**Proposed Changes to Library Services – Consultation Information**

**Why are we consulting?**

As part of the Libraries Consultation, we are seeking your views on the proposed changes to Redcar and Cleveland Library Service. The changes help to support our new vision and aims to create a fit for purpose service for our residents and communities, that helps us to futureproof the service and to realise the significant budget savings required to address the Council’s budget challenges.

The proposals have been informed by a full needs assessment, including the first stage of engagement with the public, which took place earlier in the year, and sought your views on what you valued about the existing service and what you would like to see going forward. You can find a summary of the findings and evidence which have led to the development of these proposals on the consultation page:

<https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/consultations/proposed-changes-to-library-services>

On this page, you can find a link to the document under the ‘Why are we consulting?’ section.

**What are we proposing?**

We currently provide a physical library service across 13 buildings in the borough: four Community Libraries, six Library and Customer Service Points and three Library and Community Hubs. These libraries currently operate on varied opening times of 14, 28, 31 or 47 hours per week. The service also provides a limited home delivery service.

The national picture demonstrates that the way people use libraries is changing. It also shows that people want different offers from their library services. This is also reflected in our local data and consultation.

Since 2017/18 to 2022/23 we have seen a 57% decline in Active members, a 58% decline in visits, a 49% decline in book issues and 72% decline in computer use. We have seen an increase on digital borrowing since introduced and an increase in attendance by adults for events and activities.

Due to the changing needs of what people want from library services, decreasing budgets and to ensure that we can offer a strategic service fit for the future we have had to look at the shape of the service and to redesign the offer for the future. The new approach has been developed with the evidence across all the strands of the needs assessment in mind, including the first phase of public consultation. The new library service is designed around 3 archetypes. The Physical Library, Digital Library, Outreach Library delivering outside the library walls, redesigned and improved Home Delivery Service.

The key changes we are proposing to address this are:

1. **The introduction of a new vision and priority areas:**

**Vision**

*‘We will have a vibrant, thriving, inclusive and engaging library service that enriches people’s lives and enables a range of connection and engagement points for our communities’.*

**Priority focus areas**

* **Strengthen delivery and create programmes of work that support the Universal Offer** – Reading, Information and Digital, Culture and Creativity, Health and Wellbeing; and The Children’s Promise and The Vision and Print Impaired People’s Promise.
* **Relaunch and market the library** to users and non-users to increase engagement and awareness.
* **Develop an ambitious plan for outreach and partnerships.**
* **Provide a strong literacy, reading and engagement offer** for all ages, but with a strong focus on Children and Young People. This also includes new book stock and an increase in book budgets.
* **Increase the quality of the activities and programmes delivered.**
* **Create and deliver an offer that supports the Health and Wellbeing of our communities.** Funding has been secured to employ a Health and Wellbeing Development Officer who will be able to drive this forward and work with the community to cocurate activity and programmes.
* **Develop a more sustainable and resilient library service.** This will include the development of external funding bids to deliver programmes of work. The creation of more partnership working. It will also look to secure funding both internally and externally to improve the physical library buildings. It will also look at a volunteer and ambassador scheme.

1. **Close Brotton Library and Roseberry Library**

* Brotton and Roseberry libraries have the lowest usage for visitors, issues and computer use.
* Our geographical spread for physical library buildings is still good.
* Both library areas have public transport routes.
* Brotton Library is 2.5 miles away from Saltburn library and 2.3 miles from Skelton Library.
* Roseberry Library is 2.6 miles away from Redcar Library with a full-service offer.
* Our Library Community Outreach Offer and home delivery service will be expanded and improved to support communities in these areas.

1. **Enable Laburnum Library and Dormanstown Library buildings to be turned into voluntary sector/community run venues.**

* These libraries have lower usage.
* The buildings are small and don’t present some of the opportunities of our other venues, without significant spend.
* There is interest in the venues remaining for community use and we are keen to discuss this with interested parties.
* There is still good geographical spread of physical library buildings.
* Laburnum Library is 1.8 miles from Redcar Library and 2 miles from Marske Library.
* Dormanstown 1.3 miles from Redcar Library.
* Our Library Community Outreach Offer and home delivery service will be expanded and improved to support communities in these areas.
* We will work with the Family Hub in Dormanstown to ensure engagement around literacy learning and early childhood development.

1. **Expand the lease to allow Grangetown Generations to occupy Grangetown Library**

Expand the lease arrangements of the Grangetown Library building with Grangetown Generations to encompass the whole building. This also supports recommendations from a previous Accommodation Plan from June 2021.

Again, as detailed in the needs assessment, the library has lower usage across a range of areas. However due to a range of factors including educational attainment for people aged 16 and over in Grangetown, we will explore whether a statutory offer is to remain. This would still remove the staffing and management of the building, but the library book stock would be updated, rotated and checked by Library staff. A self-serve point would stay in place.

Our home delivery service and library outreach will also look to create a new offer where required.

1. **Consult and Review Library Opening Hours and Times**

Reduce the opening hours across the 8 libraries. Reduce Redcar, Guisborough and South Bank from 47 hpw to 40 hpw. This could have an option of remaining open each day of the week or with a closed day additional to the Sunday. Keep Loftus at 31 hpw. Reduce Skelton, Marske, Ormesby and Saltburn to 26.5hpw. This would still give the good coverage across the geography on all days of the week.

Proposed opening days and times will be decided in consultation with the public. This will be informed by current usage data, first phase consultation and the new delivery approach.

**How you can take part:**

The consultation will run for 12 weeks, from Monday 13th November 2023 until Tuesday 6th February 2024. Paper copies will be available until and need to be returned by Wednesday 7th February 2024. We would like everyone to have their say, and we welcome your contributions whether you currently use the service or not. The feedback is all extremely valuable in helping us to address any concerns around the proposals, and to ensure that all views are taken into consideration when finalising the new service model.

You can take part in a number of ways:

* By completing the questionnaire online:

<https://redcarcleveland.uk.engagementhq.com/libraries-consultation>

* By picking up a copy of the questionnaire at your local library
* By printing a copy from the website
* By contacting us to request a paper copy is posted out to you
* You can also contact us to request a copy of the questionnaire in a different format or another language if needed.
* There will also be a number of focus groups/drop-in sessions held – with dates of these to be made available, on the website, in libraries and on the Engagement HQ survey page.

Completed questionnaires can be returned to any of our libraries or customer service points.

If you have any questions, need help to take part or require a copy in a different format or another language, you can contact us:

Via email: libraries.consultation@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Via phone: 01642 774774

**How much will this save?**

The proposals set out would enable us to achieve a saving of £400,000 per year. Alongside the proposals, we are also conducting an internal service review, which will include the separation of the libraries and customer service model, to enable a better service for both areas. This would not remove the public facing customer side of libraries.

This would be achieved by:

* Implementing the new vision for the service and then developing a new strategy
* The closure of Brotton and Roseberry Libraries.
* Enabling Laburnum, Dormanstown and Grangetown Libraries to be community led facilities.
* Reducing and adapting opening hours across the remaining libraries, although it is proposed that Loftus number of hours of opening would remain the same.

**What happens next:**

Our proposals have not yet been agreed. We are consulting so that you can have your say around the proposals, and we can consider your views when finalising these. Once the consultation is complete and the findings have been analysed and considered, we will finalise the proposals. The final proposals will be presented to Cabinet in March 2024. We will then look to implement the new service model in April 2024.