

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Culture and Recreation
<b>Date:</b>	6 July 2012
<b>Title:</b>	Update on Developments in the Library and Information Service
<b>Reference:</b>	4031
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation on developments in the Library and Information Service (LIS) over the last few months. It seeks approval to:
- Close Stanmore Library and open an alternative service at the Carroll Centre.
  - Continue discussions with North Baddesley Parish Council with a view to transferring the running of the North Baddesley library to the Parish Council on 31 March 2013. If agreement cannot be reached by the end of October 2012, the library will close on 31 March 2013 and be replaced by a mobile library service.
  - Franchise a Post Office within some libraries and Discovery Centres.

#### 2. Contextual information

- 2.1 In Autumn 2011 LIS undertook an extensive consultation exercise on a proposed reduction to library opening hours in order to make the savings needed for 2012/13.
- 2.2 At the same time LIS started a separate consultation exercise about the future of its two smallest and least used libraries, Stanmore and North Baddesley. Within the constraints of the financial situation it was no longer viable to continue to run these two libraries and LIS expressed the desire to

enter into discussions with local groups or organisations who might be interested in taking over full responsibility for each of the two libraries.

- 2.3 The consultation on the proposed reduction in opening hours was reported back to the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation on 20 January 2012<sup>1</sup> and the new opening hours commenced on 1 April 2012. LIS set a longer deadline for Stanmore and North Baddesley and the following two sections of this report summarise the consultation and proposed outcomes for these two libraries.

### **3. Stanmore Library**

- 3.1 Stanmore Library is the least well used library in Hampshire. Open for nine hours a week, it has an average of 106 borrowers per month and a 49% decline in book issues over the five years 2005/06 to 2010/11, more than any other library.
- 3.2 The initial consultation exercise with library customers, resulted in the return of 23 forms, all against the possible closure of the library. At the request of Winchester City Council, LIS then undertook a second consultation exercise. Local City and County Councillors delivered a consultation form to every house in Stanmore in December 2011, to learn more about the library needs of the residents. However, only 51 forms were returned which unfortunately was not enough to provide any useful information.
- 3.3 Despite this low response rate, the City Council instigated discussions between LIS and the nearby Carroll Centre, a charitable run community facility, to see if a library could be provided within the Carroll Centre. The Carroll Centre is a well used community building in the middle of Stanmore. Open 5.5 days a week, it already offers many activities including after school and holiday clubs, a children's centre and a wide variety of courses for adults and children including IT. Moving the library there would bring the library to the attention of many more people, most of whom are not current library customers.
- 3.4 The City Council also commissioned a local firm of architects, Design ACB, to look at the spaces in the Carroll Centre and to come up with ideas of the best way of fitting a library into the Centre. An Open Day was held on 17 May to discuss Design ACB's plans with local residents and library customers. Over 100 people attended the Open Day and viewed the plans. Overall the response to the proposals was positive, the main concerns were around noise and cost.
- 3.5 It is therefore now proposed that Stanmore Library is closed and library provision is moved to the Carroll Centre where it would be managed on a

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[http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item\\_ID=3095&tab=2](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item_ID=3095&tab=2)

day to day basis by the Carroll Centre. LIS would continue to provide the books and resources, including a self service kiosk, so that library customers can issue and return books themselves. This is an exciting opportunity for Stanmore Library, it will move into a busy community building with much longer opening hours and the potential to be used by far more people than it is at present. The date for this to occur has yet to be decided, but it is not likely to be before January 2013. The existing library building will be returned to its owner, Winchester City Council.

- 3.6 Whilst the details of this proposal have yet to be agreed with the trustees of the Carroll Centre, at this stage LIS is seeking Executive Member approval in principle to the proposal to close Stanmore Library and move the library to the Carroll Centre.

#### **4. North Baddesley Library**

- 4.1 North Baddesley Library has an average of 163 borrowers a month. It is open for 9.5 hours a week, its book issues have gone down by 33% over the five years 2005/06 to 2010/11 and only 7.3% of the people who live in North Baddesley actually borrow from the library.

- 4.2 A total of 36 forms were returned from last autumn's consultation over the future of North Baddesley Library, most of which were against any library closure. Approximately 12 volunteers did come forward to work in the library, and the Assistant Director Community, and the local member, Councillor Alan Dowden, met with them on three occasions to discuss what this might entail. The Assistant Director and the Head of LIS Operations, also met with the Parish Council on 22 May 2012. There was no obvious conclusion or actions agreed at this meeting and the minutes have not been put up on the web site.

- 4.3 During these discussions it became obvious that the volunteers, whilst keen to work in the library, did not want to form themselves into a group capable of taking on the running of the library. No other local group came forward so, in May 2012, LIS suggested replacing the library with a mobile library. Councillor Dowden supported the proposal and, on 24 May, a mobile library was parked in North Baddesley for a day for library customers and local residents to visit it. Most of the visitors were impressed by the size of the mobile and the service it could provide for North Baddesley, although a few still preferred the current library.

- 4.4 LIS therefore proposed that North Baddesley Library should be closed in October 2012 and replaced with a mobile library for a full day on Tuesdays and on Saturday mornings, with a review after a year. It would park in the car park by the shops in a 'hatched' designated space for it. The existing library building would be returned to its owner, a local Housing Association.

- 4.5 On 18 June, the Assistant Director Community received an e-mail from one of North Baddesley's Parish Councillors asking for extra time to allow further discussions to take place between LIS and the Parish Council. The

discussions would concentrate on the possible transfer of the library to the Parish Council on 1 April 2013, and a deadline of the end of October has been set for an agreement to be reached. If agreement has not been reached by then, it is recommended that North Baddesley Library is closed on 31 March 2013 and replaced with a mobile library service as set out in 4.4.

- 4.6 The Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Select Committee on 21 June supported the proposal to continue discussions with North Baddesley Parish Council about the possible transfer of the library to the Parish Council on 1 April 2013. But if an agreement was not reached by the end of October 2012, the Select Committee also supported the proposal to close North Baddesley on 31 March 2013 and replace it with a mobile library stop.

## **5. Discussions with the Post Office**

- 5.1 Earlier this year, LIS was approached by Post Office Counters Ltd, the company which manages the franchise for Post Offices in the UK, asking if it would be interested in taking on the franchise for operating Post Offices in some libraries/Discovery Centres.
- 5.2 LIS has been working with Legal Services to ascertain the legal position with regard to operating a Post Office within a local authority managed services, by using the “general power of competence” element of the 2011 Localism Bill<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.3 This is a new venture for LIS as it means the Service would be taking on the responsibility for the operation of a Post Office, including the management of the staff and for the quality of service delivery.
- 5.4 LIS believes that adding the Post Office to the services already delivered from a Library or a Discovery Centre would significantly increase the visitor numbers, whilst enhancing their reputation as centres of community activity. Users of the Post Office would also be able to use library/Discovery Centre services at the same time.
- 5.5 If a Post Office was incorporated into a library or Discovery Centre, then LIS would use the opportunity to install self service technology at the same time. This would free up space at the front of the library because there would no longer be a need for a counter, and it would also free up staff time to spend more time with their customers.
- 5.6 There is still a lot more work that needs to be done on this proposal, but it would be an exciting opportunity for LIS to increase the range of services on offer in libraries and Discovery Centres.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted/data.htm>

## **6. Finance**

- 6.1 Stanmore and North Baddesley Libraries cost approximately £36,000 and £35,000 a year to run respectively. These costs include all staff costs (including management costs), premises and IT costs and stock.
- 6.2 It is estimated that moving Stanmore Library to the Carroll Centre would save approximately £23,000 a year. The savings from the possible transfer of North Baddesley Library to the Parish Council need to be worked out, but would be approximately £15-£20,000 a year. The costs of providing a mobile library service to North Baddesley are mainly covered by the mobile library service budget so the proposal to use a mobile library at North Baddesley would save approximately £32,000 a year.
- 6.3 The cost of moving Stanmore Library out of its current location and setting it up in the Carroll Centre will be funded by one-off transition funding for LIS, which was approved by the Leader of the Council at Full Council on 23 February 2012.
- 6.4 Running a Post Office in a library or Discovery Centre is likely to be an income generating activity which will become part of the library or Discovery Centres trading activity. LIS is awaiting further information from Post Office Counters Ltd before drawing up a business case for the proposal.

## **7. Recommendations**

That the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation approves:

- i) The closure of Stanmore library and the opening of an alternative at the Carroll Centre, Winchester, subject to the details being agreed with the trustees of the Carroll Centre.
- ii) Continuing discussions with North Baddesley Parish Council with a view to transferring the running of the North Baddesley Library to the Parish Council on 31 March 2013. If agreement cannot be reached by the end of October 2012, the library will close on 31 March 2013 and be replaced by a mobile library service.
- iii) In principle the provision of a Post Office in a library or Discovery Centre and being run by the Library and Information Service subject to the details being agreed with Post Office Counters Ltd, and a satisfactory business case being agreed with the Director of Corporate Resources.

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

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

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

**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 Assessments indicate that the proposed changes to the library service provided at Stanmore and North Baddesley would have a low impact in terms of age, disability and gender and no perceived impact on the other protected characteristics.
- 1.2 However these impacts will be mitigated by the proposed library facility at the Carroll Centre in Stanmore and the mobile library at North Baddesley. Both alternatives will be accessible by both older and younger customers and those with a disability and the new locations are in close proximity to the current ones, although it is noted that the steep hill in Stanmore may be a problem for older and disabled people without transport, even though the distance involved is small.
- 1.3 In addition, North Baddesley library falls within the catchment of Romsey library and there is an adequate public transport link between the two locations. Stanmore is less than two miles from Winchester Discovery Centre and there is also a good public transport link. Both Romsey library and Winchester Discovery Centre have a far wider range of facilities than the two small libraries.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

N/A

### **3.1 Climate Change:**

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Closing Stanmore Library will reduce energy consumption. Whilst replacing North Baddesley with a mobile library will decrease heating/lighting of a building, this will probably be cancelled out by the mobile's diesel costs.

Reducing the number of mobile library stops and increasing the length of time at others will save diesel costs.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

N/A