



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **Library Offer**

***JANUARY 2016***

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## **Basis of Offer**

Whilst it is true to say that the central requirements for the provision of library services has changed little since their inception in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the expectations and value of library services has grown since this time to encompass a much broader range of services and activities that contribute to the overall wellbeing of our towns and villages.

Libraries are now centre points within their communities, places where people of all ages come to do more than borrow books for pleasure and learning. They are places for parents and children to bond and grow, places for groups and clubs to meet, a respite for the isolated, they are champions of local creativity and gateways to all the public services that we use.

It is vital when establishing The Library Offer to recognise the increasing ways in which our library services and library buildings help sustain and elevate the quality of life for our residents.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our libraries will be welcoming and vibrant places that people are drawn to. They will protect the clearly valued heritage of our library services whilst evolving naturally to offer more and more opportunity for residents of all ages to engage in activities and access services. The libraries themselves will be flexible and adaptable in terms of their space and their uses, aligning seamlessly with other provision in their area.

The Library Offer establishes and promotes the activities that our residents can expect when visiting or using our libraries.

This offer is intended to establish a framework of underpinning principles and a delivery model which:-

- Extend the offering and give increased access to the library service.
- Provide as much as we can with the resources we have available

## **Underpinning Principles**

### **Access to Services**

- The Library Service will adapt to meet the growing population and changing behaviours of our residents.
- The Library Service will utilise opportunities to provide residents with a flexible mix of physical and virtual options for accessing all services
- Improve access to other Wokingham Borough Council services in line with Customer Services vision
- Strong partnership working to ensure flexibility of delivery and access to library services

### **Library Stock**

- Maintain the approach of books being the primary stock type
- Stock purchased will be responsive to the behaviour and needs of our residents
- Increase the numbers of items available in other formats
- Continue to ensure that we hold the books that people most want

### **Visiting and Using Buildings**

- The environment within libraries will be welcoming and enjoyable
- Buildings will be flexible and adaptable to changing demands for their use
- Enable access to other types of services including other council services, health services and local community and voluntary services
- They will provide space for locally focused events and activities that develop a sense of community
- Actively identify events and services that support the broader Council vision

### **Technology**

- The Library Service will continue to grow its online services to provide more opportunity for residents to access services when they want them.
- Invest in technologies that support learning and self-sustaining behaviours in residents.
- Increase the range of services within libraries by enabling payments for other Council services.
- Respond to natural opportunities to deliver a greater range of Council services within libraries.

### **Income Generation**

- Income generation ideas will feel a natural extension of our services and activities
- Where opportunities for investment present themselves we will look to gain the most value from them so as to minimise the need for further investments in the future

### **Supporting Wokingham Borough Council Vision**

- The library service will continue to identify ways to directly support Wokingham Borough Council's vision for the borough
- Maintain or improve on the usage of library services so that they remain a valuable method of supporting and promoting other Council services.

## **Delivery Model**

The delivery model will take a 'hub and spoke' approach. The larger libraries at Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley will act as hubs, with smaller branches delivering service in the community around them.

### **Hub Libraries**

The hub libraries will operate using a combination of traditional staffed opening hours and unstaffed self-service opening hours. This combination allows for those customers who are more vulnerable or need more support to access services whilst staff are there to support them, and also allows the overall service hours to be increased for the more independent library users. The overall approach results in a reduction of costs as fewer of the opening hours rely on having staff on duty. These sites will also be developed and adapted to give more flexible usage of space, allowing community groups and strategic partners to make use of the building whilst it is not operating as a library. In addition, space will be modified and adapted to attract business income and paying clients. For example, innovative meeting spaces using interactive technologies.

During unstaffed hour's access to buildings will be controlled by an electronic door lock which only opens when presented with a valid library ticket together with a PIN – it will allow for specific library users to be granted access, or have access restricted if necessary. The site will be monitored by CCTV, and record key actions such as customers entering and leaving the building. Customers use self-service terminals to borrow and return books and other items. If customers leave the building with books which they have not issued to themselves this will be identified as the pass through the doors, and recorded by CCTV. Pre-recorded *tannoy* messages warn customers when closing time is approaching, and lights can be set to automatically start dimming in the lead up to closure times. The process of building closedown is also more streamlined, allowing a single member of staff to turn all lighting and all computers off with single key turn.

The approach is tried and tested, with over 200 libraries operating the model on mainland Europe, and a growing number adopting the approach in the UK, including Peterborough, Brighton & Hove, Trafford and London Borough of Barnet.

### **Spoke Libraries**

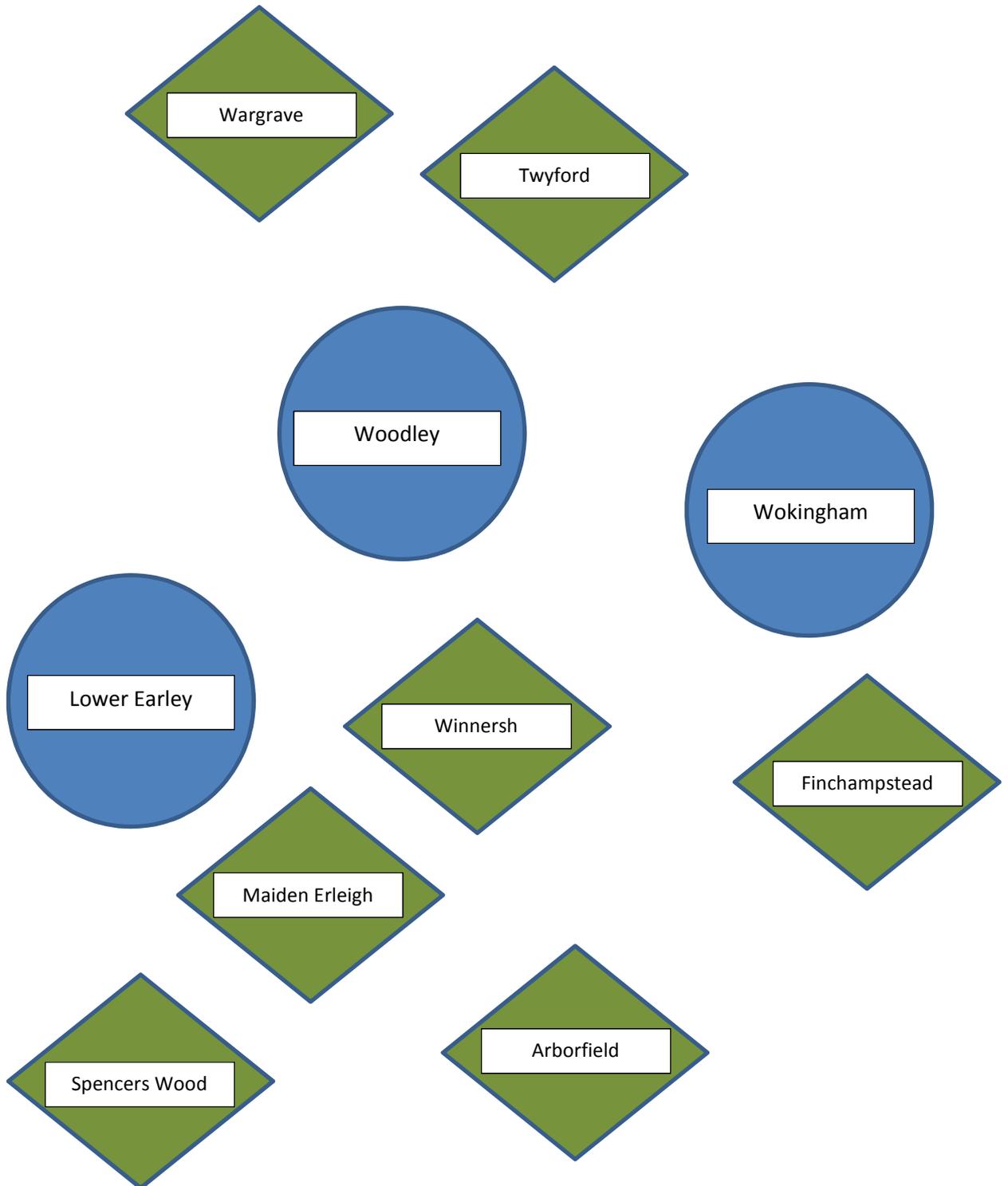
The spoke libraries will operate a regular set of opening hours focused on the times when there is most demand within the community, rather than the existing historic and rather confusing opening hour patterns operated at some sites.

Spoke libraries would initially consist of the existing smaller branches, however, not all libraries are well positioned, and not all libraries work sufficiently well alongside other local service offerings. It is important that all our spoke libraries offer the necessary services and are provided in such a way that make best use of the buildings in which they are located (whether these are Council buildings or in partnership with other services in the area). This approach would mean taking different or more pragmatic approaches to the buildings stock and a broader offer of local library services whilst not relying on a single asset.

### ***Pop-up libraries***

The methodology used for unstaffed opening at the library hubs could also be utilised to develop partnerships to deliver self-service libraries in shared facilities, and also provide temporary libraries. This could allow the service to be extended, provided more flexibly, and closer to the hearts of small communities. In addition the service could be delivered through library space located within existing community facilities – e.g. Community Centres

## WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LIBRARIES – HUB AND SPOKE MODEL



HUB LIBRARY



SPOKE LIBRARY