

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Library Offer</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on 30 June 2016
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	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 Executive is asked to:

- 1) agree the Library Offer for Wokingham Borough Council Library Services as set out in the report;
- 2) utilise up to £300K of S106 on the Library Service Delivery Model to implement Self-Service and increase opening hours;
- 3) amend the Library Opening Times to add an additional 17.5 hours opening per week.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report follows the January 2016 Executive Report that outlined the proposed Library Offer. Following an extensive consultation on the offer and proposed delivery models, this report now makes provision for implementation of the Library Offer and in particular the recommendation to extend opening hours through the implementation of self-service.

In implementing the Offer and driving improvements, the Library Service in Wokingham Borough will be on track to further embed itself as a central community facility fit to deliver broad 21<sup>st</sup> Century services, whilst offering exceptional value for money for Wokingham Council Tax payers.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The Library Offer and Delivery Model**

The Library Offer has been developed to establish and promote 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 that 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 achievement of the Library Offer is made possible through the adoption of a new Delivery Model for our Library Services. This model centres on the implementation of some self-service, alterations to staffing patterns, and gaining the maximum usage from the buildings in which each library is operated, which includes co-locating our libraries with other local services such as community centres, sports facilities and schools.

The central theme of the delivery model is that it enables those who live, work and study in the borough to have a greater choice in when and how they want to use the Library Service. Self-service and new staffing patterns enable the library service to extend its opening hours whilst making savings in its operating costs.

Details of the Library Offer are presented in Appendix 1.

Details of the Wokingham Borough Council Library Service are presented in Appendix 2.

### **Library Offer Consultation**

Between February and April 2016, the Council conducted a consultation on the proposed guiding principles for the Library Service (The Library Offer) and the different options for delivering the service (The Delivery Model). This consultation included a general questionnaire, a specific questionnaire for local groups/organisations, the offer of direct discussions with local groups/organisations, and a series of public events held across the borough to engage with non-library users as well as existing library users. The proposals for the Library Service were also considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In total, the Council received 1,112 responses to the consultation questionnaire. Of these, 344 were completed online, with the remainder submitted in hard copy format. Some of the key findings and observations are presented below.

97.8% of respondents are a member of the Council's Library Service. This is not surprising as the vast number of questionnaires returned were done so in hard copy to one of the library sites. It was evident from the engagement sessions held throughout

the borough that once people understood that the proposals did not include the closure of any libraries (in contrast to proposals in neighbouring local authorities), the motivation from the wider population to engage with the consultation diminished.

It is clear that Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley libraries are the most used library sites, with Winnersh and Finchampstead libraries also proving popular. By far the most common reason to visit a library was to borrow books (95.4% of respondents), with a wider selection of books and more convenient opening hours being the key things which would encourage respondents to visit a library more often.

In terms of respondent’s views on the Library Offer, the vast majority (over 70%) agreed with each of the proposals. The only exception to this was the proposal to enable people to buy other services and products within our libraries, where almost half were ambivalent and just over 30% were in agreement with the proposal.

There was also substantial support for the proposed delivery model of extending its opening times by implementing some self-service and unstaffed opening, with 53% of respondents agreeing with the proposal compared to 25% who did not agree with it. Again, the engagement with residents was helpful in understanding their views on this issue, with an analysis of the additional comments from those who responded positively to the proposal showing that respondents were mainly focussed on its ability to increase access and flexibility to the library service and the related benefit of increased library usage. Those responses that were broadly supportive are categorised in the table below:

Proposals would increase access to libraries and flexibility	64 comments
Proposals would increase library usage	62 comments
Conditional positive responses	25 comments
Non-specific positive responses	22 comments
Support as ‘least bad’ option / preferable to closure	20 comments

However, despite the generally positive response, the analysis of the comments received also highlighted some significant concerns over aspects of the proposal. In particular, approximately 60% (434) of those respondents who commented on the impact of the proposal raised concerns over the specific introduction of unstaffed hours. These concerns have been broadly categorised in the table below:

Concerns over security / safety of unstaffed libraries	208 comments
Concerns over loss of personal contact / general staff assistance	86 comments
General concerns about unstaffed opening	44 comments
Concern over impact on specific user groups (older people, children, vulnerable adults)	37 comments
Concerns for loss of community feel of libraries	24 comments
Comments questioning need for extended opening hours	19 comments
Concerns over operation/quality/reliability of self-service technology	18 comments
Concern that change would reduce library usage	8 comments
Concern over loss of staff jobs	7 comments

Research conducted has also shown that a number of local authorities who have piloted or have been early adopters of unstaffed opening have now implemented live monitored CCTV and/or 'assistants' on site to mitigate security, safeguarding and operational resilience issues. These remedial measures have the ability to significantly increase the operational cost of the service.

The consultation also included some other options for how the Council could continue to deliver its library service within the current financial climate. The responses show that whilst people are broadly supportive of having libraries in parts of the borough where they are most useful and located in buildings with other local services (such as community centres, sports centres and schools), there was strong disagreement with options to reduce opening hours, reduce the book purchasing budget or moving to a mainly online service with eBooks.

The consultation did show some support for making more use of volunteers within the Library Service.

The consultation asked people whether the library they used was the one nearest to them. On this, 82.5% of respondents stated that the library they used was the nearest to them. Further analysis shows that whilst people may make use of their local library, they also use other libraries across the borough. The tables below show the responses for people who used Wokingham, Woodley, Lower Earley and Winnersh and the other libraries that they visit. This shows clearly that people are making use of a range of different libraries across the borough.

<b>Library</b>	<b>No's</b>		<b>Library</b>	<b>No's</b>
<b><u>Wokingham</u></b>			<b><u>Lower Earley</u></b>	
Woodley	149		Woodley	119
Winnersh	106		Wokingham	80
Finchampstead	93		Maiden Erlegh	52
Lower Earley	80		Winnersh	35
Twyford	39		Finchampstead	22
Maiden Erlegh	24		Spencers Wood	19
Spencers Wood	18		Twyford	14
Wargrave	10		Wargrave	5
Arborfield	7		Arborfield	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>
<b><u>Woodley</u></b>			<b><u>Winnersh</u></b>	
Wokingham	149		Wokingham	106
Lower Earley	119		Woodley	63
Winnersh	63		Lower Earley	35
Twyford	56		Finchampstead	24
Maiden Erlegh	42		Twyford	24
Finchampstead	25		Maiden Erlegh	16
Wargrave	17		Wargrave	6
Spencers Wood	7		Spencers Wood	5
Arborfield	2		Arborfield	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>

### **Implementing the Library Offer and Delivery Model**

It is clear from both the usage statistics and the consultation responses that Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley libraries are the most well used libraries within the borough. Usage statistics and consultation responses also show that Winnersh and Finchampstead libraries are also well-used libraries, each with over 30,000 visits a year. Winnersh Library is currently open 30 hours per week, with Finchampstead open for 18 hours a week. Winnersh Library is located in a separate building within the Forest School site with approximately half of its of its usage currently being school pupils, and the Finchampstead library being located within the large FBC Centre which is also home to a range of community and sports facilities, including a Children's Centre.

Deployment in other libraries will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Self Service**

Although self-serve and unstaffed opening were both broadly supported through the consultation process, a number of concerns were raised about the unstaffed element of the model. This together with the uncertainty of the long term success of this emerging model means that the recommendation at this stage is to simply move to increased self-service within libraries. This enables extended opening hours but with reduced staff presence. To some extent, the Library Service already has a substantial amount of self service capability with its range of online services. Users can search, reserve and renew items, download eBooks and e-Audio items, find out about the range of activities

that are happening in each library, and keep up to date with all the library news via the regular Facebook and Twitter updates. The proposal to extend the self-service capability to those visiting a library is an extension of some things that a lot of library users are already familiar with.

Introducing self-service will enable members of the library to both check out and return items and pay fines in addition to searching for and reserving items in each of the selected libraries.

The key requirements of self-service and the supporting software will be that it is intuitive and easy to use, and that it is suitably resilient to be relied upon by both service users and staff.

It is advisable to have a small number of staff available to assist people with any difficulties they may have with the self-service function.

### **New Staffing Patterns**

The introduction of Self-Service means that fewer staff are needed for the core elements of the library service, namely the checking out and returning of books and other items. At busiest times, the hub libraries will have up to six members of staff on duty to serve customers and provide advice and support for people wanting to make use of the other services available. Following the introduction of self-service, the library can be operated with fewer staff on duty.

In order to still provide residents with a choice of using self-service or traditional style of library service, it is proposed to implement a reduced staffing regime for 40% of the opening times for those libraries with self-service.

### **Extending Opening Times**

In order to increase access to the Library Service, it is proposed to introduce the following new opening times:

- Woodley Library - Monday morning - 9:00am - 12:00am
- Wokingham Library - Wednesday afternoon - 1:00pm- 4:00pm
- Lower Earley - Saturday afternoon - 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- Finchampstead- increase 7 hours per week during afternoons
- Twyford: Increase by 1 hour per week to enable opening at lunchtimes
- Wargrave: redeploy opening hours to open on Monday mornings

This is illustrated in the diagram below:



The increased access to library services to be delivered within the Library Offer will provide more capacity and services to meet the growing demand from the increasing population, and therefore the delivery of the library offer will be funded by utilising the existing S106 contributions for library services.

### **Impact on Residents**

It is clear from the increasing number of visits and level of usage that the Library Service continues to make a substantial contribution to the lives of people who live, work and study within Wokingham Borough. This impact includes the use of the library buildings for a growing variety of uses by other local authority services, community groups and commercial activities.

It is clear that finding ways to increase the opening hours at key times will provide more opportunity for residents to make use of library services and the library buildings. However, there is currently a perceived difference between the impact of implementing self-service and implementing unstaffed opening, with the latter generating substantial concerns over the usage by school-age children, the elderly and those with additional needs, on issues such as safety and anti-social behaviour.

Given that Wokingham Borough is one of the few areas in the country where library usage is still increasing, it is advised that further analysis and consideration be given to implementing unstaffed opening, especially the expected impact on those residents who make regular use of the library service.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Up to £300K	Yes	Capital - S106
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	(£130,000)	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	(£130,000)	Yes	Revenue

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

### Cross-Council Implications

None

### List of Background Papers

None

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<b>Date</b> 9 June 2016	<b>Version No.</b> 1

## WOKINGHAM BOROUGH LIBRARY OFFER

### 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 Library 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.

## WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICE

Wokingham Borough Council operates ten 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 ten public libraries operated by the Council are located in each of the main population centres across the borough and are provided in a mix of purpose built and shared buildings.

The Home Library Service is operated from Woodley Library and provides to residents from all across the borough who are unable to visit a library in person.

### Statutory Requirements

The Public Libraries & Museums Act (1964) sets out the requirement for all local authorities to provide a public library service in their area.

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.

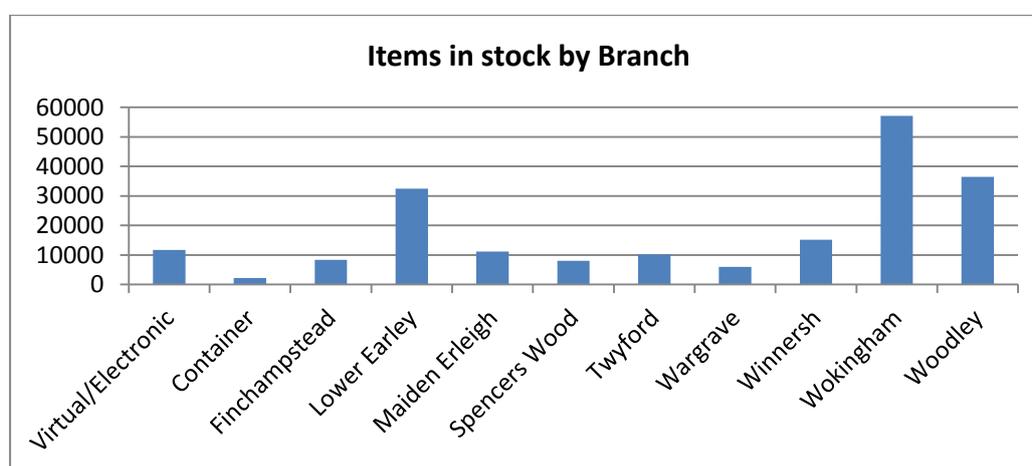
Our Library Service has a long history of implementing this statutory duty robustly, economically and flexibly. For many years, we have developed creative ways to not only encourage users into the Libraries themselves, but also to take the Library to those who cannot always make a physical visit.

## Library Stock

The Library Service currently holds the following items within its stock:

Stock Type	Items
Books - Adult fiction	53056
Books - Adult Non Fiction	43960
Books - Children's & Young People Fiction	53747
Books - Children's & Young People Non fiction	16965
Audio visual material (DVD, CD & Cassette)	10584
School stock at dual usage libraries	1592
Non loan reference material (dictionaries, encyclopaedia, etc.)	4400
Misc.	2956
<b>Total</b>	<b>187260</b>

The chart below shows the number of item in stock within each branch.



## Usage

Items loaned from libraries were increasing up until 2010/11, but since then there has been a decline in the number of 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 a little less for traditional book borrowing services and a little more for the other services on offer. The table below shows the issues/loans for hard copy and eBooks over the past three years:

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Hard copy loans	850348	813510	783864
e-loans	2500	12064	15603
Total	852848	825574	799467
e-loans as %	0.29%	1.46%	1.95%

## Services Available In Each Library

All of the libraries within the borough provide a core service to residents of being able to borrow books and other items and providing a space for reading, research and learning. However, the expectations of a modern library go beyond this and as such the Wokingham Borough Council Library Service offers a much greater range of services and activities. These are summarised below:

- Specialist areas for children & young people
- Reminiscence services for older residents
- Free Wi-Fi access and the use of computers
- Copying and printing facilities
- Meeting space for hire
- Café facilities
- Research facilities (including ancestry searches)

## Library Activities

Wokingham Borough Libraries are home to a wide range of activities each month that support enjoyment, learning and achievement for all those that attend. This includes Rhymetime sessions for children under 5, craft groups, historical societies, adult learning courses, local business training, and reminiscence groups for older residents.

The table below provides a sample of the activities delivered within Wokingham Borough Council Libraries during October 2015. This shows both the significant number of events held within our libraries, the similar proportion of events for adults and for children & young people, and the usage of the Council's libraries by voluntary and community groups for their events.

Category	Adults	Children and Young People	Total
Events run or commissioned by WBC staff	57	55	112
Events run by volunteers	18	20	38
Events run by community groups	3	0	3

(Source: One month sample – Oct 2015)

**Library Users**

The tables below show the breakdown of age, gender and disability for people who have borrowed an item during the past year and how this compares with the demographics of the borough as a whole:

Library Users	
Age	%
0-17	43.91
18 - 24	3.40
25 - 34	6.18
35 - 44	16.14
45 - 54	10.47
55 - 64	6.01
65+	13.98

Wokingham Borough	
Age	%
0-17	22.97
18 - 24	6.98
25 - 29	5.23
30 - 44	21.86
45 - 59	21.45
60 - 64	6.11
65+	15.41

Gender	Library Users	Wokingham Borough
Female	52.30%	50.5
Male	32.66%	49.5
no data	15.03%*	

(\* some library users joined the service before gender was recorded)

Disability	Library Users	Wokingham Borough
	Library Users identifying as having a disability	Residents declaring that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot by their health
	1.91%	4.7%

(Source: Library Usage Statistics (2015/16) & Census Data 2011)

This shows that a substantial proportion of the library users are children and young people, and that overall the Library Service is used by people of all ages.

**Library Choices**

Wokingham borough is a mix of urban and semi-rural neighbourhoods with its population centres spread across a relatively dispersed geographical area. In providing a comprehensive library service for the borough, the Council has located a library within most of the populated areas so that people can directly access these services.

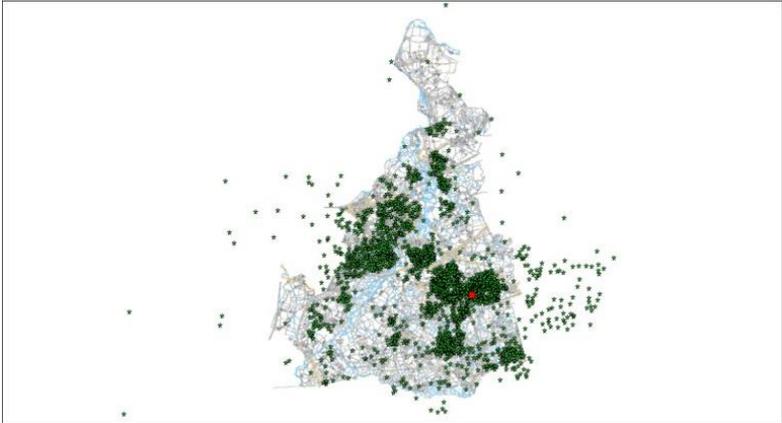
A consequence of this is that people have a degree of choice about which library they use, with most residents having at least two libraries within a few miles of their homes. The table below shows the percentage for each library of the different distances that people have travelled to use them.

	<b>0 - 1 miles</b>	<b>1 - 2 miles</b>	<b>2 - 3 miles</b>	<b>3 - 5 miles</b>	<b>5+ miles</b>
<b>Wokingham</b>	35.98%	29.53%	13.22%	15.94%	5.33%
<b>Woodley</b>	53.71%	23.16%	13.15%	7.86%	2.12%
<b>Lower Earley</b>	62.63%	22.31%	7.65%	6.55%	0.86%
<b>Winnersh</b>	45.27%	21.44%	15.42%	14.64%	3.23%
<b>Finchampstead</b>	50.68%	18.16%	16.18%	12.39%	2.60%
<b>Twyford</b>	81.67%	9.92%	2.85%	4.51%	1.05%
<b>Maiden Erleigh</b>	82.65%	9.59%	2.14%	4.08%	1.53%
<b>Spencers Wood</b>	60.77%	20.58%	8.92%	6.04%	3.70%
<b>Wargrave</b>	69.10%	14.61%	6.37%	5.99%	3.93%
<b>Arborfield</b>	50.62%	9.88%	20.99%	14.81%	3.70%

(2015/16 Data)

We can understand this further by mapping the home postcodes of the users of each library to show the catchment area of each library. Below are maps showing catchment areas for boroughs most well-used libraries:

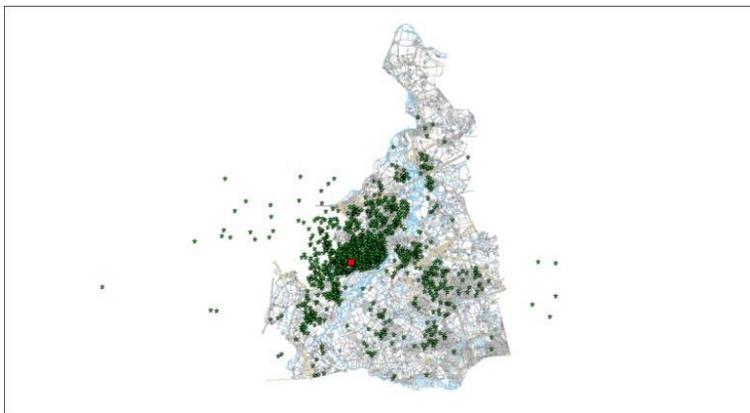
- Wokingham Library



- Woodley Library



- Lower Earley Library



From this we can see that each library is being used by residents from all over the borough. It is also clear that Wokingham Library, which offers the largest range of services and includes a café, has by far the most active usage from all parts of the borough.

### **Opening Times**

Across the Borough the Library Service is open to the public for a total of 259 hours per week across its ten libraries. The table below shows how this relates to each library for each day of the week:

It is worth noting that between Monday and Friday there is at least one library open between 9am and 7pm and that there are libraries open on both days each weekend.

