

Public Consultation on the proposed library strategy and budget

The Council intends to consult with Havering residents on proposed changes to the library service, to achieve savings of £1.138m.

The consultation will be with borough residents (as well as some non-borough residents who use Havering's libraries). Staff will be formally consulted on the proposals once the final decisions have been made by Cabinet in February 2015.

The consultation will focus on the draft Library Strategy, including measures to achieve the proposed budget reductions.

Strategic objectives

The objectives of the public consultation are:

- To promote a wider and deeper understanding of the budget proposals for the library service and the proposed strategy to deliver necessary savings.
- To undertake robust consultation – seeking the views of library users and the general public on the strategy and specific measures proposed.
- To provide residents and other stakeholders with an opportunity to suggest alternative proposals to achieve the necessary savings

Approach

All relevant information pertaining to the Library consultation will be provided through the haverling.gov.uk website – in line with the general budget consultation and other statutory consultations.

Hard copies of questions and the strategy will also be circulated through Libraries and at public meetings. The consultation will be well publicised through a range of communications channels.

Action Plan

| Channel | Audience | Details | Timescale |
|----------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| Havering.gov.uk | All audiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of proposals • Cabinet report • Feedback forms | Sept 29th – Dec 29th |
| Library buildings | Library users | Posters, leaflets and feedback forms | Sept - Dec |
| <i>Living in Havering</i> | All residents | Summary of the library proposals, set within the context of all budget proposals. Dates for meetings and promotion of feedback mechanisms. | October |
| Media / social media | All residents | Promotion of consultation activity and links to relevant material | Sept-Dec |
| Libraries social media | Library users | Links to relevant material and promotion of consultation activity. | Sept-Dec |
| Local stakeholder meetings | By invitation: Partner orgs Key groups Volunteers | Meeting to discuss strategy and overall proposals to local volunteers and groups in Council Chamber or Romford Library. Also meeting by invitation with representatives of specific stakeholder groups. | October - December |
| Library users meetings | Local library users | Meetings to be arranged with groups of library users; including a meeting to reference the specific proposals for the Local Studies and Family History Centre proposals. | November |
| Letters | Users of housebound service | Letters enclosing feedback forms to the current users of the housebound service | October |

Questions

The draft library strategy aims to save £1.14 million, whilst preserving access to all ten libraries in Havering and maintaining the role of libraries as cultural, social and learning hubs across the Borough:

1. Do you agree with the Council's proposals to reduce opening hours, rather than close library buildings? [yes/no]
2. Do you agree with proposals to open four libraries (Harold Hill, Romford, Hornchurch and Rainham) for 50 hours per week and the other six libraries for 25 hours per week? [yes/no]
3. Would you prefer that all libraries were open for a consistent (but lower) number of hours per week? [yes/no]
4. If you answered no to any of the questions above, what alternative opening arrangements do you suggest? [text box]
5. Do you agree with the proposal to involve more volunteers to support the management of libraries, in order to extend opening hours [yes/no]
6. The libraries' housebound service supports around 95 people at a cost of £15,000. Do you agree the Council should find more cost-effective ways to support this group of customers? [yes/no]
7. PC users in libraries will be charged 50p for an hours' usage under these proposals. Do you think this is a reasonable charge? [yes/no]
8. Do you have any other suggestions to save money in the library service, either by reducing costs or raising income – or other comments to make about these proposals? [text box]
9. Do you have any further comments to make about the Library Strategy? [text box]

As part of the questionnaire, respondents will be asked monitoring information, including postcode, age, gender, disability and ethnicity. This will help us ensure that the responses from the survey reflect the community at large and are not confined to certain geographical areas, age bands, or ethnicities. It will also allow us to ensure we have taken the views of people with disabilities into account.