

Option 1

Closure of libraries, ceasing the provision of a mobile library and looking to reduce the floor space in Grays Central Library.

As part of the consultation communities will be asked a series of questions with regards their preferences on usage, facilities, location of libraries to help determine if this is a viable option. This option would significantly reduce the number of libraries across the Authority.

Option 2 Community Hubs

This option would build on the successful community hubs model operating in the South Ockendon Centre. The proposal would be not to close any library but to reduce opening hours to 20% of current timetable, with the exception of Grays Central Library, which will also work to a reduced timetable which will be 80%.

Consideration could be given to ensuring libraries within close proximity of each other do not close on the same day therefore giving residents the option of visiting another local library on the day their nearest library is closed.

This option would reduce premises costs but could pose a risk by having buildings unused for the majority of the week. This option will not achieve the full savings required and to meet the gap it is proposed to look at alternative uses for the premises when the libraries are shut which would generate income. This option would give consideration to partnering libraries with community led initiatives, like the successful Community hub model currently operating in the South Ockendon Centre (formerly the Belhus library).

Thurrock Council has made a successful bid to the Transformation Challenge Award. The bid is in support of service transformation, helping to channel services through community hubs. Community Hubs enable communities to play a key role in shaping and delivering services. With both open Hubs already based within Thurrock Libraries, we are keen to explore how Hubs can support a future library offer alongside other community support services. The fund totals £300k which would help explore new ways of working across all services with Hubs, including libraries.

This option gives the flexibility of retaining libraries and buildings until the transformation of services is known. We could release £200K in 2014/15 by reducing the opening hours of libraries. This will be achieved by closing all libraries on a Saturday afternoon, having no late nights and also those libraries that are currently opened for half a day during the week will close for the full day.

We would also look to reduce the footprint of Grays central library from two floors to one which would see a reduction in resources and staffing.

Option 3 Community Partnered Libraries

By empowering communities to run their libraries and tailoring them for their local community. Individuals, Groups and organisations would be invited to put forward expressions of interest. This initiative is already in operation in a number of councils

and is working well. There is government funding available to support communities. The council would remain responsible for the buildings externally and would provide an annual allowance of approx. £6K to help with the running costs.

Support and training would be provided.