

Headline Report from Open Day Consultations December 2012

Background

Why did we do the consultation?

- To maximize efficiency and make economies we agreed to look at the way we deliver our service. We know that in the future, we will not have the same level of funding as we have now.
- Early indications from the village library consultation showed varying levels of interest from members of the public to support their LIC by volunteering.
- We took the opportunity to involve the community in shaping their future library service.

What did we do?

- We carried out a series of open days at all service points.
- All staff were involved in conversations with the public, gathering opinions and feeding back results.

How was the open day structured?

- Four topics for discussion will be:-
 - Opening hours
 - Income generations
 - Locations
 - Friends of Groups/Volunteers

When did the consultation take place?

- September and October 2012.

What have we learned so far?

Opening Hours

Whilst all the data has not been collated at this present time we have learned that each service point, of which we have 26, has very different needs. So for instance, at some service points there is a want for us to open on a Sunday but this is not appropriate or needed every where. A piece of work needs to be done looking at preferences but also linking in to our own statistics which shows when the library is most used at the moment.

Income Generation

We have had some great ideas for income generation, the most popular at every service point being provision of refreshments. This has ranged from coffee machines

to cafes in some of our bigger service points. Some smaller ideas have been around increasing charges for services e.g. photocopying and faxing.

Locations

Most people surveyed found their LIC easily accessible. We have had a few comments around how lovely some of our buildings are, but the majority have concentrated on the service we provide, rather than where we provide it from e.g. people have commented on the helpfulness of staff, the resources we provide and the importance of that particular resource to them and in some cases that the service is a lifeline to them.

Friends Groups/Volunteers

Early indications show a lot of support and interest in working with the library service to ensure provision of service remains in the community.

We need to be cautious about this and about what we are asking people to do.

There are **three levels** of volunteering.

1. Self run interest groups e.g. helping at coffee mornings or knit and natter groups, running reading groups... This already happens at our service points.
2. Volunteers e.g. people helping with a defined purpose as agreed with the LIC service. This could be someone running a job club or a homework club.
3. Friends of Groups e.g. A constituted group with a bank account, treasurer etc. We would need a strong SLA/MOU so that for instance a strong voice in the group didn't decide we were just going to buy Local History books, because that was their interest. However, the community engagement team would support us in this.

Next Steps

We are six weeks in to collating the feedback. We originally said twelve weeks but given the enormous task we may have to extend this by a few weeks. Some really good spreadsheets are being produced that will allow us to manipulate data.

As senior managers have asked for information in the New Year we are concentrating on completing two service points for each area so that we will see how all the data can work.

We are discussing with community support how we might further engage with community groups and various networks e.g. disability groups to ensure we have met our legal obligations.

Carol Stump
19/12/12.