

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SPORT, LEISURE AND CULTURE CABINET MEMBER

HAXEY LIBRARY

11. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To determine that Haxey Library should become a council-managed library operating with volunteers.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
- A review of North Lincolnshire's library network recommended that the smaller branch libraries be considered for alternative service delivery models that offer better value for money and sustainability;
 - Haxey Library has been reviewed in that context, including consultation with the parish council and with service users;
 - Taking local views and the need to improve value for money into account, this report now proposes that the library service develops a new model of service delivery for Haxey Library
 - This model will retain Haxey Library as a local community facility, operated on a day-to-day basis with volunteers and managed by North Lincolnshire Council
 - This new service model will be reviewed regularly to determine continued viability and value for money.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire's library network consists of one specialist central library, fourteen branch libraries and two mobile libraries. All of these are currently council-managed and council-staffed. During 2009, the council reviewed the network. The purpose of the review was to explore the consistency of service level provision across communities as well as issues of future sustainability. The review assessed the network's fitness for the future in terms of policy drivers for change, new technology, performance and value for money.
- 2.2 Arising from the review, a new blueprint for the network was approved by the Cabinet Member for Sport, Leisure and Culture in March 2010. This now provides a clear framework for determining the type and level of provision appropriate and sustainable for North Lincolnshire different communities. In the case of the smaller branch libraries, the new blueprint requires that consideration be given to more sustainable delivery models that might include shared sites, self-service, the use of volunteers, mobile provision, or more direct community ownership of the day to day running of the library.

- 2.3 There are already a number of examples of alternative library service models in place elsewhere in the country. These range from full community-run libraries where the local community or representative group takes over responsibility for most of the day-to-day running of the library, to council-run libraries operated by local volunteers. These libraries continue to be part of the public library network, and customers continue to enjoy access to the same quality of materials and services. The library authority ensures that this takes place through stock provision, systems maintenance, training, and other forms of advice and support. Greater involvement in the library service in turn offers local people the opportunity to help shape the service, for example in terms of opening times and stock provision.
- 2.4 Haxey is one of the first communities to be considered in terms of alternative library service options. It currently has a small, stand-alone, single-staffed library, managed by the council and open ten hours a week. Around 28% of the users are aged 12 or less and 27% are aged 65 or over. The library is located in the Haxey Memorial Hall to whom the council pays rent.
- 2.5 A consultation exercise has been carried out with service users to ascertain their views and preferences and there has been direct engagement with Haxey Parish Council. The local community clearly values the current library service and believes it is very much at the heart of the Haxey community. The parish council has actively participated in the review and is committed to supporting the best possible outcome for the community.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 is to determine that Haxey Library should become a volunteer operated library, managed by North Lincolnshire Council. Option 2 is to maintain Haxey Library's current status as a council-managed and staffed library. Option 3 is to meet the library needs of Haxey through mobile provision.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the proposed option. The factors supporting this option are as follows:
- it reflects the approved blueprint for the smaller branch libraries;
 - it allows for the continuation of a facility that is clearly viewed locally as being at the heart of the Haxey community;
 - the council's future commitment to the library will represent improved value for money for North Lincolnshire council tax payers; and
 - The proposed model offers local people the opportunity to become more directly involved in delivering and enhancing their library service.
- 4.2 In contrast, the option of North Lincolnshire Council continuing to operate the day-to-day running of Haxey Library is not financially sustainable. Nor is it consistent with the approved blueprint for the library network. Secondly, the recent consultation has yielded a relatively low level of support for the mobile library option.

- 4.3 A decision to adopt Option 1 would be on the basis of initially seeking to retain as much of the existing opening hours as possible, with flexibility to alter this commitment in light of any variance in volunteer numbers or availability.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 Financial

The annual cost to North Lincolnshire Council providing the day to day running of Haxey Library is around £12,000. The financial implications of introducing new library service delivery models are built into the council's budget framework. In the proposed model the council would continue to pay rent to the Haxey Memorial Hall. Service-wide budget provision is in place for the council to continue to support Haxey Library on matters such as stock provision, systems maintenance and training. As the council would continue to manage Haxey Library, the proposed service model would be regularly reviewed to ensure continued value for money

5.2 Staffing

If the volunteer operated model is put in place, council staff currently based at the library will be redeployed elsewhere in the service.

5.3 Property

North Lincolnshire Council does not own the Haxey Library building.

5.4 Information Technology

Installing self-service facilities would be a key element of the new service model, offering enhanced facilities and ensuring volunteer duties are minimised. Library staff would work with Information Technology Services to ensure the effective and secure installation of these facilities.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 Statutory

The council's statutory duty for library provision has been considered throughout the review and the development of this proposal.

6.2 Environmental

There are no implications. The library will operate at its current site.

6.3 Diversity

An integrated impact assessment has been carried out on alternative library models. A council-managed volunteer operated library would continue to offer library access to the local community, with opening hours determined locally. Customers would continue to have access to a wide range of library stock and materials.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The service user consultation took place in July and August. People were asked for their views on the community-run and mobile options and on the importance of the library. Around 270 forms were sent out to active library members, covering around 210 different households. A total of 128 people responded to the survey. Eighty-one per cent responded that the library is very important to their local community. While many current service users would prefer to retain the existing service, fifty-six percent said they like or don't mind the idea of a community-run library. Forty-three per cent said that they would like or would not mind a mobile library service. Some eighteen adults expressed some interest in volunteering to help run the library.
- 7.2 In addition to Haxey Parish Council's involvement, the council has received a petition signed by 93 people. The petition was to retain the library in its current form with a paid member of staff. This was considered at a petition panel. Reassurance was given on the council's commitment to ensuring quality library services in Haxey. Representatives from the Haxey Memorial Hall Committee were also assured that they would have the opportunity to be involved in further discussions on the future of the library service and be informed of the final outcome.
- 7.3 Staff members and trade unions have been briefed. Trade unions received oral reports at joint consultative committee meetings and have expressed no concerns.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the cabinet member approves the setting up of Haxey Library on the volunteer operated, council-managed model
- 8.2 authorises council officers to work with potential volunteers and community stakeholders to develop the model for implementation early in 2011-2012
- 8.3 receives a report after six months and regularly thereafter on the success and continuing viability of the proposed service model

SERVICE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND RESOURCES

Pittwood House
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Helen Rowe
Date: 3 March 2011

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Library Network Review
Service user consultation