

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **14th March 2007**

Report Title **Progress Report on the Mobile Library Service Improvement Programme**

Summary In 9 months time the Library and Information Service will replace its mobile library fleet. This report outlines progress to date on developing the new look mobile library service and projected work leading up to the launch date in October 2007

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers

Mobile Library Service Specification – Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee 10th March 2005

Report to Adult and Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee 26th July 2005 – Request for Scrutiny Review

Final Report for the Scrutiny Review of Improving ICT on Mobile Libraries – Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10th January 2006

Papers provided on request.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Other Elected Members | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Councillor F McCarney, Councillor M Stanley, Councillor Mrs J Compton, Councillor R Dodd, Councillor R Randev |
| Cabinet Member | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Councillor C Hayfield |
| Chief Executive | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Legal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Jane Pollard, Alison Hallworth, Ian Marriott |
| Finance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Paul Walsh, Financial Services Manager
Philip Lumley-Holmes, Financial Services Manager |
| Other Chief Officers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Graeme Betts, Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services |
| District Councils | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Health Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Police | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Other Bodies/Individuals | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Further consideration by this Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Cabinet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an O & S Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an Area Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Further Consultation | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 14th March 2007**

**Progress Report on the Mobile Library Service
Improvement Programme**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and
Community Services**

Recommendation

That the programme for service improvement set out in this report is considered and commented on.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Mobile Library Services provided by the Library and Information Service have been subjected to a number of reviews and scrutiny exercises from March 2001 to the present. Although the service has responded well to the challenge to improve there have been a number of inherent problems within the service, which has held back any real transformation. The requirement to build a new fleet and to have this in place by September 2007 provides the Library and Information Service with a clear opportunity to develop a service which not only meets the needs and enhances services to current customers but also has the capacity to reach out to new audiences and supports a range of corporate agendas through the provision of new facilities such as ICT.

2. Background

- 2.1 The report to the Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee, March 2005 provided a vision for a future mobile library service and was based on the development of a new fleet and a new service model to meet the current and future needs of both rural, urban (including deprived neighbourhoods) and sheltered communities in Warwickshire and formed part of the Best Value review of all library services ongoing at that time.
- 2.2 Identified in the report was a change programme that had a number of key features, the main body of which are now included in the current project plan. Not included and now seen as a second phase to the work described in this report is the development of a Travelling Library. The Travelling Library was to be based on a new design specification for mobile libraries providing a wide range of services and was a response to the potential revision of the branch library network and a recognition of the future need for a mobile one stop shop

facility. Although currently set aside as the main work on providing an integrated mobile library service continues the potential for this type of enhanced mobile library service remains and will be returned to at a future date.

- 2.3 Members requested an update report at the 8 November 2006 committee on the progress of the commissioning of the new mobile fleet, which this report provides.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The main objective of the project plan has been driven by the need to replace the mobile fleet as the current vehicles will not be in a position to provide service consistency and quality after September 2007, due to the age and condition of the current fleet.

The key objectives and business benefits of the new fleet will be as follows:

- To lower costs and create higher efficiency through integration of service delivery types under one centrally managed service
- To offer greater service consistency and therefore more opportunities to provide enhanced customer care and service
- To provide staff side ICT to improve both library housekeeping processes and increase staff efficiency
- To develop a new vehicle specification which will lead to lower maintenance and revenue costs
- To develop a service which is environmentally friendly both through fuel consumption and type of fuel used as well as efficient routing
- To provide improved access for disabled people and a welcoming and safe design
- To provide public access to ICT and community based information and so delivering a range of corporate and learning objectives
- To develop a clear rationale for stop selection and routing methodology through community profiling
- To develop a new stock specification for mobile libraries and improve stock processes which will lead to an enhanced experience for mobile library customers
- To develop a marketing and communication strategy to improve the profile and visibility of mobile library services and to encourage and seek out new audiences

4. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

4.1 Project support

- 4.1.1 The mobile review programme draws on the skills and expertise of a range of staff from both within Adult, Health and Community Services (Library and Information Service), other Directorates including Environment and Economy (County Fleet Management and Transport Planning), Resources (County Fleet Maintenance and ICT), Performance and Development (Communications and Media) as well as external network development

consultants (ESRI UK), experts in the field of vehicle design and build (Torton Bodies), ICT suppliers (Brand Communications) and library management systems suppliers (Information). This complex interplay of resources is managed through a Project Board and a Project Manager seconded from within the Library and Information Service and follows Prince 2 project methodology.

4.2 Project product

4.2.1 The programme consists of a range of product areas, which form part of the overall project plan and have specific timelines for completion. They are as follows:

- To develop and realise the concept of an integrated mobile library service
- To design and build 5 mobile libraries based on a new vehicle specification and monitor the build process
- To carry out an assessment of all current mobile stops based on an agreed service criteria and identify any potential new service locations for inclusion on the new routes
- To produce detailed mapped routes for each mobile library using computerised models and fine tune through staff experience and local knowledge
- To implement the recommendations for a new ICT technical specification for mobile libraries as agreed at the Adult, Health and Community O & S Committee, January 2006
- To produce a stock specification and stock management system for mobile libraries
- To produce a premises strategy and audit all mobile library bases as well as identifying and developing a suitable location for a mobile library depot
- To consider the current and future training needs of mobile library staff and develop a training programme
- To market the new mobile service effectively and to consult with customers on service changes

5. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT AREAS

5.1 Service Integration

Throughout the summer of 2006 discussions were held with staff of the Community Services Mobile Library¹, on the proposition that service integration² will provide a number of benefits for their customers such as a more regular service (3 weekly instead of every 4 weeks), the ability to respond to the increasing growth in sheltered and supported housing for older people in Warwickshire and customer access to an improved range of stock and facilities. Although there are still a number of issues still to be resolved all staff are now on board and are contributing in a positive way to the

¹ The Community Services Mobile Library provides a dedicated service to sheltered communities for mainly older people and is based at Kenilworth Library

² Currently the Mobile Library Service is divided into two sections, a specialist service to mainly sheltered communities and a service to rural communities, both provided by two different types of mobile library and managed separately

discussion and are generating a number of ideas on how service integration can be further improved.

5.2 Vehicle design and build

5.2.1 The aim of the project team has been to design a new type of mobile library for Warwickshire within the current budget which will have the following features:

- Improved access for all especially customers with a mobility problem
- Improved efficiency in particular maintenance and fuel costs
- A welcoming and safe design
- Better equipped to promote council services and campaigns
- Improved access to the Warwickshire road network
- Improved facilities and comfort for staff

5.2.2 Following a recommendation from County Fleet Management the review team investigated the potential of a conversion based on an Optare Solo Microbus. Although the vehicle conformed to a number of service requirements various internal design issues and overall cost made this vehicle unsuitable for further consideration.

5.2.3 With the agreement of County Fleet Management the new mobile libraries will be based on a Peugeot van conversion similar in nature to a design adopted by a number of libraries in the UK. The new mobile, designed and built by Torton Bodies, will have all the features agreed as important by the review team and they will be delivered by the required date, end of July 2006 and within the allocated budget.

5.3 Mobile library stops

5.3.1 Alterations to mobile stops and routes carried out in 2002 although they created greater efficiency due to more effective route planning did not make any changes to stop location or assess the requirement to delete stops due to limited use. The integration of service delivery, the use of the Bedworth mobile library garage as an active base (to be covered elsewhere in the report) and a requirement to move to a 3 week loan period³ has given the review team an opportunity to assess both current and potential stops and locations.

5.3.2 The review team has carried out an assessment of over 700 potential and current locations using a range of criteria and demographic information, including super output area data. As part of the assessment of current stops the review team looked at a range of issues and potential service changes

- Non and limited use over a period of time

³ Currently the mobile library service to rural communities is every two weeks and sheltered communities every 4 weeks. As the mobile fleet will be on line to the new Vubis Smart library management system there will be a requirement to conform to the 3 week loan period in operation at branch libraries. This will give the service the ability to either take on 30% more locations or the flexibility to allocate additional time to stops where this is required

- The potential to integrate stops within close proximity to each other
- The requirement to increase time (particularly where there is scope to develop the customer base and use of the public access PC's)
- The requirement to reduce time due to a decline in the customer base (flexibility will be incorporated into the agreed schedule to allow for additional time allocation if there is a positive response to the proposed marketing campaign)
- The identification of potential customers for the Home Library Service⁴ at stops that are underused

5.3.3 In total 510 locations have been identified, including new stops in rural, neighbourhood and sheltered communities and will form the first phase of route development. Those stop locations that have been identified for either a change in service delivery type or for deletion will be subject to consultation before the final schedules are produced for the launch of the service in October 2007. The final draft to be produced by ESRI working in partnership with Transport Operations is on line to be completed by the end of March 2007.

5.4 ICT on mobile libraries

5.4.1 The recommendations approved by the January 2006 Adult, Health and Community O & S Committee have been incorporated into the project plan and have informed the technical specification namely the adoption of GPRS/3G as the favoured network solution. As agreed at the January meeting mobile libraries will have on line access to the new library management system, Vubis Smart, after it goes live later this year as well as staff access to Lotus Notes and office ICT. On the customer side there will be a People's Network public access PC providing Internet facilities for customers.

5.4.2 The current stage of development is that the server supplied by Brand Communications is on site and will be installed during January. The PC's and peripherals have been ordered and the Dell Gx620 ultra small factor PC's will be available for configuration and testing again during January. In support of this activity mobile drivers are currently carrying out testing of signal strength at current stop locations and this will inform service availability. It is important to note that not all mobile library stop locations will have full access to ICT on mobile libraries due to fluctuating band widths. The new server will however increase availability through seamless searching between two mobile phone networks for the best available service.

5.4.3 In addition to services provided for staff and customers all mobile libraries will have public information screens and currently these are being sourced. The information screens will not only provide an opportunity to promote library services but also Divisional, Directorate and Corporate messages.

⁴ The Home Library Service is also part of the overall review of vehicle delivered services and has the potential to provide directly delivered services to elderly and disabled customers

5.4.4 A staged approach to delivering ICT services on mobile libraries has been agreed due to the need to make sure that there are robust systems in place and they work effectively and that mobile drivers (who are lone workers) are comfortable with what will be a new area of responsibility. As the new library management system will only be launched in libraries in October 2007 it is currently planned that mobile libraries will not come on stream for a number of weeks after this. Similarly a phased approach will be taken with the customer side PC's with Internet access being initially limited to a restricted number of favoured sites followed by an increasing range of web based services.

5.5 Premises strategy

5.5.1 For a number of years there has been concern that the Wellesbourne depot does not provide a suitable site for parking a mobile library over night and at weekends. All other mobile libraries have garages located at different locations in the county and which provide safe and secure sites and direct access to library support services. It has been agreed that due to the freeing up of the Bedworth library garage, which is currently used by the relief mobile, the mobile library based at Wellesbourne will move to this site prior to the launch of the new service and the work on the new schedules will take this into account.

5.5.2 The importance of a mobile library depot in a central location which will provide administrative, logistical and operational support to the mobile fleet is acknowledged as crucial to the success of the overall project. The Project Board has agreed after reviewing the supportive evidence that Kenilworth Library, which is the current base of the Community Services Mobile and the operations of the Kenilworth Community Services⁵, will be the site of the new depot.

5.5.3 It has been further agreed that in order to accommodate the levels of stock and activity required to support the new integrated service and to allow the 3 members of staff and a large volunteer team to work comfortably and efficiently there is a requirement for the library service to utilise the space currently occupied by the Warwickshire Talking Book Service. With the agreement of the Board and Warwickshire Association for the Blind the Talking Book Service will be re sited in what is currently used as a meeting room at Kenilworth Library and this operation will be completed by the end of March.

6. WORKSTREAMS 2007

6.1 Mobile library stock

6.1.1 Currently the review team is considering the stock requirements and processes for the integrated mobile library service. This is an important area

⁵ Kenilworth Community Services consists of a number of services, including the Rural (Countywide) and Warwick District Area Housebound Services, A library Exchange Service to various care settings for the elderly in the Warwick District Area and the Warwickshire Talking Book Service, a partnership service with Warwickshire Association for the Blind.

of work as the limitations on shelving space on mobile libraries can affect customer choice. Based on the customer response to the last mobile library survey in 2003 the following expectations were expressed:

- a greater turnover of stock
- improved range of new books
- extended range of Large Print
- more Spoken Word
- more demand from an older clientele
- older authors still wanted
- an improvements to children's stock

Key conclusions from discussions held to review stock audits 2006 and the Mobile Library User Survey were:

- New stock needs to be geared to an older target group
- Need for increased attention to stock maintenance
- Increasing stock turnover is critical as indicated by the significant number of customer comments forms asking for a greater change of stock and through the mobile survey.
- Mismatch between customer use and ratio of stock for each category i.e. too much non fiction and not enough large print and popular fiction.
- Capacity for stock work and divisional support needs to be increased.
- Need to take a range of additional measures to support the mobile team to raise customer expectations and customer issues.

6.2 Marketing strategy

6.2.1 The Service Specification Report, March 2005 identified the need for a highly visible mobile library service brought about by the creative use of current branding concepts incorporated into the livery design for each vehicle and a marketing strategy that will engage with current, lapsed and non-users, as well as seeking out audiences in communities new to the mobile library service. Equally important will be how the service engages through consultation with those customers who may be affected by the changes in schedules or in the style of service that will be offered to them. A communications strategy has been developed for this purpose and will be activated shortly.

6.3 Training programme

6.3.1 Training for mobile library staff, particularly on ICT and the new library management system, will be a major piece of the work of the library service in 2007. This aspect of the mobile review programme will be reported to a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The programme identified in this report has its sole aim of revitalising and transforming the mobile library service and to make it fit and relevant for the communities that it serves. Best practice from other library services in the UK has been embedded in this work, to ensure we have a modern mobile fleet to meet current and future needs of Warwickshire's citizens.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That the programme for service improvement set out in this report is noted and endorsed

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January 2007