

Future Library Services Programme Update

We are now talking with the **Locality Boards** (or specially convened groups of District Council and KCC members) in all Districts about the Future Library Services Programme. Ideas about how to continue to deliver library services in the current challenging economic environment are beginning to come forward and are being explored.

For Example:

Sharing space with other partners

In **Hive House (Northfleet)**, **Lyminge** and **Borough Green** libraries we have been talking about partners hiring space from us to deliver their services. This will not impact adversely on our services as the space is either not currently used for public services, or is to be used when we would normally be closed to the public.

Hiring out space/use of the library outside opening hours

At **Otford** library we have been able to generate a small income stream by offering other local groups/organisations the opportunity to hire the library space outside opening hours.

New Service Delivery Models

In some communities we are talking about the possibility of partners being commissioned to run library services on behalf of KCC in existing library buildings.

In other communities we are reviewing whether we could share space with partners in existing libraries, or in partners' existing premises, or in a new location, whichever provides the best local solution. And in some cases these collocation models might develop to a point where we would commission a partner to deliver our services, or indeed a partner might commission us to deliver their services.

All these libraries would remain part of the KCC library service and whatever the model of service delivery, we would retain responsibility for ensuring that high standards of service delivery were met. KCC would continue to provide stock and ICT systems, and training for those delivering the services on our behalf.

Consultation

Wherever we are considering new service delivery models we have committed to consult with local people and staff to get their views on the proposals before our Cabinet Member (Mike Hill) makes his decision whether to proceed or not. This consultation will help us to decide if the proposals are the right way forward in each community. In two communities **Sandgate** (Folkestone) and **Sherwood** (Tunbridge Wells), where we already work with partners and share buildings, we are now ready to consult with local people and staff on such proposals.

In **Sandgate** we have been working with the Parish Council since 2006 and they already use the Library for their parish office, for meetings and events. The Parish Clerk already delivers library services for most of the opening hours and we share some of the running costs with the Parish Council.

We are suggesting that, from summer 2013, Sandgate Library could be entirely managed and run by the parish council, with the Parish Council delivering all library services supported by a team of local volunteers.

We have reached a similar stage with **Sherwood** Library. Sherwood library is part of the TN2 Community Centre. This building is already run by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and they could take on the full running of the service.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are keen to develop a volunteer run model of operation managed by local TWBC staff.

Both these proposals would deliver some savings, whilst day to day library services would remain very much as they are now.

Customers would still be able to:

- borrow books, DVDs and CDs (including Talking Books)
- use computers with free internet access, Microsoft Office and Ability net
- access local and family history resources
- take part in activities, including Story Time and Time Talk

If the proposal is agreed, local people would benefit from having more opportunities to use the library spaces for a range of different activities and be more involved in shaping the future of both libraries.

In addition, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council would be able to increase Sherwood Library opening hours to match the TN2 Centre hours.

Starting this week, we are asking local people and staff in both communities to tell us what they think - to help KCC decide if these proposals are the right way forward. The consultation will finish on 6 March and when we have reviewed the feedback, our Cabinet Member will decide whether to introduce these new service models in Sandgate and Sherwood.

If you have any questions please get in touch by email - fls@kent.gov.uk or telephone **01622 696504**

There is also more information about [Future Library Services \(FLS\)](#) on our website – www.kent.gov.uk/libraries