Public Document Pack

Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

SUPPLEMENTARY PACK

Council

Date: Tuesday, 4th December, 2018

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Chairman: Councillor L Wells

Members: Councillors K Artus, H Asker, G Barker (Vice-Chair), S Barker, R Chambers, J Davey, P Davies, A Dean, P Fairhurst, T Farthing, M Felton, M Foley, J Freeman, R Freeman, A Gerard, T Goddard, J Gordon, N Hargreaves, S Harris, E Hicks, S Howell, D Jones, T Knight, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, A Mills, S Morris, E Oliver, V Ranger, J Redfern, H Rolfe, H Ryles and G Sell

ITEMS WITH SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
PART 1

Open to Public and Press

20 Notice of Motion Received from Councillor Sell: Library Services in Uttlesford 3 - 10

This Council asks the Cabinet member for communities and partnerships to work with Essex County Council, parish/town councils, voluntary organisations and residents to explore ways in which the library service in Uttlesford is maintained and enhanced, in light of the county council's major consultation on the proposed future strategy for the county's libraries.

Enclosed:

- Draft Essex Library Services Strategy - Summary

Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

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Essex Future Library Services Consultation summary and survey form

2019 - 2024

Essex County Council

Essex County Council would like your views on its proposed strategy for future library services over the next five years.

Before completing this survey please read the summary here or view the draft strategy online at essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation.

You can also find out about the proposals at information drop-in sessions in Essex libraries throughout the consultation period. See online or ask in your library for details.

When you are ready complete the survey and return it to us in the enclosed reply envelope by Wednesday 20 February 2019.

If you require a large print or Easy Read version or would like help to complete the survey ask at your local library or phone 0345 603 7639.

What is the strategy about?

Our vision for library services over the next five years is a 21st century library service that is inclusive and vibrant, and enables users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, our ambition is that we will:

- Have books and reading at the heart of our library service offer
- Have a class-leading eLibrary and embrace digital technology
- Have a smaller number of libraries more effectively focused on meeting the needs of communities
- Work in partnership with our communities to run and improve library services
- Offer a consistently good customer experience.

The strategy is about library services not buildings. It focuses on how best to provide library services, both physical and online. What we provide will be based on need and will be provided in different ways and in different locations and spaces than currently.

For instance, library shelves and study spaces could be in community centres or other public buildings, children's story-times or library events could take place in village halls, smart access and self-service technology could make it much easier for you to browse, study, borrow and return books outside regular opening hours.

In the future, we think community groups and volunteers are much more likely to be involved in delivering library services, taking the opportunity for people who live and work in the community and who best understand the unique needs of their community to run services in ways that fit local needs.

Library services are integral to society, helping people to thrive and prosper. They help create great places to grow up, live and work and help people get a good start in life and age well.

But customer expectations are changing, our population is growing, and we need to make sure that we offer the best possible value for money. Essex County Council (ECC) also needs to ensure it meets its statutory duty and provides a library service that is fit for the future, financially sustainable and fits with people's lives and expectations.

Essex Libraries serve a population of 1.5m through 74 library buildings, eLibrary services, two mobile libraries and home library service volunteers. It also supports eight volunteer-run community libraries that are not part of the core offer. The location and spread of libraries are the result of historical decisions rather than design and do not reflect current demographics or need.

In 2016-17, Essex was the second largest library authority in England, with a higher than average number of outlets and the fourth highest spending per head of population.

But in the last six years, here in Essex and across the country, use of libraries has sharply declined.

Essex Libraries' loans decreased 43% from over 7.1m loans a year in 2011/12 to less than 4.1m loans in 2017/18. Demand for public network computers in libraries fell 22% between 2012/13 and 2017/18. The equivalent of 16% of Essex residents – fewer than one in five – are active library users. Meanwhile, technology has transformed how people consume information and entertainment. Loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines rose 205%, from 61,000 to 186,000 in five years. And with 85% of UK adults now owning a smartphone and 10% using an eReader daily, we expect that trend to continue.

In March 2018, we asked Essex residents and library users for their views on libraries. Your feedback informs this strategy and the results are published in Your Community, Libraries and You. Our priorities, with books and reading at the top, reflect your priorities.

These are challenging times for all of local government. We can no longer afford to spend as much on services as before and we must take opportunities to do things in new and more efficient ways. In the future we will look to reduce the number of library buildings that we manage, so that we can focus our attention on meeting needs.

The strategy sets out the priorities for library services, based on what you have told us. It also defines a 'core offer' you can expect from library services and a future approach that will meet our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

Key points

- Keep books and reading at the heart of our comprehensive library offer, as this is the top priority for the people of Essex
- Invest in eLibrary and online services to respond to changing demand, particularly among younger users, and make services more accessible, for instance offering easier browsing, ordering and downloads on mobile devices
- Explore the potential of smart libraries – offering members swipe card access outside staffed opening hours - to increase opening hours and the ways people can use libraries, and introduce them where viable
- Seek investment to modernise library spaces to a consistent standard, so they are welcoming, easy to use and meet diverse user needs
- Focus on outreach, working closely with other ECC services and partners to reach communities and individuals with the greatest needs and promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings, such as community hubs and other community settings
- Provide future library services based on evidence of need, taking into account distance between locations, usage, population size, deprivation and social isolation
- This strategy places current libraries in four tiers, based on evidence of need, as described under Ways to access the service, below.

This strategy is about the service, not the buildings. However, it is worth noting that as the strategy develops, we will work in partnership to make the most efficient use of public buildings, whether owned by the council, public bodies or community organisations. This includes considering the most appropriate building for the service. Most library services will be in shared spaces, not their current buildings by 2024.

Ways to access library services

We propose that Essex library services be delivered, according to need for them, through a range of physical and online services:

- Enhanced eLibrary services to make it easier for customers to access library materials anywhere, anytime from their own devices
- A network of libraries across the county, run by ECC alone or in partnership with other groups or organisations
- Outreach to bring some library services and activities out to communities according to need, such as running a children's story time in a village hall
- Mobile libraries, which currently serve 217 stops around the county but could see more stops added depending on need
- Home Library Service, where volunteers bring books and other loan items to people in their own homes
- Friends and family membership, where friends or family members can collect and return books and other items for you.

A needs-based approach

With falling demand and limited resources, ECC cannot continue to support the 74 libraries it currently runs. In future we propose to provide library services around the county based on evidence of need for them.

We propose using five criteria to assess need for each current library. Each library will be scored, with higher weighting given to location, usage and population. The five criteria are listed below, with the weighting for each in brackets:

Location: Proximity to other libraries. Libraries clustered within a two mile walk of each other will be ranked at lower need (30%).

Usage: the number of active users (members who have used their library card in the last year) the library has (25%).

Population: The number of libraries per head of population in each district. Based on current figures, not projected growth. Districts with more people per library ranked higher for need (25%).

Deprivation: The deprivation level of the lower-layer super output area (LSOA) the library's postcode is in, as identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (15%).

Social isolation: Prevalence in the district of new parents (measured by fertility rates) and % of residents over 65 as indicators of higher risk of social isolation) (5%).

According to those identified needs, we propose placing libraries into tiers.

Tier 1: main or 'hub' libraries, at least one in each city, district or borough, managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network. These will normally be in a main town or other population and employment centre with good transport links and other facilities.
Fifteen libraries are proposed for tier 1. These are

Basildon, Billericay, Braintree, Brentwood, Canvey Island, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Harlow, Loughton, Maldon, Rayleigh, Saffron Walden, Wickford, Witham.

Tier 2: Library services in areas where there is a need for them, managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network and delivered in partnership with the community or other partner.

Fifteen libraries are proposed for tier 2. These are Burnham, Chipping Ongar, Epping, Great Baddow, Great Dunmow, Greenstead, Halstead, Harwich, Laindon, North Melbourne, Old Harlow, Pitsea, Rochford, South Woodham Ferrers, Waltham Abbey.

Tier 3: Locations where no library service is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC could support the provision of library services run by a community or partner organisation with ECC support. If no suitable offer for a location is received and accepted within six months of Cabinet approval of the strategy we intend to re-consult on the future of that library. This period may be extended to 12 months if proposals have been received but not agreed - or if we believe that deliverable proposals are likely to be forthcoming during that period.

Nineteen libraries are proposed for tier 3. These are Brightlingsea, Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Frinton, Great Parndon, Great Tarpots, Hadleigh, Hockley, Ingatestone, Manningtree, Shenfield, South Benfleet, Springfield, Stanway, Tiptree, Walton, West Clacton, West Mersea, Wivenhoe.

Just under 90% of library users currently use one or more of the libraries in tiers 1-3.

The remaining libraries will be closed.

Tier 4: This fourth tier includes locations where a library service is not required as part of a comprehensive service. This is based on evidence of need in those areas compared to other areas, proximity to other libraries within a two mile walk and the spread of library services across the district and across the county. We propose to close these libraries but will consider proposals for community libraries in these locations.

Twenty five libraries are proposed for tier 4. These are Broomfield, Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Danbury, Debden, Fryerns, Galleywood, Great Wakering, Hatfield Peverel, Holland, Hullbridge, Kelvedon, Mark Hall, North Weald, Prettygate, Sible Hedingham, Silver End, Southminster, Stansted, Stock, Thaxted, Tye Green, Vange, Wickham Bishops and Writtle.

Home library, friends and family membership and eLibrary services will be available to anybody in these areas who wants to use them. We will consider adding mobile library stops according to need.

Tier 1 libraries will act as hubs for their area. ECC will meet its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service through a combination of library services in tiers 1 and 2, the online eLibrary, mobile libraries and the home library service. Tier 3 community-run libraries will supplement the core offer. Partners could include community groups or other agencies. ECC will review mobile library stops to meet changing needs.

DS18_6269

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Essex Libraries Service

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Published November 2018