

Decision Maker: PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RENEWAL AND RECREATION
For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Renewal and Recreation
Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 1st April 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: BROMLEY LIBRARY SERVICE - PROPOSAL FOR
REORGANISATION

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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason

- 1.1 As part of the budget setting process for 2014/15 Members put forward a number of recommendations across a range of services in order to achieve the necessary budgetary savings required to achieve a balanced budget for 2014/15. This included a proposal to reduce the Library service budget by £300k. Library service staff were notified in writing on 16th December 2013 of this proposal and were informed that formal consultation would commence following the Executive meeting in January 2014. A meeting was also held on 19th December with the Trade Unions and Departmental Representatives to inform them of the budget situation. The Executive has now formally agreed to the budget reductions for 2014/15.
- 1.2 This report sets out in more detail for members consideration the scope of the proposed changes to the Library Service to achieve the budget saving identified and seek member's views on the proposals
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 That the Renewal & Recreation Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee note the content of this report and provide comments to the Renewal & Recreation Portfolio Holder who will confirm the basis of the proposed changes subject to the outcome of consultation. with regard to the following:

2.1.1 The proposed changes to operating hours;

2.1.2 The deletion of the mobile library service;

- 2.1.3 The market testing of some functions relating to site management for library buildings.**
- 2.1.4 That the outcome of staff, library users' and site officers' consultation will be reported back to members at the next Renewal and Recreation PDS meeting on 24th June 2014 for decision by the Portfolio Holder, Renewal and Recreation**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable New Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Net estimated savings of £300k from April 2015/16 and £114k for 2014/15
 2. Ongoing costs: £300k from April 2015/16
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Libraries Service
 4. Total current budget for this head: £4,761,880
 5. Source of funding: Existing Revenue Budget 2013/14
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 117.56 ftes
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 2,000,000 visits per annum
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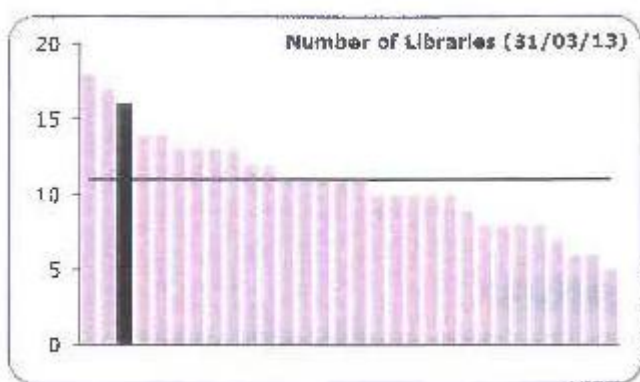
Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

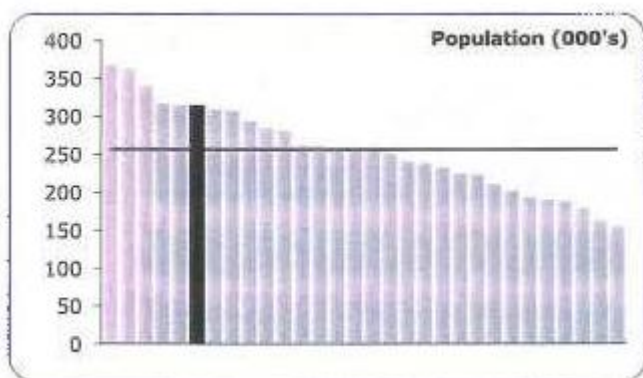
3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 As Members will be aware, the Council is facing a significant 'budget gap' over the four year planning forecast. This budget gap rises to over £52m per annum by 2017/18, particularly in light of the expected loss in Government funding which is expected to increase sharply from 2016/17. The Library Service is not immune from reductions in public expenditure and it is clear that library services will need to reduce costs and identify new ways of working, particularly through the maximisation of technology such as Radio Frequency Identification Data (RFID), which is already installed in four of the boroughs libraries, which enables greater self-service by customers.
- 3.2 The current Library service is provided from 15 library buildings which are tiered to reflect the potential catchment areas and range of services provided. Bromley Central Library has the largest stock to choose from and Orpington Library and Beckenham Library have slightly smaller but still comprehensive collections.
- 3.3 Biggin Hill, Chislehurst, Petts Wood and West Wickham are Neighbourhood Libraries, with medium-sized collections and circulating stock to support customer choice.
- 3.4 Anerley, Burnt Ash, Hayes, Mottingham, Penge, Shortlands, Southborough and St Paul's Cray are Community Libraries. These are smaller than the Neighbourhood Libraries and have popular materials and dynamic collections so that users are always presented with something new. The stock of the Community Libraries is aimed at two particular target groups: the active elderly and children. The 2003 PLUS survey of Bromley users found that 36% of adult library users were retired. Work is currently progressing on the development of a new library at Penge, it is anticipated that this new library will open in August 2014, at which time the existing Anerley and Penge libraries will close.
- 3.5 Specialist services include the Local Studies Library, the Archive Service and an extensive Reference and Information Service. The Local Studies Library in Bromley Central Library offers resources going back hundreds of years, on topics related to the London Borough of Bromley and its environs. It has specialist collections on The Crystal Palace, Walter de la Mare and H G Wells. As well as housing the archives for the borough, it also has extensive family history resources.
- 3.6 Bromley Central Library provides an extensive reference and information service through a comprehensive collection of books, newspapers and periodicals. It offers a wide-ranging enquiry services, as well as fax and photocopying facilities and by means of computer and Wi-Fi provision access to online databases, internet and MS Office packages.
- 3.7 A mobile library service regularly visits areas furthest from branches and the Home Library Service is available for housebound readers. The Home Library Service provides a library service to residential homes, sheltered housing units and to individual housebound customers within the London Borough of Bromley.
- 3.8 Access to a wide range of Council information and services online and in person is available at all libraries, including contacting the Council online for housing matters or reporting problems such as an abandoned vehicle or other road or waste services issues, purchasing garden waste collection stickers and food waste liners.
- 3.9 A network of "Peoples Network" computers in every Bromley library is free for anyone to use, subject to agreement to the terms of the acceptable use policy.

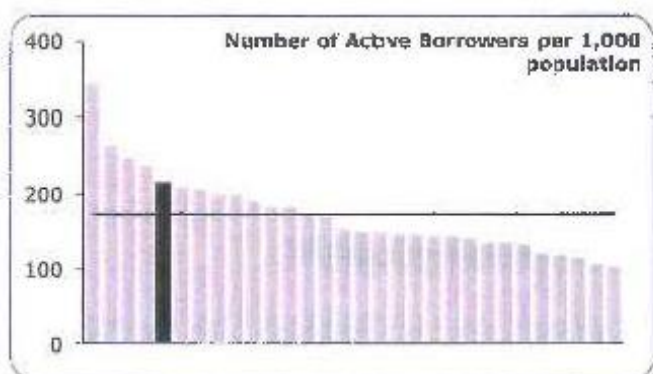
- 3.10 In addition the libraries host a range of events and learning opportunities, including Baby Bounce and Rhyme, Chatterbooks, Email for Beginners, Internet Training for Beginners, Older and Bolder Computer Clubs, Reading Groups, Silver Surfers Computer Clubs, Stay and Play, Story Times and Teenage Reading Group.
- 3.11 The Public Library and Museums Act 1964 requires local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all those who live, work or study in the borough. Users are not required to join the library services unless they wish to borrow materials. Bromley Library Service requires proof of identity and address for those wishing to join.
- 3.12 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has just released its latest comparative profiling of library services, where Bromley's Library Service has been compared to 29 other Greater London Library authorities (December 2013). This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the borough library service and compares it against a number of other library authorities. Of particular relevance to this report is the following:



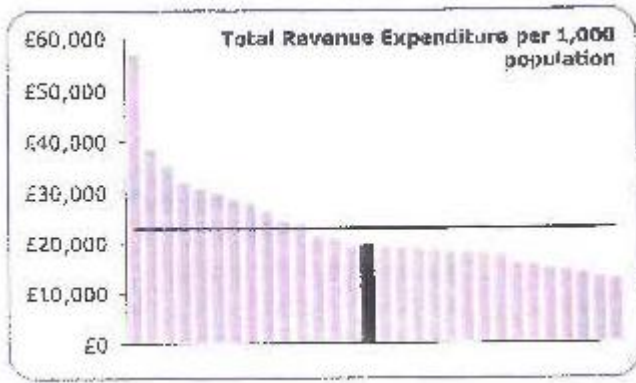
The chart on the left compares the London Borough of Bromley with all other London authorities. Bromley has 16 libraries (15 static libraries and one mobile library service) compared to an average of 11 in its comparative group. Bromley has one of the highest numbers of libraries within the group giving an indication of the scale of the existing library service.



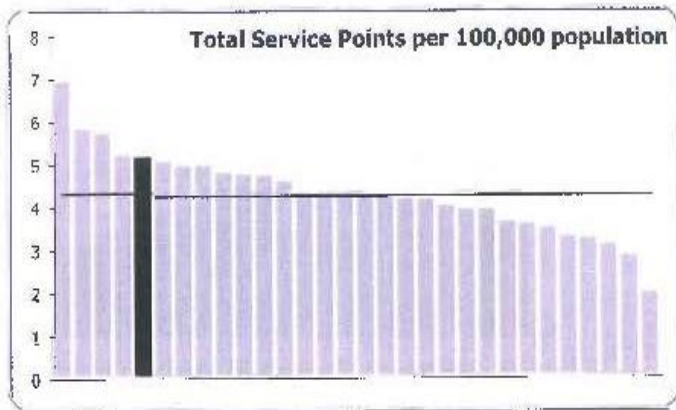
Bromley is the sixth largest of the 30 authorities compared to in this table.



The number of active borrowers per 1000 population is a key indication of how well the library service engages with the public. Bromley is currently in the top quartile suggesting that the library service engages well with the population when compared with the other authorities.



Bromley comes out as being in the middle of the comparison group which suggests that its costs are similar to the group as a whole.



Bromley has a greater number of service points (libraries) per 100,000 of population than the Greater London average.

- 3.13 The proposed £300,000 budget reductions for the service are so significant that if the Council is to avoid closing any existing static sites it will mean changing opening hours across the service. The challenge will be to ensure that the library service provides value for money, high performance and a customer focused service within these financial constraints. It will be a difficult time for all library service staff and there is a need for staff to continue to be flexible and to be able to respond to the challenges facing the service.
- 3.14 In order to meet the required budgetary savings a range of reductions in opening hours, and consequent reduction in staffing levels, have been considered. Informing these proposals are statistical data showing the declining use of services in certain areas; sample hourly counts of visits; and customer consultation previously carried out. The proposals are based on analysis of the above and the aim to keep the network of libraries open for the maximum length of time possible within the agreed budget.
- 3.15 In order to inform the proposed changes, visitor numbers to each library were counted at the end of each operating hour that the library was open for. The results show the number of people coming into each library each hour, but they do not show how long each visit lasts. Visitor number counts were conducted over three separate weekly periods, 1st – 7th July 2013, 2nd – 8th December 2013 and the 3rd – 9th February 2014.

Analysis of Opening Hours Surveys – July and December 2013; and February 2014

- 3.16 These visitor counts gave the following evidence which supports the proposed changes to opening hours.
- **Central and Beckenham**
The hours of 6pm to 7pm and 7pm to 8pm are consistently the quietest hours of the day. (Evening meetings in the halls at the Central Library can sometimes inflate the figure as the counters are at the front entrance).

- **Chislehurst, Petts Wood and West Wickham**

The hours of 6pm to 7pm and 7pm to 8pm are consistently the quietest hours of the day. The hour of 5pm to 6pm is quieter than the half hour 9.30 to 10am which suggests it is best to shorten the end rather than the beginning of the day.

- **Hayes**

The hours of 6pm to 8pm are not at all well used. In addition Burnt Ash only opens for three days per week but accommodates a greater number of visitors than Hayes does over four days. It should therefore be possible to open for an equivalent number of hours.

- **Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough and St Paul's Cray**

These libraries are all significantly quieter between the hours of 5 to 8pm than the rest of the day. They all also have a dip in usage in the middle of the day which should help mitigate the effect of a lunch time closure.

3.17 The resulting information from these counts is set out in Appendix 1.

3.18 The new Penge Library opening hours and staffing levels have recently been consulted and reported on and therefore no further changes are proposed there. Biggin Hill Library's opening hours are largely governed by the extensive opening hours of the whole centre including the pool and therefore there are no proposed changes affecting that either. Orpington Library's opening hours were amended with its transfer to the town centre in 2011 and there are no proposed opening hour changes there. Burnt Ash Library is only open for 3 days per week and it is felt that any further reduction would not be viable.

Proposed Changes

3.19 The changes currently being proposed have in part been informed by the library survey undertaken in Spring 2012. The conclusions from this survey in respect to opening hours, as reported to the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on 10th July 2012 were to:

- Reduce the number of hours open each day rather than the number of days open each week
- Continue to close at 5pm on Saturday, rather than extending to 6pm
- Open an hour later in the morning
- Do not close at lunch time (any other trimming of the hours is preferable to this).

Note: the consultation that was undertaken in 2012 did not include questions on changes to the Mobile Library Service.

3.20 The proposal that is currently subject to both staff and user consultation is for a reduction in Library opening hours (excluding the Mobile Library hours) from 605 hours per week to 527.5 per week hours (this represents a 13% reduction in total opening hours). It is proposed that this reduction in opening hours is achieved by a combination of:

- Reduction by one of the number of nights that the library is open until 8pm at each of the following – Central, Beckenham, Chislehurst, Petts Wood, Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough, St Paul's Cray and West Wickham.
- Reduction in the opening hours at Hayes Library to match the total of Burnt Ash Library. (21.5 hours)

- To open Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough and St Paul's Cray for four days per week instead of five.
- To close for one hour at lunch time at Mottingham, Southborough and St Paul's Cray, bringing them in line with the other community libraries Burnt Ash, Shortlands and Hayes.
- To close at 5.30pm instead of 6pm at Chislehurst , Mottingham, Petts Wood, Shortlands, Southborough, St Paul's Cray , and West Wickham.

3.21 The existing and proposed opening hours are shown in Appendix 2. A summary sheet setting out the existing opening hours and proposed new opening hours is shown in Appendix 3.

3.22 In order to create a staffing structure that will provide the best possible coverage for the new opening hours it will be necessary to carry out a complete overhaul of the library staff establishment. This will include rectifying some of the imbalances in allocation of staffing that have occurred through previous ad hoc reductions in the staffing budget over several years. In addition a small relief team will be created reporting to the Operations Officer to improve the ability to provide coverage in a more systematic way. These changes should help to alleviate some of the current problems with continually re-allocating staff from the larger libraries to fill gaps.

3.23 In addition it will be necessary to restructure the management levels in order to contribute towards the overall savings required. It is proposed that the current Group structure will be removed with the number of Group Managers being reduced and the remaining posts re-designated as Assistant Operations Managers with cross-borough responsibilities. The number of Assistant Group Manager posts would also be reduced and these posts re-designated as Library Managers with each one responsible for one of the largest 3 libraries in the Borough. The Library Manager posts would report directly to the Operations Manager which will have the benefit of reducing the hierarchy, and they will be part of the Operations Management Team.

3.24 The proposals for the new structure is to provide the best coverage arrangements for the new opening hours. The main consequence of this is the proposed change in balance from full time positions to part time positions resulting in an overall increase in the number of staff working on a part time basis and a reduction in full time posts.

3.25 The current and proposed staffing structures are shown at Appendices 4 and 5.

Mobile Library

3.26 The Mobile Library Service was originally established in the late 1950s to serve customers living furthest from fixed branch libraries at a time when car ownership was much less extensive than it now is. Its particular value is for those with limited mobility. Due to obvious space constraints its stock is of necessity rather limited. It is therefore targeted at children and retirement age customers.

3.27 Library data shows that between 2009 and 2013 the number of items borrowed dropped by over 30% from 31,636 to 22,046. During the same period the number of visits dropped by 26% from 27,775 to 20,561. In 2010/11 271 new members were registered on the Mobile Library but in 2012/13 it was just 108, a reduction of 60%. This is easily the most rapid rate of decline of all the libraries with the exception of St Paul's Cray.

- 3.28 A similar analysis of usage of the mobile library service was undertaken to that of the static library service over the same three week period the data from this is included within Appendix 6. A further mapping exercise has been carried out which looks to overlay the known use of the mobile service against the static libraries, allowing for a one and a half mile travel distance. The outcome of this is out of the 37 mobile sites, 24 fall within the radius of existing static library sites. Furthermore, an analysis of use over the last six months reveals that 160 people only used the mobile library service more than once in this period.
- 3.29 The CIPFA comparative data referenced in paragraph 3.12 shows that 70% of the 29 Greater London authorities do not now have a mobile service
- 3.30 Those customers with serious mobility issues who are eligible for the Home Library Service can be transferred to that to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. It is therefore proposed that this service be discontinued as a result of this review.

Library User Consultation.

- 3.31 Given the reaction across the country to proposals to amend library numbers and operating hours the Council is seeking to ensure that it has undertaken the necessary consultation on these proposed service changes, and that it has fully considered, and where required, implemented changes to the policy in response to the results of the consultation exercise. This is to ensure that in implementing any proposed changes the Council continues to meet its statutory and legal requirements as set out under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, whereby it has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service. The Courts have been clear that this is a judgement for the Council to make in the first instance as:
- The Council has intimate knowledge of local conditions and needs and has direct democratic accountability to the local population
 - The Council must be able to demonstrate that it is not acting in a careless or unreasonable way
 - The Council is not making decisions that may be outside the proper bounds of the Council's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local Bromley community
 - The Council has explained, analysed and properly justified its proposals
 - That the proposals are not likely to lead to a breach of national library policy.

Community Consultation (EIA)

- 3.32 To ensure that the Council is meeting the points raised above, the Council believes that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) needs to be completed and additionally consideration should be given as to whether or not a Needs Assessment should also be undertaken.
- 3.33 The purpose of conducting an EIA is to obtain a profile of how an area of Council activity affects diverse sections of the community, and to identify any adverse impact that is unjustifiable. Where such instances may occur the purpose of the EIA is to take remedial action in the form of an Action Plan.

- 3.34 An EIA examines the following groups with 'protected characteristics': Age; Disability; Gender; Marriage and Civil partnership; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion and belief; Transgender or Transsexual
- 3.35 The EIA should determine if:
- The service is accessible for all groups
 - There will be a negative impact on one or more the equality groups, or if they are equality neutral
 - Could the service change affect one or more of the group in a different way to another group?
 - Establish whether different equality groups have different needs
 - Establish whether the function contributes to or hinders equality of opportunity.
- 3.36 The Council is proposing to consult only with users via exit surveys as the consultation in spring 2012 included a resident survey.
- 3.37 The questions reflect the proposed service changes, as they affect each library, and also include demographic / other questions to ensure a balanced sample that includes the views from people with protected characteristics who may visit at particular times.
- 3.38 As the opening hours differ between libraries, and the degree of attachment to each library might vary, it is important to take into account feedback from users of each library in considering the changes at each location.
- 3.39 To maximise the robustness of the surveys and to enable better comparability of results for the different libraries, the questionnaires are as consistent as possible.
- 3.40 However, it is also important that the questions used at each library reflect the proposed changes facing it. Research is envisaged at 10 out of Bromley's 14 libraries. Excluded are Biggin Hill, Burnt Ash, Penge, and Orpington, where there are no proposed changes to the Library opening hours.

Sample size - Library users

150 surveys from visitors at:

Central
Beckenham
West Wickham
Petts Wood
Chislehurst
Hayes
(Total = 900)

At these libraries the proposed changes are minimal (a maximum reduction of 7.7% of opening hours), and therefore a smaller sample is required.

3.41 At libraries where more significant change is proposed the following sample will be required.

300 surveys from visitors at:

Mottingham
Shortlands
St Pauls Cray
Southborough
(Total 1200)

3.42 In total this will produce 2100 completed questionnaires from users of individual libraries. At the analysis stage it will be necessary to weight the data to reflect the frequency of visiting each library, as this will give a more accurate picture of the views of library users as a whole, although we will have to accept that the sample will exclude visitors to four of the borough's libraries that are unaffected by the proposed changes. While it would be of some value to include them it is considered that the exercise should focus on achieving actionable results rather than including all libraries for the sake of completeness.

3.43 In addition to the proposals to amend library opening hours, further management action is necessary to address in year budget pressures in order that the library service remains within its allocated budget. Therefore, in line with this ambition and as part of the annual budget setting process, the role of the site officers has been explored to identify whether efficiencies can be found. In order to achieve this it is proposed to reorganise the work of site officers employed by the Library Service. The proposals are:

- The provision of an enhanced security role at the library, delivered through a contract with an external security contractor;
- The transfer of some functions, such as cleaning, to specialist contractors;
- The transfer of some functions, such as stock control to other library staff;
- The delivery of some functions be retained in-house such as repairs, and functions such as set-ups, that are performed across the library network.
- The deletion of some functions, such as supervisory functions, which by the nature of the review, will no longer be required.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This proposed review of the Library Service is entirely consistent with the Council's objectives around Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres as well as being in line with the Council's broader financial strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposals in this report should result in a net saving of £300k from April 2015/16, with a part year effect of £114k. More detailed information will be provided in a future report following the outcome of staff consultation.

5.2 Any potential redundancy costs will be met from the central contingency provision for redundancy/early retirement costs arising from budget savings.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There were a number of pieces of legislation that affected the authorities decision making on the delivery of a library service, in particular:
- 6.1.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires the authority to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service. The terms “comprehensive and efficient” are not defined within the Act; however the Act requires local authorities to provide, free of charge, access for people who live, work or study in their area to borrow or refer to books and other material in line with their needs and requirements.
- 6.1.2 The Equality Act 2010 further places a duty on a public body to carry out Equality Impact Assessments as soon as a new policy, function or service is considered.
- 6.1.3 The Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act 2007 and the new Statutory Guidance for the Duty to involve as it places authorities under a duty to consider the possibilities for provision of information to, consultation with and involvement of representatives of local persons across all authority areas.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The proposals for a reorganisation of the library service have redundancy implications and formal consultation, in line with the Council’s procedures for managing change, is now underway with staff, Trade Unions, Staff Side Secretary and Departmental Representatives. They are being consulted on the impact on staff of the proposed changes to the library opening hours.
- 7.2. In relation to the proposal to market test some site management functions, informal consultation with staff and their representatives commenced in March 2014.
- 7.3 Further communication with staff and their representatives on all these proposals will be taking place before the date of the Committee and any feedback from these discussions will be provided at the meeting.
- 7.4 If Members agree to the recommendation to market test certain site management functions staff and their representatives will be engaged and consulted as early as practicable at each stage of the process going forward, subject of course to any commercially sensitive information. Any staffing implications arising from the recommendations to market test site management functions will need to be carefully planned for and managed in accordance with Council policies and procedures and with due regard for the existing framework of employment law. Any tendering process will consider whether or not the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) would apply and the consequential legal and financial implications arising from these proposals. Early legal advice based on the approach set out in the report indicates that TUPE is unlikely to apply in this case. Further legal advice will be sought during the consultation process.

Non-Applicable Sections:	None
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Renewal and Recreation Libraries Survey Outcome of Consultation – 10 th July 2012. London Borough of Bromley CIPFA Comparative Profile Public Libraries