

APPENDIX A: Lancashire County Council Library Service

Introduction

This report sets out an update on development of the proposed Library Service model following consultation carried out in January 2016. This information has been used to inform proposals set out in the Property Strategy (Neighbourhood Centres) consultation report at Appendix C.

National Context

Lancashire county Council has a statutory responsibility to provide an efficient and effective library service as defined in the Public Libraries and Museums' Act 1964. This includes free membership, free book lending and an enquiry service.

The council is committed to deliver a public library service that is fit for the twenty first century and delivers on all of the Society of Chief Librarians national offers; digital, reading, learning, information and health. At the same time the service will align with the government's National Library Taskforce paper; Libraries Deliver: an Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 -2021, as a framework for continuing to improve the quality of service provision in the county.

Community need

In developing the library offer throughout the county as part of the property review, we will use evidence based service planning using information on relative material, using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and population distribution. In determining the proposals for consultation we have taken into consideration the needs of communities in the county. An Equality Impact Assessment is in place and will continue to be updated to ensure that all of our communities have access to a library service.

Library Service Consultation (Phase 1)

A four week consultation on the library service design, need and use was run between 4th January and 31st January. For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available in the county council's 74 libraries and online questionnaires could be accessed from www.lancashire.gov.uk/haveyoursay. The consultation resulted in 10,566 questionnaires being returned comprising of 4,607 paper-based and 5,959 online. Full details of the consultation can be found [in the Cabinet report](#). These findings have contributed to the criteria employed in defining the buildings proposed to deliver LCC services (Neighbourhood Centres) which includes those identified as preferred for delivering libraries services. All current county council libraries have been considered as part of the property review.

The questions used within the consultation were taken from the draft Library Strategy currently being developed by the library staff. The information from the consultation has ratified the 7 strands of the strategy and this will be used to finalise the Library Strategy as future policy for the council. The strategy as it currently stands includes all the elements of the national library drivers. Those key elements reflect;

- economic change through learning and digital literacy
- promoting reading and literacy
- 24/7 virtual offer
- buildings that provide cultural and learning experiences
- opportunities for volunteers
- health and wellbeing
- development of the library workforce

Service Offer

In consideration of the consultation feedback and development of the service offer within the agreed budget of £6.4m for 2017/18, it is proposed to deliver a fully staffed and resourced library service from 37 Neighbourhood Centres, and an additional 7 satellite services from Neighbourhood Centres.

The library offer will be defined on 5 different levels and each of those levels offers access to the service through a range of opening hours. The opening hours will range from 18 hours a week through to 59 hours a week. Each level of library will be fully staffed and the building will have Wi-Fi and access to book stock, computers and additional public facing and community provided services. The level of library will be defined by the local need as identified through the information received from the opening hour's survey carried out in 2014/5.

The library service model also incorporates;

- 6 mobile library units (operating 68 routes and 792 stops)
- 7 satellite services from Neighbourhood Hubs
- home library service (delivering to over 1,000 customers)
- virtual library service, consisting of e-books, e-audiobooks and online reference service
- provision of a schools and prisons library service will also continue across the county

The council is confident that the property review which includes the 73 libraries currently in operation within Lancashire will ensure that the library offer will not be diminished and the service will be delivered equitably across the county.

It is considered that the full extent of the Library Service provision proposed far exceeds a minimum level of sufficiency to meet the needs of the population under the 1964 Act.