LIBRARIES STAFFORDSHIRE CONSULTATION

Tuesday, 9th September, 2014

Present:-   Councillor Amelia Rout – in the Chair

Councillors   Mrs Astle, Bailey, Mrs Braithwaite, Mrs Burgess, Miss Cooper, Eastwood, Harper, Mrs Heesom, Holland, Huckfield, Jones, Loades, Matthews, Northcott, Owen, Sweeney, Taylor.J, Miss Walklate, Williams, Mrs Williams and Mrs Winfield

Officers   Scrutiny Officer

1.   **APOLOGIES**

Councillors Mrs Shenton, Proctor and Kearon

2.   **LET'S TALK LIBRARIES STAFFORDSHIRE**

The Chair welcomed Catherine Mann (Libraries and Arts Manager) and Samantha Mellenchip (District Manager Staffordshire Library and Information Services Culture and Leisure) from Staffordshire County Council to the meeting.

A presentation was carried out by Catherine Mann on Staffordshire County Council's proposals to meet the shifting demand and safeguard the service for the future.

Countywide, visits to libraries had declined by almost 12 per cent over the last three years and issues of physical books had reduced by 19 per cent.   Staffordshire County Council wanted to work with communities to move away from a 'one-size-fits-all'.   A resilient and sustainable library service was required to cope with changing demands and financial constraints.

It was proposed to reshape the library network by offering three categories of library:-

1) Library 'Extra'
2) Library 'Core'
3) Library 'Local'

All supported by Library 'Plus' – an enhanced online service.

- There had been 35 drop in sessions
- 8 Question and Answer sessions
- 4 'Community Managed' workshops
- Social Media
- General queries

Library Extra and Library Core were the libraries which saw the most use by the public and would remain managed directly by Staffordshire County Council.

The Library Extra currently proposed to include Burton, Lichfield, Newcastle and Tamworth.

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The Library Core currently proposed to include Biddulph, Burntwood, Cannock, Cheadle, Clayton, Codsall, Eccleshall, Leek, Kidsgrove, Perton, Rugeley, Stafford, Stone, Uttoxeter and Wombourne

Staffordshire County Council proposed that 24 libraries needed to be more focused based of the community, within Newcastle these included Audley, Knutton, Loggerheads, Silverdale and Talke.

The Consultation was running for twelve weeks; closing on 7th October 2014, with implementation from mid 2015 to late 2016.

It was reported that Newcastle had relative under representation in the consultation process.

3.   **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The following questions were asked by Members and responses provided by Catherine Mann and Samantha Mellenchip:-

Q1   How were the areas chosen, as children in the Clayton area were more likely to have online access to information at home, whereas children in the Silverdale and Knutton areas many did not?

A1   A swot analysis of each library and usage was undertaken. It was found the use of Silverdale and Knutton libraries were low. A methodology is currently being carried out on peoples' views around the proposals.

Q2   How many mobile libraries were there?

A2   There were six mobile libraries and two travelling libraries. The travelling libraries stay in the community for the whole day. The mobile libraries were small vehicles going from stop to stop. Static libraries had been looked at. Below is a link showing mobile routes and stops.

http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/librariesnew/Help-shape-library-service/Help-shape-library-service.aspx

Q3   In the process have you considered the use of local schools, in terms of identifying the need and service that could be provided using school premises which could save money?

A3   Talke and Knutton primary schools share their libraries but the facilities were not used greatly by parents. A Consultation had been carried out at Talke library, with the headteacher of the local school, to discuss how to work more closely. Staffordshire County Officers will be visiting schools to inform parents that a Consultation was taking place.

Q4   Can you compare usage figures by young people in Clayton Library, Silverdale Library and Knutton Library?

A4 The table below shows membership at December 2013 and show a comparison of Under 16 active borrowers (have borrowed at least one item in the last year) and registered library members.

	Active Borrowers				Total Members		
	Total	Under 16	Under 16s as percentage		Total	Under 16	Under 16s as percentage
Clayton	2,116	791	37.4%		5,162	1,851	35.9%
Silverdale	591	227	38.4%		2,142	757	35.3%
Knutton	330	296	89.7%		472	381	80.7%

Computer use is higher amongst young people at Silverdale than at Clayton and almost no young people are recorded as using the computer at Knutton. The table below shows the number of computer bookings broken down by adult and under 16s in 2013/14.

Computer use amongst Under 16s in 2013/14			
	U16s	Total	% U16
Clayton	237	6952	3.4%
Silverdale	325	4192	7.8%
Knutton	2	124	1.6%

Q5 **What would happen if there were no volunteers to take over the libraries?**

A5 One of the options was the communities managing and leading the library but realise this may prove difficult. The other option would be to look at moving the library into another building.

Q6 **Knutton library is located in St Marys School, why put it in as a 'Local'?**

A6 At the moment Knutton library is one of the used libraries in terms of visits or use and the school does not have any part in the running costs and you get more people involved in the library.

Q7 **One part of Silverdale library is sectioned off and one part was opened up for use by different organisations, two of the organisations do not use it. Why has it been classed as a 'Local' not a 'Core' library?**

A7 The usage was taken into account but the library was not being used effectively and not attracting library use.

Q8 **Can you guarantee there would not be any closures?**

A8 There are no proposals to close the libraries but the County Council could not guarantee there would be no closures. It was a three year programme and it cannot be a one-size-fits-all.

Q9 **Libraries had been stagnated for years and fully understand the difficulty Staffordshire County Council was in. There was concern that the correct service would not be provided, for example if there were no electronic system in the libraries people would struggle and hope by the end of the three years matters will be different in terms of a better library service and opportunities during that period to change.**

A9 Libraries are important. There would be an improved on line service and challenging resources to meet a wider range of users. Voluntary organisations would be trained as the service needs to be sustainable.

Q10 **Libraries are for the young and the old generation. Knutton library had a partnership between education and the community and not many people were using the library. Has your service gone out to promote the reading and are you still encouraging people to use the service?**

A10 Absolutely. Staffordshire County Council have Library Development Officers that give talks to schools. There was the reading challenge, encouraging children to read twelve books over the summer holidays.

Q11 **Have you trained the Officers?**

A11 There are four managed workshops. All library 'Locals' will be part of Staffordshire Library Service. There was a need for on-going training for the volunteers.

Q12 **What were the age group?**

A12 Volunteers are required for different areas, for example I T, children activities.

Q13 **It had been said people were not responding to the questionnaires. People who had not been involved, can they be represented?**

A13 In terms of the Consultation document, sessions had been running at each library and drop in sessions and had been recorded so every comment received over the last twelve weeks was part of the Consultation. Also each of the districts had visited each of the communities to deliver the message.

Q14 **When ordering E-books a lot of the books were not available, why was that?**

A14 The E-book service had got a licence to lone one copy out at a time.

Q15   At the moment in time there was a lot of Consultations taking place. Do you think due to there being so many Consultations taking place people lost interest in completing the forms?

A15   Yes, you could be right, but as a statutory service the forms had to be sent out. A record had been kept of how many forms each library had sent out.

Q16   How are you reaching those people who do not use the libraries?

A16   Staffordshire County Council had written to a wide range of organisations.

Q17   The Consultation form was too lengthy

A17   This we fully accept, but it was due to trying to get enough information to make firm proposals.

Q18   When you looked at usage did you take into account the footfall?

A18   Yes. Within every library there were electronic feet counters to count how many people were using the computers and number of visits.

Q19   Can you tell us the number of librarians working in Staffordshire Libraries?

A19   In 2013/14 there were 30 FTE professional librarians working in Staffordshire's public libraries, and a total of 216 FTE library staff.

The following were observations made by Members:-

➢ Knutton was a 'Library Local' and Clayton was a 'Library Core', people who had seen the review were under the assumption the libraries were closing. Five different activities had been named taking place at Clayton library not one activity was booked. The library does need to move with the times.

➢ Younger people need to get involved. Each library had to be looked at individually and be open minded to the future.

➢ The library in Kidsgrove is more than a library it is the hub of Kidsgrove. There were children reading groups and adult reading groups with 900 people a week visiting Kidsgrove library and thank you for maintaining the service.

4.   **PETITIONS**

Two petitions were handed to Catherine Mann one from residents of Silverdale and Parksite and one from residents of Audley and Bignall End.

5.   **CONCLUSION**

The Chair thanked both Catherine Mann and Samantha Mellenchip for the presentation and providing answers to the questions that had been raised by Members.

The above questions and answers would be provided to Staffordshire County Council as part of the Consultation process.

COUNCILLOR AMELIA ROUT
Chair