Have your say:

The future of mobile library services in Suffolk

www.suffolk.gov.uk/sld

Introduction

People of all ages use their libraries in many different ways, to learn new things, take part in activities and enjoy the many books, DVDs and other resources available.

Suffolk is a rural county, and provides mobile libraries as part of its provision to people living in areas which are not directly served by a static (building based) library.

However, the county council has to make significant savings over the coming years and therefore we need to find different ways of delivering services in more cost effective ways.

Between 18 January and 30 April 2011 we consulted with library users and the wider community about how to deliver library services in the future.

The main areas you commented on/raised were:

- Libraries are community hubs, used and valued by people of all ages, abilities and social backgrounds. They are particularly valued by and for children and vulnerable and older people.

- Whilst reading and books remain the priority, a shared space for social interaction, help with learning and skills, activities which support health and well being, information and use of the internet and hiring films and music are all seen as integral parts of the service.

- The countywide nature of the network of libraries is highly valued.

The results of this consultation informed a Review of Library Services and recommendations which were presented to the Cabinet of Suffolk County Council on 19 July 2011.

At its meeting, Cabinet agreed a number of actions, including that there would be a further consultation relating to potential savings that could be made by reviewing and reorganising aspects of the mobile library service.

Suffolk County Council remains committed to providing library services through a combination of static libraries, mobile libraries and outreach services.

The mobile library service

There are currently six mobile libraries and one reserve vehicle in the fleet. Between them, they make 630 stops at 361 communities, calling at each stop fortnightly. The duration of stops range from10 minutes to 2 hours 45 minutes.

Use varies between individual mobile library stops, with registered users per stop ranging from 1 to 92. An estimated 76,433 visits to mobile libraries are made per year.

Visits to mobile libraries have declined by 36,744 (32.46%) over the last ten years, and loans have also decreased by 123,090 (37%). However, statistics for the past three years show a rise in borrowing.

The budget for 2010/11 set out a budget of £588,889 for running the service. This equates to £7.70 per customer visit to a mobile library, compared to an average £2.51 per visit for a static library.

Proposal for the future

To help meet the required savings the county council has to make, it is proposed that mobile library stops are removed from locations that are also served by a static library.

The locations would be defined as stops which fall within the same parish or town boundary as a static library.

It is important to be clear that this proposal will not leave anybody who currently uses the mobile library service without any level of library provision..

The proposal would reduce the fleet of operational mobile library vehicles from six to three. The annual cost of the service would be reduced by an estimated £225,000.

Full details of the stops potentially affected can be found on page 4. Full details of all current mobile library stops in Suffolk can be found at **www.suffolk.gov.uk/sld**.

The service that currently offers support for individuals who cannot get to a library, the At Home Library Service, would be made available to those residents who can no longer physically access library services.

For all remaining stops, we propose to reduce the frequency of mobile library visits from two weekly to monthly or four weekly. A four weekly schedule operates in Norfolk's mobile library service and a monthly schedule operates in Cambridgeshire.

Four weekly: A four weekly schedule would mean the mobile library visits each stop on a regular day and time once every four weeks.

Monthly: A monthly schedule would mean the mobile library visits once a month, e.g. on the third Tuesday of each month. This would mean that the time between visits would vary from 4-5 weeks depending on the calendar.

In order for the new schedules to work most efficiently the current day and time of mobile stops in any location may need to change.

We would also like to hear your ideas for alternative or additional ways, including community solutions, in which the Mobile Library Service could be managed differently to achieve significant savings.

Other alternatives we have considered, but are not currently proposing include:

- the reduction of mobile library stops where usage is very low

- the reduction of mobile library stops where more than one stop occurs in a village

- the reduction of mobile library stops based on a minimum distance (e.g. 3 miles) from a static library

We believe that compared to the alternatives, the changes proposed will allow us to achieve the savings required while maintaining the most acceptable level of access to library services.

How to have your say

Please fill out the questionnaire on our website at: **www.suffolk.gov.uk/sld**

Alternatively complete the printed questionnaire in this booklet and return it to any mobile or static library in Suffolk.

If you need further information please either email **librariesconsultation@suffolk.gov.uk** or telephone: **01473 265086.**

All information relating to this consultation is available on the county council's website: **www.suffolk.gov.uk/sld**

All responses must be received no later than 16 October 2011.

What happens next?

All responses received during the consultation period will be analysed and the results reported to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet when it meets on 8 November 2011.

Subsequently the consultation response and the decisions taken by Cabinet will be reported to the meeting of Full Council on 15 December 2011.

Any changes approved will not come into effect before 1 April 2012.

Appendix 1: Proposed List of Mobile Library Stops to Cease

Brandon	Manor House Close Pond Lane
Bury St Edmunds	Chestnut Court Glastonbury Court Hanover Close Moreton Hall Community Centre Raedwald Drive
Debenham	Bridge House Coopersfield Sackvylle Street
Ipswich	Ballater Close Brockley Crescent Bromeswell Road Brunswick Road Cavan Road Cedarcroft Road (Thomas Eldred car park) Chilton Road Downside Close Drop-in Centre Queens Way Foxhall Road (Heathlands Pub) Garrick Way (Castle Court) Glenavon Road Gleneagles Road Inverness Road Lambourne Road Margaret Catchpole/Cliff Lane Mayfield Road Meadowvale Close Moffat Avenue Murrills Road, Warren Heath Newbury Road Penshurst Road Ravenswood School Rushmere Road Sherbourne Road Sidegate Avenue The Cottage, Old Norwich Road Ulster Avenue Waterford Road (Mayo Court) West Meadows
Kessingland	Romany Lane

Kesgrave	The bell
Lakenheath	Quayside Court
Leiston	Old Abbey
Long Melford	Westgate Street
Lowestoft	Arbor Lane, Pakefield Faversham Court/Silverwood Close, Pakefield Lansdowne Road, Pakefield Stradbroke Road, Pakefield Westwood Avenue/Suffolk Punch
Mildenhall	Milden Court Ship Gardens St Catherine's Close St Mary's Close Wamil Court
Newmarket	Fielding Way Hanover Close
Oulton Broad	Burnt Hill Way Holly Hill, Camps Heath Whiting Road
Stowmarket	Resource Centre Just Learning Nursery
Thurston	Cavendish Hall Community Centre Furze Close Planche
Woodbridge	Morley Avenue

Questionnaire

1. Do you use the mobile library service in Suffolk?

Yes	☐	No	☐

2. Do you currently use a mobile library in one of the following locations?

Brandon	☐	**Lowestoft (including Pakefield)**	☐
Bury St Edmunds	☐	**Mildenhall**	☐
Debenham	☐	**Newmarket**	☐
Ipswich	☐	**Oulton Broad**	☐
(within Ipswich Borough – including Westbourne, Whitehouse, Whitton, Castle Hill, Warren Heath, Stoke Park, Priory Heath, and Gainsborough)		**Stowmarket**	☐
		Thurston	☐
		Woodbridge	☐
Kesgrave	☐	**No, I don't use a mobile library in these locations**	☐
Lakenheath	☐		
Leiston	☐	**Don't know**	☐
Long Melford	☐		

3. How regularly do you use a mobile library?

Every 2 weeks	☐	**Less often**	☐
Every 4 weeks	☐		

4. If your mobile library service stop was removed, how would you access library services? (you may tick more than one box)

I would use my nearest static library instead	☐
I would look to use the home library service instead	☐
I would consider using the online library service more	☐
I would consider using the Ebook facility	☐
I would use the library service less	☐
I would not use the library service at all	☐
Other (please specify)	☐

5. If your current mobile stop was reduced to a four weekly or monthly service how would this affect your usage of the overall libraries network?

I would continue to use the service based on its new rota ☐

I would consider using the online library service more ☐

I would use my nearest static library instead ☐

I would consider using the Ebook facility ☐

I would use the library service less ☐

I would look to use the home library service instead ☐

I would not use the library service at all ☐

Other (please specify) ☐

[text box]

6. Do you use your local static library (ie your local town centre, suburb or village library)? If yes, which static library or libraries do you frequently use?

Aldeburgh	☐	Great Cornard	☐	Needham Market	☐
Beccles	☐	Hadleigh	☐	Newmarket	☐
Brandon	☐	Halesworth	☐	Oulton Broad	☐
Bungay	☐	Haverhill	☐	Rosehill	☐
Bury St Edmunds	☐	Ipswich County	☐	Saxmundam	☐
Capel St Mary	☐	Ixworth	☐	Southwold	☐
Chantry	☐	Kedington	☐	Stoke	☐
Clare	☐	Kesgrave	☐	Stowmarket	☐
Debenham	☐	Kessingland	☐	Stradbroke	☐
Elmswell	☐	Lakenheath	☐	Sudbury	☐
Eye	☐	Lavenham	☐	Thurston	☐
Felixstowe	☐	Leiston	☐	Westbourne	☐
Framlingham	☐	Long Melford	☐	Wickham Market	☐
Gainsborough	☐	Lowestoft	☐	Woodbridge	☐
Glemsford	☐	Mildenhall	☐		
Other (please specify)	☐				

[text box]

7. In the accompanying document the proposals to move from a bi-weekly service to a monthly or four weekly service were outlined. Please tell us which of these options you would LEAST support?

Moving to a four weekly service ☐   Moving to a monthly service ☐

8. Do you have any further or alternative suggestions which you feel would help maintain the mobile library service on a reduced budget?

Please note that this section is optional and you don't have to complete these questions if you don't want to. If you choose not to answer these questions, please tick the 'Do not want to say' option so that we are aware of your choice.

The information you provide will be used for monitoring purposes only and your anonymity is assured. Any information provided is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be treated as strictly confidential.

9. If you choose not to answer any of these questions, please tick the 'Do not want to say' option so that we are aware of your choice.

Do not want to say	☐

10. Are you:

Male	☐	Female	☐	Do not want to say	☐

11. Which age group do you fit into?

Under 16	☐	35-44	☐	65-74	☐
16-24	☐	45-54	☐	75+	☐
25-34	☐	55-64	☐	Do not want to say	☐

12. Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? (Long standing illness means anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time).

Yes	☐	No	☐	Do not want to say	☐

If yes, please specify

13. If Yes, does this illness or disability limit your activities in any way?

| Yes | ☐ | No | ☐ |

14. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

Asian or Asian British: Indian	☐	Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	☐
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	☐	Mixed: White and Black African	☐
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	☐	Mixed: White and Asian	☐
Any other Asian background – please specify in the box below.	☐	Any other Mixed background – please specify in the box below.	☐
Black or Black British: Caribbean	☐	White: British	☐
Black or Black British: African	☐	White: Irish	☐
Any other Black background – please specify in the box below.	☐	Any other White background – please specify in the box below.	☐
Chinese	☐	Do not want to say	☐
Other ethnic group (please specify)	☐		

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you have any questions about the survey, please email **librariesconsultation@suffolk.gov.uk** or telephone **01473 265086**

Please complete this four page questionnaire, and return it to any mobile or static library in Suffolk by 16 October 2011.