

PROPOSED CHANGES TO LIBRARY PROVISION IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Lincolnshire County Council is proposing wide ranging changes to library services in the County and in particular to the mobile library service which currently visits our Parishes. The following reasons for change have been cited.

Budget Considerations

Across the Country the statutory responsibility for providing public libraries lies with local authorities. In common with all local authorities, Lincolnshire County Council is faced with the challenge of providing services with significantly reduced resources following the government's Comprehensive Spending Review which was itself a response to the global financial crisis. Lincolnshire County Council as a whole is required to make savings of £125 million by 2015. The council's library service is required to contribute to this effort

and deliver savings of £1,937,894 from a starting budget of £6,038,868 by March 2015.

Aim and Challenges

Reductions in spending pose challenges to the Council; however its stated aim is to 'create an affordable Library Service, which meets Lincolnshire's needs.'

Whilst budget reductions are the major factor driving changes to the service, libraries also need to adapt to a changing world shaped by technology and new customer expectations and choices.

The challenge for libraries in Lincolnshire is to deliver on this core purpose in the age of the e-book and the internet and to deliver relevant, quality services through a mix of buildings, mobiles and digital technology. Local Needs

Although Lincolnshire's overall population is growing and is currently stated as being 714,000, 82% of the population are not 'active borrowers' and lending has declined from five million items in 2001-1002 to less

than three million in 2012-2013. Therefore to ensure that the Council provides a comprehensive and efficient library service, the following are proposed:

A universal offer to all that includes a number of digital resources such as its online library catalogues, eBooks and audio books and a Customer Service Centre that is open from 9:00am to 5:00pm seven days per week.

Core libraries, referred to as 'Tier 1' which will be open 50 hours per week in Boston, Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln, Louth, Mablethorpe, Skegness, Sleaford, Spalding and Stamford. 'Tier 2' libraries

which will be open at least 25 hours per week in Bourne, Market Rasen, Horncastle, Long Sutton and Woodhall Spa.

Targeted Provision providing access and information for the very young, very old, housebound, visually impaired; those in prison/detention centres and hospitals.

The proposal for Willoughton (which will include Blyborough and Grayingham) is that the current mobile library provision will be discontinued from 5th May, 2014 and existing customers referred to other services, for example the Home Library Services for housebound customers (eligibility criteria applies).

In WLDC the libraries at Caistor and Nettleham are due to close which is giving concern.

Saxilby Library is a model which LCC may possibly like to be imitated across the County ie its manned by a dedicated team of volunteers.