

Consultation on the future of Luton's library services 2013-2016



Introduction

The Council estimates that it needs to make savings of up to £48 million over the next three years.

Officers have therefore been looking at every single service in the Council to identify potential savings and income maximisation opportunities. This has included library services.

Luton Culture manage Luton's libraries on behalf of the Council. The total budget for Luton's library service is currently in the region of £2.7 million.

The Council recognises the importance of the library service and the place it has in the community, however tough decisions need to be made to meet the budget challenge, and this will inevitably involve reducing or stopping some of its services.

Between January and March 2012 the Council and Luton Culture reviewed its library buildings and community centres to see if further options would be possible; for example whether library buildings had room for more community events/meetings and whether more community centres had the capacity to host libraries (two libraries are already housed in community centres).

This review has helped to identify areas of the service that could be reduced or stopped while minimising the impact on Luton's residents.

The following factors have been considered:

- Location and range of services available – where libraries are located and what they offer in relation to other libraries
- Number of active users (i.e. people who have used their library card in the last year to borrow a book or use a computer)
- How well the services are used - we know that many people in Luton use more than one library
- Cost per visit and/or cost per person in Luton.



This survey

We need to make decisions about the kind of library services we can offer in the future. We are committed to making sure that there is still a high quality library service which is assessable to all residents.

We want to hear your views about the future of the library service and the proposals we are presenting. It is important to get feedback from as many residents as possible. In addition to questionnaires, we will be holding some face-to-face consultation sessions with groups including young people, disabled and elderly residents. If you are 16 or younger, there is a separate questionnaire for young people that can be completed.

The Vision

The vision for the future library service in Luton is to have fewer standalone library buildings and more libraries in community centres so that there is a network of libraries across the town where around 80 per cent of the population are within one mile of a library service.

In addition, this network of libraries will be supported by the Home Library Service and possibly Library Information Points and/or the mobile library.

Other library services such as online resources, learning and e-books will also be available to residents.

What happens next?

We will publish the results of this survey on Luton Borough Council's website and a report outlining recommendations will be presented to the Council's Executive in June 2013.

Have your say

We encourage you to complete the survey online by going to www.luton.gov.uk/yoursay and looking under budget proposals for leisure and culture. Here you can also find the full report on libraries which was agreed by the Council Executive.

Paper copies of the survey are also available in all of Luton's libraries, community centres and council buildings.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please email karen.fletcher@luton.gov.uk

The following information has been broken down into two sections to make it easier for you to find the information that is of most interest to you.

Section one provides information on the two proposals and the possible look of Luton's future library services.

Section two is an overview of Luton's library services and provides background information about the current library service in Luton. This directly corresponds to questions in the survey.

Section one - Proposals

Proposal one

To reduce the number of standalone libraries from eight to six. Some libraries may be in a different location to where they are now. Some may also be smaller.

Under this proposal:

- Luton Central Library to remain
- Leagrave or Marsh Farm Library to close
- Wigmore Library to move into Raynham Way Community Centre - becoming a smaller library
- Three other community libraries to be housed within community centres. The community centres where there could be space for a community library are, Bushmead, Bury Park, Farley Hill, Futures House (Marsh Farm) and Lewsey. Bury Park and Lewsey libraries are currently in community centres, however, this could change
- Stopsley and Sundon Park will close with one of them relocating to a community centre
- A possibility for up to four new Library Information Points (LIP) in other community centres that do not have, or are not near, a library. LIP will be a point where you can order a book, pick it up and return it, get information on the Council and make payments. There will be no book collections at LIPs.
- No mobile library service
- Home library service to remain.

Proposal two

Proposal two is the same as Proposal one except:

- It proposes to retain the mobile library service by reducing opening hours at the Central Library and the other remaining strategic library - either Leagrave or Marsh Farm - by one day a week at each library.



To make more sense of the proposals, here are some definitions:

A strategic library (Leagrave, Marsh Farm and Wigmore)

A full-time library with a wide range of services and stock up to and including NVQ/A-level or equivalent standard. It has small collections of large print and audio books, CDs and DVDs, language courses and a range of newspapers and magazines.

It has a minimum of 10 PCs, study space, health information points and a dedicated children's library. Activities include homework help, class visits, regular baby rhyme times and children's activities. A children's librarian is also based there.

A community library

A part-time library, with a small range of services and stock up to and including GCSE or equivalent standard. It is a first stop resource for basic enquiries and school project work. It has small collections of large print and audio books and a small range of newspapers and magazines. It has a minimum of four PCs and limited study space. Activities include homework help, baby rhyme time, children's activities and class visits. It will have self issue and return and single staffing. It is also aimed at meeting the recreational needs of the community (a minimum of 4000 books).

A Library Information Point

A Library Information Point will be a point where you can order a book, pick it up and return it. In the long term you will also be able to access information about your local council and make payments.

Home Library Service

The Home Library Service is a service for Luton residents who are unable to visit a library in person. Once a member of staff has visited the customer to discuss their preferences, books and/or other items are delivered to their home on a regular basis. There is no charge for this service.

Mobile Library Service

The mobile library is a vehicle with books for adults and children, and computers, which visits areas of the town where there is no library building



Section two - An overview

Currently around 49 per cent of the population in Luton use libraries, with 40,469 people (19 per cent) having used their library to borrow a book or use a computer in the last year.

In 2011/12, 991,163 visits were made to libraries in Luton. Users borrowed 967,681 books and other items and had 223,267 IT sessions. In 2011/12 40,469 people used their library card to borrow a book or use a PC.

The cost of the current service is £2,661,399. This equates to £13.07 per person in Luton a year or 25p a week (based on a population of 203,600). It also equates to £2.75 per visit.

The table below shows an overview of each of the borough's 8 libraries, the mobile library and home library service.

	Opening Hours	Visits	IT Sessions	Book Issues	Active Users
Luton Central	59.5	517,000	151,500	301,400	19,200
Leagrave	56.5	110,200	24,100	147,400	6,900
Lewsey Farm	32	32,500	8,000	37,100	1,500
Marsh Farm (in shared premises at Lea Manor School)	55	156,300 (approx 80,000 of these by Lea Manor pupils during the school day)	20,100 (all public library use)	79,100 (approx 18,000 of these were to Lea Manor pupils)	3,700 (Approx 800 of these are Lea Manor pupils)
Sundon Park	32	32,100	6,500	32,000	1,200
Stopsley	32	36,900	6,400	34,700	1,400
Wigmore	56.5	72,100	15,100	105,000	4,300
Mobile	30.75	20,900	500	52,800	1,100
Bury Park	16	13,400	5,000	14,800	1000
Home Library Service	N/A			50,500	300

Location

The Council is committed to ensuring all residents have access to the borough's library services. Currently, 88 per cent of residents live within one mile of a library. In some cases, residents live within a short distance of two libraries.

The map below shows the location of Luton's eight libraries. Each library is shown with a circle showing a one mile area around the library.

In addition to those libraries, we also have the mobile library and the home library service.

