

Key Decision Required	No	In the Forward Plan	No
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CABINET

15 FEBRUARY 2018

REFERENCE REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

A.3 ESSEX FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICES STRATEGY 2019 – 2024 (DRAFT)
 (Report prepared by Karen Neath)

BACKGROUND

At its meeting held on 28 January 2019, the Committee considered the consultation being undertaken by Essex County Council on their draft strategy for the future of library services over the next five years. The strategy is based on views gathered from the public in 2018. The consultation closes on 20th February 2019.

Essex Libraries currently serve a population of 1.5m through 74 library buildings, eLibrary services, 2 mobile libraries and home library service volunteers. It also supports 8 volunteer run community libraries. In the last 6 years use of libraries, both in Essex and elsewhere, has declined. Loans from Essex Libraries have decreased from over 7.1m in 2011/12 to less than 4.1m in 2017/18. Demand for use of network computers in libraries fell by 22% between 2012/13 and 2017/18. Conversely, loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines have risen by 205% in five years.

The strategy is about library services, both physical and online, and how and where these could be provided in the future. The strategy is not about library buildings and it could be, for example, that library shelves could be in community centres or other public buildings. The strategy anticipates that, in the future, community groups and volunteers are more likely to be involved in delivering library services. The strategy sets out the overriding ambition for library services and the key points that the strategy will focus on. These focus on keeping books and reading at the heart of the library service offer, embracing digitalisation and technology and working with communities to deliver services locally.

Each of the existing 74 libraries has been placed in one of four tiers based on assessment against the criteria of: location, usage, population, deprivation and social isolation.

The four tiers are:-

- Tier 1 – main or hub libraries which will part of the statutory provision;
- Tier 2 – library services in areas where there is a need for them to be managed by ECC in partnership with community or other partner;
- Tier 3 – locations where no library service is needed as part of the statutory provision but where ECC could support the provision of services run locally. If no suitable offer is received within six months of Cabinet approval of the strategy then ECC intend to re-consult on the future of these libraries;

- Tier 4 – These libraries are proposed for closure but ECC would consider proposals for community libraries in these locations.

The libraries in Tendring are in the following tiers:-

Library	Tier
Clacton	Tier 1
Harwich	Tier 2
Brightlingsea	Tier 3
Frinton	Tier 3
Manningtree	Tier 3
Walton	Tier 3
West Clacton	Tier 3
Holland	Tier 4

The full strategy and proposed consultation responses are attached at appendices A and B respectively.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS TO CABINET

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- (a) The consultation response attached at appendix B be agreed as the response from Tendring District Council.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

The consultation response attached at Appendix B be agreed as the response from Tendring District Council.