

Mobile Library Consultation 19 September to 6 November 2017

Briefing for all Essex County Council Members

People value their mobile library service but use has nearly halved since 2010/11 (see over). Seven of the nine vehicles are old, unreliable and nearing the end of their working lives. The time is right to look again at how we provide these services. This seven-week public consultation asks for residents' views about how we create a new service which is a better fit with people's lives across Essex.

The ambition is to have a service which suits users, is flexible enough to help volunteers set up community libraries, and supports volunteers to deliver books to people at home, helping to end social isolation. Also our ambition is to have a service which does not waste money, by having mobile libraries parked in places and at times when no-one visits, which happens on occasion now.

Proposals

Criteria for redrawing mobile library routes using the two newer, larger vehicles:

- That the location is two miles or more from a library building
- That the stop has been consistently used over the previous six months
- That there are no other stops nearby serving the same community. Where two or more stops serve one community the most popular and/or accessible stop will be kept.

Other proposals being consulted on are:

- Each stop will last for at least 30 minutes
- Changing frequency of service from fortnightly to either three-weekly or four-weekly
- Whether to change the days and times that mobile libraries will cover. They currently run five days a week (Tues-Sat). Options are to run six or seven days a week and to run later in the day.

The survey also asks whether people are interested in:

- Helping to set up a community library
- Volunteering for the Home Library Service
- Being involved in future engagement or can suggest venues for community libraries

How can people respond?

Please encourage people to respond online at libraries.essex.gov.uk (links to all information and survey, hosted on www.essexinsight.org.uk).

Printed consultation packs will also be available at all libraries and mobile libraries for people unable to respond online. Also available: braille and large print copies; current timetables and list of potential stops if criteria applied, by district/borough; children's survey for under 16s, EasyRead survey for people with learning disabilities; draft equality impacts and needs assessments (to be updated after consultation).

Timetable

19 September – 6 November: Consultation runs

November – December: analysis of results and preparation of report to Cabinet

23 January: Cabinet decision

1 May: deadline for implementation of Cabinet decision

MOBILE LIBRARY KEY FACTS

All facts are for Essex for the financial year 2016/17 unless otherwise stated



557 MOBILE LIBRARY STOPS

THESE INCLUDE 90 AT CARE HOMES, SHELTERED HOUSING OR OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING COMPLEXES, AS WELL AS SOME SECURE SITES

VISITS FELL FROM 120,578 IN 2010/11 TO 64,289 IN 2016/17



120,578
IN 2010/11



64,289
IN 2016/17

LOANS FELL FROM 252,646 IN 2010/11 TO 130,702 IN 2016/17



252,646
IN 2010/11



130,702
IN 2016/17



£511,000

COST TO RUN MOBILE LIBRARIES IN 2016/17



THE AVERAGE STOP LASTS 30 MINUTES

ONCE A FORTNIGHT

SOME STOPS LAST FOR 15 OR 20 MINUTES, A FEW LAST FOR OVER AN HOUR



4,695 ACTIVE MOBILE LIBRARY CARD HOLDERS

PEOPLE WHO JOINED AT A MOBILE LIBRARY AND HAVE USED THEIR LIBRARY CARD IN THE LAST YEAR



180 CURRENT STOPS

ARE WITHIN TWO MILES OF THE NEAREST LIBRARY



35 STOPS RECEIVED NO VISITORS

DURING A 12 WEEK MONITORING PERIOD



AVERAGE NUMBER OF VISITORS PER STOP IS

5.25

AVERAGE COST PER VISIT TO A MOBILE LIBRARY

£7.95

AVERAGE COST PER VISIT TO A LIBRARY

£3.83