

‘Facing the Challenge’

Developing Library Services within Southend-on-Sea

2013 - 2028



Report of the Cultural Advisory Working Party March 2013

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1. Introduction & Foreword

The Draft Library Strategy, developed by the Cultural Advisory Working Party, sets out a clear vision for Southend's Library Service for the next fifteen years, 2013 – 2028.

We have taken the opportunity to consult with local people, and library users and have met with stakeholders. They have clearly told us why they value the service, what is good and what could be better. We have also considered the national guidance and library specialist information along with input from staff and community groups to assist in formulating this new strategy.

This strategy sets out a challenging and ambitious but realistic future for our Library Service in the context of the ongoing pressures on public finances.

The detailed delivery plan and suggested future service strategy will now be subject to the second stage of public consultation during the early summer, with the final strategy determined by the Council in the Autumn 2013.

I am confident that the outcome of the review will deliver the best possible service within the resources available from the Council and community.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all members of the Cultural Advisory working Party for both their work and the commitment they have shown in developing this Draft Library Strategy.

Cllr Derek Jarvis, Chair of the Cultural Advisory Working Party & Executive Councillor & Portfolio Holder Culture, Tourism & Events

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Cllr Adam Jones
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2 Executive Summary

This strategy sets out the vision and ambitions for the Southend-on-Sea Library Service for the next 15 years, building on the service's current strong foundations. The strategy will see the Council continuing to provide a comprehensive library service to all residents, whilst also ensuring that it is more relevant, efficient and sustainable.

Our vision is that:

Southend Libraries will keep serving the whole community through entertainment, education and information; responding to the borough's needs and adapting to new technologies

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering accessible library services for all
- Welcoming everyone
- Promoting lifelong learning and enjoyment of culture
- Giving spaces for people to meet, read, study, explore and browse
- Helping community libraries operate
- Sharing policies and values across all the borough's library branches
- Leading the field for library services in the Eastern Region

The challenge for the service will be to deliver the strategy in a period of financial stringency. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will have to reduce its budget by a further £32.5 million in the next three years and some of these savings will come from the library service. The library service will need to deliver £378,000 of efficiency savings between April 2013 and March 2016; this will be on top of the £417,000 already made since 2011.

Along with the numerous factors that are contributing to changes in the way our Library Service is used, the Council is mindful of its current financial position and is, therefore, outlining a strategy that will help to shape the way the Library Service will develop in the Borough. The proposal seeks to address the immediate, short term pressures faced by the service and also lays the foundations for the future; helping us to create a Library Service that works for Southend-on-Sea.

This strategy is the outcome of the review undertaken by the Cultural Advisory Working Party which has involved significant consultation, review of National policy, consideration of good practice, equalities, IT developments and the impact of budget reductions.

The Working Party have produced a challenging and positive way forward which will secure the future of the library branch network and the re-provision of services in the East and West of the town. The delivery of the proposals will be dependent on both the Council's and public's commitment to the future library service.

The model of provision that the council will be working towards will involve:-

- The main Library provision at the Forum: Southend – the central library provision will be open 7 days a week, have longer opening hours, Wi-Fi and 25% more stock than presently exists in the current central library
- Two hub libraries; one in the East of Southend and one in the West. The East Hub library will be an amalgamation of Thorpedene and Friars libraries on a new site in Delaware Rd. The West hub will be a development of either Leigh Library or Kent Elms Library. This hub will initially operate from an existing library site.
- The remaining branch libraries 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.
- The delivery of the new National Offers around Reading, Health, Information and Digital.
- The Guidelines give case studies using this model from Buckinghamshire, Bradford and North Yorkshire. In many cases these have allowed the library to remain open and often seen increased opening hours, together with innovative funding and developments.
- 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.
- 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 to the Home Library Service
 - 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.

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.

The proposals within this strategy will be subject to extensive public consultation which will conclude by summer 2013.

3 Background to the Review

The Community Services and Culture Scrutiny committee agreed on 10th July 2012 to support a proposal for the Cultural Advisory Working Party to undertake a review of the Southend-on-Sea Library Service which would consider the future direction of the Library Service to achieve an effective, sustainable Library provision whilst reducing cost to assist in meeting the required Council spending reductions. It was agreed that one of the outcomes for the Review would be the production of a draft libraries development strategy clearly setting out proposals for future service delivery to be agreed by cabinet.

Scope of the Review

It was agreed that the review would take account of the following areas:

- **Current service provision and performance** – benchmarking against comparator and other East of England library authorities.
- **Asset Management and operational review of the branch network and the Mobile Library Service** – Central library provision will be provided from the Forum: Southend from September 2013. The review has looked at the physical buildings of the branch networks and the mobile library as well as service provision across the entire network.
- **An assessment of need across Southend Library Services of those groups and localities potentially affected** – taking account of the local demographic profile of the borough and specifically the catchment areas for each of the branches and the mobile library.
- **Identification of service changes, development opportunities and priorities; including opportunities to collaborate across other public sector services and alternative methods of service delivery** – these are likely to emerge from the consultation exercises with a wide range of stakeholders.
- **Identification of required financial savings**

As directed, the outcome of the review has informed the development of this draft Library strategy which outlines how the agreed recommendations of the review will be implemented over a period of time to ensure that the Library Service remains fit for purpose until 2028.

4 Drivers and principles of the service

4.1 Statutory obligations

The statutory basis for the Library Service is 'The Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964'. The Local Authority has the statutory duty to provide, under the superintendence of the Secretary of State, a free, comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all who wish to use it. The Act requires Libraries to provide facilities for borrowing books and other materials for persons whose residence or place of work is in the area or who are undergoing full time education. It also states that local authorities "must encourage adults and children to make full use of the service and provide advice".

While the core Library Service is free under the Act, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Library Charges (England and Wales) Regulations 1991 define what may not be charged for and also gives Library Authorities the power to make charges for the provision of specified Library facilities.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council currently delivers the service at the Central Library, six Branch Libraries and a Mobile Library. The range of services has changed considerably since the 1964 Act. The speed of change is increasing through the rise of ICT, social media and digital content, which has changed how people access reading and find information.

4.2 National Policy

There are no national standards for library provision. As a result, library services across the country are different. Services are shaped by factors such as local policy, customer need and, in some cases, historical developments. The Secretary of State has the power to intervene if he believes that a local authority is not providing a “comprehensive and efficient” service under the terms of the Act but such intervention is rare.

Individual public library services are delivered by 151 library authorities in England. In 2011-12, those authorities invested £820 million in the 4,265 public libraries in England.

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for national library policy and work closely with Arts Council England on a range of issues. In June 2012, Culture Minister Ed Vaizey, set out the Government's current work in supporting public libraries and an outline of the challenge ahead. This set out his vision for a future where:

- The Arts Council acts as a development agency for libraries;
- Libraries can access grants and support from the Arts Council
- Poorly performing authorities are identified and helped to improve;
- Key initiatives can be taken forward by central government, such as Wi-Fi or automatic enrolment for school children;
- Government and local authorities understand what vital resource libraries are across a whole range of activities.

This work programme takes place within the context that libraries are a local service – free to serve their local community, to innovate and adapt to local needs.

Arts Council England

On 1st October 2011 Arts Council England took over responsibility for supporting and developing libraries as part of the functions they inherited from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

Whilst not responsible for providing or funding library services, they play a significant role in supporting and developing the libraries sector. The Arts Council's vision for libraries is that they inspire and empower people to lead active lives, enriched through cultural experience. The Arts Council is working with libraries to explore a vision for arts and culture working together and are leading a programme of research and debate, ‘Envisioning the library of the future’ to help develop a long-term vision for public libraries in England.

To get more people involved in cultural activities, the Arts Council is providing an extra £6 million in ‘Grants for the Arts’ funding for libraries to support projects between libraries and

artists or arts organisations. Public libraries can apply for grants of between £1,000 and £100,000 covering activities lasting up to 3 years. The fund will run until March 2015.

The Libraries Development Initiative run by the Arts Council in association with Local Government Association is designed to test new approaches to library service delivery, these projects are looking at ways libraries can work together with arts and other cultural organisations to enrich the way that people experience arts and culture. They explore innovative, locally appropriate and enterprising ways of working, resulting in a resilient vision for future public library services.

A new era for Library Services

The Digital Age

Millions of people use their library to access the internet via The People's Network. In the age of the smartphone and tablet, DCMS recognise that Wi-Fi is becoming an essential aspect of every-day life and wish to go further with the ambition for Wi-Fi to be in every library in England by 2015.

Libraries have been a key part of the Cabinet Office's Race Online 2012 initiative to get the digitally excluded on-line. Libraries' staff and volunteers saw 2.5 million people getting online, which is a very real demonstration of the role they play in tackling the digital divide. Arts Council England and Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) are currently working with the Post Office to support the Government's programme to get more people using government services online.

Automatic enrolment

DCMS are working with the Department for Education to provide automatic library membership for primary school pupils, to encourage them to use their local library. Different approaches are currently being piloted to test the most effective ways of supporting children and their families to use their libraries and read more widely.

Library Closures and service reviews

Given the changes in the way that libraries are being used, the expectations of its service users and the tight financial constraints Local Authorities are working within; many library authorities have proposed a range of changes to the delivery of the library service within their area. All of these changes have taken place following a review of their library service.

Libraries are a local service; as far as possible, local needs and circumstances should influence how they are shaped. Consequently, there have been library closures, mergers with other services and a move to community-management of others.

The annual report from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy reveals that the rate of library closures has increased: 146 branches closed between 2010 and 2011, with the number stepping up to 201 for 2012. The UK now has 4,265 libraries, compared with 4,612 two years ago.

Visits to libraries across the UK have also dropped, down 2.4% during 2011/12 to 306.6m and down 6.7% compared with five years ago, when there were 328.5m visits. Adults are borrowing less fiction – down 5.4% – and less non-fiction – down 7.3% – with the only growth seen in borrowing of children's fiction, up 0.3%.

"Local authorities across the UK are working hard to identify savings and reduce their spending. Although there has been a large increase in the number of libraries and mobile libraries closing, it is important to note that the largest, most popular and most viable libraries are largely staying open," said Julian Mund, CIPFA's product development director.

The decline in numbers comes as fresh analysis from the Society of Chief Librarians shows that libraries are no longer used merely for borrowing books. Looking at internal data over the last 10 years, the society identified five main users of libraries:

- *Career builders* – who use their libraries' resources to write CVs and practice interviews in meeting rooms;
- *Health detectives* – who track down information about particular conditions;
- *Little learners* - five to 10-year-olds who love reading;
- *Friend finders* – who use libraries to meet people in their local communities;
- *Research sleuths* - who track down information about their family or community histories.

E-lending

E-lending is currently in its infancy but growing fast. Just as e-readers are transforming the way people access books, e-lending could help transform the way people use libraries. Some library authorities in England are already lending books electronically whilst others do not yet offer this service.

There is no common consensus on the best way of making electronic copies of books available in public libraries: popular e-readers are sometimes excluded from lending schemes; a variety of formats can be used; there is no universally agreed system for remunerating authors and publishers; and there are various ways of making content available – and ensuring that it is only accessible for a limited time. Publishers can therefore be wary about making their books available for e-lending, meaning that provision is patchy even in libraries that have adapted to current technology.

Consequently, Culture Minister, Ed Vaizey has asked William Sieghart, founder of Forward Publishing and the Forward Prize for Poetry, to lead a review of e-lending to help ensure that libraries and their users, authors and publishers can all benefit as this fledgling service grows.

The review will consider issues including:

- the benefits of e-lending;
- the current nature and level of e-lending and projection of future demand;
- the barriers to supply of e-books to libraries; and

- the possible consequences of e-lending, including the long term impact on library premises, the effect on publishers and the impact on those who cannot keep up with changes in technology.

The review is intended to cover e-lending in public libraries in England. However, given that the public lending right scheme and Digital Economy Act 2010 are UK-wide, it may be necessary to consider the systems in place in the devolved administrations.

The Digital Economy Act 2010 contains provisions (which are not yet in force) which will allow the lending of e-books (and audio-books) to be included within the public lending right scheme, but only where the e-book is downloaded within library premises. Any changes to this system to allow readers to download e-books online (for example, from home) would require a legislative amendment.

DCMS ministers will consider the proposals resulting from the Review alongside any recommendations which may emerge from Arts Council England's 'Envisioning the Libraries of the Future' Project, and potential recommendations from the Culture, Media and Sport Parliamentary Committee Inquiry on Library Closures.

New strategy for libraries (The Reading Agency)

In the last ten years libraries have been modernising and evolving, with stunning results. They now offer a lively, social service to encourage reading for pleasure. Most effort has been focused on children's work, and children's book borrowing has risen for the last seven years. 77% of 5 to 10 year-olds now use the library.

The biggest challenge in the current age of austerity is keeping this momentum up. Consequently, the Reading Agency has been working with the Society of Chief Librarians developing their new strategy which covers 2012 to 2015. Called the 'Universal Reading Offer', the strategy aims to help save resources and share the things that work by:

- Prioritising key programmes and partnerships
- Giving libraries a ready made set of tools and easy ways to share information
- Giving libraries access to national partnerships with the BBC, 40 publishers and other organisations
- Creating shared evidence and advocacy resources to show the difference libraries make in their communities.

The Arts Council and the Local Government Association have recently published their findings on a joint piece of work into Community Libraries: 'Learning from Experience'. The report acknowledges that the involvement of community groups and volunteers in library services is not a new concept and has been a feature of most library services for decades. CIPFA's survey of public libraries for 2010/11 found over 21,000 volunteers involved in 3,300 public libraries.

Since 2010, there has been a rapidly growing trend to involve communities in library service delivery in more significant ways – to support and in some places to manage them or even take on ownership and management of library buildings. More than one in three library authorities now have at least one community supported or managed library operating within

their area, including some in every region of England and in authorities run by all of the main political parties, as well as in urban and rural areas. In quite a number of these areas there are multiple community libraries.

Those libraries that are becoming community supported or managed tend to be the smaller libraries in many areas and, as such, they represent a smaller proportion of overall national book lending and borrowers than their numbers may suggest.

Currently, the vast majority of community libraries retain links with their local authority library service and indeed many remain part of the statutory library service

Approximately one in six of the current and planned community supported or managed libraries involve the discounted transfer of assets to the community (either the freehold or a lease of 20 years or more)

There is immense variation in practice on the ground. No two library authorities have followed exactly the same approach, so there is a broad spectrum in the nature of activities. Authorities also often use more than one model, accepting that even within one area, 'one size does not fit all'. The present situation is also dynamic, so may well change over time.

4.3 Local Factors

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council took responsibility for the library service across the Borough in 1998 upon becoming a Unitary Authority; prior to that the service was run by Essex County Council. The service still retains close links with Essex; library users benefit from being able to use their library card in any of the libraries in Southend, Thurrock and Essex meaning they can borrow and return books from a wide range of locations across the greater Essex area. The service also benefits from shared use of the ELAN cataloguing system and a range of other economies of scale associated with the purchasing of stock and IT systems via joint contractual arrangements.

Since taking over responsibility for the service, the Council has not undertaken a full strategic review of the entire Library Service. Given the current budget reductions being faced by Local Government, the Council is going through a process of reviewing all of its services to ensure their continued relevance and that effectiveness.

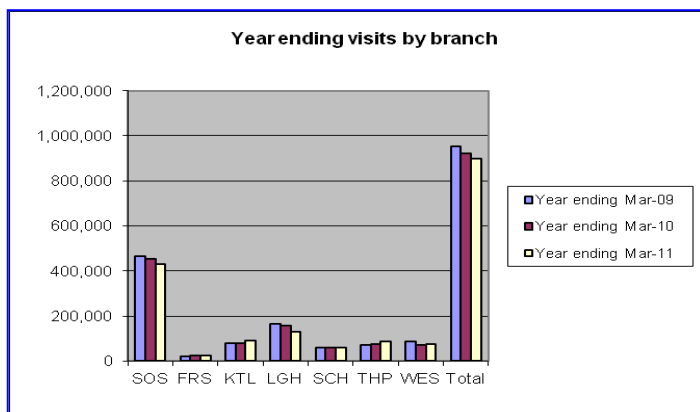
The Council's Head of Finance and Resources has highlighted that the current budget gap for the Council over the next three years to 2016 is estimated to be £32.5 million, and the Library Service will need to contribute towards the Authority's saving target

In the light of the restrictions in public spending in the last two years savings in the Library Service of £417,000 have already been achieved through a Service restructure and the introduction of Self-Service Technology (RFID), reductions in supplies and services and increasing income. The savings to date have not resulted in reducing opening hours, services or closures. However, with the requirement to save a further £378,000 over the next three years it is clear that the service can no longer continue in its existing format.

The Council has invested capital into the Service to develop the Library infrastructure and currently committed to invested £12.5 million towards a £27 million development of the 'Forum', an academic and community 21st Century facility which will open in late September 2013. The town's Central Library provision will move from its present location and will be provided from the Forum: Southend, bringing with it a new model of service delivery that could be rolled out across the branches (physical or virtual).

The opportunity for the community to access information and Libraries has significantly changed in recent years. The speed of change and new technology will continue to have a major impact on the way the community will access Library services and heighten their expectations. This has been recognised in the preparation of the new Library in the town centre; however consideration now needs to be given, holistically, to the best future shape for the whole Library Service across Southend.

In line with the national trend in the decline in the number of people using libraries, the Southend Library Service has witnessed an overall decline in visits to its libraries in excess of 6% from April 2008 (954,004) – March 2011 (896,978). The table below illustrates that whilst the overall trend in visits is downward, some of our branches have had small increases (Friars, Kent Elms and Thorpedene).



During the period November 2011 – January 2012, all branches were fitted with self-serve, RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification) machines enabling library users to scan the items they wish to borrow or return themselves. The installation of the machines did mean that each of the buildings were closed for a period of time and all branches experienced some issues with the new technology once newly installed, further reducing the number of recorded visits

during 2012; as a result of this if we are using visit figures to March 2011 for comparison as to use those for the year ending March 2012 would give a distorted view.

4.4

Council's corporate plan

The Council has ambitious plans to create a Safe, Clean, Healthy, Prosperous Southend and become an Excellent Council. Libraries will link towards 'Creating a better Southend' in the following specific ways.

Healthy:

- Continue to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults and older people
- Make Southend active and alive with Sport and Culture

Prosperous

- Continue to improve outcomes for vulnerable children
- Enhance the prosperity of Southend and its residents
- Reduce the inequalities gap and increase the life chances of people living in Southend [Customers may experience several challenges e.g. an older carer living at home looking after a partner and with limited time to use Libraries.]

Excellent

- Become a high performing organisation. [Improving customer satisfaction, offering better services by working together with partners, e.g. Benefit Clinics at Branches]

4.5 Equality & Diversity

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has a legal obligation to have due regard to equalities in the way that the library service is being delivered (both currently and in the future) to ensure that there is no adverse impact or barriers to usage for groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Libraries also help fulfill the Council's role in advancing equalities. The Equality Act 2010 stipulates that the Council must have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and libraries encourage all to participate in public life bringing people together and tackling prejudice and promoting understanding, in short helping to build communities.

Reasons why libraries are good for a town and support inclusion amongst all groups:

They sustain democracy - Libraries provide access to information and multiple points of view so that people can make knowledgeable decisions on public policy throughout their lives. With their collections, programs, and professional expertise, librarians help their patrons identify accurate and authoritative data and use information resources wisely to stay informed.

They break down barriers – Libraries of various kinds offer services and programs for people at all literacy levels, readers with little or no English skills, preschoolers, students, homebound senior citizens, prisoners, homeless or impoverished individuals, and persons with physical or learning disabilities. Libraries rid us of fences that obstruct our vision and our ability to communicate and to educate ourselves.

They value the individual - Libraries offer choices between mainstream and alternative viewpoints, between traditional and visionary concepts, and between monocultural and multicultural perspectives. Library doors swing open for independent thinking without prejudgment. Library collections and services offer the historical global, cultural, and political perspective that is necessary to foster a spirit of exploration that challenges orthodoxy and conformity.

They level the playing field – By making access to information resources and technology available to all, regardless of income, class, or background, a public library levels the playing field and helps close the gap between the rich and the poor. Libraries unite people and make their resources available to everyone in the community, regardless of social status.

They nourish creativity – By providing an atmosphere that stimulates curiosity, libraries create opportunities for unstructured learning and serendipitous discovery. As repositories not only of books but of images and a wide variety of media, libraries offer access to the accumulated record of mankind with assistance from professional staff delivering these resources through the physical library, the web, and outreach services.

They open young minds – Children’s and young adult librarians offer story hours, book talks, summer reading activities, career planning, art projects, gaming competitions, and other programs to spark youthful imaginations. Bringing children into a library can transport them from the commonplace to the extraordinary. From story hours for preschoolers to career planning, children's librarians make a difference because they care about the unique developmental needs of every individual who comes to them for help.

They build communities - People gather at the library to find and share information, experience and experiment with the arts and media, and engage in community discussions and games. No narrow definition will work for libraries. There is the community of scholars, the deaf community, the gay community, the gaming community, and countless others, each with its libraries and specialised collections. Libraries validate and unify; they save lives, literally and by preserving the record of those lives.

They support families - Libraries offer an alternate venue for parents and their children to enhance activities traditionally conducted at home by providing homework centers, parenting collections, after-school programs, outreach, one-on-one reading, and early literacy programs. Like the families they serve, libraries everywhere are adapting to meet the economic and social challenges of the 21st century. In libraries, families find professionals dedicated to keeping their services family-friendly by offering a diverse selection of materials to which people of many backgrounds can relate.

They return high dividends - Libraries offer big returns to the communities they serve not so much in monetary terms but in economic, cultural, health and wellbeing. Strong public libraries make a town more desirable as a home or business location.

They Build technological skills - Library services and programs foster critical-thinking skills and information literacy. All Southend libraries offer internet access and assistance with problem-solving aptitude, scientific inquiry, cross-disciplinary thinking, media literacy, productivity and leadership skills, civic engagement, global awareness, and health and environmental awareness. Library patrons search for jobs online, polish résumés with word processing software, fill out applications, research new professions, sign up for career workshops, and look for financial assistance. Public libraries serve as technology hubs by offering a wide range of public access computing and internet access services at no or low cost to the user (1st hour is free then low cost).

They offer sanctuary – By providing an atmosphere conducive to reflection, libraries induce a feeling of serenity and transcendence that opens the mind to new ideas and interpretations. In the library we are answerable to no one. We can be alone with our private thoughts, fantasies, hopes, and dreams, and we are free to nourish what is most precious to us with the silent companionship of others who share our quest. Libraries are places where computers and databases provide superior access to information and they offer an atmosphere of light and textures that beautiful architecture and design foster.

They preserve the past - . Libraries are repositories of community history, oral narratives, and audiovisual records of events and culture, and when these local resources are digitized and placed online as digital libraries, communities and cultures thousands of miles away can share in the experience. Libraries and information science and technology enable us to communicate through distance and time with the living and the dead. A library is a miracle kept available by the meticulous resource description and access that is the work of the librarian. Libraries preserve the record and help their patrons make sense of it in the Information Age.

All of the above provide us with a good insight into the role that our Public Libraries play in addressing the equalities agenda. In our review we have taken these factors into account and have also taken regard of a raft of information on issues which may affect certain groups within our community. We will continue to ensure that we do not lose sight of these issues through further public consultation; making changes where necessary before final decisions are taken and implemented.

4.6 Budget and Resources

The Library Service operates within a current budget of £3.12m; this is set to be reduced by a total of 15% (£378,000) by March 2016. The table below provides a breakdown of the total library budget for 2012 / 13 on a branch by branch basis.

	Southend Library	Library General	Friars	Southchurch	Thorpedene	Westcliff	Kent Elms	Leigh	Mobile Library	Bookfund	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employee	1,207	6	46	65	91	82	78	166	25		1,766
Premises	315	8	9	8	15	16	14	15			400
Transport	9								5		14
Supplies & Services	136		10	10	10	10	10	11	1	150	348
Third Party Payment		215									215
Income	(194)		(3)	(7)	(12)	(15)	(11)	(38)			(280)
Total Controlable Budget	1,473	229	62	76	104	93	91	154	31	150	2,463
Support Services (MATs)		264									264
Depreciation		396									396
Total Non-controlable Budget	.	660	660
Total Budget	1,473	889	62	76	104	93	91	154	31	150	3,123
Central Library Allocation											
Removal of Central Management Staff (including Books tart)	(487)										(487)
Apportionment of Central Management Staff (including	274	2	18	25	35	31	30	63	10	0	487
Total Controlable expenditure including Central Library Adjustments	1,260	231	80	101	139	124	121	217	41	150	2,463

In addition to the total budget the review has also considered information relating to how effective our branches are in terms of cost per visit, cost per issue and also visits per hour and issues per hour.

Of the branches, Kent Elms is the most cost effective at a cost of £0.98 per visit and £0.98 per item issued. The most expensive branch being Friars with costs of £2.33 per visit and £2.76 per item issued. (See **Appendix 1** for detailed information)

5 Demographic Profile

Southend is 16.1 square miles in size and is the largest conurbation in the East of England. Located on the north side of the Thames estuary approximately 40 miles east of central London, it is bordered to the north by Rochford and to the west by Castle Point.

The borough has 7 miles of award-winning beaches and coastal nature reserves; has over 80 parks and green spaces and 14 conservation areas and is home to the longest leisure pier in the world. Southend is served by an international destination airport, two railway lines linking to London, with 10 railway stations and many local bus routes.

Our libraries serve a large population in a relatively condensed area; the latest population census shows an increase of 13,000 on the 2001 Census figures with a population density of 41.6 people per hectare, which is comparable to that of a London borough.

	Southend on Sea	East of England	England
Population: All Usual Residents (Persons)	173,658	5,846,965	53,012,456
Population: Males (Persons/%)	85,037 49%	2,875,807	26,069,148
2011 Population: Females (Persons/%)	88,621 51%	2,971,158	26,943,308
Density (number of persons per hectare)	41.6	3.1	4.1

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census

Over the last ten years ethnic diversity in Southend has been increasing at a faster rate than regional levels. The 2001 census suggested a less ethnically diverse population than we have today. The table below provides a comparison to both 2001 data and national data.

Ethnic Group	2001	2011	% change	England
White (%)	95.8	91.6	-4.2	85.5
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups (%)	1.1	2.1	1.0	2.2
Asian / Asian British (%)	1.7	3.6	1.9	7.7
Black / African / Caribbean / black British (%)	0.7	2.1	1.4	3.4
Other ethnic Group (%)	0.7	0.5	-0.2	1.0

A Healthy population?

Research evidence has shown that people place a great importance on being able to decide where and how they live and being able to access a range of services in the community that make this possible; providing choice and control to go about daily life and participate in society and having the same range of options and the same degree of self-determination as others in society. Numerous factors contribute to enabling independent living.

Health

	Southend	England
Very good health (%)	45.1	47.2
Good health (%)	35.1	34.2
Fair health (%)	14.1	13.1
Bad health (%)	4.5	4.2
Very bad health (%)	1.3	1.2
Day to day activities limited a lot (%)	8.8	8.3

Source: ONS Census Figures 2011

By 2015 it is estimated that Southend will have over 8,000 residents over 65 years of age living alone, an increase of over 10% on current numbers. Within our population there are numerous groups of people that currently need support to enable them to live in our community, including those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory disabilities. In Southend there are an estimated 2,380 people aged 18-64 that have a learning disability and nearly 10,000 people with a moderate or serious physical disability.

Economic Activity

	2001	2011	Difference	England
Economically active (%)	66.7	70.7	4	69.9
Employee: Part time	12	14.4	2.4	13.7
Employee: Full time	40	38.4	-1.6	38.6
Self-employed	8.9	10.2	1.3	9.8
Unemployed	3.7	5	1.3	4.4
Students	2	2.7	0.7	3.4
Economically inactive (%)	33.3	29.3	-4	30.1
Student	3	3.8	0.8	5.8
Retired	14.8	14.1	-0.7	13.7
Looking after home of family	7.7	5	-2.7	4.4
Long term sick or disabled	4.9	4.2	-0.7	4.0
Other	3	2.1	-0.9	2.2

Source: ONS Census Figures 2011

Educational Attainment

	Southend	England
People aged 16 and over with 5 or more GCSEs grade A-C, or equivalent (%)	17.5	15.2
People aged 16 and over with no formal qualifications (%)	24.6	22.5

Source: ONS Census Figures 2011

Our population have told us how important financial and economic security and independence is to them and how the ability to access information and have a wide choice of responsive, coherent services enables a greater sense of independence for both individuals and carers. Our library service has a key role to play in enabling these groups to access information and reducing social isolation.

Appendix 2 provides the demographic profile of the catchment areas surrounding each of the branches.

6 Services offered

The Southend-on-Sea Libraries Service provides access to anyone seeking information; access to IT facilities; space to study or work; a community meeting point; as well as promoting reading to children and providing access to cultural resources and reading in particular.

Currently the library service provides access to books and audio-visual materials and to information and IT through a network of a central library, six branch libraries, the library web pages, a mobile library and the Home Library Service.

Our libraries offer access to specialist resources and arrangements for older people and those with disabilities or learning difficulties, reaching out through the mobile library and home library service, which is delivered by volunteers. They involve children through regular story times and holiday activities, which encourage their language development and reading. Libraries also act as community venues for advice surgeries to those in greatest need with many partners including Adult Continuing Education, Citizens Advice Bureau, police and lifestyle guidance.

As part of their information provider's role, libraries disseminate information on Council services, act as signpost to the correct department or agency, distribute public transport information, recycling materials, planning information and also in some cases act as polling stations.

The net cost of this service in 2012/13 is £3.12m excluding recharges, and the service employs 77 staff.

6.1. Books and Reading

Southend libraries stock an extensive range of books and other reading materials across its library network. The table provides a summary of the range of book stock held by the authority as at 31st March 2012:

Stock Type	Number (as at 31/03/12)
Reference books	11,738
Lending Stock:	
Adult fiction	73,234
Adult Non-Fiction	154,790
Children's Fiction	45,761
Children's Non-fiction	21,776
Reserve Stock	0
Total Book Stock	307,299

Source: CIPFA Public Library Statistics 2012

Additionally a range of audio, visual electronic and other materials are available:

Stock Type	Number (as at 31/03/12)
For Reference	15,525
Lending Stock:	
Sound - Music	4,287
Sound – Adult Talking Books	5,129
Sound – Children's Talking Books	687
Video & DVDs	7,908
CD-ROMs & Software	42
Reserve Stock	0
Total Audio Visual Stock	33,578

Source: CIPFA Public Library Statistics 2012

The Reading Agency runs a range of national reading promotions, such as Quick Reads, World Book Night and Mood-boosting Books. Throughout 2012, Mood-boosting Books have been used across Southend Libraries to raise awareness about reading and mental health, and worked in partnership with organisations, such as the mental health charity Rethink, to reach service users.

Research shows that reading improves mental well-being and reduces stress levels by 67%, Mood-boosting Books aim to help alleviate stress and anxiety by encouraging the reading of uplifting books, such as novels, non-fiction and poetry.

Southend readers have been involved in the development of Mood-boosting Books, by nominating three reading groups – the Dial-a-read group, Rethink reading group and Breakthrough carers group – which helped review and select the titles.

“Southend's work around Mood-boosting Books has been invaluable in highlighting the benefits of reading to mental health, and has demonstrated how to get the initiative out to

the wider community. Their work around Mood-boosting Books (and World Book Night) has been profiled on 'Reading Groups for Everyone' as an example of best practice "

Judith Shipman, Programme Manager, The Reading Agency

6.2 Lifelong Learning and literacy

"6 book challenge"

"In my role as Programme Manager at The Reading Agency for our adult literacy programmes I'm always looking for stars in terms of reaching and engaging less confident audiences. Southend Libraries sets a high standard in terms of its strategic approach and imaginative partnership working in this area. A wide range of Southend residents have had life-changing experiences through the use of our Six Book Challenge scheme and the Quick Reads initiative by Southend Library staff.

It is so encouraging to work with library staff who understand the power of communication to promote their service effectively and to make maximum use of their resources. Southend Libraries keep us informed of all relevant activity, so that we can use this at national level to showcase good practice to other library services. "

Genevieve Clarke, Programme Manager (Adult Literacy)

6.3 Digital services & Access to information

Computers for Public Use (The People's Network)

In every library in Southend there are PCs providing access to the Internet, webmail and Microsoft Office - Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Publisher for both adults and children.

A Southend, Essex or Thurrock library ticket is required to use the PCs. This gives each customer the use of a PC for a one hour per day.

In Southend Library there is a self-booking system which allows customers to book a PC up to 7 days ahead. There are also 2 scanners available in Southend Library.

Each library holds Free Internet Taster Sessions throughout the year, for more information please see our webpage [Are you an Internet Novice?](#)

The library subscribes to a number of online databases which are available by visiting the [Online Reference Library](#).

6.4 Buildings & Community Space

Southend-on-Sea Borough Libraries consist of seven libraries and a mobile library.

Southend Central Library

Southend Library, in Victoria Avenue, is the Central Library. It was opened on 20th March 1974 by Sir John Ruggles-Brise, the Lord Lieutenant of Essex. As previously stated, from September 2013 the new home for the Central library will be the Forum: Southend; located adjacent to the town's High Street. The £27m four-storey building will provide a new public

and academic library replacing the existing Central Library, as well as a new teaching facility for the College and new University research and learning facilities. The Forum will provide a new home for the Focal Point Gallery as well as a new café, lecture theatre and large screen to show cultural events.

Leigh

"It's everything a small town library should be. From the very friendly staff, to the dedicated children's area even down to the gardens that it's set in. I love going there with my daughter and she loves it too... Numerous times a year there are local events held in the Library Gardens which are free and support the community".

Comment from a member of the public

Leigh library was built in 1836 as a Rectory. It became Leigh Library in October 1928, two years after it was purchased by the Town Council. The external facade of the building has barely changed in over 100 years and is one of two listed library buildings in the Borough.

Of the six branches, Leigh library has the longest opening hours at 48 hours per week. During 2010/11 the branch received 130,703 visits and issued 159,728 items making it the busiest branch in the borough.

The library building is open 5 ½ days each week (Monday to Saturday); this includes a half day on Wednesdays and extended evening openings 2 nights each week. The service is delivered by 4 full time equivalent members of staff.

Kent Elms

"A great little library, this, with friendly and helpful staff who are always glad to meet a person with an interest in reading. The computers are often available and the resources rarely booked out, but it is possible to check online from home, as well as ordering in books if they don't have them.

Expect all the standard facilities, such as photocopying, DVDs and games, as well as internet access and disabled access."

Comment from a member of the public

Kent Elms library was opened in 1964 and is situated in Rayleigh Road near the junction with the A127.

The branch is open for 41 hours each week, across 4 ½ days. The branch does not open on a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday afternoon. During 2010/11 there were 89,623 visits and 102,137 items were issued. The service is provided by 2.5 full time equivalent employees.

Southchurch

"Good library in Southchurch. Can easily miss it as hidden behind buildings and plants. Small car park. Staff very helpful finding books or with kids' homework. Good for older people to have local library rather than have to travel to Southend."

Comment from a member of the public

Southchurch library was originally in the Southchurch Hall Manor House within Southchurch Hall Park and just like the old Southend Central Library it became a museum. The new premises in Lifstan Way opened on the 9th September 1972.

The branch is open for 34 hours per week and is closed on Sundays and Monday mornings, although it does stay open until 7:00pm on a Monday evening. During 2010/11 there were 59,441 visits and 59,405 items were issued. The service is provided by 1.95 full time equivalent employees.

Westcliff

"A small and quaint library located along the London Road. Staff are very friendly and helpful, attending to you needs and queries with no bother."

Comment from a member of the public

Westcliff library opened in 1960 and is one the two Southend Borough libraries which are both grade II listed buildings.

The branch is open for 41 hours per week, closing on Wednesdays and Sundays and provides extended opening hours each Monday until 7pm. During 2010/11 there were 76,182 visits and 86,181 items were issued. The service is provided by 2.5 full time equivalent employees.

Thorpedene

"Libraries like Thorpedene are ideal. Just the right size. Also, very friendly and helpful staff."

Comment from a member of the public

Thorpedene library was opened in August 1965 and is located near the junction of Station Road and Maplin Way. It replaced the old Shoebury Branch library previously in Ness Road. It is located on a shared site with a Health Centre and a Community Centre.

This branch is open for 40 hours per week; it is closed on a Monday afternoon and all day Wednesday but does stay open until 7:00pm two nights each week. During 2010/11 there were 85,772 visits and 96,522 items were issued. The branch is staffed by 2.4 full time equivalent members of staff.

Friars

"Very small compact library, but still loads to choose from. Staff helpful. The library is inside a community hall, area now a bit run down, closed shops etc. Big free car park next door. Very near local park which is hidden down a path next to car park."

Comment from a member of the public

Friars library was opened in 1974, the same year as Southend Central Library. It is part of a community centre off of Constable Way, Shoeburyness and was refurbished and reorganised in October 1997.

Friars is the smallest of our branch network and is open for 20 hours each week, offering a service for 3 full days and one half day each week. The branch is staffed by 1.4 full time equivalent employees. During 2010 / 11 the branch received 24,041 visits and issued 27,616 items.

Mobile Library

Southend Borough Libraries has a mobile library that takes books to people who find it difficult to visit the library. The service provides visits once every three weeks to over a 106

residential homes, sheltered housing and hospices across the borough as well as one stop every three weeks which the general public can access at Moor Park Gardens (off The Fairway) Leigh-on-Sea.

The vehicle is equipped with stock of over 2,000 books, including large print titles, videos, DVDs and audio books as well as an on-board computer linked directly to the ELAN system which has the facility to place orders for books, CDs, videos etc. and answer customer queries. Southend Libraries was the first authority in the country to provide this enhanced service. The vehicle has a step lift, wheelchair access

Branch Network Buildings

A condition survey of the existing branch network has been undertaken to ascertain the future maintenance required to the buildings. In addition, a valuation of each branch library site has been undertaken together with the potential development opportunities of each location including an assessment of land, ostensibly, on areas owned by the Authority. The main findings are outlined in **Appendix 3**

It is recognised that the location of library buildings should be focused on the Library Service requirements. Opportunities do exist in the east of Southend to develop a hub library with good quality services and greater opening hours at an alternative location whilst providing the opportunity to re-shape other services provision and allow re-development of existing sites at Friars and Thorpedene.

In the medium to long term it will be necessary to either replace or relocate Southchurch Library as the current building is life expired. Opportunity may also exist to re-locate Leigh Library in the Elm Road development which could provide a modern facility with improved access and opening hours. Full consideration would need to be given to an appropriate future use of the existing library building.

The continuation of the branch network will require continuing capital investment by the Authority

6.5 Partnerships and community engagement

Southend Libraries support a wide range of free community activities across the Borough.

Polish & Roma Advice Service

Southend Borough Council Libraries aims to meet the needs of the local Polish and Roma communities. A Polish speaker is employed from 10.00am - 2.00pm every Friday at the Central Library, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea providing a free drop-in service helping with Housing, Transport, NHS enquiries, School Admission forms, debt information and any type of documentation query. The sessions are also used to promote the free electric plugs, enabling those who have recently moved to the UK to use their electrical items safely (without having to purchase new items).

The year (to December 2012) has seen a 24% increase in demand for the service with over 632 enquiries being received and 415 customers being dealt with. This has led to a reduction in the amount of time given to individual enquirers at the library slots to ensure

everyone can be dealt with. Changes to the benefits system due later this year are already causing confusion and concern.

In 2012, typical enquiry themes included:

- Debt advice and management/ paperwork- a major issue
- Benefit advice – particularly SBC Housing, Tax Credit, Child benefits (and changes)
- Nursery and Primary school Applications/ admissions
- GP/ Hospital appointments and letters
- Utilities enquiries (energy suppliers)
- Job Centre queries
- National Insurance
- Residency
- Housing- particularly private landlords
- Unfair dismissal /employment rights
- Domestic Violence

Southend Libraries feature as an exemplar library service on the RNIB 'Readingsight' Website. Southend Library staff delivered talks to 775 residents, and 162 people took part in a free guided 'Discovery Tour' of the Central Library, making library services more accessible by providing opportunities for local residents and community groups to 're-discover' their library service.

Southend Borough Libraries currently work with volunteers from the local community to help deliver services in the following areas:

Bookstart

"Bookstart" is a national scheme which encourages parents to share books with their children from an early age. Volunteers meet parents of 8 month-old babies when they attend local health clinics for the child's developmental and hearing check. They chat to the parents about the benefits and fun of early book contact and, to reinforce the message, hand out a free pack containing among other things two Board books.

Home Library Service

Southend Libraries offers a free home delivery scheme, which takes the library service direct to people's homes. Anyone who finds it difficult to visit libraries for whatever reason, can receive books in large and ordinary print, audio books, videos, DVDs and other library materials to suit their tastes and needs.

Home Library Service volunteers are quick to point out how enjoyable their visits are, with people always pleased to see them and view their half day a fortnight visits as a pleasant way of helping the community, and giving something back.

Volunteers visit people with disabilities, older people and carers who cannot easily use their local library. Volunteers are teamed up in pairs and make fortnightly visits to customers in the same part of town.

The service is organised by Library Community Services, who provide full training and support to library volunteers. There is a physical aspect to this work, i.e. lifting boxes and books that volunteers should be able to cope with.

Volunteers use their own cars to deliver books etc. with Southend Libraries paying a mileage allowance.

SeeJobGroup

SeeJobGroup based at Southend Central Library helps local people to obtain paid work, gain work experience, undertake voluntary work or return to study through a 12-week 'SeeChange' plan which suits job-hunters of all ages, with or without work experience.

Book Festivals

Each year the service runs both an adult's and a children's Book Festival as part of its programme of events. The Festivals are hugely popular; bringing household names into Southend to talk about their work and meet their readers.

6.6 Staff & skills

Professional library staff are central to the continuing success of national reading programmes such as the Summer Reading Challenge. We need to retain a skilled base in libraries if the service is to continue to thrive. The six branches are open to the public for a total of 282 hours each week and employ 28 members of staff, equivalent to 14.76 full time equivalent employees. We also employ 1 member of staff to deliver the Mobile Library Service.

In addition to this there are staff based at our Central Library who will transfer to the Forum from September 2013. Staff are supported by the Community & Diversity Team who are responsible for the wide range of outreach work undertaken by the library service which includes managing the Home Library Service, giving Library Discovery Talks and Tours and developing partnerships with local community groups and national partners such as the RNIB. During 2011/12 the team engaged with 1,230 people talks and discovery tours and also gave 33 talks to local community groups.

6.7 Volunteers

Libraries have always benefited from the work of volunteers and Southend Libraries are no exception to this. The service relies almost entirely on its band of 60 or so volunteers in the delivery of the Home Library Service; our volunteers are integral to the continued delivery of that service.

We also use volunteers in the delivery of our Bookstart programme and also with Story Rhymes sessions.

Our Library volunteers are loyal and dedicated and have told us that they are motivated by the fact that they are able to give 'something back' to the community. Many are long-serving; we have individuals who have given over 35 years of 'service'. It is estimated that our volunteers will have given around 6,000 hours to the service during 2012/13 – this is

equivalent to employing and additional 3.1 members of staff on a full time basis. We recognise the need to look after our volunteers and provide a framework for them to develop in their role.

6.8 Key service information

In drafting this strategy and as part of the review the performance of Southend's Library Service has been taken into consideration against the performance of a range of other library authorities. We have used the CIPFA stats Comparative Profile for Public Library Services as our information base for this.

DCMS commissioned CIPFA to produce these profiles for all English Library Authorities. The reports were made available in December 2012 through CIPFA's website; www.cipfastats.net/librariesprofilesdcms/ which is also accessible to members of the public.

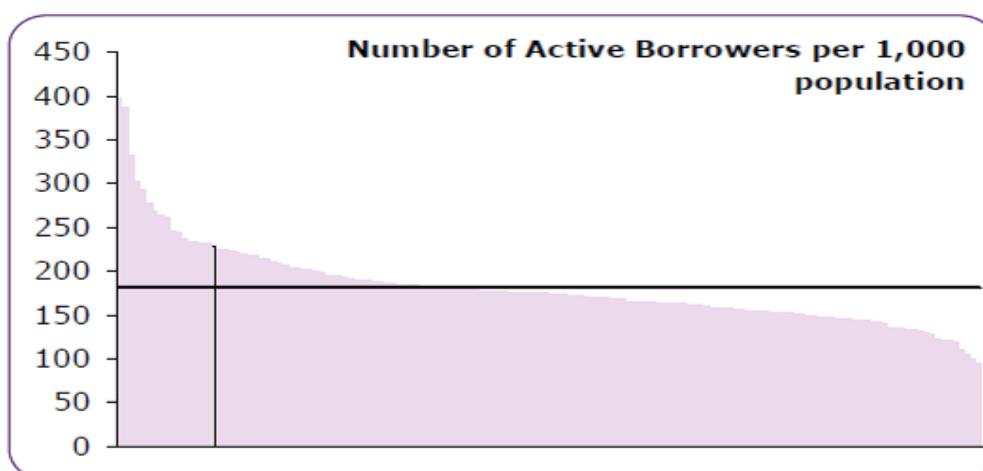
These profiles provide a comprehensive analysis of public libraries data covering all the major topics collected in the CIPFA stats Public Libraries collection and presents the outcome in a simple and non-judgemental way.

CIPFA have compiled three separate profiles for Southend's Library Service:

- How Southend's Library Service compares against the 145 English Library Authorities
- How Southend's Library Service compares with the 10 Library Authorities within the Eastern Region
- How Southend's Library Service compares with its 15 'nearest neighbours' (i.e. services in local authority areas with similar characteristics)

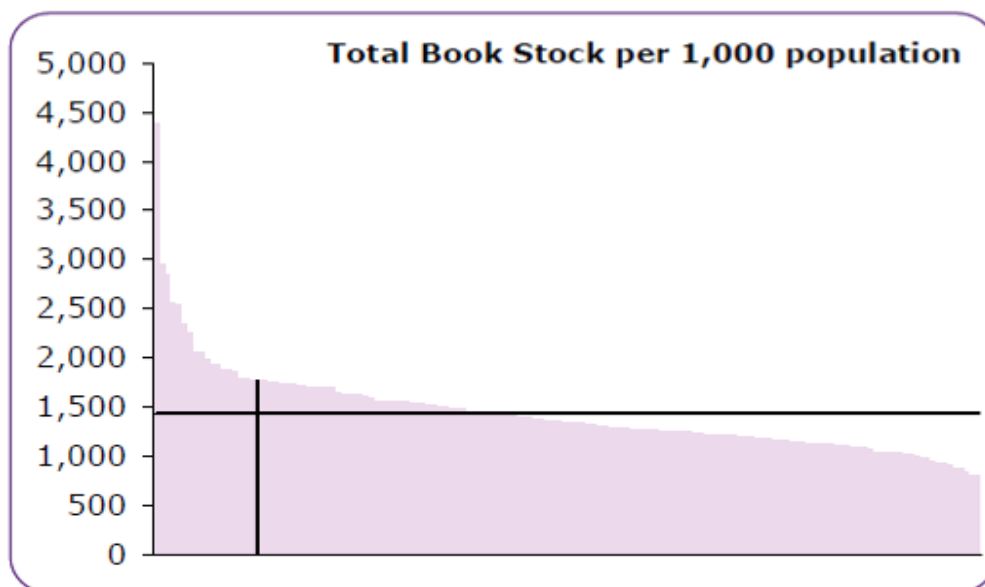
How does Southend compare?

The table below demonstrates that the service has a high number of Active Borrowers per 1,000 population; Southend and is in the top quartile suggesting that the library service engages well with the population when compared to other authorities.

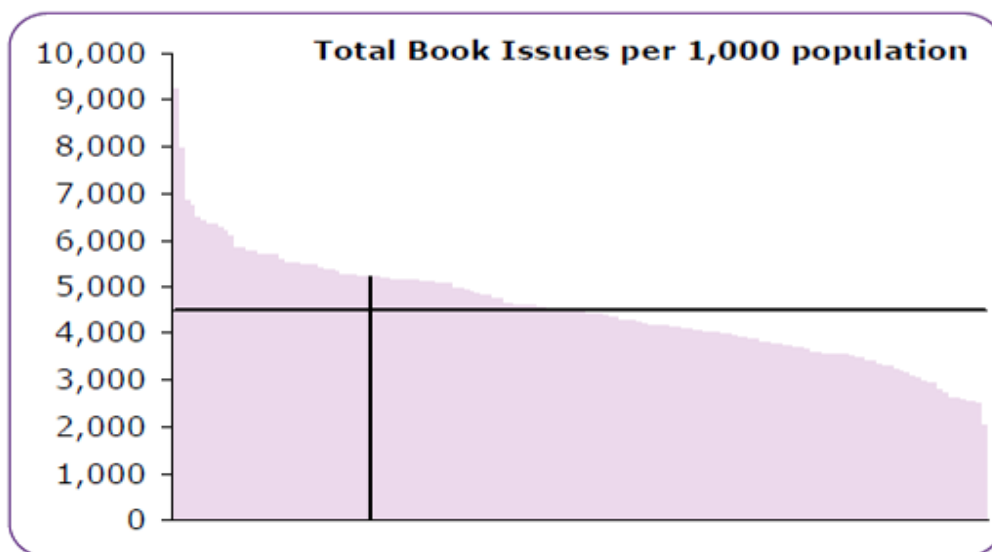


(The horizontal line shows the national average and the vertical line indicates Southend's position)

This chart compares another core library activity, providing an indicator for both workload and the demand placed on the library book stock.

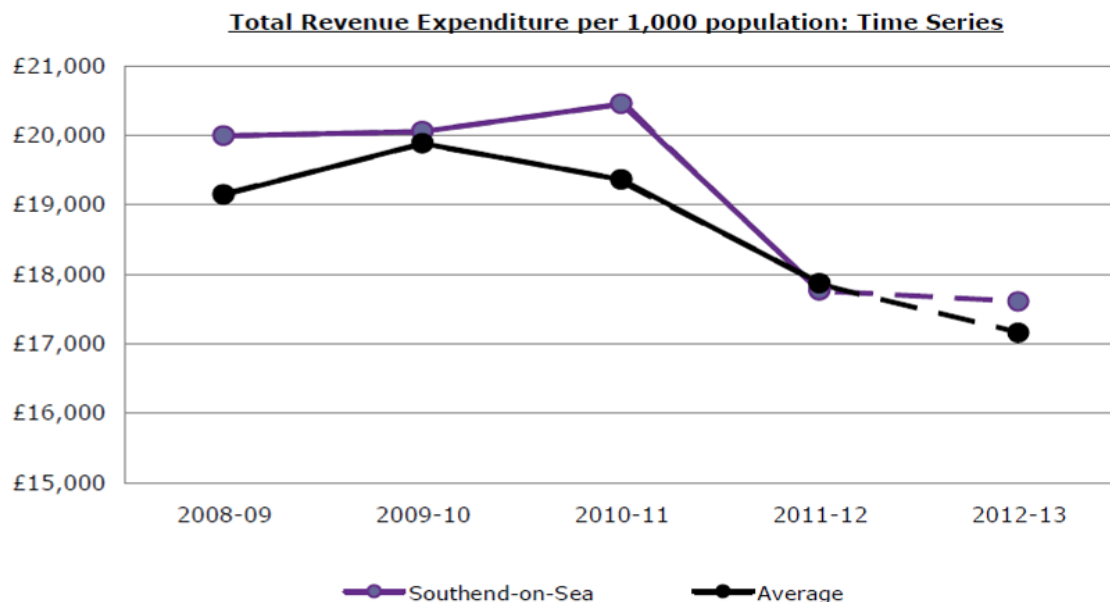
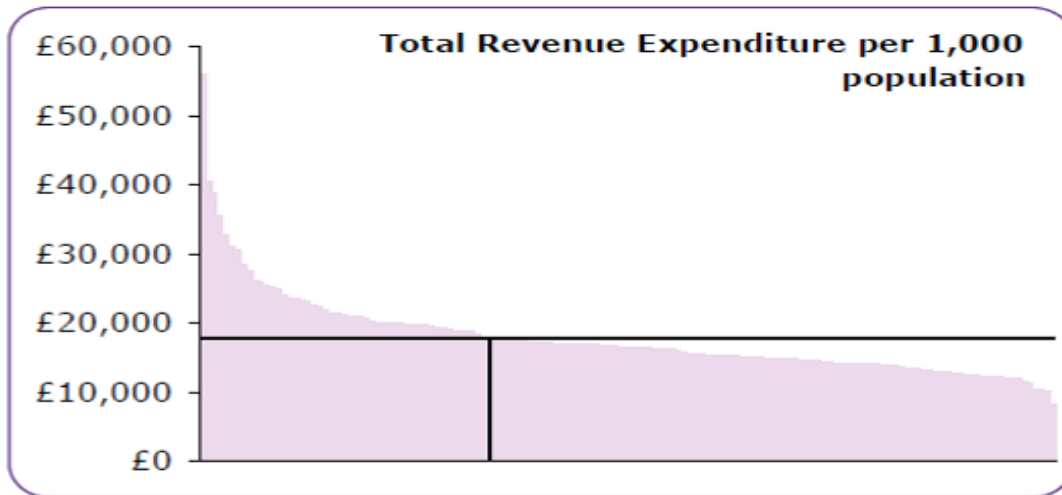


The chart above compares the overall book stock level of the library service.



This chart compares another core library activity, providing an indicator for both workload and the demand placed on the library book stock.

Total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population is a key cost indicator. Figures in the graphs below are 2011-12 actuals. Southend comes out as being at the middle of the comparison, which suggests that our costs are similar to the group as a whole.



The above chart plots the total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population over the last four years and shows the estimated figure for 2012-13. The population figure used for all years is the mid-year 2011 figure, so the changes in value relate to changes in expenditure only.

For most authorities a reduction can be seen in the 2012-13 estimates.

The following tables provide Southend's revenue expenditure and staffing levels for 2011/12 and compare them to the national average per 1,000 head of population.

Revenue Expenditure (2011-12 Actuals)	£	per 1,000 pop	Average
Employees	1,662,341	9,537	9,287
Premises	347,200	1,992	2,155
Total Materials	216,684	1,243	1,649
Computing Costs	1,242	7	527
Other Supplies & Services	208,652	1,197	966
Transport	13,168	76	183
Third Party Payments	329,544	1,891	190
Support Service Costs	318,414	1,827	2,911
Total Revenue Expenditure	3,097,245	17,770	17,867

	FTE	per 100,000 pop	Average
Professional Staff	11.0	6.3	6.0
All Other Staff	66.0	37.9	28.0
Total Staff	77.0	44.2	34.0

Overall, it has been demonstrated that Southend Library Service performs very well against all Library Authorities. Whilst the service does perform well across the board, there are areas; particularly in relation to expenditure where it may be worthwhile looking at the authorities who are cheaper to see if there is anything we can learn from their approaches.

7 Consultation

A key element of the Library Review has been to gather the thoughts, ideas and opinions of as many people as possible to shape proposals which can then be subject to further consultation and testing before a decision is taken on how Southend's future library service will be delivered.

To meet this objective it was agreed that the review would encompass three distinct stages;

1. Fact finding,
2. Formulation of proposals
3. Implementation.

A key part of stage 1 has been gathering information on how the service is used by the entire community. The review used a range of mechanisms to consult widely with service users, the local community and stakeholders throughout the period 3rd October 2012 – 10th January 2013 as follows: (Appendix 4d provides summaries of the responses received).

- A Questionnaire - “Your future Library Service” which was available online and also in hard copy and easy read format. These were distributed via the Library Network and other key distribution points in the Borough.
- Meetings and discussion with stakeholders, community groups and other organisations to enable them to provide a collective response in line with the themes of the questionnaire.
- Library Staff, Library volunteer and Member workshops; providing them with the opportunity to identify success and challenges of the service along as well gathering their thoughts and ideas on what the future service could look like.

(Please refer to **Appendices 4 (a-d)** for the specific details of each of the tools used)

Running alongside the review process, our Library Service was already consulting with children (within the age group 5 – 11 years old) to find out what children want from Southend Borough Libraries and to assist with the planning of services for this age group – this consultation ran between July - November 2012 with the results being fed into the wider review to inform future service delivery and ensure that Young People are able to have a voice in shaping service delivery.

7.1 Outcomes

Overall, we had a good response in relation with our engagement and consultation with the community; we received in excess of 3,000 direct responses across the direct consultation we ran:

- 2,155 from the “Your future Library Service”, which included 50 responses via the Easy Read version
- 941 responses to the Children’s questionnaire
- 14 meetings with local community organisations / stakeholders and both local MPs

Through the consultation we have gathered several thousand individual comments on various aspects of the library service and achieved a good geographical spread with a wide range of ages participating. The challenge has been in disseminating the wealth of feedback received and using that to develop our proposal for future service delivery.

7.2 Feedback from the survey

The consultation sought to establish how the library service was currently being used and explored some ideas for future service delivery and areas for improvement – irrespective of how the service continues to be delivered in the future the Council has an overall objective of increasing usage of the service and encouraging non-users to become library users.

Overwhelmingly, we were told how the services offered by the library service were greatly valued, with many articulating their fears of closure. Many respondents also recognised the need for the service to evolve in order for it to survive, whilst others enthusiastically suggested ideas for change.

How the service is used

The outcome of this confirmed existing perceptions of how the service is used. The main areas being:

- Borrowing books, films, DVDs etc and getting information about local services and events
- Online services are largely used for looking for and requesting books
- Internet services are popular and widely used
- Quality & choice of books was rated as extremely important to the majority of respondents
- Location of the library in terms of transport and proximity to other services rated highly along with access to a range of information and the building being welcoming and comfortable
-

The main reasons for not using libraries included:

- Lack of time and the ability to get things online / from other sources
- Issues with accessibility; namely parking, opening hours, transport routes, physical access at some locations, particularly for people with baby buggies.

The main themes and ideas for the future Service emerging from the consultation were:

- People like the services offered at the libraries
- Appetite for volunteering - but not at the expense of paid staff
- Local solutions for each area
- Support to explore partnerships but preference for more community based partnerships
- Desire to retain the core values of a library - fear there is a potential for this to be lost with commercial partnerships
- Recognition that the service has a social value and that this should be retained
- Developing services for families – encourage / support literacy levels
- Share buildings with other compatible services; e.g. CAB, Benefits advice, children's centres
- Coffee shop / cafes popular additions at library locations
- Advertise the full range services on offer; many people felt there was a high degree of the wider population being unaware of just how many services and activities are available to them via the Library Service; including the on-line services.
- Introduce more chargeable events, such as the popular author talks & exhibitions
- Improved technology to encourage greater use
- Modernise the service to capture more young people; retain some of the 'old' and don't stop having physical books

Feedback from the Focus Groups

The following sections summarise the themes that were identified by the groups. There was a large amount of commonality in the comments made by the different stakeholders participating in the discussions, including consensus about the pressures faced by the service and how these might be addressed in the strategy for the future. During the course of the focus groups there were several themes which emerged:

i) Communications

The need for better internal and external communication was highlighted. It was suggested that few members of the public were aware of the different services provided by the library service. Many assumed that they were solely book based and are unaware of technological developments. Services such as the home delivery service and some events are also poorly publicised. The development of a clear communication and marketing strategy targeting staff, volunteers and councillors as well as members of the public would effectively address this issue. This should include identifying new methods of engaging staff and customers, e.g. through outreach, an updated and effective website and blog, as well as traditional methods of communication such as leaflets and posters.

ii) Resources

Concern about the resources invested in the Library Service was highlighted by all participants. Some staff stated that the service had experienced cuts in staffing, investment in books and other resources over the last 6 or 7 years, whilst they perceived that other council services had experienced less substantial savings. It was suggested that the service could make better use of staff skills and knowledge within the current budget. There might also be an opportunity to change staff working practices which would provide staff development opportunities.

Reductions in resources have already resulted in reduced opening hours and reductions in the availability of new stock in the branches. There is a risk that the current strength of positive public perception about the service will be undermined.

The opportunities that partnerships with other organisations and council services could provide in enabling the libraries to develop were raised in these discussions. Whilst it was clear that many participants recognise the need and opportunities that co-locating a library/branch library with other services may bring, it was suggested that there should be an agreed minimum service that would be provided.

iii) Staff & Volunteers

Many staff commented on the reduction in numbers employed over the past few years and the need for those staff that were employed to multi-task rather than specialise. There was a feeling that many had become 'jack of all trades and master of none' and that professional training was undervalued. The reduction in staffing meant that:

- there was no time to develop branches
- not enough time for outreach by staff
- not enough staff to run libraries adequately.

There were suggestions made about the need to recruit more staff and to make best use of the specialised skills and knowledge of staff.

Other suggestions for addressing issues relating to staffing included:

- reviewing opening hours
- review current staffing levels across the whole service
- provide relief staff on a higher grade to cover different absences
- providing better training of staff and encouragement for achieving professional qualifications.

The role of volunteers was recognised as an important part of the library service by all the groups. Volunteers may have more time to spend with customers and their involvement in the children's service, home delivery service, and talking books was recognised as invaluable, consequently it was suggested that ways of using volunteers more creatively within branches was explored.

iv) Technology

The issue of technology dominated a lot of the discussions. It was recognised that changes in technology have influenced how many customers want to use library services and that services need to adapt. However, the use of technology means that information and equipment need to be kept up to date if an effective service is to be provided. New services such as the provision of e books and Wi-Fi should also be considered and implemented.

It was reported that many members of the public are unhappy with the new automated returns system; it was suggested that more visible support for service users should be put in place to address this and prevent dissatisfaction with the service.

Future Suggestions:

The common view was that the new library would provide the hub of the service with various approaches to delivery provided within community settings. These include continuing the home delivery service, continuing to use the mobile service in certain parts of the Borough and continuing to deliver children's outreach and events.

Better recognition of the diversity of services by the council and public in the future would enable better use of the resources available.

Development of the role of volunteers, whilst ensuring that they did not just replace trained staff, was also identified and agreed.

Most participants suggested that branch or community based libraries should be seen as community spaces, possibly delivering a number of council services.

Many of the participants described the system of the future as 'flexible', referring to the need for flexibility amongst staff and volunteers as well as flexibility in the use of resources. There was clear consensus that this could not be achieved without good communication and marketing and reliable technology.

8. Shaping the Future

8.1 Vision

Southend Libraries will keep serving the whole community through recreation, entertainment, education and information; responding to the borough's needs and adapting to new technologies

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering accessible library services for all
- Welcoming everyone
- Promoting lifelong learning and enjoyment of culture
- Giving spaces for people to meet, read, study, explore and browse
- Helping community libraries operate
- Sharing policies and values across all the borough's library branches
- Leading the field for library services in the Eastern Region

8.2 'Facing the Challenge' – the way Forward

Southend Libraries: where we want to be.

Throughout the review we have been looking at and trying to understand who exactly who are our customers, how we serve them at the moment, what both their future and current needs are and how best to meet those needs.

Who are these customers?

Many customers already use the library service and know what the service has to offer. There are, however, groups who don't use libraries. As a public library authority, Southend Libraries have a duty to encourage *all* potential customers to use the service.

The Library Management Team (LMT) has agreed the following 7 groups to work with.

- Adults re-discovering reading (Emergent Readers)
- Children with Disabilities
- Lapsed and Potential customers
- Older People
- Homeless People
- Carers
- Teenagers

Libraries play an important role that cannot be replicated by the internet alone. Personal interaction can easily be forgotten in a society which can be accessed via the internet. This can lead to a sterile environment that greatly affects a town's economic, health and feel good factor. It is for these reasons that the Council's cultural service places a high degree of importance on libraries and their community interaction.

Along with the numerous factors that are leading to changes in the way our Library Service is used, the Council is mindful of its current financial position and is, therefore, outlining the following proposal to help shape the way the Library Service will develop in the Borough. The proposal seeks to address the immediate, short term pressures faced by the service and also lays the foundations for the future. The proposal encompasses and is informed by the feedback from the consultation we have undertaken in recent months.

It is acknowledged that this proposal is challenging for both the Council and the community; it does involve the re-provision of existing services, which will rely on both the Council and the community working together towards a solution.

The model of provision that the council will be working towards will involve Council's main library provision being that at the Forum in the Town Centre and two hub libraries; one in the East of Southend and one in the West, with the remaining branches being run as community managed libraries.

The East Hub library will be an amalgamation of both Thorpedene and Friars libraries, seeing them relocated at a new site; most likely along Delaware Road. The West hub would be a development of either Leigh Library or Kent Elms Library. This hub will initially operate from an existing library site. The remaining branch libraries will be offered to Community Groups to run.

To support our and encourage community groups to come forward and develop the remaining libraries we will develop a version of Model 2a, Community Managed Libraries, as detailed in the Arts Council England/Local Government Association Guidelines on Community Libraries. See Paragraph 8.3 for an outline of this model.

We will develop a Virtual Library to provide 24 hour access to information and resources and to support the Community Libraries. An example of a current, successful Virtual Library can be seen at <http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/cgi-bin/vlib.sh>.

The proposal also includes changes to the operation of the mobile service and Home Library Service to ensure these are bringing maximum benefit to their users. This includes a pro-active approach that would transfer a number of residential homes to the Home Library Service and use the mobile and or 'pop-up' libraries to serve neighbourhood areas and to target service users at different venues such as major store car parks or outreach locations such as Cluny Square. This work may also involve extending the Home Library Service to all those whom the Council currently helps to live at home.

To achieve the introduction of Community Libraries, outreach work and the virtual library, changes to the management structure of the Library Service will be required to reflect and support the proposals.

In the Medium Term, there may be the opportunity to consider the Elm Road Development in Leigh as a potential site for the location of the West Hub.

It is acknowledged that good access and adequate parking are important factors for our service users; this emerged very clearly from the consultation. In all instances where relocation to other sites is being proposed, we will ensure these issues are taken into consideration.

The Council would also look to find a replacement building for Southchurch Library, as the current building is well past its design life. It is proposed to roll out Wi-Fi to all branches and an e-book lending service as this becomes possible. We will seek Capital investment into designated Hub Libraries (East and West) to improve and provide latest IT provision.

In the longer term, we will look to develop private/public sector partnership to provide access to public services and complimentary private sector activities. Delivery/collection points for parcels and Implement building refurbishment and maintenance programme. We will also review the Community Library Provision and Outreach Service.

8.3 Community libraries

As a result of the Localism Act, 2011, the Community Right to Challenge is now in effect. It enables communities to challenge to take over local services that they think they can run differently and better. The Right to Challenge could be used to run a wide range of local services. Advice and grants available for community groups who may be thinking about taking over a Local Authority service: www.mycommunityrights.org.uk

Under the proposal the Council will provide support to encourage community groups to come forward and develop the remaining libraries. We will work with our community groups to develop a version of Model 2a, Community Managed Libraries, as detailed in the Arts Council England/Local Government Association Guidelines on Community Libraries.

Model 2a is summarised in the following paragraph:

The Council's financial input would be limited to the provision of materials, access to relevant parts of the Library Computer system and professional support and advice. The branches are likely to remain part of the Council's statutory service and will operate under a Service Level Agreement within a framework of policies set by the Council. This would include the new National Offers around Reading, Health, Information and Digital. There will be a high level of community involvement in the running of the branches.

This model has the advantage of supporting Community Libraries within the framework of the Council's Library Service, ensuring users are treated the same at all of the Borough's libraries and have access to the same services, while allowing community led developments at libraries. This model is currently in use in several local authorities.

The Guidelines give case studies using this model from Buckinghamshire, Bradford and North Yorkshire. In many cases the move to community managed libraries has allowed the library to remain open and often seen increased opening hours, together with innovative funding and developments that might not otherwise be available or possible via Local Authority Delivery.

8.3.1 Governance

The proposed changes will result in the need to put in place alternative governance arrangements for the Library Service. The new arrangements will need to take into account factors such as the transfer of an asset (if applicable) and the future relationship between the council and a Library Management Board (this may be given another name but essentially this will be the body responsible for running a particular branch location). It is anticipated that the organisation will more likely be some form of social enterprise, charitable organisation or Community Interest Company; however commercial organisations would not be precluded from the bidding process.

8.4 Resources

The proposal presented within this document seeks to strike a balance between providing a solution to the requirement for the Library Service to meet a 15% reduction in its operating budget over the next three years and helping the library service evolve and remain a relevant and vibrant community resource.

The delivery plan in section 8.6 sets out how the annual savings of £126,000 will be met between April 2013 and March 2016. The savings identified within the first year are as a result of existing operational changes that can take without having an impact on the overall service delivery.

Potential savings identified for the subsequent two years will be subject to the outcome of the next stage of public consultation that will be undertaken on this strategy and may change as a result. The consultation will be completed by late Summer 2013 enabling a final decision to be taken in Autumn 2013. There will be extensive opportunities for members of the public, staff, stakeholders and other interested parties to engage with us and shape our future library service.

8.5 Library Staff Skills and Development 2013 – 2028

The aspect of the library service that is most praised by the public is the staff. Even with self-service RFID machines staff are crucial to the provision of a successful and vibrant library service. The skills library staff will need during the period 2013-2028 will be in the following areas:

- *Customer Care*
- *ICT*
- *Community Development & Political Skills*
- *Marketing and Promotion*
- *Product knowledge*
- *Management and Leadership*

We will seek to ensure that staff are offered continuing professional development opportunities to ensure their skills are as current as possible and enable them to progress within their field.

There will also be a need to provide training to the volunteers running and staffing the Community Managed Libraries. This will include equalities training as well as operational training.

Staffing Structure

The proposal has implications for the current staffing structure as it involves the transfer of several of the existing branches into Community Libraries which will not be staffed through the Council. However, in order for the proposed Community Managed model to succeed the Council recognises the need to create additional support in the form of staff resources to provide advice and guidance and also to develop and continue to deliver the virtual library. We will look to minimise staffing reductions as much as possible and will seek to redeploy staff into other roles within the service; some of which will be new.

8.6 New Services for the Library - Launch of the Universal Offers

Alongside the proposal within this strategy, the Council will be delivering the newly launched Universal Offer which has been recently launched by the Society of Chief Librarians, Arts Council England and The Reading Agency. This offer sets out their vision for the future of public libraries with four new 'Universal Offers' via their initiative "Libraries of the 21st Century".

- The Universal Health Offer
- The Universal Reading Offer
- The Universal Information Offer
- The Universal Digital Offer.

This new collective approach builds upon existing provision and best practice within these areas and will clarify what the public should be able to expect from their library, provide a shared platform for developing new initiatives, and will enable local authorities to share costs and resources.

To drive this national programme, exciting new initiatives will be launched during 2013 which are aimed at further servicing local needs.

The Universal Health Offer

This is a new national strategy expressing the public library contribution to the health and well-being of local communities. Public libraries already provide books for people who want to understand more about specific conditions, and many also have initiatives aimed at raising awareness of different illnesses.

This new offer will see services to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of local communities being rolled out in every public library in England and Wales; these services will include:

- A network of local hubs offering non-clinical community space
- Community outreach supporting vulnerable people
- Expert staff with local knowledge

- Assisted on-line access
- Self-help library resources
- Health and care information services
- Referral and signposting
- Public health promotion activity
- Social and recreational reading opportunities like reading groups
- Volunteering and community engagement activities.

A new development under this initiative will be 'Reading Well', a 'Books on Prescription' scheme' designed to support people who are looking for quality assured health information.

The 'Books on Prescription' scheme is endorsed and supported by key mental health organisations in England and will be implemented in public libraries from May 2013, although some libraries are already offering this service.

GPs and other health professionals will be able to prescribe patients cognitive behavioural therapy books from a quality assured national reading list focused on mild to moderate mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. The books are tried and trusted resources which can help people understand and manage their conditions either as part of a therapy programme or as a first self-help step.

The scheme combines self-help therapy from factual reading with reader-recommended novels and poetry in a shared library promotion called 'Mood Boosting Books'. The health benefits of reading groups will be promoted, supported by a collective website at www.readinggroups.org

The Universal Reading Offer:

This is a new planning framework developed by Society of Chief Librarians and The Reading Agency which combines libraries' efforts to develop, deliver and promote reading services. It builds on the success of libraries' reading work, which has seen children's book borrowing rise for eight years running, and which has been responding to public demand for community reading activities which bring reading alive, physically and digitally.

The Universal Reading Offer sets out what public libraries will offer in order to provide a modern reading service in their local communities. It builds on public demand for a lively and engaging reading offer with reading groups, challenges, promotions and author events, alongside public engagement opportunities services for specific audiences such as families and the blind and partially sighted. It aims to combat the effect of cuts by working together as a network and focuses libraries' collective energy into some national shared reading programmes. It will also strip out the costs of duplicated effort, share best practice and attract the investment of partners.

The strategy enables libraries to enlist national partners' support and investment by working as a critical mass. Partners in creating libraries' reading year offer to the public will include The Publishers' Association and 40 publisher partners, World Book Day, World Book Night, Share the Vision, Quick Reads and Booktrust.

The Universal Reading Offer will create a shared evidence bank so libraries can strengthen their arguments for the impact of their reading work within local authorities' priorities.

The services are:

- Free books and reading resources
- Free community space
- Supported online access
- Community outreach
- Services for targeted audiences
- Access to local and family history resources
- Multimedia reading resources

New initiatives have been developed through the National Reading Programmes to address literacy levels and skills; it is estimated that approximately 5.1m people in England have inadequate literacy levels. The initiatives will include:

- The creation of a new package of year round volunteering opportunities for 11-19 year olds, to build their life skills and confidence at the same time as supporting others to enjoy reading and join the library.
- A new digital skills sharing programme funded by Arts Council England ...
- A partnership with the 2013 Rugby League World Cup, which will support libraries' adult literacy Six Book Challenge to encourage new audiences to engage with reading.

The Universal Information Offer aims to develop the role of public libraries in helping citizens access information online in a digital age.

The focus of this offer is on supporting people accessing information and services online in life-critical areas such as careers and job seeking; health; personal financial information and benefits. Central to this offer is helping people to use vital government online information and services.

Public libraries already bring together in one place access to both national and local sources of information, and support for these life-critical issues. For instance, someone seeking information about an illness will find not only links to reliable official online sources but also links to local advice and support networks.

The Universal Information Offer will:

- Bring together government and non-governmental sources of information, which have been researched by information professionals in public libraries, giving a level of quality assurance to the user.
- Ensure that public library staff and volunteers are continually developing their skills to provide help to people accessing information and services.

A new development will be 'helping claimants of the new Universal Credit'; a new single payment for people on a low income, or people who are looking for work. It is being launched in 2013 and will replace income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Tax Credits,

Housing Benefit, Income Support, Working Tax Credits and income-based Employment and Support Allowance.

Public libraries already provide significant amounts of information and support for people finding jobs. With the introduction of Universal Credit this year, libraries will provide internet access and support to complete the application and manage their account online, signposting claimants to local advice agencies where needed.

Finally, **the Universal Digital Offer** defines the minimum that a public library authority should provide and that customers should expect from their public library. It helps to support the delivery of all of the Universal Offers.

Every public library service will provide:

- Free access to the Internet for every customer (for a minimum period of time)
- Clear and accessible online information about library services
- Staff trained to help customers access digital information
- Ability for customers to join online
- Ability to be contacted online/via email for answers to customer enquiries
- 24/7 access to services through a virtual library presence
- Ability to reserve & renew items remotely via an online catalogue.” [p8]

The Universal Digital Offer also sets out what every library authority should aspire to provide. These services include:

- Opportunity for e-lending of digital books, audio and video with remote access
- Social networking interaction/engagement opportunities
- A library APP to allow full access to all library digital services from mobile devices
- Digital services that work with a range of assistive technology such as speech programmes or magnifiers.
- Free internet access for all wanting to use it, including Wi-Fi
- Tailored digital information for each customer
- Training in digital information literacy and access for its customers and staff both locally and remotely
- Time-relevant, quality checked digital content for the communities it serves and support for communities to create their own content
- Loan of digital devices for those without other access
- Access to digitised local archive and local history resources
- Federated searching of locally held online resources
- Access to online learning opportunities (citizenship & theory driving tests or language learning etc.)

The Southend Libraries service already supports and delivers many of the functions of the Universal Offers and it will be participating fully in all of the offers as they are rolled out nationally.

8.7 Library Development Delivery Plan

The following tables provide an outline delivery plan which addresses the action required in order to meet the short – medium term objectives within the proposal. It is the intention that the adopted strategy will be subject to review and revision within 5 years and an updated delivery plan agreed. All financial figures provided within the delivery plan are broad estimates and should not be taken as exact figures as they may be subject to change.

The proposals within this strategy will be subject to extensive public consultation which will conclude by summer 2013. This delivery plan will be updated accordingly to reflect any changes in the proposed model of service delivery and will incorporate any additional actions required.

8.7 Library Service Development Delivery Plan 2013 - 2028

Year 1: 2013 – 14

Theme	Action	Investment funding £	Revenue Saving £	Timescale
Achievement of year 1 savings	Self Service/Operation Review Savings		(70K)	April 2013
	Review of shared service arrangements with Essex County Council		(30k)	April 2013
	Review Library Management. Introduce a Community Libraries Support Outreach Team		(26k)	March 2014
Shaping the future	Open new Forum Central Library	0		September 2013
	Library Review Strategy adopted by Council	0		October 2013
	Advertise/promote the introduction of Community Libraries – Transfer of Operation	0		December 2013
	Bid for Capital to introduce Wi-Fi access to the Branch Network	0		December 2013

Year 2: 2014 – 15

Theme	Action	Investment funding £	Revenue Saving £	Timescale
Shaping the Future	Development East Hub Library (Revenue cost of providing the service)	80k	(70K)	March 2015
	Friars and Delaware Branch Transfer to East Hub Library Site	(153k)	(30k)	March 2015
	First Library branch transfer to Community Operation	(76k)	(26k)	April 2014
	Virtual Branch Library Service opened	23k		April 2014

Year 3: 2015 – 16

Theme	Action	Investment funding £	Revenue Saving £	Timescale
Shaping the Future	Transfer two branch libraries to community operation	(170k)	(70K)	March 2016
	Create Hub Library in the West (either Leigh or Kent Elms)	14k	(30k)	March 2016
	Introduce 'Pop-Up' Library Provision in Wards without provision, accessibilities issues and area of low use, pro-active development of mobile service	30k	(26k)	Sept 2015

Year 4: 2016 – 17

Theme	Action	Investment funding £	Revenue Saving £	Timescale
Shaping the Future	Virtual library branch introduced home delivery and collection service – linked with increased volunteering to key groups			
	Capital investment into designated Hub Libraries (East and West) to provide latest IT provision			
	Implement building refurbishment and maintenance programme			
	Develop private/public sector partnership to provide access to public services and complimentary private sector activities, for example delivery/collection points for parcels	0		

Year 5: 2017 – 18

Theme	Action	Investment funding £	Revenue Saving £	Timescale
Shaping the Future	Review Community Library Provision and Outreach Service			April 2017 – Oct 2017
	Update Library Development strategy and action plan, incorporating specific actions to 2028			Jan 2018
	Explore options for the replacement of Southchurch Library building and development of site. Possible re-provision nearby or on existing site			

9 Documents considered throughout the Review and to assist with development of this strategy:

Culture, Knowledge & Understanding: Great Museums and Libraries for Everyone – Arts Council

A New Chapter – Public Library Services in the 21st Century – Carnegie Trust

The Modernisation Review of Public Libraries – DCMS March 2010

CIPFA - Libraries Benchmarking Data Reports

Brent Council - Libraries Transformation Project

Chalfont St Giles Community Library

Warwickshire Community Libraries Newsletter

Warwickshire Library Transformation Pack

Culture Governance Report

Southend-on-Sea Borough Libraries Annual Review 2009

ACS Culture, Performance Team Plan 2012/13

Libraries Structure Chart

Communication Plan

Update on Consultation

Library Proposals – Focus Group Reports

Demographic Profiles

Report of Members Possibilities Workshop 16th January 2013

Children's Survey Reports

Scope of the Review

Finance Presentation

Branch Unit Cost Performance Data

Consultation & Engagement Plan

Running a small public library with volunteers

Library Condition Surveys

Commons Select Report

Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on Library Closures (HC 587 2012/13). The report also includes oral and written evidence:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcmums/587/58702.htm>

Additional written evidence was published in a second volume and is available below:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcmums/587/587vw01.htm>

10 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Library Branch Unit Performance Data

Appendix 2: Demographic Profiles of the Branch Network

Appendix 3: Asset Review

Appendices 4a - d

4a: 'Your Future Library' Consultation outcome report

4b: Children's Library Consultation Report

4c: Focus Groups Report

4d: Stakeholder Meetings