Options for change

1. Introduction

1.1   In this appendix, we examine each of the options that might enable the outcomes for the review to be met and to help address the gaps that have been identified between the outcomes and the service as it is now.

1.2   Given the poor performance of the service since the reduction in opening hours was introduced in April 2022, the outcomes for the review are:

Table E1: draft strategic outcomes for library service review (v0.3)

By three years' time, we will be able to say that the library review has achieved the following:

Primary outcome	Supporting outcomes
1. We are reaching more people	- More people are using our library service. - We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. - People know what we're offering.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community	- We have a wide range of popular services and activities. - People across our communities enjoy what's available. - Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.
3. Our service is more efficient	- We are delivering better value within the resources we have. - We generate more income from events and venue hire. - More people are willing to help.

1.3   A range of options have been developed that might enable the outcomes to be met and that could help to address the gaps identified in chapter 10 of the report.

1.4   In this appendix, we have examined each of the options in turn. For each option we:

- Summarise what's involved.
- Describe the potential benefits and negative impacts.
- Identify the resource implications.
- Identify further work required.
- Evaluate the option and its feasibility.
- Recommend whether the option should be pursued further.

1.5   We have developed a set of success criteria to help guide our analysis of the options:

Table E2: evaluation criteria to assess how well each option could deliver the options

Primary outcome	Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
1. We are reaching more people	- More people are using our library service. - We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. - People know what we're offering.	- Encourages more users. - Allows a focus on areas of high need. - Provides resources for promotion and outreach.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community	- We have a wide range of popular services and activities. - People across our communities enjoy what's available. - Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.	- Provides resources for events and programming. - Provides services people value. - Improves library interiors and entry points. - Enables us to deliver an offer for communities not engaged with the current model.
3. Our service is more efficient	- We are delivering better value within the resources we have. - We generate more income from events and venue hire. - More people are willing to help.	- Improves the unit costs of the service. - Increases income from paid-for services. - Increases partner and voluntary support.

1.6   Our description and evaluation of each option follows the sequence of the three primary outcomes. We point out where an option may also contribute to other outcomes. Some options are subject to a more detailed analysis, and this is shown in separate appendices.

1.7   **These options are still at the formative stage and so for each option we have identified further research that is required in the next phase of the review and the engagement that will need to be undertaken largely in parallel.**

1.8   **Potential costs and savings are shown for a number of the options. Where they are included, they are indicative at this stage and further work would be required to validate them in detail before any final decisions are made.**

1.9   **Resource to invest in service improvement is currently limited by the Council's overall financial circumstances. The recommendations and costs have been considered in this context and the Summary at Section 5 outlines what is proposed to be included in the new service model for consultation in January 2024.**

2. Options for addressing primary outcome 1: "We are reaching more people"

Preamble

2.1   The supporting outcomes and success criteria for this primary outcome are:

Table E3: supporting outcomes and specific evaluation criteria for primary outcome 1

Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.	• Encourages more users. • Allows a focus on areas of high need. • Provides resources for promotion and outreach.

2.2   In this section, we explore ways of addressing the fundamental problems with the library service that have manifested themselves since opening hours were reduced in 2022. Combined with the effect of the slow recovery from the impact of the pandemic, the numbers of people using the service have plummeted.

2.3   As summarised in chapter 9 of the review report at Appendix A:

- The data shows that visits, book issues and other uses of the library have fallen dramatically compared with pre-pandemic levels - and are unlikely to recover from the effects of the pandemic as quickly as in other similar library services.

- Our feedback so far is that the public find it harder to access the service as a result of the reduction in hours and to know what time the libraries are open and what is on.

- The introduction of Open Plus so that libraries can open longer is progressing slowly and has proved more expensive to make the physical changes needed to library entrances.

- Few of the 13 libraries are in the best locations to maximise footfall.

- There is little confidence that the library service is reaching the people that need it most and there is no capacity in the service to undertake outreach work.

- The staff of the service are now so stretched that they struggle to keep the libraries open or to find time to organise the events and other activities that people value.

2.4   The options considered in order to meet this primary outcome focus on how resources can be used to address the problems caused by the move to part-time opening.

2.5   We have sought to identify and consider all possible options in order to make a comprehensive analysis and develop proposals for the best possible service model.

Option 1.1: reverse library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network

Introduction

2.6   This option examines the possibility of reversing the reduction in the library budget wholly or in part in order to increase staffed library opening hours. It could involve either:

- A straight reversal of the April 2022 hours reductions for each library across the network.

- A more tailored pattern of opening to reflect local need or to accommodate more evening or weekend opening.

2.7   This option would require the Council to find additional funds from elsewhere in its overall budget to restore library opening hours. It assumes that the Council is not able to improve its overall financial position and so budget reductions in other Council services would be required. As a result of pay inflation since the last reduction in hours, the budget increase would need to be greater than the £500k reduced from the service budget to meet the same number of hours as previously staffed.

Benefits and impact

2.8   This option would restore library opening hours to the level that users enjoyed before April 2022.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Enables users to return to previous patterns or more tailored opening patterns. • Allows greater stability for staff and provides continuity for their customers. • Restores resources that could be used for more programming or outreach. • Could allow a recovery in library usage. • Would allow for more weekend opening that might suit working parents using the library with their children. • Would allow for tailoring of opening hours to better suit people in full-time work.	• Would require the Council to make budget reductions elsewhere, probably at the expense of children's and adult social care services (the main areas of Council spending). • Would not address weaknesses and inefficiencies in the library network. • Would require greater capital investment to improve the accessibility and condition of the library buildings. • If the budget cut was not reversed in full, a partial restoration of the library budget could still leave the service with much-reduced hours and stretched staffing.

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Would allow the service to provide a longer and more tailored opening pattern to people in need and with protected characteristics.	

Resource impact and affordability

2.9   A full restoration of the budget (uprated for inflation) has been assumed below.

Resource	Cost estimates	Saving estimates
Increase in staffing budget	Revenue: Over £500k Capital: N/A	N/A

Given the financial problems facing local government and Croydon in particular, there is little chance that the Council would be in a position to restore the budget reduction, whether in whole or in part. The current Medium Term Financial Statement published by the Council in October 2023 forecasts a budget deficit of £75m for the period of April 2024-25.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the latest CIPFA benchmarking data when published in to compare Croydon's library spending with similar authorities. • To confirm whether the Council's spending power has increased over the last year.	• To consider whether it is realistic to include the option of increasing the library budget in the Council's overall budget consultation (if the Council's spending power has improved).

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Allows restored or tailored opening hours. • Allows for increased use across the network. • Does not address weaknesses in network.	Over £500k	Nil	*This option cannot realistically be pursued given the Council's financial position.*

Recommendation: to not pursue reversing library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network further given the Council's financial position.

Option 1.2: extend evening/weekend opening

Introduction

2.10   During the briefing sessions for community organisations, it was pointed out that libraries do not open in the evening (all shut by 6pm) and only five of the thirteen are open on Saturdays, making it difficult for people working full-time to access the libraries. This also prevents many parents from being able to take their children to a library.

2.11   *The* extension *of opening hours into the evening and weekend would need to be offset by more daytime and weekday closures if the current number of libraries are maintained and other aspects of the service remain the same.*

Benefits and impact

2.12   This option envisages all libraries being open one evening a week and on Saturdays for larger libraries and Saturday morning for smaller ones. It would be envisaged that additional children's activities would be provided on Saturdays.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
- Enables people working full-time during the week to access the library more often. - Increases the chance for working parents to take younger children to the library. - Improves access to library services for younger children who cannot visit the library on their own.	- Reduces access for people who prefer to (or can only) use the library during daytime during the week. - Requires changes to staff working patterns.

Resource impact and affordability

2.13   If no additional resources can be made available and evening and weekend opening would be offset by closing at other times during the week, this option could be cost neutral, although it may be difficult to attract and retain staff for weekend working given current workforce shortages in the economy.

Resource	Cost estimates	Saving estimates
Increase in staff budget to allow for additional weekend working	Revenue: £105k Capital: N/A	N/A

This option may be affordable if other options are pursued that would free up resources that could be redirected.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the experience and impact of weekend opening in Croydon and other library services. • To identify which libraries would open for a full or half day on Saturdays.	• To consult users and non-users over the ideal opening pattern in each library. • To consult staff on changes to their working patterns, if the option is pursued further.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Improves access for people who can't use the libraries during the weekday daytimes. • Improves access for younger children of parents who work Mondays to Fridays. • Reduces access for those who prefer to or can't use the library in the evenings and weekends.	£105k	Nil	*This option is worth exploring further if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service, but change may have an impact on staff recruitment and retention.*

Recommendation: to explore further the option of evening and Saturday opening if resources can be freed up within the service.

Option 1.3: extend opening hours through Self Service access (Open Plus) technology

Introduction

2.14   Open Plus was introduced to Selsdon Library in 2022 and extended recently to Norbury Library. There were plans to extend Open Plus to three more libraries, but progress with implementation has been slow due to issues with capacity and building adaptations and delays to the implementation of self-service kiosks. Open Plus allows users to access a library using their library card and PIN outside the hours when library staff are present.

2.15   Although a security guard is present during self service access opening hours, users are not able to get support from library staff. Take-up has been low so far in Selsdon Library, but the experience from other library services is that this option can prove popular (over time and with marketing) with a section of the population who don't require support when using the library.

2.16   This option envisages the extension of Open Plus to up to three more libraries. This will be subject to the suitability of the building and the funding of a security presence.

Benefits and impact

2.17   The use of Open Plus provides those who are happy to use this service with more opportunities to use the library during normal opening hours.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Increases access for those who cannot use the service during normal opening hours. • Extends opening hours for those who do not need library staff support and are happy to use the service. • Extends access for people working full time on weekdays.	• Does not extend access to unaccompanied children and young people nor those not happy to use the service. • Will have a negative impact on other aspects of the service if resources cannot be freed up as a result of other options. • Has a revenue cost where security staff are needed to be on site for fire safety reasons. • Take-up at Selsdon Library has been low so far and Open+ has only just gone live in Norbury Library, so not yet clear how popular this will be.

Resource impact and affordability

2.18   The principal costs of extending Open Plus are the adaptations to buildings and the use of security measures, which are identified through building assessments as part of the implementation process. Both Selsdon and Norbury currently operate with a security guard on site. The induction of new users of the service does take some staff time.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Cost of part-time security staff. Maintenance for the equipment and software. Cost of installation and capital works, which includes FM adaptations and CCTV cameras as well as hardware.	Costs per site approx: Revenue: £2k (annual maintenance per site) Security: £25k per annum (3 days a week, 30-hour week) Capital: £35k approximately for each site.	N/A

This option may be affordable if other options are pursued that would free up resources that could be redirected.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the experience of operating Open Plus so far, reviewing its performance, comparing with other library services using it for longer. • To review the current policy of providing an on-site security presence, learning from other library services. • To develop a marketing plan to improve take up of existing Open+ service before deciding whether to extend it to other libraries.	• To understand the experience of current Open Plus users in Croydon. • To consult users and non-users on their interest in this option and whether it might encourage them to make more use of libraries.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Extends access for those who are happy using the service. • Provides a benefit for working people who cannot use the library during standard opening hours. • Does not improve access for unaccompanied children nor those not happy to use the service.	Per site approx: £27k (revenue) if security staff are required. Capital: £35k.	Nil	***The costs of retrofitting Open+ and operating the libraries during Open+ hours with security staff are currently too high to merit further rollout across the current network. An evaluation of existing Open+ sites is required before extending it further as part of wider building modernisation projects.***

Recommendation: To undertake a review of the performance of Open+ at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries and lessons learned in advance of further extension

Option 1.3: extend opening hours through Open Plus technology

Introduction

2.19   Although library buildings, especially older Victorian and Edwardian ones, are much-loved, they were often not sited in the best or busiest locations at the time or, if they were originally, those locations are less busy now due to changes to shopping parades and shopping in general. The environmental performance and layout of older buildings are often poor and can be difficult to adapt.

2.20   A location that is both very visible *and* has high levels of natural footfall due to passing pedestrian traffic will attract more visitors, especially among those less dedicated to - or aware of - what a library can offer. Currently, only two libraries are in busy pedestrian locations. If other libraries in the network were moved to more lively locations, take-up of the service could improve as was demonstrated by the redevelopment of Selsdon and relocation of Ashburton libraries.

2.21   Moving library locations is generally contentious as people are often strongly attached to the old building, regardless of its suitability. Careful consultation is needed over a potential move.

Benefits and impact

2.22   Library services that have located their services in well-designed buildings that benefit from good footfall improve their visitor numbers and performance. They are also often designed in a more flexible way to accommodate the wide range of uses and services delivered in a modern library and with spaces which can be used to generate income through hires. This does require investment and the cost of purchase and conversion will generally outweigh any income from the disposal of the old building, especially if it is listed.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• A visible library building in an area of high footfall will improve service take-up. • A popular library can act as an 'anchor' to improve a shopping parade or district. • A new or adapted building will generally be more accessible and easier to manage. • Modern or overhauled buildings will generally have better energy performance. • A location in a popular shopping parade and district will generally be better served by public transport.	• People who loved the old building and users who live near it are likely to be very disappointed. • The cost of change may be prohibitive in the Council's current financial position.

Resource impact and affordability

2.23   Given the Council's finances, a programme of replacing library buildings is not practical. Instead, a longer-term strategy which takes opportunities for relocation, particularly as a result of regeneration programmes will be more realistic. Lottery bids or Government funding programmes can be a source of capital funding but will require match-funding by the authority.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Project management and scheme development.	Revenue: scheme dependent. Capital: scheme dependent.	N/A

2.24   A more modern or refurbished building will generally be cheaper to maintain, but a prominent high street location will demand a higher standard of routine maintenance and cleaning. New buildings will also often attract a higher business rate bill (although this will have little impact in the event that full business rate retention is implemented).

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• Identify opportunities for relocating libraries to take advantage of regeneration programmes or fundraising/bidding opportunities. • Identify long-term plan for improving library facilities informed by demographic and footfall data.	• Consult carefully when opportunities arise for an improved library location and building. • Test with users and non-users how library use and their locations would fit into their lifestyles.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Improved library locations would improve service take-up. • More modern buildings would perform better and be more accessible and efficient. • Popular libraries can make shopping centres and parades more successful. • Leaving a much-loved old building can disappoint people and local users.	Scheme specific	N/A	*Moving to a better location can transform a service but can be capital-intensive. In the current financial climate this can only be pursued as regeneration and bidding opportunities emerge.*

Recommendation: develop a long-term plan for improving library locations to be implemented as opportunities arise in consultation with local communities.

Option 1.5: close the poorer performing and less viable libraries in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours

Introduction

2.25 The Council consulted the public on options for cutting the library service budget in 2021. Respondents to the consultations expressed a preference for not closing any libraries and reducing their opening hours instead. The reduction in opening hours took place in 2022 and has been a failure with usage now much lower compared with before the pandemic. The performance of all library services has taken time to recover, but Croydon's has been notably worse as a result of the reduction in opening hours.

2.26 It is notable that the number of digital issues has increased steadily, offsetting the fall in the number of physical loans to the point that combined physical and digital issues in 2022/23 exceeded the totals for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

2.27 However, although the number of visits to the library network has improved steadily since the pandemic, it is still less than half of pre-pandemic figures. This is particularly important for users who need access to PCs and the internet and for those who need to use libraries as study spaces. This suggests that the reduction in opening hours may be having a disproportionate impact on those who most depend on access to libraries and library spaces.

2.28 In Appendix E, we have examined the option of library closures in greater depth and recommended that the poorest performing libraries are closed or transferred to community management so that resources can be reinvested in extending the opening hours of the more popular libraries.

Benefits and impact

2.29 The benefits and adverse impacts of library closures have been explored in greater depth in Appendix C and are summarised here.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Allows the reintroduction of longer opening at the more popular or suitable libraries. • Encourages increased visits to the overall network by opening the most popular or suitable libraries for longer. • Allows more time for those most in need of PC access and study space in remaining libraries. • Frees staffing resources to organise more activities and events and undertake outreach.	• Increases the travel time for those who use the libraries that would close. • Risks preventing or discouraging users of libraries that would close from using the service at all. • Risks depriving users of much-loved libraries and library buildings.

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Reduces the building running costs of the service. • Reduces the capital investment costs to improve the accessibility and condition of the library estate.	

2.30   Library closures can impact negatively on those who use those libraries, particularly those with protected characteristics. Mitigations would need to be explored to reduce that impact.

Resource impact and affordability

2.31   The recommended closure of the libraries in Appendix C would allow staffing and building expenditure to be reallocated to expand the service in the higher performing and more viable libraries.

Resource	Cost	Saving	Net saving
Staffing costs reallocated from closed libraries.	£214k staffing costs to be redistributed to deliver improved offer in retained libraries and community provision	£214k	0
Building management costs reallocated from closed libraries.	£189k to be redistributed to support improved library offer and community provision	£189k	0
	Net saving		**0**

As part of the consultation process, it is planned to explore the appetite and realism of community management of the library service as an alternative to closure. Any contribution to the costs of running a community managed service would reduce the amount available to reinvest in the remaining network.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To research further the probable causes and impacts of the fall in visits to libraries. • To identify the impact of library closures on users, communities and those with protected characteristics. • To identify potential mitigations to offset the negative impact on users of closed libraries. • To confirm the net savings resulting from the proposed closures.	• To explore the impact of part-time opening on users at the most popular libraries and those proposed for closure. • To consult on the proposed closures and review the representations of those who want to retain the libraries. • To consult on the specific proposition of closing libraries, focusing on the users most affected by the proposal.

• To identify how best to allocate the net savings to improving the service in the remaining libraries and evaluate the positive benefit that might result. • To explore the potential for community management (see also option 3.3) and the financial impact of that option.	• To consult on proposed mitigations to assess their adequacy. • To focus on the views and experience of those with protected characteristics.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Allows the focusing of resources in order to allow longer opening hours at the most popular libraries. • Frees resources for the programming of events and activities and for outreach. • Impacts negatively on users of the libraries proposed for closure.	N/A	0	*The option of closing the worst performing libraries would allow the overall weaknesses in the service to be addressed through reallocation of the budget within the service*

Recommendation: to consult formally on the option of closing the poorer performing and less viable library buildings in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours and improve the overall service.

Option 1.6: Introduce 'library link' service points

Introduction

2.32   Library services traditionally rely on dedicated library buildings to provide a service. Some library services have experimented with providing book deposits in non-library settings, such as in community centres. Models include offering a 'pop up' library, deposit collections of books from the library for use by users in a community setting such as a leisure centre, children's centre or care home; library staff delivering regular events in community settings, for example storytimes and family reading advice at playgroups and family centres; or a full service point with access to the Council's library management systems and access to the Council's book stock. It might also include a PC and Wi-Fi offering in areas suffering from digital exclusion.

2.33   A 'library link' offering could allow the library service to reach parts of the borough that do not traditionally make active use of the library service. They could also help to provide mitigation in areas where a library has been closed. This offer would also allow for library services to be tailored to local need, for example delivering advice and information on digital skills in areas of digital deprivation or early years provision in areas with a large population of young families.

2.34   The potential permutations of a library link offering would need to be explored and defined in collaboration with potential partners who would host library link such as community centres and schools.

Benefits and impact

2.35   A library link offering could enable the service to extend its service at low cost to a wider range of locations.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
- Extends the library service including possible digital access to new locations to reach new users. - Offers a low-cost and flexible way of providing a physical library presence. - Enables the service to target hard to reach communities. - Encourages an increase in book usage (albeit likely limited in take-up).	Does not provide space for study for those that need it.

Resource impact and affordability

2.36   Depending on the model selected, this option should be relatively low cost, relying on restocking as part of the library van delivery round. This option has been costed on the basis of a simple 'honesty' service with units using surplus stock located in five sites, with no rental charges for locations hosting the units. Service provision would be

delivered through a combination of library staff, volunteers and grant funded partners to deliver library programmes and events in community settings.

2.37   We would propose commencing with a pilot phase of four initial Library Link services focussed on catering to communities most impacted by the library closures with a second phase of delivery focussed on a further four areas of low library engagement across the borough.

Resource	Cost	Saving
• Increase in staffing budget for weekly library van deliveries. • Maintenance costs of units. • One-off cost of design and installation of units.	Revenue: £92k staff costs for co-ordination, programme delivery and additional transport delivery of stock and portable internet connection devices One-off cost of units: £15k. Capital: N/A	N/A

If the service was integrated into the network using self-service checkout, the capital and revenue costs would be higher, requiring the purchase of self-service units, the installation of power points and internet points and additional revenue costs, including maintenance.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To model a 'library link' unit and permutations and test a prototype. • To identify potential locations for library link units and partnership arrangements.	• To test whether people would use the units.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Increases access to library books in areas of high need. • Allows for targeted library programmes and events under the Universal Offers to be delivered.	£92k (annual) £15k (one off)	Nil	*Allows a limited service to be provided in areas of need and may provide some mitigation in areas where a library is closed (if that option is pursued).*

Recommendation: to explore and test the option of a 'library link' service further.

Option 1.7: introduce programme of outreach and marketing

Introduction

2.38   The budget reductions in the service have been associated with a marked fall in usage, particularly in library visits. Fewer than 10% of the borough's population are active users of their libraries in Croydon and this may be due to a combination of factors, such as the limited opening hours; a lack of awareness of opening hours or of the service as a whole; or the quality of the service that can be offered within the resources available. The percentage of the population who are active users is considered to be comparatively low and this will become clearer when CIPFA's benchmarking data for 2022/23 is published in December 2023.

2.39   Library staff are stretched by keeping a part-time service with tight staffing in operation and have no capacity for outreach or the targeting areas of high need, such as through visits to schools or other institutions. As a result, those who need the service most may have little awareness of what libraries can offer. In addition, library users and potential library users often complain they don't know what is going on in their library.

2.40   In 2019 a previous round of cuts included the deletion of a team of six staff delivering a cultural programme and promotion. Some dedicated staffing resource would need to be restored for promotion to communicate what's on offer, particularly through social media and e-newsletters. Resources would also be needed to introduce outreach. Promotion and outreach would need to be programmed but would only be effective if the service was able to run more activities and have longer opening hours.

Benefits and impact

2.41   Resources for promotion would encourage greater service take-up and outreach would enable staff to target those most in need of what is available.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Increases awareness of what the library service has to offer. • Increases usage and interest among hard-to-reach communities. • Allows those most in need to be targeted.	• Will only be effective if the service in libraries is of sufficient quality.

Resource impact and affordability

2.42   Marketing resource would bring together the programme of activities in library hubs (both staff run and hosted), and highlight outreach activities and opportunities, co-ordinated them into one programme through a regular targeted engagement and communication plan, raising awareness of the activities in each of the Universal offers and defining the library service offer. The regular communications would be shared with a network of partners for onward promotion and engagement. The success measures

of this exercise would be a clear development of the service including take-up of the services and activities on offer, linked back to Universal offers and project objectives, as well as increased engagement with partners and the harder to reach groups in Croydon. The marketing staff would also collect regular feedback from residents that will ensure continuous service improvement and development of services to meet the needs and priorities of the communities across Croydon.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Increase in staffing budget for outreach and marketing (two full-time staff).	Revenue: £77k Capital: N/A	N/A

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To develop an operating model for marketing and a marketing plan. • To identify communities most in need of outreach and develop and test a package of outreach service offerings. Working with community partners already in these communities	• To explore how different categories of users and non-users are best communicated with. • To explore with local institutions and community organisations in target areas how best to collaborate on outreach.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Enables the service to encourage take-up from those most in need. • Promotes to all potential users what is available. • Contributes to increased library usages.	£77k (revenue)	Nil	*This option could transform service take-up but would only be effective if the overall service offer in libraries was improved. This option is worth exploring further if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.*

Recommendation: to explore the resourcing of marketing and outreach if the service in libraries can be improved by other options.

3. Options for addressing primary outcome 2: "We have improved our service to the whole community"

Preamble

3.1 The supporting outcomes and success criteria for this primary outcome are:

Table E4: supporting outcomes and specific evaluation criteria for primary outcome 2

Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
• We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.	• Provides resources for events and programming. • Provides services people value. • Improves library interiors and entry points. • Enables us to deliver an offer for communities not engaged with the current model.

In this section, we explore ways of improving the service available from the borough's libraries and how the service could encourage more people across communities to make use of the service.

3.2 As described in chapter 3 of the review report at Appendix A, reading is still central to libraries' purpose, but they play a much wider role in improving the health and wellbeing and giving people access to the digital world. In recent years and particularly since the reduction in opening hours in 2022 the trends suggest:

- The number of people making use of free PCs has fallen significantly compared with pre-pandemic levels which means that the digitally excluded might be missing out.
- There is less time available in each library to run events and activities and this has been flagged as a frustration for users.
- Loans of books and other materials have recovered well from pre-pandemic levels, in large part thanks to the increase in digital loans (eg of eBooks).
- Where libraries are in good locations and well-designed buildings (eg Selsdon), service take-up remains higher.
- The level of visits to libraries has plummeted across the network, probably as a result of the reduction in opening hours. Where other library services' usage numbers are available, they appear to have been recovering from COVID faster than Croydon's.

3.3 The options considered in order to meet this primary outcome focus on how resources can be freed up to provide a better service to more people.

Option 2.1: extend programme of improved events, working with partners.

Introduction

3.4   The budget reductions in the service have led to a marked fall in usage, particularly in library visits. Library staff are stretched by keeping a part-time service in operation with fewer staff and have little capacity for organising events and activities such as 'Rhymetime' for infants; homework clubs for older children; and author visits and creative arts for adults. In any case, with the reduced opening hours and only five libraries open on Saturdays, the time available for scheduling and promoting events is limited.

3.5   The lack of organised events and activities was raised as an issue at briefings with community organisations in September 2023. Expanding the range of activities and events held in libraires would require dedicated staff resources to design the programme of events and co-ordinate them across the network and to promote them. It was also suggested at the briefings that a mixture of free and paid-for events could be laid on.

3.6   The library service already collaborates with other services and organisations to lay on events in libraries and a central resource could strengthen partnerships and potentially expand the programme.

3.7   However, running more events and in the evenings and weekends would require resources to be freed up through other options. Some libraries are not easily adaptable to host events and some changes would be needed to equipment and furniture (especially moveable bookshelves and suitable seating).

3.8   Some staff development may be required to ensure that activities are delivered to a consistently high standard and some specialisation may also be beneficial.

Benefits and impact

3.9   A lively programme of activities and events can prove popular and encourage those attending to make more use of their libraries and encourage others to do so. Library events are often the only affordable way for many people to engage in arts and cultural activities.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Promotes the role of the library as a community hub and lively cultural centre. • Allows events to be tailored and targeted at those in greatest need. • Encourages more users, particularly if events can be run at evenings and weekends. • A wider programme of events can be offered by working in partnership. • Central co-ordination and programming can improve the quality of the events. • Supports the development of literacy and learning among children and young people. • Addresses feelings of isolation and contributes to improved health and well-being.	• Events in open plan spaces can disturb users needing quiet for study.

Resource impact and affordability

3.10   This option envisages a new member of staff dedicated to the programming, design and co-ordination of events and activities, generally delivered by staff or partners. A capital investment would be required in audio-visual (AV) equipment and furniture to make libraries suitable for hosting high-quality events.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Resource for an event co-ordinator. Capital investment in AV equipment and furniture.	Revenue: £40k to include co-ordinator and staff training. Capital: to be determined, potentially in combination with option 2.3 to improve the interior of libraries.	N/A

This option may be affordable if other options are pursued that would free up resources that could be redirected. The value of an events programme would be limited if opening hours cannot be increased.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the current range of events and activities and any organisational and quality issues. • To review all libraries to identify suitable spaces and investments in furniture and AV equipment. • To collaborate with partners to plan a potential programme that would suit different communities, preferences and age groups. • To develop a planning and quality framework for event and activity planning. • To review staff support requirements and staff skills and create a development programme.	• To review satisfaction with existing activities and events. • To engage with library users to find out what type of events (and timings) that they would find useful. • To explore with local community groups the types of events that would be attractive and that they could support.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Introduces a co-ordinated programme of high-quality events and activities. • Encourages new users and strengthens community cohesion. • Supports learning and health and wellbeing.	£40k pa (revenue) TBD (capital)	Nil	*This option is worth exploring further if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service and if opening hours can be extended.*

Recommendation: to explore the option of extending a programme of improved events, working with partners if resources can be freed up by other changes.

Option 2.2: increase community language provision.

Introduction

3.11   Staff have indicated that there the current library collection does not adequately cater for particular community languages. This may require special stock selection arrangements, outside of the current supplier contract.

3.12   Specialist books collections catering for new communities can help to welcome them, providing opportunities to promote other Council services such as ESOL courses. The option to increase capacity for outreach would enable relationships to be built with community organisations who could help to target non-users.

Benefits and impact

3.13   The provision of specialised language collections can encourage new communities to use the library. Supported by outreach, this option can help target those most in need.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Increases the take-up of library services. • Allows targeting of those most in need. • Builds community cohesion. • Recognises the needs of community with particular language needs. • Supports engagement with communities not currently using the library.	• Could result in the dilution of the already small stock fund if additional resources are not found.

Resource impact and affordability

3.14   As a result of budget reductions, the revenue budget for books and materials is provisionally £300k funded through CIL funds which is time-limited. Spend was only £150k in 2022/23 and at that level it would be difficult to divert resources towards books and materials for community languages without an impact on the wider overall service.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Allocate budget for books and materials in community languages from within overall budget for books and materials.	Revenue: N/A, subject to the results of research and delivery and maintenance of CIL funding. Capital: N/A	N/A

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To research and verify the extent of local demand for books and materials in community languages. • To identify priority languages and locations and consult on stock acquisition.	• To engage with community groups to explore the extent of potential demand and need.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Can allow targeting of communities in greatest need. • Can support community cohesion.	Revenue: N/A, subject to the results of research and delivery and maintenance of CIL funding. Capital: N/A	Nil	*This option is worth exploring further if there is genuine need and potential demand.*

Recommendation: to explore an increase community language provision if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.

Option 2.3: improve signage, entrances and interiors

Introduction

3.15   Libraries built in the Victorian and Edwardian age tend to be designed around the requirements for a library to house a large number of bookstacks. This were generally fixed to walls and so the ground floor of many older libraries have solid walls at ground floor level with high ceilings with rooflights and windows *above* the bookstacks.

3.16   The replacement of physical reference books and journals with online material has reduced the need for as many bookstacks and so modern library design often exhibits a 'retail' aesthetic with extensive ground floor 'shop windows'. Modern library entrances are also glazed allowing passers-by to see into the library and the doorways are often less grand, but lighter and more welcoming. Many of Croydon's library entrances are messy and entrance lobbies are cluttered with unreadable notices. Staff have suggested replacing notices with updated (and professionally designed) notice on screens.

3.17   The interiors of most libraries are drab and dull although those in Norbury, Thornton Heath and Selsdon libraries are notable exceptions: their interiors are bright and the furniture comfortable and stylish. Another issue important to users is that not all libraries have accessible toilets.

3.18   While the interior of Selsdon Library is attractively designed, its exterior is anonymous. Like most of Croydon's libraries, there is minimal exterior signage indicating the presence of the library. With the exception of Thornton Heath Library and Norbury Library (at least at night when the sign is illuminated), signage is often almost invisible.

3.19   Users know where their libraries are and are more likely to tolerate their faults. Non-users (the majority of the population) often don't and have no prominent visual reminders of their library's presence. Once inside, non-users will find most libraries' interiors to be so dull and uninspiring that they may not want to return. The design of children's libraries can be visually exciting and stimulate the imagination, but too many of their interiors in Croydon need investment.

Benefits and impact

3.20   A highly visible library with an inviting entrance, an attractive interior and comfortable furniture will encourage more people to use it - and more often. Thoughtful design also can preserve key aspects of a library's heritage, reusing and refurbishing existing furniture and fittings where practical.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Prominent signage will inform or remind people of the library's presence. • Better designed entrances and interiors will welcome non-users (and users) and provide a better experience for people with disabilities. • Well-designed furniture will be more practical and encourage people to visit more often. • Visually stimulating children's libraries will encourage them (and their parents) to make more use of their library. • Accessible design and accessible toilets will allow people to stay longer and benefit people with disabilities. • Users and non-users will be more likely to use the service.	• Poorly designed signage would detract from the façade of the building and the streetscape. • While most people will probably welcome nicer interiors, some may question the expenditure. • Some users may be attached to their library just the way it is. •

Resource impact and affordability

3.21   One-off capital funding has been made available to invest in library buildings. Some of this can be allocated to improving signage, entrances and interiors.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Invest in works to improve signage, entrances and interior design.	Revenue: direction and sponsorship of the project can be met from existing management resources. Project management costs can be capitalised. Capital: subject to site surveys, design standards and extent of any works required.	N/A

Good interior design is needed to ensure that a clear and consistent standard is set that makes a noticeable impact within limited budgets.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To commission a simple design manual for signage, entrances and library interiors that can be rolled out as resources allow and adapted to each site. • To undertake site surveys to assess the extent of works required and to estimate costs. • To explore the replacement of notices with screens. • To develop a programme of works and project manage its delivery.	• To test design options with focus groups representative of users and non-users. • To consult disability group representatives on accessibility aspects of design standard. • To test design options with staff. • To consult on individual library designs plans with local users, friends' groups and any partners.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Prominent signage will alert and remind non-users and users of the location of libraries. • Well-designed entrances will welcome users and non-users. • Good quality interior design and furniture will improve the experience of using the library, particularly for those using libraries for research and study. • Improvements in signage and interior design will encourage more users.	£nil (revenue) Management direction can be met within existing resources. £TBC (capital) Project management costs may be capitalised and capital costs will be subject to design and survey and the number of libraries to upgrade.	Nil	*There is one-off capital allocated to improving libraries and the upgrading of signage and interiors are needed. There would be little point upgrading libraries that may be closed and so clarity will be needed on the closure option before investments are made.*

Recommendation: to pursue the option of improving signage, entrances and interiors

Option 2.4: improve libraries' IT offer

Introduction

3.22   An important aspect of a modern library service is the provision of free PCs, Wi-Fi and support with IT. This is particularly needed for people suffering from digital exclusion if they can't afford the cost of devices or broadband and data contracts. Even if households do have broadband and data contracts, some cannot afford devices for everyone that needs them. Demand for library PCs has been falling, but demand for Wi-Fi and printing has increased.

3.23   Library staff have highlighted that PCs need to be kept up-to-date to cope with the demands of the latest software and streaming. In the past, PCs and the network were very dated and this was associated with a severe drop-off in usage. To correct this, all IT equipment & network were updated by January 2020 with full fibre. It is possible that there is a lack of awareness of the improvements made, but there is a risk that the recent equipment could date rapidly and so a periodic replacement programme is required, probably as a capital investment.

3.24   Staff also pointed out the value of IT training and support to people who increasingly have to deal with completing online forms and often lack the confidence. Library staff are increasingly asked to provide complex support without the training or time needed. This was suggested as an area that could particularly benefit from more support from partners who run digital skills programme and from skilled volunteers. The service has secured an £80k grant to provide Clear Community Web IT training for both customers and for staff and volunteers over the next 3 years. The library service received a £150k grant to create a Digital Zone in Central Library; dedicated space is needed for IT training and more spaces in libraries could be identified to host such training.

Benefits and impact

3.25   Up-to-date IT equipment and IT training and support are particularly important for people who are digitally excluded or want to improve their IT skills.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Provides IT equipment that is fit-for-purpose. • Benefits people who cannot afford devices, broadband and/or data packages. • IT training gives people the confidence to take part in the digital world. • Supports people less confident in using technology, particularly older people. • Reduces the risk of digital exclusion in a world that increasingly demands 'digital by default'.	• Some users may feel libraries' IT provision detracts from what they see as their core purpose: physical books and materials.

Resource impact and affordability

3.26   A rolling programme of IT replacements is the best way to keep equipment up-to-date. Various partners already offer IT training and more may be willing to deliver IT training from libraries.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Introduction of rolling 5-year PC replacement programme.	Revenue: N/A Revenue for IT training: nil (either self-funded or delivered by partners). Capital: TBC	N/A

Routine IT equipment updates (eg of routers and switches) are covered by the Council's IT support arrangements. It is assumed that monitors will need a less frequent refresh. Good IT training depends on suitable IT training facilities which only some libraries can offer currently. An assessment is needed of whether it is possible to create IT training areas in all libraries.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To confirm the priorities for PC and monitor refreshes and develop a rolling programme. • To review all libraries and identify suitable rooms or zones for IT training. • To develop a delivery plan with the support of partners and/or volunteers.	• To engage with users and non-users over their IT training needs. • To engage with partners (including CALAT) to extend an IT training programme in libraries. • To test options for IT training among less confident IT users.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Provides improved IT provision for users who depend on the libraries' free IT. • Provides training to people who might otherwise be digitally excluded.	TBC	Nil	*Fit-for-purpose IT equipment and training are essential to deliver one of libraries' most important services. Funding for this should be built into the library service's base budget but this will only be possible if resources can be freed up by decisions on other options.*

Recommendation: to improve libraries' IT offer if the resources can be freed up.

Option 2.5: promote the library service's digital offer

Introduction

3.27   While physical versions of books still remain more popular than eBooks, the proportion of digital issues has increased steadily in recent years, accelerated by the pandemic. Digital issues have now reached 29% of all issues. The option of borrowing digital materials appears to be valued by a substantial proportion of active users.

3.28   Digital materials can be borrowed and downloaded from anywhere via the internet, so users do not need to visit a library at all. As a result, digital use is not impacted by the reduction in opening hours. The ability to download books and other materials remotely does risk users losing touch with their library, but the functionality of the app does include alerts and the ability to promote events and other activities in libraries. The new TLC Discovery Platform has recently been launched in Croydon which makes collections of ebooks and e audiobooks easier to access.

3.29   Most users and non-users are probably not aware of how easy it is to borrow eBooks and other digital materials and so this option envisages marketing that option further and increasing the budget for digital resources.

Benefits and impact

3.30   While the rate of growth in the sale of eBooks has reportedly slowed recently in the publishing industry, they are popular with a substantial and growing proportion of Croydon's library users and provide a convenient way of encouraging reading that is not dependent on library opening hours.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
- Encourages reading among users who are particularly open to using digital materials. - Provides access to reading to people who would otherwise struggle to visit library during their shortened opening hours. - Users using the digital app can be sent notifications about events and activities going in libraries. - Digital stock can be more accessible to visually impaired – more adaptable because you can control size of print as required and also access audio versions of titles.	- Reduces the incentive for users to visit a library and take advantage of other service offerings. - Some users are not interested or confident in using digital materials, especially among older users. - Screen use, particularly in the evening, is reported to impact on sleeping patterns. - Is not available to those who cannot afford smartphones, e-readers or tablets.

Resource impact and affordability

3.31   Digital materials are increasingly popular among library users

Resource	Cost	Saving
• Increase staffing resources by 0.2 fte to actively promote digital books and materials. • Increase stockfund for digital materials.	Revenue: £10k pa staffing. £20k pa increase in digital stock-fund. Capital: N/A	N/A

It should be noted that, as a member of The Libraries Consortium (TLC), the library service can access digital stock from all TLC members and so a judgement will be needed about what is a fair level of funding for digital stock for Croydon.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To benchmark against other TLC members to ensure Croydon's contribution to funding digital materials is fair. • To research the pattern of borrowing of digital materials and their distribution among users across the borough and whether active users are new to the service or have 'switched'.	• To test digital users' views on the range of digital materials on offer • To explore users' and non-users' awareness of the digital offer and their willingness to use it.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Encourages greater take-up of reading, despite the reduction in opening hours. • Communicates the digital offer available. • Could remove the incentive for library visits. • Does not benefit those who cannot afford smartphones, e-readers or tablets.	Revenue: £10k pa staffing. £20k pa increase in digital stock-fund. Capital: N/A	Nil	*More and more users are taking advantage of the digital offer and this may grow with better promotion. Given Croydon's limited stockfund, diverting further resources from physical to digital materials will reduce the limited resources for the physical stock most users prefer at present.*

Recommendation: to explore the promotion of digital books and materials if resources can be freed up by other options and subject to Croydon's contribution being fair to TLC's other members.

Option 2.6: train staff for more interactive support role

Introduction

3.32   Staff are increasingly drawn into providing support and advice to library users needing help with completing online forms or interpreting online guidance. Some public services as part of their move to 'digital by default' advise people to visit their libraries for help in completing online documents. Generally, public services have not consulted library services before providing this advice and staff report that they can often feel ill-equipped to help.

3.33   If libraries are going to provide more events and activities, they will also need to know more about them so that they can promote them. There are parallels with training for retail staff: they will require briefing on 'products' and 'promotions' by supervisors and training in how to 'sell' such services.

3.34   The provision of more support to the public over online forms and applications and the selling of services requires both training *and* capacity. Staff need to be freed up from routine tasks by encouraging more self-service (see option 3.2) so that they are not stuck behind counters.

Benefits and impact

3.35   The range of services that can be available in libraries (if resources allow) demands a much wider range of skills on the part of library staff. Library staff want to provide a great service but can only do so if they have the training and time needed.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Gives staff the skills and confidence to provide support to people in most need. • Provides staff with the knowledge to be able to promote library services, events and activities better. • Could increase the take-up of library services, especially by those most in need of digital support. • Gives staff the chance to provide a more complete service and gives them a richer role.	• Will only be possible if self-service can be maximised (see option 3.2), otherwise staff will not have the capacity to provide the support required.

Resource impact and affordability

3.36   There is no scope for providing staff training given current resourcing levels. Currently, if staff training is required, libraries have to close. This option will depend on the creation of capacity for staff training. In the past, public services and libraries opened half an

hour later one day a week to allow for staff training. Given the restricted opening hours currently available, this option will require additional resources to be freed up.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Increase in staffing budget to allow for staff training and new responsibility Trained staff would expect to go up to Grade 5 (aligned with Access)	Revenue: 8 staff at Grade 4 to Grade 5 = £12,800pa Capital: N/A	N/A

As the role of library staff becomes ever broader, the skills required becomes more challenging. Requiring those skills and retaining staff with those skills will challenge the current grading and employment package of staff and a review may be required.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify the changes in staffing and rosters needed to allow for training and regular briefings. • To develop a protocol for supervisor briefings and a training programme for staff.	• To explore with users the support they receive from staff and what they value most. • To consult with staff on their skill needs and priorities for training.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Additional staffing budget required to roster staff for training. • Requires a cycle of specialist training.	£12,800	Nil	*Funding for this should be built into the library service's base budget but this will only be possible if resources can be freed up by decisions on other options.*

Recommendation: to pursue the option of training staff for more interactive support role if the resources can be freed up.

4. Options for addressing primary outcome 3: "our service is more efficient"

Preamble

4.1 The supporting outcomes and success criteria for this primary outcome are:

Table E5: supporting outcomes and specific evaluation criteria for primary outcome 2

Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
• We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.	• Improves the unit costs of the service. • Increases income from paid-for services. • Increases partner and voluntary support.

4.2 In this section, we explore ways of making the service more efficient and making better use of the library building assets and reducing 'unit costs' (eg the cost per visit) within existing budgets.

4.3 As part of the changes agreed in 2021, there was an intention to:
- Co-locate services in libraries. As outlined in the review report at Appendix A, little progress has been made in finding partners to share library facilities and this has not been helped by the severe reduction in library opening hours.
- Encourage more volunteering. This has proved more challenging and the number and type of volunteers has become more limited. Lack of staff capacity is an issue as some staff in branches are too busy responding to customers to spend time training and supporting new volunteers. Volunteer feedback is not always positive because the staff are too busy to help them or give them a range of tasks when they are on site. IT volunteers have found they are not so much helping residents get online and increasingly supporting residents in completing forms, often finding this stressful especially in Central Library. Part time opening hours mean that volunteers can only help on certain days which does not support the momentum of regular volunteering and makes work experience impossible.

4.4 This unfinished business is revisited in this section alongside other options for the future designed to:
- Make better use of technology to free up staff resources.
- Generate income from library buildings.
- Improve library buildings' energy efficiency.
- Explore transferring individual libraries to community management.

Option 3.1: co-locate libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT

Introduction

4.5   Library services have found that locating services in shared buildings can generate greater footfall for each service. Some councils have co-located libraries with leisure centres and others in 'joint service centres' which include other services such as health, housing and community services. Some have amalgamated their library and adult education services, using shared buildings.

4.6   New Addington library shares its building with CALAT and other services. The library service has explored the potential for further co-location with other services, although none have yet progressed to the point of sharing a facility. There is likely to be greater impetus as the Council reviews its other assets, including those used by community organisations. Discussion have taken place with CALAT about greater collaboration over site usage and this is being explored further.

4.7   Some libraries do have spaces that can be shared with other partners, eg Thornton Heath and Norbury.

Benefits and impact

4.8   Sharing buildings can encourage more crossover between services and reduce the overheads of running a building. As outlined in option 1.4, the buildings have to be of the right design and in the right place.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
- Reduces the overhead of building management for each service. - Encourages greater footfall and crossover for each service. - Can dramatically increase service usage (if in the right building and in the right place). - Close collaboration can enable more cost-effective joint programming and marketing.	- If the library service opening hours remain part-time, the benefits of co-location will be reduced. - The management of the building can become more complex if the services operate at different times (eg evening classes). - Services can lose their distinctiveness and visibility within a larger building. - If the library is moved to a new location, this may impact on current users attached to the existing building or for whom the new location is less convenient.

Resource impact and affordability

4.9 The sharing of a facility can generate income for the library service or savings if redundant buildings can be released for re-use or disposal.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Joint planning is required to support co-location but should be contained within management budgets. Savings should be achievable through rental income or releasing assets and their building management costs.	Revenue: N/A Capital: TBC (expenditure may be required for adaptations to allow for sharing).	£tbc Savings will be dependent on any sites released or income from rent.

4.10 The ideal co-location is one where the services collaborate to maximise the mutual benefits of sharing, rather than creating siloed spaces.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify the library sites that have spare capacity. • To identify partners' buildings with spare capacity that might be suitable. • To assess their building for its suitability, condition, management costs and cost of adaptation. • To identify how sharing would operate, including the sharing of costs.	• To consult users over a potential change of location or change to their own library if it impacts on their use of the building. • To explore the possibility of co-location or deeper collaboration with potential partners.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Co-locating services can increase footfall and users. • Co-location can reduce the overheads of managing and maintaining buildings. • Changing a library's location could impact on existing users and require consultation.	Revenue: N/A Capital: TBC (expenditure may be required for adaptations to allow for sharing).	£tbc Savings will be dependent on any sites released or income from rent.	*Co-location can help to reduce the cost of building overheads but can be contentious. Any location shared by the library service needs to be in the right building in the right location. Co-location and collaboration often requires culture change.*

Recommendation: to explore further co-locating libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT

Option 3.2: increase IT and checkout self-service

Introduction

4.11 Self-service checkouts are now common-place in retail and, after some initial resistance, shoppers can become used to it and many actively choose self-service checkouts. Similarly, users can use self-checkout in Croydon's libraries and most books are now checked out this way.

4.12 Users of printing and photocopying facilities can also use the equipment without assistance and pay for their use. However, they can only pay by cash as payment by card is not yet functional. It is intended to resolve this shortly by implementing the Council's new payment system in all libraries using the new kiosks.

4.13 Staff encourage users to use self-service, but the option for users to ask staff to check out a book or take payment for printing remains. It should continue to do so, but self-service can be encouraged further as the 'default' approach for the vast majority of transactions. The public often value the human contact offered at a counter, but by freeing staff from manual processes, they will be freed up to provide the more interactive role described in option 2.7.

Benefits and impact

4.14 Improved self-service functionality and increased take-up of self-service options can free staff up to leave the counter and to provide a more interactive support role. They will still provide human contact, but from the other side of the counter.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
- Self-service checkout and printing and copying reduces the administrative burden on staff. - Users are increasingly happy to use self-service and this will simply reinforce that trend. - Staff will be freed up to play a more interactive support role within the library. - Check-out and payment at the counter will remain available.	- Many users are put off by self-service and take time to learn how to do it. - Until a user gets the hang of self-service, staff will spend some initial time showing them how. - Many users value the human contact with staff when checking out books.

Resource impact and affordability

4.15 The technology is largely already in place and the final piece of functionality (card payments for printing and copying) will be available shortly.

Resource	Cost	Saving
No extra resources required.	Revenue: £nil Capital: N/A (already paid for)	Not realisable (see below)

Given that most users already use self-service, the shift to self-service by default will not produce realisable savings but will allow staff to spend more time assisting users on the floor of the library.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify the timetable for resolving the delay in introducing card payment for printing and copying. • To introduce monitoring of the proportion of transactions that are self-service. • To train staff in how to encourage reluctant users to make use of self-service.	• To explore with users the barriers to using self-service. • To work with staff to identify the best way of maximising self-service and overcoming the fear of a loss of human contact.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Encouraging more self-service will reduce the burden on staff of routine administration. • Some users are not keen on self-service and value human contact. • Freeing staff up to play a more interactive role on the library floor will provide human contact for those who want it. • Frees staff to target support to those who need it most.	Revenue: £nil Capital: N/A (already paid for)	Not realisable (see above)	*This option completes the shift towards self-service and makes it the default approach. It frees staff up to play a more interactive support role with users who need it.*

Recommendation: to pursue increased IT and checkout self-service in order to free staff for a more interactive support role.

Option 3.3: explore alternative management arrangements

Introduction

4.16   Principally in order to reduce costs, many councils have experimented with alternative management arrangements or 'sourcing' of their library services. Models have included outsourcing the service, spinning it off into a charitable trust or transferring libraries to community management. The experience of these alternative service models has been mixed.

4.17   Croydon Council's experience was not a positive one. A contract was awarded in 2013 to John Laing Integrated Services which was promptly bought out by Carillion which then collapsed in 2018. The Council then had to take the service back in-house. In recent consultation, the survey results demonstrated that respondents were not keen on the alternatives to in-house delivery.

Assessing the options

4.18   There are four main options for sourcing library services and a high-level evaluation is summarised below.

Option	Key considerations	Explore further?
Make: continue to deliver the library service in-house	- Staff costs and overheads are likely to be more expensive. - There is a track record of delivering much improved library buildings (eg Thornton Heath, Norbury and Selsdon). - Volunteering is at a low base and offers the potential for improving the service. - Opportunities for co-location with other services, particularly council services. - Service use has fallen dramatically in recent years due to the impacts of COVID and of the severe reduction in opening hours. - The library service in Croydon is comparatively cheap and stretched so the potential for further staff savings is limited without severely degrading the service. **Potential savings: low**	Yes: to continue in-house provision as it is better able to deliver shared premises and the fastest results.

Option	Key considerations	Explore further?
Buy: procure from private or third sector	• There is not a competitive market for library outsourcing, but there is a local option in GLL (Better) who already deliver leisure services for the Council. • Savings from outsourcing are in large part dependent on lower staff pay and conditions. • Procurement process costly and potentially abortive and would delay changes or savings. • Introduces client-side costs for contract management. • The most recent survey showed opposition to this option. **Potential savings: moderate**	No: outsourcing would be high risk and time-consuming for uncertain returns given that there is not a competitive market for library outsourcing.
Share: collaborate to share expertise or resources.	• Existing track record of collaboration through The Libraries Consortium (TLC) which, through economies of scale, allows greater innovation. • The Consortium provides a shared library management system and My Library App which is being developed further. The authorities in the Consortium share their stock with Croydon (and vice versa). • The track record in London of fully shared library services has been problematic and few savings would result as the service has few 'back office' resources and the library system is shared already with TLC. Shared library services take time to set up and maintain for limited returns. **Potential savings: low/moderate**	Yes: to continue membership of The Libraries Consortium. No: to pursue a fully shared library service with another Council.

Option	Key considerations	Explore further?
Divest: devolve or transfer to third sector or community.	• The community management of individual libraries may provide an alternative to closures. • The most recent survey showed opposition to this option. • There is no track record of community management of libraries in Croydon. Will take several years to build capacity and can be precarious. This option generally involves some form of ongoing investment from the local authority to support the community managed operations. • Spin-out charity would take time to and resources to establish and might not be successful in the procurement process that would be required and the spin-out may not be viable. **Potential savings: low/moderate**	Yes: to explore the potential for community management of individual libraries if there is interest. No: to spinning out the service to a charitable body.

4.19   This high-level analysis suggests that there is little point pursuing outsourcing, a fully shared service with another borough or a spin-out. Instead, the recommended **approach is to**:
- Continue with in-house management of the service as this can deliver change faster.
- Continue collaboration with The Libraries Consortium due to its benefits.
- Explore the potential for community management of individual library buildings as an alternative to closure, while noting the opposition shown in the 2021 survey results.

Benefits and impact

4.20   This assessment focuses on the benefits and impacts of the recommended approach (ie continuing in-house, collaborating with TLC and exploring potential community management of individual libraries).

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Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• In-house management is more responsive and can deliver change faster. • The service has a track record of improvements under in-house management. • Membership of The Libraries Consortium provides considerable benefits and economies of scale. • There may be appetite for community management of individual library buildings.	• The last survey showed opposition to community management. • Credible community management can take time to emerge and time to mature. • Without a sustainable business plan, problems can emerge with community management due to a lack of capacity or resources (eg for repairs and maintenance).

Resource impact and affordability

4.21   The recommended approach has a resource impact in relation to exploring community management for individual libraries. Interest in community management is likely to be higher for library buildings at risk of closure (if the closure option is pursued), but there may be interest in other library buildings which the Council would want to remain a core part of the library service. In either instance, resources would be required, eg for exploring credible community management options; agreeing on a model; undertaking a condition survey; completing any urgent remedial work; negotiating a lease and operating agreement as part of a 'community asset transfer'.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Project resources to explore the potential for community management.	Revenue: £TBC (one-off project management costs, depending on the number of options explored). Capital: TBC (subject to the terms of the lease and operating agreement).	TBC There may be savings from transferring a library building to community management, but there may be ongoing costs that reduce the savings that might result from a closure.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify potential models for community management that are sustainable. • To identify potential interested parties and explore their proposed approach, suitability and stability. • To review the business plans of potential community operators before agreeing any asset transfer.	• To explore whether there are community management options, particularly for any libraries at risk of closure. • To consult the public on the possibility of community management options.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• In-house management for the bulk of the service allows faster change. • Membership of The Libraries Consortium delivers benefits and economies of scale. • Community management of individual libraries may offer an alternative to closure. • There was opposition to community management in the last survey.	Revenue: £TBC (one-off project management costs). Capital: TBC	TBC There may be savings from transferring a library building to community management, but there may be ongoing costs.	***Overall the recommended approach to management continues current arrangements. The option of community management of individual libraries may be an alternative to closure, but any residual costs would reduce the savings flowing from closures.***

Recommendation: to continue with in-house management of the library service and membership of The Libraries Consortium but explore the potential for community management of individual libraries at risk of closure.

Option 3.4: invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers

Introduction

4.22   Library services increasingly rely on volunteers to help deliver their service. Some have over the years developed a model with large numbers of volunteers who undertake tasks that suit their skills and preferences, from routine tasks through to IT coaching. This has, at least initially, depended on a full-time volunteer co-ordinator.

4.23   However, formal volunteering has declined over the last decade across the public and voluntary sector and that decline accelerated following the outbreak of the pandemic[11]. This trend has also affected Croydon's library services. As part of the changes agreed in 2021, it was intended to recruit more volunteers in order to help keep all thirteen libraries open. This has not been a success.

4.24   In 2019/20 Croydon Libraries had 201 volunteers delivering 6,218 volunteer hours. However, many of the volunteers pre-COVID did not return after the Pandemic and it has been difficult to build back to the levels of 2019 which would not have been enough to increase open hours then. The priority has been to recruit IT volunteers and local volunteers for the branches, especially to be in the branches over lunchtimes to avoid closures, and there are currently only 41 regular volunteers across all branches fulfilling these roles, but certainly not enough to confidently increase open hours. Factors identified by the Volunteer Co-ordinator include cost of living priorities reducing the number of regular volunteers, and our own limited capacity to provide support with subsistence and training. Staff on site say they often find it difficult to provide new volunteers with timely training and support.

4.25   Staff and supervisors have described the difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers who may not always be reliable. There have been suggestions that the roles of volunteers could be made more rewarding and that all staff need to be trained on how best to encourage and support volunteers. The officer responsible for volunteer co-ordination would benefit from extra support.

4.26   There is a full time Volunteer Co-ordinator who co-ordinates the promotion, recruitment, DBS checks, and administration of the volunteer service. Following advice from Croydon Volunteer Action, she has set up key policies and uses the Better impact database to administer the applications and communication which streamlines the process. However, her time is taken up with operational and daily queries and she has limited capacity for the wider promotion and marketing of the volunteer offer. More capacity within the senior frontline staff would allow her to delegate control over the interview, selection and training process for the volunteers in their branches, and leave the Co-ordinator with time to grow the quantity and quality of the Volunteer programme. Reinstating the volunteer expenses element would attract more volunteers and enable existing volunteers to work more daily hours (currently limited because we cannot cover a contribution towards lunches).

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[1] 1. DCMS: Community Life Survey 2021/22

Benefits and impact

4.27 Volunteers can bring invaluable skills and enthusiasm and help to improve the service, but need to have roles that are attractive to them and to have the encouragement and support of the staff they work with. Volunteers (and sometimes staff and the public) worry that volunteers will be used to displace staff jobs, but their prime role would be to help improve the service.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Volunteers can help the library service to expand its offer and improve quality. • Volunteering can be rewarding. • Volunteers can bring a range of skills and experiences to the service. • Volunteers can help to keep the service operating efficiently.	• Volunteers can feel taken for granted if not appreciated and supported. • Volunteers can become bored with routine tasks. • Volunteers may not have the skills or knowledge needed to respond to enquiries from the public. • Volunteers can be unreliable and need co-ordination. • Volunteers can be seen as a threat to paid employment.

Resource impact and affordability

4.28 The transformation of the level of volunteering in the library service would require additional project support to help the volunteer co-ordinator to revisit the roles of volunteers, to introduce more marketing, to train staff and to support volunteers with any issues they face.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Provide one-year additional project support to the volunteer co-ordinator.	Revenue: £40k (one-off) Capital: N/A	Savings should materialise downstream, but at the margins of the staff budget.

The use of volunteers can help a library service to function effectively but cannot at the moment be relied upon to support professional library staff to the extent needed. This depends on resources to co-ordinate and on freeing resources to enable library staff to select and train volunteers.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the numbers and types of volunteering opportunities available. • To review the roles of volunteers, drawing on feedback from staff and volunteers. • To develop a marketing plan for library volunteering. • To train staff in the skills and approaches needed to support and encourage volunteers.	• To consult staff and volunteers on their experience of volunteering. • To explore with volunteers the types of roles that they would be interested in and the help they need. • To explore with the public what their perceptions are of volunteering and the barriers to them taking part.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Volunteers can help to improve the quality of the library service and its efficiency. • Volunteering can be a rewarding experience. • Recruiting, retaining and supporting volunteers require effort. • Volunteering can be viewed negatively by some staff and members of the public.	Revenue: £40k (one-off) Capital: N/A	Savings should materialise downstream, but at the margins of the staff budget.	***Volunteers can be integral to a successful library service but require support and co-ordination (and frontline staff resources to be freed up). Using volunteers to replace paid staff is unlikely to be successful.***

Recommendation: to invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers.

Option 3.5: increase income generation

Introduction

4.29   The library service has a number of spaces that could be suitable for hiring out for events or meetings, as noted during briefings with community groups. The spaces include the community hall on the first floor at Norbury Library and training rooms and an IT suite on the lower ground floor of Thornton Heath Library. There are spaces in other libraries that may be suitable, but some alterations may be required.

4.30   This is a competitive market, but the libraries offer a different style and setting to other venues and so there may be some potential for the service to run a venue hire operation. To do this effectively, the service would need to invest in marketing and sales capacity and in AV equipment. There would also need to be staff training to support hirers. A key barrier to success is the current pattern of opening hours which would either limit the availability of spaces or incur costs for opening just for a venue hire booking.

4.31   The option of providing cafés was suggested. There is already provision for a café at Norbury Library, but it was not practical to open it when the library was part-time. It may in any case be difficult to let given that it has no external 'shopfront'. Cafes in libraries can be difficult to operate successfully unless they have the right location and sufficient library footfall. The Norbury Library café option could be revisited after a period of Open+ operation. It was also suggested that charges could be introduced for dedicated 'hotdesking' workspace and this has been trialled in other library services, but this is now a saturated market and there is a trend for employers to encourage office workers to spend more time at the workplace.

Benefits and impact

4.32   If there is a market for the hire of libraries' spaces, this could generate valuable income, although there are barriers to overcome. Cafés in libraries are not generally successful given the need for a shopfront and suitable library opening hours.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Venue hire can bring valuable income, particularly for large spaces. • The libraries could, with the right investment, provide attractive venues for corporate and community events and for celebrations. • Visitors to venues would be able to enjoy their visit to the library and come more often. • Hires for community events or celebrations could reinforce libraries' roles as hubs for the community.	• Venue hire requires professional management and there are reputational risks if hirers are let down in any way or their safety is compromised. • This can be a diversion for staff from their everyday activities. • Busy events (eg parties) can be distracting for library users and disruptive for neighbours (unless carefully managed).

• Café provision could attract more users.	• Finding operators for café spaces in libraries can prove difficult and the financial return can be low.

Resource impact and affordability

4.33   Success in venue hire depends on a professional approach and an investment in resources, kit and skills.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Specialist resource to develop a business plan and business case. Venue hire manager (fixed term and part-time).	Revenue: £25k (one-off) for business plan and business case. £24k pa for venue manager. Capital: TBA, dependent on site assessment, survey and adaptations required.	TBC income depends on business plan and case and number of spaces for hire and hire rates achievable.

Before pursuing a more active venue hire operation, a business plan and business case would be needed to confirm that the net returns are worthwhile. If not, a reactive venue hire operation may be more realistic. The return to the Council from a concession fee from a café operator is likely to be poor.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• Develop business plan assessing the local market for venue hire and whether there is a gap in the market for spaces in libraries and potential pricing. • Review all suitable spaces and identify equipment and adaptations needed. • Develop a business case identifying investment requirements, potential income, ROI and annual net return after taking account of venue hire sales and support costs. • Confirm the most suitable model for venue hire (active or reactive). • Review the option of café provision if staffed opening hours can be increased, subject to market analysis and a business plan.	• Engage with staff to identify what's involved and their appetite to make this work. • Identify training requirements with them. • Engage with local communities over need to balance hire and community use.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Venue hire can bring valuable income but must be resourced to be run professionally. • Regular venue hire for meetings, events and celebrations would help to cement libraries as focal points for the community. • Venue hire can be disruptive for users, staff and neighbours if not managed well. • Part-time opening would make a professional venue hire operation more challenging. • A café would be attractive to users, but finding operators can be difficult.	Revenue: £25k (one-off) for business plan and business case. £24k pa for part-time venue manager. Capital: TBA, dependent adaptations required.	TBC income depends on business plan and case and number of spaces for hire and hire rates achievable.	*Venue hire can be lucrative for the right venues. This is a crowded market and careful planning, and resources would be required to make a success of it. While the gross income might be attractive, the net return is key. Concession fee income from a café operator would be low.*

Recommendation: to explore further the introduction of a venue hire service in order to generate income from library spaces and to revisit café provision once attendances have increased at Norbury Library.

Option 3.6: invest in energy efficiency

Introduction

4.34   A number of the library buildings are difficult to heat in winter and difficult to keep cool in summer. This is particularly true of older libraries with high ceilings and rooflights such as Norbury Library or with large single-glazed windows such as South Norwood Library. Although recently refurbished, Norbury Library had to close in 2022 during a hot spell of weather for health and safety reasons as it was severely overheated.

4.35   As well as making the libraries uncomfortable for users and staff, poor energy performance leads to large energy bills and contributes to the climate emergency. There is an imperative to improve the energy efficiency of the borough's libraries or to find better buildings.

Benefits and impact

4.36   Improved energy efficiency improves the experience of users and staff, reduces costs and helps to save the planet.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Improves the experience of users and staff and so encourages the public to use the library more. • Reduces the cost of energy uses. • Reduces libraries' carbon footprint. • Possible to bid to funding streams such as the £230m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.	• Retrofitting energy efficiency measures can be difficult and expensive, especially in old and/or listed buildings. • Retrofitting can take time and require closures or partial closures. • While there may be an invest to save case, funding the investment can prove challenging.

Resource impact and affordability

4.37   Energy efficiency measures require careful planning and costing and may require additional resources for the council's Estates team.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Energy efficiency assessment. Project management and bid writing.	Revenue: TBC Capital: TBC (subject to scheme development).	TBC There will be savings in energy costs.

If there is a question mark about the future of some libraries, it would be advisable to defer decisions on investment in their energy efficiency.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
- To review the energy performance of each library. - To undertake a study into measures for improving energy efficiency in each library. - To develop an energy efficiency scheme for the library network. - To explore potential funding pots ready for fund-raising.	- To consult staff on their experience of the issues with managing temperatures in their libraries. - To consult planning staff over any impacts on the fabric of listed buildings and in relation to conservation and local heritage areas. - To consult friends' groups over energy efficiency proposals for each library and any changes to the building's fabric.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
- Improved energy efficiency will improve users' and staff experience and encourage use. - Energy costs will be reduced. - The carbon footprint of libraries will be reduced. - The impact of retrofitting energy efficiency measures on the fabric of listed and historic buildings will need to be considered.	Revenue: TBC Capital: TBC	TBC There will be savings in energy costs.	*This is essential work for the future of the planet and may be difficult to fund unless the Council is successful in external fundraising.*

Recommendation: to pursue investing in energy efficiency.

5. Summary of recommendations

5.1 The options recommended to be pursued in the next phase of work are summarised below.

5.2 The options for improving the library network are dependent on the reallocation of savings from library closures. The detailed analysis of the options for library closure (option 1.5) is contained in Appendix C.

5.3 The estimated costs detailed against these recommendations in Sections 2 to 4 of this report represent the preferred resourcing and delivery mechanism for delivering the service outcomes. However given the ongoing pressure on Council budgets it is not viable for the Council to progress with this expenditure and alternative models for delivering the outcomes have been proposed, as outlined in the table below.

Table E6: options recommended to be pursued in the next phase

Option	Recommendation	Proposed new service model
1.2	To explore further the option of evening and Saturday opening if resources can be freed up within the service.	Additional staff requirement factored into new service model budget through some reinvestment of costs
1.3	To undertake a review of the performance of Open+ at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries and lessons learned in advance of further extension.	The Council will seek to extend self service access using technology security systems to reduce additional revenue cost where possible
1.4	To develop a long-term plan for improving library locations to be implemented as opportunities arise in consultation with local communities.	The service will continue to work closely with other Council departments to seek long term opportunities to develop the service
1.5	To consult formally on the option of closing the poorer performing and less viable library buildings in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours and improve the overall service.	This is included in proposals for public consultation
1.6	To explore and test the option of a 'library link' service further.	This is included in proposals for public consultation as part of a wider outreach offer
1.7	To explore the resourcing of marketing and outreach if the service in libraries can be improved by other options.	The full cost of £77k is not proposed in the new model.

A budget of £24k is proposed for a post supporting outreach, fundraising and engagement focused in areas impacted by |

Option	Recommendation	Proposed new service model
		closures as part of the mitigations.
2.1	To explore the option of extending a programme of improved events, working with partners if resources can be freed up by other changes.	The proposed £40k for this service is not included in the new model. The service will seek to deliver programme activity through partnerships and fundraising.
2.2	To explore an increase community language provision if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.	This is proposed to be funded through the libraries book stock investment from Community Infrastructure Levy.
2.3	To pursue the option of improving signage, entrances and interiors.	No specific budget is allocated for this in the proposals. A review and prioritisation of the capital needs and improvement plans in the service will be undertaken following approval of the new service model.
2.4	To improve libraries' IT offer if the resources can be freed up.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will use grant funding and partnerships to improve the offer for residents.
2.5	To explore the promotion of digital books and materials if resources can be freed up by other options and subject to Croydon's contribution being fair to TLC's other members.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will use grant funding and partnerships to improve the offer for residents.
2.6	To pursue the option of training staff for more interactive support role if the resources can be freed up.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will use grant funding and partnerships to improve the offer for residents.
3.1	To explore further co-locating libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT.	This is included within the proposals for public consultation.
3.2	To pursue increased IT and checkout self-service in order to free staff for a more interactive support role.	This is included within the proposals for public consultation.

Option	Recommendation	Proposed new service model
3.3	To continue with in-house management of the library service and membership of The Libraries Consortium but explore the potential for community management of individual libraries at risk of closure.	This is included within the proposals for public consultation.
3.4	To invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will seek to develop the volunteer programme through reallocation of existing resources.
3.5	To explore further the introduction of a venue hire service in order to generate income from library spaces and to revisit café provision once attendances have increased at Norbury Library.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will seek to develop the hires programme through reallocation of existing resources.
3.6	To pursue investing in energy efficiency.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will work in partnership with other Council teams to seek funding opportunities.

5.4   The option of reversing the cut to the library budget is also not recommended given the Council's financial position. Options for alternative management arrangements for the library service were explored in option 3.3. In that option, the potential for outsourcing or spinning out the service into a charitable body were considered but were not recommended.

Table E7: options not recommended to be pursued

Option	Recommendation
1.1	To not pursue reversing the library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network further given the Council's financial position.