

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Culture and Recreation
Date:	20 January 2012
Title:	Proposed Changes to Library Opening Hours in Hampshire
Reference:	3095
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report outlines the proposed changes in library opening hours following a three month public consultation during the autumn of 2011. The changes, if agreed, will see a reduction in opening hours from 1,939 to 1,827, a total of 112 and a 5.8% decrease. Along with some other savings made in the service, a total saving of £446,000 will be made which will contribute towards the 8% budget cut needed for 2012/13.

2. Contextual information

2.1. Over the last two and a half years Hampshire's Library and Information Service (LIS) has made savings of £2.48 million by :

- Restructuring its senior management and middle management teams
- Restructuring the Mobile Library Service
- Restructuring Library Headquarters posts

2.2. The scope for further efficiencies in operating costs in these areas is now limited and the need to save a further £450,000 of savings required a review of the number of library buildings and their opening hours.

3. Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

3.1. The primary legislation governing libraries in England and Wales is the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This requires that:

“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service”.

'Comprehensive and efficient' are not defined, it is the responsibility of every library authority to determine how to deliver a public library service in their area 'set in the context of local need: that is specifically of those who live, work and study in the local area'.¹

- 3.2. It is important that LIS takes account of the Act in all of its plans for the Library Service.

4. Current Library Provision in Hampshire

- 4.1. There are 53 libraries and Discovery Centres in Hampshire, located in urban areas and in many of Hampshire's market towns and larger villages. In a report to Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Culture, Communities and Recreation in September 2009², Hampshire's libraries were categorised into the following types:

- Discovery Centres (3)
- Large libraries (12)
- Medium libraries (14)
- Small libraries (8)
- Neighbourhood libraries (16)

- 4.2. These are listed in Appendix 1.

5. Proposed Library Provision in Hampshire

- 5.1. The proposals for the future of static libraries are underpinned by LIS's commitment to the residents of Hampshire:

*Hampshire's Library and Information Service aims to provide access to library services for everyone in Hampshire, regardless of age and income and within reasonable travelling distances. 'Reasonable' is defined in relation to travel cost, time taken, frequency of timetabled routes for public transport or degree of physical difficulty involved. This service will be provided through the appropriate mix of static and mobile libraries.*³

- 5.2. In order to meet this commitment LIS undertook a thorough review of all Hampshire's libraries and Discovery Centres and identified a revised network designed to ensure everyone has reasonable access to library services in Hampshire. The plans also took account of the financial constraints of budget cuts identified for 2012/13 and beyond.

¹ Department for Culture, Media and Sport website - <http://www.culture.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.hants.gov.uk/decisions/decisions-docs/090910-emccra-R0904114320.html>

³ Executive Member Decision Day 14 January 2010 – Outline Proposal for Future Static Library Provision in Hampshire.

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemsummary.htm?pref=Y&tab=1&item_ID=1147&cancel=n

- 5.3. In order to provide access to library services to as many people as possible across Hampshire, LIS proposed to designate the busiest library in each District Council area as a key library, based on the number of visits and book issues etc per year. These 11 libraries would remain open 6 days a week and the goal is for each one to be open 50+ hours a week with self service. The key libraries were: Basingstoke, Gosport and Winchester Discovery Centres, plus Andover, Chandler's Ford, Fareham, Farnborough, Fleet, Lymington, Petersfield and Waterlooville libraries.
- 5.4. It is also proposed that the opening hours of the large, medium and small libraries would be reduced so they are closed by the equivalent of at least one day per week in order to make the savings required.
- 5.5. LIS did not suggest many changes to the opening hours of the neighbourhood libraries because most were not open for many hours a week anyway.

6. Public Consultation

- 6.1. On 28 September LIS began a three month consultation on its plans to reduce library opening hours.
- 6.2. Any reductions to library opening hours were likely to be controversial and it was important to make as many library customers and other stakeholders and partners aware of the proposals as soon as possible. Every library had its own Public Consultation stand, which was prominently displayed, and customers' attention was drawn to them by LIS staff. In every stand was a leaflet, individual to that particular library, with details of its current opening hours and the proposed new ones. Customers could pick up a leaflet, complete it and either hand it in to a library or post it back Freepost. They could also fill in the form online, via the library web pages and e-mail to LIS.
- 6.3. Library staff were given briefings at the end of September 2011 about the need for the changes and the proposed changes for their particular library. Emails about the proposals were also sent to every County Councillor, the District/Borough Council Chief Executives and all Town and Parish Councils in Hampshire. The unions were also kept informed via regular meetings throughout the three month consultation period.
- 6.4. After the first month LIS did an initial analysis of the comments that had been received so far. It became obvious that, for five libraries, a different pattern of opening hours might be more suitable, whilst still making the saving required. Therefore, in early November, leaflets with revised set of proposed opening hours for Alresford, Eastleigh, Leigh Park, Totton and Whitchurch libraries were printed and distributed.
- 6.5. By the end of the consultation period on 28 December over 5,500 responses had been received on the proposals. Of these about 1,000 (19%) were completed online, the rest submitted via the Freepost address or handed in to a library.

7. Consultation with District, Town and Parish Councils

- 7.1 Several District, Town and Parish Councils responded to the consultation, expressing their desire to work with LIS to maintain the opening hours at their local library. Meetings were held with Hedge End, West End, Totton and Hythe Town Councils and Eastleigh Borough Council to discuss their library opening hours in more detail.
- 7.2 As a result of these discussions Hedge End and West End Councils, with Eastleigh Borough Council, have committed to fund 50% of the costs of installing self service in Hedge End and West End libraries during 2012/13. Based on experience at other libraries in Hampshire that already have this system (including Winchester and Basingstoke Discovery Centres, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Chineham and Waterlooville), it is known that 90% of the books/DVDs etc issued and returned will be through self service. This releases a significant amount of front line staff time to deal with more detailed enquiries and so on. It also means that LIS can reduce the number of front line staff and use of casual staff, but still maintain the existing opening hours. It has therefore been agreed that the opening hours at Hedge End and West End libraries will not reduce on 1 April 2012.
- 7.3 Hedge End and West End Councils have also expressed a desire to increase the opening hours during 2012/13 in their respective libraries by using volunteers. LIS is working with these councils and Eastleigh Borough Council to achieve this, whilst keeping the unions closely informed too.
- 7.4 Hythe and Dibden Parish Council has also committed to providing £25,000 towards the costs of installing self service in Hythe Library. LIS will use this opportunity to modernise the layout of the library to make it more welcoming and provide a community/learning room; as well as installing the self service technology. The work will be undertaken during 2012/ 2013 and, in the meantime, it has been agreed that the opening hours at Hythe Library will not reduce on 1 April 2012.
- 7.5 A meeting was also held with Alton Town Council to discuss why Petersfield library had been chosen as the key library for East Hampshire, and not Alton library. Following the meeting there was an exchange of e-mails between the Town Council and the Assistant Director for Community. The Town Council then sent a detailed e-mail on 8 December setting out the reasons why it felt Alton should be the key library in East Hampshire. Councillor Joy made a presentation to East Hampshire District Council's Cabinet on 15 December and, in a subsequent letter to the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation, said that the Cabinet's recommendations were that both Alton and Petersfield should be designated as key libraries. The Deputy Leader of the Town Council also sent an e-mail on 28 December.
- 7.6 The e-mails from the Town Council and the Deputy Leader plus the letter from Councillor Joy make a number of points about the visit and issue figures for Petersfield and Alton libraries and the fact that the population of Alton is due to grow considerably more than Petersfield's from now until 2026. LIS's Management Team have considered the points made in detail, but still recommend that, based on current usage, Petersfield is designated

as East Hampshire's key library, with a review after two years. LIS would like to continue talks with Alton Town Council about installing self service to retain Alton library's current opening hours, as was discussed at the meeting on 3 November. But, for now, it is recommended that Alton library's opening hours are reduced on 1 April 2012.

8. North Baddesley and Stanmore Libraries

- 8.1 The consultation also included proposals to close the two smallest libraries, North Baddesley and Stanmore in Winchester. Extra time has been allowed for local groups or organisations who might be interested in taking on full responsibility for running their local library to come forward. Discussions are ongoing for both these libraries and proposals for their future will be going to the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation Decision Day on 5 July 2012.

9. Transition Fund

- 9.1 The Leader of the County Council is making provision in the 2012/13 budget for a Transition Fund of £145,000 to help LIS move to new arrangements for library provision in some areas. So far £120,000 has been allocated towards the costs of installing self service in Hedge End, West End and Hythe libraries and refurbishing Hythe library too.

10. Proposed Reduction in Library Opening Hours

- 10.1 The vast majority of the 5,500 or so public consultation responses received by LIS were constructive. Many of the respondents understood the need to make the reductions, even if they did not like the proposals for their particular library. LIS has tried to respond when there was a consensus for a different set of opening hours but, inevitably, in some cases, there was no clear consensus and the proposed opening hours have not been changed.
- 10.2 Appendix 2 sets out a summary of the results of the consultation for each library and the proposed reduction in opening hours. At the start of the consultation LIS was proposing to reduce the opening hours in 37 of the 53 libraries and Discovery Centres in Hampshire. Following analysis of the consultation LIS is recommending changes to its original proposals in 26 libraries and Discovery Centres.
- 10.3 Whilst LIS had intended to close some of the larger libraries one day a week, it became obvious from the consultation that this was not considered to be a good idea. Alternative suggestions were put forward by customers to reduce their libraries opening hours in a different way. Where possible, LIS has amended its proposals to reflect these suggestions e.g. it is now recommended that Eastleigh Library is still open 6 days a week, but for a reduced number of hours per day.
- 10.4 Whilst it is recommended that the changes to library opening hours, as set out in Appendix 2, will be implemented on 1 April 2012, LIS remains open to ongoing suggestions of ways to increase opening hours in the future.

11. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 11.1 The general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are; Age, Disability, Faith, Gender, Transgender, Race, Sexual Orientation and Pregnancy and Maternity.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- 11.2 Before LIS announced its proposals to reduce library opening hours and possibly to close two libraries, three Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) were prepared. The EIAs covered:-
- Proposed reduction in opening hours – effect on library customers
 - Proposed reduction in opening hours – effect on library staff
 - Proposed closure of North Baddesley and Stanmore Libraries
- 11.3 The EIA on library customers identified that women were more likely to be affected than men because more women visit libraries than men. The opening hour changes have been proposed in the light of current usage figures so that the changes are targeted to have the least impact on existing customers. The impact on gender issues has therefore been graded as low.
- 11.4 In addition the EIA on library customers identified that older people and children may be impacted by the changes to opening hours as in proportion to the Hampshire population more of these age groups use the library service. The impact has been rated low because despite the changes to opening hours the Library Service will still be readily available to these two age groups. It is possible that people of working age might find it more difficult to use the Library Service if there are fewer evening or weekend opening hours. However the changes have been proposed in the light of current usage figures and are targeted to have least impact on current customers.
- 11.5 The EIA on library customers also identified a low impact on those with a disability. Customer surveys indicate that 25% of library customers consider they have a disability, but there would be implications for only a proportion of this group when accessing library services. For example there may be some customers who have mobility or other issues which would make visiting an alternative library, when their most local library is closed, more of a problem. But with only a 5.8% reduction in opening hours across Hampshire, this is judged to be a low impact.
- 11.6 No particular issues were identified for the other protected characteristics in the EIAs for library customers.

- 11.7 The EIA on the impact of the proposed changes to opening hours on staff also highlighted a medium impact on older and female staff. LIS will work to ensure that the decisions on changes to staff timetables and work locations are based on a number of factors such as personal circumstances, geography and appropriate skills, rather than age.
- 11.8 No particular issues were highlighted for the other protected characteristics in the EIA.
- 11.9 The EIAs have been considered as part of the consultation and decision-making. Actions have been identified to mitigate the impact of change, whilst still securing the required savings in 2012/13. The EIAs have been amended as a result of the consultation and are attached as Appendix 3.

12. Staffing and Financial Implications

- 12.1 The proposed reduction in library opening hours of 5.8% will result in the reduction of 10.8 full time equivalent (FTE) front line staff. LIS is already holding 12.9 FTE vacancies. It is anticipated that, through reorganisation of staff timetables and changes to some work locations, no front line staff will have to reduce their working hours, unless they choose to do so.
- 12.2 In addition to the 5.8% reduction in opening hours, LIS will also be reducing its managers by 3.1 FTE posts and deleting the caretaker posts in all libraries, apart from in the three Discovery Centres which will retain their caretakers. This comes to 6.5 FTE posts.
- 12.3 The total saving from all these proposals for LIS is approximately £446,000.

13. Timescale

- 13.1 The changes to library opening hours, as set out in Appendix 2, will be implemented on 1 April 2012. Some of the necessary changes to library staff timetables and work locations may take a little longer to resolve, but they will be implemented by 30 June 2012 at the latest.

14. Recommendation(s)

That the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation:

- 14.1 Approves the changes to library opening hours as set out in Appendix 2, to be implemented on 1 April 2012.
- 14.2 Agrees that the 11 key libraries are Basingstoke, Gosport and Winchester Discovery Centres, Andover, Chandler's Ford, Fareham, Farnborough, Fleet, Lymington, Petersfield and Waterlooville libraries. These will be reviewed after two years.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Executive Member for Culture & Recreation Decision Day on 14 January 2012 and 10 September 2009	1147	14 Jan 2010
	900	10 Sept 2009
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>		<u>Date</u>
Public Libraries and Museums Act		1964

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. EIAs have been undertaken for library customers and library staff. Some protected characteristics have been identified as low or medium risk and mitigating actions have been put in place to minimise these – as set out in Section 10 in the report and attached at Appendix 3.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. N/A

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
Energy consumption in libraries is likely to decrease as they will not be open for so many hours
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?