

Southend-on-Sea Library Service 2013 - 2028

Following the Library Service review it was formally agreed in December 2013 that the Southend-on-Sea Library Service will be structured as follows:-

1. The main Library provision will be delivered from The Forum: Southend – this new central library provision is open 7 days a week, has longer opening hours, Wi-Fi and more stock than previously existed in the old central library.
2. The creation of hub libraries in the east and west of the borough staffed and managed by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council;
 - The East Hub library will be an amalgamation of Thorpedene and Friars libraries on a new site in Delaware Rd.
 - Both Kent Elms and Leigh Libraries will become Hub locations in the West of the Borough. Each of these 2 branches will share the paid staff resource allocated for a single hub library in the west. The Council will work with the local community to provide volunteer support to sustain the service.
3. Leigh Library will remain in its current location for the foreseeable future
4. The remaining branch libraries (Southchurch & Westcliff) will be offered to Community Groups to run as Community Managed Libraries, supported by the Council in terms of the provision of materials, access to relevant parts of the Library Computer system and professional support and advice. These branches will operate under a Service Level Agreement within a framework of policies set by the Council.
5. The delivery of the new National Offers around Reading, Health, Information and Digital.
6. The development of a Virtual Library providing 24 hour access to information and resources and to support both the Community Libraries and enable Library Users to access the service at times convenient to them.
7. Changes to the operation of the mobile service and Home Library Service to ensure these are bringing maximum benefit to their users. This includes:
 - Transferring a number of residential homes from the Mobile Library Service to the Home Library Service; providing a more personal service for some readers.
 - Using the mobile and or pop-up libraries to serve neighbourhood areas, targeting service users at different venues such as major store car parks or outreach locations such as Cluny Square
 - Extending the Home Library Service to all those whom the Council currently helps to live at home.

8. In the Medium Term to long term the Council will look at a replacement building for Southchurch Library, introducing Wi-Fi into all of the branches, improving IT provision and an e-book lending service as it becomes available.

To support these changes funding to progress the installation of Wi-Fi across the entire branch network (including any branches that eventually become community managed libraries) has been approved.

Funding has also been approved to an additional resource to help with the transition to Community Managed Libraries; this support is likely to help both staff and community groups identify and create appropriate models of service delivery for each branch.