

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 18 November 2014

Decision No: (CAB 14/15 13292)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Resources and Leisure
SUBJECT:	The Future Transformation of the Southampton Library Service
AUTHOR:	Tina Dyer-Slade

THE DECISION

Modified recommendation (ii)

- (i) To approve Option D (detailed in paragraph 47 of this report) as the preferred option for consultation.
- (ii) To carry out public consultation for a minimum of twelve weeks to seek views on the proposal including, but not limited to:
 - views on the future focus for the library service and the priorities contained within
 - views on the decision to continue to provide a library service from six city council managed libraries plus the online virtual library and the school's library service
 - views on the proposal to offer library buildings to community groups to develop independent community libraries prior to the consideration of disposing of the properties
 - views on the city council ceasing to lease the properties in which Thornhill and Millbrook Libraries are located
 - views on bringing the temporary provision in Weston to an end and to seek to create the opportunity for the community to develop an independent library provision within a new unit being provided in the area
 - views on ceasing the mobile library service
 - views on any alternatives or expressions of interest offered up by consultees, including but not limited to, those detailed in paragraph 35
- (iii) To report on the feedback arising from the consultation, to Cabinet in 2015 with a final proposal.
- (iv) To seek permission to start staff consultation on the changes that would result from the proposals, if approved.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. To progress changes to the Library Service, to develop and deliver a comprehensive and efficient service which is modern, creative, innovative, inclusive and affordable that reflects the changing needs of the Southampton community.
2. To respond to the need to transform the service in a way that will meet the changing needs of the Southampton community. Life is very different now compared to when the infrastructure of libraries was developed in the city and many people are choosing to access the services in different ways which are more convenient to them. There is a need to develop a clear focus for the future of the service with supporting priorities. The consultation is designed to attract feedback on these five areas of focus.
3. This report also outlines the results of a needs assessment which has looked at the buildings from which library services are provided and options for reducing the number of buildings to focus the service in the areas where there is greatest need, and where the libraries are most heavily used and most cost effective. Further details are provided later in the report.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4. The options considered are outlined in detail in Appendix 3. This report provides the detail relating to four options that were developed for the library service buildings in Southampton including:

- The description of the Option
- The performance of the libraries concerned
- A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of each Option
- A description of the current service and how this could be enhanced in the future

Any changes to the hours of opening

Appendix 4 includes Equality and Safety Impact Assessments for all the Options and all the libraries affected.

Option D is the preferred option and will be the subject of the public consultation. This option is described in detail later in the report. The three other options not being pursued at this stage are described in detail below in paragraphs 5 - 10, they are listed in the order of the number of libraries directly provided by the city council as part of the option.

5. **Option A - (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to the Option and the potential impact.)**

Option A includes:

- City council managed library services to be operated from the following buildings, Central Library, Bitterne Library and Portswood Library.
- The Schools Library Service which would continue substantially unchanged.
- The Virtual online library service which would continue.
- The mobile library which would continue to provide services around the city to neighbourhoods and a wide variety of local community buildings such as sheltered homes and nurseries
- Designated staff within the library service who would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and develop partnership working to enhance the library service reach and impact around the city.
- The remaining eight libraries made available for community led initiatives or for disposal.

6. Key reasons why this option is not being pursued at this stage:

- There would be eight fewer city council managed libraries in the city. Shirley, Woolston, Lordshill, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook.
- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to eight libraries.
- There would be no council managed libraries to the west of the city centre.
- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 4,393 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year. (Regular users are those that have made use of the service at least six times in the last year.)
- In order to continue to use a library building these 4,393 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.
- Those that do decide to travel to their next nearest library would have to travel up to 22 minutes longer via public transport via a direct route. However for those who would use Weston Library there is no direct bus route to Bitterne, Portswood or Central Library.
- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 2,109 may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data. This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions in the city from over 223,384 to 175,050.

7. **Option B (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to the Options and their potential impact.)**

Option B includes:

City council managed library services to be operated from the following buildings, Bitterne Library, Central Library, Portswood Library and Shirley Library.

- The Schools Library Service which would continue substantially unchanged.
- The Virtual online library service which would continue.
- Designated staff within the library service who would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and partnership working to

enhance the library service reach and impact around the city.

- The remaining libraries made available for community lead initiatives or for disposal.
- This service would not include the provision of a mobile library service but there would be a more limited service from a library van delivering deposit collections where required around the city.

8. Key reasons why this option is not being pursued at this stage:

- There would be seven fewer city council managed libraries in the city. Woolston, Lordshill, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook.
- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to seven libraries.
- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 2,501 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year.
- In order to continue to use a library building these 2,501 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.
- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 1,200 may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data.
- This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions in the city from 225,000 to 187,600.

9. Option C- (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to the Options and their potential impact.)

Option C includes:

- City council managed services to be operated from the following buildings: Bitterne Library, Central Library, Portswood Library, Shirley Library and Woolston.
- The Schools Library Service which would continue substantially unchanged.
- The Virtual online library service which would continue.
- Designated staff within the library service who would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and partnership working to enhance the library service reach and impact around the city.
- The remaining libraries made available for community lead initiatives or for disposal.
- This service would not include the provision of a mobile library service but there would be a more limited service from a library van delivering deposit collections where required around the city.

10. Key reasons why this option is not being pursued at this stage:

- There would be six fewer city council managed libraries in the city. Lordshill, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook
- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to six libraries.

- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 1730 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year.
- In order to continue to use a library building these 1730 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.
- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 830 may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data.
- This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions in the city from 225,000 to 196,000.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

Following a recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 13th November 2014 Cabinet agreed to amend paragraph 35, bullet point 3 to read:

"within the City Council, including the Estate Regeneration Programme".

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 18 November 2014

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in (*if applicable*) (*this suspends implementation*)

Call-in Procedure completed (*if applicable*)

Call-in heard by (*if applicable*)

Results of Call-in (*if applicable*)