

Decision Maker: 1. **Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder**

2. **Executive on 16th July 2014**

**For Pre Decision Scrutiny by the Renewal and Recreation
PDS Committee on:**

Date: 23rd June 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **BROMLEY LIBRARY SERVICE - OUTCOME OF
CONSULTATION**

Contact Officer: Colin Brand, Assistant Director Leisure and Culture
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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of the staff and library user consultation, that has been undertaken since the meeting of this Committee on the 1st April 2014. In response to the outcome of the consultation, the report makes a number of recommendations to achieve the necessary budget savings for 2014/15.
- 1.2 In order to maintain an effective service within the reduced operating hours and staff hours, it is necessary to install Radio Frequency Identification Data (RFID) equipment in all of the boroughs libraries at a cost of £275,000 to enable full customer self-service.
- 1.3 The report that went to the Renewal and Recreation Committee on the 1st April 2014 also set out proposals to reorganise the work of the Library Site Officers subject to the outcome of consultation. This work is ongoing and the outcome will be reported to members in a separate report to the Committee meeting on the 2nd September 2014.
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2. **RECOMMENTATIONS**

- 2.1**
- (a)** That the Renewal and Recreation Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee note the content of this report, including the outcome of the staff and library user consultation and provide comments to the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder.
 - (b)** That the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder consider the outcome of the consultation and the comments of the R&R PDS Committee and agree the changes as set out in this report particularly the changes to operating hours as set out in appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2** The Executive to agree the deletion of the mobile library service as set out in paragraph 7.13.

Corporate Policy

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

1. Cost of proposal: Net savings of £300k from April 2015/16 and £100k for 2014/15
 2. Ongoing costs: £300k savings from April 2015/16
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Library Services
 4. Total current budget for this head: £4,656,440
 5. Source of funding: Existing Revenue Budget 2014/15
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 118.81 Fte's
 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 At the meeting of the Renewal and Recreation Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee on the 1st April 2014, Members were reminded of the Councils financial position over the four year planning forecast and the likely budget gap that the Council would face by 2017/18. As part of a broad range of measures aimed at addressing this budget gap the Council had opted to reduce the Libraries revenue budget by a sum of £300,000 for the financial year 2014/15. In order to achieve a balanced budget, the paper presented to Members set out a number of options to reduce library opening hours, whilst simultaneously, preserving the current fixed library network. Furthermore, it was proposed within the report to delete the mobile library service.
- 3.2 Prior to agreeing to either amend operating hours or cease the provision of a mobile library service, Members agreed to officers undertaking a consultation exercise with existing library users to gauge their reaction to the proposed changes to opening hours and the cessation of the mobile library service. The local authority has a statutory duty as set out under the Public Libraries and Museums act 1964 whereby it must 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.
- 3.3 Running in tandem with this exercise, staff, trade unions and departmental representatives were consulted. This report, therefore provides members with feedback on both pieces of work.
- 3.4 Informed by previous research undertaken in Spring 2012 as well as studying hourly usage figures recorded at each library in three separate weeks in 2013/14, the authority devised three or four options as to how the reduction in hours could be achieved at each of 10 libraries. This included the option that the Council considered would cause least inconvenience, referred to as the ‘Council’s Proposal’, plus two or three Alternative Options for each library.
- 3.5 The prime aim of the research, as well as establishing various aspects of library usage patterns and awareness of services on offer, was to establish the level of perceived inconvenience caused by the Council’s Proposal at each library and whether visitors preferred the Council’s Proposal or one of the Alternative Options, or whether in fact they showed no preference.
- 3.6 As reported to members on the 1st April 2014, the proposed reduction in weekly opening hours varied for each library and more interviews were undertaken at the libraries where the proposed reduction was greatest, see Table 1. Only these 10 libraries were included in the research as no reduction to the opening hours was being proposed at the other libraries.

Table 1: Proposed Reduction in Opening Hours and Number of Interviews, by library

Library	Proposed Reduction in Opening Hours Per Week	Number of Interviews Undertaken
Southborough	16	300
St.Paul's Cray	16	300
Mottingham	16	300
Shortlands	11	300
Hayes	6	150
Petts Wood	3.5	150
West Wickham	3.5	150
Chislehurst	3.5	150
Central	2	150
Beckenham	2	150

- 3.7 The interviews were undertaken face-to-face with library visitors. They were carried out between 24 March and 2 May 2014, at different times of day (including late evenings) and days of week (including Saturdays). Laminated show cards were used in addition to the interviewer reading out the Council's Proposal and subsequently the Alternative Options for reducing the opening hours at each library, they were also in print for the respondent to see, read, digest and consider. The interviewers also had the current opening times for each library to hand to answer any queries.
- 3.8 In total 2,100 interviews were conducted. Given that some libraries are much busier than others, the survey results have been weighted to reflect the proportion of visitors each library received in 2013/14.
- 3.9 The survey included questions about all of the nine 'protected characteristics' stemming from the 2010 Equality Act. These include age, gender, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and legal marriage or civil partnership status. Respondents were given an option of 'Prefer not to say' to all of these questions.
- 3.10 The number of interviews achieved per day at each library varied tremendously, there were quieter times of the day and towards the end of the survey process, it was found many library visitors had already completed the interview. Many libraries have activities in the daytime or in the evening, and it was therefore not possible to interview such participants in a short window upon arrival or departure, unless they were willing to wait.

4. FINDINGS

- 4.1 More than 4 in 10 of those interviewed, 42%, said they visited the library where they were interviewed 'at least once a week' with an additional 3% saying they visited it 'every day'. A further 37% said they visited the library 'at least once a month'. Therefore, 82% had visited the library where they were interviewed 'at least once a month' or more often.
- 4.2 The proportion of visitors saying they 'always' or 'usually' bring children with them to the library is just under a quarter, 23% (lowest at Central with 14%). A further 10% said they 'sometimes' or 'occasionally' bring children with them. Just over two-thirds, 68%, said they 'never' bring children with them to the library.

- 4.3 When asked how they got to the library on the day of interview 43% said 'walk', a further 31% came by 'car' and 22% by 'bus'. Some 2% said they had used an 'other' means of transport and 1% said they had 'cycled' to the library that day. Library visitors were most likely to have walked to Mottingham (75%) and St. Paul's Cray (62%) and not surprisingly least likely to have walked to Central (32%), with only marginally more having walked to Southborough (34%) and Shortlands (35%).
- 4.4 Whichever method they used, just over half, 53%, took 10 minutes maximum to get to the library with 26% saying it took them '5 minutes or less' to get to the library and a further 27% saying it took them '6-10 minutes' to get there. The remaining 47% said it took them 'over 10 minutes'.
- 4.5 On the day of the interview the responses were split as to whether people had made a 'special visit' to come to the library or whether they had been 'doing something else as well' with 51% saying they had made a 'special visit' and 49% saying they had been 'doing something else as well' as visiting the library.
- 4.6 As might be expected those interviewed at Central library were by far the least likely to have made a 'special visit' to the library with just 37% having done so. Those most likely to have made a 'special visit' to the library on the day of the interview, were those interviewed at St. Paul's Cray (70%), Shortlands (67%), Mottingham (66%), Petts Wood and Hayes (both 63%) and Southborough (62%).

Awareness and Use of Services

- 4.7 When asked what they had done in the library in the last 12 months, 'to borrow a book' was the most likely answer with 79% of respondents having done so. The second most likely answer was 'to read' as cited by 32%, followed by 'to buy food waste bags or garden waste stickers' and 'to find something out' each by 31% of those interviewed. Just over a quarter, 27%, said they had been to the library 'to use the computers' and 22% reported that they had been to the library for some 'other reason'.
- 4.8 Some 1 in 5 respondents, 20%, had been to the library 'to borrow something else, such as CDs or DVDs' in the last 12 months, 14% had been 'for an activity such as a reading group or children's story time' and just 3% had 'visited with a school or pre-school group'.
- 4.9 Overall, four fifths, 80%, of visitors have access to the internet at home. The incidence of this was seen to be lowest amongst those interviewed at St. Paul's Cray, 63%, and next lowest amongst respondents at Mottingham with 74% saying they had internet access at home. Most likely to have access to the internet at home were those interviewed at Hayes library with 89% indicating they had.
- 4.10 When those with access to the internet at home were asked what they thought could be done using their computer by visiting the Council's website, 'renew books' was most likely to be known with 66% answering in this way, followed by 'search the library list for a particular book' by 59% and 'order books' by 56% of them. Furthermore, 45% knew they could 'order other items, CDs and DVDs', 43% knew they could 'renew other items' and 36% said 'download e-books'. Just over a quarter, 27% said 'none/ not sure'.
- 4.11 Those in Mottingham were least likely to know they could 'renew books' from the Council's website with 45% indicating this, followed by 51% at West Wickham, 53% at Beckenham and 59% at Hayes. By contrast, 77% of those at Central and 71% at Southborough knew they could 'renew books' from the Council's website.

Use of the Mobile Library

- 4.12 When asked if they had used the Council's mobile library service within the last 12 months, 99% said 'no' they had not and 1% said 'yes' they had done so. Given that all of the 2,100 people included in the survey were interviewed at a 'fixed' library, it would seem reasonable to suggest that they would be less likely to use the mobile library service than those residents of the Borough who are more restricted - both in terms of travelling as well as their physical mobility.
- 4.13 Of the respondents who had used the mobile library service within the last year, just over two-thirds, 69%, had used it 4 times or less, with 33% having used it either 'once or twice' and 36% having used the mobile library '3 or 4 times'.
- 4.14 Some 4% had used it '5-10 times' and likewise 4% had used the mobile library on a 'weekly' basis in the last 12 months, leaving 23% of those who had used it having done so on a 'fortnightly' basis.

5. PROPOSED REDUCTION IN OPENING HOURS – RESULTS BY LIBRARY

- 5.1 No comparisons are made across the libraries in terms of the results to preferences for the reduction in opening hours, as they not only varied for each library but so do the current opening hours. The results for each library are therefore commented upon individually. The libraries have been treated in two groups: those where the greatest reduction in opening hours was being proposed and those where a lesser reduction was being proposed.

Southborough, St. Paul's Cray, Mottingham and Shortlands Libraries

- 5.1.1 At each of the four libraries where the greatest reduction in opening hours was being proposed, Southborough, St. Paul's Cray, Mottingham and Shortlands - all currently have one late night opening, until 8pm, each week. Interviews were held on the relevant late evening, until 8pm, at each library during two different weeks - to coincide with any evening groups (where held).
- 5.1.2 Given the importance of ensuring the interviewees understood the options the interviewers highlighted the implication of all options offered to respondents as a means for reducing the opening hours at their library. For example, rather than just saying 'close at 5.30pm on Friday' the interviewer said 'close at 5.30pm on Friday instead of 8pm so there would be no late night opening', or, instead of 'close on Thursdays' saying to respondents 'closing on Thursday so that the library is open for 4 days a week'.
- 5.1.3 Tables 1 and 2 give the results to the questions posed to respondents interviewed at Southborough, St. Paul's Cray, Mottingham and Shortlands libraries.

Table 1: Council's Proposal for reducing opening hours inconvenience you in any way, if so, by how much, by library

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Q0a. Library			
		Southborough	St Paul's Cray	Mottingham	Shortlands
Base	1200	300	300	300	300
V51. Council's proposal for reducing opening hours inconvenience you, if so, by how much					
No	545 45%	152 51%	113 38%	123 41%	157 52%
Yes, very inconvenient	353 29%	64 21%	98 33%	119 40%	72 24%
Yes, fairly inconvenient	264 22%	69 23%	81 27%	50 17%	64 21%
Yes, not very inconvenient	38 3%	15 5%	8 3%	8 3%	7 2%

5.1.4 Respondents were then asked whether they preferred the Council's Proposal, Alternative Option A, Alternative Option B or whether in fact they had no preference as to how the opening hours at the library could be reduced.

Table 2: Preferred Option, by library

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Q0a. Library			
		Southborough	St Paul's Cray	Mottingham	Shortlands
Base	1200	300	300	300	300
V52. Prefer Council's proposal or an alternative option					
Council's Proposal	219 18%	66 22%	55 18%	46 15%	52 17%
Alternative Option A	254 21%	81 27%	71 24%	57 19%	45 15%
Alternative Option B	391 33%	67 22%	110 37%	117 39%	97 32%
No preferred option	336 28%	86 29%	64 21%	80 27%	106 35%

Southborough Library

5.1.5 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Monday and Tuesday at 5.30pm AND closing at 5.30pm on Friday instead of 8pm so there would be no late night opening AND closing on Thursday so that the library is open for 4 days a week AND closing for an hour for lunch on the 4 days it is open.

- Alternative Option A: As per the Council's Proposal but close on Monday rather than Thursday
- Alternative Option B: As per the Council's Proposal but stay open until 8pm on Fridays and close on either a Monday or Tuesday at 3pm instead of 5.30pm.

Survey Findings for Southborough Library:

- Just over half, 51%, said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Just over a fifth, 21%, said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and a similar proportion, 23% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 5% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at Southborough were most likely to say they had 'No Preferred Option' for reducing the opening hours with 29% answering in this way, followed by 'Alternative Option A' which was the preference of 27% of them.

St. Paul's Cray Library

5.1.6 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Monday and Thursday at 5.30pm AND closing at 5.30pm on Tuesday instead of 8pm so there would be no late night opening AND closing on Friday so that the library is open for 4 days a week AND closing for an hour for lunch on the 4 days it is open

- Alternative Option A: As per the Council's Proposal but close on Tuesday rather than Friday
- Alternative Option B: As per the Council's Proposal but stay open until 8pm on Tuesday and close on either a Monday or Thursday at 3pm instead of 5.30pm

Survey Findings for St. Paul's Cray Library:

- Some 38% said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- A third, 33%, said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and a further 27% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 3% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at St. Paul's Cray were most likely to say they preferred 'Alternative Option B' for reducing the opening hours as indicated by 37% of them

Mottingham Library

5.1.7 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Monday and Wednesday at 5.30pm AND closing at 5.30pm on Friday instead of 8pm so there would be no late night opening AND closing on Tuesday so that the library is open for 4 days a week AND closing for an hour for lunch on the 4 days it is open

- Alternative Option A: As per the Council's Proposal but close on Monday rather than Tuesday
- Alternative Option B: As per the Council's Proposal but stay open until 8pm on Fridays and close on either a Monday or Wednesday at 3pm instead of 5.30pm

Survey Findings for Mottingham Library:

- Of the respondents at Mottingham, 41% said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Some 40% indicated that the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient', a further 17% said it was 'fairly inconvenient' and 3% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at Mottingham were most likely to say they preferred 'Alternative Option B' for reducing the opening hours as indicated by 39% of them.

Shortlands Library

5.1.8 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND closing at 5.30pm on Monday instead of 8pm so there would be no late night opening AND close all day on Wednesdays so the library would be open 4 days a week

- Alternative Option A: As per the Council's Proposal but close on Friday rather than Wednesday
- Alternative Option B: As per the Council's Proposal but stay open until 8pm on Monday and close on either Tuesday or Friday at 3pm instead of 5.30pm

Survey Findings for Shortlands Library:

- Just over half, 52%, said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Just under a quarter, 24%, said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and a similar proportion, 21% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 2% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at Shortlands were most likely to say they had 'No Preferred Option' for reducing the opening hours with 35% answering in this way, followed by 'Alternative Option B' which was the preferred option of 32% of them

Central, Beckenham, Petts Wood, West Wickham, Chislehurst and Hayes Libraries

5.1.9 At the six libraries where a lesser reduction in opening hours was being proposed - Central, Beckenham, Petts Wood, West Wickham, Chislehurst and Hayes - all currently have two evenings where they are open late, until 8pm, each week (apart from Hayes which just has one). Library users were interviewed on the two different late evenings, until 8pm, at each Central, Beckenham, Petts Wood, West Wickham and Chislehurst and on two evenings on the same day of the week, until 8pm, in different weeks in Hayes - to coincide with any evening groups (where held).

5.1.10 Tables 3 and 4 give the results to the questions asked when interviewing at Central, Beckenham, Petts Wood, West Wickham, Chislehurst and Hayes libraries.

Table 3: Council's proposal for reducing opening hours inconvenience you in any way, if so, by how much, by library

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Q0a. Library					
		Central	Beckehnam	Petts Wood	West Wickham	Chislehurst	Hayes
Base	900	150	150	150	150	150	150
V51. Council's proposal for reducing opening hours inconvenience you, if so, by how much							
No	601 67%	104 69%	107 71%	119 79%	114 76%	100 67%	57 38%
Yes, very inconvenient	157 17%	22 15%	23 15%	15 10%	14 9%	32 21%	51 34%
Yes, fairly inconvenient	116 13%	20 13%	13 9%	13 9%	15 10%	17 11%	38 25%
Yes, not very inconvenient	26 3%	4 3%	7 5%	3 2%	7 5%	1 1%	4 3%

5.1.11 Respondents were then asked whether they preferred the Council's Proposal, Alternative Option A, Alternative Option B, Alternative Option C (apart from Hayes) or whether in fact they had no preference as to how the opening hours at the library could be reduced.

Table 4: Preferred Option, by library

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Q0a. Library					
		Central	Beckehnam	Petts Wood	West Wickham	Chislehurst	Hayes
Base	900	150	150	150	150	150	150
V52. Prefer Council's proposal or an alternative option							
Council's Proposal	198 22%	34 23%	27 18%	34 23%	51 34%	21 14%	31 21%
Alternative Option A	179 20%	11 7%	23 15%	32 21%	35 23%	46 31%	32 21%
Alternative Option B	76 8%	5 3%	6 4%	12 8%	6 4%	8 5%	39 26%
Alternative Option C	187 21%	68 45%	51 34%	25 17%	21 14%	22 15%	- -
No preferred option	260 29%	32 21%	43 29%	47 31%	37 25%	53 35%	48 32%

Central Library:

5.1.12 Council's Proposal: Closing on Tuesday at 6pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Thursday

- Alternative Option A: Close on Thursday at 6pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Tuesday
- Alternative Option B: Close on Friday at 4pm instead of 6pm
- Alternative Option C: Open at 10am Monday to Friday instead of 9.30am

Survey Findings for Central Library:

- Just over two thirds of those interviewed at Central, 69%, said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Some 15% said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and a similar proportion, 13% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 3% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient' to them
- Respondents at Central were most likely to say they preferred 'Alternative Option C' for reducing the opening hours at the library as indicated by 45% of them (**Note:** the focus of the interviewing was on the latter part of the day rather than first thing in the morning)

Beckenham Library:

5.1.13 Council's Proposal: Closing on Friday at 6pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Wednesday

- Alternative Option A: Close on Wednesday at 6pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Friday
- Alternative Option B: Close on Tuesday at 4pm instead of 6pm

- Alternative Option C: Open at 10am Monday to Friday instead of 9.30am (a saving of 2.5 hours but needed for consistency)

Survey Findings for Beckenham Library:

- Of those interviewed at Beckenham library, 71%, said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Some 15% said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and 9% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 5% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents interviewed at Beckenham library were most likely to say they preferred 'Alternative Option C' for reducing the opening hours at the library as indicated by 34% of them (**Note:** the focus of the interviewing was on the latter part of the day rather than first thing in the morning)

Petts Wood Library

5.1.14 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND on Monday at 5.30pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Thursday

- Alternative Option A: Close half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND on Thursday at 5.30pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Monday
- Alternative Option B: Close half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND on Saturday at 2.30pm instead of 5pm
- Alternative Option C: Close an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5pm AND on Monday at 6.30pm instead of 8pm

Survey Findings for Petts Wood Library:

- Some 79% of those interviewed at Petts Wood library said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Some 10% said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient', 9% said it was 'fairly inconvenient' and the remaining 2% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at Petts Wood library were most likely to say they had 'No Preferred Option' for reducing the opening hours with 31% answering in this way, followed by the 'Council's Proposal' which was the preferred option cited by 23% of them.

West Wickham Library:

5.1.15 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Thursday at 5.30pm AND on Friday at 5.30pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Monday

- Alternative Option A: Close half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Thursday at 5.30pm AND on Monday at 5.30pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Friday

- Alternative Option B: Close half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Thursday at 5.30pm AND on Saturday at 2.30pm instead of 5pm
- Alternative Option C: Close an hour earlier on Tuesday and Thursday at 5pm AND on Friday at 6.30pm instead of 8pm

Survey Findings for West Wickham Library:

- Just over three-quarters of those interviewed at West Wickham library, 76%, said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Some 9% said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and similarly 10% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 5% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at West Wickham library were most likely to say they preferred the 'Council's Proposal' for reducing the opening hours with 34% answering in this way

Chislehurst Library:

5.1.16 Council's Proposal: Closing half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND on Thursday at 5.30pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Monday

- Alternative Option A: Close half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND on Monday at 5.30pm instead of 8pm, leaving one 8pm closing per week on Thursday
- Alternative Option B: Close half an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5.30pm AND on Saturday at 2.30pm instead of 5pm
- Alternative Option C: Close an hour earlier on Tuesday and Friday at 5pm AND on Thursday at 6.30pm instead of 8pm

Survey Findings for Chislehurst Library:

- Of those interviewed at Chislehurst library, two-thirds, 67%, said 'no' the Council's Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Just over a fifth, 21%, said the Council's Proposal was 'very inconvenient' and a smaller proportion, 11% said it was 'fairly inconvenient'. The remaining 1% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was 'not very inconvenient'
- Respondents at Chislehurst were most likely to say they had 'No Preferred Option' for reducing the opening hours with 35% answering in this way, followed by 'Alternative Option A' which was the preference of 31% of them

Hayes Library

5.1.17 Council's Proposal: Closing on Thursday from 2pm-8pm, the total number of hours the library is normally open on a Thursday, leaving no late night opening and meaning that the library would be open 3 days a week

- Alternative Option A: Close on Tuesday from 2pm-6pm and close on Saturday at 3pm
- Alternative Option B: Close on Friday from 2pm-6pm and close on Saturday at 3pm

Survey Findings for Hayes Library:

- Some 38% of those interviewed at Hayes library said ‘no’ the Council’s Proposal would not inconvenience them in any way
- Just over a third, 34%, said the Council’s Proposal was ‘very inconvenient’ and a further quarter, 25%, said it was ‘fairly inconvenient’. The remaining 3% said that whilst it was inconvenient, it was ‘not very inconvenient’
- Respondents at Hayes were most likely to say they had ‘No Preferred Option’ for reducing the opening hours with 32% answering in this way. This was followed by ‘Alternative Option B’ which was the preferred option of 26% of those interviewed at Hayes library

Bromley Mobile Library Service

- 5.1.18 Two pieces of research were undertaken in relation to the mobile library service operated by Bromley Council. A face-to-face survey of mobile ‘users’ and a telephone survey of ‘non-users’. For the purpose of this research, mobile library ‘users’ were defined as those who had used the mobile library in the last 12 months; ‘non-users’ were defined as those who had not used the mobile library service in the last 12 months, if ever. In addition, the non-users were selected for living within a mile of any public mobile library stop.
- 5.1.19 The two surveys are reported upon separately in this document, both surveys included questions about all of the nine ‘protected characteristics’ stemming from the 2010 Equality Act: age, gender, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and legal marriage or civil partnership status. Respondents were given an option of ‘Prefer not to say’ to all of these questions.

Survey of Mobile Library Users

- Face-to-face interviews were conducted with mobile library users to gain an understanding of their patterns of usage and whether or not they had in fact used any other libraries in addition to the mobile library in the previous 12 months.
- A market research interviewer accompanied the mobile library on 12 days in total, during the period 27 March to 3 May, from the start to the end of the day. As the mobile library operates on six days of the week, Monday to Saturday, interviewing took place on two different Mondays, two different Tuesdays etc across the fieldwork period. Three of the 12 days, a quarter, were undertaken on weekdays during the school holidays to reflect the fact that the school holidays account for a quarter of all weeks of the year.
- The specific objectives were to assess:
 - Frequency of usage
 - The services used
 - Awareness of other relevant services (online and offline)
 - Levels of internet access at home
 - Levels of access to a vehicle in the daytime
 - How far respondents lived from the library stop at which they were interviewed and how they usually get to the mobile library
 - How often respondents took children with them to the mobile library, if at all
 - Had respondents used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months, if not, why

- If respondents had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months: which and how often, what they had done there in the last 12 months, how did they usually get there and how far away they live from the other library/ nearest other library (if more than one other library is used)
- In total 202 interviews were conducted, 187 as exit interviews from the mobile library and 15 with people walking in the vicinity (who lived locally) and who had used the mobile library service within the last 12 months. Interviews were conducted at both public and non-public library stops. At the majority of mobile library stops, at least one interview was achieved.

6. FINDINGS

Visiting the Mobile Library

- 6.1 Overall, 37% of those interviewed said they visited the mobile library 'at least once a week' and a further 25% said they did so 'at least every two weeks'. A further 24% said they used the mobile library 'at least once a month' and the remaining 13% used the service less often. Therefore, 86% of those interviewed said they used the mobile library 'at least once a month', or more often.
- 6.2 The proportion of mobile library users who said they 'always' or 'usually' bring children with them is 37% (31% said 'always' and 6% said 'usually') and a further 6% said they either 'sometimes' or 'occasionally' do, leaving 56% who said they 'never' bring children with them to the mobile library.
- 6.3 When asked how they usually come to the mobile library, the majority, 81% said they usually 'walk' and 18% said they usually came by 'car'. Just 0% (*1 person, rounded down to 0% because they represented less than 0.5% of the 202 respondents*) travelled by 'bus' and 0% (*1 person*) 'cycle' to the mobile library.
- 6.4 More than 9 in 10 of those interviewed said they lived 'less than 1.5 miles away' from the library stop at which they were interviewed, with 93% indicating this. Some 6% lived 'between 1.5 miles and 3 miles away' with the remaining 0% (*1 person*) living 'over 3 miles away' from the library stop of interview.
- 6.5 Respondents were asked how often they had access to a vehicle in the daytime and 67% said they 'always' had access and a further 3% said they 'usually' did, equating to 7 in 10 respondents 'always' or 'usually' having access to a vehicle in the daytime. A quarter, 25%, said they 'never' had access to a vehicle in the daytime and the remaining 4% said they either 'sometimes' or 'occasionally' did.

Awareness and Use of Services

- 6.7 In the last 12 months, 93% of those interviewed said they used the mobile library 'to borrow a book' as by far the most likely answer. The next most likely activity was 'to buy food waste bags or garden waste stickers' by 48% and 'to find something out' by 20% of respondents. Some 11% said they had used the mobile library 'to borrow something else, such as CDs or DVDs', a further 7% had 'visited with a school or pre-school group' and 4% said they had used the mobile library 'for some other reason'.
- 6.8 When respondents were asked if they were aware of 'the home library service', the split was fairly even with 52% saying 'yes' and 48% saying 'no' they were not aware.

- 6.9 When asked if they were aware of the 'online reservations and renewals' service, 58% said 'yes' and 42% said 'no' they were not aware. In terms of awareness of 'free E-book loans from the library website' almost 3 in 10, 29%, said 'yes' they were aware whilst 71% said 'no' they were not aware of this service.
- 6.10 To give the awareness of online services some context, three quarters of those interviewed, 75%, indicated 'yes' they did have access to the internet at home whilst 25% said 'no' they didn't.
- 6.11 Just over half of those interviewed, 57%, indicated 'yes' they had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months, whilst 43% said 'no' they had only used the mobile library service.
- 6.12 Amongst those who had not used any other library in the last 12 months, when asked the reason(s) why they had not done so, similar responses were grouped together. The top four answers were as follows
- 'the mobile library is convenient' by 52%
 - 'the other libraries are not convenient' by 24%
 - 'the mobile library meets needs' by 20%
 - 'friendly/ more personal' by 15%
- 6.13 Of those who had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months, the most likely to have been used was 'Orpington' by 59%, followed by 'Central' which had been used by 34% of them. The library at 'Petts Wood' had been used by 14%, 'Biggin Hill' by 10%, 'West Wickham' by 8% and 'Beckenham' by 6% of them. Some other libraries had also been used - but each by 3% or fewer of those who had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months. A point to note here is that some had used more than one other library, in addition to the mobile library, in the last 12 months.
- 6.14 When asked how often they had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months overall, 5% said that they go 'every day', 8% said 'at least once a week' and 38% said 'at least once a month'. This equates to just over half, 51%, of those who had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months saying they had done so 'at least once a month', or more often. Some 25% said they used another library/ libraries overall in the last 12 months 'at least once every three months', 19% 'at least once a year' and the remaining 4% said they had done so 'less often'.
- 6.15 Those respondents who said they had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months were then asked what they had used them for: the majority, 90%, said 'to borrow a book', markedly less, 28% said 'to find something out'. Just under a quarter, 24%, said 'to buy food waste bags or garden waste stickers' and 16% said 'to borrow something else, such as CDs or DVDs'. Some 13% said 'for an activity such as a reading group or children's story time' and 13% also said 'for some other reason'. 'To use the computers' was cited by 11% of respondents, 'to read' by 9% and 'visited with a school or pre-school group' by 4%, the least likely response.
- 6.16 When asked how they usually get to the other library/ libraries used, 51% said usually by 'car', 31% said by 'bus' and 17% usually 'walk'. The remaining 1% said by 'other' means.
- 6.17 Just under a third, 30%, said they lived 'under 1.5 miles away', some, 56% lived 'between 1.5 miles and 3 miles away' and 14% lived 'over 3 miles away' from the other library/ nearest other library used.

- 6.18 In terms of a brief profile of mobile library users, all were willing to give their age group: some 39% were aged '70+ years'; 13% were aged '60-69 years'; 27% were aged '40-59 years'; 18% were '20-39 years' old and 2% were aged '16-19 years'. In relation to gender, 79% were females and 21% males.
- 6.19 When asked if they had a health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities and which had lasted, or was expected to last, 12 months or more, some 72% said 'no' they did not; 16% said 'yes, limited a little' and 9% said 'yes, limited a lot'. The remaining 2% said they preferred not to answer the question.

Survey of Mobile Library Non-Users

- 6.20 In addition to the face-to-face interviews, a telephone survey was undertaken with 200 non-users of the service, defined as those who had not used the mobile library within the last 12 months. All respondents lived within a mile of any public mobile library stop. The 200 interviews were divided proportionately across the number of stops. Those interviewed broadly reflected the London Borough of Bromley's population from the 2011 census in terms of both age and gender.
- 6.21 The purpose of interviewing non-users of the mobile library by telephone was to:
- Establish levels of awareness of the mobile library service
 - Find out why respondents had not used the mobile library service in the last 12 months
 - Had respondents used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months, if not, why
 - If respondents had used another library/ libraries in the last 12 months: which and how often, what they had done there in the last 12 months, how did they usually get there and how far away they live from the other library/ nearest other library (if more than one other library is used)
- 6.22 All the telephone interviews were conducted between 22 April and 6 May 2014.

7. FINDINGS

- 7.1 Overall, 71% of respondents said 'yes' they were aware of the mobile library service, whilst 30% said 'no' they were not aware of it.
- 7.2 When those who were aware of the mobile library service were asked the reason(s) why they hadn't used it in the last 12 months, similar responses were grouped together and coded. The top four answers were as follows (*all other responses were given by 9% or fewer of the respondents*):
- 'prefer large/ bigger/ main libraries' by 21%
 - 'don't use a library/ no need' by 18%
 - 'I use another library/ other libraries' by 13%
 - 'buy books/ have books at home' by 11%
- 7.3 Although none of the respondents had used the mobile library service, they were then asked whether they had in fact used any other library/ libraries in the last 12 months to which some 56% said 'yes' they had done so and 44% said 'no' they hadn't.
- 7.4 Those who hadn't used any other library/ libraries in the last 12 months were asked the reason(s) for this and the responses were as follows (again similar responses were grouped

together and coded). The top four answers were as follows (*all other responses were given by 7% or fewer of the respondents*):

- 'buy books/ have books at home' by 26%
- 'don't use a library/ no need' by 25%
- 'don't read/ read much' by 24%
- 'read on Kindle/ tablet usually' by 13%

- 7.5 When those respondents who had used any other library/ libraries in the last 12 months were asked which they had used, Orpington was most likely to have been used with 65% of respondents citing it, followed by 19% who had used Central. Any other libraries were mentioned by 9% or fewer respondents.
- 7.6 When asked how often they went to these other library/ libraries, none said 'every day'. Some 21% said 'at least once a week' and a further 35% said 'at least once a month'. Therefore, 56% of all those who had used any other library/ libraries in the last 12 months, had done so 'at least once a month', or more often.
- 7.7 Some 26% said they had used other library/ libraries 'at least once every three months', a further 14% used these other library/ libraries 'at least once a year' and the remaining 4% said they did so 'less often'.
- 7.8 These respondents were then asked what they had used the other library/ libraries for in the last 12 months: the majority, 74%, said 'to borrow a book' followed by 37% who said 'to buy food waste bags or garden waste stickers' and 29% said 'to find something out'. 'To use the computers' was cited by 22%, 'to read' by 17% and 13% said each 'to borrow something else, such as CDs or DVDs' and 'for some other reason'. Some 10% said 'for an activity such as a reading group or children's story time' and 1% had 'visited with a school or pre-school group'.
- 7.9 When asked how they usually get to the other library/ libraries used, 44% said usually by 'car', 37% said they 'walk', 19% said they usually go by 'bus' and 1% used an 'other' means of getting there.
- 7.10 When asked where they lived in relation to the other library/ nearest other library used, 59% said they lived 'under 1.5 miles away', a further 37% lived 'between 1.5 miles and 3 miles away' and 4% lived 'over 3 miles away' from the other library/ nearest other library used.
- 7.11 In addition to the library user and staff consultation, a further set of hourly counts were undertaken over a seven day period in May 2014. As before, the statistics show the number of people coming into the individual libraries, but they do not show how long each visit lasts. The results from this latest count are shown in appendix 2, along with the data from the original hourly counts. Of note is the fact that the pattern of use has not changed and the information obtained from this latest count is consistent with that gathered over the three previous counts.
- 7.12 In light of the responses received from the staff and user consultation exercise and the information from the hourly counts it is proposed to recommend that the proposals as set out in the original report on the 1st April be agreed, with the exception of Mottingham Library. Given the feedback, from users and staff, it is recommended that Option B be agreed with respect to Mottingham Library, whereby the late night on a Friday is retained with a corresponding reduction in operating hours on a Wednesday afternoon. Whilst a higher level of 'inconvenience' was expressed by users of St. Pauls Cray Library, it is recommended that the hours are reduced as per the Council's original proposal as no representations were received from staff at this library, the numbers of people using the current late night remains

low and there continue to be security issues faced by customers and the staff operating late nights at this library. The final set of proposed library opening hours are set out in Appendix 1 along with the existing hours of operation for comparison purposes.

- 7.13 It is further proposed that the mobile library service be discontinued. Just over half (57%) of those mobile library users surveyed suggested that they regularly use another static library in the borough. A high percentage of existing mobile library users (71%) acknowledged that they had access to a car during the daytime. The Mobile Library was established in Bromley to serve customers living furthest from a fixed branch. When the service was introduced 50 years ago it was seen as a necessary service for a borough the size of Bromley which at 59 square miles is the largest London borough. At a time when car use was much less extensive, the need for an accessible physical service for all was so much greater before the onset of the internet, e-books, online renewals and online access to the Library catalogue.
- 7.14 A recent mapping exercise was carried out which looks to overlay the known use of the mobile service against the static libraries allowing for a 1.5 mile travel distance. The outcome of this exercise was that of the 37 mobile sites 24 fall within a 1.5 mile radius of a static library which is generally regarded as a suitable benchmark for Library provision
- 7.15 The remaining 13 mobile sites are within 1.6 and 4.0 miles away from static libraries. All are served by a variety of bus routes for which elderly and disabled residents are eligible to receive a free freedom pass, and are easily accessible by car.
- 7.16 The Home Library Service is available to any Bromley resident who is unable to:
- Travel to a Library due to disability or illness
 - Carry items to or from a library
 - Access a library for any reason e.g due to poor facilities e.g users with mobility problems.
- 7.17 Currently anyone wishing to use the Home Library Service should contact the Library Service. Mobile staff will actively promote the service to eligible customers as a preferred alternative if the Mobile is deleted. Previously only half of users were aware of this service, awareness has been raised and the profile raised as a result of the consultation.

Radio Frequency Identification Data (RFID) Equipment Investment of £275,000

- 7.18 In order to realise the £300k savings from the proposed new opening hours and staffing structure, it is necessary to implement a full roll out of new technology, in particular, self-service terminals in the form of RFID. At present, the Library Service has RFID in operation at four libraries, Central, Beckenham, Orpington and Biggin Hill, where it has been in operation for some time now. The new Penge library will also, as part of the refurbishment works have RFID installed. Self Service in the form of RFID has become the backbone of frontline library operations across the UK and wider afield. It allows library users to automatically borrow and return books, and enables staff to focus on the provision of a wider range of activities whilst simultaneously freeing up space in the libraries currently taken up by counters to improve the customer offer.
- 7.19 The cost of the RFID equipment and installation is £275k, broken down as follows:

Estimated Costs	£'000
RFID Equipment	200
Capita Installation Costs	45
Ancillary Works	30
Total	<u>275</u>

- 7.20 The Executive is requested to agree the one-off funding of £275k for the roll-out of the RFID system to the remaining libraries in order to realise the full £300k savings within the first 12 months following installation.
- 7.21 In addition to the one off capital costs highlighted above, there would be an on-going revenue cost of £19k per annum, based on a five year contract.
- 7.22 The introduction of RFID is considered crucial to support the reduction in operating hours and staffing complement. The roll-out of the RFID system will allow staff to interact more with customers and continue to provide a broad range of activities and events.

Impact on Staffing

- 7.23 In order to create a staffing structure that will provide the best possible coverage for the new opening hours a complete overhaul of the library staff establishment has been undertaken. This includes 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, including senior staff, will now be created reporting to the Operations Officer to improve the ability to provide coverage in a more systematic way.
- 7.24 The table below sets out the current and proposed staffing structure: -

Summary	Current	Proposed	Change
	Structure	Structure	
	FTEs	FTEs	FTEs
Group Managers	3.00	1.50	-1.50
Assistant Group Managers	3.00	3.00	0.00
Operations Officer	1.00	1.00	0.00
Library Supervisors	13.75	12.50	-1.25
Senior Customer Service Assistants	29.25	28.25	-1.00
Mobile Customer Service Supervisors	1.50	0.00	-1.50
Support Customer Service Assistants	36.06	31.25	-4.81
	87.56	77.50	-10.06

- 7.25 It can be seen that there will be a net reduction of 10.06 FTEs, which will be achieved by deleting the current vacant posts, equivalent to 9.5 FTEs. In addition, one group manager has requested voluntary redundancy and therefore the direct impact on staffing will be minimised, although some staff may be offered work at another location to maintain their existing hours.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The proposed review of the Library Service is entirely consistent with the Councils Objectives around Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres as well as being in line with the Councils broader financial strategy.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The recommendations set out in this report should result in net savings of £300k from April 2015/16 with a part year effect of £100k for 2014/15. Final savings will be dependent on the outcome of the selection process.
- 9.2 Any potential redundancy costs will be met from central contingency provision for redundancy /early retirement costs arising from budget savings. The table in 7.24 above shows a net reduction in staffing of 10.06 FTEs, however as there are 9.5ftes vacancies the impact on staffing is likely to be minimal.
- 9.3 In order to achieve this level of savings, it is necessary to roll out the RFID system to the remainder of the libraries. The estimated cost of the equipment and installation is £275k and the Executive is requested to agree the one-off funding required to realise the savings within 12 months of installation.
- 9.4 There are on-going costs of £19k per annum (£9k part year) for the on-going maintenance of the system for 5 years. It is expected that this additional cost can be funded from the savings of the review of the site management of the Bromley library buildings.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There were a number of pieces of legislation that affected the authorities decision making on the delivery of a library service, in particular:
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The proposals for a reorganisation of the library service have been considered in the context of the Council’s legal obligations, the formal consultation process and in line with the Council’s procedures for managing change. Consultation has been undertaken with staff, Trade Unions, Staff Side Secretary and Departmental Representatives.
- 11.2 In total there were 6 formal consultation meetings held with staff at various locations. The meetings were well attended with 107 staff present which represents 86% of the library service staff. The basis for the proposals was explained to staff as well as the HR implications.

- 11.3 There were a number of themes that came out of the staff discussions at these meetings and these are set out in Appendix 3. The main issues raised were about how the selection process would be implemented should the proposals be agreed, issues around the public consultation exercise and the impact of reducing hours and the targets already set for library activities. Staff also expressed concern about the proposal to cease the mobile library.
- 11.4 Full details of the comments made by staff can be found in Appendix 3 of this report along with the management side's full response. At the time this report went to print no written comments had been received from either the trade union side or departmental representatives.
- 11.5 The changes would result in a reduction from 87.56 FTE to 77.50 FTE as previously set out in this report. There are a number of vacancies (9.5) being held and these posts will contribute to the budget reduction required and this greatly minimises the impact on the existing library workforce. There are 135 staff affected and of these 87 are part time and the gender profile is 117 female and 18 male. It is anticipated that the majority of staff will be accommodated with the least disruption as possible for staff. This will be achieved by asking all staff to express an interest in those posts which closely match their current hours and grade wherever possible. Management will endeavour to deploy staff taking into consideration the needs of the organisation and on the basis of the best fit for individuals. It is not possible at this stage to state how many full time staff will be affected but it is expected to be a low number and although this may give rise to a redundancy situation, in the first instance, any displaced full time staff will be offered part time hours at another library to bring their hours to full time.

Trade Union and Departmental Representatives Consultation

- 11.6 An initial meeting was also held on 19th December 2013 with the Trade Unions and Departmental Representatives to inform them of the budget situation. A further meeting was held on 16 April 2014 and an update given on the consultation meetings which had already been held with staff and reassurance that the comments from staff would be considered.
- 11.7 It was explained that most staff will be accommodated in the new structure. There are a number of full time staff affected as some library opening hours may be reduced and in the proposal there is not a requirement for full time staff at these libraries. These full time staff may be accommodated by working part time across two libraries.

Non-Applicable Sections:	
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 Bromley Library Service – Proposal for Reorganisation 1 st April 2014.