

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
25 MARCH 2013	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Matthew Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning	
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OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : Councillor Matthew Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning and John Harrison, Executive Director – Strategic Resources	Deadline date : None
<p>Following a resolution by Council on 6 March 2013 to make savings of £200,000 from the services provided by Vivacity and having carefully considered the feedback received from the recent public library consultation and consultation on the Council’s budget proposals:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To revise the opening hours for Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries as set out under the columns headed ‘revised proposal based on user feedback’ in paragraph 7.11 to this report; 2. To reduce the book fund by £50,000 per annum as referred to in paragraph 10.4 of this report; 3. To note the savings to be made in respect of Vivacity’s own internal management and overhead costs as referred to in paragraph 10.5 of this report; and 4. To retain (and not revise) the current frequencies and stopping times for the mobile library service as set out in Annex B to this report for the reasons set out in this report. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following a request from Councillor Matthew Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR THE REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider, and determine, what revisions, if any, should be made to the City’s library service as a result of the feedback received from the recent public library consultation and consultation on the Council’s budget proposals.

- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.7 'to be responsible for the Council's overall budget and determine action required to ensure that the overall budget remains within the total cash limit'.

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	
Date for relevant Council meeting		Date for submission to Government Dept (please specify which Government Dept)	

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's budget proposals for 2013/14 were considered by Council at its meeting on 6 March 2013. Due to the challenges being faced, the Council has been forced to review a whole range of services in order to secure a balanced budget, as well as maintaining effective public services.
- 4.2 The Council last considered revisions to the City's library service almost 2 years ago in June 2011. On that occasion, the following revisions took place to the service:

	Open hours pre-June 2011	Open Hours post June 2011 to date	Change in hours	% Change in hours
Peterborough Central	52.5	52.5	0	0%
Bretton	44.5	37	-7.5	-17%
Orton	44.5	37	-7.5	-17%
Werrington	44.5	37	-7.5	-17%
Dogsthorpe	34.5	29	-5.5	-16%
Eye	21	21	0	0%
Hampton	22	21	-1	-5%
Stanground	25.5	21	-4.5	-18%
Thorney	20	21	+1	+5%
Woodston	21.5	21	-0.5	-2%

- 4.3 The Council currently spends £10,465 on library services for every 1,000 people. According to CIPFA in 2012, the average expenditure for an authority of a similar size to Peterborough was approximately £16,000 per 1,000 people. However, Peterborough's library service's performance remains high compared to the level of investment and is an effective low cost model.
- 4.4 Vivacity, which operates the City's libraries on behalf of the Council, also works collaboratively with other authorities and the consortium through which books are purchased is an example of this. The consortium arrangement in place offers excellent discounts on book spending.

5. CURRENT PROPOSALS

5.1 In considering the City's library service, consideration has been given to ways in which the savings could be made and which:-

- Still enable a comprehensive and efficient library service to be provided in the City;
- Avoid the need to close any of the City's libraries; and
- Minimise the impact on users of the library service.

5.2 As a consequence, consideration has been given to:-

(a) Revising the opening hours of four of the City's libraries by reducing the opening times by:-

- 8 hours per week at Bretton library;
- 12.5 hours per week at Central library;
- 13 hours per week at Orton library; and
- 8 hours per week at Werrington library.

(b) Whether revisions should be made to the mobile library service frequencies and stopping times and removal of one stop at Wansford Haycock (which is not in the Council's administrative district) noting that Wansford Nene Close should continue.

(c) Reducing the book fund by £50,000 per annum which can be accommodated without any short-term impact on the library service because of the favourable arrangements in place to enable Vivacity to purchase books at discounted prices.

(d) The knock on effect of reducing Vivacity's own internal management and overhead costs.

6. PUBLIC LIBRARY AND BUDGET CONSULTATION

6.1 There have been two recent public consultation exercises:-

(a) The public library consultation (carried out by Vivacity on behalf of the Council) during the period 4 February 2013 to 23 February 2013 which provided information to users on the options and proposals being considered and asked library users for their views on:-

The options for revising the opening hours at Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries as set out in Annex A to this report. Users were (i) asked to express a preference for how the reductions in opening hours could be best managed; and (ii) invited to offer any other comments.

The proposals for revising the frequencies and stopping times for the mobile library service and the removal of the Wansford Haycock stop as set out in Annex B to this report and asked for their comments on what was being proposed; and

(b) The public consultation on the Council's overall budget process which provided the opportunity to make comments on the Council's budget proposals until 5 March 2013.

6.2 Given the scale and nature of the Council's current proposals for the City's libraries, in discussion with Vivacity, it was not considered necessary for a full public needs assessment to be carried out, because the proposals do not involve closing any public libraries or making any large scale removals to the mobile library services. The proposals are much more limited in scale and it was, therefore, considered appropriate to carry out a public library consultation on revising (a) opening hours for four of the libraries; and (b) the frequencies and stopping times of the mobile library service. Even if the proposals were implemented, users still have access to (a) 10 libraries throughout the City during a variety of hours per week; and (b) a mobile library service.

7. FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION:

7.1 There has been considerable feedback as a result of the recent consultation exercises.

7.2 There have been over 3,850 responses on the public library consultation and a comprehensive digest of comments and preference received is set out in Annex C to this report.

7.3 There have been 7 responses to the Council's budget consultation process (including 3 petitions). The responses to the Council are set out in Annex D to this report. The 3 petitions are from:-

- Werrington Library (sent by the Friends of Werrington Library and with 399 names) stating that the petitioners believe that Werrington Library provides a vital service to the community and any reduction in opening hours will have a detrimental effect to that service and they urge the Council to maintain the current 37 hours;
- Bretton Library users (820 names) stating that the petitioners do not accept a reduction in opening hours and the library belongs to the community; and
- Peterborough Liberal Democrats (125 names) asking the Council to re-consider proposed cuts to services, including the Library Services (and other services) and to urge the Council to prioritise services over other projects and amend the budget proposals accordingly.

7.4 Having considered the comments and petitions referred to in paragraph 7.3 of this report, the concerns from users about not wanting any reduction in opening hours and the value they place on the libraries as a community facility are understood. However, in order to make the savings and to avoid having to close any of the City's libraries or reduce the already more limited opening hours for the smaller libraries, there is really no alternative for the Council other than to reduce the opening hours of the larger libraries at Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington.

7.5 It can also be seen from Annexes C and D to this report that users' main concerns are around the impact on:-

- More limited access to on-line services and computers;
- Support for children and young people, especially on early learning and homework; and
- Communities and neighbourhoods generally.

- 7.6 Having considered the comments in Annexes C and D as referred to in paragraph 7.5, the concerns of users are understood, and having regard to these comments, the revised opening hours for Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries have been adjusted as set out in paragraph 7.11 (Revised proposals based on user feedback) to provide longer opening hours after school and an additional late evening at Central library to enable access to books and computers.
- 7.7 It can also be seen from Annex C that around 21% of users who responded to the public library consultation would prefer no change at all to the library services currently being provided.
- 7.8 Having considered the feedback referred to in paragraph 7.7 of this report, the conclusion and reasons are as set out in 7.4 above.
- 7.9 As can also be seen from Annex C, a relatively strong consensus of users who responded to options in the public library consultation indicated a preference for option 1 if changes are made to the opening hours for Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries. The consensus of users is summarised in the table below:-

Total responses on the options set out in Annex A

Library	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Total
Bretton	349	71	49	43	512
Orton	234	79	71	57	441
Peterborough Central	821	195	208	142	1366
Werrington	328	179	85	110	702

7.10 In expressing their preferences on the options for Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries, the feedback from users indicates that they would like to have longer afternoon hours or a later closing time. As a consequence, it is proposed that the original Option 1 opening hours for these libraries be amended to address users' requests for:-

- More hours at the libraries after school ends; and
- An additional late night at Central library.

7.11 The following tables set out the revised proposals based on the user feedback from the public library consultation referred to in paragraph 7.10 above as against the original Option 1 for each of the four libraries.

Central Library			
Original Option 1		Revised proposal based on user feedback	
Monday	09:00-19:00	Monday	10:00-19:00
Tuesday	09:00-13:00	Tuesday	10:00-17:00
Wednesday	14:00-17:00	Wednesday	13:00-17:00
Thursday	09:00-17:00	Thursday	13:00-19:00
Friday	09:00-17:00	Friday	10:00-17:00
Saturday	09:00-16:00	Saturday	09:00-16:00

Bretton			
Original Option 1		Revised proposal based on user feedback	
Monday	CLOSED	Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday	10:00-16:00	Tuesday	10:00-17:00
Wednesday	13:00-18:00	Wednesday	14:00-18:00
Thursday	10:00-16:00	Thursday	10:00-17:00
Friday	10:00-17:00	Friday	10:00-16:00
Saturday	10:00-15:00	Saturday	10:00-15:00

Orton			
Original Option 1		Revised proposal based on user feedback	
Monday	10:00-16:00	Monday	11:00-17:00
Tuesday	13:00-17:00	Tuesday	13:00-17:00
Wednesday	Closed	Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10:00-18:00	Thursday	10:00-18:00
Friday	10:00-16:00	Friday	11:00-17:00
Saturday	10:00-15:00	Saturday	10:00-15:00

Werrington			
Original Option 1		Revised proposal based on user feedback	
Monday	10:00-16:00	Monday	13:00-17:00
Tuesday	10:00-18:00	Tuesday	10:00-19:00
Wednesday	13:00-17:00	Wednesday	13:00-17:00
Thursday	Closed	Thursday	Closed
Friday	10:00-16:00	Friday	10:00-17:00
Saturday	10:00-15:00	Saturday	10:00-15:00

- 7.12 It is recommended, therefore, that Cabinet agrees to revise the opening hours for Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries in line with the 'revised proposal based on user feedback' as set out in paragraph 7.11 of this report.
- 7.13 Generally, the feedback on the proposals for the mobile library service has not been supportive of the proposed changes to the service as can be seen from Annex C. It is clear from the feedback that the mobile library service is highly valued by users in the areas it visits and it is the only convenient means by which many elderly, immobile and vulnerable people can borrow and enjoy reading library books.
- 7.14 A request has been made by one of the Parish Council's to the effect that should the Council agree to reduce the frequencies and stopping times for the mobile library service, they would wish consideration be given to longer book borrowing periods.
- 7.15 It is recommended, therefore, that Cabinet does not revise the mobile library service at this time and that it retains the current frequencies and stopping times as referred to in Annex B to this report. The small amount of savings that the revisions to this service would generate are outweighed by the benefits to, and impacts on, the elderly, immobile and vulnerable users of the service.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

- 8.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken at the outset of the consultation.
- 8.2 The Council's view is that the proposals are evenly spread and do not fall disproportionately on any particular group:-
- Even if the revised opening times are implemented for Bretton, Central, Orton and Werrington libraries, there are nevertheless 10 libraries across the City which users can access at various times (and no libraries are being closed as a result of the proposals);
 - As regards the mobile library service, the impact of reduced frequencies and stopping times would slightly reduce the opportunity to access the service but the service would continue to be provided. Whilst it was proposed during the consultation that the mobile stop at Wansford Haycock be removed, there is still a mobile stop in Wansford at Nene Close.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 A public library consultation has been undertaken on the Council's behalf by Vivacity as referred to in this report.
- 9.2 Consultation has also been carried out on the Council's budget proposals as referred to in this report.
- 9.3 Discussions have also taken place with Vivacity, when drawing up the proposals on which to consult, with a view to ensuring that the Council continues to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service and the effect of mitigating any impact on any such proposals¹.

¹ *Guidance from recent reviews and a recent Select Committee report is that Local Authority needs to satisfy itself that it is meeting the library needs of the residents of the authority.*

9.4 Advice has also been obtained from Head of Legal Services on the Council's legal duties as regards the library service and provision and the requirements to consult users.

10. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

10.1 If the revised opening hours are implemented as set out in paragraph 7.8 to this report), the opening hours for Central, Bretton, Orton and Werrington libraries will be reduced as shown in the chart below.

	Current opening hours per week	Proposed opening hours	Change in hours	% Change in hours
Peterborough Central	52.5	40	-12.5	24%
Bretton	37	29	-8	22%
Orton	42	29	-13	31%
Werrington	37	29	-8	22%

10.2 The estimated financial savings that would result for a full financial year (2013/14) if the revised opening hours for the four libraries are implemented are in the region of £132,000, which is broken down as follows:-

- Bretton library: £26,000
- Orton library: £32,000
- Werrington library: £25,000
- Central library: £49,000.

10.3 If the revised mobile library frequencies and stopping times (and one removal) were to be implemented, the estimated financial saving would be in the region of £11,000 for a full financial year (2013/14). However, it is proposed in paragraph 7.12 that Cabinet does not revise the mobile library service at this time for the reasons set out in that paragraph.

10.4 If the book fund is revised by £50,000 per annum, this would reduce the overall spend to £288,000 per annum.

10.5 In addition to the direct savings referred to in paragraphs 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4, additional savings of nearly £18,000 per annum (in a full financial year) would be made in Vivacity's own internal management and overhead costs.

10.6 No libraries will close as a result of these proposals.

10.7 On a practical basis, if these proposals are agreed by Cabinet, Vivacity will have to manage the impact on the library services – in terms of users, staff and re-arranging activities within the revised opening hours. However, Vivacity will look to do this in such a way as to minimise the impact on users of the library service.

10.8 Although the savings provided in paragraphs 10.2, 10.3, 10.4 and 10.5 are full a financial year (2013/14), there will need to be a lead in period prior to implementing any changes to deal with staff related issues and to give reasonable notice to users

before any changes to the library service take effect. It is suggested that this lead in period should be 3 months with an implementation date of 1 July 2013.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The reasons are set out in the report.

12. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

12.1 During the budget discussions, various other options for making savings from Vivacity were considered, including potentially closing premises, including libraries. The Council wishes to continue to provide a comprehensive range of services across arts, culture, heritage and sports and wishes to have a full range of facilities available to its customers. The view is that the recommendations set out in this report still enable that to be achieved. As a consequence, other proposals were rejected.

13. IMPLICATIONS

13.1 If the revisions to the library service are agreed by Cabinet, a service change notice will be required for Vivacity to revise the service. Vivacity has confirmed that there will be some impact across the library service which could result in a limited number of staff efficiencies and some reduced on-going hours for a number of library staff. The Council will be responsible for paying the reasonable costs involved in staffing efficiencies. As set out in paragraph 10.8 it is suggested that any changes agreed to the library service take effect on 1 July 2013 to enable time for staffing issues to be dealt with and to give users a reasonable period of notice before any changes take effect.

13.2 The Head of Legal Services has commented on this report and has provided the following legal advice.

13.3 The Council has a duty to 'provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (PLMA 1964).

13.4 They fulfil that statutory duty the Council must provide

- facilities, sufficient in number, range and quality available for borrowing of or reference to books and other materials and
- That those facilities meet the general and special requirements of adults and children, encouraging them to make full use of the library service.

13.5 It should be noted that these proposals do not remove any of the library facilities from general public use. The Cabinet must therefore be satisfied that the change in opening hours continues to provide sufficient facilities to meet the needs of those who want to make use of the facilities.

13.6 To assess this it is necessary to consider the consultation responses and the general public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)

13.7 Consultation is required to be fair and lawful and by that the Courts have held that there must be sufficient information available in the public domain for the public to understand what the proposals are and what savings the Council hoped to achieve. The Council must show that it has taken account of the consultation responses in

considering its options. These responses are considered at paragraph 7 of this report.

13.8 The equality duty requires the Council to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.

13.9 The Council is required to conduct an equality impact assessment at a formative stage of the decision making process to ensure that an assessment of any impact is part of the development of the proposed policy. It is noted in paragraph 8 above that this was undertaken at the outset of the consultation. The assessment did not demonstrate an effect on a particular group. It is noted that all users are impacted in the same way regardless of any protected characteristics. The impact upon the elderly by withdrawal of the mobile service has been considered and formed the recommendation for the mobile library provision to remain unaltered.

13.10 The Council has a general duty of best value, which requires consideration of economic, environmental and social value in providing the library service. The Cabinet must consider that these proposals allow the Council to provide the best possible service to fulfil its duties given the resources available to it. This is referred to in paragraph 12 of this report.

13.11 No other statutory considerations are considered relevant to this report.

13.12 The Head of Strategic Finance has commented on this report and has provided advice that the proposals will deliver the saving set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan except for £33,000 for continuing with the existing service levels from April to June 2013, and the costs of implementing the change.

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

Results of the consultation exercises referred to in this report