

Response to Scrutiny comments and recommendations on the Library Service Review

Recommendation 1: Agreed in part

Significant consultation has been undertaken part of the review. Over 5,000 responses were received to the library review survey and 13 public meetings were held with almost 300 people attending. The proposals contained within the report are based on the feedback from the consultation and therefore further consultation is not considered necessary except as set out in 23.7, where it is proposed to consult schools within the catchment areas of libraries where hours are suggested to reduce, in order to establish the most appropriate week day for morning opening.

Recommendation 2: Not agreed

There is no proposal to close libraries, now or in the future. Any such proposal will be reported to the cabinet and therefore be subject to scrutiny processes in the normal way.

Recommendation 3: Not agreed

Nunhead Library is currently open for 42 hours per week – the other libraries where reductions in hours are proposed are open for 33 hours at the moment. If the proposed reductions are implemented, Nunhead will still be open longer than the other libraries – 32 hours compared to 27 hours at Brandon, East Street and Grove Vale.

All of the libraries where reductions in opening hours are proposed will offer their hours over an additional day, increasing access from four days per week to five at Brandon, East Street and Grove Vale and from five days to six at Nunhead if the proposals are accepted by Cabinet.

The second morning opening session was proposed for Nunhead in order to accommodate additional visits from local schools. This could be reviewed and an afternoon/ evening session offered in place of one of the 10-3 days. However increasing the overall number of hours from the proposed 32 to 36 would mean that the full saving will not be made and alternative savings will need to be identified elsewhere and therefore the recommendation is not accepted.

Recommendation 4: Agreed

Staff are being briefed on the proposals within the report and the report has been made available to all staff via the Council's website. There are also regular meetings with the trade unions which include detailed discussion of these matters. Therefore there will be ongoing consultations.

Recommendation 5: Agreed in part

Any future significant developments in terms of cross-borough working would be subject to current standing orders and the scheme of delegation. Consultation would be carried out with appropriate stakeholders as appropriate.

Recommendation 6: Agreed in part

The budget planning process for next year has commenced and officers have prepared bids for revenue growth and for additional capital to fit out the proposed new Grove Vale library. Cabinet Members will be appraised of progress in this respect via the Council's budget process and associated reports

Recommendation 7: Agreed

Officers will return to the Committee with an update on progress within six months of recommendations being approved by Cabinet as requested.