

## **REVIEW OF LIBRARY OPENING HOURS**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 A review of library opening hours has been carried out in order to assist with the setting of the budget and to provide standardisation of opening hours for the service across the city into three main tiers.
- 1.2 Separating libraries into three tiers according to how busy they are simplifies the current pattern and delivers a significant level of standardisation. This outcome is achieved while still reflecting in the allocation of opening hours the fact that the most heavily used library is more than ten times busier than those with the fewest users.
- 1.3 A decision to allocate 37.5 opening hours to Tier 1, 30.5 hours to Tier 2 and 23 hours to Tier 3 would result in an overall reduction across the city of 23.5% and an annual saving of £214,000. However opening the least busy libraries just 23 hours each week would make poor use of valuable community assets and would severely limit service availability in those neighbourhoods.
- 1.4 In order to maintain a reasonable level of access to all of Derby's libraries this report recommends that the current minimum number of opening hours is increased from 27 to 28. In addition, under this proposal the standard at Tier 2 would be 31.5 hours per week, and at Tier 1 it would be 38.5. This would result in an overall opening hours reduction of 99 hours per week (17.4%) and an annual saving of £168,000. The net reduction in staffing would be approximately 8.4 fte.
- 1.5 The difference between the savings generated from a 23.5% reduction in opening hours and a 17.4% reduction is £46,000. The report proposes that this essential saving is covered by a reduction in the Library Service's book fund.
- 1.6 The majority of the savings are to be re-invested within the Neighbourhoods Directorate, with £36,000 being available to contribute towards the Directorates savings targets.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To agree that for the purpose of determining their opening hours, to separate Derby's libraries into three tiers reflecting the level of use made of them, as follows –
- Tier 1 – Central Library
  - Tier 2 – Allestree, Alvaston, Blagreaves, Chaddesden, Chellaston, Local Studies, Mickleover, Pear Tree, Sinfen, Spondon and Springwood.
  - Tier 3 – Allenton, Derwent and Mackworth
- 2.2 To review the status of Chaddesden Library 12 months after the opening of the new library.
- 2.3 Agree that the opening total weekly opening hours for each tier as follows –
- Tier 1 – 38.5
  - Tier 2 – 31.5
  - Tier 3 – 28
- 2.4 To agree that the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods should be guided by the principles set out in paragraph 4.9 when deciding how the total number hours available to any library should be distributed across the week, but allowed some flexibility to respond to local circumstances and community needs.
- 2.5 To agree to supplement the budget saving generated by the recommended opening hours with a £46,000 reduction in the Library Service's annual book fund in order to achieve targets that have been set.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The recommended approach delivers in excess of £200,000 annual savings as required. It achieves significant standardisation of opening times across the city and ensures that users of all libraries have a reasonable level of access to their local service point.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### A tiered approach to library opening hours

- 4.1 Derby has 15 libraries, which between them have a total of 570 opening hours. A minor adjustment reducing Alvaston and Mickleover from 43.5 to 42.5 per week was proposed to Star Chamber on 17 November. Star Chamber asked for a further review to generate at least £200,000 annual savings, and to introduce a standardised approach to library opening times across the city.
- 4.2 There is currently no consistent pattern to opening hours, with individual service points being open between 27 and 48 hours per week. A standard opening time of 31

hours per week at each library would generate full year savings of around £211,000. However this “one size fits all” approach would mean that the Central Library, which serves 130 customers per hour would see its opening hours shrink by 35% while Allenton Library, which serves just 20 customers per hour would see its opening hours rise by 15%. These changes would not appear to be the most effective and customer-focused way to achieve the required budget saving.

- 4.3 An alternative approach is to separate Derby’s libraries into tiers according to how busy they are, and then apply a standardised approach to opening hours at every library in a given tier. The following table gives an estimate of annual visits to each lending library based on a three month sample between July and September 2010.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Library</b>	<b>Annual visits</b>
1	Central	312620
2	Mickleover	126864
	Allestree	104692
	Sinfin	103644
	Blagreaves	82604
	Pear Tree	80888
	Alvaston	75668
	Springwood	63980
	Spondon	63044
	Chellaston	60780
	Chaddesden	40220
3	Mackworth	41232
	Derwent	39204
	Allenton	26528

- 4.4 For the purposes of this review the busy-ness of each library has been assessed by ranking them according to the number of user visits per hour open and the number of book loans per hour open, and combining those two rankings into a single overall ranking. This methodology demonstrates that use of the Central Library is of a different order of magnitude to any other. It belongs in a tier of its own – Tier 1.
- 4.5 The following neighbourhood libraries were easily allocated to Tier 2; they are Allestree, Alvaston, Blagreaves, Chellaston, Mickleover, Pear Tree, Sinfin, Spondon and Springwood.
- 4.6 Three libraries are notably less busy than the rest. They are Allenton, Derwent and Mackworth. These libraries have been allocated to Tier 3.
- 4.7 Statistically speaking Chaddesden Library is on the border of Tiers 2 and 3. Given that when the new library opens use is likely to increase significantly a pragmatic approach is to provisionally allocate it to Tier 2 pending a review of its status after it has been open for 12 months.
- 4.8 The ranking methodology is not easily transferable to the Local Studies Library as it is a research rather than a lending library, but its pattern and type of use fits most comfortably into Tier 2.

## Revised opening hours – guiding principles

- 4.9 The review of opening hours and the new pattern proposed is based on the following principles –
- Libraries are grouped into three tiers according to how busy they are, based on a three months sample between July and September 2010. All libraries in a given tier have the same number of opening hours each week.
  - All libraries are allowed sufficient opening hours to give potential users a reasonable choice of days and times when they can access the service. This will help avoid complaints that “this library is never open when I can use it.”
  - Every library at every tier is open on four weekdays each week.
  - Every library at every tier is open on Saturday morning.
  - To encourage use by children afternoon opening has been given priority over morning opening. Every library at every tier is open four afternoons each week.
  - Every library at every tier is open two evenings until 7pm.
  - The standard opening times are 9.30am and 1pm as appropriate.
  - The standard closing times are 1pm, 5.30pm and 7pm as appropriate.
  - When a library is open throughout the day it will not close at lunch time.
- 4.10 To generate the required annual savings of at least £200,000 an initial proposal was developed setting the opening hours of each tier as follows –
- Tier 1 – 37.5
  - Tier 2 – 30.5
  - Tier 3 – 23.0
- 4.11 This pattern of opening hours would deliver annual savings of £214,000 by reducing them across the whole city by 23.5%. However a reduction of this magnitude would have a very damaging impact on service access, particularly at Tier 3 where a total of 23 hours per week is certain to be regarded as significantly restricting user choice. For this reason an alternative proposal has been developed that would reduce the impact on service access, particularly at Tier 3.
- 4.12 The proposal recommended here would see the Central Library’s (Tier 1) opening hours reduced from 48 to 38.5 per week. The proposed timetable is –
- Monday – 9:30 to 5.30
  - Tuesday – 9.30 to 7.00
  - Wednesday – closed
  - Thursday – 9:30 to 7.00
  - Friday – 9.30 to 5.30
  - Saturday – 9.30 to 1.00

- 4.13 Tier 2 libraries would be open 31.5 hours each week. The model opening pattern is –
- Monday – 1.00 to 7.00
  - Tuesday – 9.30 to 5.30
  - Wednesday – closed
  - Thursday – 1.00 to 7.00
  - Friday – 9.30 to 5.30
  - Saturday – 9.30 to 1.00
- 4.14 Tier 3 libraries would be open 28 hours each week. The model opening pattern is –
- Monday – 9.30 to 5.30
  - Tuesday – 1.00 to 7.00
  - Wednesday – closed
  - Thursday – 1.00 to 7.00
  - Friday – 1.00 to 5.30
  - Saturday – 9.30 to 1.00
- 4.15 The change in opening hours proposed for each library is shown in the table at Appendix 2.
- 4.16 Although opening patterns have been suggested above it is recommended that some local discretion be allowed on which weekday the library closes and on the evenings it remains open until 7pm. This would enable the service to reflect long established patterns of opening and respond to the expressed wishes of the users of a particular service point.
- 4.17 The total full year saving to be achieved from the recommended pattern of opening hours is £168,000, including £19,000 from the relief budget. Implementation would result in the deletion of 8.4 fte post, although the number of individuals affected would be much greater. Vacancies are insufficient to cover this loss, and the shortfall will have to be made up by reducing the contracted hours of staff and deleting some posts altogether. New timetables and working patterns will have to be agreed with all front-line staff, and full implementation is likely to take several months.
- 4.18 Budget plans already made require the delivery of the full amount originally identified, that is £214,000 annually. It is therefore recommended to make up this shortfall by reducing the annual Library Service book fund by £46,000.
- 4.19 The impact of the proposed changes on staffing levels and budgets at each library is shown at Appendix 3.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Opening 31 hours per week at all 15 Derby libraries will deliver around £211,000 annual savings. Although this would achieve completely standardised opening hours across the city it has been rejected because of the impact on the Central Library, whose customers make up 25% of all library users in Derby.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Stuart Leslie Michael Kirk Celia Dyson Claire Davenport
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Name David Potton 01332 641719 e-mail david.potton@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Proposed changes to opening hours at each library Appendix 3 – Impact on staffing levels and budgets at each library

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1.1 Full year savings, excluding any redundancy costs, would be in the region of £214,000. However due to the inevitably lengthy implementation process £178,000 of savings can be made in 2011/12 with the balance of £36,000 in 2012/13.
- 1.2 The 2011/12 forecasted savings are planned to be re-invested within the Neighbourhoods Directorate. The £178,000 in 2011/12 are planned to be used for:
  - Derby Live require £50,000 to offset indicative savings proposals that are not achievable relating to income contributions from external partners.
  - Derby Live require £100,000 to support the Derby Live base budget, this £100,000 has been funded from one off resources in previous years.
  - Land searches income budgets need to reduce by £28,000. Income targets are not now attainable following changes to legislation around charges for this service.

The 2012/13 saving of £36,000 forms part of the Neighbourhoods Directorate savings proposals.

**Legal**

- 2.1 The new pattern of opening hours recommended here is unlikely to be judged contrary to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 The new pattern of opening hours will result in the loss of around 8.4 fte posts; however the number of individuals affected will be much greater as nearly all front-line posts are part-time. The new pattern will be implemented through reductions in the working hours of some posts and the deletion of others. Although a number of vacancies are currently being held some redundancies are likely. The working pattern of every member of front-line staff will have to be changed, even those whose total working hours are unaffected.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out.

**Health and Safety**

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **Carbon commitment**

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **Value for money**

- 7.1 The changes will improve overall value for money by concentrating library use into fewer hours per week.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 8.1 The changes will improve overall value for money by concentrating library use into fewer hours per week.



## Proposed changes to opening hours at each library

Library	Current weekly opening hours	Tier	Proposed opening hours	Change in opening hours	Percentage change in opening hours
Allenton	27.0	3	28.0	1.0	3.7%
Allestree	38.0	2	31.5	-6.5	-17.1%
Alvaston <sup>1</sup>	42.5	2	31.5	-11.0	-25.9%
Blagreaves	42.5	2	31.5	-11.0	-25.9%
Central	48.0	1	38.5	-9.5	-19.8%
Chaddesden	33.0	2	31.5	-1.5	-4.5%
Chellaston	27.0	2	31.5	4.5	16.7%
Derwent	32.0	3	28.0	-4.0	-12.5%
Local	48.0	2	31.5	-16.5	-34.4%
Mackworth	27.0	3	28.0	1.0	3.7%
Mickleover <sup>3</sup>	42.5	2	31.5	-11.0	-25.9%
Pear Tree	42.0	2	31.5	-10.5	-25.0%
Sinfin	40.0	2	31.5	-8.5	-21.3%
Spondon	40.5	2	31.5	-9.0	-22.2%
Springwood	38.0	2	31.5	-6.5	-17.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>568.0</b>		<b>469.0</b>	<b>-99.0</b>	<b>-17.4%</b>

<sup>1</sup> "Current" opening hours shown assume Alvaston and Mickleover Libraries close at 7pm on Thursdays (The change from 8pm is contained within a separate budget savings proposal)

## Impact on staffing levels and budgets at each library

Library	Reduction in fte staff	Estimated annual budget saving for established staff	Relief budget savings at 12.5%	Total net potential saving
Allenton	-0.06	-£1,062	-£133	-£1,195
Allestree	0.51	£8,949	£1,119	£10,068
Alvaston <sup>1</sup>	0.86	£15,088	£1,886	£16,974
Blagreaves	0.90	£15,765	£1,971	£17,736
Central	1.80	£31,606	£3,951	£35,557
Chaddesden	0.12	£2,042	£255	£2,297
Chellaston	-0.29	-£5,070	-£634	-£5,703
Derwent	0.16	£2,792	£349	£3,141
Local	1.34	£23,526	£2,941	£26,467
Mackworth	-0.06	-£1,127	-£141	-£1,267
Mickleover <sup>1</sup>	0.80	£14,051	£1,756	£15,807
Pear Tree	0.82	£14,446	£1,806	£16,252
Sinfin	0.62	£10,845	£1,356	£12,201
Spondon	0.62	£10,852	£1,357	£12,209
Springwood	0.31	£6,379	£797	£7,176
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8.43</b>	<b>£148,233</b>	<b>£18,529</b>	<b>£167,719</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excludes saving from changing Thursday closing time from at 8pm to 7pm on Thursdays

**Note**

Costings have been calculated at SCP 12, the penultimate point of the grading of a Library Assistant's post, including employee costs of 25% and net of 5% turnover. Relief costs are calculated at 12.5% of total costs. Saturday savings have been costed at plain time; savings on moving from time-and-a-half to plain time for Saturday working have been included in a separate budget savings proposal.