to encourage library use and provide support for educational attainment, tackling loneliness, learning to read, feeding the imagination or applying for a job.
- 2.4 The Service's budget predominantly comprises fixed premises costs, staffing to operate the venues, and library materials, e.g. books and online resources. Discretionary budgets are minimal and predominantly externally funded. Consequently any efficiency against these budgets are to be found from increased income, staff savings or reductions in opening hours and/or service points.
- 2.5 The Service has already delivered significant resource reductions over the past four years. The New Chapter Review of library services and restructure in 2010 delivered savings of over £625,000, including the closure of 14 libraries, the transfer of 3 libraries to community management and a reduction of £238,000 from staffing budgets.
- 2.6 Notwithstanding these savings, against a background of further reductions in public spending, the service has had to look at how things could be done differently providing an even more efficient service to our customers. This report responds to the inclusion of a review of library opening hours within Council budget reports for 2014/15¹, with an agreed saving target of £250-300k.

¹ Council, Agenda and Minutes 26th February 2014.

3 Main issues

3.1 Working with the Executive Member for Digital & Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills the Library service has been considering a wide range of options to manage the long-term sustainability of the service, these include library opening hours; the materials budget for buying new publications for loan in libraries; the overall library staffing structure; and opportunities for closer working with other services, including Customer Services and integrated facilities at the pathfinder Community Hubs (where three sites are moving forwards). The service is progressing with proposals for a restructure which is aimed at both service improvements and savings.

3.2 In addition, for 2014/15, the materials budget has seen a £50k reduction, which from its height in 2008/09 has seen an overall reduction of 36%. Each of these contribute to the overall annual savings target for the service, but cannot achieve the necessary savings in isolation.



3.3 Very initial thoughts on opening hours were that libraries open on a Sunday were quiet and that the removal of Sunday opening across the board could have a limited impact on customers. However, detailed analysis of the statistics for book borrowing and computer use has quickly shown that for a number of libraries the quietest hours are often during evening opening. This statistical analysis has been used for the basis of the proposals which have been tested through consultation.

3.4 This paper presents a summary of the consultation responses and final recommendations for opening hours, which, if implemented, would contribute approximately £300k to the required annual savings of both the service and the Council whilst minimising the impact on existing customers.

3.5 Current Position

3.5.1 Following the New Chapter review, agreed at Executive Board 18th May 2011, 14 libraries were closed, 3 moved into community management, and the remaining 36 libraries saw an extension to overall opening hours.

3.5.2 The remaining 36 libraries then had weekly opening hours ranging from 12 to 60 hours per week based on a range of factors. Under these proposals 17 libraries will remain open for more than 40 hours per week.

3.5.3 Broadly speaking the opening hours extended through New Chapter brought a unity of offer for a tier of libraries offering similar facilities – e.g. all large libraries were to be open 60 hours per week. However, continued pressure on service

budgets dictates that resources be placed where they are most needed, and library customers' existing use clearly indicates that some of the service's resources are being expended at times when there is actually very limited demand. See Appendix 2 for current opening hours.

3.6 Analysis and consultation on customer impact

- 3.6.1 Statistical information has been collected detailing the usage of each branch in terms of books borrowed, computer use, IT sessions delivered. An example (for Cross Gates library) is included in Appendix 3 in order to show how this data is collected.
- 3.6.2 Every book issued or computer used creates a timestamp for that use, so if a customer is served borrowing or returning a book or uses a public internet computer the time of that interaction is recorded. A site by site analysis has enabled the service to identify for each site when its quietest hours are, and the impact of any proposed reduction in opening hours can be clearly linked to its potential impact on that library's customers. However, further analysis is also possible and the use of each library can be cross referenced against all others.
- 3.6.3 Significantly, through this analysis it is not only possible to see how many customers have used a library at a time which is potentially affected by the changes, but also to see if those individual customers have also used a library at another time when no change is planned.
- 3.6.4 For the proposals presented at the initial consultation with staff and ward members this analysis indicated that 97.7% of existing borrowers have already shown an ability to use the facilities/hours which will be unaffected by the proposals. Following amendments to the proposals in light of consultation feedback this figure has risen to 98.7%.
- 3.6.5 The service had previously briefly analysed other scenarios to meet the savings target including closing the quietest 13 libraries or closing most libraries on Sunday and Wednesday. The customer impact of these options was significantly higher.
- 3.6.6 Despite the high level of statistical information available the service recognised that not every interaction with the library service is recorded, and some customers could feel that their use of the library had not been considered and it was noted that alterations to the service should not take place without detailed consultation with service users and stakeholders.
- 3.6.7 The statistical analysis, combined with an Area Team overview, resulted in an initial suggestion for alternative opening hours which was used as a baseline for consultation with staff and ward councillors. The consultations took the following format:

Consultee	Format
Ward Councillors	Where possible ward member meetings were held to discuss the base line proposal prior to public consultation. Additional information distributed and further meetings offered. Ideas and suggestions taken on the more anecdotal use of the

	libraries and work in the area that does not create an electronic footprint. (A review of mobile library stops is also taking place. Where possible this review was discussed and all comments raised will inform the review).
Staff	Details of initial suggestions, discussions with union representatives, provision of e-mail address for Q&A, provision of FAQ responses. Ideas and suggestions taken on the more anecdotal use of the libraries that does not create an electronic footprint.

3.6.8 This initial consultation in turn resulted in the creation of two options for each library for further consultation with elected members, the public and other stakeholders. People were asked to submit their preference for either option A or B. See Appendix 2 for options A and B. There was also an opportunity to provide any additional comments. This consultation took place over a six week period in the following format:

Consultee	Format
Public	Information on Options provided in public libraries and online, with freepost address available for submissions. Also included on Talking Point.
MPs	Meetings offered and information distributed by e-mail.
Petitions	Accepted where submitted.
Equality Hubs	Information distributed to equality hubs and members, by letter or e-mail, and linking to online information, seeking both an organisational and individual response. Discussion held with Assistant Chief Executive, Citizens and Communities.
Other stakeholders	Partners using or promoting the library service, e.g. trade associations, schools, meeting room hirers, Job Centre, Customer Services, parish council, CAB, have been contacted about the relevant library to obtain their views.

3.6.9 The range and breadth of this consultation resulted in the following responses:

Consultee	Results
Staff	311 queries and suggestions
Union representation	Initial meeting held with all relevant Trade Union representatives. Information made available electronically.

Ward Councillors	Individual meetings arranged where possible (63 ward members briefed face to face). Contact made by e-mail to others
MPs	The MP for Leeds West expressed support for the retention of all the current opening hours in Bramley and Armley libraries. Two public meetings were held which were attended by the Executive Member, Ward Members and officers. Briefings with the MP for Pudsey and 2 queries from the Leeds North West MP were answered.
Petitions	1 petition was received
Public comments forms	7219 see Appendix 1 for breakdown
Equality Hubs	1 e-mail response was received

- 3.6.10 The consultation has been a valuable opportunity to talk to local people about what they need from the library service today with more than 7,200 members of the public positively engaging in the process. Any additional comments, in addition to opening hours, will be collated and actioned where possible.
- 3.6.11 Meetings have also highlighted ways that the Library Service can better communicate with local Councillors, residents and partners on a more regular basis. Plans will be developed to share news and garner information, to enable better service provision at a local level. The meetings with ward members have been both constructive and very informative and the service has noted a need to engage with ward members on a more regular basis, to help facilitate this the Library Service will offer ward member briefings on an annual basis to coincide with the production of an Annual Report based on the previous year's activities. More local quarterly reports will be produced and taken to the relevant Community Committee meetings. Partnership working will clearly be a critical factor in strengthening the future sustainability of locality based library services.
- 3.6.12 Three of these sites, Armley, Compton Road and Middleton libraries, are currently operating as Community Hub pathfinders as part of the Citizens @ Leeds initiative to bring local services together for the people of Leeds.
- 3.6.13 Separate consultation has been carried out with the Community Hub managers and their input informed the opening hour options presented to the public during consultation. Subsequent discussions around the potential benefits of co-location have resulted in no major changes to the hours in the Hubs.
- 3.6.14 As part of the consultation process, 4.46% of respondents across all libraries indicated that they had a preference for neither of the options presented which suggests that they felt there should be no reduction to library opening hours. Notwithstanding this minority view, it is evident that when asked to consider reductions in opening hours more than 95% of respondents stated their preference. This valuable input has helped to inform the changes proposed so

that they have been a major determining factor in helping to shape the proposals outlined in the report.

- 3.6.15 The wide-ranging response has allowed the service to fully consider its original proposals and the resultant amended proposals in Appendix 1 reflect the findings of the consultation exercises at a very local level; for example, where there was concern at the lack of local access to a library in the evening for people working 9-5 the Service has sought to accommodate this through the provision of at least one late opening evening to supplement the weekend opening. In addition, consideration has been given to the geographical spread of evening opening hours.
- 3.6.16 The overall impact of implementing these proposals would be a reduction of library opening hours of 199, (or 13%) spread across 33 libraries. However, the analysis outlined in 3.6.4 suggests that the proportion of current customers who only use the library during the proposed closed period is less than 2%.
- 3.6.17 Following the analysis and consultation a summary of the proposed changes is below. Detailed times for each library, including where additional local community use is planned are presented in Appendix 1.

Site	Current hours	Proposed hours	Reduction	Main change
Ardley & Tingley	21	19	2	Closing for lunch times
Armley	55	55	0	No change (pathfinder)
Beeston	50	42	8	Close at 5pm Mon to Thu
Boston Spa	21	16	5	Close Mon pm
Bramley	50	50 (42)	0 (8)	Earlier mornings, reduced evenings. Thursday remains open initially to allow for the development of a 'Schools and Community day' to be phased in from January 2015
Burley	21	16	5	Close Weds am
Calverley	30	21	9	Close Tue pm, close Thu am, add Fri am, close earlier Sat and Sun
Central	60	58	2	Close earlier Mon to Weds eve
Chapel Allerton	45	42	3	Close Mon eve
Chapelton	30	24	6	Dedicated library staffing will reduce but an additional 20 hours of self- service library provision will be facilitated.

Compton Road	60	60	0	No change (pathfinder)
Crossgates	55	46	9	Reduced eves Mon, Tue, Fri
Dewsbury Road	30	23	7	Reduce eves Mon, Weds, Fri
Farsley	30	26	4	Reduce eves Mon, Weds, Fri
Garforth	60	52	8	Close Sunday, reduce eves Tue, Fri
Gildersome	21	11	10	Close Weds am, Fri am and reduce eves
Guiseley	41	37	4	Reduce Thu eve and Sat
Halton	50	41	9	Close Mon and Weds am
Headingley	60	56	4	Reduce eves Mon, Weds, Fri
Holt Park	52	48	4	Reduce Mon eve and Sat
Horsforth	55	51	4	Reduce eves Weds and Fri
Hunslet	30	24	6	Close Sundays and lunch times. Added Weds am
Kippax	30	24	6	Reduce eves Weds and Fri
Methley	12	12	0	In short term the opening hours will remain the same.
Middleton	31	31	0	No change (pathfinder)
Moor Allerton	60	58	2	Reduce Fri eve
Morley	55	49	6	Close Sundays and reduce eves
Oakwood	45	40	5	Reduce Tue to Fri eve
Otley	60	53	7	Reduce eves Tue, Weds, Fri
Pudsey	52	49	3	Reduce eves Mon, Weds, Thu
Rothwell	60	52	8	Reduce eves, 1 hour each Sat and Sunday Monday 9am to 10am added
Scholes	15	8	7	Close weds
Seacroft	45	37	8	Close Fri pm and Sunday
Wetherby	55	47	8	Reduce eves Mon, Weds, Thu, Fri
Whinmoor	15	10	5	Reduce Mon, Fri eves
Yeadon	41	37	4	Reduce Mon eve

- 3.6.18 The consultation also allowed us to directly engage with customers and staff and in some instances has provided additional community-based solutions or information which may extend the use of libraries. For instance, a Friends of Bramley Library group has been developed which will work with the service to extend usage on Thursdays for schools and local history activities, using the building at Whinmoor out of hours for community groups, opening Gildersome for school classes and Calverley for the local Live at Home group.
- 3.6.19 This example of local engagement builds on a wide range of partnerships already in place. The Library service in Leeds has continually worked with partners across the city making the best use of library buildings as community spaces. Morley and Calverley hold photographic archives of the local area with local groups helping to digitise the collections aided by service staff. Whinmoor and Morley share spaces with Children's services and Adult Social Care respectively. Many libraries across the city have reader, writer and 'knit and natter' groups. Oakwood and Ardsley and Tingley are opened for school classes and the meeting rooms in Pudsey, Seacroft and Halton are well used by the community, the latter is also used by the CAB. Farsley library now has the country's first 'open+' pilot where customers can use a swipe card to gain access outside of normal hours.

3.7 Staff Impact

- 3.7.1 The reduction in opening hours would see a reduction in staff hours of approximately 489.5hrs per week or 10%. This equates to approximately 13.2fte posts. An Impact Assessment (Organisational Change) has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 4.
- 3.7.2 The service has been appointing only temporary contracts for a number of months; it also already experiences an average turnover of 2 staff per month. In addition to this, the Service uses rota management and policies under managing workforce change to achieve these reductions to minimise the impact on individual staff. Affected staff will be offered new rotas with the same total hours although in some instances a change of location may be required. This should be accommodated through Terms and Conditions, agreed by the Council's General Purposes Committee on 29th July 2014.

3.8 Financial Impact

- 3.8.1 The reduction in opening hours would see a saving through reduced staffing costs of approximately £300,000 per annum.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 It is important that the proposals are informed by inclusive consultation to ensure that the changes, which will see a reduction in hours open, have the minimum direct impact possible. As such, consultation began on 16th June with elected members, staff and union representatives, and took place between 16th July to 29th August 2014 with customers, local MPs, partner organisations, equality hub groups and other regular library users and stakeholders, and was included on the Leeds City Council consultation portal 'Talking Point'. Consultation continued. Schools were consulted from Monday 2nd Sept as they returned from summer

breaks. The consultation has resulted in direct changes to the proposals and the proposals made in Appendix 1 take account of that public consultation. Of course not every individual view expressed can be or has been incorporated.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An EIA has been completed and is attached as Appendix 5.

4.2.2 With the exception of the Community Hubs, and the Reginald Centre the proposed opening hours will see a reduction in the amount of library provision available during evenings, and also some mornings and weekends. These changes will mean that some service users may be unable to access the library of their choice at the time they would prefer.

4.2.3 This will impact to a greater extent on service users who are in 9-5 employment, however, the service has sought to accommodate this through the provision of evening and/or weekend opening. In addition, consideration has been given to a spread of evening and weekend opening hours across the city.

4.2.4 It is possible that the opening hour reductions will have an impact on other service users who fall within the equality characteristics; however, each individual service user's requirements will be different. The service has sought the views of the equality hubs to ascertain if any wider issues can be identified and addressed. None have been raised, so it is anticipated that the preference options of the wider community are representative.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 Implementation of the proposals will contribute to:

Our Best Council Outcomes - Achieve the savings and efficiencies required to continue to deliver frontline services.

Our best council objectives and priorities for 2013 to 2017:

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

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 Implementation of the proposals will deliver a service saving of c£300,000.

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.

4.5.2 "Comprehensive" has been interpreted by the Courts to mean delivering a service that is accessible by all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies, and "efficient" has been interpreted as meaning the service must

make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on Council resources. Given that less than 2% of customers use the service only during the closure periods and that at least some of those customers will be able to access a library at a different time, or use whatever digital resources are available, it would be reasonable still to describe the service as “comprehensive”. In addition, given the rationale of these changes is to use resources so as to affect the least number of customers for the least amount of time, the service can clearly still be regarded as “efficient”.

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 Not implementing the proposals will mean that the library service is unable to deliver the required efficiency savings.
- 4.6.3 Alternatives to achieving the required efficiency savings are likely to have a greater impact on the community, for example through further library closures, cessation of services such as mobile libraries or not buying new books. Some of these issues are currently being experienced by other library services in the Yorkshire region.

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. Following the implementation of the New Chapter review of libraries in 2011 there is little capacity to make further savings through library closure without a potentially disproportionate effect on some communities.
- 5.2 The proposal to reduce opening hours, rather than close libraries, limits the impact to a reduction of service at periods already identified as of limited demand to customers and will provide a saving of c£300,000, whilst respecting the New Chapter framework of providing libraries which are easy to get to, in good condition, staffed with people to help and full of the services that are wanted. In addition, the developing proposals for the roll out of Community hubs offers some real opportunities to work across service teams to minimise the need for further service reductions in the future. The example of the Reginald Centre where customer services staff can extend a basic library service for an additional 20 hours per week is one example of what could be achieved.
- 5.3 Moving forward the Libraries Service will continue to develop and improve. Keeping its reputation as a modern, sustainable and forward thinking service engaging directly with and responding to citizens at a local level.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to agree the changes to library opening hours identified in Appendix 1 with effect from Monday 1st December 2014 and to note that the Head of Library and Information Service will be responsible for implementation.

7 **Background documents**²

7.1 None

² 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.