

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00, Tuesday, 12 December 2017

## Open Library

Item number	7.17
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	

### Executive Summary

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This report updates committee on plans for introducing the Open Library concept at selected libraries and community centres

## Open Library

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 That committee notes the plans for Open Library.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 Council agreed in February 2017 to allocate £350,000.00 to support the implementation of Open Library in Edinburgh City Libraries. The Open Library concept is based on a model of integrated library service pioneered and delivered across Scandinavia since 2009. Its uses technology and processes to enable a library to be open with or without staff present.
- 2.2 Open library technology interfaces with the Library computer system and self-service kiosks to enable customers to have access to basic library services. The technology is used to open and shut the library, controlling and monitoring a range of equipment in the library - door access, security gates, lights, self-service kiosks, Public Internet Computers, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), Public Address (PA) system, and security alarms.
- 2.3 In Edinburgh, the proposal is to include selected Community Centres in the Open Library model, to support and enable wider access to facilities and space in community centres.
- 2.4 A total of four libraries and two community centres would form the initial phase of Open Library,

### 3. Main report

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- 3.1 Open Library offers the opportunity to extend opening hours for customers and potential customers while continuing to provide regular staffed hours. Experience in countries such as Denmark (Open Library in 65% of public libraries), Sweden, Finland, Singapore and Taiwan, indicate that Open Library is highly successful (source Irish Local Government Management Agency report 2016).
- 3.2 These countries report that Open Library enables wider use of the service by more individuals, groups and families.

- 3.3 A recent Irish pilot (2016) notes that ‘It has positioned the library more strongly as a community centre or hub, a place for information and ideas, somewhere to meet, open to all, free and welcoming’. (p.5 LGMA, 2016). It recommends extension of Open Library to all libraries.
- 3.4 The Irish pilot notes that Open Library has led to a greater sense of responsibility and ownership of the library by the local community.
- 3.5 In Edinburgh, the intention is to introduce Open Library on a phased basis, at four libraries and two community centres (to be identified).
- 3.6 One of the project challenges will be ensuring effective engagement with all stakeholders – local communities, customers, staff, unions and elected members. In addition, the buildings chosen would have to lend themselves to easy adaptation. Engagement and involvement of the local community in the open library approach is essential to increase potential benefits and improved outcomes.
- 3.7 Open Library hours would complement staffed hours. The role of staff during regular staffed hours will be critical in supporting and engaging with customers, providing and promoting library services.
- 3.8 It will be crucial to involve staff early on the Open Library development, to allay any concerns and potential anxiety as to how the service would operate in practice.
- 3.9 A temporary (12 month) Open Library Project Manager position will be recruited to in November and December. Meetings have been held with CGI and the Council ICT Project Team to develop initial scoping for the project. Managers have visited Peterborough which has Open Library at all their libraries to learn from their experience. The intention is to have the first Open Library up and running by May 2018.

## **4. Measures of success**

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### **4.1 Feedback from customers and staff.**

Visitor numbers, Public Computer usage and borrowing figures

Uptake of Open Library membership by existing customers and people who previously did not use the library service or community centre.

## 5. Financial impact

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### 5.1 £350, 000.00 Capital budget already agreed

Cost heading	Amount	Notes
Project manager for 12 months	£50k inc.on costs	
Open technology cost:4 libraries & 2 community centres	£105k approx.	£70k for libraries, £35k for Community Centres
Self service units plus RFID gates	£70k (inc. Community Centre gates)	£8k per self service unit. £4k for stock security gates.
Building adjustments	£70k	Auto doors, CCTV mounting, secure heat and light controls
IT work – (new cabling, systems integration, CCTV)	£40k	Connection to/from existing IT systems and provider. Network connectivity changes. Local cabling, Scanner/keypad installs.
Contingency	£15k	
	<b>Total £0.350m</b>	

## 6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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- 6.1 Open Library will include from the beginning a considered and detailed approach to risk management, such as additional security measures, CCTV, swipe card building access, yearly face to face induction for Open Library users, to ensure safe use of the facilities and services and to maximise potential benefits for customers.

## 7. Equalities impact

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- 7.1 A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the Project.

## 8. Sustainability impact

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- 8.1 The additional power and heating for Open Library may result in increased carbon emissions.



## 9. Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 A detailed Open Library communication plan will include consultation and engagement with customers, potential customers, communities, staff, unions and elected members.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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## 11. Appendices

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- 1 LGMA.2016.Open Library Pilot Service. Dublin: Local Government Management Agency
- 2 Kelly, M. 2016. Review of the open library concept in UK public libraries. Manchester: APSE



# **Open Libraries Pilot Service**

## **2014-2016**

### **Report of Libraries Development**

### **June 2016**

# Local Government Management Agency

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## **Executive Summary**

The Open Libraries service is an initiative under '*Opportunities for All*', the national public library strategy 2013-2017. The Open Libraries approach has been in place in a number of European and other countries since 2004. It extends opening hours to library members during unstaffed hours while continuing to provide regular staffed periods for ongoing delivery of the service, supporting users and developing community engagement and programming.

In 2014, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government allocated funding towards a pilot Open Libraries service. Three branches were approved for the pilot: Tullamore and Banagher Libraries, Co. Offaly and Tubbercurry Library, Co. Sligo. The objectives of the pilot were to –

- explore the potential of Open Libraries to extend access to the library service,
- consider the best model and good practice for the operation of Open Libraries in public libraries, and
- identify any barriers to implementation and successful operation of the service

Under the pilot, libraries were open from 8.00 until 22.00, seven days per week, to Open Libraries members aged 18 and over who signed up for the service. Staffing levels and staffed hours remained unchanged.

The pilot service went live in November 2014 following a period of equipment and facilities upgrade. On foot of an interim review, access to additional services, such as meeting spaces and toilet facilities, was also provided and membership was extended to members aged between 16 and 18 with parental consent.

## **Pilot Outcomes**

Over 1,400 users (26% of members in Tullamore and Banagher) registered for Open Libraries membership in Offaly, with some 28,000 visits taking place outside of normal opening hours over the pilot period. In Tullamore in 2015, visits during Open Libraries hours accounted for 8.97% of all visits, in Banagher this figure was 27.32%. The higher percentage

of visits to Banagher reflects the significantly shorter hours of opening in this branch of 14 per week, in comparison to Tullamore Library, which is open for 37 hours per week. Some 8,600 library items were borrowed during Open Libraries hours across both Offaly branches (4.31% of all loans in Tullamore, 20.39% of all loans in Banagher). With increased hours of opening of 63% in Tullamore and 85% in Banagher, combined wifi usage in Tullamore and Banagher Libraries increased by over 100% compared to 2014 (from 47,745 to 100,131). During Christmas closed days 361 visits were recorded in Tullamore and 271 visits in Banagher and during the recent June Bank Holiday weekend 630 visits were recorded in Tullamore.

In Tubbercurry, 345 users registered for Open Libraries membership. A total of 4,317 visits were made through Open Library access, representing 20% of total visits to the library. Tubbercurry has a total membership of 1,579, with Open Library membership comprising 22% of the total. The pilot service has attracted hundreds of new users and the usage of the library on Sundays has been particularly popular. In Tubbercurry, 107 new members have joined the library service under Open Libraries to date, which represents 6.7% of total membership in Tubbercurry. In Offaly, 306 new members have joined the library service under Open Libraries to date, which represents 2% of total membership in Offaly.

Users have visited the pilot libraries for a variety of purposes, including for study, Wifi access, printing and borrowing items. Feedback from users and staff has been very positive. Overall, users seem to value the service more, respect the civic space and display a stronger sense of community ownership of the library.

## Conclusions

The introduction of the Open Libraries in the three pilot branches has created a more flexible library service, providing extended access to the local population on a daily basis, including extended weekend opening. Users have adjusted well to using the new service and users' reactions have been positive. The service provides greater flexibility and convenience for the local community, attracting hundreds of new users who had not previously, or recently, been library members. It has positioned the library service more strongly *“as a community centre or hub, a place for information and ideas, somewhere to meet, open to all, free and welcoming.”*

## Pilot Recommendations

- Based on the data emerging from the pilot phase, it is recommended that – The Open Libraries service should be extended across the broader library service, in particular incorporating branches in a range of urban and rural locations and providing a geographical spread.
- All newly developed and refurbished libraries funded under the Library Capital Investment Programme should be required to incorporate Open Libraries capability and should be required to provide the Open Libraries service from first opening or reopening, as appropriate.
- There should be one countrywide model of the Open Libraries service in terms of opening times and services provided. Local variations on elements should be provided only in exceptional cases e.g. where additional security provisions may be required. The standard model should consist of-
  - Opening hours of 8.00 to 22.00, seven days per week, 365 days per year,
  - Automated access to the branch by library members via a membership card and pin code in unstaffed hours,
  - Minimum age of 16, with parental consent,
  - Open Libraries access membership included as part of all new membership issued to all applicants aged 16 or over,
  - User friendly application process for Open Library membership, and
  - Provision of self-service activities to include, but not limited to -

- Stock issue and return,
- Internet usage on PC and with wifi on own device,
- Printing,
- Photocopying,
- Studying / Reading spaces,
- Meeting facilities, and
- Access to toilet facilities

Finally, it is recommended that the title 'Open Libraries' should be changed to '*My Open Library: Unlimited Access 8am – 10pm*' which describes the service more appropriately. The Open Libraries service constitutes an extension of the library service in terms of access to the library branch and to a number of public library services outside of staffed hours, however the title 'Open Libraries' does not reflect this and may be misleading. In Sweden, it is referred to as 'More Open Libraries' which is also a more accurate reflection of the initiative.

## **Background**

The Open Libraries service offers extended opening hours to library members during unstaffed hours while continuing to provide the regular staffed times for ongoing delivery of the service, supporting users and developing community engagement and programming. During the extended opening hours, library services are available to the public on a self-service basis for borrowing and returning items, using the internet via library PCs or via Wifi using their own devices, browsing, printing, photocopying, individual study and community activities and meetings.

For many people, access to the library during business hours is not possible, and although most libraries open late at least once a week, this is not always sufficient for many people due to work and family commitments. In addition, there is often a requirement for study spaces outside staffed hours. The key feature of the Open Libraries service, therefore, is improved access to library services so that a larger number of people can avail of the range of library services outside staffed hours.

## **International Evidence**

Experiences from other countries where Open Libraries has already been implemented, including Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Singapore and Taiwan, show that the Open Libraries service has been highly successful. This is supported by feedback from library staff and local communities and is demonstrated by greater satisfaction levels among users, increased visitor rates and the number of loans. All countries report that the Open Libraries service facilitates use of the library by greater numbers of individual users and families.

For example, in Denmark where the Open Libraries service is well established in 291 branches (65% of public library branches), those libraries that are open for longer hours attract a broader range of customers with significantly increased usage among 35–55 year old group, in particular, in the evenings and weekends. The Danish library services report that there has been a significant increase of the number of library visits since the introduction of the Open Libraries service and that in some branches over 50% of the loans occur during the extended hours. Research in highly urbanised areas in both Denmark and



Finland found that the Open Libraries service operates as successfully in these areas as in smaller rural towns. Since the service began, very few anti-social incidents have occurred and those that have were of a minor nature. There have also been fewer incidents during the extended hours than during the staffed hours.

## **Development of public library services and demand for increased opening hours**

The Open Libraries service is an initiative under the national public library strategy 2013-2017, '*Opportunities for All*', published in December 2013. *Opportunities for All* is a commitment by central and local the government to continued development of library services. The development of the national strategy involved wide consultation with library users of all ages, all other public library stakeholders and formal national public consultation to determine services people wanted from their local library.

The programme for the development outlined in the national strategy seeks to build on the investment in library services by central and local government over the past fifteen years, which investment has seen the opening of 145 new state-of-the-art libraries throughout the country and a substantial refurbishment programme for existing libraries. Nine new or refurbished libraries opened in 2014 and 2015.

The national library strategy recognises the continued need for the library as a community space and for the service to be available in as many centres of population as possible, meeting the demand for increased staffing and extended opening hours. An innovative service, Open Libraries forms part of the overall strategy to address this demand and grants members the freedom and flexibility to use the library at the hours that suit them best.

## Open Libraries Pilot Service in Ireland

In 2014, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government allocated funding for the development of the Open Libraries service on a pilot basis in the first instance. Successful applications were received from two local authorities, Offaly and Sligo County Councils. The funding provided by the Department was matched by the respective local authorities.

Preparatory work began on the Open Libraries pilots in late 2013. Implementation was delayed due to industrial relations issues and the pilot service went live in November 2014 in three library branches: Tubbercurry Library, Co. Sligo and Banagher and Tullamore Libraries. The pilot was originally scheduled to run for one year. On foot of the findings from the interim review, the pilot was extended by an additional three months to allow additional services to be incorporated and evaluated.

The objectives of the pilot were to –

- explore the potential of Open Libraries to extend access to the library service,
- consider the best model and good practice for the operation of Open Libraries in public libraries, and
- identify any barriers to implementation and successful operation of the service

Grant aid of up to €20,000 was provided to each of the three Open Libraries sites participating in the pilot phase. Additional funding was provided to the branches that were not already Radio-frequency identification (RFID) enabled, with €16,000 allocated to Banagher Library and €19,500 to Tubbercurry Library

## **Implementation and Operation of the Open Libraries Pilot**

The pilot examined the Open Libraries model in operation, which provided additional access for members of the public to library services outside of existing staffed hours. The three pilot Open Libraries services provided seven days per week opening hours, from 08:00 until 22:00. Staffing levels and staffed hours remained unchanged. During regular staffed times, library staff continued to provide expert professional services. The importance of retaining existing the staffed hours of service and the requirement for maintenance of staffed hours into the future remains. The role of staff in ensuring the continued delivery and development of the service, supporting users and developing community engagement and programming continues to be the core element of the library service to the public.

During the extended hours, library services were provided on a self-service basis for borrowing and returning items, browsing, studying, using the internet via library PCs or via Wifi, using printing services and community meeting space. At these times, users gained access to the library via an automated system by using their membership card and an authorised pin number.

Current, rapid developments in self-service technology have facilitated the introduction of the Open Libraries system. Self-service technology allows the efficient checkout and check-in by library users of all library materials, which are identified by a barcode. Feedback suggests that library users have found the self-issue system easy to use, with intuitive touch screen and step-by-step instructions provided.

### **Equipment Installed**

- The equipment required to facilitate the service included – Door fitted with a lock release mechanism to enable access during extended hours,
- Bar-coded or RFID membership cards for all members who apply for the Open Libraries service,
- RFID/Barcode card reader and keypad installed outside the door with lock release mechanism,

- RFID/Barcode reader and keypad linked to the membership database and software installed which provides a simple management system to view user access during extended hours,
- Dome security camera at the entrance to record each user as they enter and other dome security cameras throughout the library,
- Good exterior and interior lighting with well-lit pathways as well as motion-activated lighting in necessary locations around the library,
- Upgraded or additional motion detectors,
- Clear notices displayed with emergency contact numbers and procedures, and
- Tracking equipment to record separately the number of visitors during staffed hours and during extended hours;

Queries or feedback facility for users was also provided and helped inform the review.

### **Authentication and Authorisation Process**

The user’s RFID/bar-coded membership card is presented to the door entry system. The ID information is passed to the membership database to check the user is a member who has access to the Open Libraries service. The system prompts for the user’s PIN number, checking it against the database to enable authorisation. If the PIN number matches, an entry message is given and the door is opened.

### **Sample Overview of Daily Structure**

08:00	Lock releases (operated on a timer) Equipment is powered up Lighting comes on Alarm and sensors turned off
10:00	Staff come on duty Library operates as normal
17:00/20:00	Staff lock up private areas, close and lock any open windows and exit Monitoring cameras and door opening mechanisms turn on automatically
21:40	Loudspeaker alert to users

21:50	Loudspeaker alert and PCs, printers and user equipment powered off
22:00	Lights lowered/off, door locks, all remaining equipment powered off and security system activated

Note: Staffed hours continue as prior to the introduction of the Open Libraries service. The staffed times below are for sample purposes. Loudspeaker alert times below are also notional and are decided locally.

### Security Provisions

The operation of Open Libraries was developed in line with Irish Public Bodies Insurance guidelines, health and safety requirements and fire regulations. Technological and infrastructural requirements for the Open Libraries service include the provision of automatic doors, entrance control with trackers and associated software, RFID and self-service, security systems, loudspeakers, secured staff areas and, where necessary, some reconfiguration of the layout of the library for ease of monitoring. Potential for disturbance is mitigated and a sense of security strengthened through monitoring and surveillance technology, appropriate lighting, explicit information on the use of facilities and access restrictions for children.

Only library users who sign up for the service and have a membership card enabled for use on the automatic entrance system are able to enter the library during unstaffed hours. There is a one person, one card policy and regulations clearly state that any user entering the library with a membership card may not facilitate access to any other adult user. Children are welcome if accompanied by adults with access cards to the Open Libraries services. Adherence to these rules is monitored and tracked via the security system. As the doors are locked during the Open Libraries service, it is necessary for users to enter through an automated system using a library access card and a PIN code authorised by the library for verification of the user. Library users use their membership card with the automated entrance system in order to enter the library during unstaffed hours. Members were required to register separately for the Open Libraries service for the purposes of the pilot only.

Prior to the interim review, persons under 18 were not issued with their own Open Libraries access card to use the library during unstaffed hours, however, based on the demand for access to facilitate Leaving Certificate study, access to the service was extended to persons aged 16 and over with parental consent for the remainder of the pilot.

Prominently displayed evacuation guidelines and emergency contact information details are available around the library and security cameras were also installed both inside and outside the library.

### **Enhanced Facilities**

To enhance the user experience some modifications were made to facilities to ensure a range of activities could be carried out, including studying, reading, meetings and club or community group activity.

## **Usage and User Feedback**

User feedback, reports on the use of the service, and information on issues that arose and solutions implemented were received from the local authorities involved (see Appendix One).

### **User Feedback**

Feedback from users was actively sought by the libraries. In Tubbercurry, staff elected to carry out face-to-face surveys of users, soliciting feedback from the Open Library members on a continual basis to ensure the service was operating satisfactorily. In Offaly, library staff sought and collected feedback on an ongoing basis throughout the pilot using a feedback book, email feedback and a comments box.

In line with international experience, the local authorities reported that the take-up increased continually over the pilot period. Feedback from users has been very positive, with users valuing the service highly and respecting the civic space that is provided to them during longer hours. Users felt that the library is now much more accessible for students, commuters, workers, students and families. It was observed that in each of the three branches, the local communities have felt much greater ownership of their local library where the Open Libraries service operates, as well as a sense of greater community protection of the library space and services. User feedback also indicates that the Open Libraries service is contributing to a much stronger sense of security and rejuvenation in the area of the town around the library with activity in the library and lights shining from the windows from early morning to late evening.

### **Pilot Performance**

The pilot service has attracted hundreds of new users and the usage of the library on Sundays has been particularly popular. Overall, the branches reported increases in the number of loans and in visitor figures, as well as new members who would not have previously used the library. In Tubbercurry, 107 new members have joined the library service under Open Libraries to date, which represents 6.7% of total membership in



Tubbercurry. In Offaly, 306 new members have joined the library service under Open Libraries to date, which represents 2% of total membership in Offaly.

### Offaly

Over 1,400 users (26% of members in Tullamore and Banagher) have now signed up for Open Libraries membership in Offaly. Users are accessing the library mainly for study, Wifi access, printing and borrowing items. Since the service began, 28,000 visits have taken place outside of normal opening hours.

In Tullamore in 2015, visits during Open Libraries hours accounted for 9% of all visits, in Banagher this figure was 27%. The higher percentage of visits to Banagher is a reflection of the significantly shorter staffed opening hours of 14 per week, as compared to 37 staffed opening hours in Tullamore Library. Some 8,600 library items were borrowed during Open Libraries hours across both branches (4% of all loans in Tullamore, 20% of all loans in Banagher). In accordance with the significantly increased hours of opening of 63% in Tullamore and 85% in Banagher, combined Wifi usage in Tullamore and Banagher Libraries increased by over 100% compared to 2014 (from 47,745 to 100,131).

During Christmas closed days 361 visits were recorded in Tullamore and 271 visits in Banagher and during the recent June Bank Holiday weekend 630 visits were recorded in Tullamore.

### Tubbercurry

345 users (22% of members in Tubbercurry) have now signed up for Open Library membership in Tubbercurry. Since the service began, 4,317 visits have taken place through Open Libraries, representing 20% of total visits.

The performance of the Tubbercurry pilot was impacted by a number of external factors. Infrastructural issues regarding the roof of the library resulted in the closure of the library for a number of months in early 2015. Staff resource issues in summer 2015 also necessitated the closure of the Tubbercurry branch for a three week period.

On registering for Open Libraries membership, Sligo library service implemented a requirement for new Open Libraries members to complete a powerpoint presentation on health and safety issues. This proved to be a time consuming exercise from a staff perspective and Sligo recognised that it served as a barrier to membership. Following the interim review, this practice was discontinued.

### **Feedback from library staff**

Library staff in the Open Libraries branches reported positive encouraging experiences with the service and there were few issues of concern over the 18 months of the pilot service. There were no anti-social or other incidents in any of the three branches and all users complied with the terms and conditions of use.

Staff in Offaly embraced the change and took on the responsibility. Involving staff in the change is key in addition to embedding Open Libraries as part of the normal service offer. In Tubbercurry initially there was some level of anxiety in terms of how the service would operate in practice. This has, however, been dispelled since implementation and staff are very satisfied with the way in which Open Libraries has operated.

### **International Monitoring**

Since the commencement of the Open Libraries service in Ireland, the LGMA has monitored and researched the effectiveness of Open Libraries approaches and services in other countries, including Denmark, Sweden and Finland, and has discussed the service with library staff in each of these countries.

Professional library visits by Libraries Development, LGMA and staff from interested Irish local authorities were made to libraries in Denmark in 2013 and early 2014 to learn about the service, the system requirements and to meet with staff to understand their experiences of the service. A follow-up study visit was conducted in October 2015 to libraries in both Denmark and Sweden to gain further information about the development of the service, any changes in processes or technologies, and experiences of Open Libraries located in highly urbanised areas and more complex locations.

## Denmark

On foot of the most recent visit, it is evident that staff continue to report positive experiences with the Open Libraries service. The service has spread from small towns with close community engagement to highly urbanised areas in cities where several social challenges exist. The sense of responsibility remains high among users and problems of stock losses are no greater than in any other libraries that do not provide the service.

In 2015, 65% of public libraries were providing the Open Libraries service, a significant increase from 18% of branches in 2011. Over 40% of library members use an Open Libraries service and there is an average 23% growth in the number of visits following the introduction of an Open Libraries service in a branch. The service is particularly attractive to young people, with approximately a third of the users under the age of 35.

Due to the positive outcomes of the Open Libraries service, it is continuing to expand rapidly. For example, in Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark, the number of branches providing the Open Libraries service increased from two in 2010 to 17 in 2015. The regular opening times in Aarhus libraries are between 7:00 and 22:00 and the age for access to the service is 14 years. While users report that they are very satisfied with the service, it was noted that some problems did arise initially with local young people causing disturbance in one branch in an area with a large immigrant community. To deal with the issue, library staff liaised with a number of the young people to arrange activities in the library for their peers and also collaborated with a local person to run a club for them. Staff also rearranged the layout of the branch to provide more space and light and also used lower shelving. They reported that in the years following these adjustments, there have been no further disturbances and that many of the young people have continued to attend the library activities. It was also noted that a number of clubs had begun since the introduction of the Open Libraries service, many provided by individuals in the local community such as homework clubs, gardening clubs and language clubs.

## Sweden

In Sweden, the service is known as 'More Open Libraries'. All municipalities are now providing the service in selected branches. In municipalities where the Open Libraries

service is well established, the majority of the branches are providing the service. Moreover, no incidents occurred during the unstaffed times despite limited security monitoring inside the library. In Lund Libraries, where staff continued to work during Open Libraries hours but, were unavailable to the public, users presumed that staff were available and some confusion ensued.

A slightly different feature of user access during unstaffed hours was observed in Sweden where a small key-ring tag was used instead of a membership access card. The staff noted that users welcomed the key-ring tag as it facilitated being able to more regularly visit the library at unplanned times as they always had the access tag with them. Some branches in Lund libraries have trialled fingerprint technology on the automated doors for enabling access, however, staff reported that it was not completely successful and that they had reverted to the library tag.

### Finland

The Open Libraries service has also been expanding in Finland. In Vantaa City Library Service, two branches have begun the Open Libraries service since January 2014, Point Library and Pähkinärinne Library. User feedback indicates that the service is regarded as exciting and useful. Prior to the service beginning in Point Library, there were between 118,000 and 134,000 annual visits. In the year following the introduction of Open Libraries, however, this figure increased to over 213,000 visitors, a 59% increase on the previous year. During the five month period June-November 2015, one third of visitors used the library during the Open Library hours. The most popular time to visit the branch was during the Sunday unstaffed times, while most new users tend to use the library during unstaffed hours for study, work and reading.

In the smaller Pähkinärinne Library branch, the increase in visitor numbers has been even more significant with a 257% increase in visitors during the first six months of service. These very significant increases in use are particularly notable given the current overall decrease in library use in Finland.

The Open Libraries service in both branches does not impact the regular staffed hours. Vantaa City Library Services are currently planning the opening of the service in its largest branch, Tikkurila Library which is located on 6,000m<sup>2</sup> over two floors, located in a busy area close to a railway station, and records half a million visitors to the branch each year.

Information was also gathered from staff in another region of Finland, Hämeenlinna. In Hämeenlinna Libraries, two of the seven branches have been providing the Open Libraries service since 2012. While the increase in usage has not been as significant as Vantaa City Libraries, there has been a continuing increase; in Hauho branch there was an increase from 24,473 to 26,174 visits between 2013 and 2014, and Jukola branch saw visits grow from 53,471 to 54,716 during the same period. This increase is significant given that visitor numbers in the other branches where Open Libraries does not operate has been decreasing. Similar to the Open Libraries services in other locations, there has been no reduction in the staffed hours since the introduction the service. Staff also report that the feedback from users has been very positive and there have been no incidents in the three years since the service began.

## Overview of Costs

The cost of implementing Open Libraries relates primarily to the set-up requirements. These include the installation of automatic doors, entrance control with trackers and associated software, RFID and self-service, monitoring and security systems, loudspeakers and some reconfiguration of the layout of the library for ease of monitoring. The technological cost of the Open Libraries system is approximately €15,000. Ongoing costs relate to maintenance of the equipment, maintenance of the software and hardware and energy costs.

In the larger libraries, most of the technology is in place already such as RFID and levels of existing security. The need for additional technology, however, varies according to the size of the branch and amount of stock.

The full cost of implementing the Open Libraries service in a branch, including the Open Libraries system, security upgrades and staff resources, ranges from €25,000 to €50,000, depending on the need to upgrade to RFID self-service.

Overview of approximate costs:

Purchase and installation of the Open Libraries system	<b>€15,000</b>
Security / layout upgrades (vary according to existing systems already in place)  Where little security is already installed in the branch, upgrades include security/monitoring systems; public address security system; window locks; key pads; sensor alarms, lighting system; additional signage; secure and closed off staff areas, etc.	<b>€10,000</b>
Where RFID is not already implemented by the library service, the approximate cost for adding RFID ranges between €18,000 and €25,000, depending on the amount of stock.	<b>€18,000- €25,000</b>

## Grant aid

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government provided grant aid of €20,000 per pilot as a contribution towards the costs and supporting the implementation

of the Open Libraries service in the pilot authorities. Additional grant aid of €35,500 has also been provided for the implementation of RFID.

## Conclusion

The primary objective of the Open Libraries service is to increase user access in library services, securing increased access from early morning to late evening and to serve needs in the community not being met by current opening hours.

Since its introduction in the three pilot branches, users have adjusted easily to using the new service and users' reactions have been positive. The service has provided greater flexibility and convenience for the local community and has attracted significant numbers of new users who had not previously, or recently, been library members.

Due to enhanced access to the library, a greater sense of responsibility and ownership of the library has developed. The service has also strengthened the prominence of the library in the local area by providing the only non-commercial, indoor meeting place, welcoming to all and open daily from early morning to late evening.

Designed to meet users' needs in a flexible way, there is potential to develop the Open Libraries service further. The opportunities afforded by technological developments in self-service facilities, automated systems along with electronic surveillance methods provide clear benefits for users and the wider community. The role of the library staff during the regular staffed hours also remains critical, to maintain the delivery of the service, support and engage users including children and families, and to ensure the ongoing development and promotion of the library's core services.

The Open Libraries service has the potential to significantly transform the value to the public of the services and the civic space provided by local authorities.

While the pilot phase included only a small number of public libraries, the data gathered suggests that a broader roll-out of the service would be popular with users in other library authority areas and would show similarly positive results. Moreover, similar open library approaches in other countries have proven highly successful as evidenced in the international context. The service has expanded in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. Indeed,



its introduction in Finland has seen a reversal in declining visitor numbers during that period.

## Recommendations

- On the basis of the findings of the pilot study, as well as the international evidence, it is recommended that - The Open Libraries service should be extended to all library authority areas, in particular incorporating branches in a range of urban and rural locations and providing a geographical spread.
- All newly developed and refurbished libraries funded under the Library Capital Investment Programme should be developed with Open Libraries capability and should be required to provide the Open Libraries service from first opening or reopening, as appropriate.
- There should be a single standard model of Open Libraries service in terms of opening times and the services provided. There should be limited local variations, except in cases where additional security provisions may be required. The model should be based on -
  - Opening hours of 8:00 to 22:00 , seven days per week, 365 days per year,
  - Automated access to the branch by library members via membership card and pin code in unstaffed hours,
  - Minimum age of 16, with parental consent,
  - Open Libraries access membership included as part of all new membership issued to all applicants aged 16 or over, with parental consent,
  - User friendly application process for Open Library membership,
  - Provision of self-service activities to include, but not limited to -
    - Stock issue and return,
    - Internet usage on PC and with Wifi on own device,
    - Printing,
    - Photocopying,
    - Studying and reading spaces,
    - Meeting facilities; and
    - Access to toilet facilities.

It is recommended that, in rolling out the initiative, the title 'Open Libraries' should be changed to '*My Open Library*' which describes the service more appropriately. The Open

Libraries service constitutes an extension of the library service in terms of access to the library branch and to a number of public library services outside of staffed hours, however the title 'Open Libraries' does not reflect this and may be misleading. In Sweden, it is referred to as 'More Open Libraries' which is also a more accurate reflection of the initiative.

## **Appendix One: Reports from Pilots**

### **Offaly County Library Service Report**

The Open Libraries project is an innovative customer service delivery project which started as a pilot project in December 2014 funded by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Offaly County Council. It is currently operational in two public libraries in Offaly County Council – Banagher Community Library and Tullamore Central Library. The project provides for the public library to be open to the public from 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m., seven days per week (98 hours a week). Innovative technology has been installed that allows users to access the buildings using their library card and PIN when staff are not present. Open Libraries extends the availability of library services to the public outside the existing staffed hours of service. During the regular staffed hours, library staff are available to provide expert and additional services, support users and develop community engagement

The Open Libraries project aims to transform the use and value to the community of the services and the civic space provided by local libraries while also directly addressing community needs. In addition the project aims to strengthen the prominence of the library service in the local community by providing a town's only non-commercial, in-door meeting place, welcoming to all and open daily from early morning to late evening.

The project also sets out to establish the best model for the operation of Open Libraries in public libraries in Ireland, to identify the barriers and serve as a driver for a standardised service as a whole and improve the way Public Libraries deliver services to the community.

The project is managed by the County Librarian, Offaly County Council reporting to Director of Services, Libraries and providing reports into Libraries Development, LGMA. Regular reports are provided to the stakeholders involved: Management Team, Offaly County Council, Elected Members and SPC members, Libraries Development, LGMA.

Open Libraries has transformed the use and value to the public of the services and the civic space provided by library authorities. Staff are released from the performance of the

previously time-consuming tasks around the issuing and returning of books and other stock to deliver a more user-focused and enhanced library service during staffed hours.

The rapid developments in self-service technology have made the introduction of Open Libraries possible. Self-service system technology provides an automated service which allows the efficient checkout and check-in by library users of all library materials which are identified by a barcode.

Open Libraries is an initiative under the new national public library strategy 2013-2017, '*Opportunities for All*', published in December 2013. The national library strategy recognises the continued need for libraries as a community space and the demand for extended opening hours. Open Libraries forms part of an overall strategy to address this demand and gives the community the freedom to use the library at the hours that suit them best. Due to the popularity of this service, Offaly County Council will be applying for funding for additional Open Libraries sites in Offaly.

This innovative service grants library members the freedom to use the library at the hours that suit them best. Both Banagher and Tullamore Libraries are ideally located in the town square which are focal points for the community. During Open Libraries hours, Offaly Local Development Company and the Local Enterprise Office operate outreach services for employment supports and enterprise supports respectively.

### **Statistics and Performance**

This service provides access to the library to members of the public who did not use it in the past. The feedback from customers is extremely positive, with users commenting that the library is now much more accessible for commuters, students and families. Users value the service and respect the civic space which is provided to them.

Over 1,300 users (26% of members in Tullamore and Banagher) have now signed up for Open Libraries membership and are accessing the library mainly for study, Wifi access, printing and borrowing items. Since the service began, 25,000 visits have taken place outside of normal opening hours. In Tullamore in 2015, visits during Open Libraries hours

accounted for 8.97% of all visits, in Banagher this figure was 27.32%. In 2015, 8586 library items were borrowed during Open Libraries hours (4.31% of all loans in Tullamore, 20.39% of all loans in Banagher). Combined Wifi usage in 2015 in Tullamore and Banagher Libraries increased by over 100% compared to 2014 (from 47,745 to 100,131).

### Funding

Open Libraries is jointly funded by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and Offaly County council and is an initiative under the national public library strategy 2013-2017, '*Opportunities for All*', published in December 2013.

<b>Description of costs incurred by Offaly County Council</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Grant - DECLG</b>
Self Service Access/hardware management software to control access control/lights/CCTV/alarms	40,000	40,000
RFID/Self service kiosk/Security gates	19,000	16,000
Staff/Project Management/Security	8,000	
ICT staff costs /firewall and SIP works/Security,Wifi	7,050	
Self service/mobile print/PC reservation	6,900	
	<b>80,950</b>	<b>56,000</b>

## **Sligo County Library Service Report**

The Open Libraries concept started in Denmark in Silkeborg Library in 2004. The definition of an Open Library is a library which apart from the staffed hours provides extended access hours whereby the citizen can enter the library by themselves and utilise automated services such as the reference sections, the self-check issue, the internet and printing services.

### Staffed library hours in Tubbercurry Community Library are:-

Tuesday: 12 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Wednesday to Friday: 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Saturdays 9.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

### “Open Libraries” hours in Tubbercurry Community Library are:-

Outside of staffed hours outlined above are Monday to Sunday from 8.00 a.m. through to 10 p.m.

### Implementation

The Library selected to host the pilot project in Co. Sligo was Tubbercurry Community Library. Tubbercurry Community Library serves a rural based population of approximately 10,000 and has a core urban population of 1,800. This Library was purpose built in 2003 as part of the Teach Laighne One Stop Shop which provides in addition to a library services a motor tax, County Council Area Office and various offices of the Health Service Executive.

*“Teach Laighne houses Tubbercurry Library in a purpose-built space with additional accommodation provided in two terraced, two-storey houses, built c. 1860. The façade of the original buildings have been retained. Activities are placed around a central hall. The internal wall in the central hall is made of local limestone paving embedded with fossils. A glazed wall separates the library from the central hall. The building's undulating zinc roof mirrors the horizon line of the local landscape.”* – Public Library Buildings; [www.librarybuildings.ie](http://www.librarybuildings.ie);  
7-10-15

From the description above it is realised that the Library is only part of a bigger local authority building and this is the reason that our experience is probably unique in the various pilot locations throughout Ireland. For example; the Alarm of the one-stop-shop was traditionally split into two zones whereas we now had to introduce a third zone specific for the library and ensure that the new software introduced would not interfere with the existing set up. This type of problem – where installing something new had to also dovetail with an existing set up - ran right throughout our set-up experience.

The technical aspects that had to be integrated are as follows;

- (i) **Alarm:** adding an additional zone & ensuring software complemented existing zones
- (ii) **Lighting:** ensuring software enabled automatic shutdown and restart
- (iii) **CCTV:** internal cctv system preferred to adding to existing Teach Laighne CCTV system
- (iv) **Self-service access:** ensuring Open+ door keypad access and opening mechanism works
- (v) **Self-service Kiosk:** ensuring integration to existing LMS was fully operational
- (vi) **Public PC & printing availability:** installation of Surfbox print solution to allow customers the ability to self-serve regarding printing from library and remotely.

By the beginning of November 2014 the technical staff along with the Library implementation team had fully tested the Open+ software going through a series of scenarios and were confident to 'go live' by Mid November 2014. Tubbercurry Community Library became the first library in Ireland to go live as an Open Library.

Library Staff also had to ensure that all documentation & procedures were modified to envelope 'Open Libraries' from a library point of view such as;

- (i) Membership form
- (ii) Internet Policy
- (iii) Wifi Policy
- (iv) Health & Safety procedure



(v) Zero tolerance policy

We realised that certain issues would only appear after the launch date but were assured that the service support staff would be on hand via website and email to respond to any queries/problems in a prompt manner.

### **Launch**

From the Launch date of mid November 2014 up until the present date May 2016, we have had relatively few problems. Teething problems with staff getting used to the new procedures and technology were quickly ironed out.

### **Statistics**

#### **Usage**

As it currently stands there are 345 registered Tubbercurry library members who have signed up to use this increased service. This represents 22% of the total branch membership.

### **The Future**

The Open Libraries pilot to date has proven to be very successful and once the implementation phase had been undertaken the work involved was relatively straight forward. There is a need to promote the concept of Open Libraries to the general public and a need to actively target members as the idea of the Open Libraries is relatively new to the general public in Ireland. Also the very fact that increased accessibility and flexibility are key benefits of the Open Libraries model means by its very essence it is potentially more attractive to those citizens who are not currently members due to the original opening hours perhaps being insufficient or unsuitable.

On a day to day basis there is still a requirement for staff to service the branch both on the ground and as part of the library network. Work on a daily basis is still being created for library staff by users both in the Open Libraries model and during the staffed hours.

There has been a growing interest from third level students to utilise the facility for study purposes and the printing and internet services are proving popular.

Sligo County Council is currently rolling out RFID into all its branches and we hope that in the near future that the pilot may be extended to Ballymote Community Library.

Sligo Central Library stock has already been converted to RFID tagging in preparation for a proposed new Central library for Sligo.

## **Appendix Two: General areas for documentation during pilot extension**

- Video surveillance notice(s)
- Provision and use of study facilities during extended hours
- Criteria being used for ascertaining a user's eligibility for the Open Libraries access card
- Any groups/clubs using the library during unstaffed hours
- Impact on the surrounding urban area due to the Open Libraries service later in the evening
- Impact on the library's electricity and heating costs etc.
- Access to the printer and photocopier
- Promotion of the Open Libraries service
- The issue of users not registered for the Open Libraries service tail-gating registered users on entry to the library (i.e. how big a problem and any measures for dealing with the issue)
- Procedures in place in case of emergency and whether a phone is provided for emergencies in the branch
- User feedback relating to the changeover procedure between staffed and unstaffed times
- Statistical data on:
  - age profile of users
  - patterns of use
  - number of people who enter the library during the extended hours based on the visit counter data - number of people who enter the library during the extended hours based on door access system counter
  - the percentage of overall visits during Open Libraries hours
  - number of new library members since the introduction of Open Libraries compared with rates of new membership prior to provision of the Open Libraries service
  - number of loans recorded by Open Libraries users and represented as a percentage of total loans.



# Review of the open library concept in UK public libraries

This report has been prepared by Maria Kelly  
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APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not for profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority front line services, hosting a network for front line service providers in areas such as waste and refuse collection, parks and environmental services, leisure, school meals, cleaning, housing and building maintenance.

APSE provides services specifically designed for local authorities, such as benchmarking, consultancy, seminars, research, briefings and training. Through its consultancy arm APSE delivers expert assistance to councils with the overt aim of driving service improvement and value for money through service review and redesign. APSE delivers in excess of 100 projects a year and clients benefit from the consultancies not for profit ethical approach to consultancy services.

APSE wishes to thank the councils that have taken part in this review.

Note that this review is not for publication without prior agreement.

# Review of the open library concept in UK public libraries

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## Executive summary

APSE was commissioned to review the early experiences of open libraries in the UK. The review took place from May to July 2016 and included discussions with councils who have implemented open libraries to differing extents over the last year, including one who is just about to start a pilot.

The open library concept is a new way of working for public libraries in the UK. It is designed to be used as a complementary and integral part of an overall library service and there are many different ways in which this can be achieved.

The open library concept is based on a successful model of integrated library service delivery, pioneered and extensively used successfully across Scandinavia since 2009. It uses innovative technology and processes to enable a library to be open with or without staff present. Using this technology enables councils to make further choices about how services are delivered and can be used to maintain or extend library opening times to suit the needs of the community at a time when austerity is forcing many councils to close libraries or reduce opening hours.

APSE supports innovation in the delivery of public services. This report presents the benefits and challenges of implementing the open libraries concept and lessons learned from this process.

Overall, the experience in both Scandinavia and to date in the UK is a positive one. All the councils involved have taken a staged approach to exploring the costs and benefits of open libraries. By July 2016 Peterborough Council had implemented open libraries across the entire service to safeguard and sustain the service in the medium term and to achieve budget savings of £305,000. All other councils are still in the piloting phase and having proven the technology works they are beginning to evaluate the impact on service outcomes.

The main challenges have been in getting the buildings and systems fit for purpose and integrated with the new technology and in engaging stakeholders. The more successfully this has been executed the greater and broader the benefits realised. These include extended hours, increased usage, improved social inclusion and as a means to give the 'library back to the community'.

The recommendations are given in the main body and for ease of reference are summarised. It is recommended that:

1. Open libraries be considered as part of any evaluation of options within a service review. Ambition and creativity in how services are delivered is the key.
2. The option appraisal of the open library concept is based on a robust business case considering the impact on the strategic, commercial, financial, legal and operational case and community/social inclusion outcomes.
3. In appraising the case for open libraries there are three areas to consider – people engagement, the building and systems integration.

4. The business case options appraisal requires broad and ongoing engagement of key stakeholders at every stage. This includes elected members, the community, staff and library users.
5. The business case involves 'a strategic open library champion'.
6. Part of the decision making phase includes elected members and other key stakeholders seeing the system in action, as the concept needs to be visualised. The experience of users is that a phased introduction, usually with a pilot, and further reflection on the lessons learnt works well.
7. A series of consultations be carried out with the public and community groups at every stage of the project, to understand the nature of the demand and to ensure the solution meets the identified need and that the benefits are optimised.
8. Engagement of staff is essential. Staff have a key role to play in promoting open libraries, in inducting new users and in designing new procedures. The open library concept can be used to change the staff mix, to standardise opening hours, to extend opening and to cover periods such as lunchtime. Where assurances can be given, or there is no impact on reducing staff hours, this clearly helps engagement.
9. The choice of site is key as not all sites will warrant the investment required to set-up open libraries. That in assessing potential sites consideration be given to any opportunities to align the implementation of open libraries with any refurbishments, new builds, co-location of services, town re-development plans so as to minimise costs. For an existing site, a buildings conditions survey be commissioned and the opportunity taken if possible to upgrade systems beyond the basic requirement. Any assessment will include a risk assessment, Health and Safety (H&S), Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), security, lighting, alarms and cameras.
10. In terms of systems, ideally the open library concept should be fully integrated with an up to date Library Management System (LMS) and self-service kiosks. That said, if this is not available the open library concept can still be installed. Sufficient time needs to be spent in the planning phase to ensure that all internal systems interface with the open library technology and that stakeholders are involved in deciding who has access and when the library should operate as an open library. Between three and six months is recommended.
11. An individual from the library service be appointed as project manager to facilitate discussions and co-ordinate the requirements between the council, all the internal and external suppliers (including systems) and the supplier so as to understand the exact requirements of each installation, and that sufficient time is given to test the systems. The use of 'a parallel run' before going fully into unstaffed open library mode is recommended. An estimated three to six months of planning is the norm.



12. Insurers are invited in to see a demonstration of the system, and that if required an insurance mitigation plan be prepared to manage any concerns from the insurers.
13. Outcome measures are set at the start, so that the impact of any pilot can be evaluated.
14. In consideration of any further expansion of open libraries beyond the pilot, quality, cost, integration of existing systems and ongoing support be balanced in any procurement of services. The capital cost of the open library technology is circa £15,000.
15. The APSE network is used to showcase open libraries and communicate the costs/benefits and lessons learnt from the UK experiences of open libraries.
16. No part of this report can be reproduced or published without the prior agreement of APSE and the councils who have been involved in the review.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 APSE was commissioned to conduct an independent, critical friend review of the use of open libraries in UK public libraries. The review was conducted between May and July 2016.
- 1.2 By the end of July 2016 there were 24 public libraries using 'open library technology' across nine councils. These include libraries in Devon, Harrow, Hertfordshire, Peterborough, Norfolk, Stockport and Trafford. A number of other councils have invested in an open library pilot. Given that there are over 4,000 public libraries in England, the potential growth of open libraries across the UK is significant.
- 1.3 The purpose of the independent review is to present a balanced view of the benefits and challenges of establishing open libraries. It identifies areas of good practice and shares the lessons learnt so that other councils may consider the suitability of this initiative as part of the library offer.
- 1.4 The open library concept uses innovative technology to open a library and manage all the systems within the library and costs in the region of £15,000. It is designed to be part of an integrated library services offer and works with the Library Management System (LMS). Using this technology enables councils to make further choices about how services are delivered and can be used to maintain or extend library opening times to suit the needs of the community at a time when austerity is forcing many councils to reduce opening hours or close libraries.
- 1.5 The use of open libraries started in Scandinavia in 2009 and is now widespread across Denmark, Norway and Sweden, with over half of the libraries in Denmark operating as open libraries. Bibliotheca are the leading developer of such technology across the world. Over the last two years Bibliotheca have designed and tested a bespoke specification suitable for open libraries in the UK and Ireland. This consists of a control unit secured inside the library connects to the library infrastructure including an exterior door access panel.

- 1.6 *"This complete solution can automatically control and monitor building access, self-service kiosks, public access computers, lighting, alarms, public announcements and patron safety."*  
*Bibliotheca*
- 1.7 The use of automation in libraries is not new and has been growing over the last 10 years with 90% of authorities providing a library service across the UK now equipped with self-service kiosks for straight forward task such as issuing and returning books, borrowing CD's and paying fines. Open libraries are the next step in the automation of libraries and represent opportunities to increase flexibility, increase revenue, reduce costs and/or re-structure service provision to meet service demand and as part of an integrated delivery of library services.
- 1.8 APSE is aware that the automation of library services is contentious and that supporters of traditional libraries have raised a number of issues with the use of open libraries. In some councils staff have launched industrial action against the loss of jobs and, as they see it, a reduction in service. This review will explore these issues, examine the extent to which the concerns relate to open libraries and where appropriate reflect on how the councils using open libraries are managing the concerns raised.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1 APSE supports innovation in the delivery of public services. This independent review examines the experience of those councils who have been at the forefront of implementing open libraries in the UK. This report presents the benefits and challenges to implementing open libraries and the lessons learnt.
- 2.2 The successful implementation of new ways of working is dependent on considering the unique context of libraries and engaging with stakeholders and staff in a positive way. In this way issues can be managed or eliminated and library outcomes optimised according to the individual needs of each authority and specific communities.
- 2.3 There is pressure on services to identify new approaches that meet outcome requirements and significantly reduce the funding requirement. That said, the introduction of any new approach needs to be carefully managed and the starting point is to establish clear outcomes, rather than starting with a solution and justifying it.
- 2.4 This review involved:
  - A selection of discussions and visits with a number of councils who have first-hand experience of using open libraries in the UK and represent the early pioneers of such technology.
  - Visiting Bibliotheca to gain an overview of the technology and a supplier perspective.
  - Attending an open library open day in Scotland, hosted by East Renfrewshire Council with a live demonstration of how the technology works. Observation and discussion with councils who attended to gauge their response to the technology and their initial thoughts on its potential and barriers to implementation.
  - Reference to the role of public libraries and the extent to which open libraries support their aspirations as set out in William Sieghart's independent library report for England (2014) and on the subsequent work carried out by the Library Task

Forces in England and in Scotland – ‘Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021’ (March 2016).

- Consideration of how open libraries can support the objectives for the library service within a council including:
  - a. Providing what the stakeholders want from the library service as efficiently as possible.
  - b. The role of libraries in contributing to wider social inclusion objectives such as improving levels of literacy, increasing access channels to reference material and the internet, using libraries as an access point to other council services as well as improving the added value services provided within libraries.
  - c. Community benefits such as providing additional services for local communities and supporting social inclusion.
- Outcome requirements are measurable but it can be difficult to establish the specific contribution that a given service or intervention makes, particularly as baseline service is changing constantly in many councils so the report will also draw on anecdotal evidence.
- Identifying the impact on quantitative measures such as number of users as well as qualitative measures like user satisfaction.
- Establishing if open libraries is an option to meet the essential requirements of the demand for services provided by libraries and related services, and if it can do this at reduced costs.
- Consideration of the challenges of implementing open libraries. This can be used to understand the concerns of staff and other stakeholders and explore how councils have addressed these concerns and any lessons learnt.
- Presenting a cost/benefit checklist for other councils who are considering introducing open libraries.

2.5 The review also draws on the experiences of Denmark where half of the libraries use the open library concept and all individuals are given automatic access to the service.

### **3. The role of public libraries**

3.1 Libraries are at the core of UK culture and local communities. Over half the UK population has a current library card and with 225 million physical visits and 96 million website visits to public libraries in England alone in 2015. Libraries represent one of the UK’s most well used public services. Libraries deliver value for money and act as a ‘community living room’. There are a range of delivery models from large central libraries, to local libraries, to volunteer run libraries and increasingly to libraries that are co-located with other services.

3.2 As with all public services, local authorities have been under pressure to balance ever reducing budgets with service provision and the need to find innovative approaches to service delivery has never been stronger. The UK government has responded by commissioning William Sieghart’s independent library report for England (2014) and the subsequent work carried out by the Library Task Forces in England and in Scotland –

'Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021' (March 2016). The aim, to safeguard library services across the UK by developing a national strategy for libraries, highlighting the multiple purpose of libraries and informing action to govern and deliver services; to introduce new ways of working and to market and communicate the benefits of libraries.

3.3 'The Libraries Deliver Report' (2016) summaries the national context and is illustrated in figure one.

**Figure one: Libraries Deliver Report, 2016** (Source: Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021, 23 March 2016)



3.4 Libraries are at the core of local communities and can and do deliver multiple outcomes as illustrated in figure two. Councils have a responsibility to safeguard the service for future generations and to utilise any possible means of highlighting and extending the benefits that libraries deliver at a time when nationally library usage is falling.

3.5 Arts Council England's 'Envisioning the Library of the Future' project has concluded that libraries should be at the hub of their communities, but states that libraries can provide greater benefit when they are co-located with other services. Brian Ashley, ACE director for libraries, said:

*"One of the things that came through loud and clear is that libraries are a trusted space where people want to spend their time. There are benefits for ordinary members of the public in having different services in one space. There are also benefits in terms of savings too—which could allow local authorities to protect local services."*

**Figure two: Library Deliver Report, national picture**



3.6 This APSE report reviews the role of open libraries in a number of ways; as a new way of working within the wider service provision, as a means to achieve efficiencies, its role in extending and safeguarding library services and as part of co-locating services.

## 4. Open libraries as a new way of working

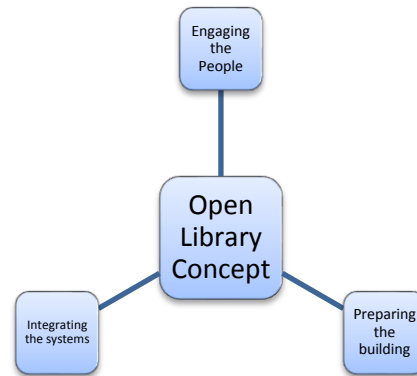
- 4.1 The open library concept represents a new way of working for public libraries. It is designed to be used as a complementary and integral part of an overall library service and there are many different ways in which this can be achieved. This report will first establish the basic principles of implementing the open library concept.
- 4.2 The open library concept is based on a successful model of integrated library service delivery pioneered and extensively used successfully across Scandinavia. It uses innovative technology and processes to enable a library to be open with or without staff present. Using this technology enables councils to make further choices about how services are delivered and can be used to maintain or extend library opening times to suit the needs of the community at a time when austerity is forcing many councils to reduce opening hours or close libraries.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding this determining how library services are delivered is driven by budget and the required level of service. There is then a decision to be made on what options are available to achieve the required outcomes. These options need to be explored in terms



of efficiency, income generation and innovation. The open library concept is one potential option within a range of measures that are available.

- 4.4 There are three aspects that need to be managed when implementing the open library concept. These are the people, systems and buildings as illustrated in figure three.

**Figure three: The three aspects of implementing open libraries**



### **Systems**

- 4.5 The open library concept technology is based on that used across Scandinavia and over the last two year's Bibliotheca have customised the technology for use in the UK market.
- 4.6 The technology interfaces with the Library Management System (LMS) and ideally self-service kiosks to enable users to have access to the basic library services. The technology is used to open and shut the library. The library service decides the schedule to determine times of the day that the library is staffed, open without staff and closed. This schedule can be changed at any time and is managed by the library service. The technology controls and monitors a range of equipment in the library, such as door access, security gates, lights, kiosks, cameras, a PA system and security alarms. Users within the UK have used the technology with their existing LMS – where the LMS is not fully integrated with the open library system this leads to data issues. In one council the LMS was installed in the 1980's and during the pilot the data was not fully integrated. Based on the lessons learnt from the UK experience it is recommended that the technology is fully integrated with an up to date LMS and self-service kiosks, although this is not essential.
- 4.7 The technology is an enabler to service delivery and how it is used is a choice for each local authority. Evidence from UK users confirms that each installation is bespoke to the requirements of the building and is straightforward to operate (a single key turn). Barring a few teething problems the technology works and is secure. A door access panel connects to the control unit inside the library that manages the internal systems. How the control panel interfaces with each of the library systems is customised to suit the needs of each individual library site/service. For example, the level of staffing present and who is given access to the open library is a decision for each individual council.
- 4.8 It is recommended that time be spent in the planning phase to ensure that all internal systems interface with the open library technology and that stakeholders are involved in deciding who has access and when the library should operate as an open library.

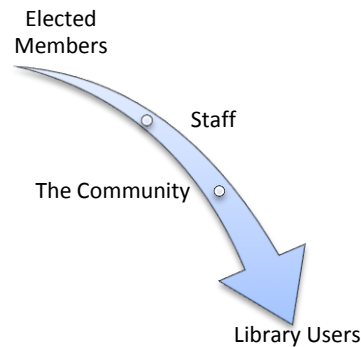
## **The building**

- 4.9 The open library concept is designed to be installed in any library building. Each building is different and the installation is bespoke to the requirements of the site. There is no one size fits all, however, within any council the lessons learnt in one site are transferable to the next.
- 4.10 A successful installation requires preparation of the site to enable the building to operate effectively in open library mode. This requires a building conditions survey including a review of access points, security, cameras, wiring, lighting, alarms, a risk assessment and an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). Discussions will involve internal and external suppliers depending on who delivers these services for the library service. The experience from the UK is that the open library supplier works in partnership with the library service to project manage the installation. The open library concept can be used as a means to audit the current systems and ensure they are fit for purpose. Feedback from the UK users is that the first installation is the most complex and any lessons are transferable to any future expansion of the open library concept within the service. It is recommended that an individual from the library service facilitate these discussions and co-ordinate the requirements between the council, all the internal and external suppliers (including systems) and the supplier of the open library concept so as to understand the exact requirements of each installation and that sufficient time is given to test the systems. A number of councils have trialled a parallel run before going fully into unstaffed open library mode.
- 4.11 A successful installation also requires discussion and agreement with the insurers as to the reasonable adjustments required. Evidence from the UK users confirm that getting agreement from the insurers has been one of the biggest challenges and time needs to be built in to address any concerns. It is helpful if the insurer can see the system and how it operates. Feedback suggests that the insurance concerns can be managed and in the examples cited have not incurred additional premiums. In time, insurers will become more familiar with the technology and this will help alleviate initial concerns. It is recommended that insurers are invited in to see a demonstration of the system, and that if necessary an insurance mitigation plan be prepared to manage any concerns.
- 4.12 A typical installation for a local library requires two elements: the first element is the building costs and cost of upgrades to the systems, the second element is the costs of installing the open library technology. Typically pre-installation building costs are between £7,000 and £9,000 but can be much higher, depending on the condition of the building, previous investment and the extent to which the library service wishes to use the opportunity to upgrade other systems beyond the basic requirement so would need to be individually costed. The supply and fit of the open library technology costs would need to be provided on an individual basis by each supplier. Evidence from the UK experience suggests that a number of councils have used the installation of the open library concept to also upgrade systems such as lighting and alarms beyond the essential requirement. A number of the early users in the UK who are now considering next steps are looking for opportunities to integrate the open library concept into any planned upgrades, new builds or town centre re-development. It is recommended that, wherever possible and appropriate, the costs of getting the building and systems fit for purpose can be minimised if they can be planned in as an integral part of any future upgrades, new builds or town re-development plans.

## People

- 4.13 Getting buy-in and then optimising the use of the open library concept requires the engagement of key stakeholders, as shown in figure four.

**Figure four – Engage key stakeholders to optimise benefits**



- 4.14 The driver for new ways of working is often the need to deliver services within a reduced budget. The decision process usually starts with a service review and how to achieve any changes is set out as a business case.
- 4.15 A business case is recommended for achieving the necessary savings and considering the strategic, commercial, financial, legal and operational cases as well as focusing on the potential impact on social inclusion. These are set out in appendix one. The option to use the open library concept is usually one of a number of options being considered, all of which need to be considered within the business case.
- 4.16 Each council needs to determine the key outcomes of the service and be informed by widespread public consultation. If there is a case for utilising technology e.g. implementing the open library concept, this needs to be part of a series of changes so the new ways of working achieve the required outcomes within the available budget. In other words, the case for change precedes the implementation of the open library concept. The latter offers a potential solution to deliver services in a new way and once the budget savings are set it can help to refine how to achieve the necessary outcomes.
- 4.17 It is recommended that effective implementation of the open library concept is based on a business case and requires broad and ongoing engagement of key stakeholders at every stage. This includes elected members, the community, staff and library users.

**Elected Members** – elected members represent their communities and will be supportive of preserving or enhancing service delivery. They will also support the use of technology to achieve this, particularly if they have a mandate from the public endorsing this to be the case. The experience from the UK is that 'seeing is believing'. Local experience that the concept works is a pre-requisite to the decision making process.

- 4.18 It is recommended that elected members, and other key stakeholders, see the system in action as the concept needs to be visualised. The experience of users is that a phased introduction, usually a pilot, and further reflection on the lessons learnt works well.



4.19 In library services where staff reductions have been implemented it can be more difficult to engage elected members and other stakeholders. In these circumstances the case for introducing new technology needs to be communicated with careful consideration. In the examples where staff cuts were made the decision to reduce costs by reducing staff hours preceded the implementation of any technology and was in spite of the technology and not because of it. It was agreed by elected members as part of a wider package of changes and/or as part of the budget saving process.

4.20 All councils have processes to gain committee approval and/or to approve how budget savings will be achieved as well as applying for capital funding. It is for the library service to judge how to achieve the necessary approval and buy-in. The ongoing engagement of stakeholders and, if necessary, monitoring by the scrutiny committee on the costs/benefits ensures that all are kept informed and any concerns are resolved.

**The community** – widespread public consultation is an integral part of ensuring that the services are delivered, within the available budget, meet the needs of the community and provides a mandate for what is required. As part of this consultation, the opportunity should be taken to understand the potential demand for any changes to opening hours and the likely response to the use of technology to support this. Given that self-service is now well established throughout the UK it is a less contentious issue than it was five years ago. The evidence from the UK suggests that the involvement of the community, through a series of public consultations and through active engagement with community groups at every stage (from considering the options to implementation and post implementation) helps to target the service to meet the demand and so influences the level of usage and impact of the open library concept.

4.21 All the early users of open libraries have involved the community to a greater or lesser degree (dependent on how low key the pilot has been kept) and there is good practice in all of these cases.

4.22 The lessons learnt from the examples of open libraries in the UK so far are that wherever possible the ongoing engagement of friends groups and community groups in optimising the use of the open library concept and in targeting the libraries where it will achieve the most benefit is key. It is recommended that full consultation be carried out with the public and community groups at every stage of the project, and to optimise the ongoing benefits of having the library available.

**Staff** – the review team echo the findings of the national library taskforce in recognising that staff are key to the quality of the frontline service delivery and that the public values local library staff. The evidence suggests that staff are apprehensive of the potential introduction of new technology and worried personally for their job security and of what might happen to the library in open library mode – e.g. misuse of the library, vandalism, safety of individuals.

4.23 In all the examples of open libraries in the UK the fears regarding the use of the library in unstaffed hours have been managed and mitigated by the risk assessment and upgrades to the systems, and to date there have been no issues reported. The impact of open libraries on staffed hours is more complex and dependent on the business case for each council. In all cases in the UK so far the technology has not been used to cut staffed hours, unless these would have been cut in any case to achieve savings. The open library concept has been funded either as a test case by the supplier, through capital funding or

in one case from other savings in the service. As one library manager stated “It is not a case of the technology or staffed hours, it is a case of the technology or closure.”

- 4.24 Staff who have first-hand experience of the open library concept can act as ambassadors to others.
- 4.25 In Denmark, the open library concept was introduced following significant budget cuts in which the number of libraries reduced from 800 to 400. The open library concept has been used as a means to safeguard the remaining libraries, to extend the number of hours at these libraries and to free up staff time to support customers. Staff in Denmark had similar concerns regarding the misuse of libraries and vandalism. As in the UK, appropriate risk assessment has meant that these concerns have not materialised.
- 4.26 It is recommended that staff have a key role to play in promoting open libraries, in inducting new users and in designing new procedures. The open library concept can be used to change the staff mix, to standardise opening hours, to extend opening and to cover periods such as lunchtime. Where assurances can be given, or there is no impact on reducing staff hours this clearly helps engagement. It is recommended that staff and their representatives are engaged in discussions to any changes in working practices at the earliest opportunity.

**Library users** - Library users can and do benefit from the open library concept. Anecdotal evidence suggests that users like it and feel privileged to be trusted to use the library in unstaffed hours.

- 4.27 Of the councils that have utilised open libraries in the UK, there are examples of library closures to meet budget pressures in previous library reviews. In all of these cases, the driver for open libraries has been as an alternative choice to stem this tide and safeguard the service from further closures, to re-establish some of the opening hours that have been cut in the past and where possible, to offer a wider choice of when the service is available, to existing and potential new users.
- 4.28 In the UK the open library concept has been used as a premium service in all the cases so far. In the UK users have been asked to register if they wish to use the additional service, in Scandinavia the service is automatically part of the basic service offer. In the UK registrations have varied from 50 in one pilot library in six months where there has deliberately been a low key approach to 12,000 across ten libraries in one council over one year. Registrations do not always equate to usage and the first step needs to be establishing the potential demand for services through public consultation and involvement of the local community. Usage can be optimised through local friends groups and community groups or word of mouth. To begin with a number of the councils who have open libraries have taken a soft launch approach to give time for the service to get established.
- 4.29 In all cases in the UK the feedback from councils is that library users have taken personal responsibility for the diligent use of the library space and no adverse incidences have been reported. In fact, in several cases, there are examples where individuals and groups have been proactive in supporting each other and in reporting any teething problems. Some authorities have gone further, and given access in unstaffed hours to community groups e.g. teachers and this has worked really well.
- 4.30 It is recommended that any business case be based on public consultation to establish the potential demand for the service and at what times.

- 4.31 As with any new service delivery model there is a balance to be struck between innovation, delivering efficiencies and service improvement. There are examples of good practice and lessons learnt from each of the early pioneers in achieving the most effective outcomes from the return on investment in open libraries.

## 5. Open libraries in the UK

- 5.1 Open libraries are new to the UK. Over the last two years Bibliotheca has been re-developing the technology for the UK market so that it links to LMS and self-service. The first library to implement the open library concept in the UK was Farsley in Leeds to test the technology and to achieve earlier opening hours. By July 2016 there were 24 libraries across nine authorities that had implemented the open library concept in a variety of ways. All have taken a staged approach to give time to test the technology and to reflect on the potential of open libraries across the service. Over 80 other authorities have expressed an interest in finding out more about open libraries and many of these have visited the early pioneers to see open libraries in action.

- 5.2 The early users of open libraries in the UK include:

### **Devon County Council (50 libraries)**

- 5.3 This is an example of using open libraries to increase security and revenue across a complex including the library, standardise and extend library hours and to assess the value for money of the new technology.

- 5.4 The open library concept was piloted at the Hayridge, Cullompton across the site (since August 2015) and in the library (since November 2015). The main driver was increased security for the whole site plus standardising and extending opening hours for the library. The centre manager reports that open libraries has been a positive experience.

### **Hertfordshire County Council (46 libraries)**

- 5.5 This is an example of piloting the use of open libraries and assessing its viability as part of an innovative library strategy to preserve and increase opening hours at modest revenue costs.

- 5.6 There are plans to pilot open library concept at Croxley Green to extend opening hours at modest revenue cost in August 2016. There are no staff reductions planned.

### **London Borough of Harrow (10 libraries reduced to six)**

- 5.7 This is an example of assessing the viability of using open libraries as an option to sustain and extend service delivery in the remaining six libraries, following budget cuts leading to four library closures.

- 5.8 The open library concept integrated at Wealdstone Library, part of the Wealdstone Centre. The purpose was to extend the opening hours and reduce some staffed hours. The service has about 200 registered users. The open library concept is about to be installed at Stanmore Library.

### **Norfolk County Council (47 libraries)**

- 5.9 This is an example of using the open library concept in the busiest central library in the UK to extend opening hours and achieve staff cuts, whilst having some staff presence during open library mode and as a means to extend open hours and social inclusion outcomes in a local community library.

5.10 The open library concept was integrated into the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium (Central) Library and a pilot in Acle Community Library since May 2016. Achieved efficiency savings of £100,000 were reduced at the Millennium. Extended opening hours at Acle increased from 23 to 37 hours and at Millennium from 9am- 7pm (all staffed) to 8-10am (non-staffed), 10am – 7pm (staffed). The number of registered open library users was 582 and rising (362 at the Millennium and 220 at Acle). The initiative achieved particular community benefits at Acle. There are plans to extend the scheme to a further five local libraries.

#### **Peterborough City Council (10 libraries)**

5.11 This is the most extensive example of open libraries in the UK. This council have created two specific posts to support and register users.

5.12 The open library concept was integrated across the whole service consisting of central library and nine local libraries in 2015. The key drivers were efficiency and service improvement. Savings of £305,000 have been achieved and extended the total opening hours from 261 to 387. Registered open library users currently stand at 12,000.

#### **Stockport Council (16 libraries)**

5.13 This is an example of assessing the viability and impact of open libraries to extend opening hours to meet needs of a wider pool of users and to help inform a wider service review. Open library technology was used to open and close library on non-staffed days without use of a caretaker.

5.14 The open library concept has been piloted at Bramhall Local Library since November 2015. This resulted in extended opening hours from 41 to 59 hours, including now being open on Wednesday with no changes to staffing hours. Bramhall Library is next to the health centre and on the way to the station so there is a strong potential customer base. There was a soft launch with numbers of registered open library users currently is 50 including new users. This represents a small increase in new users and an increase in the number of PCs in use.

#### **Trafford MB Council (11 libraries and one partnership library)**

5.15 This is an example of considering the wider benefits of open libraries, of proof of concept and of getting pro-active community groups involved in assessing and taking forward its potential to extend the service offer across Trafford.

5.16 The open library concept was piloted at Woodsend Public Library and Lostock School Library in June 2015 as part of a range of measures to save one third of the budget. By June 2016 there were 778 registered open library users. They have reported an increase in services offers and staff savings have been achieved (there was a reduction from 31 to 12 staffed hours plus 29 unstaffed hours). There is community support to extend as part of future plans to three other sites, a community trust, a town redevelopment and a partnership centre.

5.17 A summary of the discussions is shown in appendix two.

## **6. Reflections from the UK experience**

6.1 Of the councils who have implemented open libraries in the UK, as a pilot or across the service, this has been in response to the need to find new ways of maintaining or improving service delivery within reduced budgets.

6.2 In general, a low key and staged approach has been taken, whilst confidence in the technology is established. As the proof of concept grows more councils are now turning to measuring the impact of open libraries on service outcomes and the potential of implementing open libraries in other parts of the service.

#### **Impact on service outcomes - usage and social inclusion**

6.3 Quantitative data is still being gathered as all but one of the councils is still at pilot stage. The early indications are:

- There is a clientele for open libraries including new and existing users
- You can choose which parts of the library to operate as an open library
- That improved security and upgraded systems make the library more inviting to users
- There have been modest increases in usage. Anecdotally this is of two to three additional users per session at one library to an overall increase of 3% in service that uses open libraries extensively. This is at a time when nationally usage is falling.
- There has been an increase in the use of PCs
- Visits are more spread out

6.4 Of particular note there has been a positive impact on social inclusion where the community has been actively embracing the open library concept. The open library concept works and the more involvement from the community the better the potential benefits.

#### **Impact on staffing**

6.5 Of the councils using open libraries, over half have also reduced staffed hours in the same period. The planned savings were already established prior to the introduction of open libraries. In one of these cases, there were more applications for severance than required so the issues were minimal. However, given reducing budgets and the cuts in library services over recent years there is a natural apprehension amongst staff of what the future may bring. Staff have a critical role as ambassadors for the service and their engagement going forward is necessary if the full potential of open libraries is to be realised.

6.6 Open libraries can support the service in:

- Changing the staffing mix
- Freeing up staff to support users
- Keeping the library available over lunchtimes, evenings and weekends
- Management Information - recording each event as it happens
- Standardising opening hours, extending hours and spreading up usage
- Managing the service – as one library manager put it “The thing that surprised us is how easy it made staff life. You turn the key 15 minutes before closing and it does everything for you which saves 20-25 minutes each time”

- 6.7 The library can operate as an open library in unstaffed hours and is programmed to interface with all systems to open and close the library without the need for staff and without the need for a caretaker or security staff to close the building.
- 6.8 The technology is not an alternative to the value added by staff. There is a balance to be struck between achieving the necessary savings and providing the best possible service to users. Councils are being very creative in identifying ways to make this happen.
- In Hertfordshire a new library link service has been launched. This is now being considered to support volunteers and users in open library mode. This library link service gives access to staff in other larger libraries if required and would help achieve the best of both worlds.
  - In Trafford a community trust has been set-up to develop and manage a new library; increasingly libraries are becoming co-located so that resources can be shared. The open library technology can facilitate and support these new ways of working to preserve and enhance the service offering and utilise staffing hours to best effect.
  - In Stockport there are live CCTV feeds in the Council control room, negating the need for someone to go and check all is well after open library concept closes the service.
- 6.9 A summary of the costs/benefits is outlined in the cost benefit checklist in figure five. It is recommended that when considering open libraries the cost benefit checklist be used as a guide along with consideration of the potential impacts on the wider social outcomes.

## Figure five: cost benefit checklist

### Cost components

- ✓ Staff costs for planning and project management
- ✓ Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment
- ✓ Staff time to register open library users
- ✓ Capital investment e.g. purchasing open library technology, circa £15,000
- ✓ Ongoing maintenance costs for open library technology – nominal annual fee
- ✓ Capital investment for building works e.g. building conditions survey and adjustments – doors, lighting, wiring etc. There is no one size fits all.
- ✓ Insurance (may be cost neutral)
- ✓ Pre-requisites - self-service kiosks and Library Management System

### Benefit components

- ✓ Open library concept installation way to audit and upgrade systems so that they are fit for purpose and compliant with insurers, EIA and H&S.
- ✓ Target staff support to meet demand
- ✓ Continue to provide a service within reducing budgets
- ✓ Maintain/increase opening hours/improve security
- ✓ Enhance the service targeting staff hours where most needed
- ✓ Open to suit demand and can be customised to the needs of local libraries
- ✓ Charges and fees for certain services (e.g. DVD/CD rentals, language and IT courses) and late returns can be collected outside staffed hours
- ✓ Rental income from premises for events and meetings
- ✓ Commercial rents from any businesses renting parts of premises
- ✓ Potential for kiosk access to other council services
- ✓ Modernise existing buildings and/or integrate with new-builds, town plans
- ✓ Modest increase in usage and use of PCs v nationally picture of falling use

### Potential savings areas

- ✓ Staff costs, working patterns
- ✓ The turn key used saves staff time opening and closing the library
- ✓ Efficient service operation - can free staff up to support library users
- ✓ Review and rationalisation of service provision and hours
- ✓ Modernisation of existing buildings

### Lessons learnt & good practice

- ✓ Show elected members, staff and community groups a working open library
- ✓ Involve the public, community groups and staff at every stage. Staff act as ambassadors and will support community benefits
- ✓ Be ambitious with open libraries – potential to extend the service and change staffing mix, deliver enhanced benefits for communities
- ✓ Give time for testing and parallel run to help iron out teething problems
- ✓ Choose a pilot site that will provide best learning
- ✓ Use implementation as a means to upgrade all systems, security and site
- ✓ Evaluate the cost/benefit of the investment and the potential demand
- ✓ Manage demand – e.g. give teachers & groups access in unstaffed hours
- ✓ Technology works – councils now need to assess impact on outcomes

### Challenges

- ✓ Engagement of stakeholders and staff, particularly if related to staff cuts
- ✓ Concern from staff even when hours not affected of the potential misuse of the library and of potential cuts in the future
- ✓ Getting agreement from the insurers – useful to invite them in
- ✓ Getting all systems to work together with the open library system
- ✓ Optimising the usage of the open library concept, once registered

## **Figure six: Anecdotal evidence of social outcomes**

### **Support for vulnerable people**

Libraries are lifelines for people who live alone. One example is a vulnerable customer who spent many hours in the library when it was open for 23 hours a week. He lives alone and going to the library is one of the few contacts he had with people each week. Now the library is open for 37 hours this customer has stated that he has benefited from the company of other self-service library customers as a group of regular self-service users has formed. They support him with his isolation issues and with job searching.

### **Support for job seekers**

Libraries are often used by job seekers who use the library computers to apply for jobs online. An example is a customer who spotted a job advertised and was able to access the library during self-service time to complete and submit her application by the closing date. She was successful in her application and now has a job. She says that "this would not have been possible before as the deadline was really tight"

### **Supporting children and families**

Our library is shared by the children's centre who ran a course to make story sacks whilst the library was in self-service mode. The result has been that now the course has finished, the group continue to meet in the library "it's a wonderful safe environment to meet up with other mums so that I don't feel so isolated"

### **Supporting reading, literacy and digital literacy**

"We provide teachers with open library card and they bring groups in. It's about giving the library back to the community even more". An example in another council, "there has been an increase in the use of PC's, particularly by men who may not be able to access the library during the day"

### **Supporting young adults**

The library now provides a study space for young adults. In another example, a library customer who home schools her three children is using the library in self-service time.

### **Supporting social enterprise**

Hale Library users have formed a Hale community trust who have put in a joint bid to buy land and develop a library. The plan is to use the open library concept as part of the library offer. This represents an example of a significant improvement and of community taking control.

### **Supporting each other**

In our library, there are a group of individuals who have taken the initiative to form a self-help group. They report back to staff any problems and improvements.



## 7. Making the case for open libraries

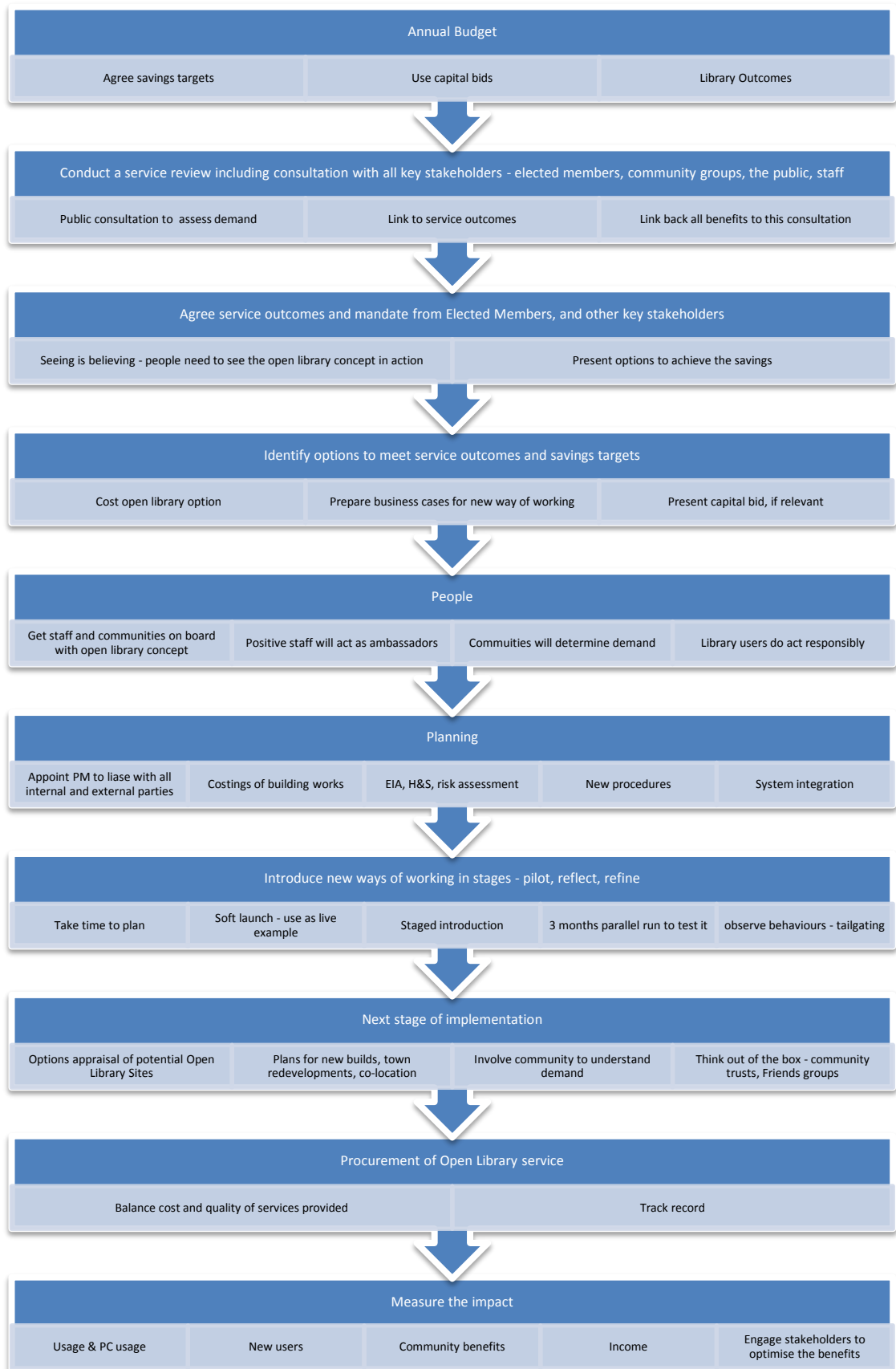
- 7.1 Open libraries offer a significant innovation to the delivery of library services and the potential benefits lie far beyond an extension to hours. The potential is driven by the imagination of those who are engaged in optimising the benefits of the library service and lies in creating community hubs and in supporting the national aspirations for libraries across the UK.
- 7.2 Based on the evidence of the UK experience so far and that of Scandinavia, there is significant potential for councils to benefit from the open library concept. There is the potential to significantly increase this value where the library has self-service kiosks that offer a range of council services, is co-located and with active engagement of stakeholders.
- 7.3 Deciding whether to and in which part of the service to use open libraries as part of the library offer is a decision for each local authority. Open libraries can bring multiple benefits, but there are set-up costs and the suitability of each location needs to be evaluated on its merits.
- 7.4 There are six areas to consider when making the case for open libraries as set out in figure seven. It is recommended that all these areas be considered when evaluating the case for open libraries.

**Figure seven: Making the case for Open Libraries**



- 7.5 Figure eight summarises the lessons learnt from the evidence gathered during this review. This is offered as a good practice guide to support the business case and optimise any investment.

**Figure eight: Lessons learnt and tips for good practice**



## 8. Recommendations

Open Libraries can offer a means to sustain and / or extend service provision. A summary of the recommendations is given here. It is recommended that:

17. Open libraries be considered as part of any evaluation of options within a service review. Ambition and creativity in how services are delivered is the key.
18. The option appraisal of the open library concept is based on a robust business case considering the impact on the strategic, commercial, financial, legal and operational case and community/social inclusion outcomes.
19. In appraising the case for open libraries there are three areas to consider – people engagement, the building and systems integration.
20. The business case options appraisal requires broad and ongoing engagement of key stakeholders at every stage. This includes elected members, the community, staff and library users.
21. The business case involves ‘a strategic open library champion’.
22. Part of the decision making phase includes elected members and other key stakeholders seeing the system in action, as the concept needs to be visualised. The experience of users is that a phased introduction, usually with a pilot, and further reflection on the lessons learnt works well.
23. A series of consultations be carried out with the public and community groups at every stage of the project, to understand the nature of the demand and to ensure the solution meets the identified need and that the benefits are optimised.
24. Engagement of staff is essential. Staff have a key role to play in promoting open libraries, in inducting new users and in designing new procedures. The open library concept can be used to change the staff mix, to standardise opening hours, to extend opening and to cover periods such as lunchtime. Where assurances can be given, or there is no impact on reducing staff hours, this clearly helps engagement.
25. The choice of site is key as not all sites will warrant the investment required to set-up open libraries. That in assessing potential sites consideration be given to any opportunities to align the implementation of open libraries with any refurbishments, new builds, co-location of services, town re-development plans so as to minimise costs. For an existing site, a buildings conditions survey be commissioned and the opportunity taken if possible to upgrade systems beyond the basic requirement. Any assessment will include a risk assessment, Health and Safety (H&S), Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), security, lighting, alarms and cameras.

26. In terms of systems, ideally the open library concept be fully integrated with an up to date Library Management System (LMS) and self-service kiosks. That said, if this is not available the open library concept can still be installed. Sufficient time needs to be spent in the planning phase to ensure that all internal systems interface with the open library technology and that stakeholders are involved in deciding who has access and when the library should operate as an open library. Between three and six months is recommended.
27. An individual from the library service be appointed as project manager to facilitate discussions and co-ordinate the requirements between the council, all the internal and external suppliers (including systems) and the supplier so as to understand the exact requirements of each installation, and that sufficient time is given to test the systems. The use of 'a parallel run' before going fully into unstaffed open library mode is recommended. An estimated three to six months of planning is the norm.
28. Insurers are invited in to see a demonstration of the system, and that if required an insurance mitigation plan be prepared to manage any concerns from the insurers.
29. Outcome measures are set at the start, so that the impact of any pilot can be evaluated.
30. In consideration of any further expansion of open libraries beyond the pilot, quality, cost, integration of existing systems and ongoing support be balanced in any procurement of services. The capital cost of the open library technology is circa £15,000.
31. The APSE network is used to showcase open libraries and communicate the costs/benefits and lessons learnt from the UK experiences of open libraries.
32. No part of this report is reproduced or published without the prior agreement of APSE and the councils who have been involved in the review.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1 As in Scandinavia, the evidence in the UK indicated that the experience of open libraries in the UK is a positive one and there are added value benefits. That stakeholder engagement supports the optimising of these benefits.
- 9.2 All councils should include consideration of costs/benefits of open libraries as part of a package of options to support new ways of working and to sustain and improve service delivery within reducing budgets.
- 9.3 The potential for deployment of open libraries across the UK remains significant and there is considerably more scope to optimise the value from open libraries and as a means to find efficiencies.

# The 5 case model: key points



Strategic case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Links to the Council's strategic aims and objectives</li></ul>
Commercial case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding the market you are operating in</li><li>• Finding out about your customers</li><li>• Identifying your USP</li></ul>
Financial case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the business affordable?</li><li>• Meet public accountability obligations</li></ul>
Legal case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Powers</li><li>• Duties &amp; responsibilities</li><li>• Liabilities</li></ul>
Operational/technical case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can it actually be done?</li></ul>

# Appendix two – Open library users in the UK

## Devon County Council – Cost benefit checklist

Devon County Council has a population of over 747,000 residents and has 50 local libraries and four mobile libraries and 44 friends groups. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 the service became a mutual. This membership model involves friends groups, staff and the service. The service has been subject to ongoing budget constraints with a reduction in budget of £1.5m from 2015-2018.

Cullompton is a busy commuter town and has a growing population of 45 and overs. The library service is popular with users but many are out working during the day. A public survey was conducted at Hayridge, Cullompton between March and April 2015 indicated 91% support for extended opening hours to include evening and weekends.

In April 2015 the Council approved the Hayridge, Cullompton as the pilot for the open library concept. The aim was to establish how the technology worked and identify any lessons learnt for any future possible expansion of the open library concept. The Hayridge was chosen as the library is part of a modern complex which offers the community the library and separately bookable meeting spaces. There is a caretaker on site. The business case for the pilot was built on the need to improve the security of the meeting spaces as well as giving extended access to the library. The pilot was in two phases. Firstly to test how the technology would improve the access and security of the meeting spaces (August to November 2015) and secondly, to extend library open hours (from Nov 2015).

### Cost components

- ✓ Centre library manager involved in planning and project management
- ✓ Cost shared between the council and Bibliotheca as test site - for the open library system provided by Bibliotheca the council used capital to cover the cost of integrating the sliding doors with the open library software and to manage IT network issues (PSN)
- ✓ Revenue costs for ongoing support per annum per library.
- ✓ Staff time involved in developing new working procedures

### Benefit components

- ✓ Security of the building improved e.g. extended use of the system to meeting spaces.
- ✓ Increase in revenue from meeting spaces
- ✓ Open library concept integrated within the library service offer.
- ✓ Opportunity to regulate open hours whilst maintaining and re-distributing staff hours, in-line with community feedback. Changed working patterns (e.g. sole working) to achieve increase in staffed hours. This has gone from 35 staffed hours to 44 staffed at no additional cost. This includes opening and staffing the library on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Saturday morning.
- ✓ Extended opening hours from 35 hours (staffed) to 44 hours (staffed) plus further 27 unstaffed hours. Now open 9am - 9.30 pm daily plus 9am - 5.30pm on Saturday.
- ✓ By June 2016, there were 250 registered open library users, mainly using meeting spaces

### Savings areas

- ✓ Achieved increased revenue and improved security for meeting space
- ✓ Service is currently in the process of reviewing the costs/benefits and impact of the open library concept at Hayridge and its wider potential

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ LMS installed in 1980s. Need to integrate open library concept with an up to date LMS
- ✓ Open library concept can be used to secure / connect to all exits in the building. Now the service is confident in technology they will use it to secure second emergency exit at the next installation.
- ✓ There are 250 registered users, with uptake of 20-25 in the evening, mainly for meeting space. There is a need to analyse usage statistics and assess how can encourage more people to use it

### Challenges overcome and areas of good practice

- ✓ Group of library officers and elected members attended an open library open day, which gave buy-in to having a pilot.
- ✓ A soft launch – “It’s been a really good experience so far” centre manager, Hayridge
- ✓ Self-help group of regular users who provide feedback on any teething problems
- ✓ For the future there needs to be consideration of plans if there is no caretaker in a building.

### Future plans

- ✓ Need to further review the potential of open library concept for Devon CC
- ✓ Involvement of a local friends group to help promote usage at Hayridge and seek views of demand for extended hours in other locations

## London Borough of Harrow – Cost benefit checklist

The London Borough of Harrow has a population of over 240,000. Up to 2015 the population was served by ten libraries, a housebound library service and school libraries. There are 146,000 registered library members and 51,000 active members. Harrow is in the top quartile for library usage in London, however, in line with national trends library usage (visits, stock issue and borrowing) has been falling over the last five years. Over the last ten years there has been minimal investment in the majority of the library buildings. Following a review in 2011 the service was outsourced to Carillon and managed as a joint contract with the London Borough of Ealing. Further budget cuts mean that the service is required to achieve further efficiency savings of £500,000 in 2015-2016 on a staff and maintenance budget of £2.2m and a further £235,000 for books.

Following extensive public consultation a new Library Strategy 2015-2018 was agreed. The aim is to sustain the service for the longer term to provide the best possible library service to meet community needs and within the available budget. To achieve the strategy the 54% of those who responded expressed support for the use of libraries as community hubs and 57% for the use of technology to develop services.

In 2012 Council public survey indicated that longer opening hours would encourage library use. This was endorsed by the Cabinet Report 'Future of Cultural Services in Harrow', 2012

To achieve a balance between savings and extending services in June 2015, Harrow closed four of its libraries and in October 2015 invested in the open library concept to extend opening hours at its busy Wealdstone Library. If successful, opening hours will be extended across the other libraries. LB of Harrow is seeking to modernise its library buildings as part of any wider re-development plans. Stanmore library has just been re-furbished and will include the open library concept.

### Cost components

- ✓ The service manager involved in planning and project management, along with two managers from Carillon and local library staff from Wealdstone
- ✓ Capital cost for open library system and works at Wealdstone
- ✓ Revenue cost for annual maintenance of the open library concept per library

### Benefit components

- ✓ Open libraries concept integrated within service offer to sustain the service within the available budget and extend opening hours at these sites
- ✓ Extended opening hours using the open library concept at Wealdstone from 40.5 staffed hours to 40.5 staffed hours plus 16.15 unstaffed hours
- ✓ By June 2016, there were 400 registered open library users

### Savings areas

- ✓ The open library concept is part of a package of savings of £500,000
- ✓ Staff savings were achieved from the closure of the four libraries. There were no staff savings from the implementation of the open library concept at Wealdstone.

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ The long lead in time was useful
- ✓ Project manager would have been useful
- ✓ Teething problems with technology but on the whole it works really well
- ✓ Limited up take of open library by registered users. Further analysis as to why is needed

### Challenges overcome

- ✓ For future implementations Carillon have requested a security guard be present which will add additional cost.

### Future plans

- ✓ To evaluate the pilot at Wealdstone and look to extend opening hours using the open library concept across the London Borough of Harrow libraries. The next to use the open library concept is Stanmore.

## Hertfordshire County Council - Cost benefit checklist

Hertfordshire County Council has 46 community based libraries servicing a community of around £1million. Active borrowing is £160,000. Following ongoing budget pressures in 2013 open hours were reduced. To ensure the service continued to meet the needs of the community within a reduced budget in 2014 there was an extensive public consultation and a new 10 year library strategy was published. As part of this the library service is offered on a tiered basis. There are 11 tier one libraries based in the larger towns, 19 tier two libraries in smaller towns and 16 tier three libraries run primarily by volunteers in partnership with other local services. Two are up and running with several more following this year, and the final tranche next year. The council has a history of innovation in its library service and was the first council to install self-service kiosks across all 46 libraries. The library strategy includes using innovation to deliver and enhance the service whilst achieving the necessary efficiency savings. Open libraries is one such innovation and is to be piloted at Croxley Green. This is at the test phase with the open library system being used alongside the current service to open and close the library. By mid-July there were 130 customers registered and waiting to use the open library when it becomes available in the next few weeks.

### Cost components

- ✓ Library service manager involved in planning and project management
- ✓ Capital cost including reconfiguring existing IT systems, installing new doors, security gates, alarms, lighting and the open library system and do building works
- ✓ Revenue costs for ongoing support per library and also for utilities. There were no additional staff costs.

### Benefit components

- ✓ The business case for the open libraries concept is that it has the potential to provide extra opening hours for a small ongoing investment
- ✓ Open library concept provides the technology to support the development of community hubs
- ✓ No staff cuts. The use of volunteers across the service is well established and the trade unions have not raised any issues with the planned open library pilot.

### Savings areas

- ✓ The open library concept is being used as an innovation to extend library provision, initially to re-instate hours lost from previous budget cuts, then potentially to extend
- ✓ No staff savings are planned

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ Croxley Green a busy tier two library with 51,000 visits, 63,000 issues, 368 square meters of public space and a community catchment of 13,000 people. Croxley Green was chosen as the pilot site to provide a working example of open libraries, to fully test the system in a busy environment, understand the implementation challenges of open libraries and any lessons learnt for any potential future implementation.

### Challenges overcome and areas of good practice

- ✓ Buy-in from elected members – it is useful to see the system working
- ✓ Concern from staff that in the future open libraries may lead to cuts in staff hours
- ✓ Hertfordshire County Council has introduced library link, an innovative service which gives the public and volunteers from a smaller library access to staff in a larger library via a television link. Library link is an area of good practice and has the potential to be used to enhance the services offered during unstaffed open library hours.
- ✓ Getting the IT and all the other systems to work together with the open library system. The “tricky bit was the doors”.
- ✓ Obtaining sign-off from the insurers. An insurance mitigation paper was needed to achieve agreement from the insurers.
- ✓ One size won't fit all – each building is different

### Future plans

- ✓ Depend on outcome of pilot and the demand for extended hours



## Norfolk County Council - Cost benefit checklist

Norfolk County Council has 47 libraries including the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium library in Norwich, a UNESCO city of literature. The Millennium Library is a showcase modern, vibrant library set within the forum complex and is the busiest library in the UK. In 2011 library opening hours in Norfolk were reduced by 10%. Following a library review in 2014 the service needed to find revenue savings of £1.2m on a £10m library budget – all libraries remain open but staffing levels were reduced, with 34 libraries having lone-working for some or all of their opening hours. Following a public consultation it was clear that the public valued its library service and wanted to use libraries when they are not currently available, the public wanted more opening hours rather than less. As part of the option appraisal of what was possible, before making significant savings Norfolk County Council decided to explore the benefits of integrating the open library concept into the service offering. As an interim measure the open library concept was introduced into the Millennium library and at one local library, Acle (68,000 issues, 146 square feet) to test the viability of the technology as a way of extending access to customers for limited ongoing revenue costs. The benefit case was £100,000 savings and extended opening hours.

### Cost components

- ✓ Local library manager involved in planning and project management at minimal cost
- ✓ Capital cost for open library system plus cost of new electronic glass gate at Millennium library. For Acle costs of new automatic door and works
- ✓ Revenue costs for ongoing support per annum per library
- ✓ Discussions with the Insurers and agreement to what is appropriate. This meant skeleton staff in Millennium library during open library hours to comply with insurance and sign-up new users.
- ✓ The plan is to open Acle library in the evening and weekends. Given its co-location with a Children's Centre within a shared building, this would require additional caretaker costs to secure the whole building. There may be additional insurance costs.

### Benefit components

- ✓ Open libraries concept integrated within service offer – skeleton staffing in Millennium during open library hours extending opening hours at minimal cost
- ✓ Millennium library is accessible to meet demand. Regular queuing prior to extended opening hours
- ✓ By June 2016, there were 580 registered open library users for both locations and this is rising
- ✓ Increase in the use of computers
- ✓ At Acle opening hours extended from 23 (all staffed) to 37 (23 staffed hours). In reality the open library concept means the library can open at times that are convenient for more users and stay open over lunch break. There is a plan to extend open library concept to evenings and weekends.
- ✓ Acle staff act as ambassadors and library as training ground for open library concept
- ✓ Increased use of unstaffed library space by community groups
- ✓ Positive outcomes for customers - "the potential is phenomenal. Teachers have an open library card and can bring groups in when the library would otherwise be closed" Library manager, Acle
- ✓ Open library system automatically shuts down PC's, systems, lights and puts the alarm on saving time

### Savings areas

- ✓ £100,000 saved on a library budget through staff savings

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ Staged implementation has worked well and helps staff from other libraries to experience the open library concept
- ✓ Open library concept gives the library back to the community even more
- ✓ The turn key system makes it easier for staff
- ✓ A positive attitude from staff and the public helps

### Challenges overcome and areas of good practice

- ✓ Concerns over the risk of vandalism haven't happened. The opposite is true, members of the community have taken the opportunity to hold new groups in the library and to help support each other. One example was highlighted of the open library members supporting a more vulnerable member in the community become part of a friendship group. Another of a mum and toddlers group using the library as a place for mums to meet up.

### Future plans

- ✓ Committee approval being sought to extend pilot to five other local libraries and increase savings. Estimated set-up and building costs for all building works and installation.
- ✓ Plans are in place now for installation in a further six locations.

## Peterborough City Council - Cost benefit checklist

With a population of circa 180,000, Peterborough is the second fastest growing city after Milton Keynes. The city has 10 libraries and a mobile library. Peterborough City Council has been one of the first authorities to implement open libraries in the UK and is the only authority to implement open libraries across its central library and all nine local libraries. Peterborough has 32,000 active library users of which 12,000 are registered to use open libraries. This represents the most extensive coverage of open libraries in the UK. Since 2011 the Council has reduced library opening hours annually to meet budget pressures. By 2014 the council recognised that any further cuts would potentially lead to library closures. A similar scenario had played out in the neighbouring authority of Lincolnshire County Council where proposed closures resulted in a Judicial Review. Elected members supported council officers in the recognition that it was time to think differently about service transformation and what could be done to safeguard the service.

In 2014 Peterborough City Council embarked on a series of 15 public consultations and identified what the public valued most from the libraries: the ability to borrow books, access to information and location. 75% of those who responded felt access outside of normal opening hours was important. Three options were put forward to elected members to address the required savings: close all local libraries and invest in central library; keep all libraries open and reduce opening hours across the service; consider new ways of delivering the service to maintain and extend opening hours. There was all party support for option three and in 2015 the open library concept was implemented in central library and then in all the local libraries.

### Cost components

- ✓ Staff costs for planning, project management and the two new roles of open library assistant
- ✓ Capital cost for open library system, for cabling and doors, for enabling works, including internal locks
- ✓ Revenue costs for ongoing support per library per year. The cost of borrowing spread over 8.5 years.

### Benefit components

- ✓ All libraries in Peterborough City Council use the open library concept and remain open
- ✓ By June 2016, there were 12,000 registered open library users
- ✓ Opening hours extended from 261 to 386
- ✓ Library usage is up by 3% in the last year
- ✓ Availability of space for staff and community groups from across the council services

### Savings areas

- ✓ £305,000 saved on a library budget of £1.5m
- ✓ Saved £275,000 from staff through voluntary redundancies, £30,000 from materials

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ The open library concept is hard to describe, to help make the business case key individuals need to see it in action
- ✓ The public are respecting the library – in presenting evidence to the scrutiny committee, there have been no incidents and no vandalism to report
- ✓ The public who use the open library concept have been more proactive to take ownership and responsibility for their own safeguarding

### Challenges overcome and areas of good practice

- ✓ The open library concept represents a rescue plan. Elected members agreed to the strategy for the next five years, giving the service stability, staff re-assurance and the public continuity of service
- ✓ Agreed with the trade unions that staff roles would not be replaced by volunteers
- ✓ Negative voice around staff cuts – friends group rallied to support staff. In reality maintaining the status quo was not an option
- ✓ Two of the libraries are attached to schools, and here an open library assistant role was created to support the open library concept and provide resource to register new users

### Future plans

- ✓ To extend the open library concept to provide more council services through kiosks
- ✓ Strengthen use of libraries as part of the health and well-being outcomes

## Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council - Cost benefit checklist

Stockport MB Council has 16 local libraries, employing approximately 90 staff. The service is currently in the process of a service review to inform future planning. As part of this Review there has been a re-structure at Librarian level to bring together the development and operational aspects of the service into a more joined up and cohesive team.

The open library concept is being piloted at Bramhall Library to assess the capability of the new technology and the benefits and challenges of open libraries. Bramhall was chosen in partnership with the supplier of the technology to act as a test case of open libraries in a large suburban area in the UK. Bramhall is a busy town library located next to the health centre and on-route to the railway station. The pilot started in November 2015 and is part of the ongoing service review.

### Cost components

- ✓ The senior librarian who acted as internal project manager, working with the supplier project manager to co-ordinate various internal and external service providers involved and to support the planning and the pilot.
- ✓ The capital cost of the open library system was picked up by supplier as this was a test site for open library system
- ✓ Building costs to adapt facility to accommodate the system
- ✓ Revenue costs for ongoing support per annum for each library

### Benefit components

- ✓ The open libraries concept integrated within service offer to extend opening hours from 41 staff hours to 41 staff hours plus 18 non staffed hours
- ✓ The library is now open on a Wednesday for the first time accounting for 11 of the extended unstaffed hours, using open library technology to open and shut the library.
- ✓ By June 2016 there were 50 registered open library users
- ✓ Staff act as ambassadors and library as training ground for open library concept
- ✓ New users coming in during unstaffed library e.g. commuters are now able to use the library in the evening when previously it would have been closed

### Savings areas

- ✓ Not applicable

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ The library manager reports a few teething problems with alarms and zoning. These have been resolved and occasionally items have been left on tables
- ✓ Users of the open library have taken responsibility for reporting any faults or issues
- ✓ Many of the perceived barriers and concerns from staff haven't materialised e.g. vandalism in unstaffed hours and misuse of the library
- ✓ Takes time to get staff on board – what's worked well is getting staff involved in the implementation e.g. in writing new procedures, in registering users, in inducting new users

### Challenges overcome and areas of good practice

- ✓ Discussions with insurer and management of potential risks – no additional insurance costs
- ✓ A soft launch
- ✓ Induction and guidelines gaining customer agreement to open library responsibility is an area of good practice. Induction includes a tour
- ✓ No issues have been raised from the public
- ✓ Individuals taking personal responsibility for their own welfare and for reporting any issues in the library

### Future Plans

- ✓ Dependent on the outcomes of the service review and the needs of the service for increased demand in opening hours

## Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council - Cost benefit checklist

Trafford MBC has 220,000 residents and approximately 50,000 library members. There are 11 statutory libraries and one partnership library within a school. Over the last eight years there have been ongoing budget cuts and two library closures. In 2014 a further budget review required budget savings of up to one third across the service. This led to a two part public consultation in which there was a clear message from the public of the need to keep all libraries open. The public supported the use of technology and partnerships as a way to keep availability to the service. The open library concept was part of the package of measures explored in the second phase of the consultation which involved community groups and staff. In June 2015 the open library concept was installed at Woodsend library and Lostock school library for everyone 16 and over who registers.

### Cost components

- ✓ Service manager involved in stakeholder engagement, planning and project management
- ✓ Capital cost to upgrade building works (some in addition to that needed for open libraries); and for the open library technology
- ✓ Revenue costs for ongoing support per annum per library

### Benefit components

- ✓ Open libraries concept implemented with full consultation and involvement of community groups
- ✓ Open libraries concept used at Lostock School Library to enable public access on Saturdays and during school holidays.
- ✓ By June 2016 there were 778 registered open library users
- ✓ Opening hours at Woodsend library extended from 31 staffed hour to 12 staffed plus 29 unstaffed hours, including access to the library on a Wednesday for the first time
- ✓ People are taking ownership of the space - community groups and staff act as ambassadors
- ✓ Increased use of unstaffed library space by community groups with access to closed spaces (e.g. toilets) for group activities by agreement

### Savings areas

- ✓ Open library concept contributed to overall budget savings. At Woodsend staff hours cut from 31 to 12
- ✓ Open library concept a small part of a package of measures to achieve budget savings

### Lessons learnt

- ✓ Be ambitious with the open library concept and go for a significant improvement in service
- ✓ Engaging as much as possible with the users and staff and making them part of the change was critical to the success of the open library concept in Trafford
- ✓ A few teething problems with the system and automatic door which needed on-site support, these are being addressed by next release of the open library kit
- ✓ At Woodsend staff worked to a tight timescale for implementation due to the release of key staff, in future implementations more lead in time before going live would help iron out teething problems

### Challenges overcome and areas of good practice

- ✓ Good practice showed ongoing community engagement through open days and involvement of local interest groups on safety, how to use the staffed hours, who should have access (over 16)
- ✓ Challenge – re-assurance of staff through change. Staff cuts were achieved through voluntary severance, with numbers applying exceeding requirement.
- ✓ No issue with trade unions in using volunteers as this custom and practice had been embedded in the service following a previous review

### Future plans

- ✓ Savings on target to be achieved
- ✓ Incorporating the open library concept in three new build libraries that are being funded by public/private/trust funds. This includes Altrincham as part of economic development of the town centre, Timperley in partnership with local GP and developer and Hale by a new Hale community trust.

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