

LIBRARY OPENING HOURS

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The current pattern of library opening hours was introduced on 23 January 2012. When cabinet approved this pattern on 13 December 2011 it also agreed that there should be a consultation exercise to gather views on the new opening hours.
- 1.2 While adjustments to a library's pattern of opening hours are likely to be welcomed by some of its users, others will be inconvenienced by them. Carrying out a survey before making any further adjustments will help to ensure that those changes reflect the wishes of as many users and potential users as possible.
- 1.3 Planning for an opening hours survey is at an advanced stage; however its implementation has been deferred pending decisions on the Council's budget strategy for the next three years.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note that consultation with library users on opening hours patterns is proposed to take place following decisions on the Council's budget strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Feedback from library users indicates that some would like the Council to adjust opening hours; it is felt that the timing of this should take into consideration the outcomes of the Council's budget strategy.
- 3.2 A consultation exercise on opening hours was recommended in the report presented to cabinet on 13 December 2011.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 4.1 Library opening hours were altered for the first time during 2011/12 on 4 July 2011. The changes that were implemented had been agreed as part of the Council's budget setting process for that year. Libraries were allocated to tiers, with each library in a tier having the same number of weekly opening hours. Across the network of 15 libraries total weekly opening hours were reduced by 101.
- 4.2 On 23 January 2012 library opening hours were further reduced due to the early implementation of the 2012/13 budget savings. The change across the whole network this time was a reduction of 102 opening hours per week. This pattern of weekly opening hours still remains in place and is illustrated for each library in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 Consultation with staff and public on the second round of opening hours reductions began in early October 2011, in line with the corporately agreed timetable for setting the Council's budget for 2012/13 that December. In November 2011, Neighbourhoods Commission requested that cabinet "consider partnering libraries which are geographically close to facilitate staggering opening hours to provide a fuller and complementary service."
- 4.4 Partnering of libraries was already an element of the proposals specifically to enable managers to be shared across two sites. This in turn resulted in some staggering of neighbouring libraries' opening hours so that managers could work at different sites on different days within a 37 hour working week. Sharing managers helped increase budget savings, though this made the citywide restructuring process more complicated. It took many weeks to draw up workable plans, including individual timetables for a large number of staff.
- 4.5 By the time the Commission's proposals were received in mid-November, draft timetables had been drawn up for all members of staff and consultation was underway. Therefore to have changed the proposed opening times of any library at that stage would have caused the whole restructuring process to become unravelled. New individual timetables would have been required for dozens of staff and a new consultation process would have been needed, resulting in significant delays to the introduction of new opening hours.
- 4.6 A delay in implementing the revised opening times would have meant that members of staff who were displaced would not have the opportunity to take advantage of the Council's enhanced redundancy package, as this was only available until 31 December 2011. It would also have prevented displaced staff taking advantage of the redeployment opportunities that became available in December 2011 as a result of the budget setting process. For these various reasons it was impractical at that time to revise the proposed library opening patterns.

- 4.7 An additional consideration was that, although some people wanted the Council to change the proposed opening patterns, others would have been unhappy if that had been done. For example some users living midway between Blagreaves Lane and Sinfen Libraries were unhappy that under the proposals both were to be closed on Fridays. They would have preferred Blagreaves to remain open on Fridays and close on Mondays instead. However, users living midway between Blagreaves and Mickleover would probably have taken an entirely different view, because Mickleover was also proposed for closure on Mondays.
- 4.8 It was very apparent that the situation was complex and that any adjustments should not be made until users of all libraries have been consulted.
- 4.9 With this in mind the report to cabinet on 13 December 2011 included a recommendation that the annual Library Service user survey scheduled for autumn 2012 “be adapted to gather feedback on the new opening hours on a library-by-library basis and that based on its findings, a report identifying possible improvements to patterns of opening hours within existing budget allocations be presented to the cabinet members if a key decision is required”.

Progress towards an opening hours survey

- 4.10 Libraries officers have been working closely with colleagues from the Council's Policy Research and Engagement team to design a consultation process in line with the recommendation in the December 2011 cabinet report. The intention was to carry out the survey in mid to late summer 2012, to give time for the new opening patterns to “bed in” and therefore to enable users to comment on them with the benefit of experience.
- 4.11 However, along with services and teams from across the Council, libraries have been asked to develop proposals to deliver substantial budget savings over the next three years. It was therefore felt prudent by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture to defer consultation on patterns of library opening until these larger issues have been resolved.
- 4.12 Although the consultation is currently on hold, we expect to go ahead with it once budget decisions have been made. When the time comes we are anxious to engage as many people as possible in the survey, both existing users and non-users, so we will be working with the Communications Team to publicise it and encourage participation. As well as promoting the survey in libraries, via the media and on the Council's website, we will provide details to Neighbourhood Forums and the Council's Equality and Diversity Forums.

- 4.13 Although it needs some finishing touches, the design of the survey form is almost complete (Appendix 3). To encourage maximum participation forms will be widely available, as follows –
- To collect at every library – staff will proactively offer them to users
 - To collect from Albion Street / the Council House
 - By post if requested
 - Online
- 4.14 We also intend to write personally to everyone who contacted us when plans for the current opening hours were announced, enclosing a survey form and inviting them to complete and return it to us. This ensures that people who told us that it would be impossible for them to use libraries because of January's change in hours will be actively encouraged to participate in the consultation.
- 4.15 People whose first language is not English may struggle with the written survey form. Each questionnaire will therefore carry the Council's standard help message in about 17 languages that are spoken in Derby. We will make arrangements to provide appropriate support for anyone contacting us via the help number shown in this message.
- 4.16 Before finalising preparations for the consultation we will carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment to help us identify the potential positive or negative impacts of changing the way the service is delivered for different groups or communities. This would also be used to inform the design of the consultation.
- 4.17 When we carry it out the consultation will last 12 weeks, in line with the consultation policy agreed by cabinet in July. We could receive several thousand responses, and their analysis by the Policy, Research and Engagement Team will take a further four to six weeks. Having received the completed analysis Libraries officers will need time to consider how to act on it; preparing proposals and gaining approval for them from cabinet will take a month or more. Once approval for any changes has been received we will then need to undertake formal consultation with staff affected by them, and give customers notice of the changes.
- 4.18 Overall, therefore, the time between the start of the consultation and implementation of any changes resulting from it is likely to be in the region of eight months, but it could be a little more or less depending on the scale of the changes being proposed. Timescales may also be influenced by capacity within the Policy, Research and Engagement Team to carry out a survey on this scale.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	None
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Financial officer	None
Human Resources officer	None
Service Director(s)	Claire Davenport
Other(s)	None

For more information contact:	Name 01332 641719 e-mail david.potton@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Opening hours at each library from 23 January 2012 Appendix 3 – Draft survey

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 None arising directly from this report

Legal

- 2.1 None arising directly from this report

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising directly from this report

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report

Asset Management

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report

Risk Management

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 None arising directly from this report

Opening hours at each library from 23 January 2012

TIER 1 Open 33 hours a week

		opening time	closing time
Central	Monday	10am	5pm
	Tuesday	10am	7pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	5pm
	Friday	10am	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

TIER 2 Open 26 hours a week

		opening time	closing time
Allestree	Monday	CLOSED	
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	7pm
	Friday	10am	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Alvaston	Monday	CLOSED	
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	7pm
	Friday	10am	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Blagreaves	Monday	10am	7pm
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	5pm
	Friday	CLOSED	
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Chellaston	Monday	CLOSED	
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	7pm
	Friday	10am	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Local	Monday	9.30am	1pm
	Tuesday	9.30am	1pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	

		opening time	closing time
Mickleover	Monday	CLOSED	
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	7pm
	Friday	10am	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Pear Tree	Monday	10am	5pm
	Tuesday	CLOSED	
	Wednesday	10am	7pm
	Thursday	CLOSED	
	Friday	10am	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Sinfin	Monday	10am	7pm
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	5pm
	Friday	CLOSED	
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Spondon	Monday	10am	7pm
	Tuesday	10am	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	5pm
	Friday	CLOSED	
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Thursday	9.30am	7pm
Friday	9.30am	4pm
Saturday	10am	1pm

TIER 3 Open 20 hours a week

		opening time	closing time
Allenton	Monday	1pm	5pm
	Tuesday	CLOSED	
	Wednesday	10am	7pm
	Thursday	CLOSED	
	Friday	1pm	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

		opening time	closing time
Mackworth	Monday	10am	5pm
	Tuesday	1pm	7pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	1pm	5pm
	Friday	CLOSED	
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Chaddesden	Monday	CLOSED	
	Tuesday	10am	7pm
	Wednesday	1pm	5pm
	Thursday	CLOSED	
	Friday	1pm	5pm
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Springwood	Monday	CLOSED	
	Tuesday	1pm	5pm
	Wednesday	10am	7pm
	Thursday	1pm	5pm
	Friday	CLOSED	
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Derwent	Monday	1pm	5pm
	Tuesday	1pm	5pm
	Wednesday	CLOSED	
	Thursday	10am	7pm
	Friday	CLOSED	
	Saturday	10am	1pm

Draft survey form

The attached PDF file shows the latest draft of the survey form. Please note that it has been designed using specialist Market Research software, and is therefore not available in MS Word.



Two additional questions have been identified since this draft was written. They are –

1. If the opening hours for your local library were changed, do you think that this could affect any particular groups of people or communities?

Yes / No / Not sure

If you would like to, please say which group/s of people and why.

2. If the opening hours for your local library were changed, would this affect you?

Yes / No / Not sure

If you would like to, please say how.

These will be added to the final draft, and there may be other adjustments before the survey takes place.