

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 18 October 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Library Service Review – Scrutiny Comments and Recommendations	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All Wards	
<b>From:</b>		Regeneration and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee	

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. The Sub-Committee recommends that the timetables for reduced opening hours at the smaller libraries should be agreed in consultation with local library users and that different patterns should be adopted to reflect the needs of local communities.
2. The Sub-Committee recommends that if reduced opening hours have an impact on the sustainability of the smaller libraries, or if volunteering is unsuccessful and opening hours have to be further reduced, that a full evaluation is carried out of the impact on those libraries before any decision on closure is taken. In addition, that the relevant scrutiny committee would have an opportunity to scrutinise that evaluation, ahead of any decision on closure or a further reduction in opening hours.
3. The Sub-Committee recommends that Nunhead library is open 10-7 on Monday (6 hours less per week in line with other small libraries) or 10-5 (8 hours less per week), the same opening hours as Saturday. The Friday 3pm closure would remain.
4. The Sub-Committee recommends that ongoing consultation continues with library staff to ensure they are kept informed of developments and are able to feed in any concerns.
5. The Sub-Committee recommends that any further proposals for sharing resources with other boroughs above £50,000 that fundamentally change or challenges Southwark Council's accountability for the day to day running of our libraries should be subject to further consultation with councillors and residents in Southwark.
6. The Sub-Committee requests that the relevant Cabinet members provide the Committee with a written update about progress in securing additional funding to plug the capital and revenue gaps for Grove Vale and securing additional funding for planned maintenance costs of our libraries prior to agreement of the Council budget for 2012/13 at the February 2012 Full Council Budget Setting Meeting.
7. The Sub-Committee requests that officers provide the Committee with an update within 6 months of the recommendations being approved by Cabinet.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

8. The Sub-Committee acknowledges the significant amount of investment that has gone into Southwark libraries over the last 3 years and welcomes the figures for 2010/11 that show increases in the number of visits and loans to our libraries at a time when the national trend is showing a decrease in library use.
9. The Sub-Committee notes the large number of responses that were received to the consultation, which was carried out in June and July 2011, and congratulates all those staff and other interested parties who worked hard to achieve such an impressive response.
10. The Sub-Committee notes the strong opposition to any library closures with 69% of the survey respondents indicating that this was not their preferred option and welcomes the decision by the Cabinet Member and officers to put forward recommendations that avoid any library closures.
11. The Sub-Committee welcomes the diversity of the recommendations that are being made to achieve the savings including being prepared to consider innovative and popular suggestions such as volunteering, community management and sponsorship and external funding.
12. The Sub-Committee notes and supports the commitment to pursue sources of sponsorship from local organisations and businesses and requests that we are updated on any progress on these efforts.
13. The Sub-Committee also welcomes the practical recommendations to achieve savings including seeking alternative premises for Camberwell and Grove Vale libraries, which are currently located in rented buildings and the co-location of shared services.
14. The Sub-Committee notes the increased level of uncertainty and risk that is associated with achieving the savings from some of the recommendations including the use of volunteers, sharing resources with other boroughs and the proposals for reduced opening hours at the smaller libraries (Brandon, East Street, Grove Vale and Nunhead)
15. The Sub-Committee notes that Nunhead Library is being asked to take a reduction in opening hours of 10 hours as opposed to 6 hours at the other smaller libraries. This is in a highly populated residential area, serving three wards and is close to several primary schools and two secondary schools.
16. The Sub-Committee notes the need for additional revenue and capital for a new Grove Vale library estimated at a further £70,000 in revenue per annum and £241,000 in capital for ICT services and other improvements
17. The Sub-Committee draws to the Cabinet's attention the considerable increase in known required planned maintenance on our library buildings from an estimated £1.9m up until 2014/15 and £3.29m from 2015 onwards.

18. The Sub-Committee notes and politely reminds Cabinet of the decision of Council Assembly in November 2008 to name the children's section of Canada Water Library after former Rotherhithe Ward councillor Anne Yates.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

19. The Regeneration and Leisure Scrutiny Committee considered the Library Services Review and the recommendations made within that report to make savings of £397,000 from the library service budget in the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14.
20. The meeting was held at John Harvard Library on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October.
21. The Committee invited and heard from 2 young library users about their views and experiences of using Southwark libraries.
22. Councillor Veronica Ward, the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Sports and Olympics addressed the committee about the consultation and the recommendations and Gill Davies, Director of Environment and Leisure, took members through the report.
23. Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure and Pam Usher, Library Service Manager were also present.
24. These comments and recommendations are intended to represent areas of agreement between members.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet report on Library Service Review	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Report Author</b>	Councillor David Noakes		
<b>Version</b>	Final		
<b>Dated</b>	17 October 2011		
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No		
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>			
<b>Officer Title</b>		<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance		No	No
Finance Director		No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>		No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team</b>			17 October 2011