

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND PROTECTION  
SELECT COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2001 AT 10.30 A.M.**

Agenda Item No.

**1**

**ANNUAL LIBRARY PLAN 2001 - 2004**

Report of the Director of Community Information

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**1. Purpose of the Report**

To invite the comments of the Select Committee on a proposal from the Executive Member for Community Information and Development, as set out in paragraph 2.4, concerning the draft Annual Library Plan 2001 - 2004.

**2. Summary**

2.1 Community Information has to produce an Annual Library Plan (ALP) for the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) which must be approved by full Council to meet Government requirements.

2.2 The format of the plan is prescribed by the DCMS and includes standing information about the library service together with reviews of past performance and medium term strategies, action plans and targets

2.3 The Plan measures performance against the Public Library Standards (PLS) and is used to compare Hertfordshire's library service with other public library authorities.

2.4 The Executive Member for Community Information and Development makes the following proposal in relation to the draft Annual Library Plan 2001 - 2004:

That the draft Annual Library Plan 2001 - 2004 be agreed and recommended to the Cabinet and Council for approval.

**3. Conclusion**

The Select Committee is invited to comment to Cabinet on the Plan in its draft form before it goes to County Council on 27 November 2001.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Since 1998 all library authorities have been required by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to produce an Annual Library Plan (ALP). These plans are intended to be a key element in helping the Secretary of State to carry out his statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to superintend and promote the public library service.
- 1.2 A draft of the full Annual Library Plan is attached and a brief outline of each chapter is given in Appendix 1. The draft version becomes the final Plan when it has been agreed by County Council which is due to consider this matter on 27 November 2001.
- 1.3 The format of the plan is prescribed by the DCMS. It covers the three-year period April 2001 to March 2004 and has six main components:
  1. Statement of service objectives
  2. Service delivery and resources
  3. Performance appraisal, assessment against the standards in 'Comprehensive, Efficient And Modern Public Libraries' and customer response
  4. Review of preceding plans and progress for the previous financial year
  5. Rolling 3-year medium-term strategy
  6. Rolling action plans and targets

## **2. Financial implications**

Any financial implications contained in the Plan are dealt with separately through the normal revenue and capital budget planning processes.

### *Background papers used by the author when compiling this report*

None

**Hertfordshire Annual Library Plan 2001 - 2004**

**1. Introduction**

A statement on the Plan status, i.e. whether it is a draft or has full Council approval. It is draft pending County Council approval.

1.1 Local authority characteristics

Includes a brief description of the county and a topographical map. It provides demographic information on the authority's communities including trend data, the profile of statistical data and a socio-economic analysis. The implications of the demographic trend data for the development of the library service are noted.

1.2 Organisational relationship with other council services and departments

A chart shows how the library service executive and management fits within these structures.

1.3 External and local influences

Summarises key influences and our responses. It includes for example:-

- a) the adoption of social inclusion policies
- b) support for lifelong learning, including staff training
- c) reader development
- d) Information and Communications Technology (ICT) provision, including staff training
- e) best value
- f) regional developments

**2. Statement of objectives**

This section includes the library service mission statement and subsidiary aims and objectives. It also identifies how the library service fits in with corporate objectives and plans.

**3. Service delivery and resources**

3.1 Access

Covers the location of libraries, both static and mobile, as well as opening times and availability. The policy on provision of access outside the normal range of office hours is stated.

3.2 Buildings and mobile libraries

Reviews static and mobile libraries in relation to access policies in 3.1 and the Service Property Strategy. It includes a statement on the overall level of

adequacy of buildings and mobiles to meet user expectation, and identifies issues relating to inadequacy of repair, furnishings or tenancy.

### 3.3 Scope of the library service

A simple chart shows the range of library services provided to the different sizes of communities in Hertfordshire.

### 3.4 Services for adults

This states our service philosophy and the key points of our policies in relation to services for adults including for example:-

- i) stock selection and deployment
- ii) stock conservation, including digitisation plans
- iii) reader development
- iv) loan periods and overdue items
- v) reservation services

### 3.5 Services for children

This is structured and covers much the same points of philosophy and policy as for services to adults. In addition it covers our services to schools and links with Children Schools and Families.

### 3.6 Services for special groups

This identifies which special groups have been identified as requiring special services, including the service philosophy and key points of policies. It describes the services provided and covers for example: -

- a) people with physical disabilities and their carers
- b) services to the Asian communities
- c) people with mental health problems
- d) people with visual impairments
- e) services to Travellers
- f) low income groups

### 3.7 Wider community use

This states our policies relating to the use of library premises by community and similar groups, as well as services where library premises are used to give access to broader council and government services, including services from other local authorities.

### 3.8 Finance

This sets out the overall level of expenditure for the library service for the preceding three years and identifies expenditure trends to date. It includes an assessment of the adequacy of the level of investment in books and other library materials. The resources allocated to training and development, including departmental and corporate expenditure, as well as external funding is identified.

- 3.9 Staff  
This section provides an organisational chart for senior staff, and a breakdown of full time equivalent (FTE) numbers in salary grade bands. It comments on the appropriate qualifications for staff and provides a summary of the training plan.
- 3.10 ICT systems and services  
The provision of direct public services e.g. electronic information sources, personal computing services for the public, plans for the provision of the People's Network and library housekeeping systems are described. Policies relating to the provision of ICT systems and services and how these relate to corporate policy are also covered.
- 4. Performance appraisal, assessment against the standards in "*Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries*", and customer response**
- 4.1 Trend data  
Presented in table form, figures for the last three financial years and various indicators e.g. population aged over 60, proportion of service points with internet access, proportion of adult stock on loan. Best value indicators are also covered and these include cost per visit to public libraries, net expenditure per head of population, number of information enquiries dealt with. The first part of the table compares Hertfordshire's performance with that of the English County Average (ECA). In many cases, the libraries' performance does not vary significantly from the ECA and in some cases exceeds it.
- 4.2 Public Library Standards  
A pro-forma shows the performance of the library service in relation to each of the public library standards where measures have been identified.
- 4.3 Commentary  
Provides a commentary on the trend data, and the performance of the library service against both the public library standards and local targets. In brief summary, there are 19 standards in 30 parts covering aspects of the service including opening hours, numbers of internet terminals, customer service, numbers of staff with qualifications, percentage of requests for books met within 30 days etc. Hertfordshire meets or exceeds 14 parts, 12 parts have yet to be calculated and four parts have not been met - aggregate opening hours, total electronic workstations, number of library visits per population, % of adult users rating the knowledge of staff as "good" or "very good". The latter measure was missed by a very small margin: the standard is 95% and Hertfordshire's result was 94.2%.
- 4.4 Public consultation  
Shows the outcomes of public consultation undertaken over the last 3 years, and summarises the complaints policy. It also includes a review of the comments and suggestions received in the previous year.

#### 4.5 Quality assessment

The Customer Care Standards are summarised. The quality auditing programme principal results and conclusions are covered.

### **5. Review of preceding plans, and progress for the previous financial year**

#### 5.1 Key achievements from previous Plans

The key achievements and important developments from the two financial years preceding the last financial year are summarised. Examples include the following:-

- i) ICT Strategy implemented
- ii) Development of the Customer Services Centre for HCC telephone enquiries and Automatic Telephone Renewals service for library items. Libraries part of planning and implementation and were first into the centre
- iii) HCC "Putting People First" equal opportunities policy and development of departmental Equalities Action Plan
- iv) Development and implementation of Quality Service Standards
- v) Abolition of internet charges for library members
- vi) PLUS survey extended
- vii) Bookstart extended countywide
- viii) Increased stock circulation

#### 5.2 Achievement of the Action Plan for last financial year

Re-states the Action Plan and reviews progress against each item stating where an action was not achieved, why and whether or not it is being carried forward.

### **6. Rolling three year medium term strategy**

#### 6.1 Analysis of strengths, areas for development, opportunities and threats

This table includes trend data, customer response, public library standards, and is dealt with under the following headings: -

- a) accessibility
- b) service levels
- c) social inclusion
- d) lifelong learning
- e) services to children and young people
- f) stock provision and deployment
- g) reader development
- h) resource issues
- i) effectiveness and efficiency
- j) policy
- k) demography

## 6.2 Best Value reviews

The principal review of libraries will take place next year as part of the information and advice Best Value Review. However, the library service has contributed to, or has been affected by a number of other reviews including Schools Library Service, ICT services, Property services, Reprographics, Voluntary Agencies and Home Library service (as part of Adult Care services review on adults with physical and sensory disabilities).

## 6.3 Service and ICT improvements and variations

This uses the analysis of strengths, development areas, opportunities and threats to provide a medium term strategy for improving or varying library services. For example the main areas for improving services over the next three years will be ICT, access, social inclusion, reader development and lifelong learning. Some of this is in response to the PLS, however, there are concerns about the desirability and sustainability of meeting the standard on opening hours in particular. ICT and electronic service delivery will respond to results of current HCC ICT Best Value Review recommendations and corporate ICT strategies as appropriate.

## **7. Rolling action plans and targets**

### 7.1 Action plan for the current and the immediately following year

Detailed action plans in response to the 3 year rolling medium term strategy. It includes specific actions, firm time scales, specific targets and identified responsibilities.

### 7.2 Action plan - third year

Major service initiatives planned with outline estimates e.g.

- ECDL training for 140 staff to meet NOF requirements and to meet public expectations for support in IT use. £74,900 from NOF plus £9,000 for supplementary training, £10,000 from the training budget
- Develop services to meet social inclusion, making use of new ethnicity information, and building on stock investment of £82,000 in 2001/2

### 7.3 Performance targets

These are local targets for the three years of the Action Plan that should be both challenging and achievable.