

Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education
27th October 2008

Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services

Update on the Modernisation of Library Service

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Select Committee on the Modernisation programme for Dudley Library Service.

Background

2. The Library Service in Dudley has been through a number of review including an internal policy committee review in 1998/1999 and a peer review by the Museum, Library and Archive Council in October 2005. Each of these reviews identified that the service had a number of strengths, but need to look at significant re-provision and remodelling of major elements of the over-all service to make it into a modern and effective service.
3. The first step in developing a modern service was to define a new vision for the Library Service *'Open and Accessible to All'* and the ten principles which would underpin this vision. The vision and principles were approved by Cabinet in September 2006.
4. In September 2007 Cabinet agreed to a significant plan to change and invest in Dudley Library Services including closing 5 libraries, providing 4 Library Link facilities, increasing borough wide opening hours and investing in a development programme for the service.
5. This Select Committee called in the decision to modernise the Library Service and subjected it to scrutiny on the 24th October 2007. The Committee resolved *'that this Committeesupport the proposed modernisation of the Library service and ask that all of the views expressed here tonight are fully taken into account during the consultation stage of the process and that we further ask that the Cabinet ensure that, where appropriate, the re-provided facilities are put in place before any libraries are de-commissioned.'*

Progress to date

6. Additional work has been carried out to ensure that the implementation of the modernisation programme is effective for the communities served. This has included:
 - Questionnaires for customers at the libraries to be replaced by Library Links to identify the most appropriate location and the stock, services and staff opening hours that were required. These were followed up by open days at each library to discuss options.

- Work with customers at the libraries where services were being extended at nearby libraries after their closure, including the transfer where appropriate to the Home Library Service.
 - Questionnaires at all remaining libraries about preferred opening hours, including Sunday opening hours for the 5 main libraries.
 - Discussions with children at schools in the areas where libraries were closing
 - Use of the Citizen's Panel to consult on preferred opening hours.
 - Attending meetings of local groups to discuss the changes to library provision, working with the neighbourhood management team.
 - The setting up of a library customer focus group at Brierley Hill.
 - The use of the Housing Service Readers Panel to assess the effectiveness of posters advertising the library service
7. A communication and engagement plan is in the process of being developed for the Library Service using the Community Engagement Guide and Online Toolkit and the Directorate of Adult, Housing and Community Services draft Engagement Strategy. The possibility of adding discussion about Libraries to the Housing Forums as a regular item has been investigated. It has been decided not to use this methodology as it would exclude non tenants from the process.
8. Operational Library Services have now been organised into locality groups which match the Council's area committee structure.
9. The programme of moving services and extending hours has been largely implemented. The detail of the programme completed to date is included in Appendix 1. It includes:
- The closure of Wall Heath Library and extension of opening hours at Kingswinford and Gornal Libraries to 6 days a week.
 - The closure of the Library at Brook School (formerly Amblecote Library) and the extension of opening hours at Stourbridge Library to 7 days a week including 10 – 2 on a Sunday
 - The extension of opening hours at Dudley Library to 7 days a week including 10 – 2 on Sunday.
 - The transfer of library services in Dudley Wood to the Library Link based in Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Learning Centre (which has also resulted in Netherton Library becoming busier).
 - The transfer of library services in Woodside to the Library Link based in the Woodside Children's Centre
 - The extension of opening hours at Brierley Hill and Sedgley to 7 days a week including 10 – 2 on Sunday
 - The extension of opening hours at Coseley, Cradley, Long Lane and Lye to 6 days a week
10. The refurbishment of Wordsley Library has started this month, with a planned completion date of January 2009. There is a temporary library service available in the neighbouring Community Centre for 28 hours a week during the time this work is being carried out. Wordsley Library will extend its opening hours when the refurbished library is opened.
11. The Directorate as been successful in gaining funding from the Learning and Skills Council for the extension to Kingswinford Library to enable it to become a Library

and Learning Centre. The original modernisation programme included plans to extend Kingswinford Library using National Lottery funding which we were unsuccessful in gaining. The work on the extension is planned to start in early 2009 with completion before the Autumn.

12. The remaining closure of Quarry Bank Library is dependent on the completion of the Library Link facility which will be in the Quarry Bank Community Centre. This project is progressing well. Netherton Library will extend its opening hours when Quarry Bank Library closes.
13. Halesowen Library will extend its opening hours in November when the new Asda is opened.
14. Discussions on options for the location of the final Library Link in Pensnett have now started.
15. The plans for an exciting new joint library in Brierley Hill working with Stourbridge College as part of their new college facility are being developed.
16. The remodelling of the staffing structure was successfully completed at the end of March 2008. It resulted in only 5 staff remaining on protected salaries. As requested by the Union they are being given the first option on any vacancies that arise. Thirty staff gained a promotion as part of the remodelling, including two staff who were cleaners becoming library assistants. The career development structure has been implemented and the library service now has an apprenticeship programme.
17. The Strategy and Development Team have been successfully developing new services and promoting existing services during the modernisation programme. This had included:
 - Promotions as part of the National Year of Reading working with colleagues in Children's Services
 - Launching the Dudley Book on Prescription Scheme working with colleagues in Health
 - Actively taking part in promotions including Adult Learning week, Make a noise in Libraries day and Black History Month
 - Running the Big Book Fortnight reading festival with the Black Country Libraries in Partnership (BCLiP) Establishing and launching Family Friendly Library Standards with BCLiP and the Museum, Library and Archives Council
 - Managing the purchase and introduction of computer systems for Radio Frequency Identification Self Service and Cash Management systems to make the use of Library Links as easy as possible for customers
18. The Home Library Service has taken on 12 new customers as a result of the changes in provision, mainly from the Wall Heath area.
19. A library brand has been created including the key words 'Read, Learn, Discover' which is being used in library promotions across the borough and will assist in developing a positive image for the library service.

Evaluation of the success to date

20. A sample of the evaluation of the success of the programme to date includes:
 - Sunday opening is already a success – the 4 libraries have over 300 people visiting between 10 and 2.
 - Over 200 people applied to be weekend assistants

- There has been positive customer feedback about the Dudley Wood Library Link
 - Positive reactions from customer saying how easy the Self Issue and return facilities are in the Library Links (including one 80 year old from Dudley Wood).
 - An increase in the number of reading groups including family reading groups, and events including major authors such as Alan Ahlberg and Roger Ellory.
 - Positive reaction from communities to extended opening hours
 - Interest in what we are doing from other services across the country
21. The modernisation programme has had a high national profile and has been the subject of a review into professional library standards of ten library authorities by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information. The review concluded that the service has made *'significant progress in the last couple of years....the overall library modernisation programme of which the Library Link proposals and library closures are but one component, should bring material benefits to library users and the local community'*.
22. The Museum Library and Archive Council have been supportive of the modernisation programme. The West Midlands relationship officer for Dudley commented that *'the proposals have been supported by a comprehensive review and rationalisation of staff structures and professional roles, as well as the introduction of an innovative programme of staff training which we think could become an exemplar for other library services.'*
23. David Potts the Library Project Manager for the Museum Library and Archive Council has recently visited the Dudley Wood and Woodside Library Links and was impressed by their quality.
24. In addition requests for information on how Dudley has managed the modernisation programme have been received from a number of other authorities.

Finance

25. The net library revenue budget for 2008/09 is £5.23 million. The proposals and actions contained within the report will be carried out within the available resources. The Library Service also has a capital programme allocation of £2.63 million split over 2008/09 and 2009/10. All capital works planned should be contained within these resources.

Law

26. Under the requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the Council is a Library Authority with a requirement to provide *'a comprehensive and efficient library service'* as defined by the setting of Public Library Service Standards. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) set these standards on behalf of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). A revised performance management framework for public libraries, drawn up by the Museums, Libraries & Arts Council, has been created to replace the Public Library Standards.

Equality Impact

27. A stage one Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the whole modernisation programme.
28. The continual implementation of service enhancements will enable Dudley Library

Services to provide effective services for children and disadvantaged communities in Dudley through the provision of service focussed on geographical communities, and a team of staff who can also provide services for communities with more specific requirements across the borough.

29. The implementation of the Library Modernisation programme means that the library service is working more effectively to address the needs of all communities and takes positive steps to encourage reading and library use amongst them all.

Recommendation

30. It is recommended that the Select Committee:

- Note the report and the progress to date of the Library Modernisation Programme.



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List of Background Papers

Leisure and Development Committee Paper *Best Value Review of the Library Service – the final report* 9th February 1999

Cabinet Paper *Providing a Modern Library Service in Dudley MBC – a strategy for the future* 13th September 2006

Corporate Board Paper *Providing A Modern Library Service In Dudley MBC* 25th April 2006

Decision Sheet *Dudley Libraries Blueprint for the Future Remodelling of staffing structure* 19th January 2007

Decision Sheet *Dudley Libraries Blueprint for the Future Remodelling of senior management team structure* 2nd March 2007

Cabinet Paper *Providing a Modern Library Service in Dudley MBC – a modernisation programme* 12th September 2007

Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education *Responses to Members questions on improvement plans for Dudley Library Services* 24th October 2007

DCMS *Framework for the Future; Libraries, Learning and Information in the next decade* 2003

IdeA/MLA *Library Service Peer Review Benchmark* 2005.

DCLG Developing the local government services market to support a long term strategy for local government 2007

DCLG Stronger and prosperous communities 2007

MLA Community engagement in public libraries: a report on current practice and future developments

MLA A blueprint for excellence 2007

MLA *A new libraries performance management framework* 2007

Patrick Conway *'Professional Standard of Service report'* Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, May 2008

Appendix 1 – programme of opening hours extensions and library closures

Date	Library	Hours Lost	Hours Gained	Total hours open per week	
				Staffed hours p.w.	Total hours available p.w.
Total number of opening hours per week 31st March 2008				672.5	672.5
<i>Saturday 14th June 2008</i>	Closed the Library at Brook School (the former Amblecote Library)	- 22		650.5	650.5
<i>Saturday 21st June 2008</i>	Closed Wall Heath Library	- 25		625.5	625.5
<i>Sunday 22nd June 2008</i>	Dudley Library opening hours extended to 7 days		+ 6	631.5	631.5
	Stourbridge Library opening hours extended to 7 days		+ 6	637.5	637.5
<i>Monday 23rd June 2008</i>	Gornal Library opening hours extended to 6 days		+ 14.5	652	652
	Kingswinford Library opening hours extended to 6 days		+ 12	664	664
<i>Monday 28th July 2008</i>	Transfer Library service to Dudley Wood Library Link	- 22	+ 10 staffed + 39.5 open	652	681.5
<i>Monday 8th September 2008</i>	Transfer Library service to Woodside Library Link	- 26	+ 10 staffed + 47.5 open	636	703
<i>Monday 15th September</i>	Brierley Hill Library opening hours extended to 7 days		+ 16	652	719
	Cradley Library opening hours extended to 6 days		+13.5	665.5	732.5
	Long Lane Library opening hours extended to 6 days		+11.5	677	744
	Sedgley Library opening hours extended to 7 days		+ 15.5	692.5	759.5
<i>Monday 6th October 2008</i>	Coseley Library opening hours extended to 6 days		+ 12.5	705	772
	Lye Library opening hours extended to 6 days		+ 10.5	715.5	782.5