

Decision Maker: Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder

Date: For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio on
Wednesday 18th March 2015

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY - UPDATE

Contact Officer: Colin Brand, Assistant Director Leisure and Culture
Tel: 0208 313 4107 E-mail: colin.brand@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Director of Environment and Community Services

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

1.1 The Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on 18th November 2014 considered a Report on the new Library Service Strategy, including proposals for the development of community managed libraries and the exposure of the core library offer to the market for market testing.

1.2 The Portfolio Holder subsequently agreed:

1) The strategic approach in relation to the libraries:-

- the development of community managed libraries (Burnt Ash, Hayes, Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough and St Paul's Cray) as set out in paragraph 3.19 of the report ; and
- market testing the core library offer.

2) Officers be authorised formally to consult with library users and staff on the proposals and the outcome of the consultation be reported back to a meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee in March 2015.

1.3 This report provides Members with the outcome on the consultation with staff, library users and residents that has now been completed and provides further recommendations for the implementation of the Library Strategy.

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.**
- 2.2 That the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation agrees that Officers:**
 - 2.2.1 Commence the procurement process for the Community Management of the six community libraries as detailed in section 3.7.3 of this Report.**
 - 2.2.2 Enter into discussions with the London Borough of Bexley to develop a joint procurement strategy for the Library Service.**
 - 2.2.3 That officers subsequently undertake a soft market testing exercise for the library service and undertake further consultation on the results of the soft market testing with library staff, library users and residents, and bring a further update report back to this Committee.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: New Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated one off cost of £30k and potential annual savings of £250k
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost Potential annual savings of £250k from establishment of 6 community libraries.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Library Service
 4. Total current budget for this head: £4.7m and £21k
 5. Source of funding: Existing controllable revenue budget 2015/16 and Commissioning Fund
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 111 ftes
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

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

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 2,000,000 library 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 The Library Service Strategy report which was considered by the Policy and Development Scrutiny Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation 18th November 2014, highlighted the continued financial constraints faced by the Council, and as a consequence the necessity for consideration to be given to the most cost-effective and efficient way of managing the borough's library service going forward.

3.1.1 The Library Service Strategy highlighted that changes should be considered in terms of a strategic approach across the 14 libraries that make up the library network, rather than in isolation library by library. Following consideration of the report by the Policy and Development Scrutiny Committee the Portfolio Holder subsequently agreed the strategic approach being proposed and for Officers to consult formally with library users and staff on the proposals, with the outcome of the consultation being reported back to a meeting of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee in March 2015.

3.1.2 This report provides Members with the outcome of the consultation with staff, library users and residents that has now been completed, and provides further recommendations for the implementation of the Library Strategy.

Consultation with staff

3.2 In line with the proposals set out in the Library Service Strategy report which was considered by the Renewal and Recreation Holder on the 18th November 2014, Officers undertook formal consultation with library staff on the proposals and report back to this Committee in March 2015.

3.2.1 The Library Service staff were notified on 10 November 2014 of the Library Service Strategy report which was considered by Committee on the 18th November 2014. Formal consultation commenced with staff on 19 December 2014 and ended on 31 January 2015.

3.2.2 There were six formal consultation meetings held with library staff at various locations during January 2015. A meeting with the Trade Union and staff representatives was held on 16 January. In addition a meeting was held on 29 January with the Shared Library Service staff. The meetings were well attended with 95 staff present representing 73% of the library service staff. Staff were encouraged to respond to the consultation document. At these meetings staff were informed of the Council's overall budget and that the Council is reviewing all services and considering market testing these services in a move to becoming a commissioning authority in line with the Council's Corporate Operating Principles. At the time of finalising this report no formal comments had been received from the trade union side.

3.2.3 Library staff raised a number of questions during the consultation process. A detailed report into the outcome of staff consultation including the questions raised by staff and management's response to those questions is included in Appendix 1. There were a number of questions and themes that came out of the staff discussions at these meetings and these have been summarised below:

Who would run the Community Managed Libraries and what would happen if there was no interest from the community groups?

What about the opening hours in the Community Managed Libraries?

What support would the Community Managed Libraries receive from the Council?

Would Community Managed Libraries be expected to undertake activities?

What does the Council have to provide in terms of a library service

The on line customer survey does not give customers an alternative choice?

How will the market testing process for the core libraries be undertaken and why would an organisation want to tender for the library service?

In the Community Managed Libraries how will volunteers access the data base and what happens to the stock?

Are there any models where staff have taken over running libraries?

Why is there is a split of 6 Community Libraries and 8 Core Libraries?

Human Resources Issues - A number of HR related issues/questions were asked and a representative from HR was at every meeting to respond to these questions.

Consultation with library users and residents.

- 3.3 The consultation with library users and residents was made up of three parts:
 - 3.3.1 An online self-completion survey that ran from Monday 1 December 2014 to Monday 2 February 2015 inclusive, along with paper surveys that were available inside the boroughs libraries with identical questions to the on line survey questionnaire
 - 3.3.2 Focus groups at each of the 6 community libraries where proposals for community management are being considered
 - 3.3.3 Feedback from library users and residents who were aware of the proposals directly to officers and ward members
 - 3.3.4 Strands 1 and 2 were undertaken by JB Market Research, and independent market research company who worked with officers and developed the methodology and the survey questionnaires, organised the online survey and the paper surveys, and managed and facilitated the focus groups.

On-line self-completion questionnaire and paper questionnaire.

- 3.4 Methodology
 - 3.4.1 The questionnaires for the online and paper survey were identical, and therefore the data files from both methodologies have been merged together to form one set of survey results. There were 1,837 respondents who completed a questionnaire with 1,256 responses received online and 581 questionnaires completed on paper. This represents around 3.0% of the 66,000 active users that use the boroughs libraries at least once a year.
 - 3.4.2 The consultation exercise was publicised with features being run on two occasions in the local press along with a poster campaign in the libraries. It was additionally promoted on the front page of the Councils website, and on the libraries page within the website. An extended time period was allowed for the consultation process to try and ensure there was a good level awareness of the consultation and to provide an opportunity for people to participate.
 - 3.4.3 The consultation was deliberately restricted to one application per computer or device, this was to ensure that the survey was not deliberately skewed by individuals submitting multiple entries to bias the results. There is a chance that some people may have completed a paper and an online response on more than 1 computer or device and also that people who do not have cookies set on their computer (most people have them set) could have completed the online survey more than once, but there is no way of stopping this in relation to any online survey.

- 3.4.4 Many households now have more than one computer or device so there was an opportunity for more than one family member per household to complete the on-line survey, and additionally paper surveys could be completed in the libraries.
- 3.4.5 There were also some controls at the libraries in respect to people completing the questionnaires again to try and ensure that the survey was not skewed by multiple entries from individuals. A record of people who had received a questionnaire was kept by library staff and the questionnaires were not allowed to be taken away from the library to stop them from being photocopied. The returned questionnaires were not marked up in any way by the library staff and so were completely anonymous. The paper questionnaires allowed one response per person to be submitted.
- 3.4.6 The benefit of the online methodology is that respondents are required to answer each question before they can move on to the next, whereas, with the paper questionnaires respondents often don't answer all of the questions leaving incomplete surveys.
- 3.4.7 Officers received feedback from a 6 respondents stating that requiring respondents to answer all questions on the on line survey introduced bias, notably around Question 8.
- 3.4.8 Question 8 asked respondents to choose what they considered to be the best option in respect to type of management they were supportive of for the community managed libraries. The question when being completed online required an answer as the Council wished to hear the views from all respondents in determining which would be the preferred management option from everyone who is completing the survey.
- 3.4.9 The concern raised was that respondents that were not in favour of the overall community management principle felt that by answering this question it was implying they were in favour of the overall principle. The previous question, question 7, however had specifically asked about the overall principle of community management which included the options 'do not support' or 'strongly oppose' community management. If either 'do not support' or 'strongly opposed' was selected there was also an option to suggest alternative proposals. There was therefore within the survey an opportunity for everyone completing the survey to oppose the proposed community managed options and to provide alternative proposals.
- 3.4.10 This point is further highlighted when the responses to individual questions are considered later in this report.
- 3.4.11 Respondents were asked to identify which of the borough's libraries they 'use most often' and this has been used as the basis for further analysis - by grouping together the results from respondents who most often use one of the '6 Community Libraries' and grouping together the results from respondents who most often use one of the '8 Other Libraries' in the borough (Central, Beckenham, Orpington, Biggin Hill, Chislehurst, Petts Wood, Penge and West Wickham Libraries). Some mention is made of these two groupings in this report.
- 3.4.12 Of the total 1,837 respondents, 642 respondents said that they most often use one of the '6 Community Libraries', some 1,183 said that they most often use one of the '8 Other Libraries' and the remaining 12 did not use any of the boroughs 14 libraries.
- 3.4.13 The percentages do not always add to 100% due to rounding. In many questions, respondents were asked how supportive they were of certain ideas or possibilities. Those who answered either 'strongly support' or 'tend to support' were considered to be 'supportive' and those who answered either 'do not support' or were 'strongly opposed to' have been grouped together in the results as being 'not supportive'.

3.4.14 The key aims of the survey were to find out:

- How much did respondents feel the proposed changes might affect them or their organisation
- How did respondents feel about the overall proposals for the library service at the end of the survey, having had more time to consider all of the facts and options

3.4.15 The questionnaire contained background information for respondents to read in relation to: the savings that the Council needs to make; the notion of Community Management and a list of the 6 proposed Community Libraries; the 3 Community Management options being considered; Library Service Commissioning of the core library offer; and the opportunities to renovate and improve the authority's library asset stock. The Library Service Strategy Committee Report from November 18th 2014 was also available online as background information.

3.4.16 The full reports from JB Research, including the cross tabulations results, can be accessed via the Contact Officer.

Survey Results

3.4.17 Below are the key findings from the survey:

Supportive or Unsupportive of Community Management in Principle

3.4.18 Respondents were asked, in principle, to what extent they support the Council seeking Community Management options at the 6 proposed Community Libraries, to ensure that as many of them as possible remain open. Just over a third, 37%, said that they 'tend to support' the Council's proposals in principle and a further 21% said that they 'strongly support' them, making a total of 58% who indicated that they were 'supportive' of the Council's proposals in principle.

3.4.19 Some 14% of respondents said that they, in principle, 'do not support' the Council's proposals to seek Community Management options at the 6 Community Libraries and a further 22% said they were 'strongly opposed to' them. In total therefore, 36% were 'not supportive' of the Council's proposals in principle. The remaining 6% answered 'don't know' to this question.

3.4.20 Those respondents who answered either 'do not support' or 'strongly opposed to' were asked an open-ended question as to whether they could suggest any alternative proposals that the Council may consider to make the necessary savings. Appendix 2 provides a summary of these responses and the full responses can be obtained through the contract officer.

3.4.21 When considering the results of those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries', some 24% said that they 'strongly support' the Council's proposals and a further 29% said that they 'tend to support' the proposals, representing 53% of them being 'supportive'. A detailed breakdown of the respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries' is shown in Table 1 below:

Counts Break % Respondents	Q2. Which library do you use most often						
	Total	Burnt Ash	Hayes	Mottingham	Shortlands	Southborough	St Paul's Cray
Base	621	48	194	108	131	92	48
Q7. To what extent support the Council seeking Community Management options at the 6 Community Libraries							
Strongly support	152 24%	8 17%	58 30%	12 11%	40 31%	19 21%	15 31%
Tend to support	177 29%	20 42%	54 28%	17 16%	43 33%	31 34%	12 25%
Do not support	87 14%	7 15%	22 11%	18 17%	17 13%	15 16%	8 17%
Strongly opposed to	181 29%	11 23%	52 27%	57 53%	28 21%	22 24%	11 23%
Don't know	24 4%	2 4%	8 4%	4 4%	3 2%	5 5%	2 4%

3.4.22 Across the results for each of the '6 Community Libraries', the lowest incidence of support came from those respondents who said that they most often used Mottingham Library with 11% of them saying that they 'strongly support' and 16% saying they 'tend to support' the Council's proposals to seek Community Management options at the 6 Community Libraries, totalling 27% who were 'supportive'. See Table 1 above.

3.4.23 In relation to each of the 5 other Community Libraries, there was greater support. Of the respondents who said that they used Shortlands Library most often, 64% were 'supportive' and this represented the highest incidence of support amongst the users of the 6 Community Libraries. The percentage that was 'supportive' amongst those who most often used the other 4 Community Libraries varied between 55% (Southborough) and 59% (Burnt Ash) by comparison. See Table 1 above.

3.4.24 The results to the same question amongst the respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '8 Other Libraries', 60% of them were 'supportive' with 19% saying that they 'strongly support' the proposals and a further 41% saying that they 'tend to support' the Council's proposals to seek Community Management options at the 6 Community Libraries.

Which Community Management Model Favoured

3.4.25 Respondents were asked which of three Community Management options they favoured for the six Community Libraries. The 3 Community Management models provided were:

- Asset Owning - a completely independent community library, with no staffing or funding assistance from the Council, which owns its own premises, sometimes after asset transfer from the Council. There is no ongoing Council funding.
- Community Managed - this is community led and largely community delivered, rarely with paid staff, but often with some form of ongoing Council support (mainly in the provision of book stock) and the library often remains as part of the public library network. There is a low level of ongoing Council funding.
- Commissioned Community - the library is commissioned and fully funded by the Council but delivered by a non-profit making community organisation. The community organisation can be existing or newly created. There is a high level of ongoing Council

funding. This option may not provide the required savings to the Council and this option therefore may lead to the closure of up to 3 of the 6 Community Libraries in the borough, or, a further reduction in the opening hours of the libraries across the Borough network.

- 3.4.26 The 'Community Managed' option was considered most suitable by 51%, just over half of all respondents. The 'Commissioned Community' option was considered to be the better of the three by 43% and the 'Asset Owning' model was favoured by only 6% of respondents. (Note as per sections 3.4.7 – 3.4.9) that these figures include the preferences of on-line respondents who may have already stated that they did not agree to the overall principle of community managed libraries),
- 3.4.27 Of the respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries', they equally favoured the 'Commissioned Community' and the 'Community Managed' options with 48% of them selecting each option. Just 4% favoured the Asset Owning model.
- 3.4.28 There was a strong preference towards the 'Commissioned Community' option amongst those who said that the library they 'use most often' was Mottingham Library with 76% of them favouring this option. Those who said that the library they 'use most often' was Southborough Library were next most likely to favour the 'Commissioned Community' model with 52% of them doing so.
- 3.4.29 Least likely to favour the 'Commissioned Community' model were respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was St Paul's Cray Library with just 34% of them favouring it - they were the most likely to favour the 'Community Managed' option with 64% of them selecting this option as their preference, followed by some 58% of those who said that the library they 'use most often' was Shortlands Library. Least likely to favour the 'Community Managed' option were those who said that the library they 'use most often' was Mottingham Library with only 22% of them favouring it.
- 3.4.30 Of those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '8 Other Libraries', some 53% favoured the 'Community Managed' option and 41% favoured the 'Commissioned Community' option. Just 7% favoured the Asset Owning model.

If Community Management Arrangement Could Not be Secured

- 3.4.31 Respondents were then asked about their preference should a Community Management arrangement not be secured within a year to run any number of the proposed Community Libraries because the Council would not then be able to maintain the current opening times across the 6 Community Libraries. In response to this, 83% of respondents indicated that should this situation arise, they would prefer to 'keep all Community Libraries open but reduce the opening hours across the library network, with the busier libraries having the longer opening hours'.
- 3.4.32 Some 11% of respondents said they would prefer the option of 'the closure of the Community Library(s) for which a Community Management arrangement could not be secured, to concentrate resources into fewer better equipped main libraries' and 6% said that they had 'no preference' as to which of the two options was adopted.
- 3.4.33 Amongst those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries', 91% favoured the option of 'keep all Community Libraries open but reduce the opening hours across the library network, with the busier libraries having the longer opening hours' in comparison to being the favoured option amongst 79% of those who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '8 Other Libraries'.

Widening Community Libraries to Other Borough Libraries

- 3.4.34 When asked how supportive they were of the notion that the Council 'widens the idea of Community Libraries' to other libraries, beyond the six already mentioned, more respondents were negative towards this idea than were positive. Overall, 32% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' this idea and a further 31% were said that they 'do not support' it, making a total of 63% who were 'not supportive' of this idea.
- 3.4.35 'Tend to support' was the response given by 21% and a further 7% said that they 'strongly support' the idea that the Council 'widens the idea of Community Libraries' to other libraries, beyond the six already mentioned. Therefore, 28% of respondents were 'supportive' of this idea. The other 10% of respondents answered 'don't know' to this question.
- 3.4.36 Respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries' tended to be more 'supportive' of this idea, with 8% saying that they 'strongly support' it and a further 27% saying that they 'tend to support' the idea, totalling 35% who were 'supportive'.
- 3.4.37 Of those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '8 Other Libraries', some 24% were 'supportive' of this idea with 6% saying that they 'strongly support' it and a further 18% saying that they 'tend to support' the idea that the Council 'widens the idea of Community Libraries' to other libraries, beyond the six already mentioned.

Who Might Run the Libraries?

- 3.4.38 Respondents were most likely to favour the libraries being 'run directly by the Council' when asked how they favoured this in comparison to other types of provider or arrangement. Second most likely to be favoured was the idea of the libraries being run though 'a shared service with another Council or in partnership with another Council', followed by the libraries being run by 'a trust or charitable provider' and the least likely to be favoured by far was the idea of the libraries being run by 'a private sector organisation or a commercial provider'.

Run directly by the Council

- 3.4.39 In relation to the libraries being 'run directly by the Council', 53% of respondents said that they 'strongly support' this arrangement and a further 30% said they 'tend to support' this, representing 83% of respondents who were 'supportive' of this way forward.
- 3.4.40 Only 6% of respondents said that they 'do not support' and 7% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the library's being 'run directly by the Council', thereby representing 13% of respondents who were 'not supportive'. The 'don't know' response option was only selected by 4% of respondents.

A shared service with another Council or in partnership with another Council

- 3.4.41 When asked how they felt about the libraries being run though 'a shared service with another Council or in partnership with another Council' some 14% of respondents said that they 'strongly support' this idea and exactly half, 50%, said that they 'tend to support' it, equating to 64% of respondents being 'supportive' of 'a shared service with another Council or in partnership with another Council'.
- 3.4.42 Some 28% of respondents were 'not supportive' of the idea of the libraries being run though 'a shared service with another Council or in partnership with another Council' with 17%

saying that they 'do not support' and 11% saying that they were 'strongly opposed to' this idea. The other 8% of respondents answered 'don't know' to this question.

A trust or charitable provider

- 3.4.43 In relation to the idea of libraries being run by 'a trust or charitable provider', 10% of respondents said they 'strongly support' this idea, followed by a further 47% who said that they 'tend to support' it, so that overall 57% of respondents were 'supportive' of the libraries being run by 'a trust or charitable provider'.
- 3.4.44 Some 35% of respondents were 'not supportive' of libraries being run by 'a trust or charitable provider', 21% said that they 'do not support' the idea and a further 14% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the idea. The remaining 8% answered 'don't know' to this question.

A private sector organisation or a commercial provider

- 3.4.45 The least favoured option was that of the libraries being run by 'a private sector organisation or a commercial provider' with just 3% of respondents saying that they 'strongly support' this idea and 13% saying that they 'tend to support' it, totalling 16% of respondents who were 'supportive' of this idea.
- 3.4.46 Over three quarters, 77% of respondents were 'not supportive' of libraries being run by 'a private sector organisation or a commercial provider', 32% said that they 'do not support' the idea and a further 45% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the idea. The remaining 6% of respondents answered 'don't know' to this question.

Relocation and Redevelopment Possibilities

Redeveloping current library sites potentially in partnership with a third party

- 3.4.47 Respondents were asked how they felt about the possibility of 'redeveloping current library sites, potentially in partnership with a third party' to which 15% said that they 'strongly support' this option and a further 37% said that they 'tend to support' the idea, representing just over half, 52%, of respondents who were 'supportive' of this idea.
- 3.4.48 Of the remaining respondents, 9% said 'don't know', 21% said that they 'do not support' this idea and the remaining 19% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' this idea equating to 40% of respondents being 'not supportive' towards the possibility of 'redeveloping current library sites, potentially in partnership with a third party'.

Moving the library to an existing, accessible venue, near to the current site

- 3.4.49 When asked how they felt about 'moving the library to an existing, accessible venue, near to the current site', 51% were 'supportive' of this idea, specifically 10% said that they 'strongly support' it and 41% said that they 'tend to support' this option.
- 3.4.50 Some 42% were 'not supportive' of the idea of 'moving the library to an existing, accessible venue, near to the current site' as 24% said that they 'do not support' it and a further 18% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the idea. The other 7% answered 'don't know' to this question.

Co-locating the library to a new location with another Council or community service

- 3.4.51 There was less overall support from respondents towards the idea of 'co-locating the library to a new location with another Council or community service' with 30% being 'supportive' of the idea. Some 7% of respondents said that they 'strongly support' this idea and a further 23% said that they 'tend to support' it.
- 3.4.52 Whilst 8% said they 'don't know' about the idea of 'co-locating the library to a new location with another Council or community service', 62% demonstrated that they were 'not supportive' with 34% of respondents saying that they 'do not support' this idea and 28% saying they are 'strongly opposed to' this option.

How Proposed Changes Would Affect You or Your Organisation

- 3.4.53 Overall, 39% of respondents said that the proposed changes would affect them or their organisation 'a lot' and 29% said that the proposed changes would affect them or their organisation 'a little'.
- 3.4.54 Some 11% indicated that the proposed changes would 'not' affect them or their organisation and the remaining 22% answered 'don't know' to this question.
- 3.4.55 The results to this question amongst those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries' were as follows: some 59% said that they or their organisation would be affected 'a lot', some 27% said that they or their organisation would be affected 'a little' by the proposed changes, only 2% said that they or their organisation would 'not' be affected by the proposals and the remaining 12% answered 'don't know'.
- 3.4.56 Amongst those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '8 Other Libraries' the results were: some 27% said that they or their organisation would be affected 'a lot', some 30% said that they or their organisation would be affected 'a little' by the proposed changes, some 15% said that they or their organisation would 'not' be affected by the proposals. The remaining 28% selected the 'don't know' option to this question.

Given that the Council Needs to Save £60 Million over the Next four Years, How Do You Feel About the Overall Proposals for the Library Service

- 3.4.57 The final opinion based question asked respondents how they felt about the overall proposals having answered all of the questions and having had time to reflect more on the details.
- 3.4.58 Some 51% at the end of the survey were 'not supportive' of the Council's overall proposals with 28% saying that they 'do not support' them and a further 23% who said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the Council's overall proposals.
- 3.4.59 Overall, 43% of respondents said that they were 'supportive' of the Council's overall proposals with 5% saying that they 'strongly support' them and an additional 38% saying that they 'tend to support' the Council's overall proposals. The other 5% of respondents said 'don't know' to this question.

Are you involved with a group of friends or an organisation that might be interested in managing a Community Library

- 3.4.60 A total of 109 people responded to this question with 11 people saying they were definitely interested and 98 saying they would possibly be interested. Nearly all respondents supplied their contact details, and Officers will follow this up subject to Members agreeing to the proposals.

Focus Groups

3.5 Methodology

- 3.5.1 A total of 12 focus groups were held at the borough's libraries in January 2015. Two focus groups were held at each of the 6 libraries for which the London Borough of Bromley is considering Community Management. The libraries are: Burnt Ash, Hayes, Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough and St Paul's Cray.

- 3.5.2 Each focus group lasted approximately one hour and was moderated by JB Market Research Services. Group 1 at each library was held from 11.30am-12.30pm and Group 2 from 2.30pm-3.30pm (apart from Mottingham Library where instead of an afternoon group, an evening group was held from 6.30pm-7.30pm).

- 3.5.3 The participants were recruited in each library at random during the week before the relevant focus groups were held. There was no previous notification given or any process for identifying people to be included or excluded. This was to ensure that the sample selected provided genuine representation of the views of a wide range of randomly selected library users on the Groups, rather than from people who specifically wished to attend the focus groups to express their views and self-selected to be part of the groups. No incentive payment was offered.

- 3.5.4 The aim of the groups was to gain greater insight into many of the questions asked in the simultaneous online and paper survey, both of which were self-completion and ran from 1 December 2014 to 2 February 2015.

General Awareness of Changes to Library Services Around the Country

- 3.5.5 Across the groups, awareness of changes to library services across the country varied greatly.

- 3.5.6 In some groups, none of the participants had heard anything about any discussions or changes to library services elsewhere in the country (both groups at St Paul's Cray Library), in some groups a few of the participants had heard (both groups in Southborough, Hayes and Burnt Ash Libraries), and, in other groups, all of the participants voiced a general awareness of discussions or changes to library services around the country (both groups at Mottingham and Shortlands Libraries).

Reasons Cited by Participants as to Why Their Local Library is so Important to Them

- 3.5.7 Across all 12 groups many of the same things were raised in several groups as important to participants in relation to their local library. The responses have been grouped together and the following gives a flavour, not an exhaustive account, of what was seen as important across many of the groups.

- **Convenient:** local, close, in walking distance, near the shops, on a bus route, ideal location, parking outside (where applicable), easy to get here (other libraries are further away, difficult to get to by bus or car - especially for the elderly, disabled or those with young children, don't have parking, have to carry books, have to pay to get there)
- **Staff:** helpful, enthusiastic, professional, knowledgeable, experienced, highly trained, well informed, excellent, polite, efficient, friendly, they have commitment and competence, can order books, put in so much effort, nothing is too much trouble, know their customers, can help with the computers, have built up a range of activities, run the library well, have the skills to run so many different activities
- **Community Facility:** an 'integral part', the 'hub', the 'heart' a 'focal point' of the community, a place to meet people, interact and make friends, a really useful 'information hub', makes people less isolated, needed for people who can't go far, very important for the young, disabled and elderly, too special to lose, serves a wide age range, a way to access the community
- **Education:** nurseries, primary and secondary schools use the library, it benefits education, encourages children to read, helps children develop a love of reading and books and that 'books do exist', popular with children, children and grandchildren use the library, children can do their homework in the library, teachers can borrow books for six weeks at a time
- **Activities:** reading groups, talks, events, exhibitions, book competitions, cater for all ages, there's a good range, they are well attended (also Councillor Surgeries and Police Drop-In Sessions at Mottingham)
- **Ambiance:** homely, has a nice feel, safe, small, cosy, pleasant, has soul, an oasis, peaceful, quiet, warm, well lit, intimate, nice atmosphere, feels comfortable coming in, friendly as staff know you by name (Central Library is overwhelming, unfriendly, almost sterile, impersonal, bigger, noisy by comparison, Petts Wood Library is gloomy, Biggin Hill Library is very hectic)
- **Books:** the lending books, the variety of books, stock share scheme in operation with other London boroughs and the wider area so it's part of something bigger, the reference books, can borrow books instead of buying them
- **Computers:** the computers themselves, computer lessons, the printers, the internet
- **Other:** photocopying, faxing, newspapers, CDs, digital [talking] books, CDs

Supportive or Not Supportive in Principle that the Council is Considering Community Management Options for 6 of its Libraries - to Ensure that as Many of Them as Possible Remain Open

3.5.8 In 6 of the 12 groups, all of the participants were 'supportive' of the Council's proposals but many had provisos as follows:

(Hayes Group 2) All 7 were 'supportive' as 'an absolute last resort if it's that or closing the library'

Mottingham Group 1 All 8 were 'supportive' with the proviso that there would be 'a qualified professional paid person that oversees the library'

Shortlands Group 1 All 6 were 'supportive' and added 'because we want to keep the library open'

Shortlands Group 2 All 7 were 'supportive' and further qualified their feelings by stating 'if the alternative is closure' but with the proviso that they needed more information and wanted the Council to consider other options aside from the three presented

Southborough Group 1 All 8 were 'supportive' with 'reservations' with the proviso that they needed more detailed information, that there were some grey areas lots of questions yet to be asked and answered

Southborough Group 2 All 11 were 'supportive' and qualified 'if it's the only way to keep the library open' with the proviso that the Council seeks a better option aside from the three currently on the table

3.5.9 In 4 groups, all of the participants were 'not supportive' of the Council's proposals:

Burnt Ash Group 1 All 8 were 'not supportive'

Hayes Group 1 All 9 were 'not supportive'

Mottingham Group 2 All 8 were 'not supportive'

St Paul's Cray Group 2 All 6 were 'not supportive'

3.5.10 In 2 groups there was a mixed response towards the Council's proposals with some participants being 'supportive' and others 'not supportive' (and 1 participant was 'undecided):

Burnt Ash Group 2 Of the 7 participants: 6 were 'not supportive' and 1 was 'supportive'

St Paul's Cray Group 1 Of the 7 participants: 4 were 'not supportive', 2 were 'supportive' and 1 was 'undecided' (1)

3.5.11 The comments made by participants across all of the groups have been grouped together under common headings and included the following, some are concerns and others are suggestions.

- **Voluntary staffing and current staff:** Key issues: training; long term commitment; finding volunteers, volunteers couldn't replace the professionalism and expertise of the current paid staff; mix of paid and voluntary staff e.g. charity shops have a paid manager to organise the volunteers, participants didn't want to lose the current staff, abilities of volunteers particularly older ones, data protection issues, fire regulations, health and safety, public liability, background checks,
- **The long term viability of Community Management / Reversible:** if it doesn't work 'once it's gone, it's gone', would the library shut in 12 months if a community group couldn't balance the books, If it's too expensive for the Council to run, it's too expensive for anyone else to run, issues around longevity of commitment and sustainability
- **Charge More Council Tax:** increasing Council Tax which they noted had remained stable for many years
- **Save money in other areas of the Council apart from the library service:** the savings they are trying to make are not a vast amount in the overall scheme of things, Why are they making savings in the libraries when other savings could be made, It's the most essential resource we've got here to take people out of poverty, the 'cost' of not having the libraries will be far greater for the community than the financial savings made, save on salaries within the Council, make cuts from the top downwards
- **Save money in different ways within the library service:** reduce opening hours or days in the bigger and other branch libraries (apart from the 6 being looked at) in order to save money

- **Increase revenue in different ways within the library service:** lease out the top floors of Central Library, a possible annual membership fee per adult member, levy a borrowing fee for books, commercial sponsorship, have advertising in the library, sell e-book readers, the Council could look to generate income rather than make savings
- **Long term plans for the libraries:** what's the long term agenda for the libraries from the Council's perspective?
- **Ambiance:** under Community Management the library would 'change too dramatically' and it would 'change the feel', Consistency is a welcoming thing, would the community feel be 'lost'
- **(Hayes only) Generate money from the Hayes Library building itself:** generate an income from the two flats upstairs within the building, possibly a volunteer run tea shop
- **Operational costs and concerns:** would independent Community Library have links with the national library network / London Library Consortium. Issues around maintenance. Costs of books and staff are mentioned in the information supplied, business rates, would people fundraise, would a membership scheme be introduced
- **Need more specific and detailed information:** more information would enable us to have a better discussion, what are the running costs of a library, how much does this library cost to run in comparison to Central, footfall data, what proportion of the population use the library, more information in plain English, number of adult library members, we need to know more from library staff about their roles in detail, plus other information requests included 'fixed scenarios regarding opening times' and 'concrete proposals' for the 'Community Managed' and 'Commissioned Community' options
- **Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964:** 'Councils must assess local need and provide a service to meet that need' and "We want and need this local library to meet local need"
- **London Borough of Bromley:** In 2011, LBB made a commitment to its library service

The 3 Community Management Options

3.5.12 Participants were asked to give their thoughts on the three different Community Management options that the Council is considering for the six libraries in question. Participants had been given some background information on the three options to read in advance, at the time of being recruited.

- 1 group favoured the 'Community Managed' option (Hayes Group 2)
- 1 group favoured the 'Commissioned Community' option (Mottingham Group 1)
- 5 groups were split as to whether they favoured the 'Community Managed', the 'Commissioned Community' option or none of the options (Mottingham Group 2; Shortlands Group 1; Shortlands Group 2; St Paul's Cray Group 1; St Paul's Cray Group 2)
- In 5 of the 12 groups, none of the options were favoured by any of the participants (Hayes Group 1; Burnt Ash Group 1; Burnt Ash Group 2; Southborough Group 1; Southborough Group 2)

Extending Community Libraries to Other Libraries

- All participants in 5 of the groups thought extending the idea of Community Libraries beyond the six in question was a good idea. They were keen that the libraries were 'treated the same'.
- All participants in 5 of the groups felt this was not a good idea
- The participants of 2 groups were split as to whether or not extending the idea of Community Libraries beyond the six in question was a good idea.
- Both of the groups in Mottingham added here that Chislehurst Library is never under review.

Attitudes Towards Different External Providers

3.5.13 When asked about how they felt about **a trust or charitable provider** running their local library, here is a selection of reactions from across the libraries:

- Would volunteers be reliable, consistent, committed (St Paul's Cray Group 2)
- There would be a loss of the professionalism and knowledge of the current staff (Burnt Ash Group 1)
- "What would be the advantage to a charitable trust to run it" (Hayes Group 2)
- "How would it work" (Mottingham Group 2)
- "Where's this mythical organisation going to come from" (Shortlands Group 1)
- "I'd have fewer concerns than if a private company came along" (Southborough Group 2)

3.5.14 Here is a selection of reactions from across the libraries to **a private sector organisation or a commercial provider** running their library:

- "They'd do more of the things they want to do to make money and less of the things library users want" (Hayes Group 2)
- "They might come in and start up and then be off once they can't make a profit" (Southborough Group 1)
- "How do you make money from a library service" (Mottingham Group 1)
- They would probably charge for the use of computers and borrowing books (St Paul's Cray Group 1)
- "You'd lose the depth of knowledge that the professional staff have" (Shortlands Group 1)
- "Would any company be attracted to it" (Burnt Ash Group 1)

3.5.15 A selection of reactions to libraries being run through **a shared service with another council or in partnership with other Council's**, this was received in a less negative way than the former two types of provider were:

- "The Council would retain professionalism, control and responsibility" (Burnt Ash Group 1)
- "How would that work so far as we were concerned and in a small library" (Hayes Group 1)
- "It already happens now" (Shortlands Group 2)
- The Bexley arrangement has not been good from Bromley's point of view (Southborough Group 1)

- “How would it save money” (Mottingham Group 1)
- “It would be good to know if it’s working elsewhere, so we can judge” (St Paul’s Cray Group 1)

Effects of Changes to the Library Service on Participants

3.5.16 Across the 12 groups, some participants indicated that they could adapt and plan around a reduction in hours “If it closed another day, I’d come on a different day” and “A reduction in opening hours is better than no library at all”.

3.5.17 The following concerns were expressed in relation to the impact that any changes to the library service might have on participants.

- **Convenient:** we might lose the convenience of a local library, it is two bus rides away to the nearest library to St. Paul’s Cray, the disabled, elderly and people with buggies who may find it awkward to get to the other libraries, we don’t want to have to go to another library, “I might not go to another library”, “I would have to pay the bus fare to another library”, going into Bromley to Central can take a large part of the day
- **Paid Staff and Volunteers:** the current staff can help with the computers, would the volunteers have computer knowledge, there should always be a paid permanent knowledgeable member of staff, could volunteers run the activities, volunteers are unlikely to be reliable and have the same skills as qualified library staff, who the volunteers might be and how they would be selected – if the choice of volunteers was too politically sensitive it won’t work
- **Community Facility:** the library is important to the community, the community would be ‘deeply affected’ if it wasn’t here, “It’s a meeting point for a lot of people”, has been part of the community for a long time, important for all age groups
- **Library Usage:** some people might stop using the library, might stop coming if they see it closed a couple of times, might stop coming if it was run by volunteers, different sectors of the population like to use the library at different times of day, “It needs to be consistently open or you get out of the habit of coming”
- **Education:** schools would have to adjust the times when they visited the library, there might be less time for children of all ages to visit the library, the importance of the library to education, the children, schools and nurseries would lose out
- **Activities:** events, talks and groups might - cease, disappear, become less popular, fall apart
- **Books:** would the stock be replaced less often, would the book stock in terms of number of books and range of books in the library stagnate further than it has recently
- **Computers, Internet and Printers:** who would manage the computers if they broke down, “They think every child has a computer at home but they haven’t” and “They might have a computer but not necessarily the internet or a printer” (both comments made at Paul’s Cray Library)
- **Other:** what will happen to the Home Library Service, the library needs to be open all day on Saturdays and co-ordination of nearby library’s opening times is needed to ensure they are closed on different weekdays

- Group 1 at Mottingham summed up succinctly with the fact they were concerned that all services offered by the library in addition to the 'core service of lending of books' could fritter away.

Supportive or Not Supportive of the Overall Proposals for the Future of the Library Service

- In 4 groups, all of the participants were 'not supportive' of the Council's overall proposals (Burnt Ash Group 1; Hayes Group 1; Mottingham Group 2; St Paul's Cray Group 2)
- In 4 groups, all of the participants were 'supportive' (Hayes Group 2; Shortlands Group 1; Shortlands Group 2; Burnt Ash Group 2)
- In 2 groups, all of the participants would not be drawn to directly answer this question: (Mottingham Group 1; St Paul's Cray 1)

3.5.18 In summary, the following were highlighted by participants both during and at the end of the discussions in one or more groups as messages the participants wished to convey to elected Members:

- The participants were passionate about their 'local' library and the convenience of it
- Were glad for the opportunity to meet and discuss
- Further consultation is needed
- More specific and detailed information is needed in order to fully consider the principle of Community Libraries and the three Community Management options (Mottingham Group 1 and Shortlands Group 2 made very specific requests)
- Concerned about voluntary staffing
- Concerned about the current staff
- Concerned about the long term viability of Community Management
- Save money in other areas of the Council apart from the library service
- Save money in different ways within the library service
- Increase revenue in different ways within the library service
- Operational concerns in general and also within the wider library network
- Increase Council Tax (Burnt Ash Groups 1 & 2, Hayes Group 2)
- Concerned about the long term plans for the libraries
- Concerned about the impact on the community
- Concerned about impact on education, the activities in the library and library usage, the access to and rotation of books, access to and maintenance of the computers, access to the internet and printers, the general ambiance within the library if it was run by volunteers, what would happen to the Home Library Service, co-ordination of library opening times so that nearby libraries are closed on different weekdays and are open all day on Saturdays
- Hayes Library is in a Listed building and was left to the people of Hayes (and has 2 flats which could be let out on the first floor)
- St Paul's Cray Library is in a deprived area

3.5.19 One particularly recurrent theme which does not necessarily stand out in the above, is that many groups mentioned the need for a professional paid qualified member of library staff to co-ordinate and manage the volunteers and oversee the smooth running of the library, often citing charity shops as a prime example, having a paid manager with voluntary staff.

3.5.20 Several groups referred to their local library as being so much more than 'a room full of books'. The final sentiment of one female participant "We want the library open and with paid [professional] staff".

Relocation and Redevelopment Possibilities

3.5.21 Redeveloping current library sites, potentially in partnership with a third party

- Respondents were asked how they felt about this, to which 15% said that they 'strongly support' this option and a further 37% said that they 'tend to support' the idea, representing just over half, 52%, of respondents who were 'supportive' of this idea.
- Of the remaining respondents, 9% said 'don't know', 21% said that they 'do not support' this idea and the remaining 19% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' this idea equating to 40% of respondents not being supportive of this idea.

3.5.22 Moving the library to an existing, accessible venue, near to the current site

- When asked how this felt about this, 51% were 'supportive' of this idea, specifically 10% said that they 'strongly support' it and 41% said that they 'tend to support' this option.
- Some 42% were 'not supportive' of the idea as 24% said that they 'do not support' it and a further 18% said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the idea. The other 7% answered 'don't know' to this question.

3.5.23 Co-locating the library to a new location with another Council or community service'

- There was less overall support from respondents with 30% being 'supportive' of the idea. Some 7% of respondents said that they 'strongly support' this idea and a further 23% said that they 'tend to support' it.
- Whilst 8% said they 'don't know' about the idea, 62% demonstrated that they were 'not supportive' with 34% of respondents saying that they 'do not support' this idea and 28% saying they are 'strongly opposed to' this option.

How Proposed Changes Would Affect You or Your Organisation

3.5.24 Overall, 39% of respondents said that the proposed changes would affect them or their organisation 'a lot' and 29% said that the proposed changes would affect them or their organisation 'a little'.

3.5.25 Some 11% indicated that the proposed changes would 'not' affect them or their organisation and the remaining 22% answered 'don't know' to this question.

Given that the Council Needs to Save £60 Million over the Next 4 Years, How Do You Feel About the Overall Proposals for the Library Service

3.5.26 The final opinion based question asked respondents how they felt about the overall proposals having answered all of the questions and having had time to reflect more on the details.

- Some 51% at the end of the survey were 'not supportive' of the Council's overall proposals with 28% saying that they 'do not support' them and a further 23% who said that they were 'strongly opposed to' the Council's overall proposals.
- Overall, 43% of respondents said that they were 'supportive' of the Council's overall proposals with 5% saying that they 'strongly support' them and an additional 38% saying

that they 'tend to support' the Council's overall proposals. The other 5% of respondents said 'don't know' to this question.

- When considering the results of those respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '6 Community Libraries', 5% said that they 'strongly support' the Council's overall proposals and a further 29% said that they 'tend to support' the proposals, representing 34% of them being 'supportive'.
- The results to the same question from the respondents who said that the library they 'use most often' was one of the '8 Other Libraries' showed that 48% of them were 'supportive' with 5% saying that they 'strongly support' the proposals and a further 43% saying they 'tend to support' the Council's overall proposals to seek Community Management options at the 6 Community Libraries

3.5.27 To ensure that the Council is compliant with its statutory obligation and following the advice provided by the DCMS, a full assessment of the available data and information has been produced to ensure that the Council's definition of a "comprehensive and efficient" library service has taken into consideration the key information available about need in the community.

Feedback from library users and residents

3.6 Feedback from library users and residents who were aware of the proposals was also made directly to officers or Members. There was a total of 35 letters or e mails received which have been forwarded to the PDS Chairman for his consideration. 20 of these were in respect to Mottingham Library, and there were 3 each were in respect to Shortlands and St Pauls Cray. The key issues raised are summarised below:

- **The value of the community libraries:** Key issues: Vital to the well-being of the community, accessible to all, more than just a place for books, the value of the staff their skills and knowledge, educational value for all ages but particularly children, supporting people particularly those who are disadvantaged, safe and welcoming atmosphere, easy to get to for local people, the value of the services provided – activities and events, used by schools, community libraries serve areas of deprivation, access to computers valuable and could be lost
- **The sustainability of the Community Management model.** Key issues: Is the model sustainable, where are other examples of where this has worked, against the overall principle.
- **Role of volunteers.** Key issues: where are the volunteers found from, sustainability of using them, loss of skills and expertise, the principle of using volunteers is not acceptable, can't replace paid staff.
- **Concerns over private companies running the library service.** Key issues: Against or ideologically opposed to the principle, where do they make their profit from, replacement of trained staff by untrained volunteers, staff on zero hours contracts, staff reduced, additional / higher charges will be made, service will not be as good.
- **Consultation process:** Key issues: process flawed – issues over Question 8, issues over how the volunteers were selected for the Focus Groups, only 1 response per household allowed. Question 11 difficult to understand.

- **Consider all Libraries not just Community Libraries.** Key issues: Community libraries should not be looked at in isolation, look at all the same and share the burden. Do not single out community libraries for closure.
- **Do not close libraries:** Key issues: concerns over closure of community libraries, closure through privatisation, look at other savings or arrangements
- **Raise Council tax to pay for library service or use reserves**
- **Keep the Status Quo:** Key issues: Happy with the current arrangements why change, find other ways to meet financial problems.

Conclusions from Consultation

3.7 Community Managed Libraries

3.7.1 It is clear from the outcomes of the consultation that the issues around the community of management of libraries are many and complex. A number of respondents highlighted that they have some significant issues regarding community management of libraries, and many communities expressed their concerns and fears over such an approach. 58% of people who completed the questionnaires however were supportive of the Council's proposals in principle to develop community management across the 6 identified libraries and 36% were not supportive. The lowest incidence of support came from Mottingham where 27% of respondents were supportive of the principle of community management.

3.7.2 It should be noted that there are many different models for the Community Managed libraries and these can be adapted and developed in conjunction with local views, needs and aspirations. This detail of work has yet to be undertaken by the Council. It is clear that further dialogue and discussion is required with local communities and stakeholders in the development of any future proposals to determine the most suitable model for each library and the community that it serves. It is also worth highlighting that within any community management arrangements the Council is intending that the library would remain part of the Council's statutory provision. The Council would continue to provide staffing support, expertise and the library could still be linked to the Library Management System. Additionally the Council will provide support, assistance and guidance to any voluntary or community organisation or partner expressing an interest in operating a community library and will extend the procurement timetable accordingly to support this.

3.7.3 An indicative timetable for the development of Community Libraries is set out below. Although in principle, the procurement of a community run library is very similar to the standard authorities' procurement process, acknowledgment has to be given to the fact that those responding to the process may not have the initial experience to fully engage with the process. As such sufficient time has been built into the programme to allow for this and for officers to work with interested groups to enable the best development of their ideas.

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS TIMETABLE	INDICATIVE KEY DATES
Agree documentation for Procurement Process – Expression of Interest (EOI) stage	April 2015
Process publicity announced via advert and press release	April 2015

Closing date for EOIs	May 2015
Preparation of further detailed information for next stage of process	June 2015
Evaluation and scoring of EOIs	June 2015
Report back to Members on outcome of EOI	July 2015
Despatch of phase 2 documents for business planning	August 2015
Initial meeting with groups	August – November 2015
Follow up meetings with groups	August – November 2015
Deadline for receipt of business plans etc	December 2015
Evaluation and scoring of business plans	January 2016
Interviews	January 2016
Interview scores and business plan scores finalised and normalised	February 2016
Groups notified of outcome of process	March 2016
Public announcement of outcome of selection process	March 2016
Negotiations on detail of lease and SLA – Property and Legal	April 2016
Lease and SLA finalised by Legal	April / May 2016
Formal signing and appointment	May 2016
Go live	June 2016

Market Testing of the core library offer

- 3.7.4 The results from the consultation questionnaires showed that people were more supportive of a service run directly by the Council (supported by 83% of respondents) or of a service run through a shared service with another council or in partnership with other Councils (supported by 64% of respondents). People were less supportive of libraries run by a trust / charitable provider (supported by 57% of respondents) or by a private sector organisation / commercial provider (supported by 16% of respondents). These responses are broadly reflected in the feedback from the focus groups.
- 3.7.5 Within any arrangements for the delivery of the core library offer, even if it not retained in house, the Council would still have overall control of the library service through the management and the development of the service requirements that the Council would seek to have delivered through a service specification. This point did not seem to be recognised

within all of the responses, and it is acknowledged that perhaps further information regarding the detail of these types of arrangements may have proved useful to the respondents.

- 3.7.6 Given that maintaining the service in house is unlikely to produce any savings, the Council is proposing to enter into discussions with the London Borough of Bexley and through a joint procurement strategy to undertake a soft market testing for the library service. This would include the operation of the 8 libraries within the core library offer and also the management of the 6 libraries where community management options are to be explored.
- 3.7.7 A joint procurement exercise would provide economies of scale to both authorities and accords with the procurement proposals that Bexley are currently developing. There are already a number of existing arrangements between that two authorities that make this an attractive option to both authorities such as the current arrangements to deliver a shared back office service and management functions, along with shared service arrangements for computer and IT systems. Additionally the joint procurement process would be for a larger contract for neighbouring boroughs which should provide greater scope for savings in both the procurement process and the resultant contract award.
- 3.7.8 In response to the concerns raised by the consultation exercise that has just been undertaken, it is proposed that after the initial soft market test exercise is undertaken that a further consultation is undertaken with library service staff, library users and local communities to further clarify arrangements and to gauge reaction to the service proposals being developed. The Council would at this stage in the process, be proposing that there are no changes to the current front line service that is specified for future delivery, and that levels of current provision are therefore maintained.
- 3.7.9 The proposed consultation exercise should enable the Council to provide a more detailed and clearer picture around future service delivery proposals and models, and to address many of the questions raised within the current consultation exercise. The results of this further consultation will be reported back to Members before any further decisions are made regarding the future of the Library Service.
- 3.7.10 Should Members agree to further explore a joint procurement exercise with the London Borough of Bexley then the following is the anticipated timetable:

MARKET TESTING OF THE CORE LIBRARY OFFER TIMETABLE	INDICATIVE KEY DATES
Commencement of joint working with Bexley	April / May 2015
Market research and soft market testing exercise	May - August 2015
Further staff and public consultation	September 2015
Update report to Committee	October 2015
Subject to Committee approval:	
Development of a full specification	November 2015 – February 2016
OJEU notice published with PQQ	April 2016

Invitation to tender issued	July 2016
Tender returns	October 2016
Consultation with staff	November – December 2016
Award contract	January 2016
Commencement of new arrangements	July 2017

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This delivery of the Library Strategy is entirely consistent with the Councils objectives around Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres and well as being in line with the Councils broader financial strategy and its stated ambition to becoming a commissioning authority.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The net controllable cost of the library service is £4.689m.
- 5.2 Should the six community libraries be established, the maximum full year saving that could be achieved, after allowing for the cost of the support team (£70k) is £250k. This is based on all of the community libraries being set up as asset owning community libraries rather than the community managed or commissioned community library models. It should be noted that only part year savings of up to £187k will be achieved in 2016/17.
- 5.3 Any potential redundancy costs as a result of the establishment of community libraries will be met from the central contingency provision for redundancy/early retirement costs arising from budget savings.
- 5.4 It should be noted that condition surveys for the community libraries may need to be undertaken at an estimated cost of £30k.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There were a number of pieces of legislation that affected the authority's decision making on the delivery of a library service, in particular:
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the new Statutory Guidance for the Duty to Involve places authorities under a duty to consider the possibilities

for provision of information to, consultation with and involvement of representatives or local persons across all authority areas.

6.5 Counsels opinion on the strategy has now been sought to confirm that the approach set out in the Library Strategy does not create a situation whereby the Council could be challenged in the future over its duty to provide a Comprehensive and efficient library service.

6.6 The conclusion provided by Counsel is as follows:

6.6.1 “As a matter of principle, therefore, I consider that the ‘core proposal’ of eight libraries constituting the Council’s statutory service *ought* to satisfy the Council’s duty under section 7 of the 1964 Act, so long as a full evaluation of the needs and provision is carried out. There is no statutory requirement that more than 80% of the borough’s population live within 1.5 miles of their nearest library. In coming to its evaluation, the Council will need to consider whether the additional travelling time (whether by private car, or public transport) will enable reasonable access to the available libraries. I see no obvious reason why not, but this is a matter for the Council to consider having taken into account all of the relevant information.”

6.6.2 The Council will need to consider very carefully the cost-benefit of keeping within the statutory service the three community libraries at Mottingham, St. Paul’s Cray and Southborough: there is some vulnerability here from the public sector equality duty perspective. A detailed Needs Assessment has been carried out considering all the relevant matters.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 If the proposal to develop community managed libraries and market test the core libraries is agreed there are 11FTE posts which would be deleted within the community libraries which would give rise to a redundancy situation in the service. In addition it is proposed that 2 posts will be created to support the community libraries, providing training, support and advice. These positions will be ring-fenced to existing library staff resulting in a net reduction of 9 FTE

posts which will be managed in accordance with the Council’s Managing Change Procedures. To further mitigate the impact of redundancy it is proposed that any future vacancies will be filled on a on a temporary fixed term basis making it clear that there is no expectation of continuing employment beyond the end of the transitional period.

7.2 If the core libraries from London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley are transferred to an organisation as a result of a joint procurement strategy then it is expected that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) will apply.

7.3 The staffing implications set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 above were highlighted and discussed during the recent consultation process. Staff and their representatives have been advised of the contents of this report, along with the recommendations contained therein and if these are agreed the library staff and their representatives will continue to be engaged and consulted as early as practicable on the issues involved with due regard to the existing framework of employment law including TUPE.

Non-Applicable Sections:	[List non-applicable sections here]
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<p>Renewal and Recreation Libraries Survey Outcome of Consultation – 10th July 2012.</p> <p>London Borough of Bromley CIPFA Comparative Profile Public Libraries.</p> <p>Bromley Library Service Proposal for Reorganisation - 1st April 2014 DRR14/024</p> <p>Bromley Library Service – Outcome of Consultation 23rd June 2014 DRR14/054</p> <p>Bromley Library Service – Outcome of Consultation 23rd June 2014 DRR14/054</p> <p>Library Service Strategy – Update 18th November 2014 DRR14/090</p>

Appendix 1

Proposed Library Service Strategy – Outcome of Staff Consultation

The purpose of this document is to set out the response to the staff consultation on the proposed Library Strategy. The Committee report to Members in November 2014 set out the strategy for taking the Library Service forward and proposed the development of 6 community managed libraries and market testing of the borough's core library offer. This document will be sent to all staff and will be submitted to Members as part of the report to the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on 18 March 2015 and the Portfolio Holder.

Background

As part of the budget setting process for 2015/16 and 2016/17 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 2015/16. This included the proposals set out in the Library Strategy report to R&R PDS on 18 November 2014 requiring officers to formally consult with library users and staff on the proposals and report back to Committee .

Library service staff were notified on 10 November 2014 of the report to the R&R PDS on 18 November 2014. The formal consultation commenced on 19 December 2014 and ended on 31 January 2015.

Staff consultation

There were 6 formal consultation meetings held with staff at various locations during January 2015. A meeting with the TU and staff representatives was held on 16 January. In addition a meeting was held on 29 January with the Shared Library Service staff. The meetings were well attended with 95 staff present which is 73% of the library service staff. Staff were encouraged to respond to the consultation document. At these meetings staff were informed of the Council's overall budget and that the Council is reviewing all services and considering market testing these services in a move to becoming a commissioning authority in line with the Council's Corporate Operating Principles.

At each consultation meeting the Head of the Library Service set out the background to the Library Strategy and the proposed strands which are 1. exploring community managed libraries with a proposed implementation date of April 2016, 2. to market test the delivery of the library service by 2017 and 3. to explore how the physical buildings can be improved by refurbishing existing buildings through, for example seeking interest from developers or co-locating with other suitable organisations.

There were a number of questions and themes that came out of the staff discussions at these meetings and these are listed below with management's response:-

Question:- Who would run the Community Managed Libraries and what would happen if there was no interest from the community groups?

Management response:- If the proposal is agreed to explore the option of community managed libraries then expressions of interest will be sought from community groups or organisations. There are different models that could be adopted. In other authorities there are examples of groups managing libraries without any paid staff and volunteers helping customers. In some models the community organisation has limited paid staff but these would not be Council employees. If there was no interest from the community then Members would need to decide how to progress this situation and discuss whether to include these libraries with the 8 core libraries constituting the statutory service. Staff were informed that at this time Members do not intend to close any libraries.

Question:- What about the opening hours in the Community Managed Libraries?

Management response:- The intention would be that the opening hours of the library would not be less than the current opening hours; a formal agreement with the community group/organisation would stipulate the

minimum opening hours. They can open up the library for more than the stipulated hours as has happened in other authorities with community run libraries.

Question:- What support would the Community Managed Libraries receive from the Council?

Management response:- Initially it is proposed that a small Support Team of two officers is set up to be the first point of contact for organisations running the individual libraries. They would provide training and support and monitor how the libraries are running. They would also liaise with Shared Service managers where specialist support is needed. Ultimately it is proposed that the contract for the 8 core libraries would include responsibility for the management of the community managed libraries. They would have responsibility to oversee them and ensure they were meeting the Council's agreement with regard to library services provided in these libraries and provide support.

Question:- Would Community Managed Libraries be expected to undertake activities?

Management response:- Community managed libraries would be expected to undertake library activities as part of the agreement, training would be given and performance would be assessed.

Question:- What does the Council have to provide in terms of a library service?

Management response:- The Council is legally required to provide a "comprehensive and efficient service". This statutory provision is not clearly defined but it is believed that it could be provided by the 8 core libraries. It certainly includes the provision of a free book lending service. .

Question:- The on line customer survey does not give customers an alternative choice?

Management response:- The survey is seeking views from customers on the proposals. The online survey allows respondents to indicate that they are strongly opposed to the proposals and to suggest alternatives. If customers complete a hard copy then they can also share their views on alternatives. In addition customers and staff have been given the opportunity to write directly to the Council with their views.

Question:- How will the market testing process for the core libraries be undertaken and why would an organisation want to tender for the library service?

Management response:- A specification will be drawn up and tenders invited through a procurement process. An organisation would be able to use the building perhaps for additional purposes, e.g. to deliver courses or other grant funded activities and this could be a form of income. There are several examples across the UK where organisations have taken on Library Services so there are organisations interested.

Question:- In the Community Managed Libraries how will volunteers access the data base and what happens to the stock?

Management response:- A version of our current Library Management System is available designed for use by volunteers and meeting data protection requirements. Customers may be signposted to the core libraries for other library services.

Depending on the model adopted library stock could be supplied to community managed libraries.

Question:- Are there any models where staff have taken over running libraries?

Management response:- There are examples in York and Suffolk.

Question:- Why is there is a split of 6 Community Libraries and 8 Core Libraries?

Management response:- Members wish to involve the community more and hope that there will be an interest from the local community in running and developing their own local services at community libraries. It is believed that the 8 core libraries, which provide the greatest range of services and are used by the most customers, are required to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations.

Human Resources Issues

A number of HR related issues/questions were asked and a representative from HR was at every meeting to respond to these questions. It was explained to staff that there will need to be a restructure if the proposal is agreed and that the probable route would be for all staff to be in a selection pool and competitive interviews held. There are 11FTE posts which would be deleted within the community libraries. These staff would be in the selection pool along with the library staff in the core libraries. To mitigate the number of staff "at risk" of redundancy all vacancies, should the proposal go ahead, would be filled by temporary staff over the next year so that permanent positions would be available for existing permanent staff. In addition it is likely that 2 posts will be created to support the community libraries, providing training, support and advice. These positions will be available for permanent library staff to apply for meaning the net reduction would be 9 FTE posts.

A number of questions came up about TUPE arrangements should an organisation be interested in the core libraries. The general principles of TUPE were explained.

Trade Union and Departmental Representatives Consultation

A meeting was held on 16 January 2015 and TU and staff representatives were informed of the proposals as set out in the Library Strategy. The meeting was informed of the Council's intention to improve the assets and discussed proposals for Chislehurst Library and possible work at St Pauls Cray which will be subject to consultation.

It was explained that at the time of the meeting there had been 800 on line responses (100 hard copies) from the public on the public consultation exercise. Concern was raised about the questionnaire used in the public consultation because on the on line survey there was not an option to disagree with the options proposed. However, members of the public have been invited to write in with comments and public notices have been put up across the borough and advertisements in the News Shopper to encourage other responses. It was also explained that the Council would not be reducing opening hours and a SLA would be entered into with Community groups expressing an interest to run libraries. Concern was expressed about volunteers and their commitment and ability to answer questions from the public. Management stated that It is proposed that there will be some support to the community managed libraries and some training for volunteers provided by the Council. The Head of the Library Service said there are good models around for the Council to consider if the proposals are agreed. Concern was expressed that community managed libraries were not stable and although examples were not given at the meeting UNITE said they would undertake some research. The meeting was informed that if the proposal went ahead there could potentially be a net loss of 9 FTE's in the Community Managed Libraries and the Council would try and mitigate these posts by only temporarily filling any vacancies going forward to protect permanent staff should the proposal be agreed. There was concern expressed about the monitoring arrangements and management confirmed that the scrutiny issue would be considered.

I would like to thank staff for the contributions to the consultation process.

Colin Brand
Assistant Director, Culture

Appendix 2

Respondents were asked, in principle, to what extent they support the Council seeking Community Management options at the 6 proposed Community Libraries

Those respondents who answered either 'do not support' or 'strongly opposed to' were asked an open-ended question as to whether they could suggest any alternative proposals that the Council may consider to make the necessary savings. Below is a summary of the comments received. They have been grouped as far as was practical to provide an overview of the key theme.

Overall there were 503 responses, some respondents made more than 1 suggestion and in such cases all suggestions were counted. The figures have been rounded and shown as a percentage of the overall responses.

Suggestion / Comment	%
Prioritise library service budgets over other services. Libraries are a more essential services than others that the Council provides, money is wasted on unnecessary projects such as town centre pavement improvements, hanging baskets etc.	15%
Generate income from library buildings – different commercial uses such as cafes, raise charges for services and include charging for books and room hire, generate sponsorship, work with partner organisations who could hire space.	12%
Raise Council Tax, (some suggested ring fence additional income to library budgets).	10%
General comments on the value of libraries in supporting communities, educational benefits particularly for children, social value, benefits of services offered (also noted that they support people in disadvantaged areas)	9%
Reduce staff and staff pay, particularly senior and middle management, reduce staff perks, pay for car parking etc.	9%
Reduce members and members pay and expenses and perks.	8%
Reduce / change the opening times of libraries to make the required savings	6%
Share the costs of the service over all libraries - do not differentiate between the 6 community libraries and the 8 core libraries, community libraries are as important as the larger libraries, spread the costs savings.	5%
Concerns over using volunteers – reliability, sustainability, skills, ability to deliver the current service.	5%
Integrate services, share services, co locate services	4%
Use reserves to keep libraries open	4%