

Cabinet	 TOWER HAMLETS
3 March 2021	
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director Place Directorate, Corporate Property and Capital	Classification: Unrestricted
Revised approach to Idea Stores & Library Service	

Lead Member	Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit
Originating Officer(s)	Teresa Heaney, Interim Divisional Director Customer Programme
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	
Reason for Key Decision	Impact on Wards
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Priority Three: Outcome 9 – People say we are open and transparent putting residents at the heart of everything we do Outcome 11 – People say we continuously seek innovation and strive for excellence to embed a culture of sustainable improvement

Executive Summary

Following the proposal presented at the Cabinet Meeting on 28th October 2020 we have undertaken a consultation with the public on the future of our Idea Store and Library Service. Nationally since 2010 hundreds of libraries have closed nationally and despite budget pressures Tower Hamlets has retained and invested in the service.

The original proposals contained within the October 2020 report were developed out of our continuing commitment to deliver a rich and robust service offer across the borough whilst also achieving a saving. Our approach was to ensure that longer opening hours and a broad service offer continued at our four main sites (which offer a good geographical spread across the borough) and that any service reductions should be made at our least visited sites and/or where there was another site within a relatively short distance.

Whilst this principle is still sound and based on providing a balanced service (i.e. that we should focus on our four main sites), we have listened to what residents and stakeholders said and propose to adjust our proposals so that:

- some opening hours are maintained at Cubitt Town Library until such time as both sites on the Isle of Dogs (IS Canary Wharf is currently the main site) can be replaced by a new, more centrally located Idea Store
- The reduction in hours at Bethnal Green Library (and to a lesser extent at IS Watney Market) is smaller, and that hours are concentrated into 'whole days' so that we can meet the needs of those who use the venues at different times of the day (particularly that they would be open for study in the after school period).

The process of public consultation and engagement gave us valuable additional insight into how much residents value Idea Stores and the way they bring together library and adult learning services alongside digital hubs and a 'third space' that allows residents to meet in informal ways. It also showed that for a minority, the quieter spaces in our two libraries offer a valued environment. The strength of these views are particularly notable given the limited access (likely to continue for some time) engendered by the Pandemic.

There was real concern about the impact of the proposals on children and young people in particular, and a definite concern that the impact of Covid on the economy, jobs, young people, and the community as a whole will mean that Idea Stores will be more necessary than ever going forward.

Residents expressed strong views that we should avoid closing Cubitt Town Library completely even if we could only continue to provide very limited hours or had to provide this by reducing some hours at IS Canary Wharf. There was also a lot of feedback about opening hours at the other two sites not being suitable for all, especially if they were only to open for mornings or afternoon sessions.

However, the changes to the way residents use our services and the financial imperative that led to the proposal in the original cabinet paper remain. The revised proposal we have developed can still deliver the £1M existing savings and the £600K new proposed saving associated with the original proposal.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Consider the results of the public consultation and other feedback received.
2. Approve the revised proposal as set out in the report below.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The shift in resident behaviour (pre-Covid) towards using self-service machines and other digital options mean our overall staffing requirement has reduced.
- 1.2 Furthermore, the pandemic has changed the Idea Stores service and the way it is delivered; accelerating the change in the way that residents choose to interact with us.
- 1.3 We are facing significant financial pressures, which have only worsened due to Covid.
- 1.4 We need not only to deliver savings that are already planned, but to offer options that would support the council to meet the additional financial challenge.
- 1.5 We have been able to develop the revised proposal mainly through careful use of timetables. We are therefore asking that the revised proposal be approved as set out below as there is very little flexibility about the times and days of sessions at Cubitt Town Library, Bethnal Green Library or IS Watney Market. Any additional changes are likely to reduce the saving we can deliver.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Keep services unchanged. This would result in a smaller staff restructure that would deliver approx. £600K and result in an additional budget pressure of £1M for the organisation (Not Recommended)
- 2.2 Deliver a total of £1.6M by proceeding with the proposal that came to Cabinet in October 2020 and which was set out as Option 1 in the public consultation
- 2.3 Based on feedback from residents develop a new option based on the above, but which allows us to keep some hours at Cubitt Town Library (CTL) and improve the opening times and hours at Bethnal Green Library (BGL) and Idea Store Watney Market (ISWM) but still delivers the saving.
- 2.4 A number of consultation responses highlighted the lack of any proposed weekend opening at BGL and CTL. Expanding the revised proposal to also include opening BGL and CTL for 8 hours a day on Saturdays would require a reduction of the savings target of £100k

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Existing Service

- 3.1 Idea Store (IS) is Tower Hamlets Council's unique offer of integrated library, adult learning and information services. Created in 2002 in response to the lowest participation and satisfaction levels in libraries in London, Idea Store quickly became an icon for innovative services that are loved by the Tower Hamlet's community and admired nationally and internationally. There are five Idea Stores, strategically located in the highest footfall areas in the borough, and two Libraries. As well as a very strong, modern library offer, customers can also enjoy 800+ courses for adults and families, book groups, art exhibitions, cultural celebrations, under 5s and 50+ sessions, access to the Council's online services and much more. The Idea Store concept is now widely recognised as best practice in social cohesion in a diverse community
- 3.2 Idea Stores have gone against the national trend of chronic decline, and library visits in Tower Hamlets have quadrupled. Last year we saw nearly 2,000,000 visits, the fourth highest in London. Participation in adult learning has doubled (8,000 yearly enrolments) and access to online services has also seen a substantial increase. Satisfaction levels are now on a par with the best library services in the UK, and the Idea Store innovation ethos is being maintained during the pandemic, with a number of activities and initiatives that ensure local residents continue to receive excellent library, learning and information services
- 3.3 We continue to innovate and significant change has been delivered over the last two years; adoption of the self-service machines and the implementation of online course registration have, in particular, reduced the number of full time equivalent posts needed to run the service safely
- 3.4 Given the size of Tower Hamlets, our service compares relatively well to other boroughs across the board and particularly in terms of the number of public access PCs available and residents' uptake of downloadable e-resources such as e-Books and magazines and audio books
- 3.5 During the unavoidable closure of sites due to Covid-19, the IS Service successfully shifted some of its delivery. The service has seen over 6,000 new members join since the end of March 2020 and a significant increase in online activity (see table below). Whilst many groups are still unable to meet physically, we have been delivering Storytime, conversation groups and book clubs via other means since early summer.

Digital Service	January 2019 - December 2019	January 2020 - December 2020	Percentage change
eAudio books	22,711 downloads	32,430 downloads	42%
eBooks	42,837 downloads	55,821 downloads	30%
Ancestry	28,870 searches	51,119 searches	77%

Britannica Encyclopaedia	378 sessions, 36,182 hits	449 sessions, 55,798 hits	18%
Go Citizen	68 sign ups	64 sign ups	-5%
Oxford Art Encyclopaedia	6 sessions	19 sessions	200%
Oxford Music Encyclopaedia	40 sessions	64 sessions	60%
Oxford English Dictionary	1724 sessions	2596 sessions	50%
Oxford Dictionaries	153 sessions	440 sessions	187%
Oxford Dictionary National Biography	125 sessions	131 sessions	4%
Oxford Reference Encyclopaedia	203 sessions	270 sessions	33%
Rbdigital Magazines	98,064 check outs	113,846 check outs	16%
PressReader newspapers	187,784 articles read	1,688,476 articles read	799%
Freegal music	13,628 downloads	12,940 downloads	-5%
RBdigital Comics	510 check outs	693 check outs	35%
Great Courses	1042 views	3023 views	190%
Stingrey Qello Live music & documentaries	452 views	535 views	18%

- 3.6 Four IS sites (Whitechapel, Crisp Street Bow & Canary Wharf) are currently open, but services are limited ordering books for collection at the door, and access to a limited number of bookable PCs. Adult Learning is currently limited to online classes only.
- 3.7 Two of our sites ISWM and BGL are currently deployed to support the NHS in its efforts to combat the pandemic and this is likely to continue for some months.

Public Consultation

- 3.8 Our period of consultation ran from 30th November 2020 to 29th January 2021. During this period, we heard from residents, interest groups, young people, members, unions, and others. It is clear that people feel passionately about the Idea Store Service and that whilst many understood the need to make a saving, a significant number felt the local proposals, particularly those that affected Cubit Town Library and Bethnal Green Library, went too far. We have listened to this feedback and made some significant amendments to our original proposal.
- 3.9 It should be noted however that in finding a way to respond feedback but still deliver savings, we have used up the flexibility in the rotas. It is very unlikely that we will be able to accommodate any changes in days or opening hours at the various sites without reducing the level of saving we can make.
- 3.10 Consultation Process - We consulted and engaged in the following ways:

- We published papers & a questionnaire on the council's Consultation Hub. This was primarily available online, but hard copies could be accessed via the idea stores and those without connectivity were able to choose to complete it over the phone
- We led 3 focus groups (2 general and 1 with ESOL Learners) in order to get more insight into the impact of the potential options
- We engaged with adult learners from our classes
- We received some direct communications including a video from one of the borough's scout groups
- We attended a Challenge session with scrutiny members, members of the youth council and a representative of a VCS
- There was also a public meeting led by unions and a petition is currently circulating.

3.11 Survey Responses

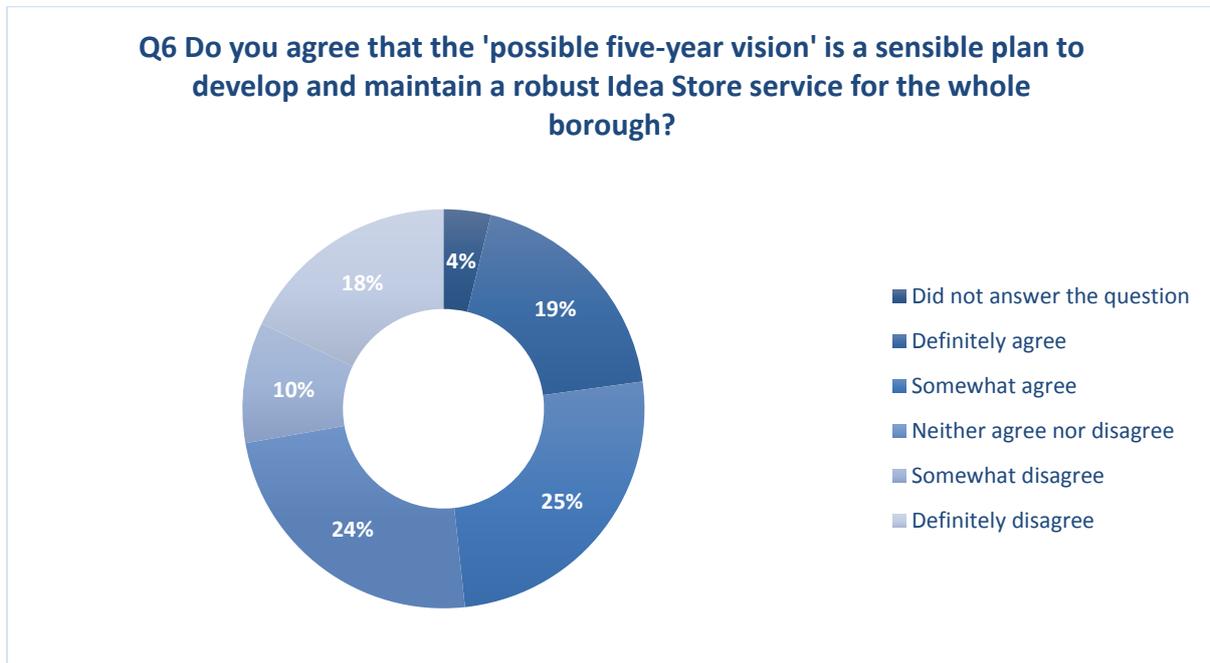
- We received 799 responses to the survey (789 after duplicates removed)
- 95% of responses came from individuals and again 95% of responders said they were IS members
- 84% identified as using the service regularly (once a month or more frequently)
- Most people who responded to the survey use more than one Idea Store or library. However, the proportion who use CTL BGL & ISWM was disproportionately high (e.g. 32% of responders identified CTL as one of the sites they visit but in 2019/20 only 2% of visits were actually at CTL).

A full report on the responses to the survey can be provided on request, however a high-level overview is given below.

3.12 Did People Agree or Disagree with the proposals?

- The highest-level question we asked was whether people agreed with the five-year vision that we set out (see 3.24 for details of what this

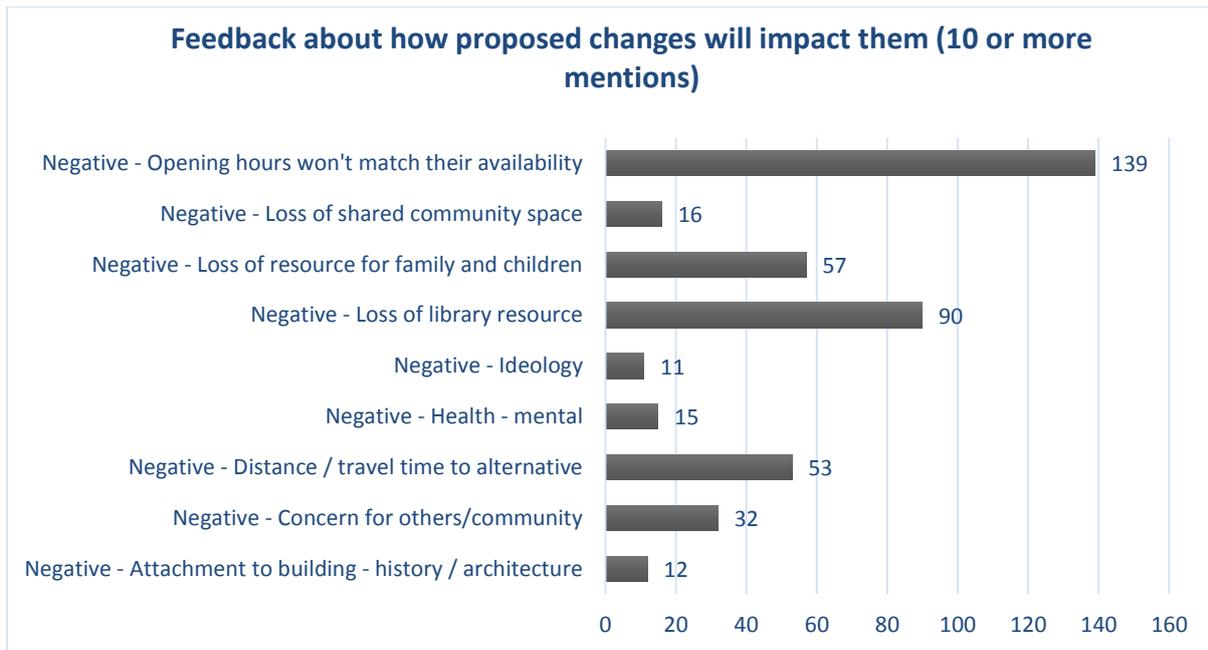
was). Most people either agreed with or were ambivalent towards this as you can see in the chart below:



3.13 Responses to the proposed options

- 303 responders agreed with Option 1 and 126 responders agreed with Option 2. Of the 429 total agrees, 80 responders agreed with both Option 1 and Option 2. Leaving 349 responders who agreed to one or more of the options (44.2 per cent)
- Taking into account responders who were ambivalent (they answered nether agree nor disagree). 585 responders agreed with or were ambivalent to Option 1 or Option 2. There were 160 responders who responded the same to both questions leaving 425 responders who agreed / were indifferent to one or more of the options (53.8%)
- The above strongly suggests that most people preferred option 1 to option 2. However, it also indicates that a significant proportion of people (46.2%) disagreed with both options.

3.14 514 (65.1%) responders said that if we were to implement Option 1, it would impact them. We asked them to describe how it would impact them if it did and the responses we received loosely break down as follows



3.15 In respect of the proposal to close Cubitt Town Library

- 62 per cent of responders said no, they did not agree with the proposal
- 38 per cent said yes
- (of the 187 responders who said they used CTL regularly 93% said no, they did not agree with the proposal. 7% said yes).

3.16 In respect of the proposals to reduce hours at (or close) Bethnal Green Library

- 47.7 per cent of responders said 'I think there is a better alternative'
- 44.5 per cent opted for reduced hours as described in option 1
- 7.9 per cent said it should close
- (of the 158 responders who said they use BGL regularly, 81% said 'I think there is a better alternative'; 2.5% said the library should close; and 16.5% said the library should reduce its hours from 50 to 15 hours per week.

3.17 In respect of the proposals to reduce hours at (or close) Idea Store Watney Market

- 50.1 per cent of responders said we should reduce floorspace and opening times as described in option 1
- 42.7 per cent said I think there's a better alternative, and
- 7.2 per cent said I think Watney Market should close
- (of the 155 responders who said they use ISWM regularly 72.3% said I think there is a better alternative, 25.8% said it should reduce floorspace and opening times, and 1.9% said it should close.

3.18 In respect of the proposal for shorter opening hours on Sundays at Idea Stores

- 67.7% of responders said yes
- 32.3% of responders said No

Impact

- 3.19 We gathered information on how the proposal might impact people not only through the consultation survey but also through our focus groups, the challenge session and via direct communication. We heard how valuable the service is not only in terms of the services it provides but as an informal space to meet, study or relax. Whilst there were views expressed at either end of the possible spectrum, there were a number of common themes that emerged from what people said:
- Our young people need local spaces to study outside of their homes
 - Not everyone can comfortably travel the extra distance to another site
 - There was significant concern that the hours at BGL and to a lesser extent at ISWM might not be sufficient. Feedback suggested that having part day sessions was the wrong approach. People would rather have fewer days but longer hours on those days
 - Not everyone enjoys the bustling atmosphere in the Idea Stores and that the quieter environment in the two Libraries is more suitable for some
 - Provision on the Isle of Dogs was a particular concern to many who responded. Whilst visitor numbers, including locals, are relatively high IS Canary Wharf is not seen as the best location for an Idea Store by some local residents. There was strong feeling that some hours should be maintained at CTL at least until there is a more centrally located Idea Store on the Island that can replace both ISCW and CTL. There was some suggestion that if the only way of achieving this was to reduce hours at ISCW this should be considered
 - The focus groups gave us access to some very personal stories
 - The challenge session built on this and provided us with insight into both local and borough-wide concerns and, in particular, enabled us to hear from young people
- 3.20 As well as asking people how the proposals might impact them, we also asked their opinion on how we might change our proposals or what else we could do to achieve the saving instead.
- 3.21 A number of people suggested income generation, use of grants or fundraising as ways we might mitigate against the need to save money. Most of these would not be suitable sources for our largest budget item (staffing) and income from room hire is integral to our current budget. However, we will consider some of these approaches going into the future potentially for innovation costs or smaller local projects
- 3.22 Other mitigations that were suggested included asking the Youth Hubs to offer study space, reducing hours at other sites, the use of volunteers, and further publicising our Friends & Family book delivery service.

Proposal

3.23 Our original proposal was developed considering how people used our sites, their geographical spread and the services each was able to offer.

Idea Store / Library factsheet



1.95m
Total visits*



Idea Store Whitechapel
Most visited



2m
Virtual visits



Cubitt Town
Least visited



£1.6m



spent on service and buildings improvements

31k
Members



819k
Loans



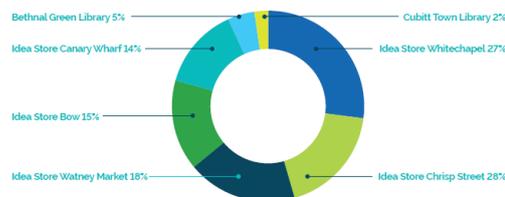
67k
Digital loans



There were roughly 2 million virtual visits to the website. People used the website to order and renew items, download eBooks and audiobooks, find out information about Idea Store Learning and Idea Store Local History Library and Archives and use many other virtual services. All data April 2019-March 2020.

Local presence spend included refurbishment work at five Idea Store sites, including the creation of new Digital Hubs.

Percentage share of visits by Idea Stores and Libraries



The site with the fewest members is Cubitt Town Library. Most people living in Isle of Dogs are registered at Idea Store Canary Wharf.

Digital loans of eBooks / audiobooks from Idea Stores are amongst the highest in the country and the highest in The Libraries Consortium in London. Loans of eBooks and audiobooks have grown significantly from April making 'Idea Store Digital' one of Tower Hamlets busier sites.

Members by Idea Store / Library



Loans by Idea Store / Library



3.24 We are committed to finding ways of continuing to deliver a great service to our residents and adapting how we do that the changes we have seen in how people access our services over the last few years, the impact of covid and the current budget pressures. With this in mind we developed the following potential five-year vision:

- **Four well placed Idea Stores** situated at Crisp Street, Bow, a new site on the Isle of Dogs (the plan is that this site will be more centrally located on the island and replace Idea Store Canary Wharf). The Whitechapel store will be split across the current Idea Store Whitechapel and New Town Hall, acting as a cultural hub for the borough
- **All four sites will have some redesign** which will support people to stay socially distant if required
- **Bethnal Green Library and Idea Store Watney Market will be run as satellite sites for Idea Store Bow and Idea Store Whitechapel** respectively with a reduced service on offer
- **Our digital offer will continue to develop**

3.25 We then developed our original proposal along with another option and proceeded to public consultation. Having listened to what residents said the following table sets out how we have adapted the proposal to mitigate the issues they told us about

Site(s)	Original Proposal	Revised Proposal	Change
IS Whitechapel IS Bow IS Canary Wharf IS Chrisp St	Keep these sites open 7 days a week but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the level of staffing in the evening Reduce Sunday opening from 6 hours to 4 	Keep these sites open 7 days a week but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the level of staffing in the evening Reduce Sunday opening from 6 hours to 4	
Cubitt Town Library (CTL)	Close the library service at Cubitt Town Library	Reduce opening hours at CTL so that it is open 10:00am till 6:00pm on Mondays and Wednesdays (16 hours)	
Bethnal Green Library (BGL)	Reduce opening hours at BGL from 50 to 15. Suggestion was that this might be for morning or afternoon sessions 5 days a week	Reduce opening hours at BGL so that it is open 10:00am till 6:00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (24 Hours)	
IS Watney Market (ISWM)	Reducing the size of ISWM from 3 floors to 1 and its opening hours from 65 to 30. Suggestion was for morning and some afternoon sessions and some hours on Saturday.	Reduce the size of ISWM from three floors to one and open it for 8 hours a day on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays (10:00am till 6:00pm) and Saturdays 9:00am till 5:00pm (32 hours)	
NB. the revised proposal cannot accommodate further changes to hours or days of opening without impacting the saving			
Staff Impact	Reduction of Circa 35 FTE	Reduction of Circa 33 FTE (30 if vacancies removed)	
Saving	Deliver a total of £1.6m by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making the changes above reshaping the service to take advantage of the uptake of self-service by residents 	Deliver a total of £1.6m by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making the changes above reshaping the service to take advantage of the uptake of self-service by residents 	

As stated above, there is an alternative option that further reduces the impact of the change by continuing to provide weekend opening at the two Libraries. However, this option cannot deliver the full saving and will create a £100k pressure on the budget.

Site(s)	Alternative proposal	Change
IS Whitechapel IS Bow IS Canary Wharf IS Chrisp St	Keep these sites open 7 days a week but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the level of staffing in the evening Reduce Sunday opening from 6 hours to 4	
Cubitt Town Library (CTL)	Reduce opening hours at CTL so that it is open 10:00am till 6:00pm on Mondays and Wednesdays and 9:00am till 5:00pm on Saturdays (24 Hours)	
Bethnal Green Library (BGL)	Reduce opening hours at BGL so that it is open 10:00am till 6:00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and 9:00am till 5:00pm on Saturdays (36 Hours)	
IS Watney Market (ISWM)	Reduce the size of ISWM from three floors to one and open it for 8 hours a day on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays (10:00am till 6:00pm) and Saturdays 9:00am till 5:00pm (32 hours)	
Staff Impact	Reduction of Circa 31 FTE (28 if vacancies removed)	
Saving	Deliver a total of £1.5m by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making the changes above reshaping the service to take advantage of the uptake of self-service by residents	

Background & proposed changes

3.26 Cubitt Town Library - Footfall at Cubitt Town Library is significantly lower than any of our other sites; just 44,651 visits last year, which is less than half of those at BGL, and about 2% of visits to the service as a whole. Usage of the public PCs is also lower than any other site. However, local residents told us how valuable this resource is particularly to the elderly, those with young children and the disabled, who may find it difficult to travel the distance to IS Canary Wharf regularly. For example:

"I'm registered Visually Impaired. Cubitt Town is easily accessible for me and the staff are very aware of my needs. Having to travel further is difficult for me".

“This is the library I have used since childhood. I am now 81 years old. To get to another library I would have to travel far and this is difficult for me at this age”.

3.27 In response to the public consultation we now propose that instead of closing CTL we keep it open two days a week (10:00am till 6:00pm Mondays and Wednesdays). In addition, we will publicise our Friends and Family service which supports those who find it difficult to access services themselves. IS Canary Wharf, whilst not popular with all local residents, is close by. Longer term, we hope to replace both ISCW and CTL with a new, more centrally located, Idea Store as part of the planned Crossharbour development. We will also explore ways that we can maximise the use of the building, which could include co-location of another community focused service over time.

3.28 **Bethnal Green Library** - This site is currently dedicated to supporting the national Covid response (6 to 12 Months). A library service will resume at this site when it is handed back. Whilst visitor numbers are relatively low at this site (about 6% of all annual visits), it is a much-loved presence in the community and attendance at certain times of the day and for activities is clearly valued. Feedback from residents strongly suggested that opening in the mornings or afternoons only would not meet their needs and that longer ‘sessions’ were required. There was a lot of feeling that 15 hours was just too few:

“Me and my children regularly use Bethnal Green library after school I do not understand how reducing the hours to just 15 a week would work.”

“I would like more extended hours for Bethnal Green an important venue for the elderly and those who cannot access libraries further afield.”

3.29 In response to the public consultation we now propose that post-Covid, we re-open the service in this building three days a week 10:00am till 6:00pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. This is an increase of 9 hours a week on our original proposal. In addition, we will publicise our Friends and Family service which supports those who find it difficult to access services themselves. The Library service will continue to be part of the offer from this historic building (approx 30% of space). Our asset strategy includes the release of the rest of the building to generate income (eg through letting and bookable space), but this would not affect the library space.

3.30 **IS Watney Market** - This site is currently being used as a Covid testing Centre (6 to 12 months). IS Watney Market does not deliver adult learning, but the percentage of its members who are children is higher than any other site. Post Covid, we had proposed to re-open this site but with a reduced footprint (one floor) and fewer hours spread in a pattern of mornings and/or afternoons throughout the week. Feedback from residents suggested that having morning or afternoon sessions spread across the week wouldn’t meet their needs and longer sessions were needed. For example people who use this site told us:

“Idea Store Watney Market reducing from 65 to 30 hours a week means that probably will be open during office hours when the children or people at work will not be able to use it. Having a library with limited opening hours will be detrimental.”

“I’m a normal bloke. I work Monday to Friday 9 to 5. What I love about idea stores is...that I can pop over after work, whether that be 6pm or 8pm. Weekends are when I have time to go and really visit the library.”

- 3.31 In response to the public consultation we propose to change how and when we open the building and open it for 8 hours a day 4 days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday) this is 32 hours a week; a small increase on our previous proposal of 30. We will develop the site as a satellite to IS Whitechapel with a strong focus on the children’s offer (which is very popular). Our Asset Strategy team will seek to identify a compatible shared user/activity to generate income and to mitigate costs of holding a building with a reduced IS use.
- 3.32 **Evening Staffing Levels.** After 7:00pm the atmosphere of the Idea Stores changes and the hustle and bustle of the day gives way to a quieter period. Few visitors need support from staff. As tutors and security staff are also on site at this time, we believe it is safe to reduce dedicated IS staff in the evenings.
- 3.33 **Sunday Opening.** Currently the four main sites are open 6 hours on Sundays although their opening and closing times differ so that they complement the typical opening times of the shopping areas in which they are situated. The stores are quieter on Sundays, and although we recognise that they offer a valued space to a significant number of residents there was broad agreement to reduce opening to 4 hours on Sundays from those who responded to the consultation.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 We have undertaken an EqIA screening and have concluded that, whilst the amended proposal mitigates the impact, the following protected groups are still potentially disproportionately affected by the proposal:
- Age
 - older people and children as they may have to travel further to their nearest Idea Store to access services on some days
 - Children would be less likely to travel further unsupervised. In some areas 20-39 age group may also be disproportionately affected
 - Young children/babies and their parents who access our parent and toddler groups may have to travel further on some days to access their nearest provision
 - Disability – people with disabilities may need to travel further on some days to access an Idea Store and may not have the support needed to do so.

- 4.2 We believe the revised proposal goes a long way to mitigating any negative impacts of the original proposal. However, it is worth noting that the alternative option would further reduce the impact by enabling us to provide a very local service to those who can only access our services at weekends.
- 4.3 The EqlA has been developed using existing data on our service users and population profiles alongside the results of the public consultation.
- 4.4 As part of the reorganisation, change process will also assess the equalities impact on our staff affected by the final service provision.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications
 - Consultations
 - Environmental (including air quality)
 - Risk Management
 - Crime Reduction
 - Safeguarding
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 Under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, 'it shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof' and that the authority 'shall in particular have regard to the desirability -
- a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
 - b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and
 - c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report recommends changes that would achieve existing savings targets totalling £1m agreed in the medium-term financial strategy (please refer to the table below) and a further £0.6m Local Presence and Idea Store Asset Strategy saving proposed for 2021-22.

MTFS Savings Tracker 2020-23				20/21	21/22
Reference	Approved	Title	Original Scope of previous savings pro-formas	Savings target £'000	Savings target £'000
SAV/ RES 10 / 18-19	2018-19	Additional Local Presence Efficiencies	Further local presence and customer access improvements - (1) continue to develop/drive/encourage take up of digital services to further reduce demand for phone and face-to-face contact, thus enabling further staffing reductions (2) investigate options for including Clean & Green call handling within new refuse & recycling contract (3) consider moving to digital-only access for appropriate service areas	300	-
SAV / ALL 001 / 19-20	2019-20	Phase 2 Local Presence - putting Digital First	<p>The increased use of digital services will be targeted to reduce staffing and transaction costs further whilst making services easier to access for residents. Digital services across the council will be designed to achieve specific cost reductions and these will be allocated on a service by service basis as the baseline costs are confirmed.</p> <p>This second phase of the Local Presence Review will ensure we don't duplicate services, we make the most efficient use of resources and that the way we deliver services keeps pace with what our residents want. This Review will consider options to rationalise staff, buildings and services in each of the localities.</p>	-	700

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The provision of library services is a legal function of the Council. When making a decision relating to changing the way the Council's legal functions are carried out the Council has a legal duty to act fairly. Consultation with affected parties is part of this duty and therefore the report demonstrates compliance with this duty.
- 7.2 Consultation will only be legally valid where sufficient time has been given to affected parties to make representation about potential changes and the

representation has been considered by the Council whilst the decision is still at a formative stage. Compliance in this regard is also demonstrated by this report in particular the change in the proposal in paragraph 3.25.

- 7.3 In taking any decision on the future of the public library service, the local authority will need to have due regard to the public sector equalities duty set out at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty requires the local authority to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The proposals set out in this report comply with the above legislation and case law. Also as required by the Equality Act the Council has undertaken a detailed level of analysis regarding persons with a protected characteristic and the way in which they may be impacted upon by the proposals and built relevant mitigating factors into the proposals..
- 7.4 There may be an impact on staffing levels if sites are closed or overall hours are reduced. The Council will consult individual employees, unions and employee representatives. The Council will ensure that it follows a fair procedure as set out in the Council's Handling Organisational Change procedure and in line with prescribed time frames to inform and consult set out in the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
- 7.5 The impact on staffing is not detailed in the report as currently no decision has been taken as to which option will be pursued.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Service Information & Data
- Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state

Teresa.Heaney@towerhamlets.gov.uk