

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION

The attached papers were specified as "to follow" on the Agenda previously distributed relating to the above mentioned meeting.

4. **Libraries Provision - Worcestershire County Council Presentation** (Pages 3 - 12)

Presentation for this item is included in this Pack.

S. Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

8th February 2024

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Libraries Unlocked Phase 2

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Libraries
Unlocked



Agenda Item 4

Background

- Open library service delivery model identified in Library Strategy 20-25 as Worcestershire's preferred transformation approach for sustaining the library network
- Approved by Cabinet (Dec 2019) - supported by Scrutiny
- Implementation delayed by COVID
- Implemented widely: London, Norfolk, Leicestershire, South Gloucestershire, Peterborough
- Technology allows customers & trusted partners to enter the library and use library space and services when staff are not present
- formal public consultation on library transformation options in 2018/19
- 2000 survey responses and public meetings held in all libraries
- Libraries Unlocked model informed by customer feedback on concerns that would stop them from using the library when unstaffed and best times of day for libraries to be unstaffed

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- Increases opening hours and extends service availability to a wider community audience – improves library service representation and reach
- Grows libraries as community assets by increasing use of library space by community partners
- Future-proofs Worcestershire Library network through a flexible service delivery model that can be scaled up to deliver efficiencies in response to financial pressure
- Supports recovery of library participation post pandemic

Benefits of Libraries Unlocked

Libraries Unlocked



- Staff support highly valued by library customers - timetabled throughout the week
- Many library services accessed without staff support
 - Self Issue (borrow, return, renew and pay)
 - Self service computer use and printing
 - Free public wi-fi and space for study, research and reading
 - Space for meeting friends, business colleagues, interviews
 - Free access to online library resources & services
 - Customer and partner-led activities (Adult Learning, library connect groups, children's 'stay and play', partner drop-ins and events: police, CAB, NHS etc.

Builds on
self-service
in libraries

Libraries Unlocked



<https://youtu.be/kLnXsUuihZ8>

Impact on Under 16s

- local, under 16s surveyed to identify preferred times for visiting local library unaccompanied
- staff timetabled to reflect preferences
- new services introduced for young library customers (Study Happy, 'Bookstagram' and 'Booktok' reading groups, youth work sessions, webinars on referencing and information literacy, access to University of Worcester 'AskaLibrarian' service)
- 12 months after go-live: 22% increase in 16-19 active library members and 5.6% increase in 11 to 15 active library members
- Phase 2 will see Libraries Unlocked eligibility extended to 15 year olds studying for GCSEs to encourage take-up by more young people

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Safety of Libraries Unlocked

- Well-established model in UK public libraries (2104)
- Proven safe, effective way of extending community access to libraries
- Listened to customer concerns
- Learned from good practice at other authorities
- Safety highlights:
 - Mandatory, face-to-face induction
 - Unavailable to customers with history of unacceptable behaviour
 - Full CCTV coverage
 - Monitored by County Hall Security (Mon-Fri 5-8 and all day Sat)
 - Dedicated emergency 24/7 phone line direct to emergency services & out of hours property
 - Security and fire systems linked to suppliers for timely response
 - Close links with local PCSOs and Design out Crime teams

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Successful early adopter implementation (Droitwich & Stourport, Jun 22)

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- 85% increase in opening hours
- 26% and 37% reduction in core staffing hours - staff available throughout the week
- Positive customer response
- 79% (Stourport) and 65% (Droitwich) active library members signed up
- 3,250 members, 21, 500 visits, 27,500 issues, 5,400 PC sessions
- 56% increase in library visits 12 months after go-live
- Most popular with 65-74, 35-44, 55-64 and 75+
- Uses: borrow books (91%), use a computer (12%) , study space (7%) , meet friends (5%), attend event/activity (5%), online reference search (4%)
- Most convenient for people who work, parents who work, people who prefer to visit the library when less busy, people wishing to spend longer in the library

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Successful early adopter implementation

- Positive community response
- An opportunity to increase the use of the library as a local venue for community activity
- Free meeting room hire to encourage greater use of library by local groups and organisations
- Regular partner-led events : Adult Learning, Citizens Advice, PCSOs, Chess Club, Knit & Natter, Spanish Language class, Cancer Support, Repair Cafes, Vaccination Clinics, Ukraine Connections, Writers' Circle

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Libraries Unlocked



- 12 further libraries in scope for Phase 2 implementation
- Investment prioritised on higher need libraries with good ROI
- Reduction in core staffed hours aligned to relative need
- Implementation subject to:
 - stakeholder negotiation
 - under 16 engagement
 - formal staff consultation
 - building surveys & costs
 - planning compliance

Libraries Unlocked Phase 2