TITLE	**Library Offer**
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 7 March 2016
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Resident Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Library Services support the achievement of vibrant and self-sustaining communities through the provision of materials and services for enjoyment, education, creative and engagement activities. The proposed Library Offer and Delivery Model present an exciting and sustainable solution for the Wokingham Borough Council Library Service.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to consider the Library Offer proposals in the report and to submit comments and recommendations as appropriate.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The establishment of a clear ambition for the Libraries Service has been identified as an opportunity to demonstrate its current and future contribution to the Vision and Priorities of the Council.

The Council operates a very successful Library Service which has increased its usage against a national picture of declining activity within libraries. We have done this by responding to what residents have told us and by looking at new ways to make our libraries more welcoming and flexibly places that offer a broader range of services and activities.

The Library Service has a substantial amount of contact with residents each year, going beyond the historical role of libraries to enable a broad range of services and activities that support the vision priorities of the Council. A core element of this work involves supporting children and parents with learning support, providing access to post education and adult learning opportunities, and supporting engagement with elderly and isolated residents.

The **Library Offer** is the next stage of this journey in continuing to maintain the elements of the library service which resident's value and enabling more opportunities for connecting with new users. It establishes a purpose and direction of travel for the Library Service, providing residents with a clear understanding of its current contribution to the borough and an expectation of how it might evolve in the coming years.

Our Library services are already achieving a great deal and this offer increases accessibility, encourages greater usage and enhances services whilst being sensitive and responsive to the financial challenges the Council faces.

The Council has also identified a preferred **Delivery Model** for the proposed Library Offer which establishes a new hub and spoke model for its library services. The hub libraries will operate using a combination of traditional staffed opening hours and implementing self-service and some unstaffed opening hours. This combination allows for those customers who are more vulnerable or need more support to access services whilst staff are there to support them, and also allows the overall service hours to be increased for the more independent library users.

The Council is consulting with residents on the attached Library Offer and Delivery Model for eight weeks in order to fully understand residents' views.

Background

Libraries are a statutory service for councils and Wokingham Borough Council has a long history of implementing this statutory duty robustly, economically and flexibly. For many years, we have developed creative ways to not only encourage users into the Libraries themselves, but also to take the Library to those who cannot always make a physical visit. Our footfall bucks national declining trends, and when other local authorities have closed Libraries, Wokingham Borough has opened new ones. It is this broader recognition of the worth of a Library which the Council has long valued and provides the strong foundation from which to build a future Library Offer.

The financial backdrop for local authorities means that the Council has to be pragmatic about how its libraries continue to offer valued services whilst not being isolated from the reality of the need for efficiency. This point drives some of the themes within the Library Offer; and particularly the proposed Delivery Model which makes as much use of our assets and resources (make them work harder and more flexibly for our residents) and the ability to generate income. The challenge will be to maximise what the Library service can offer within its means, by balancing different needs, making wise use of any S106 contributions and generating income to support service delivery.

In this context therefore, the emerging Library Offer and Delivery Model recognise two things:

1. The value to residents of the flexible service already on offer
2. The need to maximise viability and enhance service delivery

Statutory Requirements

Local councils have to abide by the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 which makes public library services a statutory duty for local authorities.

The Act requires the Council to:

- Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it.

- Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

Aside from this general requirement for local authorities there are very few additional regulations which dictate what and how local authorities are required to provide.

The key elements that have to be included within a library service can be summarised as:
- Lending of books has to be free.
- Internet usage should be free of charge.
- Lending of ebooks should be free.
- Be able to obtain books we don't have in stock.
- A duty to encourage usage.

Whilst we are unable to charge for library membership or for the loan of books, we are not restricted in generating income through libraries in other ways.

Current National Good Practice

As recently as December 2015, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport has issued further guidance on good practice within local authority library services. This guidance is clear on the worth to local residents, the local community and to local businesses of effective and well-run library services.

In particular, the guidance highlights the need for local authorities to ensure that they can provide an efficient library service that listens to and reflects the changing needs of their communities. Within this, local authorities should understand the value of exploring new and smarter models for service delivery that embrace using new technologies and enhance the range of services and activities that are available to all their residents.

The full guidance can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-shaping-the-future-good-practice-toolkit/libraries-shaping-the-future-good-practice-toolkit

Analysis of Issues

The Current Library Service

The Library Service has a substantial and increasing amount of contact with residents each year, going beyond the historical role of libraries to offer a broad range of services and activities that support the vision priorities of the Council.

A core element of this work involves supporting children and parents with learning support, providing access to post education and adult learning opportunities, and supporting engagement with elderly and isolated residents.

The library service is delivered in each major population centre in the borough, within premises that range from large purpose built libraries to schools, community centres and porta cabins. Some background information on current library use and service delivery issues are presented in Appendix 2.

The Library Offer

The Library Offer (Appendix 1) establishes and promotes the activities that our residents can expect when visiting or using our libraries, including a clear understanding of their contribution to the borough and how they will evolve within the future means of the Council.

The ambition is for our libraries will be welcoming and vibrant places that people are drawn to. They will protect the clearly valued heritage of our library services whilst evolving naturally to offer more and more opportunity for residents of all ages to engage in activities and access services. The libraries themselves will be flexible and adaptable in terms of their space and their uses, aligning seamlessly with other provision in their area.

The library offer has been developed by considering a range of information that includes:

- usage data
- previous consultation results
- recognised good practice
- new technological capabilities

The Delivery Model

The Delivery Model will establish a 'hub and spoke' approach between the larger full-time libraries at Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley and the other smaller branches delivering service in the community around them.

The hub libraries will operate using a combination of traditional staffed opening hours and implementing self-service and some unstaffed opening hours. This combination allows for those customers who are more vulnerable or need more support to access services whilst staff are there to support them, and also allows the overall service hours to be increased for the more independent library users.

These sites will also be developed and adapted to give more flexible usage of space, allowing community groups and strategic partners to make use of the building whilst it is not operating as a library. In addition, space will be modified and adapted to attract business income and paying clients.

Within the first phase of the new Delivery Model we will enable customers to use self-service terminals to borrow and return books and other items. If customers leave the building with books which they have not issued to themselves this will be identified as the pass through the doors, and recorded by CCTV.

The second phase of the Delivery Model will include unstaffed access to buildings which will be controlled by an electronic door look which only opens when presented with a valid library ticket together with a PIN – it will allow for specific library users to be granted access, or have access restricted if necessary. The site will be monitored by CCTV, recording key actions such as customers entering and leaving the building. Pre-recorded tannoy messages warn customers when closing time is approaching, and lights can be set to automatically start dimming in the lead up to closure times. The

process of building closedown is also more streamlined, and can be automated or done by a single member of staff to turn all lighting and all computers off with single key turn.

The spoke libraries will operate a more regular set of opening hours focused on the times when there is most demand within the community, rather than the existing historic and rather confusing opening hour patterns operated at some sites.

Spoke libraries would initially consist of the existing smaller branches, however, not all libraries are well positioned, and not all libraries work sufficiently well alongside other local service offerings. It is important that all our spoke libraries offer the necessary services and are provided in such a way that make best use of the buildings in which they are located (whether these are Council buildings or in partnership with other services in the area). This approach would mean taking different or more pragmatic approaches to the buildings stock and a broader offer of local library services whilst not relying on a single asset.

This approach is tried and tested, with over 200 libraries operating the model on mainland Europe, and a growing number adopting the approach in the UK, including Peterborough, Brighton & Hove, Trafford and London Borough of Barnet. More information on each of these can be found via their websites:

http://www.vivacity-peterborough.com/libraries-and-archives/
http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/libraries
http://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-lifestyle/libraries/libraries.aspx
https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/libraries.html

Consultation

The consultation on the Library Offer and delivery Model is running for eight weeks between 1st February 2016 and 1st April 2016. The consultation includes a combination of an online questionnaire and specific consultation events held across the borough so that we can obtain the views of both users and non-users of the library service. This approach has proven very successful in other recent consultations within the Council and will enable thorough testing of the ideas with residents.

To support residents in understanding some of the issues that have been raised within the Library Offer consultation a short FAQ documents has been developed and is available on the Council's website (and attached in Appendix 3).

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Date 6/1/16	**Version No.** 1

Library Offer

JANUARY 2016

~[OFFICIAL]~

Contents

Basis of Offer

Whilst it is true to say that the central requirements for the provision of library services has changed little since their inception in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the expectations and value of library services has grown since this time to encompass a much broader range of services and activities that contribute to the overall wellbeing of our towns and villages.

Libraries are now centre points within their communities, places where people of all ages come to do more than borrow books for pleasure and learning. They are places for parents and children to bond and grow, places for groups and clubs to meet, a respite for the isolated, they are champions of local creativity and gateways to all the public services that we use.

It is vital when establishing The Library Offer to recognise the increasing ways in which our library services and library buildings help sustain and elevate the quality of life for our residents.

In the 21st century, our libraries will be welcoming and vibrant places that people are drawn to. They will protect the clearly valued heritage of our library services whilst evolving naturally to offer more and more opportunity for residents of all ages to engage in activities and access services. The libraries themselves will be flexible and adaptable in terms of their space and their uses, aligning seamlessly with other provision in their area.

The Library Offer establishes and promotes the activities that our residents can expect when visiting or using our libraries.

This offer is intended to establish a framework of underpinning principles and a delivery model which:-

- Extend the offering and give increased access to the library service.
- Provide as much as we can with the resources we have available

Underpinning Principles

Access to Services

- The Library Service will adapt to meet the growing population and changing behaviours of our residents.
- The Library Service will utilise opportunities to provide residents with a flexible mix of physical and virtual options for accessing all services
- Improve access to other Wokingham Borough Council services in line with Customer Services vision
- Strong partnership working to ensure flexibility of delivery and access to library services

Library Stock

- Maintain the approach of books being the primary stock type
- Stock purchased will be responsive to the behaviour and needs of our residents
- Increase the numbers of items available in other formats
- Continue to ensure that we hold the books that people most want

Visiting and Using Buildings

- The environment within libraries will be welcoming and enjoyable
- Buildings will be flexible and adaptable to changing demands for their use
- Enable access to other types of services including other council services, health services and local community and voluntary services
- They will provide space for locally focused events and activities that develop a sense of community
- Actively identify events and services that support the broader Council vision

Technology

- The Library Service will continue to grow its online services to provide more opportunity for residents to access services when they want them.
- Invest in technologies that support learning and self-sustaining behaviours in residents.
- Increase the range of services within libraries by enabling payments for other Council services.
- Respond to natural opportunities to deliver a greater range of Council services within libraries.

Income Generation

- Income generation ideas will feel a natural extension of our services and activities
- Where opportunities for investment present themselves we will look to gain the most value from them so as to minimise the need for further investments in the future

Supporting Wokingham Borough Council Vision

- The library service will continue to identify ways to directly support Wokingham Borough Council's vision for the borough
- Maintain or improve on the usage of library services so that they remain a valuable method of supporting and promoting other Council services.

Delivery Model

The delivery model will take a 'hub and spoke' approach. The larger libraries at Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley will act as hubs, with smaller branches delivering service in the community around them.

Hub Libraries

The hub libraries will operate using a combination of traditional staffed opening hours and unstaffed self-service opening hours. This combination allows for those customers who are more vulnerable or need more support to access services whilst staff are there to support them, and also allows the overall service hours to be increased for the more independent library users. The overall approach results in a reduction of costs as fewer of the opening hours rely on having staff on duty. These sites will also be developed and adapted to give more flexible usage of space, allowing community groups and strategic partners to make use of the building whilst it is not operating as a library. In addition, space will be modified and adapted to attract business income and paying clients. For example, innovative meeting spaces using interactive technologies.

During unstaffed hour's access to buildings will be controlled by an electronic door look which only opens when presented with a valid library ticket together with a PIN – it will allow for specific library users to be granted access, or have access restricted if necessary. The site will be monitored by CCTV, and record key actions such as customers entering and leaving the building. Customers use self-service terminals to borrow and return books and other items. If customers leave the building with books which they have not issued to themselves this will be identified as the pass through the doors, and recorded by CCTV. Pre-recorded *tannoy* messages warn customers when closing time is approaching, and lights can be set to automatically start dimming in the lead up to closure times. The process of building closedown is also more streamlined, allowing a single member of staff to turn all lighting and all computers off with single key turn.

The approach is tried and tested, with over 200 libraries operating the model on mainland Europe, and a growing number adopting the approach in the UK, including Peterborough, Brighton & Hove, Trafford and London Borough of Barnet.
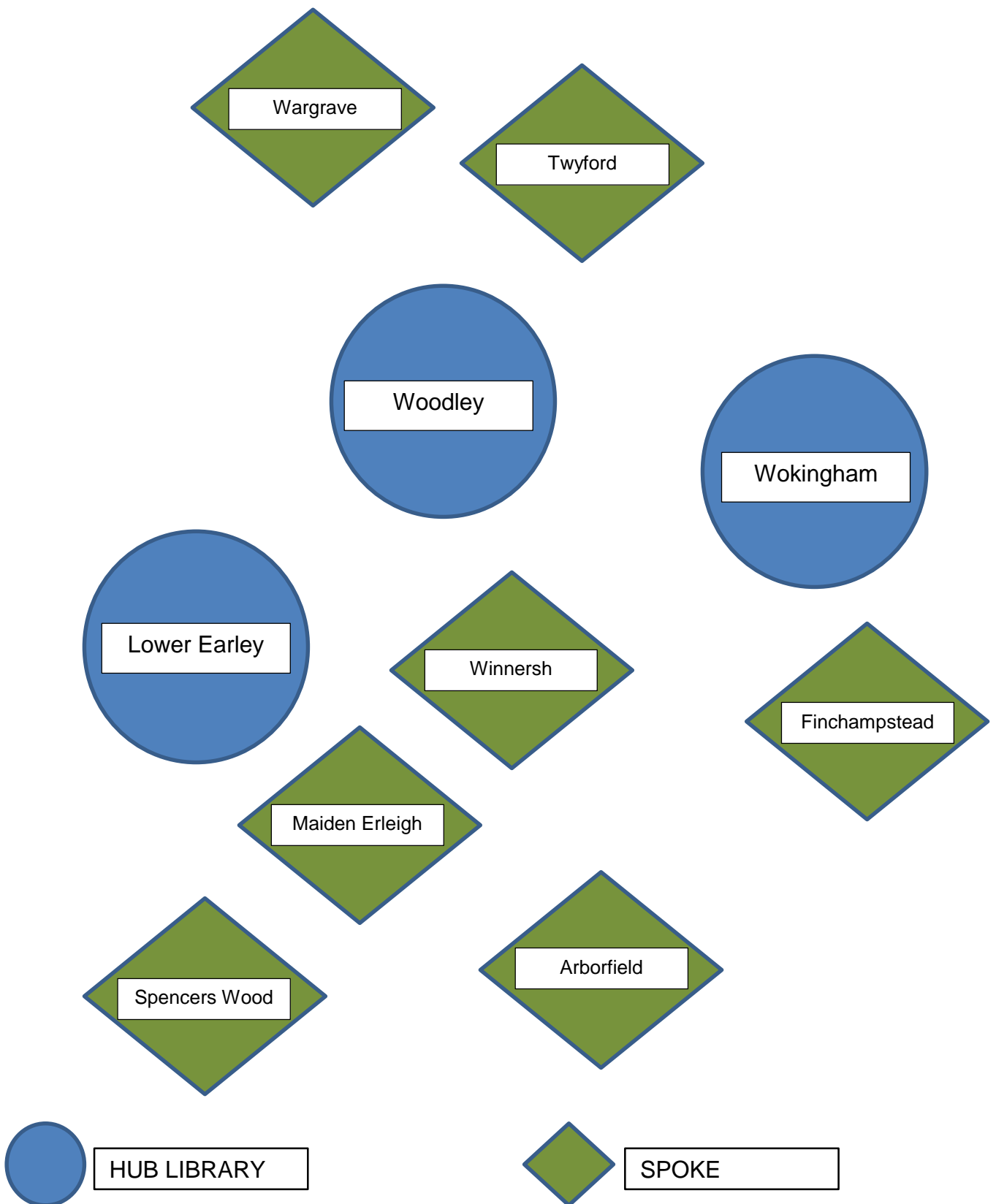
Spoke Libraries

The spoke libraries will operate a regular set of opening hours focused on the times when there is most demand within the community, rather than the existing historic and rather confusing opening hour patterns operated at some sites.

Spoke libraries would initially consist of the existing smaller branches, however, not all libraries are well positioned, and not all libraries work sufficiently well alongside other local service offerings. It is important that all our spoke libraries offer the necessary services and are provided in such a way that make best use of the buildings in which they are located (whether these are Council buildings or in partnership with other services in the area). This approach would mean taking different or more pragmatic approaches to the buildings stock and a broader offer of local library services whilst not relying on a single asset.

Pop-up libraries

The methodology used for unstaffed opening at the library hubs could also be utilised to develop partnerships to deliver self-service libraries in shared facilities, and also provide temporary libraries. This could allow the service to be extended, provided more flexibly, and closer to the hearts of small communities. In addition the service could be delivered through library space located within existing community facilities – e.g. Community Centres

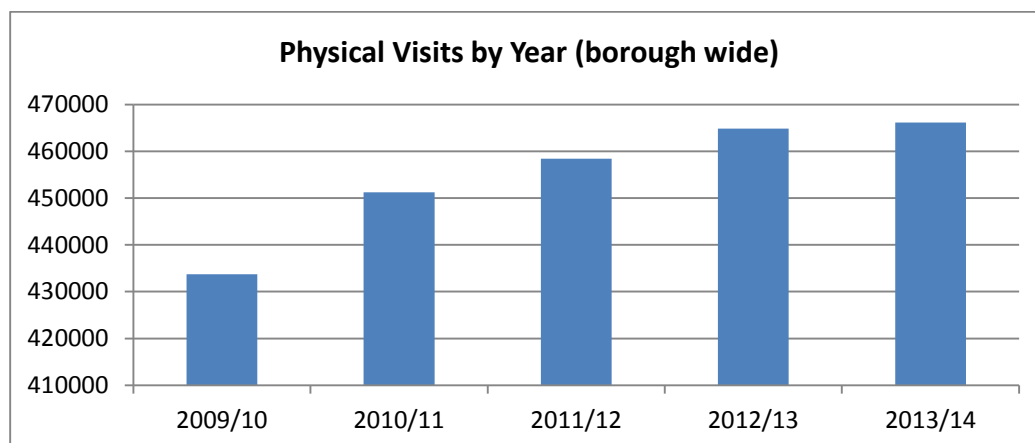**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LIBRARIES – HUB AND SPOKE MODEL**

Wargrave

Twyford

Woodley

Wokingham

Lower Earley

Winnersh

Finchampstead

Maiden Erleigh

Spencers Wood

Arborfield

HUB LIBRARY

SPOKE

CURRENT LIBRARY USE AND SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES

Wokingham Borough Council operates 10 libraries and a Home Library Service within the Borough. Last year the libraries had over 470,000 physical visits and a further 90,000 online contacts, which is part of an increasing local trend in library usage against a national picture of declining usage.

The information summarised below shows that physical visits to libraries are increasing, whilst the numbers of active library users remains high.

Physical Visits by Year (borough wide)

The Library Service holds around 187,000 hard copy items in stock, and has approximately 850,000 hard copy issues per annum. There are currently around 4000 eBook, 6500 eMagazine, and 1480 eAudiobook downloads per annum.

Larger libraries are open up to 45 hours per week; smaller libraries are open between 8 and 30 hours per week. Library services are available to all library members; library membership is open to all who live work or study within the Borough. Membership of the library service is free.

Just over 23,000 residents are currently active users of the service.

Book Loan Trends

Items loaned from libraries have shown an increase through to 2010/11. Since 2011/12 there has been a decline in items issued. This change in trend of items issued broadly coincides with changes in visiting trends. In 2010/11 after a period of multiple years of declining visits, physical visits to libraries started increasing.
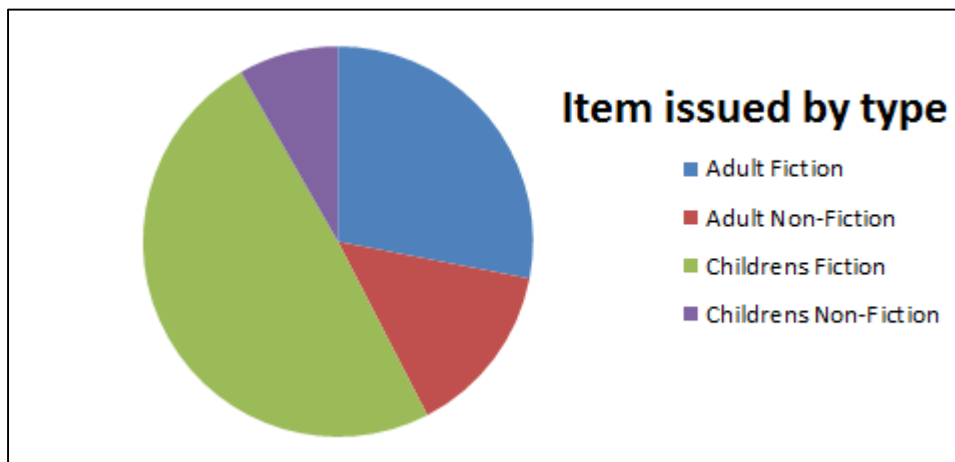
This suggests a change in the way libraries are used by Wokingham residents in that they are using them less for traditional book borrowing services, but visiting libraries more for other uses as they have in recent years become more modernised and offered a wider ranges of services and activities. This hypothesis is ratified by the fact that library members who have actively borrowed a book has also been on a gradual but steady increase year on year since 2012/13.

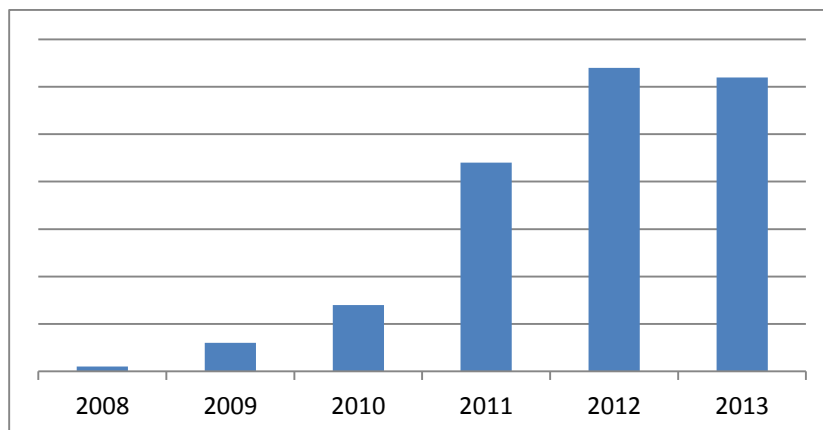Breakdown of customers who borrow books/items by age group

0-4 years	5.31%
5-17 years	33.52%
18-39 years	19.89%
40-59 years	22.94%
60+ years	18.34%

8% have a disability, 10% are from an ethnic minority, 64% are female and 36% are male.

Selections of items purchased for loan is carried out by the suppliers based upon a specification built of population demographics and existing usage.

e-Publication Trends

The graphic above shows ebook sales trends in America 2008 to 2013, the trend is one of rapid growth 2008 through to 2011, with a slight decline, levelling off by 2013. Current expectations within the book trade are that figures for 20014 will remain similar, meaning that sales have levelled off at between 20% and 25% of the overall market.

In recent years growth in the ebook market in the UK has been 95% in 2012, 40% in 2013, and 13% in 2014. The understanding within the book trade press, based upon the most reliable UK books sales data (provided by Neilsen Book Data) is that based upon

available reporting figures, and in comparison to the American ebook sales trend the UK is about 1 year behind the US and following a similar trend.

The ebook market is still relatively young compared with the traditional publishing market, so all trends are not yet understood. It is however already apparent that individual titles can impact on overall sales skewing trends.

Local Picture: Electronically published materials are still a relatively nascent service within public libraries. The main areas of provision within Wokingham's libraries are ebook, emagazines, and spoken word audio books; at present usage of these is as follows:-

- ebooks: 4019 items issued per annum (60% increase on 2013/14 when 2500 items were issued)
- emagazines: 6565 items issued per annum (new service as of 2014/15 so no previous data)
- eaudio: 1480 items issued per year (new service as of 2014/15 so no previous data)

Library Service Management System

The Library service uses a computerised Library Management System (LMS) to administer much of the day to day operation of the library service. The current system used is the Spydus system from Civica, which was implemented 2007.

The system holds details of all library members and also all library resources, and is used to record access and usage by library members.

It currently administers access to and records usage of:
- Customer book stock borrowing (inc. applying policy relating to age restricted material to such as certificated DVDs)
- Calculates hire charges and overdue charges.
- Controls access to public PCs and WiFi within the libraries.
- Controls access to online loans of ebooks, emagazines, eaudio and only subscriptions.
- It provides a public online interface for book searches, book renewals and book reservations.

APPENDIX 3

The Library Offer FAQ during consultation

Q. How would you make sure people are safe using the library when there is no staff?

A. This is our number one priority and a great deal of thought has gone into it. The libraries would have CCTV coverage and we would be implementing other safety methods such as an emergency alarm and telephones that will go to an emergency responder. The libraries can also be physically redesigned in order to improve reduce risk – by making sure there is good visibility all around and that all other potential hazards are removed or are out of action during unstaffed hours.
Before making any changes we are also getting the full approval from our Health & Safety and Insurance Services, plus residents will also be able to make comments or suggestions during the consultation (for example, in Trafford they layout of the shelving was changed following comments from residents to make all areas of the library visible from the entrance).
Finally, we should also point out that this has not proved a problem at unstaffed / self-service libraries in other areas where this has been introduced such as Peterborough, Trafford and Brighton nor has it been a problem in Scandinavia, where libraries have been open unstaffed very successfully for a number of years.

Q. How would you avoid having all the books and other stock stolen when there is no staff?

A. Experience shows that this has not been a significant problem at unstaffed / self-service libraries in other areas where this has been introduced. In many ways, the unstaffed / self-service libraries would have much more security such as CCTV and security tagging with alarm systems.

Q. Isn't this just the start of a move towards completely unstaffed libraries?

A. This isn't what residents have told us that they want and a key purpose of these proposals is to provide residents with the type of library service they want. The objective is to continue to deliver services that are used and valued by our residents and to make our libraries more sustainable in the long term.

Q. How would people with additional needs – disabilities – cope with an unstaffed library?

A. This is an extremely important issue. The self-service and unstaffed opening systems would support the use by people with additional needs, so that as many people as possible can use and enjoy them. However, we know there will be some people for whom unstaffed libraries are not appropriate, which is why we our preferred option includes some normal staffing hours throughout the week. We would be particular keen to hear from people who may have issues on this subject through the consultation and would write directly to representative organisations to make sure all voices are heard.

Q. Will you be making lots of redundancies if unstaffed libraries are introduced?

A. No. The library service currently has quite a few vacancies and a reasonably swift turn-over of staff, which would allow us to make this change by more flexible use of staff rather than through redundancies.

Q. Will this affect the activities that go on at the libraries for children and grown-ups?

A. No – or rather it might actually provide more opportunity to open up the library for other activities. It certainly would not mean fewer events.

Q. Will children and young people be able to use the libraries during the unstaffed times.

A. The established best practice on this is to require people under the age of 16 years to be accompanied by an adult when accessing an unstaffed library. One of the key issues we are keen to understand from local residents is how we may alter the unstaffed opening times throughout the year so that children and young people are able to make the best use of the libraries during school holidays and in the build-up to exams.

Q. At the moment, library staff will help search electronically for books that are not on the shelf and order them for me will the new system be able to do that

A. Yes, people can already search for books online via the Wokingham Borough Council website and we are intending to make it possible for the new self-service system to be able to do this.

Q. Part of the joy of libraries is chatting with librarians and getting recommendations for great books – will this element be lost?

A. As part of the Library Offer we want our libraries to be welcoming and friendly environments that encourage visitors to mix and talk to each other. This will be supported by improved technology for our self-service and on-line services which suggest books to members based on their previous borrowing. During the staffed opening hours visitors to the libraries will still be able to speak with librarians about book suggestions and other services and activities they may enjoy.

Q. How will the work necessary to implement the Library Offer & Delivery Model be paid for?

A. The primary driver for making these changes at this time is to ensure that our Library Service meets the needs of the growing population as a result of the Strategic Development Locations within the borough. We know that residents don't just use their nearest library; they travel all over the borough to use different libraries. The majority of residential developments make contributions to local infrastructure and facilities, including libraries, and we would be pooling these to fund the Library Offer.

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