

Cabinet Member for Strategic Communities Agenda

Date: Monday, 13th May, 2013
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Fred Flint Room, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. Public Speaking Time/Open Session

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relating to the work of the body in question. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman or person presiding will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

For requests for further information

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4. **Proposal to Close Hurdsfield and Weston Libraries** (Pages 1 - 14)

To consider the closure of these libraries.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**Cabinet Member for Strategic Communities**

Date of Meeting: 13 May 2013
Report of: Customer Service and Libraries Manager
Subject/Title: Proposal to Close Hurdsfield and Weston Libraries
Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brown

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 A major change project has been established as part of the Council's Three Year Plan to develop a new model for sustainable library services and community hubs. The project is expected to contribute a £1m saving from the current £3.5m libraries revenue budget by 2015/16. As part of this project, it is proposed that Hurdsfield and Weston libraries are closed.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to retaining libraries in the 16 towns that they are in today. Macclesfield is the only town within Cheshire East that has more than one library. The main library is located close to the town centre and is the busiest library in the borough with 11,785 active users. Hurdsfield library has approximately 90 active users with a cost per active user of £111. Weston library has 47 active users with a cost of £210 per active user. The average cost per active user across all Cheshire East libraries is £53.
- 1.3 A consultation has been carried out which asked how the closure of the library would affect customers. The almost universal response was loss of access to books. The consultation also identified 17 elderly customers with mobility issues who would struggle to access the central Macclesfield library. If the proposal is approved the service will explore opportunities for community partners to host an informal community 'book swap' scheme and we will contact the customers that indicated they had mobility issues to establish whether they would be interested in the Books on Wheels service for house bound customers

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Communities approves the proposal to close Hurdsfield and Weston libraries.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that Hurdsfield and Weston libraries are closed because:
- Demand for library services within these communities is very low and the cost of continuing to provide the library is disproportionate compared to the cost per active borrower in other communities.

- These libraries are unable to fulfil the objectives defined in the Libraries strategy due to the limited space available.
- Library provision in Macclesfield, where we provide these satellite libraries in addition to the main central library, is inequitable with other Cheshire East communities.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Macclesfield Hurdsfield ward and Macclesfield West and Ivy ward.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Macclesfield Hurdsfield – Councillor Steve Carter
Macclesfield West and Ivy - Councillor Carolyn Andrew, Councillor Alift Harewood

6.0 Policy Implications (including carbon reduction and health)

- 6.1 Libraries provide a wide and diverse range of health and wellbeing activities, from Reading Groups to Health promotion activities to books on prescription. Activities offered at Hurdsfield and Weston libraries are very limited due to the constraints of the physical space and the low demand. Customers will benefit from a much wider range of activities if they become regular users of the central Macclesfield library.
- 6.2 The library closures will have a minimal impact on carbon reduction.

7.0 Financial Implications (authorised by Director of Finance and Business Services)

- 7.1 The closure of Hurdsfield and Weston libraries will deliver annual revenue savings of £20,000 from staffing and book fund savings. This will contribute to the £1m saving expected from the Sustainable Libraries change project.

8.0 Legal Implications (authorised by Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 a local authority has a duty to provide “a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof” who live, work or are being educated in its area.
- 8.2 There have been a number of challenges to Local Authorities looking to change their library provision in the last two years. In the relevant cases three points were considered by the Court:
- The duty placed on the Local Authority by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
 - The need to consult
 - The Public Sector Equality Duty (S149 of the Equality Act 2010)
- 8.3 In respect of the duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act, case law states that a LA cannot be found to have complied with this duty unless it has

assessed the needs that its library service has to meet. However, the requirement to conduct an assessment of needs does not require a LA to carry out a discrete information-gathering exercise; it is entitled to rely on the expertise and experience of its professionals and on information gathered from a variety of reliable sources. The Council's Libraries Strategy sets out the priorities for the service to meet the needs and expectations of customers; this was approved by Cabinet in August 2012. It is understood that the strategy was informed by a review undertaken by the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee, a Peer review and customer insight from the Influence Cheshire East (ICE) Spring 2012 Survey which included a section on Libraries to assess residents' current library usage and to explore what their future requirements of libraries may be. It is understood that the proposals in this report are in line with one of the priorities for action within the Libraries Strategy to review the lowest performing libraries to ensure value for money.

- 8.4 There is no specific statutory duty to consult in respect of library provision. However, the Local Authority does have general duties to consult and involve the community in changes to services and recent cases in respect of changes to library services have made it clear that consultation is expected by the Courts.
- 8.5 A consultation has been carried out on the proposal in this report and details of the outcome are contained in Section 10.
- 8.6 There are four requirements of consultation:-
- (a) that consultation is undertaken when the proposals are still in a formative stage;
 - (a) that adequate information is given to enable consultees properly to respond;
 - (b) that adequate time is provided in which to respond; and
 - (c) that the decision-maker gives conscientious consideration to the response to the consultation.
- 8.7 The decision maker must satisfy themselves that the consultation has been appropriately undertaken and ensure that the results of the consultation are taken into account when making their decision.
- 8.8 In making the decision requested in this report, the portfolio holder is reminded of the need for decision makers to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. An Equality Impact Assessment has been provided to assist the decision maker in this.
- 8.9 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty:
- "A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to –
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this act;

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it..”

The “protected characteristics” are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 Reputational risk is the main risk associated with any proposals to change a library service. The risk is low as this proposal is not proposing radical changes to the service across the Borough. The proposal affects 140 library users out of 66,000 active library users across Cheshire East. The risk has been mitigated for this proposal by consultation with customers and community stakeholders, and the completion of an equality impact assessment. The service will also explore further measures (see 10.10) to mitigate this risk if the proposal is approved and they will develop a communications plan to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the changes and alternative options.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 A major change project has been established as part of the Council's Three Year Plan to develop a new model for sustainable library services and community hubs. The project will implement a range of library operating models that enables the Council to deliver a library service that better reflects the scale of demand within each community and at a consistent subsidy across the Borough, ensuring best value for local people. The project is expected to contribute a £1m saving from the current £3.5m libraries revenue budget by 2015/16. The Council is committed to retaining libraries in the 16 towns that they are in today, but as a result of this project some libraries may move to a different building; some libraries may operate within a smaller footprint within existing buildings; some libraries will review their opening hours; some libraries will not change at all.
- 10.2 Macclesfield is the only town within Cheshire East that has more than one library. The main library is located close to the town centre and is the busiest library in the borough with 11,785 active users.
- 10.3 Hurdsfield library is located in a small building adjacent to a parade of shops in the centre of the Hurdsfield estate. It is open nine hours per week, running a weekly rhyme time on Monday afternoons. The library does not have access to the computerised library management system. It has approximately 90 active users, with a cost per active user of £111. Hurdsfield library is located one mile from Macclesfield library, with regular buses from the estate to Macclesfield town centre.

- 10.4 Weston library is located in a small room at the rear of Weston Community Centre. It is open eleven hours per week, and provides access to the internet through one People's Network computer. It has 47 active users, with a cost of £210 per active user. Weston library does have access to the library management system, and from this we can see that half of the active users also regularly use Macclesfield or other nearby libraries. Weston library is located two miles from Macclesfield library, again with regular public transport from the estate to Macclesfield town centre. The closure of the library would not affect the current operation of the Community Centre.
- 10.5 The average cost per active user across all Cheshire East libraries is £53. This must reduce to less than £40 to deliver the expected budget savings.
- 10.6 The Cheshire East Libraries Strategy, approved by Cabinet in August 2012, defines the objectives for our libraries:
- Improve literacy
 - Support informal learning
 - Enable digital inclusion
 - Provide information
 - Promote libraries as community anchors
- 10.7 Hurdsfield and Weston libraries promote literacy by providing access to books, but are unable to run any reader development activities or other informal learning activities due to the limited space available within each library. Weston library supports digital inclusion by providing one computer, but usage is very low and IT Buddy training sessions are not possible due to the space available. Neither library are able to accommodate a Customer Service Point or provide or host activities and events for the community, although Hurdsfield is taken over by a rhyme time session for half an hour on a Monday afternoon and community activities are provided from the adjacent Community Centre in Weston.
- 10.8 A customer consultation was run during January and February on the proposal to close Hurdsfield and Weston libraries. The questionnaire was available online or in person from one of the libraries in Macclesfield. 61 responses were received to the consultation questionnaire
- 26 responses were received from users of Hurdsfield library; 27 responses were received from users of Weston library; 8 responses were received from people that used neither library;
 - 34% of respondents used the library at least once a week; 46% used the library at least once a month;
 - 23% also used another library;
 - When asked how the closure of the library would affect them, the almost universal response was loss of access to books;
 - Although the questionnaire did not specifically ask for age, 17 respondents revealed that they were elderly with mobility issues and so would struggle to access the central Macclesfield library.

- A petition from Weston residents with 152 signatures and a petition from Hurdsfield residents with 48 signatures were also received.

All responses to the consultation have been made available to the Portfolio Holder.

10.9 It is proposed that Hurdsfield and Weston libraries are closed for the following reasons:

- Demand for library services within these communities is very low and the cost of continuing to provide the library is disproportionate compared to the cost per active borrower in other communities.
- These libraries are unable to fulfil the objectives defined in the Libraries strategy due to the limited space available.
- Library provision in Macclesfield, where we provide these satellite libraries in addition to the main central library, is inequitable with other Cheshire East communities.

10.10 To help mitigate the impact of closing these libraries, which is primarily loss of access to books, we are exploring the following options:

- Hurdsfield Children's Centre has indicated that it would be prepared to host a collection of adult and children's stock in an informal community 'book swap' scheme.
- We are investigating the possibility of hosting a 'book swap' collection in the foyer of Weston Community Centre which would be available on the days when the hall was being accessed.
- We are also in discussions with Broken Cross Children's Centre over hosting a collection of children's stock.
- A Librarian that has been spending time at Weston library has invited customers on a tour of Macclesfield as some Weston customers have expressed a fear of using the main library and the self service terminals. The staff member has offered to introduce them to staff, and show them around, and offer support and explain the services on offer.
- We will also contact the 17 customers that indicated they had mobility issues to establish whether they would be interested in the Books on Wheels service for house bound customers.

10.11 Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, working in partnership with the Hurdsfield Community Centre Group, have expressed an interest in transferring the Hurdsfield library building into the ownership of Peaks and Plains. The intention is to develop a community space which will incorporate all of the buildings in that block (the rest of which is already under the ownership of the Trust). Discussions on this proposal will continue.

10.12 If the proposal to close Hurdsfield and Weston libraries is approved the libraries will close during June 2013 to allow sufficient time for community book swap schemes to be established and to enable effective communication of the changes to customers that only visit the library once a month.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies, plans, functions, policies, procedures and services under the Equalities Act 2010. We are also legally required to publish assessments.

Section 1: Description

Department	Customer Service and Libraries		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Paul Bayley, Customer Service and Libraries Manager	
Service	Performance, Customer Services and Capacity		Other members of team undertaking assessment		Paul Everitt, Area Librarian	
Date	25 th March 2013		Version		2.0	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service ✓
Is this a new/existing/revision of an existing document (mark as appropriate)	New ✓		Existing		Revision	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the strategy/plan/function/policy/procedure/service	<p>PROPOSAL TO CLOSE HURDSFIELD AND WESTON LIBRARIES</p> <p>As part of the Council's new three year plan, a major change project has been established to develop a new model for sustainable library services and community hubs. The project will design and deliver a library service that better reflects the scale of demand within the different communities. The project is expected to contribute a £1m saving from the current £3.5m libraries revenue budget by 2015/16.</p> <p>There are libraries in 16 towns across Cheshire East. Macclesfield is the only town within Cheshire East that has more than one library. The main library is located close to the town centre and is the busiest library in the borough with 11,785 active users. Hurdsfield library is located in a small building adjacent to a parade of shops in the centre of the Hurdsfield estate. It is open nine hours per week, running a weekly rhyme time on Monday afternoons. It has approximately 90 active users. Hurdsfield library is located one mile from Macclesfield library, with regular buses from the estate to Macclesfield town centre. Weston library is located in a small room at the rear of Weston Community Centre. It is open eleven hours per week, and provides access to the internet through one public computer. It has 47 active users. 24 of the active users also regularly use Macclesfield or other nearby libraries. Weston library is located two miles from Macclesfield library, again with regular public transport from the estate to Macclesfield town centre.</p> <p>The Council is proposing to close Hurdsfield and Weston libraries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for library services within these communities is very low and the cost of continuing to provide the library is disproportionate compared to the cost per active borrower in other communities. • These libraries are only able to provide a very limited library service due to the limited opening hours and 					

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

	<p>space available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library provision in Macclesfield, where the Council provides these satellite libraries in addition to the main central library, is inequitable with other Cheshire East communities. <p>This proposal will deliver annual revenue savings of £20,000 from staffing and book fund savings. We will attempt to mitigate the impact of the closures by donating the existing children's stock to Broken Cross and Hurdsfield children's centres, and will offer to provide weekly rhyme time sessions as outreach activities within the children's centres. This proposal does not affect the current operation of the Weston Community Centre.</p> <p>A consultation was carried out on the proposal in January / February 2013. 61 responses were received to the consultation questionnaire. When asked how the closure of the library would affect them, the almost universal response was loss of access to books. Although the questionnaire did not specifically ask for age, 17 respondents revealed that they were elderly with mobility issues and so would struggle to access the central Macclesfield library.</p>
Who are the main stakeholders? (eg general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences)	<p>Library users Councillors Community partners</p>

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Section 2: Initial screening

Who is affected? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	Library users, Community partners										
Who is intended to benefit and how?	The Council will benefit from achieving budget savings, which will contribute to ensuring a sustainable future for Cheshire East libraries and their users.										
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	Yes										
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	No										
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	The proposal will make the library service in Macclesfield more equitable with other towns in Cheshire East.										
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?	No										
Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)											
Age	Y		Marriage & civil partnership		N	Religion & belief		N	Carers		N
Disability	Y		Pregnancy & maternity		N	Sex		N	Socio-economic status		N
Gender reassignment		N	Race		N	Sexual orientation		N			
What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts										Consultation/involvement carried out	
										Yes	No
Age	The Influence Cheshire East (ICE) Spring 2012 Survey identified that the wholly retired and 65 plus year olds were more likely to visit a library at least once a month. The consultation on the proposals identified 17 respondents that were elderly with mobility issues and so would struggle to access the central Macclesfield library									✓	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Disability	The consultation on the proposals identified 17 respondents that were elderly with mobility issues and so would struggle to access the central Macclesfield library	✓	
Gender reassignment	Neutral impact	✓	
Marriage & civil partnership	Neutral impact	✓	
Pregnancy & maternity	Neutral impact	✓	
Race	Neutral impact	✓	
Religion & belief	Neutral impact	✓	
Sex	Neutral impact	✓	
Sexual orientation	Neutral impact	✓	
Carers	Neutral impact	✓	
Socio-economic status	Neutral impact	✓	
Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	Yes ✓	No	Date 25/03/2013

If yes, please proceed to Section 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Section 3: Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups? Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups? Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified High: Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation Medium: Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures Low: Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4)
Age	The consultation on the proposals identified 17 respondents that were elderly with mobility issues and so would struggle to access the central Macclesfield library		Medium	Contact the 17 customers to establish whether they would be interested in the Books on Wheels service for house bound customers
Disability				
Gender reassignment				
Marriage & civil partnership				
Pregnancy and maternity				
Race				
Religion & belief				
Sex				
Sexual orientation				
Carers				
Socio-economics				
Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)				
No				

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Section 4: Review and conclusion

Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed			
The customer consultation on the proposal to close Hurdsfield and Weston libraries has identified 17 elderly customers with mobility issues that will be adversely affected as they will not be able to access the central Macclesfield library.			
Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Contact the 17 customers to establish whether they would be interested in the Books on Wheels service for house bound customers.	Take up of the Books and Wheels service by these 17 customers will be monitored	Customer Service and Libraries Manager	31 st May 2013
Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions			
When will this assessment be reviewed?	1 st October 2013		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	No		
Lead officer signoff	Paul Bayley	Date	25/03/2013
Head of service signoff	Vivienne Quayle	Date	

Please publish this completed EIA form on your website