



**Executive**  
21 May 2012

**Report from the Director of  
Environment and Neighbourhood  
Services**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Progress report on the Libraries Transformation Project**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress made on the Libraries Transformation Project one year on and the plans for further improvements.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members note the progress of the strategy and next steps.

**3.0 Detail**

**Background**

- 3.1 Brent Council delivers a free public library service to its residents from its six library buildings, through its online services and by taking resources out to residents who are unable to visit a library. The service currently includes:

- Books, ebooks, audiobooks, DVDs and CDs for loan
- Reference material for in book and digital formats
- Space for study and relaxation
- Free internet and Wi-Fi access for library members
- Informal training, including online courses
- Information and advice
- A full programme of events and activities for all ages
- School visits and homework clubs
- A home visit and outreach service

3.2 In April 2011 the Executive agreed the Library Transformation Plan, centred around a clearly defined Library Transformation plan shaped by the Council's responsibilities and resources, the assessment of needs, consultation feedback and equalities considerations. The project aimed to improve the service, make better use of limited resources and to deliver savings to the Council of £816,000. This report is coming to the Executive now as one of the recommendations in the April 2012 report was for officers to report back on progress one year on from the original LTP decision.

3.3 The decision of the Council was challenged by way of Judicial Review proceedings. The High Court and the Court of Appeal ruled that the decision of the Council was lawful. The claimant's request to appeal to the Supreme Court was refused and the legal proceedings came to an end in February 2012.

**The Library Transformation Plan**

3.4 The Library Transformation Plan approved by the Executive in April 2011, sets out the ambitions of the library service in detail. The fundamental focus is on the creation of a library service that is accessible, inclusive and able to change according to resident needs. In 2012 and beyond the focus is on:

- Improving access to library services
- Improving the reading and learning offer
- Information, reference and study
- Improved online and digital services
- Improved offer for children, young people and families
- Creating a skilled workforce
- Customer and community engagement
- Library buildings and spaces improved.

**Project Progress**

3.5 The legal challenge has delayed implementation of many aspects of the project. However, as the table below shows, delivery of the Library Transformation Plan is now well under way.

<b>LTP improvements as of April 2012</b>	
<b>Access to library services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All six libraries are now open seven days a week</li> <li>• Ealing Road Library is now opening two extra evenings per week.</li> <li>• New user friendly online catalogue purchased; due to go live in May 2012</li> <li>• Library app for smartphones introduced</li> <li>• 10 volunteers recruited for home visit service</li> <li>• Expansion of outreach service to children's</li> </ul>

<b>LTP improvements as of April 2012</b>	
	centres and hospital wards
<b>Reading and learning offer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £550,000 stock budget retained for six libraries</li> <li>• Online stock suggestion scheme available</li> <li>• 'Books on Prescription' service launched in partnership with Brent Mind</li> <li>• Life in the UK citizenship course available in all six libraries and on line.</li> </ul>
<b>Information, reference and study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider range of online reference resources purchased</li> <li>• PCs in the six libraries increased by 15%</li> <li>• Bookstart Bear Club launched in all libraries (encouraging families to read together)</li> </ul>
<b>Services for children, young people and families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in children's stock in all libraries</li> <li>• Termly loan collections for schools piloted</li> <li>• Joint Summer Programme being produced with Sports and Youth services</li> </ul>
<b>Creating a skilled workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for frontline staff has taken place on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enquiry skills</li> <li>○ Customer service</li> <li>○ Use of online resources</li> <li>○ Working with children</li> <li>○ Story telling for under 5s</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Customer and community engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valued Customer Panels meeting quarterly in all libraries from April 2012</li> <li>• Email newsletter for customers now reaches 15,000 recipients</li> </ul>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> century library buildings and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ealing Road Library refurbished in March 2012</li> <li>• Kilburn Library will be refurbished in the summer of 2012</li> <li>• The new Wembley Library in the Civic Centre will open in June 2013</li> <li>• Willesden Green Library Centre redevelopment is proposed to start in the autumn of 2012 and is due to open in May 2014</li> </ul>

- 3.6 Over 4,651 'active borrowers' who previously used one of the closed libraries has since moved their library usage to one of the six libraries; indicating that 46% have moved to using the new services. It is recognised that comparing overall 2011 usage of twelve libraries against 2012 usage of six libraries shows a reduction overall but this is to be expected initially as it will take time to build usage based on the new library offer. Usage and borrowing figures also need to take account of periods when libraries are closed for refurbishment.
- 3.7 The rationalisation of library buildings was achieved in October 2011, with the closure of six buildings. The current position on disposal of the buildings is set out in the table below:

Building	
Barham Park	Currently vacant. In March 2012 the Executive (acting as Trustees of Barham Park Trust) approved a feasibility study of the Barham Park complex which includes this former library space. This study is awaiting approval from the Charity Commission. Dependent upon the outcome of this study proposals for use will be considered and where necessary, approval sought from the Charity Commission. Note this land is held in Trust.
Cricklewood	Ownership of the land and building has reverted to All Souls College, Oxford
Kensal Rise	Ownership of the land and building has reverted to All Souls College, Oxford
Neasden	Offer from potential sub-tenant for five year term at passing rent. Council lease expires in 2022. Property will remain on the market for assignment.
Tokyngton	Freehold disposal recommended. Property Consultants appointed.
Preston Road	In March 2012 the Executive approved the proposal to review this asset as possibly providing temporary primary school expansion space as part of the Brent School Expansion Programme.

### Strategy and Improvement Plan

- 3.8 The focus for the coming year is to lay the foundations for the improved service, in preparation for the unprecedented opportunities of the new Wembley Library in the Civic Centre and the new cultural centre in Willesden Green. Ealing Road was refurbished during February and March 2012 and Kilburn Library will be refurbished in 2012. By 2014 all six library buildings will be modern, in accessible locations and fit for purpose as libraries for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- 3.9 Access to library services will be increased by improving outreach and home visit services. Handheld devices for staff will enable housebound residents to order and reserve books from the catalogue. Monthly loans of books to care homes, community groups, children's centres and school will be expanded.
- 3.10 There will be investment in ebooks and online resources and a new stock policy will commit to involving customers directly in choosing books. Stock for children and young people will be improved through targeted projects and consultation. There will be homework clubs in all libraries and a wider range of study materials for loan.
- 3.11 Customer and community engagement are also a focus for 2012/13. Regular customer consultative groups for each part of the service will influence development. Targeted groups will be involved in shaping the look of new and refurbished buildings and deciding which stock and services are provided. The use of volunteers will increase, especially in the outreach and home visit services, providing added value for customers.
- 3.12 In the year ahead the service will also focus on increasing visits, issues and active borrowers across its six libraries, online service, home visits and outreach work. This will be challenging with the refurbishment of Kilburn library and the proposed redevelopment of Willesden Green Library Centre.

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The delay to the original closure date of the libraries has meant that only £317K of the £408K savings for 2011/12 were found from libraries. The Environment and Neighbourhood Services department found alternative savings to fund the remainder. Legal costs associated with confirming the council's actions were met from central resources.
- 4.2 The full year savings of £816k are on target to be achieved for 2012/13, as set out in the April 2011 report. A summary table is shown below showing the 2012/13 savings and beyond. The main challenge is a pressure of £60K relating to weekend enhancements. This will be resolved as part of the Employee Benefits project.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff savings	-758.4	-758.4	-758.4	-758.4
Property savings	-177.7	-177.7	-177.7	-177.7
Other savings	-61.3	-61.3	-61.3	-61.3
<b>Gross Savings</b>	<b>-997.4</b>	<b>-997.4</b>	<b>-997.4</b>	<b>-997.4</b>
Radio Frequency Identification Technology	66.0	66.0	66.0	66.0
Web Improvements	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
Seven day opening	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5
<b>Net Savings</b>	<b>-815.9</b>	<b>-815.9</b>	<b>-815.9</b>	<b>-815.9</b>

4.3 All costs relating to redundancy were met in 2011/12 with the exception of approximately £50k pension related cost which will be met in equal instalments of £17k over the three years 2012/13 to 2014/15.

4.4 Receipts from property disposals will be brought into the council's capital receipts pool.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Council has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service under Section 7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, (PLMA). The Council's compliance with this duty has been tested in the Courts and its Library Transformation Project was found to be lawful. It is being considered by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport who has powers to intervene under Section 10 of the PLMA but the current indication is that he is satisfied with the Council's arrangements.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The Libraries Transformation Project and the report agreed by the April 2011 Executive was accompanied by an extensive Equalities Impact Assessment.

### **Background papers:**

Report to Executive April 2011: Libraries Transformation Project

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