

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 SEPTEMBER 2012

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>LIBRARY STRATEGY - OPENING HOURS</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE MEADEN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details results of recent libraries consultation with regard to opening hours. Members are asked to consider how Library opening hours may be taken forward in the light of this consultation, public requirements set against overall use and the budget situation of the authority. This Committee's views will be taken forward to Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1. The authority's first ever Library Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2011 (minute 219, 8 December 2011) and considered by this Committee in January 2012 (minute 68 30 January 2012). Subsequently this Committee received a report on 28 March 2012 (minute 79) which set out results of the consultation on the strategy. The consultation response of 1,465 people showed an overwhelming support for the value of having a strategy, that it fitted Wirral's needs and was in favour of the initiative to bring together Library and One Stop Shops.
- 2.2 The most significant response in the consultation was in terms of public comment to proposed changes to opening hours, although views varied not surprisingly location to location. The numbers expressing the need for evening opening was in excess of the numbers using them.
- 2.3. The Strategy had set out a proposal as part of the One Stop Shop merger to offer six day opening, including opening on Wednesdays and lunchtimes, whilst concentrating on evening opening to the four main (or central sites) at Birkenhead, Bebington, Wallasey and West Kirby. This would see 13 sites not open for two evenings a week. This scenario had been piloted at Heswall and Eastham which are already merged Library and One Stop Shop sites with very limited public issues being reported on the loss of evenings, set against the positive reception of being open on a normal weekday and at lunchtime. This initial proposal was made after an analysis of visitor figures had shown evening usage in terms of visits and issues to be very low and that in these stringent financial times this was the best response to the conflicting pressures of customer demands and budgetary constraints.

- 2.4 Members of this Committee expressed the view that evening opening hours were essential for school children being able to do homework, especially in deprived areas and for them to have access to a computer and for some working people evenings may be their only opportunity to visit the local library.
- 2.5 At Council on 16 July 2012 (minute 32) it was noted that a consultation exercise was about to be undertaken regarding library opening hours during late July and August. This would help establish demand for evening opening hours in the non central libraries. This specific opening hours consultation was undertaken at all Library sites and the form used is shown at Appendix 1. The libraries open two evenings a week are shown at Appendix 2.
- 2.6. The survey was conducted entirely on site and all users were encouraged to complete the form, but asked to complete only one each during the consultation exercise. There were 3,385 responses which is 9% of the total of active adult borrowers (defined as having borrowed at least one item a year). Question 8 asked for more information on the respondent, from this 1,387 (42.6%) were identified as retired which is a large proportion of the survey group.
- 2.7. Detailed below are the responses to each question:

1. *Where did you pick up this form?*

To ensure that the responses from all libraries were included in the survey the library where the form was completed was asked for. Bebington Central with 394 responses (13.3%) had the largest number of returns, but returns from all sites form part of the exercise. 2,284 responses (67.5%) were from smaller libraries

2. *Which library do you use most often?*

It was recognised that the site where the form was completed is not always the site that the user would visit most often. Bebington Central, 421 responses (12.9%) was the most used followed by Birkenhead Central and West Kirby.

3. *Please indicate when you prefer to visit your library?*

Two hour time frames were given as options

Time	Response Count	Response Percent
9 am – 11am	1,071	32.9%
11 am – 1pm	1,225	37.6%
1pm – 3pm	1,074	33.0%
3pm – 5pm	1,186	36.4%
5pm onwards	1,043	32.0%

Users like to visit the library at all times and people were not restricted to ticking one box thus of the total submission of 3,385, 32.0% indicated a preference to do so during the evening, albeit not to the exclusion of all other times.

4. *How often do you use the library at these times?*
5. *Why do you use the library at these times?*

These two questions were to establish the times actually used as opposed to preferred and the reasons for this. Again figures are of the total number of responses.

Time	Site used daily	Site used weekly	Site used several times a month	Site used than once a month	Site never used at this time
9 am – 11am	163 (9.8%)	660 (39.8%)	428 (25.8%)	221 (13.3%)	186 (11.2%)
11 am – 1pm	118 (7.7%)	596 (38.9%)	450 (29.4%)	248 (16.2%)	121 (7.9%)
1pm – 3pm	119 (8.2%)	517 (35.5%)	452 (31.0%)	246 (16.9%)	124 (8.5%)
3pm – 5pm	130 (8.4%)	561 (36.3%)	467 (30.2%)	271 (17.5%)	116 (7.5%)
5pm onwards	110 (7.9%)	477 (34.2%)	390 (28.0%)	211 (15.1%)	205 (14.7%)

Users are most likely to visit weekly and 34.2% state they make use of the facility after 5 p.m. The reasons given for post 5 p.m. use were:

	Number	Percent
Convenience	2,321	77.9%
To do my homework	140	4.7%
Group/Activity I attend	383	12.8%
I can't use at other times due to other commitments	663	22.2%

6. *Do you ever use any other libraries?*

	Response Count	
Yes	1,326	41.4%
No	1,877	58.6%

A majority of users state they only use one library but we did not establish if that is because they are not able or prefer not to visit another library.

7. *There are staffing and accommodation costs to keep the library open, so what is your preferred option to support an evening opening if required?*

	Response	%
At least one late evening and no lunchtime openings	1,136	40%
At least one late evening and no Wednesday opening	1,702	60%

There is a preference, albeit not an overwhelming one, for some smaller libraries to not open on a Wednesday and open one evening.

- 2.8. Opening hours at the merged Eastham and Heswall library one stop shops have been piloted to maximise resource and to respond to historical customer feedback as follows:

Monday	9.00 – 17.00
Tuesday	9.00 – 17.00
Wednesday	10.00 – 17.00 ( <i>9.00 – 10.00 being a training hour</i> )
Thursday	9.00 – 17.00
Friday	9.00 – 17.00
Saturday	9.00 – 17.00 (closed 13.00 – 14.00)

This provides a total of 46 hours opening per week.

- 2.9. More opening hours have been available to users under this change. Heswall previously 43 hours, Eastham previously 39 hours. When specific consultation was done on the changed hours at these libraries out of 175 users asked, 153 (87.4%) said they preferred the library to be open on a Wednesday and closed on an evening, as opposed to the old hours. Anecdotal verbal feedback at Eastham and Heswall libraries has been positive about the change in hours with most people commenting on the Wednesday opening as being a “good thing” once it had been established.
- 2.10. This creates a picture of the change being welcomed once implemented but not unsurprisingly current users being wary of change with the vast majority finding it better once in place. This gives the authority the issue of balancing the two views, the identifiable need and the clear financial restrictions all services face.
- 2.11. Given the approach outlined in the library strategy it is suggested that we look to first support the four main central sites (Birkenhead Bebington Wallasey West Kirby) as being the key sites open later four evenings a week and open Wednesdays. Then at each smaller library that is currently open on a Monday and Thursday evening that as one size opening may not fit all a maximum of one evening opening is made available.
- 2.12. It is clear within financial constraints this cannot be extra hours so it can be best achieved, if locally required, by moving the morning opening time to later. As a broad principle it is suggested this would be two hours later to allow a closure time of 19.00. Given the impact of Bank Holidays on the service users it is proposed that any evening opening should be either on a Wednesday or Thursday. The need will be established by a site by site user consultation. It will be in place and reviewed over the initial twelve month period on the basis of use both of the Library and its available facilities such as IT.
- 2.13. Whatever is put in place will be kept under review both in regard usage and the overall financial position that the Council is contending with in all service areas. Any future further changes will be reported to this Committee.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 The risk is ensuring that the maximum number of people have a service available to them at a convenient time within the resources available. By offering this facility we are trying to mitigate this risk.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 The other option is to not allow local review of opening hours at the smaller libraries which was felt inconsistent with the service to be offered.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 This has been undertaken across the service and if members and Cabinet accept the principles set out, we will undertake site by site review and implementation.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1 The changes may well assist ongoing engagement and use by these groups of our facilities.

#### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

7.1 Where evening opening is agreed we will need to agree with staff representatives how this is built into the work profile of staff and that any financial implications are minimised.

7.2 There are no IT or asset implications arising directly from this report.

#### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The implications relating to equality are covered within the impact review on this link <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance>

#### **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

12.1 It is recommended to Cabinet that:-

- a) the four main central sites will open four nights a week
- b) site by site consultation be undertaken at other sites already offering, evening opening, to establish if revised opening hours should include one late evening opening per week which will be then subject to review.

## 13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 To allow Members to recommend how the issue of evening opening hours at smaller libraries be handled on a case by case location basis.

FNCE/176/12

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### SUBJECT HISTORY

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Cabinet	8 December 2011
Sustainable Communities	30 January 2012
Sustainable Communities	28 March 2012
Council	16 July 2012

## Wirral Libraries Opening Hours Consultation

We are reviewing our library opening hours and would appreciate your views.

The Council has committed to Wednesday and lunchtime openings; this means that we are extending our current opening hours at the times that people most want to use them.

We will maintain evening openings at our 4 Central Libraries at Bebington, Birkenhead, Wallasey Central and West Kirby.

We are now reviewing our evening opening hours at the other sites, and would like to know whether you would prefer the Council to change our opening hours in preference for an evening opening session.

1. **Where did you pick up this form?** (Please state location and whether library or one stop shop)

2. **Which library do you use most often?**

3. **Please indicate when you prefer to visit your library**

- 9am – 11am
- 11am – 1pm
- 1pm – 3pm
- 3pm – 5pm
- 5pm onwards

4. **How often you use your library at these times?**

	Daily	Weekly	3 weekly - monthly	Less than monthly	Never
9am - 11am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11am - 1pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1pm - 3pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3pm – 5pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5pm onwards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Why do you use the library at these times?**

- Convenience
- To do my homework
- Because there is a group / activity that I attend
- I can't use the library at other times due to other commitments.
- Other, please explain briefly in the space below

**6. Do you ever use any other libraries?**

- No, I only ever use this library
- Yes, I sometimes use another library, which is:

Library

**7. There are staffing and accommodation costs to keep the library open, so what is your preferred option to support an evening opening if this is required?**

- At least one late evening and no lunchtime openings
- At least one late evening and no Wednesday opening

**8. Please tell us a little bit about yourself:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I work full time  | <input type="checkbox"/> I work part time             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I work shift work | <input type="checkbox"/> I am retired                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am at school    | <input type="checkbox"/> I am at college / university |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a carer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                        |

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**



**OPENING TIMES September 2012**
**APPENDIX 2**

<b>BRANCH</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
BEBINGTON CENTRAL	9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 8.00		9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	48.0
BEECHWOOD	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	8.30 - 1.00	34.5
BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL	9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 8.00		9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	48.0
BROMBOROUGH	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
EASTHAM	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 5.00	10.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	46.0
GREASBY	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
HESWALL	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 5.00	10.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	46.0
HIGHER BEBINGTON	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
HOYLAKE	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
IRBY	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
LEASOWE	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	37.0
MORETON	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
NEW FERRY	9.00 - 3.00	9.00 - 12.30	9.00 - 3.00	9.00 - 2.00	9.00 - 12.30		24.0
PENSBY	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
PRENTON	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
RIDGEWAY	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 4.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00	42.0
ROCK FERRY	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0

SEACOMBE	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	39.0
ST JAMES	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
UPTON	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
WALLASEY CENTRAL	9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 8.00		9.00 - 8.00	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	48.0
WALLASEY VILLAGE	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	40.0
WEST KIRBY	9.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 5.00		9.00 - 7.30	9.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	44.0
WOODCHURCH	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	9.00 - 1.00 , 2.00 - 5.00	39.0
							975.5