

Theme 6 (Submission) Cabinet Member Interview- Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub 12 September.

Update of progress on the various recommendations made in respect of library services by the former Regeneration scrutiny sub-committee. These were considered by Cabinet in October 2011 when the formal report on the Libraries Review was presented.

Recommendation 1: 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.

Response

The recommendation was agreed in part. The proposals contained within the Cabinet report were based on the feedback from the public consultation and therefore further consultation was not considered necessary apart from asking local schools about their preferred days and times for class visits. The revised hours at Brandon, East Street, Grove Vale and Nunhead Libraries were implemented on 1 April 2012 and were based upon the widespread consultation undertaken with local residents.

The consultation during the review included:

- 13 public meetings in libraries
- Attendance at 2 cycles of the community council meetings
- Surveys completed by over 5000 residents in hard copy format and online

Recommendation 2: that if the 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.

Response

The recommendation was not agreed. In considering the outcomes and recommendations arising from the libraries review, the Cabinet agreed that no libraries in Southwark are to close.

Recommendation 3: 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.

Response

The recommendation was not agreed. To implement it would have meant further reductions elsewhere or a reduction in the savings allocation.

The revised pattern of hours at Nunhead Library from 1 April 2012 is:
Monday to Thursday 2pm to 7pm

Friday 10am to 3pm
Saturday 10 am to 5pm

This pattern of opening hours enables increased access to service from 5 to 6 days per week and they are designed to accommodate use by schools, families and students as well as other local residents. The full programme of activity previously offered at the library including under 5's activities has been sustained. The number of events and total number of people attending for the months April to July 2012 are as follows:

Month	Events	Attendance
April 2012	24	530
May 2012	33	733
June 2012	31	734
July 2012	28	646

The events include: class and nursery visits, baby and toddlers and rhyme times, knitting club, ICT taster sessions and other one off events during the library of the month programme.

Recommendation 4: ongoing consultation continues with the library staff to ensure that they are kept informed of developments and are able to feed in any concerns

Response

The recommendation was agreed. Library staff were involved in the library review both through management / staff consultation meetings and also with some staff attending the public consultation meetings and community council meetings. All are briefed on the performance of the library service, proposed developments and changes as part of an ongoing process of communication which includes bulletins and staff meetings on a regular basis.

Recommendation 5: 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.

Response

The recommendation was agreed in part. Work is continuing to explore options for shared services with Lambeth Libraries. No agreement reached on this as yet and any changes would be subject to current standing orders and the scheme of delegation and consultation with appropriate stakeholders would be undertaken.

Recommendation 6: 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 the agreement of the Council budget for 2012 / 13 at the February 2012 Full Council Budget Setting meeting.

Response

The recommendation was agreed in part. A capital programme bid has been submitted to supplement the contribution from the developer for the fit out costs of the new library and a bid for additional revenue budget is also in preparation.

The Council has written formally to the developer to accept the proposals of a library shell as part of his scheme adjacent to East Dulwich Station. The estimated timeline for the completion of the new library building is 2014.

With regard to a planned maintenance programme for libraries, work is in progress to replace the existing Camberwell Library with a new building located opposite the Magistrate's Court and longer term plans are being investigated for the reprovision of Newington Library. Funding has been allocated to Peckham and Dulwich Libraries for refurbishment programmes in 2012 / 2013 to install self service technology and to improve access to services and the layout of stock.

Normal reactive maintenance and some planned works each year within the resources available will be undertaken. Officers will also continue to look for external funding opportunities.

Recommendation 7: that officers provide the Committee with an update within 6 months of the recommendations being approved by Cabinet.

Response

The recommendation was agreed.

Cabinet agreed a package of measures to deliver savings of £397,000 from the library service budget in the financial years 2012 / 13 and 2013 / 14 as listed below

	Item	Saving	Progress report September 2012
a)	Use of volunteers	£40k	Saving achieved. 43 volunteers in place and 2 recruitment fairs have been held to date.
b)	Reshaping opening hours at smaller libraries to offer more days open but with less hours overall. This to be combined with an invitation for community management for the period of reduced hours.	£80k	Saving achieved. Revised opening hours implemented at Brandon, East Street. Grove Vale and Nunhead libraries from 1 April 2012. No viable responses received to date to the invitation to local community organisations regarding community management.
c)	Staff reorganisation	£120k	Saving achieved and reorganisation completed.
d)	Sharing resources with other boroughs	£50k	Work ongoing with Lambeth libraries regarding model for joint stock services.
e)	Sharing space with Housing at Peckham Library and thereby reducing library costs	£57k	Housing no longer requires space at the Library. Alternative tenant is being sought.
f)	New rental saving from the creation of the new Camberwell Library	£50k	Estimated completion of new library is 2014.

In addition to the above:

1. Fees and Charges review

Minor changes to fees and charges are to be brought forward as part of the annual fees and charges setting process. The library service is to continue to seek external funding and seek to improve its marketing in line with the recommendations from the libraries review consultation.

Additional fees and charges introduced from 1 April 2012 are as follows:

- Fines rate for late return of books, talking books, language courses, CD's and CD sets and children's story tapes from 20p per day (to a maximum of £6 per item) to 25p per day (to a maximum of £10 per item).
- People aged 60+ no longer exempt from payment of fines.
- Maximum fine per DVD and games software package increased from £12 to £15 per item.
- £1 per item hire charge for language courses for 3 week hire period.
- Increase in charges for stock requests. These have historically not been set at levels sufficient to recover the actual cost of the service. The standard stock request fee of 50p remains unchanged, but the basic fee for non-stock items was increased by 50% from £2 to £3 per item, and a new separate charge of a further £10 per item was introduced for loans from the British Library, specialised and academic libraries and loans from abroad, as these loans are at great cost to the service. The member of the public putting in the stock request is asked whether they want the request to go ahead and are prepared to pay this cost before the request is processed by the library staff.

2. Marketing of services:

Hire of space

- Officers have completed a review of the spaces for hire at Dulwich, John Harvard and Peckham Libraries in terms of the facilities provided and the physical condition of the spaces, the terms and conditions for the hire of these spaces and the management of the bookings and income procedures. An improvement plan arising from this review is being actioned and includes:
 - A refurbishment programme for the hall at Dulwich Library to be completed by the end of October 2012.
 - Replacing the worn out carpet in the meetings pod at Peckham Library. This was completed in July 2012.
 - Revised terms and conditions for the hire of space which are easier to understand and which set out a clear framework in line with those conditions established by The Albany for the management of the spaces at Canada Water Library
 - Centralising the administration of hall hire under the management of the Libraries Performance and Contracts Manager

- Introduction of the option to pay for hire of spaces by debit and credit card payments in addition to cheque and cash payments.
- Promotional campaign designed with corporate communications to raise the profile of the spaces for hire with the local community and beyond. This will be launched in autumn 2012 and will include features in the press, web pages and fliers at all libraries and other council service points.

Cafes in libraries

- The Water's Edge Café has been in operation at Canada Water Library since the building opened on 28 November 2011. This business is provided by Barista Design Ltd on a licence to occupy basis.
- The café space at John Harvard Library is currently unoccupied and procuring a suitable provider remains a challenge. Two different providers have taken on the running of the space since it was opened in 2009 and both have withdrawn due to being unable to make sufficient income.
- All of the main high street coffee chains and other catering providers have been approached to see if they wish to provide a concession but to date none have taken up this offer due to concerns about footfall and market profile.

Officers continue to undertake further work on identifying possible future models of service to ensure the longer term viability of the library service in respect and / or savings. These should include:

- Community management of libraries including assessing the offers for the community management
- Sharing services with other boroughs either through the MLA Future Libraries Programme pilot project or any cross borough negotiations.
- Co -locating or integrating with other Southwark services
- Working with the Customer Services Division to support the emerging corporate customer services strategy
- Seeking opportunities for resolving building issues through regeneration or other property opportunities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of volunteer arrangements as a result of this report.

Supporting the emerging customer services strategy

Residents are being encouraged to use the free public computers and internet access available at their local library to access Council services online. Library staff provide free ICT taster sessions to help the public to become proficient in the use of online services. The Revenues and Benefits and Concessionary Travel services are hiring Meeting Room 1 at Canada Water on a weekly basis to deliver their appointments service with residents.

Resolving building issues

- New Canada Water Library opened in November 2011 and replaced the Rotherhithe Library in Albion Street.
- Plans in progress for the new Camberwell and Grove Vale Libraries.
- Peckham and Dulwich libraries to be refurbished in 2012 / 13 to install self service technology.