

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

17 November 2011

LIBRARY SERVICES REVIEW – UPDATE REPORT

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for the Organisation and Resources Select Committee of the work undertaken to date in response to Library Service Review approved by cabinet in January 2011.

Background

2. In December 2009 the library service started work on a customer focused lean review aimed at making sure that the service was focused to meet customers' needs and fit for purpose. The review had an initial savings target of 10% over 2 years.
3. Extensive consultations were carried out in summer 2010 through Area Boards, the council website, 22 customer and non customer focus groups and staff groups to identify community library service priorities
4. Work on the review was overtaken by the Comprehensive Spending Review in late 2010 and the budget reduction required increased to 28%. Of this;
 - 16 % was achieved in 2010/11 by a senior management restructure which resulted in 17.5 senior managers/professional staff taking voluntary redundancy.
 - 12% £505K additional savings were required over the next two years.
5. With support and guidance from the Portfolio Holder, Corporate Leader, Service Director and Project Manager the Library Service Review paper was approved by Cabinet in January 2011. The paper put forward a strategic vision for the development of the library service in Wiltshire over the next 5 years, placing libraries at the heart of the communities they serve whilst achieving the additional savings required.
6. An important part of the strategy was a successful investment bid for £546K for RFID self service to be rolled out across the county. Self service enables volunteers to work unsupported by avoiding the need to handle personal data or cash. By allowing customers to carry out simple transactions themselves it also enables more efficient use of staff time in larger service points.

7. The changes proposed ensured that all Wiltshire libraries would remain open and the council would be in a position to provide:
 - 21 council operated libraries (accounting for 97% of all physical visits) operating with rationalised opening hours
 - 10 libraries (accounting for 3% of all physical visits) operated in partnership with local communities – providing opportunities for volunteers, embracing the ‘Big Society’ agenda of community involvement as well as ensuring no library closures.
 - Further opportunities for volunteers to extend the library service to make best use of staff to keep libraries open for core/streamlined hours.
 - All five mobile libraries would continue to operate.
8. This would allow the council to maintain a professional and comprehensive library service as defined in the Public Libraries Act 1964 whilst involving local communities in service provision and improving efficiencies to achieve the required by the Comprehensive Savings Review.

Work undertaken to implement the review findings

9. The key changes recommended in Library Service Review were implemented on Monday 5 September 2011, on target with the project plan time line and within budget. All 31 branch libraries, covering every major Wiltshire town, remain open. The fleet of five mobile libraries continue to provide a service to over 280 other communities and 120 residential homes for both elderly and sheltered housing providers.
10. Specifically the Library Review change programme has delivered:
 - **A full Staffing Restructure** – removing a total of 37 FTE posts and developing new team structures and staffing time tables for 30 library service points
 - **New, rationalised core opening hours**, equalised by the size and customer use level, focusing on periods of highest demand for each library
 - **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Self Service** – 42 new RFID self service units were installed by the end of July 2011, with all staff trained on their use, thereby releasing staff time to improve customer interaction.
 - **New Volunteers** – 325 Volunteers for the nine smallest libraries were recruited, CRB checked and trained, by the end of August 2011, in time for the implementation date of Monday 5 September 2011. Additionally, using volunteers has extended the opening hours in five other smaller libraries.
 - One parish council opted to fund the time for a council staff member to operate their local library.

- **Communications** – the outcomes of the review were communicated to all interested parties. Briefing sessions were arranged for Members. Visits were made to all 18 Area Boards and Parish council were briefed. Publicity materials for library users, council members, council staff, parish councillors, the council web site, etc were issued throughout the project
- **Savings** – The changes put in place will allow the required savings of 505K over 2 years will be achieved as follows:

		Savings 2011/12	Savings 2012/13	Total savings for 2 years
		£m	£m	£m
Staff structure delayering	Staff savings	0.077	0.055	0.132
RFID	Staff savings	0.093	0.067	0.160
Core opening hours redefined	Staff savings	0.050	0.014	0.064
	<i>Total staff savings</i>	<i>0.220</i>	<i>0.136</i>	<i>0.356</i>
Reduction in book fund	Stock savings	0.117	0.032	0.149
	Total savings	0.337	0.168	0.505

Delivering the strategic vision for libraries

11. The Library Review was not just about savings, it gives a clear strategic vision that will enable libraries to offer the service customers want whilst contributing to the broader goals of the council and Big Society objects.
12. Work on the key elements of this vision is listed below. Most of these objectives are long term goals and will continue to inform service planning for the next 5 years
 - **Promoting the library service as the ‘face of the council’.** With 31 service points, 5 mobile libraries, visiting another 400 communities, staff with excellent customer service skills and free public access to the internet libraries are well placed to offer added value to the Council. Examples of work in this area include supporting customers to use Homes 4 Wiltshire, energy monitor loans through libraries, providing space for council officers such as registrars to meet clients and proposals to install teletalk kiosks to provide remote face to face access to council services
 - **Provide a wide range of up-to-date stock of books, organising events and activities to promote literacy and reading for children and adults.** This year 8,000 children participated in the Summer Reading Challenge supported by 150 volunteers. Through the Partners in Literacy project the

library service is working with a wide range of organisations to promote literacy

- **Develop a strong on-line service offer, including on line reference sources, providing Wi-Fi.** The library service will introduce downloadable E-books in January 2012 and work is in progress to further develop on line reference sources and new interactive website features, making the service available 24/7. Wi-Fi will be delivered in libraries as part of a corporate project within the next year.
- **Provide Space and opportunity for people to develop new skills, including I.T.** We are currently working with Learning Curve to provide six week introduction to IT courses at our larger libraries and all library staff are trained to support customers to access the Internet.
- **The library will be part of a campus vision where appropriate.** New libraries are planned for Campus sites at Trowbridge, Corsham and Melksham.
- **Greater community involvement, through the use of local community volunteers.** Currently the library service has 660 volunteers in a wide range of roles. Volunteers continue to be recruited to support the work of the service and enable the extension of opening hours.
- **Increase collaborative ways of working and sharing services across the council and its partners and collaborative working with neighbouring authorities.** The service works in partnership working with the Police to provide a Police Information Point Service and the NHS to provide weekly Health Information Sessions staffed by health professionals at larger libraries. We are part of a regional consortium for the procurement of library stock and are in discussions with neighbouring authorities about future collaborative work.
- **Investigate means of income generation with outside agencies.** We are currently reviewing income generation opportunities including provision of coffee and refreshments, sales of books and reading glasses.
- **Continue to review mobile library service provision to deliver the best possible service to rural areas and to those who cannot access a library building.** A full review of mobile library routes and stops is planned for 2012.

Conclusion

13. We invite the committee –

- To note the work undertaken in response to the ambitions outlined in the Library Service Review approved by Cabinet in January.

- To note the quick and excellent response from our rural communities to support our Library Services.
- To continue support the work to deliver the vision for the service outlined in the Library Service Review.

Report Author: Niki Lewis
Service Director, 01225 718518

Joan Davis:
Head of Libraries, 01225 718518

Date of Report 7 November 2011