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# Library Case Studies **Different Delivery Models**

May 2016

**Report**

## Contents

Executive Summary	3
<hr/>	
Case Study Summaries	3
<hr/>	
Key Themes	5
<hr/>	
Case Studies	
<hr/>	
Kent County Council Libraries, Registration and Archives – internal commissioning	7
<hr/>	
Leicester City Council Libraries – transformation of neighbourhood services	11
<hr/>	
Middlesbrough Council Libraries and Community Hubs – asset review of buildings	15
<hr/>	
Staffordshire County Council Library Service – develop a new tiered model for library provision	18
<hr/>	
London Borough of Waltham Forest Libraries – repositioning libraries as first point of contact for council transactions	22
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## Executive Summary

As part of the LGA/Arts Council England cultural improvement programme libraries work strand, the LGA with financial support from Arts Council England have developed a small number of case studies showcasing different service delivery models and approaches taken as libraries reposition as part of a place's wider cultural offer. The research and report was undertaken by LGA Associate Mark Harrison. The case studies identify:

- the rationale behind the approach these library services have taken
- how the approach links to the council's corporate plans e.g. transformation, growth and wellbeing
- the opportunities and challenges that have been encountered
- top tips for other councils keen to explore a similar approach.

The five councils all exemplify different approaches taken to ensure that their library services remain relevant and sustainable in the long term, the councils are:

- Kent County Council Libraries, Registration and Archives – internal commissioning
- Leicester City Council Libraries – transformation of neighbourhood services
- Middlesbrough Council Libraries and Community Hubs – asset review of buildings
- Staffordshire County Council Library Service – develop a new tiered model for library provision
- London Borough of Waltham Forest Libraries – repositioning libraries as first point of contact for council transactions.

The key themes identified by the library services are:

- service review
- political direction
- strategic realignment
- partnership
- workforce development
- learning from others
- identifying what success would look like
- consultation
- volunteers.

The following section summarises each case study and sets out the key themes identified by the libraries.

### Case study summaries

Kent County Council Libraries, Registration and Archives – internal commissioning

Kent County Council (Kent CC) Library, Registration and Archive (LRA) service has been fully commissioned as an internal service provider. The LRA delivers the service against a specification that reflects the Kent CC outcomes framework. Councillors have contributed directly to the development of the specification and the approach after specification. The LRA has both the freedom and flexibility to determine the best way to achieve the required outcomes. The LRA performance will be assessed annually, and consideration is being given as to how best to involve the public and other stakeholders in this process. Kent CC had been looking at transferring the LRA to a trust, but this is not possible at the moment as a change in

primary legislation would be required to transfer the registration element of the service. Kent CC sees internal commissioning as a viable step towards any alternative delivery vehicle as well as an effective way of better demonstrating the outcomes LRA delivers to its customers.

#### Leicester City Council Libraries – transformation of neighbourhood services

In April 2013 Leicester City Council (Leicester CC) announced its intention to reorganise neighbourhood services across the city. This Transforming Neighbourhoods Services (TNS) programme included libraries, community centres, adult learning and local customer service points. The TNS programme aims to provide different service delivery models according to local need, while reducing delivery costs by 30 per cent. The methodology adopted divided the city into six neighbourhoods. Local people were asked their views on initial proposals, setting out options for colocation of services and better use of buildings. The preferred option took on board the ideas of local people. Leicester report that TNS has achieved the required savings, increased opening hours and usage, helped secure new investment in technology, modernised facilities and enhanced the customer experience. The success of the TNS programme has helped the council set up a city wide asset review, the Using Buildings Better programme, whereby the council is intending to review all of its neighbourhood buildings.

#### Middlesbrough Council Libraries and Community Hubs – asset review of buildings

During the period 2010-2015, the extensive network of community centres and branch libraries have been reviewed and rationalised. This was part of a corporate asset review across the Middlesbrough estate. This has resulted in the incorporation of branch libraries into community hubs. The process has been challenging, but the changes have been largely successful and has allowed a greater number of people to access a more holistic service offering, despite a reduction in buildings, fewer staff and budget reduction. The council has described the hub as, “a focal point for local communities, where groups and organisations come together to deliver a core offer of services and support essential to the wellbeing and needs of the local people. This approach was endorsed by the Council Executive in November 2015. The final integration of standalone branch libraries into community hubs will happen in 2016.

#### Staffordshire County Council Library Service – developing a new tiered model for library provision

In 2012 Staffordshire County Council (Staffordshire CC) set out to transform its libraries. This decision was necessary because of changing customer demand and expectations, changing local authority landscape and budget pressures. Libraries were expected to deliver on the key council vision, to create a connected Staffordshire, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. The council was clear that greater community involvement would benefit the library offer. The council proposed a new service delivery model and this was consulted widely. Consequently all libraries will remain as part of the Staffordshire CC network, within three categories of service delivery. These are Staffordshire CC managed and delivered, Staffordshire CC managed and community delivered and community managed and delivered. Following a procurement process contracts have been issued for 11 libraries to be community managed and delivered from April 2016.

#### London Borough of Waltham Forest Libraries – repositioning libraries as first point of contact for council transactions.

In 2011 Waltham Forest determined to review its library service, this resulted in a strategic realignment of the service to ensure: improved access, increased opening hours, retention of a core library offer and the provision of additional services through library buildings. These

additional services are: reporting council services, payments, applications, birth registration, CAB, Met Police contact point, information about fostering, financial advice and events and special activities. As a consequence of the strategic realignment, the council is implementing its Library Plus Improvement Programme. This is a £5 million programme to refurbish and improve Waltham Forest's four main Library Plus buildings at Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Chingford. The capital investment in library buildings aims to maintain the library core offer, while meeting other cultural requirements of residents, such as the provision of performance space.

## Key themes

In reviewing their service delivery models the five councils identified certain common themes, these are:

**Service Review:** All councils undertook a needs based review of the existing service and developed proposals for a redesigned service delivery model. This process provided the opportunity to review the essential components of the library core offer and to ensure that the requirements of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums act continue to be met. Proposals that have been developed for a new service delivery offer should be flexible, transparent and include consideration for the involvement of stakeholders in an appropriate way. It is desirable to allow time to pilot and assess the new service delivery model and build in flexibility to finesse the model.

**Political Direction:** All library services advocated the importance of securing political direction throughout the process. Key decision areas identified by the councils are a determination not to close viable libraries, identification and securing investment (revenue and capital), securing human resources to implement the change, agreement of a clarity of direction, agreement of medium term timescales and seek and confirm financial certainty. It is also important to have a project champion at executive officer level within the council. Proposals for service change should be made open to scrutiny (councillors, stakeholders, public) in an appropriate way.

**Strategic Realignment:** Library services identified the importance of contributing to the corporate agenda and work of the councils. This review process assisted in helping libraries consider how they could deliver a wider range of services leading to better outcomes for the community. Different approaches have been identified based on local need and opportunity, ranging from ensuring that libraries consolidate their core offer through to libraries providing the basis for a complete reappraisal of how services can be delivered in a locality.

**Partnerships:** It is important for libraries to demonstrate that they are a viable and proactive partner and capable of aligning with corporate and partner agendas, and demonstrating their contribution to key areas of work within the council and other agencies.

**Workforce Development:** Councils identified the desirability of involving the workforce in developing alternative delivery proposals. This involvement needs to be carefully considered. The level of involvement and clarity about decision making are a necessary part of planning the engagement process. Staff involvement takes managerial time and resources, however the consensus seems to suggest this pays dividends in generating ideas and ownership of outcomes.

**Learning from other councils:** A number of library services said that they benefited from willingness to learn from and share with other councils. This helped them learn about what works and what doesn't, the generation of new ideas and the effectiveness of alternative models adopted by other councils. Library services cautioned to be aware that no one size fits

all and that it is not always possible to directly import models from elsewhere without testing them locally.

Identifying what success would look like: Certain councils have identified and described the critical success factors necessary to assess the impact of the reconfigured service delivery model. These factors will be built into new contractual arrangements both with internal and external library service providers. Appropriate outcome based performance measures will be developed and regularly reviewed.

Consultation: Councils advocate clarity about consultation proposals and making a conscious effort to involve all stakeholders in the process in a legitimate and timely way. A good communication plan is essential, and consultees appear to be interested in being involved in the development and implementation of solutions, rather than being asked to simply agree or disagree on a prescribed way forward. The continued involvement of the community also engenders buy-in and an enthusiasm to ensure that new approaches work for everyone's benefit. (See SCC)

Volunteers: Particular attention is required to keep existing and potential volunteers involved in the change process.

The following section considers the five approaches in detail.

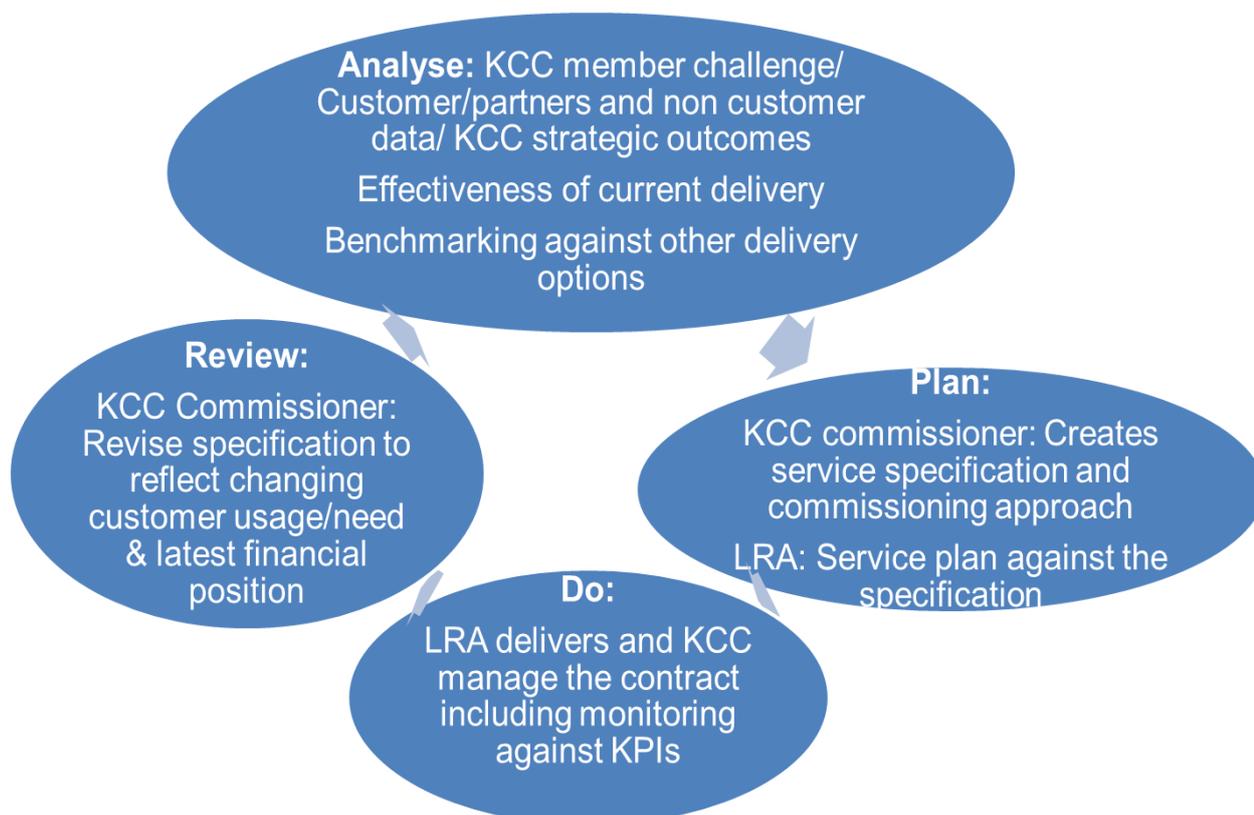
## Kent County Council Libraries, Registration and Archives – internal commissioning

### 1. Rationale underpinning the approach

Kent County Council's (Kent CC) Library, Registration and Archive (LRA) service is one of the first council services to be internally commissioned. Previously the LRA was subjected to a full service review, market engagement and extensive public consultation. This led to Kent CC choosing a trust as a preferred delivery model. Currently a trust cannot be implemented because of the need for primary legislation relating to registration services. In Kent the Registration service is fully integrated into the LRA service. Now that Kent CC has adopted the model of internal commissioning, this will not preclude reconsideration of the trust option in the future and is in effect a step towards any alternative model. As, for example, the LRA will be commissioned as a whole service and held to account by Kent CC in the same way as an external provider would be.

From 1 April 2016, LRA will be commissioned to deliver the existing service against the Kent CC outcomes framework. A specification has been developed that reflects the existing service, and will be used as the baseline to test and refine the approach. Councillors have been involved in developing the specification, through the Kent CC Commissioning Advisory Board (CAB) and the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee. Transparency is an important factor, and the specification will be placed on the Kent CC website and open to customer comment. The specification will be reviewed annually to ensure continuing relevance in delivering the required outcomes and to ensure that it evolves to meet ever changing customer need, demonstrated best value for money and is regularly benchmarked against other delivery options.

The figure 1 below illustrates the annual commissioning cycle proposed for Libraries, Registration and Archives utilising Kent CC's commissioning cycle of Analyse, Plan, Do & Review.



## 2. How does the approach link to the council's corporate objectives?

Much effort has been invested in ensuring that the LRA specification relates directly to Kent CC corporate objectives. New governance structures reflect the separation between the commissioning/contract management function and that of delivery. The specification clearly sets out the expectations placed upon LRA, these are to:

- deliver the service in line with the specification and Kent CC statutory obligations
- develop the service to support Kent CC wider strategic objectives and outcomes, and shape the service around resident and user needs
- maximise opportunities to use LRA premises and assets to maximise use, deliver additional services and generate income.

The Kent CC strategic statement “Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes” sets out key outcomes to be achieved for residents and businesses by 2020. Kent CC is commissioning LRA to ensure that the priority outcomes of Kent CC are achieved whilst providing LRA maximum flexibility in deciding the best way to support this delivery. The specification also sets out social values and minimum (baseline) service delivery requirements.

LRA will contribute to these Kent CC strategic outcomes through its core offer countywide, and provide targeted services to meet local need. LRA will work with partners to evaluate the impact of its activity and to demonstrate it is meeting the required outcomes.

It is accepted that this will be an evolving process, especially in the first year, as the specification is developed. The specification demonstrates this linkage, see diagram 2 below – an extract from the specification showing the need for both quantitative and qualitative measures:

<b>KCC Outcome</b>	<b>Supporting Outcomes supported through the provision of LRA services</b>	<b>LRA activity</b>	<b>Key PIs/How it will be measured</b> While qualitative measures may demonstrate the impact of LRA activities, LRA will continue to work with KCC and partners to identify PIs which better link targeted activities to outcomes	<b>Baseline 14/15 /Target 15/16</b>
<b>Outcome 1: Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life</b>	Kent's communities are resilient and provide strong and safe environments to successfully raise children and young people	All babies to receive Bookstart packs as part of the birth registration All parents offered the opportunity to engage with Children's Centre Services	Number of packs delivered/number of births.  Work with Children's Centres on the number of referrals and impact on parents.  Use of parent/carer stock collections	100% / 100%  Feedback from Children's Centres  Tbc / tbc

The LRA specification also details:

- minimum service requirements, including the statutory obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service
- requirement to offer statutory registration of births, deaths and marriages, civil partnerships, citizenships and associated certification
- maintain secure access for public to access archive documents
- principles and professional practice, and as a minimum to meet current service and compliance with for example CILIP and achievement of customer service excellence award and the Archive accreditation
- maintain existing access points
- maintain a balance of permanent and sessional staff
- continue to develop the role of volunteers who add value to the service
- retain the provision of books for loan free of charge
- promote reading and literacy
- contribute to corporate work, in social inclusion, learning and skills developments, digital services and internet provision and community engagement.

Any significant change to the above will require agreement between Kent CC and LRA.

Finally, the specification sets out performance reporting and monitoring arrangements. These will be assessed annually and targets updated.

### 3. The opportunities and challenges encountered

Kent CC has been open to exploring a range of alternative delivery options for services. As the transfer of LRA to a trust is currently not possible, Kent CC has adapted and is exploring the potential of internal commissioning while still retaining the trust option as a future possibility. Much of the work involved in internal commissioning will further evidence the potential viability of a trust option at some point in the future.

The development of the specification based on outcomes is challenging, and developing performance measures for outcomes is a lot more difficult than measuring outputs. The longer term intention of the arrangement is to measure the impact that the LRA has on individuals and communities, and more work is being carried out to develop new ways to demonstrate this e.g. collecting stories, evaluating impact in different ways and working with local partners to develop joint measures.

However it is recognised by Kent CC and LRA that the specification will evolve and represents a starting point for the new arrangements, and is not an end in itself.

The language of internal commissioning is “new” and efforts are being made to ensure that staff understand the differences between procurement and commissioning. Commissioning is about ensuring the council is focussed on delivering the right outcomes to customers in the right way. This may involve procurement of externally provided services but equally may be about how services are delivered internally.

### 4. Future challenges and potential solutions

The LRA is required to produce an annual report which will be made publicly available. The intention is to allow residents to review the operation of the LRA in the previous contract year. The service will be working on ways to involve users in shaping future versions of the service

specification. LRA will be required to demonstrate achievements and challenges and specifically demonstrate how the LRA is delivering the expected outcomes set for it by Kent CC.

#### 5. Top tips for other councils

- take time to properly assess the delivery options available, and to be flexible in decision making
- involve councillors throughout, and in particular in the development of the service specification
- strongly link to corporate agenda and involve in the development of the specification as an extra check and challenge to the process.
- build in flexibility to the specification, allow for review within an agreed baseline
- allow the commissioned organisation (LRA) to deliver outcomes as it sees fit and be clear about authority to change minimum (baseline) standards
- accept that this is a journey and that the arrangements at the start may not be perfect or answer every question, so allow yourself freedom to evolve the model once it is in operation.

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## Leicester City Council Libraries – transformation of neighbourhood services

### 1. Rationale underpinning the approach

In April 2013 Leicester City Council (Leicester CC) announced a Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) programme, with the intention to reorganise neighbourhood services across the city. Services included within this programme were libraries, community centres, adult learning and local customer service points. Other council delivered services in the neighbourhoods were not in scope directly e.g. Housing, Children's Services etc., but were involved in the development of this model where it is anticipated that they may form a part of the future delivery, for example, by sharing locations.

The TNS programme aimed to identify different new service delivery models across the city of Leicester, with a requirement to reduce the costs of delivery by 30% while maintaining the quality of services. The approach taken is to divide the city into six geographical neighbourhoods and each of these are investigated sequentially to identify methods by which the service delivery model can be transformed through opportunities to co-locate services and make better use of the assets available.

In the first tranche the council asked for people's views on a set of proposals for transforming the way buildings are used in the South of the city to provide neighbourhood services. This followed a previous consultation where more general views were sought on how the council should approach the transformation programme overall.

Consultees said that the retention of locality based services were more important than the retention of specific buildings. Although stakeholders expressed support for the retention of two buildings – namely Southfields Library and the Linwood Centre.

The council responded with proposals to ensure that services delivered in the South were protected, but be provided from fewer buildings in the area. The council ensured that the views expressed towards the implementation of the proposals be carried out responsively and sensitively. The buildings that are no longer required have proposed alternative uses, this means that none will be left empty. They will be either reused, demolished and land cleared for housing development, or the ownership of the building will be transferred to a community group that meets the necessary criteria (for Community Asset Transfer or other form of tenancy).

The first phase of the TNS review focused on gathering information about the assets of the city's neighbourhoods, including the buildings, used to support service delivery and information about the associations through which people come together, both through formal organisations and informal networks.

Under the TNS, the council has reorganised libraries, community centres, and adult learning and customer services in some areas of the city. By using fewer buildings and bringing different services together under one roof, TNS has achieved savings and increased opening hours, increased use, secured new investment in technology and modern facilities, improved access for disabled people and enhanced the customer experience.

The library service was an integral part of the initial TNS programme, which piloted the new approach in the south and west of the city. Proposals for the third tranche of TNS are about to be considered by the Cabinet. This successful approach is now being adopted across a corporate Using Building Better (UBB) programme. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) contributed £90,000 to assist the council in this pilot work as part of its Delivering Differently programme.

## 2. How does the approach link to the council's corporate objectives?

In October 2015 the council announced a city-wide review of its buildings called "Using Buildings Better". The Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme now forms part of this wider programme and is extended to include other neighbourhood based service points. The inclusion in UBB enables dependencies with other relevant areas of work including a wider review of staff accommodation and for channel shift to be better managed.

The types of service delivery option currently under consideration include developing standard efficiency measures (e.g. integration of front-of-house functions, co-location of staff in fewer buildings) plus more transformative measures (e.g. more say for community organisations and associations, development of more self-service transactions, focused outreach such as evening opening or home visits).

For proposals to be agreed they have to achieve a combined 30% revenue saving and align with other service requirements. The latest proposals for the continued roll out of the TNS programme indicates that:

- the model is in line with the majority of views received from the engagement process which suggested greater co-location of services
- the provision of convenient, co-located services be at well located buildings
- the introduction of self-service facilities into the libraries will release staff to support community activity and increased access to council services in the building
- multi-service centres will provide more opportunities for volunteers to get involved in a wider range of services
- investment in multi-service sites ensures the longer-term viability of the services in the area
- potential reduction in energy use of approximately 30% and associated carbon dioxide savings that will contribute towards achieving the corporate environmental improvement objective is to reduce the council's greenhouse gas emissions
- meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## Case study: Aylestone Leisure Centre and Library



- The old Aylestone Library on Richmond Road was poorly located and had accessibility issues.
- In July 2013, we relocated the library to space within the leisure centre.
- The move has proved very popular, with a large increase in library visits, book loans and computer use.
- The library is now staffed for longer hours than before and self-service facilities are available when staff leave.
- The old library building is now being managed by the community under the council's policy of community asset transfer. It is being reused by a childcare service.

Aylestone Library		
Performance indicator	2012 - 13	2014 - 15
Total book loans per year	13,029	28,504
Total hours PC use per year	968 hrs	4,526 hrs
Total visits per year	7,730	47,001



The council actively promotes the benefit of the TNS programme, as demonstrated in Figure 2 above.

### 3. The opportunities and challenges encountered

The library service has used the TNS programme as an opportunity to review its service delivery and core offer. In addition there has been a particular focus around:

- ensuring libraries are exciting and imaginative places
- places where reading and literacy are promoted via traditional and other methods such as storytelling and drama
- provide exciting reading development support for school children through projects such as Our Best Book, where young people vote for their favourite book of the year
- work with partners, such as Spark Arts to provide drama in non - traditional locations
- enhance access to Wi-Fi and digital services.

### 4. Future challenges and potential solutions

Further budget reductions may lead to more asset transfers and greater use of technology to deliver services such as unstaffed lending facilities in some locations.

## 5. Top tips for other councils

- take a look at what other councils are doing to help inform your approach
- involve councillors at all levels through from strategic decision making (The Mayor and Executive) to gathering information/opinion of local ward representatives in the development of proposals
- tell people what you are doing, “this is what you said and this is what we did”
- build on success and test your approach in the less difficult areas, thereby building trust, integrity and reducing suspicion e.g., this is not about closing facilities/services. A single model for all parts of the city is not necessarily what will work best. Ensure proposals are fit for the area they are aimed to support
- develop a clear and transparent model for stakeholder engagement, including arrangements for data collection to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided, usage statistics, and historical information. Investment in this part of the process is key to making proposals acceptable and owned by the community
- ensure proposals are scrutinised prior to consideration by The Mayor and Executive (all final proposals are presented to the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission, following public consultation prior to an Executive Decision).

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## **Middlesbrough Council Libraries and Community Hubs – asset review of buildings**

### **1. Rationale underpinning the approach**

Over a five year period (2010 – 2015) the extensive network of community centres and branch libraries located in Middlesbrough were reviewed and rationalised to leave a portfolio of community hubs. Six standalone library facilities were moved and incorporated into community or leisure hub buildings, leaving three standalone branch libraries, still to be incorporated into the community hub model. The incorporation of libraries into community hubs, meant that for these libraries, the existing opening hours were actually increased. Although difficult and controversial at the time, these changes have proved to be largely successful, and have allowed a greater number of people to access a more holistic service offering, despite a reduction in the number of facilities, fewer staff and less collective resources to call upon.

This review process helped embed a more efficient way of working. The council recognised that there were areas where the approach could be further extended, and the success of the hubs represented a major opportunity to go a stage further and implement a more fundamental change in how services are delivered. Despite budget challenges the council was looking to secure a long-term sustainable future for the hubs.

In 2015, work began on a comprehensive review bringing together a wide range of community services including libraries to form a wider delivery model of community hub provision across the nine community based library points. The intention was to explore ways of delivering library services more efficiently and effectively whilst being mindful of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The scope of the work involved a service and staffing re-organisation and a consultation with around 500 service users and 100 stakeholder organisations and groups. The result of this was the production of a strategic plan, agreed by the councils Executive in November 2015. The main points of this plan were that:

- all facilities would be branded and operated as community hubs
- literacy would play a key role in all hubs
- hubs would be truly multi-agency, with a combined offer reflective of local need
- the local community and wider partners would be encouraged and supported to maximise their role in managing and delivering hubs
- the primary role of hubs would be to encourage self-help and self-sustainability
- hubs would provide access to a range of services previously only available in central council locations.

Taking the above into account, the definition of a community hub would therefore simply be described as: “A focal point for local communities, where groups and organisations come together to deliver a core offer of services and support essential to the wellbeing and needs of local people”.

### **2. How does the approach link to the council’s corporate objectives?**

Libraries and community hubs already play an important part in neighbourhoods, offering a welcoming community space with access to IT facilities, information and advice. The buildings play host to a range of organisations offering support and events, making them a genuine hub of activity. A number of current opportunities to extend this role, and reflect the corporate agenda, will be built into a core part of how the hubs operate in future, including:

**Public Health:** Currently, the range of public health interventions currently on offer in Middlesbrough is delivered through a variety of organisations, across many different venues and in many different ways. It is intended that the recommissioning of public health contracts around preventative activities (smoking cessation, weight management etc.) are brought together and are focused through the network of community hubs. This would significantly redefine the role that hubs can play in improving health and wellbeing within communities.

**School readiness:** The increasing council focus on improving school readiness for children, aged under five, which is aimed at reducing long-term demand on acute services, presents an opportunity to redefine the role that hubs play in the lives of young children and their parents. Hubs offer the potential to exploit the benefits of engaging in activities that boost attainment, early literacy, social interaction and social skills in a more relaxed multi-agency setting.

**Work with targeted Individuals:** The work to identify and offer support to individuals and families identified as being at risk of needing future safeguarding or other acute service interventions could be built around the hub concept. Each hub should provide a platform for agencies to conduct targeted work with the most vulnerable and 'hard to reach' people in communities.

**Integration with other venues:** As specialist services engage in more co-ordinated outreach around targeted individuals and families in local communities, and move away from providing universal activities based in one building, there is an opportunity to cross refer and explore joint working with more specialist, more defined venues. As community hubs are now part of the same Supporting Communities Service as Myplace, Children's Centres and school readiness teams, the opportunity exists to develop a much more co-ordinated and mutually supportive offer across the portfolio.

*(Note, Myplace is a state-of-the art £4.3 million venue and activity centre for young people in Middlesbrough. It has amazing facilities and opportunities for young people including a theatre, TV and recording studio, Internet café, alcohol free nightclub, sensory room and amphitheatre. Officially opened on 30th June 2012. See <http://myplaceboro.co.uk/>).*

**Shared Services:** The opportunity to share the space within the buildings with other community focused agencies and services offers the opportunity not only for a more coherent offer for the public, but also the opportunity to share costs and align service objectives. The online resources available in hubs would also enable greater access to wider council services.

**Digital by Default:** The hubs offer the opportunity to support the overall strategy of moving towards services being offered as digital by default, providing advice, support and access to IT for those least able to make the switch. A recent innovation in this regard is the provision of Wi-Fi to all hubs and Central Library facilities.

**Community empowerment:** The hubs offer an opportunity to extend the Community Asset Transfer process, supporting communities to take a much more active role in running their own hubs. If designed into the overall hub offer, this process can accommodate the full range of community involvement from offering volunteer opportunities in hubs, through to full self-management for those communities ultimately able to reach a position to do so.

**Assertive outreach:** For the hubs to be successful in the long run, there needs to be a move away from seeing the buildings as the entirety of the hub model. The hubs of the future should not just be static buildings that expect people to seek them out, but instead should be actively focussed on assertive outreach, to respond to local need. This would allow the hubs to maximise their role in achieving the demand reduction objectives of the Supporting Communities Service, and of the wider public sector.

### 3. The opportunities and challenges that you have encountered

The council has managed the transition programme well, a substantial amount of the required financial saving was delivered in year one of the current three year change programme. The service appears to be stable, with no closures and an enhanced core offer. The incorporation of the remaining stand-alone libraries within the community hub model as soon as possible, is anticipated.

### 4. Future challenges and potential solutions

- a re-organisation of library staffing to form part of a broader Stronger Communities service, partly based on locality working where appropriate to the role of the library staff, whilst retaining a town wide team able to implement work at that level
- a commitment to apply the broader community hub model of provision to the remaining stand-alone facilities, with the exception of the Central Library, in 2016
- a review of existing opening times and a re-focus to core opening times and maximising use of the staff resource available
- re-focus of the Library Service Early Years Team around working directly with identified Families with Literacy support from January 2016
- it is planned that all libraries will be rebranded by April 2016 and this will require “modest investment” in new signs alongside an enhancement of existing community provision’
- ensure that customers who are able to, embrace self-service technology. In terms of possible solutions, Middlesbrough are looking to speak to self-service technology suppliers to look at the potential for improved self-service equipment which can offer more services
- the potential of working together regionally to procure library management systems
- the service is now involved with a project called ‘Middlesbrough: A Reading Town’, which is a big partnership across the town, to find a solution to the problem of low levels of literacy.

### 5. Top tips

- review assets and rationalise services to become more effective and to respond to changing demands e.g. decline in library usage
- set out a clear process for change, including provision for meaningful, open and honest consultation and flexibility to evaluate and incorporate alternative proposals
- seek political support for the programme, and plan for effective scrutiny. Agree parameters of political flexibility e.g. no closures
- involve workforce in the change programme
- do not seek a “one size fits all” model for the hubs
- set out “a proactive view” to determine a clear plan, before potential ‘salami slicing’ of funding reduces the viability of the service
- develop close working partnerships with local organisations throughout the process.

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## **Staffordshire County Council Library Service – develop a new tiered model for library provision**

### 1. Rationale underpinning the approach

In January 2014 Staffordshire County Council (Staffordshire CC) Cabinet agreed proposals to transform Staffordshire's Library Service. The transformation was achieved through a three part programme initially called, "Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire".

The Cabinet endorsed recommendations to consult on:

- a new three tier model for library provision – virtual, physical locality or town, physical community or village
- engage internal and external stakeholders to map community need, and to:
- commission usage assessments
- gather other insights
- be mindful of statutory duty and recent case history.

The intention was to adapt and reposition the library service, to enable it to remain a sustainable, relevant and valued part of the community and to deliver £1.325 million savings. In making this decision the council was mindful of the following factors:

- In December 2014 the DCMS Independent Library Report for England highlighted the "sustained and severe financial situation" and the "rapid pace of current change" which is impacting on libraries across England.
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) statistics December 2014 showed that visits to libraries nationally fell by 2%, in 2013-14 compared to 2012-13. In Staffordshire visits fell by 2.8%.
- As identified nationally and experienced locally, expectations of libraries have and will continue to change and the way in which Staffordshire Libraries (SL) is working with communities and enhancing the online offer, is in line with the recommendations within the Independent Library Report. Continuing to transform the library service will enable it to remain a sustainable, relevant and valued part of the community.
- The library offer in Staffordshire has been reviewed based on the Staffordshire CC Commissioning Framework context, with reference to the Arts Council England's report: 'Envisioning the Library of the Future' and the Society of Chief Librarian's Universal Offers. The review suggested a tiered library offer.

Staffordshire Libraries are nearing the completion of the three part programme:

Part 1: sets out the proposed changes to the library network and outlined what the new offer could look like. Following wide consultation views were incorporated into refining the initial Part 1 proposals. The consultation process also highlighted the opportunity for further exploration of a number of themed suggestions. These have been developed in parallel to the proposed model.

Part 2: defines the levels of tiered libraries, proposed details of Staffordshire's library offer and sought permission to consult. Public consultation took place between 16 July and 7 October 2014 to gain additional information and insight from Staffordshire residents and other key stakeholders. Staff and Trade Union representatives were also consulted. These views have informed the final proposals.

Part 3: builds on the recommendations made in Part 2 and is informed by the feedback received through staff and public consultation ensuring the refined proposals are fully reflective of the views of Staffordshire residents and other stakeholders.

The Staffordshire CC Cabinet reviewed the final proposals on 18 February 2015 and agreed that no libraries will close and all will remain part of the Staffordshire CC network of libraries and Staffordshire Libraries will:

- continue to manage and deliver 20 libraries, as Staffordshire CC managed and delivered libraries.
- support 23 communities to either deliver Staffordshire CC managed community delivered libraries or manage their own local library which will be community managed and community delivered. These are differentiated, as follows:
  - Community managed libraries/community delivered libraries: some community groups will take responsibility for managing and delivering their local library service, following a selection and evaluation process and will have access to support from Staffordshire CC Library staff.
  - Staffordshire CC managed/community delivered libraries: for others there will be a transitional stage where volunteers staff the library on a day-to-day basis but the library will be managed by paid members of Staffordshire CC staff. The library will be part of a cluster which will have support from members of library staff on a regular basis.

To enable the Staffordshire CC to contract with an appropriate community organisation a procurement process was used. Local organisations were assisted by Staffordshire Libraries to develop their business case. Once community managed & delivered libraries have been established the service level agreement/contract will be monitored to ensure that the library service delivered by the community organisation meets the required standards.

During the consultation community organisations worked with Staffordshire Libraries to define the level of support they would require from Staffordshire CC to take on the management function. A package of support for community libraries has been developed by Staffordshire Libraries, which includes:

- Staffordshire CC owning and retaining responsibility for the library building at a peppercorn rent
- the council continuing to provide all utilities including maintenance of the infrastructure general grounds and building maintenance
- IT & Wi-Fi
- IT telephone helpline
- strategic advice from a paid member of staff
- training and support
- continued provision of book stock and library resources.

2. How does your approach link to the council's corporate objectives?

The Achieving Excellence project accords with the Leading for a Connected Staffordshire 2014 - 2018 strategic plan, in that Staffordshire Libraries are taking the lead, seeking to achieve better outcomes and looking to a sustainable future for libraries.

The introduction of the commissioning framework in early 2013 changed Staffordshire CC's approach to the delivery of services. The commissioning framework seeks to deliver better Library case studies – different delivery models

outcomes for people and communities rather than necessarily directly delivering services, and seeks to do so through the most appropriate and value for money solution. This encourages innovation and creativity in finding ways of providing what people want and need that may not be directly through Staffordshire CC. The role of the council is therefore changing into seeking out, developing and facilitating new approaches that encourage personal responsibility amongst communities in order to achieve outcomes. The Achieving Excellence programme conforms to this framework.

### 3. The opportunities and challenges encountered

The key themes of the proposals put forward as part of the collective consultation presented a range of opportunities for consideration, as follows:

- closure: consider reviewing poor performing libraries with a view to possible closure as a vehicle to deliver savings
- resourcing: consider retaining paid library staff capacity to provide a more tactical management to a cluster of libraries
- Mobile Service: review the mobile library service in line with the static offer
- branding: remove the naming of Extra & Core
- management: review the management structure and level of authority given locally to empower each library to control their offer
- opening hours: consider seasonal opening hour changes and a general reduction of hours to mitigate redundancies
- cost reduction: multitude of options provided from environmental efficiencies, staff reductions, potential relocations and greater adoption of IT.

These were assessed against the following viability criteria:

- the Critical Success Factors (see Figure 3)
- contribution towards the delivery of £1.325 million savings
- contribution towards the outcomes of Staffordshire CC
- the vision and values of Staffordshire CC.

Viable consultation submissions have been incorporated into the development of final proposals and considered alongside and in relation to the findings of the public consultation process. The collective consultation process has also highlighted the opportunity for further exploration of a number of themed suggestions that will be developed in parallel to the proposed model as business as usual activity. These are:

- income generation – a range of ideas have been put forward to increase revenue streams in the libraries
- stock management – the current stock management process has generated a great deal of feedback and highlighted some potential areas of improvement
- promotion of the library service and linked Staffordshire CC offers - there is understanding of the need to better advertise the service.

Other challenges include:

- time taken to produce legal documents/contracts
- fundamental restructure of all staff roles in anticipation of change
- workforce engagement and development to prepare staff for new roles and maintaining staff morale

- deciding on an appropriate level of support across the tiers, tailored according to need
- undertaking further related reviews e.g. opening hours and mobile and travelling library services

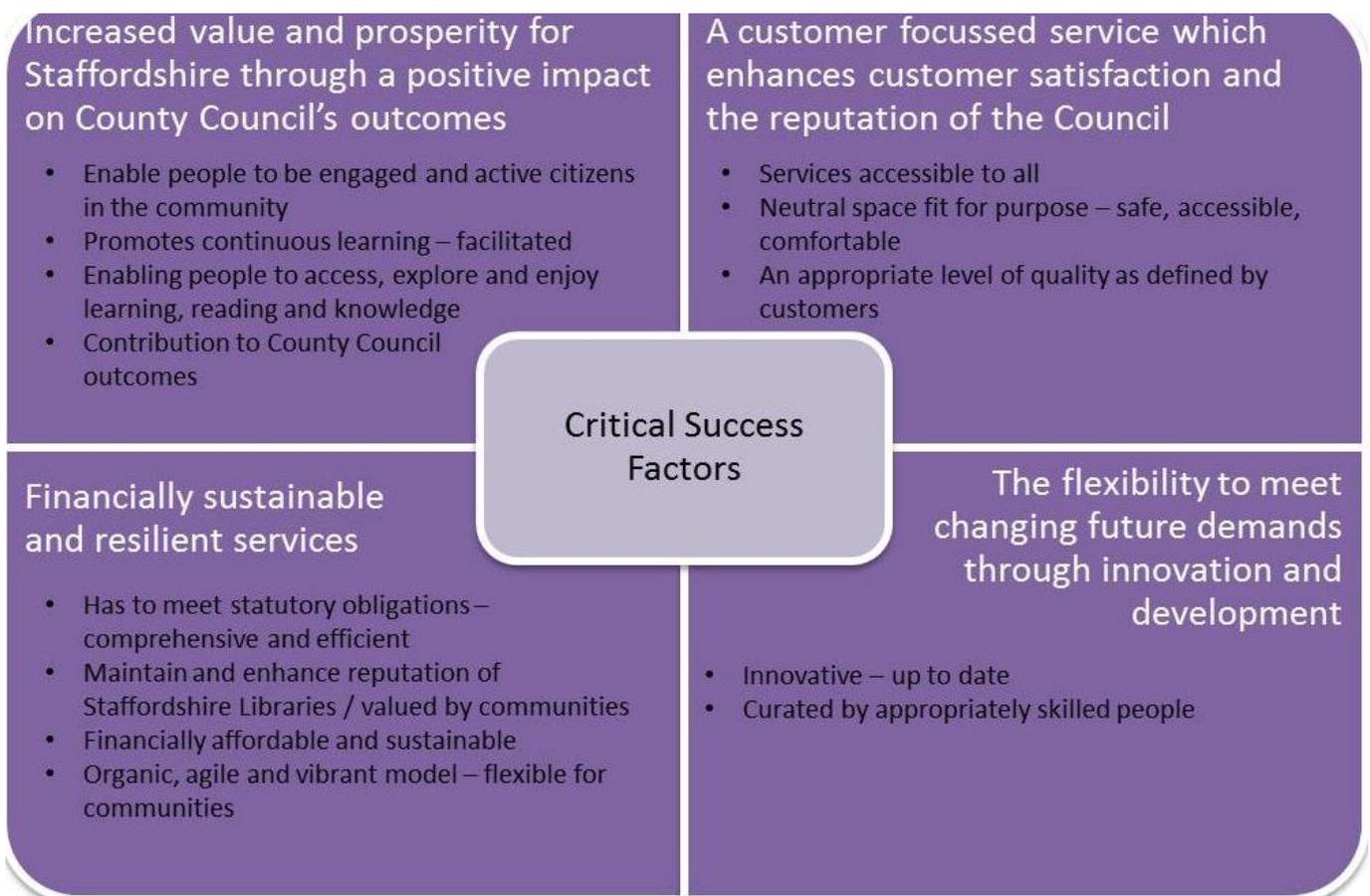
4. Future challenges and potential solutions

- establishing Friends Groups for every library
- roll out of new 3 tier model, and identify other possible community management and support via the Transformation Support Unit

5. Top tips for other councils.

- set out a clear process for change, including provision for meaningful, open and honest consultation and flexibility to evaluate and incorporate alternative proposals
- seek political support for the programme, and plan for effective scrutiny and agree parameters of political flexibility e.g. no closures
- involve workforce in the change programme
- model what “good” looks like i.e. 4 Critical Success Factors model (See below)
- identify and use other resources and exemplars – Warwickshire, Suffolk
- think carefully about accreditation, training and continued support for volunteers.

Figure 3: Critical Success Factors – What a “good” library looks like.



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## **Waltham Forest Libraries – repositioning libraries as the first point of contact for council transactions**

### **1. Rationale underpinning the approach**

In 2011 Waltham Forest determined to review its library service, this resulted in a strategic realignment of the service to ensure improved access, increase opening hours, maintain a core library offer and to provide additional services through library buildings (reporting services, payments, applications, birth registration, CAB, Met Police contact point, information about fostering, financial advice and events and special activities).

As a consequence of the strategic realignment the council is implementing its Library Plus Improvement Programme. This is a £5 million programme to refurbish and improve Waltham Forest's four main Library Plus buildings at Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Chingford. This is a major investment at a time when many councils are facing financial challenges in their library services.

During this period the library service has built upon the momentum created by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the refurbishment of the William Morris gallery. The legacy has seen more visitors to the borough and increased resident appetite for cultural activity. The role of the libraries is seen as a critical success factor in this development.

Chris Robbins (leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Culture) in his forward to the new borough arts strategy "Arts for All, Great Arts and Culture in Waltham Forest" sets out the vision for arts and culture in Waltham Forest. He says that arts and culture will make Waltham Forest a better place to live and affirms his determination to continue to invest in this area.

The library service has repositioned in order to align with Waltham Forest corporate priorities.

### **2. How does the approach link to the council's corporate objectives?**

The council reaffirmed its core priorities for 2015 - 2018, which include helping to build a strong economy and helping people enjoy a good quality of life. The new arts strategy and the pre-existing cultural strategy demonstrate the cultural services and libraries contribution to these objectives.

The new Arts and Culture Strategy sets out a number of core principles, and makes specific reference to the contribution that libraries will make to the future provision of arts and culture in Waltham Forest. Specific reference is made to:

Enterprise: Use of community spaces for culture and arts e.g. libraries

Investing in art and communities libraries: Libraries have never been more relevant in opening up possibilities and opportunities for residents, helping them improve their wellbeing by pursuing their interests, aspirations and potential and tackling the problems of social isolation, inequality, and disadvantage. Children who read well by 11 do better at school, get better exam results and do better in the workplace. However, books are only part of the library story as all libraries provide free internet access, opening up the world of digital technology to aid self-improvement and advancement, support for those seeking new skills and employment and providing access to local services.

Collaboration and Partnership: Waltham Forest has developed strong partnerships to deliver a high quality and ambitious events programme. Examples include:

- Leytonstone Library has developed a partnership with their local children's centre and registrars' service, with funding from Arts Council England. All under-5s activities at Leytonstone Library are run by the children's centre. When parents come to register the birth of their baby, they are signed up for library membership and given a free Bookstart bag, with some first books to read to their child and signed up for membership of the children's centre which offers a whole variety of support to parents including advice and training.
- In Higham's Park, the Friends of Hale End Library have successfully obtained grants from their local community ward forum to deliver a range of events for adults and children, including silver surfer ICT sessions. There is also a successful film club 'Film as Cultural Capital' at the library, which screens a range of films to meet a variety of interests.

In 2015 the Walthamstow Garden Party brought together over 30,000 residents and visitors to the borough to experience and enjoy a programme of music, food, arts activity and crafts market, delivered by Waltham Forest with a range of partners including Barbican, Create London, Artillery and the E17 Designers Market with support from Arts Council England. Waltham Forest is now building on this partnership to bring in external funding to recreate this offer in other parts of the borough.

The Barbican, feedback on the partnership with Waltham Forest is:

"The partnership has enabled us to utilise the programming expertise of a world class arts and learning institution to develop a large-scale cultural event in the community. It has deepened existing relationships with local arts organisations, providing us with further insight relating to the needs and interests of local communities, whilst helping to further build capacity in those organisations to develop and expand upon existing cultural provision in the area".

The borough's Culture Strategy, *Taking Our Place in London*: the aim in this strategy to "increase participation in arts, culture and sport across the borough's diverse and changing population" is supported by proposals in the development plan to increase library usage.

### 3. The opportunities and challenges encountered

Waltham Forest has recognised the potential that arts, culture and libraries has to bring prosperity to the borough, as well as helping Waltham Forest to secure its unique identity in and contribution to London.

The recommendations in the council's 2014 Growth Commission report acknowledge the borough's history of creativity and innovation. Reputation is being secured into the future through investment in high-quality arts and culture resources and "fantastic" events throughout the year.

The realigned library service has identified the contribution that it can make to the cultural fabric of Waltham Forest. The capital investment in library buildings aims to maintain the library core offer, while meeting other cultural requirements of residents, such as the provision of performance space. This approach is integral to the design brief for the buildings. Cultural opportunities, including performance and exhibition space, are considered in all stages of the planning and development of the design of the refurbished Walthamstow Library/Town Square development, along with space for employment and skills training.

Leytonstone Library Plus reopened after £1.5 million investment. The Grade II\* listed building has been sensitively refurbished to enhance its beautiful listed features. The library also offers 36 state of the art PCs with free internet access, Wi-Fi connection and space for workshops and events for families and young people, in the restored theatre hall.

The library service has been proactive in engaging with partners to maximise the cultural offer for residents and visitors e.g. Arts Council England, Leytonstone Festival.

The library service has been proactive in incubating new projects and delivering existing projects in different ways:

- ACE funding supports Leytonstone Library in developing a strong partnership with the local children's centre and registrars service
- Higham's Park Library has silver surfer ICT sessions and a successful "Film as Cultural Capital" film club
- 3D Printer Artwork is being trailed in libraries, using local artists and library staff skills.

East London has become a hub for creative activity and much focus is placed on ensuring that the cultural infrastructure is in place to ensure that the momentum continues. Waltham Forest has identified a number of regeneration hotspots (Walthamstow Town Centre, Wood Street and North Olympic Fringe) where the library service will be a visible and active partner.

#### 4. Future challenges and potential solutions

Waltham Forest will continue its programme of capital investment and identify new opportunities for collaboration, within the core priorities of the council.

#### 5. Top tips for other councils.

- engage with the political leadership of the council
- become a proactive and viable partner (Arts Council England, E17 Arts Trail)
- review and reposition library provision to provide core library services and other council and public services as a community hub/front door
- link to one or more of the council's core areas of work, in this case regeneration and to demonstrate the positive contribution that libraries will make to the regeneration activity in Waltham Forest.
- identify opportunities for collaboration, be nimble, take risks and be flexible.

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