

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 19 September 2017

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Update on the Libraries Transformation Programme (draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy)

Purpose: To provide Cabinet with an update on the Libraries Transformation Programme, and for Cabinet to consider consulting on the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy for a 12 week period from September to December 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS: Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) agree that the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy is publicly consulted on for a 12 week period from September to December 2017**
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1 Background Information

1.1 In December 2015, Cabinet approved the Libraries Transformation Programme (LTP), including an Internal Review of the Library and Information Service (LIS) and the development of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy (LSCS). In July 2016, Cabinet approved changes to library opening hours which were implemented in November last year.

1.2 The July 2016 Cabinet report noted that the library service remains popular, with 231,559 registered members and 1.48 million visits to East Sussex libraries in 2016/17. However, patterns of library usage are changing locally and nationally, with a major declining trend in visits to libraries and loans (visits are down by over 40% in East Sussex in the past 10 years), and an increase in take up of online library services.

2. Update on the Libraries Transformation Programme (LTP)

2.1 The draft LSCS is based on a robust assessment of the needs of residents of the county as a whole and within specific communities, and has been guided by priority outcomes informed by the Needs Assessment. The LSCS outlines what is required from the service in future and how this can be delivered, by focussing on outcomes rather than the existing service. The draft LSCS is considered to be the most appropriate strategy to prioritise resources in order to meet the needs which have been identified at the current time. The draft LSCS is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and a detailed Rationale and Impact Assessment for the Proposed Needs-Based Library Service is attached as Appendix 2.

2.2 Under section 7 of the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964* it is: 'the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'. A detailed assessment of needs is presented in the Technical Appendices which have been produced to support the development of the proposals contained in the draft LSCS. A summary document of the Technical Appendices is attached as Appendix 3 and the Technical Appendices themselves are attached as Appendices 4-10. These consider carefully whether the draft LSCS would enable the Council to continue to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. The conclusion drawn in the draft LSCS is that it would.

2.3 The draft LSCS has identified the context in which the LIS in East Sussex is operating in terms of reducing demand for traditional library services, the needs of the population of the county and the ESCC's priority outcomes, as well as the financial challenges facing the authority. This included a consideration of factors which may influence need in the future, such as changes in population and housing growth, the age and health of the population, economic factors, and developments in new technology (which may change the way people access library services in future).

2.4 The Needs Assessment identified significant areas of need across a broad range of indicators, where the LIS would be well placed to help achieve better outcomes for the people of East Sussex. In addition to providing a core library offer accessible to all residents, by re-prioritising and developing new, more targeted services we have a key opportunity through the draft LSCS to support and empower those with the greatest needs to make potentially transformational changes to their life chances.

2.5 Literacy skills underpin success in all walks of life, providing children with the building-blocks for future academic and employment success, thereby improving their future prosperity, health and wellbeing. Young children's early communication and vocabulary skills are particularly important. Children who are disadvantaged do worse at school than those from non-disadvantaged backgrounds. At the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) only 51% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard for reading, 60% for writing, and 52% for grammar, punctuation and spelling, compared with 72%, 79%, and 74% respectively for non-disadvantaged pupils. At GCSE (Key Stage 4) 39% of disadvantaged pupils achieve A*-C in both English and maths, compared with 71% of non-disadvantaged pupils. In 2016 about 29% of East Sussex state school pupils were disadvantaged at Key Stage 2 and 25% at Key Stage 4.

2.6 Similarly, there are areas of East Sussex among the 10% of most deprived areas in England for working age adults with no or low qualifications or who cannot speak English well or at all. Parts of the county have an adult population with skills below a level which means they could not compare products and services for the best buy, or work out a household budget. There are also parts of East Sussex in the top 10% of worst areas of England for health deprivation and disability. There is a 13 year difference in life expectancy at birth in different parts of the county.

2.7 Many of these identified needs are most prevalent in and around the coastal towns of Newhaven, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings. However, need is not exclusive to these areas, and there are areas of need in other parts of the county, notably around Hailsham and Rye and for some indicators around Uckfield, Lewes and Crowborough.

2.8 Drawing on the Needs Assessment, the draft LSCS proposes an overall Vision for the service which recognises the importance of the LIS to support residents and communities by promoting reading and knowledge as a route to leading fulfilling lives. Four Strategic Outcomes propose the future focus for delivery of the service. They are: improving child and adult literacy, supporting the economy, better health and wellbeing and increasing digital inclusion. Each of the Strategic Outcomes will be delivered through a range of enhanced and new services which are described in the draft LSCS and in more detail in the supporting documents. These four Strategic Outcomes are also closely aligned to, and will enable the LIS to support, the Council's four overarching priority outcomes of driving sustainable economic growth, keeping vulnerable people safe, helping people help themselves and making best use of resources.

2.9 The draft LSCS therefore proposes that the way in which people access library services would change, with resources targeted to communities where we have identified highest need. The key elements of the draft LSCS are as follows: (i) An enhanced eLibrary service - we would continue to expand the range of online services and materials that are offered through the eLibrary, our online library service, and would actively promote the benefits of the eLibrary to different groups according to their needs; (ii) A new Children and Young People's Offer to improve literacy - we would work closely with other services across all ages (including pre-school), to encourage children and their families to use the LIS. We would offer a range of free, targeted services to support literacy in schools and other settings in areas of identified need and would also provide resources to schools on a pay-as-you-go basis, ceasing the current Schools Library and Museum Service. Further details of the proposed support for schools are set out on page 18 of the draft LSCS. (iii) A focus on outreach - we would work closely with other ESCC services and partners to reach communities and individuals with the greatest needs and promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings, such as Children's Centres and community settings. The draft LSCS identifies further potential for other organisations to be located and deliver services from library buildings in the proposed needs-based service and invites any interested parties to make contact during the consultation period.

2.10 The Accessibility Analysis undertaken for the draft LSCS draws on national research to establish that a journey time of 20-25 minutes by car or public transport is reasonable to get to a library. Considering also the evidence from the Needs Assessment of where needs are greatest across East Sussex, the draft LSCS proposes a smaller network of 17 library buildings and the cessation of the Mobile Library Service. This proposal would ensure that there remains a very high level of accessibility to a library by public transport or by car across the county within a reasonable journey time, including in rural communities, and would also ensure that libraries are geographically well-placed to meet the identified needs. The enhanced eLibrary (see 2.9 above) would offer a complementary means of accessing library services remotely, including the ability to renew, reserve and download items. We would provide additional support for our most vulnerable and isolated customers who are unable to travel to libraries or use the eLibrary through an improved Home Library Service. We would also introduce a Community Library Membership which would enable individuals to borrow a larger number of items from a library on behalf of others within their local community for a prolonged period.

2.11 The seven libraries which it is proposed would not be retained are Langney, Mayfield, Ore, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Ringmer, and Willingdon. Based on registered home addresses, our analysis shows that

100% of the members of these seven libraries live within a 20 minute journey time by car to one of the proposed 17 remaining libraries, and over 96% are within a 30 minute journey time by public transport. In the case of Mayfield, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Ringmer and Willingdon, the Needs Assessment shows that the libraries are in lower areas of need relative to other parts of East Sussex. In order to direct resources to where they are needed most it is proposed that these libraries are not retained.

2.12 The needs assessment shows high levels of need around Langney Library. However, the proximity of Langney to Eastbourne and Hampden Park libraries means that it is possible to meet needs in Langney from these two locations. The running costs for Langney Library are relatively high because it is in a commercial retail unit within a shopping centre, which we pay rent for, whereas Hampden Park Library is owned by the Council, so it has lower running costs. In addition to the provision of libraries in Hampden Park and Eastbourne, we propose to deliver an outreach service for children and families in the Shinewater Children's Centre. For these reasons it is not proposed to retain Langney Library.

2.13 The Needs Assessment also shows high levels of need around Ore. However, the proximity of Ore to Hollington and the Hastings main library means that it is possible to meet needs in Ore from the completely refurbished Hastings Library (which will re-open in spring 2018) and from Hollington Library. The East Hastings Children's Centre would also be an effective way of meeting needs in Ore, delivering an outreach service for children and families who are identified by the Needs Assessment as one of the groups the Library and Information Service is well placed to support. Hastings Library and Hollington Library are well placed to meet the remaining needs within the community. For these reasons it is not proposed to retain Ore Library.

2.14 92% of members of the current 24 libraries in East Sussex would be unaffected. For the population as a whole, over 86% of the population would be within a 20 minute journey time by public transport and over 99% within a 20 minute journey by car, and therefore within the reasonable travel time of 20 to 25 minutes by either mode (page 25 in the draft LSCS).

2.15 The Mobile Library Service currently has just over 2,900 members. Of these, just over 1,100 have used the service in the last 12 months. It offers a three weekly service to 88 stops across the county, predominantly in rural locations. Of the 88 stops, 82 have an alternative library that can be accessed by public transport, of which 76 are within a 30 minute journey from their existing mobile library stop. All 88 stops are within a 20 minute drive of an alternative library (page 29 in the draft LSCS).

2.16 Specific consideration has been given in the draft LSCS to options for the seven libraries that we do not propose to retain to be community run or community funded if there is a desire within communities for the libraries to continue to operate. The draft LSCS identifies potential options for keeping these seven libraries within the LIS if communities or other organisations wish to fund them in full, in place of ESCC funding. Alternatively, communities or other groups or organisations may wish to take over the leases of buildings or purchase them, and run them as completely independent libraries, or use them as other community assets.

2.17 The draft LSCS includes a summary of the findings of a draft Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The draft EqIA is an assessment of the impact of the proposals and further detailed assessment will be undertaken throughout the development of the LSCS and following public consultation. This current draft identifies three main groups who it is considered might be more affected by the proposals. These are those aged 75 and over, those with certain disabilities and those in rural communities. Rurality is not a protected characteristic under the EqIA but is an additional factor that ESCC takes into account considering the impact of the proposals. Those aged 75 and over and those with certain disabilities are primarily identified for a common reason, in that they are likely to be less able to travel to an alternative library and in some cases may be lacking the digital skills or technology to access the services via the eLibrary. For those living in rural communities the impact is likely to be that they would have further to travel to an alternative library. Appropriate mitigations are proposed for each group (page 29 in the draft LSCS).

2.18 An initial options appraisal was undertaken to explore the advantages, disadvantages and risks for ESCC of different delivery models for the draft LSCS. This included the current in-house model (with re-engineering through the proposed LSCS), a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC), a Public Sector Mutual (PSM), outsourcing to a 'for profit' or third sector provider and a joint venture. The options appraisal identified the LATC and in-house (with re-engineering) as the two highest scoring options for East Sussex, with the LATC scoring slightly higher. We visited a number of library services during the development of the Strategy, including Suffolk and Devon County Councils, both of which have created PSMs for their library services. Both PSMs have savings programmes that include many of the options we have either delivered through the Internal Review of the current LIS or that we propose to deliver through the LSCS. The options appraisal concluded that there is currently no convincing argument for changing from the current in-house model in order to implement the LSCS. Discussions have taken place with the District and

Borough Councils to explore opportunities for the potential of a Service Level Agreement to operate libraries on behalf of ESCC, and we will continue these during the consultation period.

2.19 The proposals will provide total savings of £653k (see 3.2 below). These consist of £172k from the proposed reduction in library buildings (including frontline staff for those buildings); £73k from the proposal to cease the Mobile Library Service (including staffing); £137k from management savings associated with the reduction in library buildings; £171k from income generation and shared efficiencies by co-locating library services with other ESCC services; and £100k from a further reduction in the stock fund.

2.20 The proposals in the draft LSCS and the supporting appendices have drawn on the findings of significant public consultation which has been carried out as part of the wider LTP. Additional stakeholder engagement has been undertaken during the development of the draft LSCS with a range of organisations representing different sectors, including children, education and further education, the voluntary and community sector, including rural communities, and organisations representing businesses, in order to develop a fuller understanding of need and shared countywide priorities.

2.21 Following consultation, if agreed by Cabinet, and in making any decision in terms of any final proposals, Members will be required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the PSED'). The EqIA is carried out to identify any adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the proposals for those with protected characteristics and any final proposal will take into account the findings about impact identified through the consultation and the EqIA process. It is anticipated that the consultation will help address existing gaps in knowledge in the EqIA process, and the results will be used to inform a detailed assessment of potential mitigations that can be undertaken to minimise any negative impacts.

2.22 It is recommended that a public consultation on the proposals in the draft LSCS be undertaken from September to December 2017, following which all the supporting appendices and EqIA would be amended and updated proposals would be presented to Cabinet in March 2018. During the consultation period, we would engage with all relevant stakeholders including District and Borough Councils, all existing partners and stakeholder organisations, volunteers and communities to ensure they are given the opportunity to comment on the draft proposals. The draft consultation questionnaire for the LSCS is attached as Appendix 11. If approved, the LSCS would be implemented from April 2018.

3 Financial Analysis

3.1 The LTP has an agreed savings target of £2m by the end of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) period in 2018/19. The net revenue budget of the LIS in 2017/18 is £5.4m (including depreciation costs of £853k), consisting of £3m of staffing costs (94.5 full-time equivalents) and £2.4m of non-staffing costs. The LTP is on target to deliver in full the identified savings of £1.25m from the Internal Review of the service by 2018/19. The Internal Review included a reduction in front line and back office staff (£500k), the implementation of amended opening hours (£500k) and a reduction in the libraries stock fund (£250k)

3.2 The proposals within the draft LSCS would deliver a further saving of £653k as a result of the implementation of a needs-based library service and through a combination of income generation and shared efficiencies by co-locating LIS services with other ESCC services. This is £97k less than the £750k savings target for the Strategy in the MTFP and the shortfall would be met from elsewhere within the Communities, Economy and Transport Department budget. Overall, this would equate to £1.903m toward the total £2m savings target. If the LSCS is implemented as proposed, the net revenue budget for the LIS will have been reduced by 46% since 2014/15.

3.3 Once the refurbishment of Hastings Library is complete in the spring of 2018, ESCC will have spent approximately £20.4m in the past decade on improvements and major refurbishment of East Sussex library buildings. This included a specific on-going allocation for minor refurbishments, which was contained within the Capital Programme to 2012/13, but was not part of the subsequent Capital Programmes for 2013/14 onwards, apart from where there was slippage that was carried forward. The current Capital Programme is a core needs programme, which would therefore include priority repairs and maintenance works, but not lower priority works that would be important for a library environment as defined in the draft LSCS.

3.4 Following the development of the LSCS, an analysis has been undertaken to assess the expenditure required to keep the proposed 17 library buildings in their current condition and stop them from deteriorating. It is estimated that this will cost around £2.24m over the next five years. However this figure does not include any allocation for day to day reactive maintenance, or specific maintenance items such as new roofs, windows or boiler replacements, as these will be funded through the planned maintenance programme. Of the £2.24m it is estimated that there is currently a notional provision of £76k within the core needs maintenance Capital Programme to undertake some of the identified works, which leaves a current shortfall of around £2.164m over the next five years. Unless this enhanced work is funded, the condition of

libraries will start to deteriorate and create a poor environment from which to deliver the service, as well as a poor image of ESCC. There are risks to service delivery from the increased potential for short-notice library closures to deal with urgent, reactive maintenance issues instead of a more efficient and cost-effective planned maintenance and refurbishment programme. Therefore a Libraries Refurbishment and Maintenance Programme will be included within the RPPR process for consideration for inclusion within the Capital Programme from 2018/19.

4 Libraries Scrutiny Review Board (SRB)

4.1 The Libraries SRB was established to provide critical challenge to the development of the draft LSCS. The SRB was formed of Members from the Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee. The SRB will have met six times between October 2016 and September 2017. It is expected that a report in response to the proposals in the draft LSCS and supplementary documents will be produced by the SRB prior to the Cabinet meeting.

5 One Council approach

5.1 The draft LSCS has considered how we can modernise, improve and enhance the LIS to meet current and future needs and to ensure it is focussed on outcomes for the whole population of the county. To achieve this, a One Council approach to governance and delivery for the LTP was adopted, comprising a formal project board and project team with members from all Council departments. This has resulted in specific proposals to deliver a library service which works more closely with other ESCC services and with external partners, to achieve shared goals. This would include working with Children's Services to actively promote and deliver some library services within Children's Centres, and through Health Visitors working with families to promote the LIS's offer. We would work with Adult Social Care and Health to train and support volunteers who deliver the Home Library Service and seek to build its capacity to support our most vulnerable and isolated customers.

5.2 In addition, an Integrated Locality Team (ILT) will be based in Seaford Library from the autumn of 2017. This supports the East Sussex Better Together transformation programme in its aim of achieving a fully integrated health and social care system locally by 2018, a key enabler of which is the physical co-location of health and social care staff. There are potential savings to both the LIS and the ILT from more efficient use of the available space in the library and operational benefits for both clients and staff alike from reduced travel time and journeys from a community base. The East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) website, which is provided by the LIS, is being enhanced with Adult Social Care and Health as a common platform for online community health information.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 This report presents proposals for the implementation of the draft LSCS that could achieve £653k of savings and create a modern, sustainable library service for East Sussex, which prioritises the needs of the county and is able to adapt to future needs. This would deliver total savings for the LTP of £1.903m against a target of £2m and is considered to be the most appropriate strategy to prioritise resources in order to meet the needs which have been identified at the current time.

6.2 In addition to providing a core library offer that would retain a very high level of accessibility to all those who live, work and study in East Sussex, by re-prioritising and developing new, more targeted services the draft LSCS presents a key opportunity for us to support and empower those with the greatest needs to make potentially transformational changes to their life chances. If the proposed needs-based library service were to be implemented following the consultation, resources would be targeted to communities where we have identified these highest needs and, in partnership with others, we would develop and expand our services, including an enhanced eLibrary and Home Library Service, a new Children's and Young People's Offer to support literacy, and increased outreach work in our most disadvantaged communities. There would be a smaller network of library buildings, with 17 libraries in appropriate locations across the county according to need, and 92% of members of the current 24 libraries would be unaffected. Over 86% of East Sussex residents would be within a 20 minute journey time to a library by public transport and over 99% within a 20 minute journey by car.

6.3 Subject to agreement by Cabinet the draft LSCS would undergo a public consultation during September to December 2017. The findings of the public consultation would be analysed and the draft LSCS and the supporting appendices, which form the statutory assessment of needs, including the full EqIA, would be reviewed. The outcome of the consultation and a draft LSCS will be presented to Cabinet in March 2018, with a view, should it be agreed, to implementation from April 2018.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None