

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/2015 - REPORT NO.

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN UNDER
DELEGATED AUTHORITY**
CABINET MEMBER FOR
EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S
SERVICES AND PROTECTION

REPORT OF:

Director of Finance, Resources and
Customer Services

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| Agenda - Part: | Item: |
| Subject: Library Development Strategy property assessments | |
| Wards: | |
| Key Decision No: <i>(not applicable)</i> | |
| Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Ayfer Orhan Cabinet Member for Education, Children's Services and Protection | |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The draft Library Development Strategy aims to develop and improve the quality of library services across the borough, and has been the subject of public consultation between November 2014 and 6th February 2015. The draft Strategy aims to deliver a broader and deeper range of core library services, supported by a network of community libraries across the borough.
- 1.2 The final approval of a Library Development Strategy is the subject of a separate Cabinet and Council report in June/July 2015.
- 1.3 The consultation results showed general support for the principle of community libraries and therefore this report seeks approval to start discussions with possible community library partners to discuss proposals before the final decision is made..
- 1.4 The report explains the process that will be followed so that a broad range of partners can be considered, and seeks authority for officers to have more detailed discussions and seek expressions of interest.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That officers actively commence the process of seeking relevant partners to deliver the proposed Enfield community libraries in accordance with the aims of the draft Library Development Strategy in preparation for a final

decision by Council in June/July 2015

2.2 That officers engage with appropriate organisations from the voluntary, community, statutory and commercial sectors by appropriate means and methods to identify potential partners who are able to deliver the aims of the Development Strategy.

2.3 That once partners are identified and agreed in principle, officers negotiate and agree the terms by which the service may be delivered at individual locations in preparation of and subject to the Council obtaining full and final authority in respect of the Library Development Strategy in accordance with the Council's constitution.

2.4 That realistic timescales for implementation be identified as part of the terms of agreement with partners.

3. BACKGROUND

The public library service is a statutory service, governed by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Act requires library authorities to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service to all those desiring to make use thereof".

The Service currently has 17 libraries (the highest in London), a mobile library, a home delivery service and a schools library service, which is traded. Library resources are procured through a framework contract which includes over 55 other library authorities and, as a result, Enfield residents are able to access resources in libraries across London. The Service also offers a 24/7 digital library with access to online resources and services.

The Council recognises the value and need for physical libraries in the community, and these need to be fit for purpose, in the right locations, and in buildings that are used as much as possible. With this in mind, the following two options were presented to local people to gauge their views about how we can ensure libraries are fit for the future and meet the needs of the whole community.

Option 1

Enfield Town, Edmonton Green, Palmers Green and Ordnance Road libraries will become flagship libraries with **extended opening hours seven days a week**, offering the full range of services including:

- A comprehensive range of standard library resources and activities alongside digital hubs that will offer a far greater number of self-service kiosks and PCs and greater capacity wifi
- Homework clubs and quiet zones for online and traditional learning activities
- Trained staff able to provide advice and support including self-scanning of evidence with video and web chat functionality to talk to officers directly and access video interpreting services
- Joining up with voluntary sector and partner organisations to support employment advice and job clubs and facilities for appointment only advice sessions to provide advice and guidance to vulnerable customers
- Training areas to support those requiring more intensive support around personal budgeting or digital access
- Business innovation advice to support the self-employed and new starters with access to business online resources
- Community space
- Children's library services linked to children's centres to ensure support for families and early years learning

Significant investment has already been made in Enfield Town, Palmers Green and Ordnance Road libraries. Edmonton Green Library will see significant investment and be expanded to two floors with a full community access services and a large digital access suite on the ground floor and quieter space for learning upstairs. Each is ideally located for transport links and reflects the four key areas of the borough.

Other libraries will move to 'community libraries' where they will share facilities with other services, organisations or voluntary groups. These community libraries could offer:

- An increase in community space for VCS and community groups
- Address digital exclusion in communities through public access wifi and video/web chat
- Kiosks for ordering, returning, renewing and downloading library materials plus other council online services and payments
- Possibly increased opening hours due to the co-located partner service being able to open the building for longer or a lobby service with secure access via a library card
- Pick up lockers for ordered items
- Access to other services through shared facilities

Sharing with community groups or alternative services would need to have a clear business case and a purpose and ethos that is sympathetic to the core library vision and the Council's aims of fairness for all, growth and sustainability and strong communities.

There can be significant benefits to the community by co-locating library services with other council services or community based organisations:

- Widen and improve the range of services available in any one location
- Increase the available opening hours by sharing resources particularly for those who work or who currently live in areas where current opening hours are limited
- Reduce costs and increase the use of the building by attracting new users for all co-located services
- Extend the availability of community and voluntary sector space at no extra cost
- Increase the range of volunteering opportunities and the sharing of skills across a wider range of services

Bring to an end the mobile library service and explore providing an expanded, volunteer led home delivery service for homebound with possible links to other community initiatives such as befriending services

Option 2

As above, the four flagship libraries will provide a comprehensive range of services set out in Option 1 plus

- Oakwood and Ponders End Library will be retained offering traditional library facilities and will see an investment in digital access and support facilities to enhance access to council and other local services. (Ponders End library is due to be moved as part of the wider Ponders End regeneration scheme)
- The four flagship libraries (Enfield Town, Edmonton Green, Palmers Green and Ordnance Road) **to be open 6 days a week and will not have the extended opening hours as option 1** – these six libraries are currently open for 308 hours in total each week. These hours would be redistributed to give each library six day opening and a consistent pattern of hours so that times of access for the public are clear and easy to remember
- Other libraries will move to be 'community libraries' as set out in Option 1

4. Consultation and community libraries

A public consultation exercise was carried out between 10th November 2014 and 6th February 2015 on the two options below. Over 2,000 responses were received.

The public were also asked their opinions about the principle of Community Libraries and co-location with other services. The principle of co-location was acceptable to most (62%) as long as the right partner was found, with 18% disagreeing.

In order to finalise the report and recommendations to Cabinet and Council in May/June 2015, this report recommends that early discussions take place with a broad range of potential co-location partners to gauge interest and the potential offer for each possible community library site. Any discussions will be subject to a final decision on the Strategy to be made by Council and no formal leases or contracts will be entered into.

The Council will seek expressions of interest from a wide range of organisations with the aim of encouraging interest from a broad range of community, statutory, voluntary and commercial sector partners. Each site will also be assessed for its location, structure and local needs as the model of a community library may vary across the borough.

Clear evaluation will be used to assess options with recommendations going to either the Council meeting in June/July 2015 or subsequently being made in line with the Council's property procedure rules.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council can decide not to undertake this preparatory work. However, by entering into this engagement with potential partners, the Council can produce a more detailed and informed report and draft strategy for Cabinet and Council to consider.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

By entering into this engagement with potential partners, the Council can produce a more detailed and informed report and draft strategy for Cabinet and Council to consider. The consultation responses supported the idea of co-location and community libraries. No decisions will be taken and all potential partners will be made aware of the fact that the Council may choose not to proceed with the model of

community library. The engagement does not pre-determine the final decision in any way.

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

The 2015-2018 library development strategy is integral to the delivery of the agreed Enfield 2017 savings. No costs will be incurred in the exploration of possible partners and staffing costs will be contained within existing resources.

6.2 Legal Implications

6.2.1. Under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the London Borough of Enfield has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service for all people wishing to use the facility.

When fulfilling its duty under section 7(2), a local authority must have regard to the desirability:

- (a) Of securing that facilities are available for the borrowing of or reference to books and other printed matter, pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials
- (b) That these facilities are sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general and special requirements of adults and children.
- (c) Of encouraging children and adults to make full use of the library service.

6.2.2 The Council's proposed engagement with relevant providers (described in the Recommendations of this report) are subject to the Council obtaining full and final authority in respect of the Library Development Strategy in accordance with its Constitution. All relevant partners with whom the Council is intending to engage should be made fully aware of the Council's requirement to obtain such authority at the outset of any engagement.

6.2.3 When the detail of Options 1 and 2 (referred to in this report) are further developed and finalised, the Council should obtain legal advice as to the impact and implications of both options.

6.3 Property Implications

Property Services (SPS) has been involved in this programme from its inception. The principles in this report support the core objectives of the evolving Estate Strategy – better utilisation of assets, the concentration

of services into fewer buildings, working with other public partners to leverage our asset base and generating additional income where possible.

SPS have developed a draft plan for asset utilisation, in conjunction with the Library Services team, which will form the basis for this more detailed work.

Detailed due diligence will need to be undertaken at a later stage to include financial and legal issues.

7. KEY RISKS

The key risk relates to raising expectations that the Council will agree to implement community libraries. All parties will be advised clearly at the outset that any engagement will be subject to the final decision of Council and this engagement does not pre-determine that decision in any way.

8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The selection of any co-location partner would need to ensure an ethos that shared the Council's priorities of fairness for all, growth and sustainability and stronger communities.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and universal access to community libraries will remain a priority and a criteria in any discussions with potential co-location partners.

10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The Council is seeking possible partners to co-locate/share library facilities. Any engagement will be subject to a final decision by Council and the engagement does not pre-determine that decision in any way.

12. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The choice of co-location partners has the potential to increase access to public health information and services.

Background Papers

None

