



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

Report to:	<b>Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny</b>
Date:	<b>27 October 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Community Hub Year 4 Update (2019-2020)</b>

**Summary:**

This report is to provide an update on the performance of the Community Hub Model to enable the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee to fulfil its role in scrutinising the service delivery

**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 highlight any additional priorities for consideration.

## 1. Background

2016 saw the introduction of a new model of service delivery for Lincolnshire Libraries. The aim and objective was to 'create an affordable Library Service, which meets Lincolnshire's needs.' This required a new way of delivering services and the creation of new partnerships with the communities.

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) were awarded a five year (+5 year) contract to deliver 15 core libraries across Lincolnshire. Community groups were approached to deliver the remaining former Tier 3 libraries under the banner of 'Community Hubs'.

The development of Community Hubs was driven by two council priorities. The first was the desire to give communities more control and a bigger role in delivering services. The second was ensuring services remain affordable within the council's reduced budget.

Community Hubs are community-run facilities, operated by volunteers under a grant agreement with the council. The hubs receive finance support from the council under this agreement and professional library support from GLL. The 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. They are open for a minimum of six hours per week, offering a range of services, such as book lending and internet access.

Agreement was given, that the service could develop a maximum of 40 Community Hubs to operate for an initial four year period and each to have an allocated a ring-fenced budget to support them during this time. The decision was taken in 2018 to continue supporting these hubs post the initial grant period and hubs continue to operate across the county.

## 2. Current Position

There are currently 34 Community Hubs in operation, as shown below, with library provision also being provided at a Children's Centre and all three Lincolnshire Hospitals; these are managed by the staff at each location but again supported by GLL.

1.	Alford
2.	Belton Lane (Children's Centre)*
3.	Birchwood
4.	Boultham
5.	Bracebridge
6.	Bracebridge Heath
7.	Branston
8.	Burgh le Marsh
9.	Caistor
10.	Cherry Willingham
11.	Crowland
12.	Deepings
13.	Donington
14.	Ermine**
15.	Heckington
16.	Holbeach (Co-op)
17.	Ingoldmells
18.	Keelby

19.	Kirton
20.	Metheringham
21.	Navenby
22.	Nettleham
23.	North Hykeham
24.	Pinchbeck
25.	Ruskington
26.	Saxilby
27.	Scotter
28.	Spilsby (Co-op)
29.	Sutton Bridge
30.	Sutton on Sea
31.	Swineshead
32.	Waddington (Co-op)
33.	Wainfleet
34.	Welton
35.	Wragby
36.	Hospital Hub*

\* These hubs are included in the numbers from a contractual perspective but are not operational like the other Community Hub sites; they do not receive the financial support from LCC

\*\* This site is currently managed by GLL, due to the former tenant entering difficulties and becoming insolvent. A new provider is in discussions with LCC over negating the management of the hub from GLL.

### 2.1 Service Delivery Update

Since the commencement of the Community Hub model, the Hubs have gone from strength to strength. Many have established customer groups, have invested in redeveloping the sites and have increased the use of the Hubs with the implementation of additional activities; such as storytimes, Lego Club, craft activities.

All sites have transferred over to the GLL IT network and have had new public computers, volunteer computers and printers installed. They have also transferred to the new Library Management System (LMS) that was included within the wider IT transfer project. Volunteers have received training on this and they continue to

receive support from GLL's Library Development Officers; offering advice on queries, providing information, weeding stock, continually training new volunteers and supporting existing volunteers.

## **2.2 Covid-19**

The later part of the 2019-20 operational year saw all the Community Hubs close, in line with the Core Libraries and as a result of Central Government advice in the response to Covid-19.

The majority of the hubs are operated by volunteers who fall within the vulnerable category; either because of their age or underlying health conditions. This created a slight delay in hubs entering the recovery phase of re-opening. However, since 5 September 2020, 29 sites have commenced service delivery, offering a book deposit and collection provision. In the recent weeks we have also seen an increase in these sites moving to the browsing phase of recovery, wherein customers can access the sites, browse stock and utilise the PC's available. Each site is taken on an individual basis and certain prerequisites required before this approach has been approved. This includes submission of a covid risk assessment, evidence of screens in place at counters and photographic confirmation that the NHS QR code poster is on display. We now have 13 hubs offering browsing, with another 10 hubs open for click and pick.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/a

## **4. Background Papers**

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

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