

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	28 July 2020
Subject:	Performance of the Library Services Contract – Year Four Review Report

Summary:

This report is to provide an update of the contract performance information to enable the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee to fulfil its role in scrutinising performance of the fourth year of the out-sourced Library Contract to Greenwich Leisure Limited.

Actions Required:

Members of the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the performance information included in the report and to:

- (1) Consider and support the on-going development and proposed 'Year 5 Developments' highlighted in the report;
- (2) Highlight any additional priorities for consideration.

1. Background

The decision to outsource LCCs statutory library service was taken to enable the delivery of a cost effective, high quality library service in an on-going environment of financial constraint.

Key aims of this outsourcing:

- Increase levels of service performance
- Improved customer's experience
- Service transformation.

The Lincolnshire Libraries Partnership began on 1st April 2016 with the transfer of staff and services from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), as part of a 5 year contract with a potential 5 year extension.

The Partnership comprises:

- 10 x Tier 1 & 5 x Tier 2 Core Libraries; Boston, Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln, Louth, Mablethorpe, Skegness, Sleaford, Spalding, Stamford, Bourne, Horncastle, Long Sutton, Market Rasen and Woodhall Spa
- 36 x Community Hubs
- 3 x District Mobiles which take library resources to over 200 Lincolnshire communities that do not have easy access to a library or community hub
- 2 x Access Mobiles which take library material to housebound residents who cannot travel to a library, a community hub or a District Mobile stop
- 2 x Community Mobiles which deliver collections of books to care homes, sheltered housing complexes, day centres and primary schools
- Subscription Services to Reading Groups and Music and Drama Groups
- Listening Lincs Services for visually impaired customers
- Delivery of the national Bookstart scheme across the County

Grantham and Bourne Libraries are not directly managed by GLL. It has not yet been possible to transfer the lease for the Grantham Library site to GLL, and so LCC continues to employ the staff based there; although GLL maintains a close working relationship with the Grantham team. Bourne Library is in shared accommodation, and members of staff at the Bourne site remain employees of SKDC; as they were before the contract with GLL. GLL supplies books and other resources to both libraries, together with professional advice and guidance to support the provision and development of library services. Similarly, GLL provides book stock for the 36 community hubs across the County, and through its network of Library Development Officers, provides training and on-going library specific support and guidance for over 900 Hub volunteers.

In year four of the contract GLL has continued to make significant improvements to library services across the County. Managing library stock more effectively has had a positive impact on performance with issue figures for core, mobile and e-services exceeding the KPI target, and use of the library website exceeding target by 37%. Customers really enjoy the events which take place in libraries, and in 2019/20 over 5,300 events were run and attended by over 68,000 adults and children.

Following LCC's approval for the upgrade and transfer of public and staff IT provision and management to GLL, a major refresh project has been embarked upon. Public IT provision has been refreshed at the majority of library service points countywide, and the modern and fit for purpose offer has received much customer praise. The new Library Management System is currently under construction. However, due to the national lockdown resulting from the recent Covid 19 pandemic, this project has only been slightly delayed due to the flexibility and innovative remote working of library staff. GLL looks forward to launching the new system and refreshing staff IT, whilst also being able to continue their work modernising and improving library provision, so that it meets customer's needs for access to high quality reading, information and IT resources across the county.

2. Review of Year 4

2.1 Review of Year 4:

During 2019/20 library staff ran a total of 5,354 events in core libraries, before such activities had to be paused on 17th March by the COVID19 pandemic. These events were attended by over 68,000 adults and children. Over 7,000 hours of community use of core libraries was recorded in 2019/20, including a number of community use events, such as exhibitions and meetings, meaning that the KPI target was exceeded by 270%.

National Bookstart week, rebranded as Pajamarama, took place 3rd to 9th June 2019 and all libraries celebrated with bedtime story themed sessions for the under 4s. Bookstart Bear joined in the fun, visiting libraries across the county in his snazzy new pjs.

The annual Summer Reading Challenge took place in all core libraries and mobiles between July and September 2019 with a 2% increase in participation compared to 2018. Out of this world events, linked to the Space Race theme, included alien, rocket, astronaut and planet making crafts, Lego robot coding workshops and STEM focussed rocket making and launching activities. Stamford Library also welcomed STEM children's author Colin Furze, who demonstrated a number of his amazing inventions.

5 core libraries across the county took part in the National 'Fun Palaces' weekend on the 5th October. Linking with the Fun Palace ethos of connecting communities and local people sharing skills, activities included; sign language, indoor bowls, knitting and crochet, paper folding, stop go animation, how to play Maori board games, Laughing Yoga and chair based exercise courtesy of the Better NK Healthwise team.

In October 2019, as part of National Libraries Week, libraries around the county held events highlighting the range of resources provided and the contribution libraries make to local communities. In line with the national theme of Digital provision, numerous taster sessions were held covering e-books, e-magazines and online resources such as Ancestry and Freegal. Digital colouring and painting workshops and a variety of coding sessions including robotic mousetraps were also held.

In January 2020, working with East Lindsey District Council and Mablethorpe Town Council, Mablethorpe Library hosted a Holocaust Memorial and Remembrance Service. Due to the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the service had a theme of 'Stand Together' and highlighted the actions of people like Oskar Schindler, Corrie Ten Boom and Irena Sendler.

After successfully bidding for and receiving 160 copies of Juliet Naked by Nick Hornby to give away as part of World Book Night, special 'Naked Digestive' coffee mornings were held at Grantham, Horncastle and Boston libraries. Alongside their cups of tea and biscuits, customers were gifted a free novel in line with the World Book Night ethos of encouraging the joy of reading and sharing of stories.

The GLL Annual User Survey (AUS) was held in core libraries in summer and autumn 2019, with over 1,500 responses received. Overall satisfaction with services was 99%, with 82% of respondents saying they would recommend the library to a friend. The lowest rated areas, and so requiring improvement, were provision of public IT and Wifi.

Following library supplier Askews' decision to remove themselves from the e-book market, a new e-book platform, Overdrive, was launched in August 2019 with all 13,000 existing titles being transferred. The new platform included a dedicated app, Libby, which is compatible with multiple devices. This considerably increased the accessibility of the services' e-book collection for customers.

New contacts and working relationships were built with colleagues in Public Health and Children's Centres by the BookStart co-ordinator and officer. This resulted in joint working to build greater knowledge and understanding in Health Visitors and Children's Centre staff of the BookStart scheme, and the benefits it can bring families with babies and pre-school children.

2.2 Performance Review, KPI's:

The library contract is monitored through 11 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Performance against the 2019/20 KPI targets is detailed in the table below.

KPI	Detail	2019/20 KPI Target	2019/20 Actual	KPI Actual compared to Target
1	Number of visits to Core Libraries and Mobile Library Services in a contract year	1,723,917	1,305,135	-24%
2	Percentage of scheduled events at Core Libraries in a Contract Year which are delivered	100%	100%	0%
3	Number of hours of use of access to the internet from public access computers in Core Libraries and Mobile Library vehicles in a Contract year	178,135	112,631	-37%
4	Number of hours of Wi-Fi Use in a Contract Year	Not available	Not available	Not available
5	Number of visits to the library website in a Contract Year	417,034	572,647	+37%
6	Total number of Stock Issues across Core Libraries, Mobile Libraries and E services	1,990,956	1,999,635	+0.4%
7	Percentage of books Requested delivered within 7 days	65%	71%	+6%
8	Percentage of books Requested delivered within 15 days	75%	81%	+6%
9	Percentage of books Requested delivered within 30 days	85%	87%	+2%
10	Percentage of mobile library stops scheduled in any Contract Year which are delivered	100%	100%	0%
11	Aggregate number of hours of Community Use at all Core Libraries	1,909	7,073	+270%

Although the majority of KPIs present a positive picture of progress within the Library Service, there has been a decrease in public access computer use, and a related but smaller decrease in visits against the KPI target. It should be noted that the suspension of library activities from 17th March, and sites closure from Monday 23rd March due to the national Covid-19 pandemic, had a negative impact on KPI performance in the final month of the contract year, most notably on visits, PN use and issues.

As highlighted in previous years reports, the age and limitations of LCC's library IT provision, which remained in use at most sites until January 2020, continued to present significant problems for customers and staff alike, and negatively impacted on the library service's ability to deliver high quality services in line with customer expectations.

The IT refresh, which commenced in 2019, has received very positive feedback from library users, staff and volunteers alike. Once complete it is expected that this will have a significant positive impact on IT usage in libraries although this is unlikely to fully manifest itself in 2020/21 due to Covid-19 impact in service delivery.

2.3 Service Transformation/Innovation

2.3.1 IT Refresh

Following approval for the upgrade and transfer of public and staff IT provision and management to GLL, the first phase of the IT transfer commenced in core sites in December 2019 with the roll-out of new public IT provision. The remaining core sites, excluding Bourne, saw the new public IT offer installed in January 2020. Hub installations commenced in February 2020 but could not be completed as scheduled by the end of March 2020 due to the Covid-19 national lockdown. The installation of the last few remaining hubs and Bourne Library is scheduled to take place in July 2020 following the easing of lockdown measures nationally. Customers' response to the new IT provision was extremely positive and alongside multiple verbal compliments 26 formal written compliments were received.

The second phase of the IT transfer, which will take place in summer 2020, involves the refresh of staff IT following the Library Management System (LMS) transfer. The LMS transfer project commenced in January 2020 with the planning and building of system parameters and data mapping and testing exercises continuing into early March. Alongside this, planning for the training of staff and volunteers was devised. The training was to be delivered locally by key staff trained by Capita in the new system and in how to deliver this to colleagues and volunteers. This 'train the trainer' programme took place in mid-March just days before lockdown commenced. During lockdown these key trainers, working remotely, reconfigured the planned training package so that it could be carried out remotely by library staff rather than in face to face group sessions. The building of the new LMS by library staff working remotely also continued throughout lockdown to ensure that the planned implementation did not fall significantly behind schedule.

The improvements include:

- Installation of new high speed communication lines and upgrading of existing IT infrastructures
- Refresh of all public access computers at core and hub libraries
- Refresh of all public printing/photocopying/scanning facilities at core and hub libraries
- Provision of web based printing facilities at core libraries
- Provision of web based public PC booking facilities for all core and hub libraries
- Installation of public WiFi at all core and hub libraries
- Refresh of staff and volunteer computers at all core, mobile and hub libraries
- Transfer of the Library Management System (LMS) from Civica's Spydus system to Capita's Soprano system

Launching the new system and refreshing staff IT will see continued modernisation and improvement of the county's library provision, so that it meets customer's needs for access to high quality reading, information and IT resources.

2.4 Community Hubs

2.4.1 Community Hub Background:

The development of community hubs was driven by the desire to give communities more control and a bigger role in delivering services, whilst ensuring services remained affordable within the Council's reduced budget.

GLL provide on-going professional support in the form of Library Development Officers [LDO's], including operational management of book stock, volunteer training and development, support of volunteers as well as supporting hubs to be professional and safe places for the members of the public to utilise; ensuring that the national picture in libraries performance and innovation is reflected locally.

LCC provide the provision of computers for public use, volunteer use and access to LCC IT helpdesk. For those hubs that have chosen to remain in Council-owned premises, preferable rates of a peppercorn rent for the initial 4 years of their lease between the Community Hub and the Council were applied and continue to be in place.

All Community Hubs have been supported financially with the allocation of £15k, a one-off capital payment to assist with set-up/improvement works and an annual revenue payment of £5,167 whilst they remain operating as a Community Hub for a minimum of 6 hours per week for 50 weeks per year.

Overall there is a commitment to support up to 40 Community Hubs and there are currently 36.

Table 2: Community Hubs

Ref	Hub Name	Ref	Hub Name	Ref	Hub Name
1	Alford	13	Donington	25	Pinchbeck
2	Belton Lane (<i>Children's Centre</i>)*	14	Ermine	26	Ruskington
3	Birchwood	15	Heckington	27	Saxilby
4	Boultham	16	Holbeach (Co-op)	28	Scotter
5	Bracebridge (<i>Bridge Church</i>)	17	Hospital Hub* (<i>Lincoln, Boston and Grantham</i>)	29	Spilsby (Co-op)
6	Bracebridge Heath	18	Ingoldmells	30	Sutton Bridge
7	Branston	19	Keelby	31	Sutton on Sea
8	Burgh le Marsh	20	Kirton	32	Swineshead
9	Caistor	21	Metheringham	33	Waddington (Co-op)
10	Cherry Willingham	22	Navenby	34	Wainfleet
11	Crowland	23	Nettleham	35	Welton
12	Deepings	24	North Hykeham	36	Wragby

** These 'hubs' do not receive the £5,167 annual revenue grant nor £15,000 capital grant. They are classified as a hub for the purpose of the GLL support to community hubs contractual payment clause.*

Community Hubs are independent and so have autonomy around opening hours, activities available and other potential utilisation of the site. All income received is retained by the hub, for reinvestment into the site.

Discussions are on-going around the potential for a new and improved future for the Ermine Community Hub.

Community Hubs need to be sustainable to ensure they will be there in years to come and they continue to achieve this through a range of income sources/funding which they require to cover the costs of running activities e.g. grants, donations, hiring out space, etc.

3. Conclusion

Building on the successes and foundations of previous years, a variety of focused activities are planned for Year 5 (April 2020 – March 2021), which include:

- The safe and successful reopening of Lincolnshire libraries post Covid-19.
- Responding to the changed needs of our users, communities and businesses post Covid-19.
- Completion of the IT refresh.

4. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/a

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Will Mason, who can be contacted on 07500 121283 or william.mason@lincolnshire.gov.uk.