



Council Offices, Kiln Road,
Thundersley, Benfleet,
Essex SS7 1TF.
Tel. No: 01268 882200
Fax No: 01268 882455



David Marchant LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) CEng FICE FCMI
Chief Executive

CABINET AGENDA - REVISED

Date: Wednesday 20th February 2019

Time: 7.00pm NB Time

Venue: Council Chamber

This meeting will be webcast live on the internet.

Membership:

Councillor Smith	Chairman - Leader of the Council
Councillor Stanley	Finance, Policy and Resources
Councillor Mrs Egan	Housing and Council Homes
Councillor Howard MBE	Streets, Waste, Floods and Water Management
Councillor Isaacs	Neighbourhoods & Safer Communities
Councillor MacLean	Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Mumford	Regeneration & Business Liaison
Councillor Sheldon	Commercial Contracts and Commercial Opportunity
Councillor Varker	Environment & Leisure

Cabinet Enquiries: **Ann Horgan ext. 2413**
Reference: **7/2018/2019**
Publication Date: **Tuesday 12th February 2019**

AGENDA
PART I
(Business to be taken in public)

1. Apologies

2. Members' Interests

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2019.

4. Forward Plan

To review the Forward Plan.

5. Health and Community Safety

5(a) Canvey Island Community Garden

(Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing)

6. Environment

7. Housing and Regeneration

7(a) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2019/20 Rent Levels, Revenue Budget and Capital Plan for 2019/20 and 2018/19 Revised

(Report of the Cabinet Members for Housing and Council Homes and Finance, Policy & Resources)

7(b) Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019 - 2024

(Report of the Leader of the Council)

8. A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council

8(a) Discretionary Rate Relief –Business Rates

(Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Policy & Resources)

8(b) Policy Framework and Budget Setting for 2019/20

(Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Policy & Resources)

9. Matters to be referred from /to Policy & Scrutiny Committees

There are no matters.

10. Matters to be referred from /to the Standing Committees

There are no matters.

PART II
(Business to be taken in private)

(Item to be considered with the press and public excluded from the meeting)

There were no items at time of publication of the agenda.

**INFORMAL
CABINET SESSION**

All Councillors are welcome to take part in this informal question time session with Cabinet at the end of the meeting. The session will be time limited and will conclude not later than 9pm.

CABINET

20th March 2019

Subject: Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019 - 2024

Cabinet Member: Councillor Smith – Leader of the Council

1. Purpose of Report

This report is to endorse the Council's response to the consultation on the Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019 – 2024 being undertaken by Essex County Council and to engage with Essex County Council to put in place a sustainable library service for Castle point Borough.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

The libraries service supports the Council's Housing and Regeneration and Health and Community Safety priorities.

3. Recommendations

- 1. That the response to the Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019 – 2024 is endorsed**
 - 2. That the Council works with Essex County Council and the community to review solutions for sustainable library services within the Castle Point Borough**
 - 3. That further reports are made to Cabinet on the outcome of the discussions with Essex County Council and the final proposals for the future library provision in the Borough**
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4. Background

4.1 In November 2018, Essex County Council launched consultation on its draft strategy for the future of the Library services within the County. This strategy excludes Southend on Sea and Thurrock, who operate separate library services.

4.2 The context for this is the decline in book lending (down 43% in the last five years); declining use of public computers (down 22%); and the number of

active users (down 17%). Added to this are budget pressures and Essex County Council acknowledge that they '*can no longer afford to spend as much on its services as before and must consider all options to deliver services in new and more efficient ways.*'

- 4.3 The approach of the strategy is to reduce the overall number of County Council run libraries through closures and transferring library operations to communities of private operators. The County Council have split the libraries into 4 tiers:

Tier 1- hub libraries for which there is at least one in each district area, including Canvey Island Library in Castle Point. These will continue to be run and managed by Essex County Services;

Tier 2 – also to be run by Essex County Council but provide less opening hours;

Tier 3 – libraries which Essex County Council wants to be provided but run by community and partner organisations. Great Tarpots, Hadleigh and South Benfleet Libraries fall in this tier; and

Tier 4 – libraries where the County Council believe should not be provided. This does not exclude community run libraries, but they would be unsupported by Essex County Council.

- 4.4 The Tier 4 libraries are at greatest risk of closure, and the needs assessment undertaken by the County Council has assumed that the services are no longer provided.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Attached in Appendix One to this report is the consultation response from Castle Point Borough Council. The letter supports the identification of Canvey Island as a Tier 1 library. It also includes an analysis using the County Council's published data which justify Hadleigh as a Tier 2 library or the case for a second Tier 1 library in the Borough.

- 5.2 The basis for this assessment is the challenge to the two stage scoring system used to define which Tier each library is within.

- 5.3 At this stage the Council is making the case for a reassessment of the libraries within the Borough. It is not providing a solution, but is confirming that it wishes to work with Essex County Council to identify and deliver the optimum sustainable library service in the Borough that is accessible to all, provides a wide range of services (including retention of the registry Office and Home Library Volunteers Service) and does not result in social isolation.

- 5.4 Therefore it is recommended that Cabinet authorise discussions to take place with Essex Council to retain a quality library service in the Borough.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications on the Council.

(b) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications on the Council.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

There are no Human Resources implications on the Council.

Equality Implications

It is the responsibility of Essex County Council to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment. This was published as a consultation document. Ensuring equality for all within the Castle Point communities is a priority and the impact considered in the consultation response and will remain a priority during forthcoming discussions to develop a sustainable solution.

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

There are no IT implications on the Council.

Hadleigh Library adjoins land owned by the Council in Hadleigh Town Centre earmarked for regeneration.

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

The Consultation closes on 21st February 2019. Essex County Council aim to report back on the outcome of the consultation in the summer 2019 and a second round of consultation will follow on the future of the Tier 3 libraries.

8. Background Papers

Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019 – 2024

Report Author:

Ian Butt
Head of Place and Policy

Essex Libraries Strategy

Response from Castle Point Borough Council:

Castle Point Borough Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft Essex Future Library Services Strategy.

The Council recognises that the library service must remain fit for purpose and provide the most comprehensive service it can to meet the needs of a growing population. It is clear that the use of libraries, the number of books borrowed and competition from other formats has had a significant impact on the service. However, libraries remain critical to local communities and it is essential that Essex County Council makes fully justified decisions now to ensure adequate coverage and protect services.

The Council supports the recognition that Canvey Library is a Tier 1 library. Canvey Island is unique in Essex, as an island with a substantial population (40,000 plus) the size of which together with the island's accessibility, create its own catchment area. As stated in the draft Strategy at least one Tier 1 has been identified for each District, and it is appropriate that this should be Canvey Island.

The Council is disappointed that the three other libraries in the Borough (Great Tarpots, Hadleigh and South Benfleet), have all been identified as Tier 3. These libraries serve the 'mainland' communities within the Borough, which collectively amounts to 50,000 residents. Although no final decision is being taken in this round of consultation on the future of the Tier 3 libraries, there is a danger that unless sustainable community management solutions are agreed, all three could be under threat of closure. This would leave a community of 50,000 people without any local library provision. The nearest provision would be Rayleigh, Canvey and Pitsea, plus a mobile library service (which currently provides a service for only 30 minutes every other Friday).

Such a scenario will be unacceptable and contrary to the very premise on which the Draft Strategy is based.

The Council is aware that ECC lease the premises at Great Tarpots; that Hadleigh library forms part of regeneration plans for Hadleigh town centre; and that South Benfleet library is the location of the Borough Registry Office, the Home Library Volunteers and is contained within a relatively recent purpose built building – these are important factors in the consideration of the Library at South Benfleet and in the Borough.

The Council has assessed the Draft Essex Libraries Services Needs Assessment and believe that there is a case for Hadleigh to be a Tier 2 library.

It is noted that in the Round One scoring, Hadleigh Library was ranked second of the 59 libraries assessed, which would have resulted in a Tier 2 status. However, the arbitrary approach the County Council has taken to the Round Two scoring resulted in Hadleigh falling from being ranked 2nd to 17th (out of 34 libraries), and from Tier 2 to Tier 3 status.

It appears that the main adjustment made between the two scoring rounds was to the Population scores. The Population scores are based on the Library Offer per Head of Population value for each district. Whilst this is an understandable assessment to make, it fails to take into account library catchment areas or where people who use libraries are likely to travel to. Consequently when Tier 4 libraries are eliminated in Round Two, an arbitrary adjustment has been made to the Library Offer per Head of Population and the consequent Population Score. This has had the effect of distorting the scores in Round Two.

As an example, the Epping Forest Libraries had a Population score of 2 in Round One. This increased to 25 in Round Two after the adjustment was made to take account of the closure of four Tier 4 libraries within that District. This totally fails to take account of travel distances, catchment areas or the levels of service

that libraries provide. It is the Council's view that it is not reasonable to assume that simply because one library closes all of the other libraries within a District would equally benefit, which is what in effect the published analysis has concluded.

All of the Tier 2 libraries after the second round of scoring, except for Harwich, were ranked below Hadleigh after the first round of scoring and benefitted from this arbitrary approach to the population assessment.

Because there were no Tier 4 libraries in Castle Point, the remaining libraries in the Borough did not benefit from an adjustment, and consequently, in the case of Hadleigh, their status was reduced.

The Council is not suggesting that libraries in other districts should not be Tier 2, but by failing to take account of travel and catchment areas, the second round scoring is flawed.

To compound this the usage scores for these libraries was not adjusted to take any account of transfer of users from Tier 4 libraries, suggesting that full and proper analysis has been undertaken. Therefore, the County Council has no published evidence to conclude that Hadleigh (and the residents of Castle Point) should be penalised in this way or that it should not be a Tier 2 library as it would have been after the first scoring round

Castle Point Borough Council acknowledges that the aim is to create at least one Tier 1 library in each District. As stated earlier, Canvey has rightly been identified as a Tier 1 library. However, the Council notes that more than one Tier 1 library has been identified for Basildon (3) and Braintree (2).

In paragraph 4.6.1 of the Draft Essex Library Services Needs Assessment – 2018, Essex County Council state that *'Tier 1 has been considered based on the clear current need to maintain hub library services in main settlements. It reflects Essex County Council's commitment to ensure that there is a distribution of hub libraries across Essex in areas of high population density and usage.'* On that basis the County Council have identified one Tier 1 library in each District, except for Basildon (three – Basildon, Billericay and Wickford) and Braintree (two – Braintree and Witham). Assuming that both Basildon and Braintree are the district hub libraries, it is reasonable to compare the totality of the Castle Point mainland libraries (Great Tarpots, Hadleigh and South Benfleet collectively) with Billericay, Wickford and Witham (all three of which are, like the mainland of Castle Point a main settlement). This comparison is set out in the attached analysis.

The Council's assessment is that the mainland of Castle Point has the levels of usage, population and demographics higher than those for Billericay, Wickford and Witham to sustain a Tier 1 library. This will provide 50,000 people with a hub library service.

In considering the future of any libraries, further work is required to better explore the impact of closures not only on the core services libraries provided, but also services such as the Registry Office and Home Library Services Volunteers base at South Benfleet, their use as community spaces, associations with schools and early years groups and the impact on vulnerable groups and older people. The County Council therefore, need to make the investment required within the libraries that are retained, or indeed new libraries, and to increase the mobile library services to ensure that no community is disadvantaged, excluded and isolated.

The Council would welcome discussions with the County Council to find a sustainable solution to the library service within the Borough. We are committed to work proactively on this with the County Council and local communities.

APPENDIX ONE:

Essex County Council have used data to conclude on what tier each library should fall. The only published data is set out in Draft Essex Library Services Needs Assessment – 2018. There are two key elements to this. Firstly the base data for each library which in respect of the 4 libraries in Castle Point is:

General		Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation		
Library	District	Post Code	Number of libraries within 2 miles walking distance	Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans and Renewals	Active Users Wi-Fi	Active Users	Indices of deprivation decile	Older People (65+) District %	Fertility Rate per 1,000 population District
Canvey	Castle Point	SS8 7RB	0	90,451	22,613	3,327	891	6,793	8	25	57
Great Tarpots	Castle Point	SS7 5UH	1	90,451	22,613	1,586	112	1,665	6	25	57
Hadleigh	Castle Point	SS7 2PD	0	90,451	22,613	3,027	179	3,149	5	25	57
South Benfleet	Castle Point	SS7 5HD	1	90,451	22,613	1,960	108	2,027	7	25	57

This data has been used in a two rounds of scoring:

First Round of Scoring used to identify Tier 4 libraries (no scoring has been published for Tier 1 libraries – including Canvey Island)

Library	Location	Usage	Population	Deprivation	Social Isolation – Older People	Social Isolation – Fertility Rate	First Round Score	Final Score Rank (out of 59 libraries)
Hadleigh	30	20	11	9	2.2	0.6	73	2
South Benfleet	20	15	11	6	2.2	0.6	55	23
Great Tarpots	20	12.5	11	7.5	2.2	0.6	54	24

Second Round of Scoring used to identify Tier 2 and 3 libraries (no scoring has been published for Tier 1 libraries – including Canvey Island)

Library	Location	Usage	Population	Deprivation	Social Isolation – Older People	Social Isolation – Fertility Rate	First Round Score	Final Tier	Final Score Rank (out of 34 libraries)
Hadleigh	30	20	11	9	2.2	0.6	73	3	17 (-15 places)
South Benfleet	20	15	11	6	2.2	0.6	55	3	31 (-8 places)
Great Tarpots	20	12.5	11	7.5	2.2	0.6	55	3	33 (-9 places)

The Second Round of Scoring maintains the First Round scores for Hadleigh, South Benfleet and Great Tarpots, but there is a significant change in the libraries Final Score Rank, which has determined the Tier they are within. This adjustment has been made to take account of the closure of the Tier 4 libraries. This results in significant upward adjustments to the population data for 15 libraries, for example, which were ranked below Hadleigh in the First Round of Scoring.

The adjustments to the population scores are due to the impact on the Tier 4 closures on the Library Offer Per head of population score. This has had the following effect:

District	Population	No. Libraries at present	Library Offer Per head of population	No. of Tier 4	Net Libraries	Adjusted Library Offer Per head of population	Change	Adjusted Population Score in Round Two
Basildon	187,097	7	26,728	2	5	37,419	+10,691	From 16 to 25
Braintree	152,630	8	16,959	3	5	30,526	+13,567	From 3 to 22
Brentwood	77,783	3	25,928	0	3	25,928	0	No change
Castle Point	90,451	4	22,613	0	4	22,613	0	No change
Chelmsford	176,421	10	17,642	5	5	35,283	+17,641	From 4 to 25
Colchester	192,625	7	27,518	1	6	32,104	+4,586	From 18 to 24
Epping Forest	131,979	8	16,497	4	4	32,995	+16,498	From 2 to 25
Harlow	87,115	5	17,423	2	3	29,038	+11,615	From 4 to 20
Maldon	63,949	4	15,987	2	2	31,974	+15,987	From 2 to 24
Rochford	86,579	4	17,316	1	3	28,860	+11,544	From 3 to 19
Tendring	145,523	8	18,190	1	7	20,789	+2,599	From 5 to 8
Uttlesford	88,311	4	22,078	2	2	44,155	+22,077	From 10 to 25

The adjustment in the final column of the table above, explains the very significant increase in some of the population scores for libraries which in the Round One Scoring were ranked below libraries in Castle Point but are higher after the adjustment. For example, Chipping Ongar library had a population score of only 2 in Round One (reflecting Epping Forest's low Library Per Head of Population at present), but this increased to 25 when the four Tier 4 libraries in that District were discounted. Whilst this approach is an understandable use of the published data, it importantly fails to take account of where users of closed libraries are likely to transfer their custom to. Would the users of Buckhurst Hill, Debden and Chigwell travel to Chipping Ongar, when in doing so they would pass the Tier 1 library at Loughton?

Therefore, ECC should make an adjustment for the spatial distribution of libraries and the adjusted catchment areas that they are likely to serve.

Case for a second Tier One Library

There is no assessment for the Tier 1 libraries. In paragraph 4.6.1 of the Draft Essex Library Services Needs Assessment – 2018, ECC state 'Tier 1 has been considered based on the clear current need to maintain hub library services in main settlements. It reflects Essex County Council's commitment to ensure that there is a distribution of hub libraries across Essex in areas of high population density and usage.' On that basis they have identified one Tier 1 library in each District, except for Basildon (three – Basildon, Billericay and Wickford) and Braintree (two – Braintree and Witham). Assuming that both Basildon and Braintree are the district hub libraries, it is reasonable to compare the totality of the Castle Point mainland libraries (Great Tarpots, Hadleigh and South Benfleet collectively) with Billericay, Wickford and Witham (all three of which are self-contained communities):

Library	General		Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation	
	District	Post Code		Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans and Renewals	Active Users Wi-Fi	Active Users		Indices of deprivation decile	Older People (65+) District %
Great Tarpots, Hadleigh and South Benfleet	Castle Point	SS7	0 (assuming one Tier 1 only)	90,451	22,613	6,573	399	6,972	6 (average)	25	57
Billericay	Basildon	CM12 9AB	0	187,097	26,728	5,853	453	6,145	10	17	69
Wickford	Basildon	SS12 0AG	0	187,097	26,728	4,723	366	4,947	5	17	69
Witham	Braintree	CM7 3YL	0	185,630	16,959	4,622	682	5,117	7	19	62

This table illustrates that there is a strong case for a Tier 1 library to serve the mainland of Castle Point, which is a main settlement (population c50,000), and an area of high density and collectively an area of high usage (higher than Billericay, Wickford and Witham). The Active Users and Older People indices, both critical to service delivery, for the mainland libraries is higher than the other three.