



Cabinet
6 March 2018
Appendix 1

Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy
Key Changes

Following the public consultation on the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy, all of the feedback we received has been analysed and considered, and following this the Strategy and the Rationale and Impact Assessment have been revised, for consideration by Cabinet in March 2018. This document outlines the key changes that have been made to these documents. Key changes to the wording from the draft to the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy are shown in red.

Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy Document

Foreword by Councillor Bill Bentley – pages 2-3

Updated to reflect the results of the public consultation on the draft Strategy and to summarise the key changes made to the Strategy.

Executive Summary – pages 4-7

Updated to include a complete summary of the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

Introduction – page 8

Includes a summary of the public consultation exercise and the engagement with members of the public and different organisations.

What does the library service look like now? – page 11

In response to feedback about the low level of awareness of the services and resources of the eLibrary, we have added a box summarising what the eLibrary is and what people can use it for, which is as follows:

The eLibrary

The eLibrary provides a wide range of online services and resources, with the majority available 24 hours a day. All of the content in the eLibrary is FREE of charge.

In the eLibrary you can:

- Download eBooks and eAudiobooks to your own device (computer, phone or tablet) FOR FREE without having to go to a library. This includes both fiction and non-fiction for adults and children, and just like regular books, you can download these items for a three week period.
- Download a wide range of eMagazines, both current and backdated copies, free of charge to your own personal device.

- Search all the stock across East Sussex County Council libraries using our online catalogue.
- Access your library account, renew your loans and place reservations on items you would like to borrow, using your library card number and PIN.
- Access ESCIS, our online database of local and community information and events across East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. ESCIS is a free resource for everyone. It is free to be listed and free to use. Over 8,000 organisations use ESCIS – visit www.escis.org.uk

**Visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/
to find out more and explore the eLibrary**

Strategic Outcomes – page 12

We have given more prominence to the importance of numeracy as well as literacy to people's life chances in the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy. The Needs Assessment identifies deprivation in numeracy as part of the overall indicators of education deprivation. Including numeracy within our Strategic Outcomes better reflects the range of materials and services already provided by the Library and Information Service, and those proposed in the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy. This Strategic Outcome now reads:

Improving child and adult literacy and numeracy. We will provide a range of quality materials and personalised support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure of reading as well as the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock for people.

Our offer for improving child and adult literacy and numeracy – page 16

We have revised our offer for improving child and adult literacy to include numeracy, in line with the revised Strategic Outcome. In addition, following the feedback received during the consultation on our proposals, we have included the piloting of Homework Clubs and Study Clubs as services we will take forward. Our offer now includes the following:

- **Homework clubs in libraries.** We will pilot homework clubs aimed at 9 - 13 year olds in selected libraries. These will run during term-time at the end of the school day on one or two days per week during library opening hours. These will either be staff or volunteer led, and will provide a quiet space for children to do their homework, with some supervision and support, although children can, of course, use the library at any other time to do their homework.

- Study Clubs in libraries. For older children and young people aged 14-18, we will pilot Study Clubs in selected libraries. These will operate in the run-up to exam periods and provide a quiet study space for revision or self-directed study on one or two days per week when the library is closed, including one evening. We would not provide any academic support during these sessions, but the library will be supervised by a member of staff, with the support of volunteers. Children and young people can, of course, use the library at any other time for study or revision.

Code Clubs for children – page 18

Following the feedback received during the consultation on our proposals, we have included the provision of Code Clubs in selected libraries as a separate strand of our offer for supporting the economy. This section of the offer now reads:

We will provide Code Clubs in selected libraries. Our Code Clubs are part of a nationwide network of after-school coding clubs for children aged 8–12 years old. Using specially created Code Club materials, the sessions are designed to build confidence and encourage creativity in 3 different coding languages, helping children learn computing skills that could unlock a wide range of future career opportunities.

Culture Offer – page 18

The revised Strategy describes on page 18 the new Culture Offer that will be launched in 2018/19. This is in response to the Society of Chief Librarian’s Culture Offer launched in autumn 2017 and builds on the proposal included in the draft Strategy to offer more events. This section of the offer now reads:

We will work closely with other cultural and heritage institutions in East Sussex to provide an expanded programme of free or paid events in libraries to support personal development and the wider cultural economy, with particular emphasis on local literature and the creative industries in the county. Wherever possible, we will seek external funding to deliver free events and activities. We will also promote libraries as spaces that can be used for the arts, covering activities such as creative writing workshops, book and poetry readings, exhibition areas, and venues for outreach by other cultural organisations.

Outreach for isolated or vulnerable residents – page 19

The revised Strategy provides more details of enhancements to our Home Library Service, including joint working to deliver the service more effectively. During the public consultation, initial discussions have taken place with the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to explore opportunities for joint working to deliver the Home Library Service, which provides reading materials for isolated or vulnerable residents. Our offer for better health and wellbeing now reads as follows:

We will continue to offer our Home Library Service to provide reading materials for isolated or vulnerable residents, and we will enhance it by offering Make Every Contact Count training for Home Library Service volunteers, to enable them to support vulnerable individuals in their physical and mental health through signposting and early intervention.

At present our Home Library Service has enough volunteers to serve all of our isolated and vulnerable customers, but we will work with partners to develop additional volunteering capacity and opportunities within the service, to ensure that we retain the capacity to continue to serve an increasingly elderly population with more complex needs.

Initial discussions have taken place with the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to explore opportunities for joint working. We will also continue to advertise volunteering opportunities via our ESCC website, in libraries, and through our existing voluntary and community sector networks, for county-wide volunteering opportunities.

Promotion of the eLibrary – page 20

The feedback received through the public consultation has highlighted that we need to do more to actively promote the range of services available in the eLibrary, as well as to promote better the free I.T. help and advice available both online and in libraries, so that more customers can benefit from our online services. Our commitment to doing this has been included as a new section of the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy, and reads as follows:

We will continue to expand the range of online services and materials that are offered through the eLibrary, our online library service. We will actively promote the benefits of the eLibrary to different groups according to their needs in the following ways:

- New step by step video guides on our website, which will show users all of the different things that they can do with the eLibrary, from downloading eBooks and eMagazines, to searching the catalogue and reserving or renewing an item.
- We will continue to include regular articles on the eLibrary and the resources it has available to users in our monthly e-newsletter to all library members whose email addresses we hold.
- Our computer buddies and staff will be on hand within libraries to provide any customers who would like a demonstration or help in accessing the eLibrary.

Library stock focussed on needs – page 21

We have included a new section in the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy to explain how we will ensure the money we spend on stock is more closely aligned to the Strategic Outcomes and focussed on meeting needs. This section reads:

We have historically spent more on library stock than comparable library authorities. As part of the Libraries Transformation Programme we have been reducing the amount we spend on stock to bring our spending down into line with our comparator authorities. The LSCS proposed a final reduction, and this will be implemented in 2018/19 reducing our spend on stock by a further £100,000.

In future, we will ensure that a greater proportion of the total amount we spend on stock is more closely aligned to the Strategic Outcomes for this Strategy. We will increase the proportion of our stock spending on children's fiction and non-fiction, to support child literacy and ensure we provide resources to support adults with literacy problems. We will also spend proportionally more of our stock fund on resources and information to enable people to take greater ownership of their own health and wellbeing, to be more resilient, increasingly independent, self-sufficient and resourceful, and thus better able to help themselves. This includes resources like our Books on Prescription selection.

A focus on outreach – page 21

We received feedback from a number of consultees that our proposals for the community outreach we proposed in Ore and Langney were not sufficiently detailed. We have therefore provided further details of what form this outreach service will take and included it in the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy as follows:

We will work closely with other County Council services and partners to make sure that we reach communities and individuals with the greatest needs. We will promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings including the East Hastings and Shinewater Children's Centres, schools and community venues.

For example, at the East Hastings and Shinewater Children's Centres our librarians will work alongside Children's Centre staff to support pre-school learning and children's speech and language development. We will train volunteers to deliver rhymetimes and storytimes at the centres, and we will provide collections of children's stock. Librarians will also run outreach sessions to raise awareness of the library offer and its benefits e.g. our eLibrary, encouraging parents and carers to join the library if they are not already members, and promoting the benefits of reading to children. We will also signpost parents and carers to the opportunities for adult learning that are available from the Library and Information Service.

Although this was not raised with any great frequency in the consultation responses or engagement during the consultation, our analysis of the consultation questionnaire responses leads us to believe that there may be a low level of awareness of the Home Library Service among respondents as a means of accessing the library service for people who cannot easily use a library due to disability or frailty, or are caring for someone who cannot be left. We have therefore

included in the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy our plans to promote the Home Library Service better. A new section in the Strategy reads:

We will continue to develop our Home Library Service where volunteers deliver library services through outreach to people in their homes, according to their needs. We will ensure that those who could most benefit will be aware of the service and will promote it better by:

- Including regular articles about the benefits of the Home Library Service for both customers and those volunteering to deliver it, in our monthly e-newsletter to all library members whose email addresses we hold
- Writing to all parish and town councils with an article about the Home Library Service and ask them to include it in parish magazines
- Contacting all relevant community organisations, including East Sussex Seniors' Association, to provide information about the Home Library Service and ask them to promote it through their channels
- Including information about the Home Library service when promoting library services through outreach activities

We are keen to hear from anyone who wishes to volunteer to deliver the Home Library Service, please see further information on our website <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/activities-and-events/library-volunteers/>, ask at a library or ring 0345 6080196.

Support for schools – page 23

In response to the feedback we received and discussions with schools, we will proceed to implement the Teacher's Library Membership and have provided more detail regarding how this would operate:

We will provide teachers in East Sussex schools with a membership which allows them to borrow items on a long loan from libraries for use in the classroom. Teachers will be able to apply for a Teachers Library Membership on behalf of their school, enabling them to reserve items online from a special Schools Catalogue, which will include books from our former SLAMS stock, both fiction and non-fiction, to support the curriculum and promote reading for pleasure. The Teachers Library Membership will allow 30-40 items to be borrowed at a time. Teachers will be able to pick up and return books to an East Sussex library of their choice.

Northiam Village library – page 29

An update on our ongoing discussions with Northiam Parish Council and the volunteers who run Northiam village library is given on page 29 of the Strategy, setting out that Northiam Parish Council and Beckley Parish Council will take over the financial responsibility for the Village Library.

We have held discussions with Northiam Parish Council and the volunteers who run the library. The Parish Council has agreed to fund the running costs of the Village Library with Beckley Parish Council and to submit a proposal to

the Local Planning Authority seeking the release of up to £5,000 of funding which has been provided under a section 106 agreement in relation to housing development in the area for enhanced library provision. This could include works to enable additional services or space to be provided as well as internal re-organisation to increase capacity such as upgrading ICT equipment and self-service facilities and/or new, improved counters and shelving. Additional supplies of books could also potentially be provided.

If the community also wished to do so, it could use the new Community Library Membership (see below) to ensure there is a continued supply of books for Northiam Village Library. This would provide a selection of more up-to-date stock from the wider ESCC library catalogue than is currently available from the Village Library, and would potentially be an improvement to the service offered to residents.

Community Library Membership – page 30

The proposals for a Community Library Membership were well-received during the consultation and a new box on page 30 of the revised Strategy document explains how this will work:

Community Library Membership

We will introduce a new Community Library Membership in 2018/19. This will allow communities to borrow a range of items which can be made available locally to the community.

The Community Library Membership will require someone in the community to apply for the Community Library Membership and to take a lead role to organise the collection and make it available. For example, it could be co-ordinated by a member of a Town or Parish Council, a member of a community organisation or a local volunteer. The collection could be made available within a village hall, community café or a similar setting, but it would need to be somewhere that the public have access to, and where the collection can be properly looked after.

We will provide a core collection (the number of items will depend on the size of the community) and then it will be possible for the Community Library Member to change the stock by making a selection online from our Community Library Catalogue and exchanging stock at a library of their choice. The Community Library Member would do this on a voluntary basis.

Volunteering opportunities – page 36

We have updated this section of the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy to provide details of the number of people who came forward during the consultation, expressing an interest in volunteering with the Library and Information Service, or with a community organisation that may be interested in setting up a community library.

Community library provision - page 37

In our draft Strategy, we proposed two potential options for keeping the seven libraries within the East Sussex Library and Information Service, these were:

- If they can be funded wholly by communities or other organisations
- If communities or other groups or organisations were able to take over the leases of buildings or purchase them and operate them as completely independent libraries or use them for other purposes.

In response to the feedback we received from community representatives and discussions we have had with them, we have included a revised section in the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy which sets out our approach to the option of community libraries:

During the public consultation on the draft Strategy we have met with many of the communities affected by the changes we proposed and listened carefully to all of their ideas and suggestions. We have supplied a large amount of information about the costs and practicalities of running these libraries, so that communities could develop proposals to take them over or fund them, if they were able and wished to do so.

Many of the communities we talked to understandably did not wish to lose well-regarded local services and argued strongly for the County Council to retain and fully fund all of the seven libraries. We did not receive any formal proposals for communities to take over the running or funding of any of the seven libraries as a preferred option to the County Council continuing to operate and fund them.

As we have explained earlier in this strategy, having carefully considered all of the representations and feedback received during the consultation we remain of the view that the seven libraries and the Mobile Library Service are not required for us to provide a needs-based library service that meets our statutory duty, and there would not, therefore, be a case for continuing to provide ongoing funding for them.

During the public consultation, communities also told us that the two options we proposed were rather 'all or nothing' options. They felt that community-funded models would be expensive for local Council Tax payers if the costs were raised through a local Council Tax precept.

Community-run libraries could help reduce costs by using volunteers and potentially making savings on business rates and at the same time provide a more tailored library service that was better suited to the community, e.g. potentially longer opening hours and combining the library with other community services and activities. However, communities felt that one of the key benefits that would be lost under this kind of model would be the access to up-to-date county-wide library stock and the free People's Network computers, with all of the resources they bring. They therefore felt that any future community-run library would need to retain these features.

Communities also told us that the initial costs of stocking a community-run library would be high, and that the costs of renting or buying at their market value the buildings in which the libraries are currently based would be a significant barrier, considering all of the other challenges that there would be in setting up a community library.

We recognise these challenges and the desirability of a different model. If Cabinet endorse the recommendation to close the 7 libraries, we propose that any community group that comes forward with a viable 3 year proposal to take on one of these libraries in a building that the County Council owns could be provided with a lease on a peppercorn rent, for an agreed duration (Ore, Polegate, Willingdon libraries). This would be subject to approval of the proposal by the Director for Communities, Economy and Transport in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive. In addition, we could lend, again on a peppercorn basis, a selection of core starter stock and the current fixtures and fittings of the library. Where we do not own the building, we will do our best to assist in assigning or sub-letting leases, where this is permitted under the lease and subject to any other restrictions such as planning permissions (Langney, Mayfield, Pevensey Bay, and Ringmer libraries). However, if communities wished to continue to provide county-wide stock on an ongoing basis, which would require access to the Library Management System (LMS – the computer system that holds our catalogue and manages issues, renewals and reservations) and to offer the People’s Network computers, the cost of this would need to be reimbursed to the County Council. We also believe that, in these cases, we would need to provide ESCC staff time to act as a point of contact between the community library and the County Council, to resolve any issues.

We have not received any proposals that would meet the above criteria, which do not require an ongoing cash contribution from the County Council, and as set out earlier in the Strategy, the seven libraries will therefore close as County Council operated libraries. However, we are happy to continue to explore any new options or work with communities to revise any existing proposals that would enable a viable community library model to be implemented, whether this enabled a seamless transition from ESCC to community library after the library closes, or whether it would mean that the library might re-open at a later date as a community library.

Appendix 1. Rationale and Impact Assessment for a Needs-Based Library Service. - Page 13

This document now provides a fuller description of some of the mitigations that we will put in place to support those that may be impacted by the Strategy, including the Community Library card (page 13) and better promotion of the eLibrary (page 14).

A number of technical appendices were developed to support the development of the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy and Members had due regard to these in September 2017 when a decision was made to consult on the draft Strategy.

In light of the comments received during the consultation, we have reviewed the entire evidence base presented in the technical appendices and have carefully considered whether any new evidence has been put forward through the consultation, by individuals or organisations, which is contrary to the detailed evidence which supported the draft Strategy.

Having analysed all of the responses and revisited the evidence base again, we do not consider that new information has been presented in the consultation responses and other forms of stakeholder engagement which means that the evidence base for the draft Strategy was incorrect or had been wrongly interpreted and therefore no changes have been made to the technical appendices.

Members must therefore have regard again to the evidence presented to them on 19 September 2017, including the technical appendices, when making their decision on whether or not to agree the revised Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy. The technical appendices are re-presented alongside the revised Strategy so that Members can review these documents when making their decision.