

SCRUTINY OF THE INTEGRATED PLAN PROPOSALS 2016/17 – 2019/20

PORTFOLIO: PUBLIC HEALTH, LOCALISM AND LIBRARIES

INTRODUCTION: Libraries

Please provide a three line summary of what services your portfolio covers and a list of the 5 key issues/ pressures facing your portfolio and what action you have taken/ are taking on them.

Summary of Services

There are four main services within this area of the portfolio. Hertfordshire Library Service, which is delivered through 46 libraries and a range of outreach services. Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) is a specialist centre, preserving, promoting and archiving resources for the discovery of Hertfordshire's history. The Customer Services Team supports county council departments and services in enhancing the customer service they provide to residents. Finally Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) provide a wide variety of learning for adults and parents and their children.

Issues/pressures

1. The Library Service's key challenge is ensuring the service remains vibrant and relevant to Hertfordshire residents whilst reducing its cost of delivery. The 'Inspiring Libraries Strategy' sets out an exciting modern role for the service and is on track to deliver its first year of saving for 15/16. The challenge ahead will be the implement the remaining 14 community partnered libraries over the next two years to achieve the further £1.m savings.
2. Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies is a specialist centre for the discovery of Hertfordshire's history from 1060 to the present day. The digitisation of collections and storage continue to be a key issue for the service. During the final quarter of 2015/16 a strategy for the future of the service will be developed.
3. The new County Council's website's homepage and several service pages of the new website have gone live in Beta form, resulting in initial positive feedback. During 2016/17 the challenge will be to develop the whole site, renewing content for all service areas and maximising the potential of the new website to as the primary customer channel to reduce the cost of other contact channels.
4. Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service is funded from the Skills Funding Agency. This funding has been reducing year on year for the last four year presenting challenges in continuing the levels of learning the team can deliver. HAFLs working with other service areas have bid for European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF)/Big lottery money in the region £5m, the outcome of this bid will be know early summer in 2016. HAFLS are due to be inspected by Ofsted in the next year to 18 months.

KEY THEMES AND QUESTIONS

STRATEGY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT

How do the future service plan priorities contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The Library Service, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) and Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) all contribute to the County Council's Corporate Priorities to provide residents with the opportunity to Thrive, Prosper and Take Part.

The Library Service's vision is to create inspiring library services that enable Hertfordshire citizens to enrich their lives:

- Hertfordshire Library Service will enable individuals to access knowledge, information and cultural resources for themselves, and provide support for those who may need more help.
- Hertfordshire libraries will provide safe spaces (both physical and virtual) where anyone can go, without judgement, to read, to borrow, to learn, to access information and online resources.
- Hertfordshire libraries will enrich communities by fostering local culture and heritage, and providing opportunities for citizens to participate actively in community life.

HALS aims to successfully preserve and promote the use of Hertfordshire's heritage resources for the personal, community, social and economic benefit and wellbeing of Hertfordshire's citizens.

HAFLS endeavours to ensure that all residents in Hertfordshire to have the opportunity to learn and acquire new skills, throughout their life, that will enable them to lead healthy, independent and fulfilling lives, actively contribute to local communities and benefit from employment opportunities created by Hertfordshire's growing prosperity.

How are you managing your service to make it more efficient?

The Customer Service team have led on the development and implementation of a new website for the County Council. This website aims to reduce customer contact through higher cost channels such as face to face and telephone, in addition to improving the customer experience. The business case for the development of the website was predicated on reducing the number of calls into the Customer Service Centre, thereby making efficiencies and also reducing the cost of outdated technology infrastructure. With the new enhanced website capability individual services are now considering what further services and transactions can be provided online to support their customers and make efficiencies.

The Library Service has also used technology to become more efficient and reduce cost. Self-service printing from public access computers, with printing and payment via the existing self-service kiosks is gradually being rolled out across libraries and innovations like the Library Link (video link between

libraries) installed at volunteer run libraries. These and other uses of technology enable the library to continue to deliver quality services whilst reducing cost.

How are you developing and delivering partnership approaches to make best use of the Hertfordshire pound and improve outcomes for our citizens?

The 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy outlines the ambition for all Hertfordshire library buildings to be bright, attractive, welcoming, flexible, tech-enabled spaces in convenient locations. With 11 of the service's 46 library buildings identified as not fit for delivering modern library services, effective partnerships have been pivotal in developing projects to improve or re provide library buildings across the county. Two of particular note are:

In Hemel Hempstead, the County Council is a partner in The Forum project, which will re-provide Hemel Hempstead Library in a new building under the same roof as Dacorum customer services, the registration service and community and voluntary sector provision. The library relocated into temporary accommodation in Dacorum Civic Centre in April 2015 so that the existing library building could be demolished to make way for the new development. Plans for the new building are well advanced, and the Forum is expected to open in late 2016.

At Berkhamsted, planning permission has been granted to re-provide the library on the ground floor of a new residential development on the adjacent police station site. A public engagement exercise undertaken in partnership with the B-Hive group in July 2015 has helped to inform plans for the new library, which is scheduled to complete in the autumn of 2016.

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service have developed strong and effective partnerships through subcontracting arrangements and working with other organisations and internal Hertfordshire County Council departments. The partnerships offer value for money through shared resources, knowledge and expertise. There are highly effective commissioning and contract monitoring processes in place to ensure quality of provision and reduce risk. The service also facilitates four geographically based stakeholder groups to encourage and widen participation in adult learning, improve co-ordination of the learning offer and strengthen partnerships between different organisations. The Service have recently submitted bids to the ESIF/Lottery fund, these bids have been developed in partnership and if successful will be delivered with a range of different public sector and community partners.

How have you prioritised capital investment and what opportunities have you considered that might mitigate or reduce future capital and/or revenue costs?

The 'Inspiring Libraries Strategy' proposed that the County Council should seek opportunities to re-provide libraries which are currently less suitable by sharing buildings with other services, and identified 11 libraries as priorities for relocation or re-provision based on condition, suitability, size and location.

The County Council has secured £700,000 in grant funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government to investigate the co-location of up to four libraries with retained fire stations in small towns and villages. Work has taken place over the summer to explore the viability of co-location projects in Buntingford, Redbourn, Sawbridgeworth and Wheathampstead, three of which were identified as priority buildings to re provide. The purpose of this project is to create attractive, modern libraries suitable for the delivery of a service appropriate to the designated tier, but also to significantly reduce building running costs. If the four co-location projects go ahead they have the potential to make approximately £100,000 reduction in revenue cost per year for the county council whilst sustaining services in the these small town and villages.

In other libraries across the county we are exploring opportunities to share space with partners and reduce building revenue costs or achieve income. Successes to date include the Thriving Families moving into Stevenage Old Town Library. At Watford Central Library, part of the ground floor has been shared with Day Services since October 2014, which has also had the benefit of a café facility for library users

Have you considered any other investment approaches to reduce future costs to the authority?

The 'Inspiring Libraries' Strategy has an aim of increasing library income by around 25% (£200,000-£300,000 per annum) from 2015/16 – 2017/18 to contribute to the total savings target of £2.5m.

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service attracted £79,000 in additional external funding from the Skills and Funding Agency to support learners with mental health needs in 2015/16 and aim to attract a similar amount of funding in 2016/17. The Service has now led on a partnership bid for ESIF/Big Lottery funding on tackling barriers to employment, if this bid is successful, delivery will commence in the summer of 2016 for three years.

ENGAGEMENT

How have the proposals been informed by staff/public/partner/staff engagement?

The 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy is informed by the results of a public consultation, 'The Future of Hertfordshire Libraries', which attracted contributions from 15,457 residents, partners and stakeholders between October and December 2013.

A further public consultation exercise took place between 29 September and 7 December 2014, to seek feedback on the strategy proposals and informed the final proposals on how the 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy will be implemented across the county's 46 libraries. Relevant Herefordshire residents/ communities continue to be engaged as elements of the strategy are progressed.

Staff have been fully involved in the development of the 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy through a services of roadshows, workshops, a questionnaire and invited to submit their idea through the Council's Bright Ideas scheme. There have been significant staffing changes, with full consultation and engagement, to implement

the first year of the Library Strategy implementation and achieve the 2015/16 savings targets.

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Service (HALS) works successfully with a wide range of partners and community organisations to preserve and promote Hertfordshire's heritage, including local groups and societies, museums, libraries and educational organisations. HALS is regularly approached to support community projects and events. There is further potential for taking Heritage Services more visibly 'out' into the wider community, improving access to services and historic resources across the whole county for the benefit of diverse audiences and this will be considered within the new strategy being developed.

The Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service's four Community Learning Network groups, which consist of a variety of local and county wide partners, meets 3 times a year and contributes information concerning current local learning opportunities, local needs and gaps in provision.

The Customer Service Team in developing the new website is using a Website Testing Panel of people to try out early web pages and services being developed. This makes sure that the website is designed closely with its audience from the start.

The panel is regularly asked to complete various tasks on the new website to find out how user friendly it is. Panellists are also asked to take part in card sorting exercises to see how they organise different types of information or content, and how they'd name those areas. The Customer service Team recruited volunteers via blog posts and social media. They also used a local market research company to recruit panel members across the Hertfordshire personas based on the different customer types that use our services. It's vital that the panel is demographically representative of all our customers and not just those familiar with websites and technology. The Panel is currently made up of 586 people.

In addition there are a range of mechanisms that staff groups have been engaged in the development of the new website. Every department has been involved in the process of developing their requirements of the website, using workshops and middle management engagement days. The new website has been a key topic on the Bright Ideas forum. Representatives from each department and current web editors and publishers have had a strong voice in developing the future requirements. A website Members working party has also been engaged to provide feedback on the current website and contribute their views on future developments.

How do your proposals support engagement with or delivery to local communities including the enhancement of the role and visibility of Members?

The 'Inspiring Libraries strategy' sets out Hertfordshire Library Service's ambitions based on three main themes. One of these themes focuses on the library as a vibrant community asset – shaped with local people and partners to reflect local need, support sustainability and enrich communities. This will be achieved in a number of ways, firstly in the county's smaller libraries we will seek to add value to the self-service offer by developing community partnerships, inviting partner

organisations to provide volunteer assistance and organise additional activities in the library. The first two community partnership libraries went live in November 2016 at Redbourn and Chorelywood. Local members have been pivotal in the development of these two libraries supporting them with time and their locality budgets. There are a further 15 libraries that need to be developed in this way over the next two years. These local partnerships to develop community run libraries will enhance local services, increase access, ensure sustainability, foster a sense of ownership and involvement and help us to develop these libraries into genuine community hubs. These community-partnered libraries will remain very much part of the family of Hertfordshire libraries.

To what extent do your proposals encourage self reliance e.g. volunteering, accessing services on line etc. enabling people and communities to help themselves?

In addition to the community partnered libraries being volunteer run, the Library Service work with local communities to encourage the organisation of 'Friends' groups for local libraries, through which volunteers can help us extend opening hours such as at Harpenden, to promote library services in the local area and to raise income. Volunteers are critical to the Home Library Service that delivers books to customers who are unable to reach your local library because they are housebound, have a disability, or care for someone at home.

Over the last 10 years in Hertfordshire Archives and Local studies (HALS), volunteers have made (and continue to make) an invaluable contribution to HALS work; they bring enthusiasm and commitment in helping to list, index and preserve archives and deliver funded projects. The volunteer and work experience programmes provide the opportunity for citizens to become more closely involved with Hertfordshire's historic collections, to learn and develop new skills. Looking ahead, the service will continue to seek to develop volunteer roles in digitisation, along with increased promotion and education roles, as well as seeking to extend our volunteering offer for people who wish to contribute remotely.

PERFORMANCE, STANDARDS & TARGETS

What contribution are you making to the broader partnership working both within Hertfordshire County Council and outside?

The Library Service, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), Customer Service and Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service's (HAFLS) work in close partnership with other services within the county council and externally. Positive relationships have been built with colleagues in health, police, PCCO, district councils, voluntary sector and Town and Parish Councils. These include areas such as; library building re provision with health and districts, co-locations between services children centre and libraries support from parishes for community partnered libraries, HAFLS commissioning the voluntary sector to deliver learning opportunities and HALS working closely with local museums to deliver a breath of heritage services and projects.

What contribution is your service making towards the efficiency savings Hertfordshire County Council needs to make?

The Library Service proposals are expected to save £2.5 million from the annual Library Service budget by 2017/18. The service is on track to deliver the 2015/16 target of £1 million, in 2016/17 the service aims to deliver a further £1 million and 2017/18 a final £0.5 million.

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies service is developing their Heritage Service Strategy currently, with it due to go to Public Health, Localism and Libraries Cabinet Panel in March 2016. This strategy will set out how the service can reduce its revenue budget by £50,000 by 2017/18, it is anticipated that this will primarily be through bringing in additional income.

The Customer Service team have been working on reducing the amount of calls going to the Customer Service Centre as a result of the work on the website. In 2016/17 the team will be reviewing the opening hours of the Customer Service Centre in the hope of making a reduction in the cost of this element of the Shared Managed Services contract.

What is your services contribution to the IP cross-cutting themes and how are these impacting on your proposals?

Libraries have been fully engaged in the asset rationalisation/shared accommodation work stream. This has resulted in underutilised areas in a number of libraries being used to host Hertfordshire County Council services or partners.

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service's work feeds directly into the skills, jobs and work opportunities work stream.

Enabling the citizen and communities work stream is very much being driven by the Customer Service team in terms of improving the website and customer journey through all the council's key contact channels. In terms of enabling communities the volunteering work progressed by the Libraries Service and HALS and the community partnered libraries are all pivotal.

How are you continuing to drive service improvement and how do you compare against the top performers in your area?

The Library Service visited a number of comparator authorities in developing the Inspiring Libraries Strategy to understand best practise in terms of technology, community engagement and capital developments and aid the services' thinking in achieving the £2.5 m savings target by 2017/18. For example Buckinghamshire County Council has partnered with the community to run 17 of their libraries, the service visited several of Buckinghamshire libraries and the learning gained from Buckinghamshire's experience has enabled Hertfordshire Library Service to develop further how we will develop out community partnered libraries. The service visited Exeter and Manchester to understand how they had developed their public technology offer in terms of 'makerspaces'. Similar learning from other authorities has informed the development of community books swaps and expansion of the

Home Library Service in response to the withdrawal of the Mobile Library service in the autumn of 2015.

Customer Service Centre was reviewed as part of Hertfordshire County Council's mid-term review of the Serco Shared Managed Services contract November 2015 – March 2015. The review focussed on benchmarking and value for money and found that the Customer Contact Centre's total price is outperforming top quartile levels of the reference group by 14% and is 17% lower than reference group pricing. Benchmarking with similar authorities also demonstrated that the Customer Service Centre call waiting average was much lower (low being good) than other authorities, reinforcing the good value for money this service provides.

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service is a member of an Adult and Community Learning benchmarking club and has the 4th lowest overheads out of 21 authorities in the club and the 2nd highest number of learners. A recent external health check has reported that the service and strong management and delivers high quality learning. This health check has been important in preparing for a full Ofsted inspection identifying any area for improvement for the service to address.

SUSTAINABILITY, DELIVERABILITY & IMPLEMENTATION

How is your service supporting economic growth and prosperity?

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service have contributed to the Hertfordshire Skills Strategy. The service endeavours to ensure that all residents in Hertfordshire to have the opportunity to learn, acquire new skills, actively contribute to local communities and benefit from employment opportunities created by Hertfordshire's growing prosperity

The Library Service also supports economic growth and prosperity by providing small businesses with access to business information and support. The Library Service also supports residents develop their digital skills and have access to technology.

What effect is the change in the economy and society having on your services? e.g. levels of demand, inflation, changing income etc. and how are these impacts being managed or mitigated?

Changes in how customers expect services to be developed or delivered is a key driver for how Customer Services, Library Service, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) and Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS). The expectations that more and more residents have to access services online, through the internet, on social media or through electronic means has greatly influence the services' development. The new website, which the Customer Service Team is leading on, is one mechanism of supporting all county council services to improve their online presence. The library service has increased its use and availability of technology with tablets, self- service printing, increase in e-books and launch of the 'library app'. HALS are further developing the benefits of technology to improve services and meet customer needs, through online services, increased access to digitised records and preservation of digital archives.

What are the major risks to delivery of your proposals and how are you proposing to manage these? e.g. capacity, time, budget in regard to these proposals.

The Library Strategy and associated savings targets are on profile to be achieved in 2015/16. There is a rigorous programme board initiated to implement the strategy, monitor progress and mitigate risks. The major risk for 2016/17 and 2017/18 is progressing the community partnered libraries, ensuring that a further 14 local communities are able to take on and successfully run their libraries. This is a time consuming exercise and often is linked with capital projects, in some locations with partners, which have their own risks to successful delivery.

The delivery of the new website by the Customer Service Team is well underway and being tightly project managed. Reputationally this project is important for the county council as a whole and it's key that the project delivers positive results for a range of stakeholders; staff, services and customers, whilst delivering the savings identified in its business case.

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning service needs to sustain its external funding from the Skills Funding Agency. Achieving a positive Ofsted inspection is fundamental to this and the service is preparing for this inspection, tacking areas for improvement found in a recent health check of the service. The other risk to this service is national policy decision to reduce the funding available for adult and community learning. HAFLS has been aiming to diversify its funding sources in the aim to sustain learning activity should his occur.

What is the basis of your demographic predictions? What effect is demographic change having on your service? How flexible is your budget to demographic changes?

Customer Services, Library Service, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) and Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) keep abreast of changes in demography so that they can ensure their services are relevant to the changing profiles of communities. It is not anticipated that demographic changes should put pressure on budgets, only that budgets should be re profiled to take into account any change that services need to respond to in the changing profile of the communities.

