

# **Proposals for Leicester city libraries and community centres**

## **Overview**

The local authority has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 “to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons” who want to make use of it.

Due to a decade and a half of central government cuts in funding we are not able to maintain the current provision for libraries and community centres, and the budget is proposed to reduce over the next three years by **up to** £2.1million.

A new service model is proposed for libraries and community centres which would operate from 12 multi-service centres and the Central Library. The aim is to provide a service targeted at areas of greater need across the whole city within available resources. The council would no longer run 12 centres including 4 libraries. Community groups would be invited to run these where appropriate. In addition the proposal includes reducing opening hours across the remaining 13 centres, reducing staff numbers and lowering how much we spend on books, IT and operating costs.

There would be a renewed focus providing interventions, resources and activities around reading, digital and information support, cultural and creative activities and health and wellbeing initiatives. Online services including e-books, e-newspapers and e-magazines will continue to be provided. The Children’s BookBus will provide regular services in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the city and a volunteer-supported Home Library Service will deliver books to housebound residents.

## **Proposals for libraries and community centres**

Multi-service centres would operate as hubs to support wellbeing by integrating a range of services provided by the council and its partners. The Central Library service would continue to deliver a broader offer, serving residents living in all areas.

A reduction in staffed opening hours at retained sites would enable the widest network of facilities to be sustained. 8am to 8pm opening would be supported by the introduction of library self-access systems to extend opening hours at six libraries. Staffed opening hours would be standardised across the network depending on busyness.

### **Central Library**

Providing a city-wide service and open 45 hours per week

#### **Band 1 multi-service centres: staffed opening for 40 hours per week:**

- Beaumont Leys Library Hub
- Belgrave Library Hub (with additional Self-Access hours)
- The BRITE Centre Hub (with additional Self-Access hours)
- Highfields Library Hub
- St Barnabas Library Hub (with additional Self-Access hours)

#### **Band 2 multi-service centres: staffed opening for 30 hours per week**

- Aylestone Library (located in Aylestone Leisure Centre)
- Hamilton Library Hub (with additional Self-Access hours)
- New Parks Centre Hub (with additional Self-Access hours)
- Pork Pie Library Hub (with additional Self-Access hours)

- St Matthews Library (relocated nearby)
- Thurnby Lodge Centre Hub (with new self-service library)
- Westcotes Library Hub

Details of the opening hours can be found on our web page here [Community services and library needs assessment](#)

## Facilities no longer run by the council

The following facilities would no longer be run by the council. Community organisations would be supported to develop a business case to take on the running of the following community libraries and community centres where appropriate:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre
- Coleman Neighbourhood Centre
- Eyres Monsell Community Centre
- Evington Library
- Gilmorton Community Rooms
- Knighton Library
- Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- Rushey Mead Library
- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
- Tudor Centre

The following facilities would no longer be run by the council. Due to the poor condition of the buildings they would not be offered for community organisations to run:

- **Fosse Neighbourhood Centre** would not be put forward for Community Asset Transfer – other disposal options would be explored.
- **St Matthews Centre** would be closed and the library would be re-located nearby.

Where no viable business plan is put forward, buildings would be considered for alternative use by the Council. Where this is not possible, the building would close and a range of disposal options would be considered.

## Additional investment and improvements

Additional investment would support a range of proposals to ensure the service could continue to meet the needs of individuals and communities across the city including:

- Extending Self-Access after core staffed hours at suitable sites. The self-access system would enable registered customers aged 16 years and over, and accompanied children, to access the library outside of staffed opening times using their library card and PIN. Self-access libraries would be monitored by CCTV and customers would be given an induction in order to use the service. Self-access customers would have access to book loans, study space, computers and Wi-Fi through existing self-service facilities.
- Investment of £1,000,000 to further develop retained buildings as multi-service centres including libraries, community rooms and adult learning facilities.
- Reviewing the areas visited by the Children's BookBus to focus on covering areas of disadvantage.

- Providing enhanced activity programmes around our “Universal Offers” in multi-service centres, focused on health and wellbeing, information and signposting needs, and more cultural and creative activities to bring people together.
- Continuing to invest in our online services and resources including our e-library.
- Supporting community groups to take on the running of more services.
- Developing volunteer opportunities to enhance the services we offer and to provide benefits to participants.
- Providing small libraries at identified children’s centres for additional access to books for children and young families.
- Expanded Home Library Service linked to our volunteer offer to support housebound residents with door-to-door book deliveries wherever