

## **HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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### **REPORT OF THE INFORMATION & ACCESS COMMITTEE 3 NOVEMBER 1999**

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NOTE: Full copies of the report mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Information & Access Committee and other members who have requested it. Any queries on this report to: Joan Blake, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Tel: 01992 555560)

#### **LIBRARY SERVICE PILOT SCHEMES**

In October 1998 the Community Services Committee agreed a set of models and principles for the future delivery of library and information services and agreed that, in order to develop those ideas, feasibility studies and pilots should be undertaken in appropriate libraries. A public consultation exercise was held in February 1999 and, taking into account the views expressed during the consultation, a set of principles for the development of the service was adopted in March 1999.

The Information & Access Committee have agreed a number of cost neutral and self financing pilot schemes to trial these new models of service provision, including the provision of library facilities within a large retail location, sharing premises with Citizens Advice Bureaux, a postal delivery service and the establishment of Life Long Learning Centres.

The opening hours of the main district libraries are largely based on outdated shop opening patterns and most close for one full and/or half day a week. Feedback from the public consultation showed clear support for longer and more rational opening hours and the committee have recommended that, subject to being self-financing, six day week opening hours be implemented in the main libraries of the ten districts as soon as is practicable. Priority will be given to those libraries which are currently closed on Saturday afternoons.

Where an existing library facility is in an unsatisfactory location or an inadequate building, sharing premises with school libraries could provide a more efficient alternative and the committee have asked that plans for new school buildings and major extensions include consideration of joint public/school library facilities.

An increase in income generating schemes is proposed. The sale of educational work books has been a particularly successful recent commercial venture and to increase income still further other appropriate schemes which are considered legal will be taken forward in all suitable libraries. Likely ventures are the selling of educational software and games and the purchase of premium paperback titles from vending machines.

A number of pilots which would require new resources have been considered and the committee have agreed that, should resources become available, Sunday opening should be the first priority for implementation. Other pilots requiring additional funding will be kept under review.

**Derrick Ashley**  
**Chairman**  
**County Hall**  
**Hertford**

**3 November 1999**