

**From:** Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community & Regulatory Services

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport

**To:** Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 28 November 2019

**Subject:** Library Extra pilot evaluation

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** This report updates on the background of the Library Extra pilot, evaluates the uptake of the service at the three pilot sites, makes recommendations for the future of the pilot and considers the potential future use of this technology.

**Recommendation:** Cabinet Committee is asked to note the details of this report, and endorse the recommendations made. Specifically, to:

A) Continue the Library Extra pilot at each of the three sites for 1 year, which will enable the uptake and use of Library Extra to be assessed in the context of the new library opening hours. It is proposed that an interim report be prepared after 6 months in April 2020.

B) LRA to explore the potential for a further pilot at a tier 2 and tier 5 library.

C) Library Extra is made available on Sunday at both Paddock Wood and Higham libraries during the normal Sunday trading hours of 10am to 4pm.

## 1. Context

1.1. In 2017, Libraries Registration and Archives (LRA) introduced a pilot of Library Extra following other local authorities introducing this innovative approach to library opening. Technology assisted library opening had been established in several European countries, and several UK authorities including Peterborough, Milton Keynes & Brighton and Hove.

1.2. The pilot involved Library Extra being installed at three libraries. The pilot would allow customers to use the library during hours that it would otherwise be closed and unstaffed. The aim was to allow LRA to assess how customers

used and valued this service to assess the benefits as well as any drawbacks of using this technology in our library buildings.

- 1.3. The pilot was launched in September 2018 giving out of hours access to Deal, Higham, and Paddock Wood libraries for Library Extra customers.
- 1.4. It is important to note that any library customer aged 16 and over with a current full membership card can sign up for an enhanced card and use the Library Extra service providing they are also prepared to agree to adhere to specific terms and conditions.
- 1.5. To evaluate the performance of Library Extra, LRA has consulted with customers, staff, the facilities management team, and used the expertise of the corporate data and intelligence team to ensure a full and meaningful evaluation was undertaken.

## **2. Technology**

- 2.1. The technology to deliver Library Extra consists of a door entry system, a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID), self-issue kiosk(s), internal CCTV coverage and a PA system.
- 2.2. The technology is programmed to interact with lighting systems and security alarms. For example, towards the end of the session the PA system will announce that the library will be closing at programmed intervals and the lights will dim as the session closes. Library Extra sessions are programmed online and are managed centrally from the Kent History and Library Centre. The system allows for any changes or adjustments to the schedule to be made easily and quickly.

## **3. Pilot Sites**

- 3.1. To fully test the Library Extra service, sites were selected to offer a geographic spread and to target different communities:
  - Deal Library, Dover District, tier 1: One of our main town centre sites open seven days a week. Deal was the only library of the 3 pilot sites to offer Sunday opening.

**Table 1 Deal pilot Hours**

	Library Extra	Staffed Hours	Library Extra
<b>Monday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Tuesday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Wednesday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Thursday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Friday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Saturday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Sunday</b>	7.00-10.00	10.00-16.00	16.00 - 21.00

3.2. Paddock Wood Library, Tunbridge Wells District, tier 4: a small-town centre library open 5 days a week on a main high street near a well-used railway station and would test commuter use.

**Table 2 Paddock Wood pilot hours**

	Library Extra	Staffed Hours	Library Extra
<b>Monday</b>	7.00 - 9.00	0.00	7.00 - 21.00
<b>Tuesday</b>	7.00 - 9.00	9.00-18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Wednesday</b>	7.00 - 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Thursday</b>	7.00 - 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Friday</b>	7.00 - 9.00	9.00- 18.00	18.00 - 21.00
<b>Saturday</b>	7.00 - 10.00	10.00 -14.00	14.00 - 21.00

3.3. Higham Library, Gravesham District, tier 3: a small library in Higham village open 6 half days a week with an active local community. Higham did not offer RFID self - service technology before the pilot.

**Table 3 Higham pilot hours**

	Library Extra	Staffed Hours	Library Extra
<b>Monday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00- 13.00	13.00 – 21.00
<b>Tuesday</b>	7.00 -14.00	14.00 - 17.30	17.30 – 21.00
<b>Wednesday</b>	7.00 - 9.00	9.00- 13.00	13.00 – 21.00
<b>Thursday</b>	7.00 -14.00	14.00- 17.30	17.30 - 21.00
<b>Friday</b>	7.00- 9.00	9.00-13.00	1.00 – 9.00
<b>Saturday</b>	7.00 -10.00	10.00-14.00	14.00 – 21.00

3.4. Capital installation costs for the three sites totalled £136,082.

3.5. The work carried out at Higham and Paddock Wood libraries has improved access into the buildings at both the entrance and fire exit making them more accessible to all our customers.

3.6. Revenue costs for Library Extra are an additional £1,500 per site per year.

## **4. Facilities Management**

- 4.1. Some issues were experienced with automatic doors and intruder alarms at Higham and Paddock Wood; an issue also highlighted in other local authorities. This was either a failure in the automatic doors opening, or an issue with the integration between the automatic doors and the intruder alarm. While a solution was found it is recommended for any future Library Extra installations that a new automatic door is installed rather than retro fitting an existing door.
- 4.2. Facilities Management has provided details of the impact on premises costs of the pilots. Whilst not significant, there has been an increase in utility costs to cover the additional opening times. From 1 October 2018 to 31 July 2019 gas and electricity bills combined increased by £4,411.36 on the same period 2017-2018. This represents a rise of 37% and incorporates annual energy price rises.

## **5. Health and Safety**

- 5.1. Any library customer aged 16 and over with a current full membership card can sign up for an enhanced card and use the Library Extra service. Applying this age limit is in line with other library authorities and was considered necessary for safeguarding reasons. Children and young people under the age of 16 can visit during Library Extra hours when accompanied by a parent or carer.
- 5.2. It is important to reiterate that the Library Extra service cannot simply be used by anyone with a library membership. Only library members who sign up to the terms and conditions can use the service. Each customer is given an induction to show them the service available and the Health & Safety procedures to follow such as the location of the emergency telephone, emergency exits, and fire alarms.
- 5.3. Additional procedures were put in place for Library Extra and to date no health and safety incidents have been reported. Of the Library Extra customers who responded to the online evaluation questionnaire, 85% said that they felt safe using the service.

## **6. Library Extra Use Data**

### **6.1. Customer Use by Library**

The table below shows Library Extra use for each library for the period September 2018 – July 2019

**Table 4**

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Total
<b>Deal</b>	5	57	35	51	75	50	88	62	63	21	40	547
<b>Higham</b>	94	144	160	87	120	154	118	124	98	113	121	1,333
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	77	106	84	84	87	61	106	10	2	39	70	726
<b>Grand Total</b>	176	307	279	222	282	265	312	196	163	173	231	2,606

**6.2** The 'core' Library Extra hours are those early in the morning before libraries open (7am to 9am) and after the libraries close in the evenings (6pm to 9pm), Monday to Saturday. The three libraries have different opening hours throughout the week, and Deal library also has Library Extra opening on a Sunday.

**6.3** Between September 2018 and July 2019, the key results to include:

- Deal Library had a total of 547 Library Extra visits and the most used timeslots were between 7am and 8am and 7pm and 8pm.
- Higham Library had a total of 1,333 Library Extra visits, and there is a clear peak in the evenings, particularly between 6pm and 7pm which is the busiest slot. The next busiest slot is between 7pm and 8pm, followed by 10am and 11am available at the library on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Paddock Wood Library had a total of 726 Library Extra visits. Issues with the automatic door setting off the intruder alarm meant that Library Extra was not available during parts of the pilot, and this has affected the number of sessions available and thus this library's performance in the pilot. By far the busiest slot at Paddock Wood is between 8am and 9am followed by 6pm and 7pm

#### **6.4. Customers**

- At the end of July 2019, a total of 479 Kent library customers had signed up for the Library Extra service. All Library Extra borrowers used only one of the three libraries during Library Extra hours and of the 479 users, 121 (25%) have borrowed during Library Extra hours. This indicates that users are accessing the service for other reasons as well as borrowing which is positive to see.
- Most of the borrowers who borrowed during Library Extra hours had used that library at some point during the previous year, except for 20 borrowers who did not borrow from any library during the year before. Of the 20 borrowers, 17 have also used the Library Extra libraries during regular opening hours.

- Just over 25% of issues were generated before 9am and after 6pm, with the rest generated when libraries were closed during the day, for example Paddock Wood library is closed on a Monday, and Higham is open for half days only.
- Deal library has many staffed opening hours which is probably why Deal has had less Library Extra visitors. It could be concluded that users are generally using the Library Extra service as they go about their daily business, instead of making special journeys to use it in the evenings or early mornings.
- The number of computer bookings during Library Extra hours has been low during the pilot. What cannot be measured is the number of Library Extra customers who use their own devices to access public Wi-Fi, which is likely to be customers' preference, but we will continue to investigate.

## **7. Pilot summary**

**7.1.** Costs of installing Library Extra, the differences between types of building and adaptation requirements are now fully understood. Door entry and alarm issues have been key to the smooth delivery of the service as well as the importance of robust testing by staff in Library Extra mode prior to launching the service.

**7.2.** Considerations about health, safety and security were a major part of the planning and implementation of this project. The processes that have been put in place to mitigate potential issues have been successful and will continue to be reviewed.

**7.3.** The ability to use services during early mornings and later in the evening has proved valuable to some customers but it has been most used where it is available when the library would otherwise be closed during normal working hours. This understanding will inform thinking about where Library Extra will be of most benefit in the future.

## **8. Equalities Implications**

**8.1.** Following the pilot, we have updated the Equalities Impact Assessment which is included as Appendix 1. The key updates to this are:

- Customer feedback about how Library Extra has been beneficial for certain types of disability such as autism. The option to use the library earlier or later in the day with less people around has been welcomed.

**8.2.** Whilst young people under the age of 16 cannot use Library Extra unless accompanied by an adult, this has not been raised as an issue. The EqIA has

identified that extending the service on Sunday at Paddock Wood and Higham would have a low negative impact on young people under the age of 16.

## **9. Extension of the Library extra Pilot**

**9.1.** LRA is proposing to extend the current pilot in all three locations for a further year and review how the service performs considering the recent change in library opening hours. The existing equipment that is installed and operating means the pilots can continue.

**9.2.** Having reviewed the initial stages of Library Extra, it is proposed that a Sunday Library Extra service is offered at both Paddock Wood and Higham libraries

**9.3.** The 3 pilot sites fall into tiers 1, 3, and 4 of the 5 library categories identified by our new library tiering and opening hours model. It is proposed that consideration be given to extending the service to a tier 2 and tier 5 libraries. LRA will look at the libraries in these tiers and the communities they serve to determine which could be good pilot sites to select. This would give us an opportunity to test and compare use and benefit at libraries in all tiers.

## **10. Additional Library Opening Hours**

10.1 In March 2019, the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services taking account of the results from the public consultation on the new LRA strategy took the decision to implement a new library opening hours model. All 99 Kent libraries have been retained but with an 18% reduction in library opening hours; these came into effect on 30th September 2019

10.2 At a previous meeting of this Cabinet Committee it was suggested that Parish Councils could pay for additional opening hours. As the new opening hours model was only implemented on the 30 September it is proposed that this new model be given time to settle before we assess its impact and before we make any further recommendations regarding staffed opening hours.

10.3 Extra opening hours could be a future consideration and we have investigated the practicalities of how Parish Councils could fund such hours. There are two options:

- Through additional staff, paid by Parish Councils under a clear funding commitment.
- Through Library Extra with a one-off capital investment to install the system, with an ongoing low, annual revenue support cost.

Both options are examined below:

Table 5:

Consideration	Extra staffing	Library extra
Costs needed	Ongoing staffing costs and utility costs. This would need to cover an amount to cover pension contribution and additional cover for annual leave for example.	Higher initial setup costs but lower ongoing costs once all the system in place
Agreement needed with partner funding	Need ongoing commitment and agreement with partner funding given we would be employing staff to cover. Commitment may change from partner which would then mean the additional hours would cease	Once initial setup costs are covered only the ongoing revenue to cover.
Ability to adjust the opening hours	Opening hours need to be agreed and staffed and clearly advertised as separate hours from the agreed KCC LRA opening hours	More flexibility to adjust as can be badged as part of Library Extra and easier to change hours on the system in response to local demand

10.4 As a result of this analysis it is proposed that LRA explore Library Extra as the way to deliver additional library access where there is demand. LRA will consider options to fund the upfront costs, for example through the potential use of S106 or CIL funding. We will also assess the potential of local member grants and future KCC capital funding.

## 11. Recommendations

**Recommendation:** Cabinet Committee is asked to note the details of this report, and endorse the recommendations made. Specifically, to:

A) Continue the Library Extra pilot at each of the three sites for 1 year, which will enable the uptake and use of Library Extra to be assessed in the context of the new library opening hours. It is proposed that an interim report be prepared after 6 months stage in April 2020.

B) LRA to explore the potential for a further pilot at a tier 2 and tier 5 library.

C) Library Extra is made available on Sunday at both Paddock Wood and Higham libraries during the normal Sunday trading hours of 10am to 4pm.

## **12. Attachments**

Appendix 1- Updated Equalities Impact Assessment

## **13. Contact details**

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