

Appendix 3 comparative research findings national

Comparative research – national

MOBILE LIBRARIES

Longer stops at one central village/community point

No specific examples, but evidence of authorities who have made reductions in stops, and ways of supporting people who cannot physically visit the mobile:

- Staffs – combined low use stops to make savings (unless special circumstances – elderly, no transport)
- Northants – abolished single stops eg farm and low usage stops – long distances to serve a few- which released a vehicle for visits to residential accommodation.
- Lincs- had plans for “good neighbours networks” in villages to encourage family, friends and neighbours to help in serving housebound people who cannot visit the mobile. Not developed - arose when cuts were made to single housebound stops. If a housebound person requests service, library staff ask the person to find a neighbour or friend to visit the mobile for them, or library staff ask around users at mobile stops.
- Shropshire – Library Service encouraged good neighbours’ schemes in rural areas (these are general community schemes of volunteers, not connected to Library Service) to select books from mobiles for neighbours – help and advice from library staff
- Worcestershire – may amalgamate or delete underused mobile stops. Plan to use housebound volunteers to support any customers unable to visit the mobile.

Refocused visiting times to meet local community needs – evenings, weekends, possibly linking to community activities

- Shropshire – beginning Sat mornings in Bridgnorth +(autumn 05) at 2 large village centres, will visit each alternate weeks
- Lincs – visit evenings and weekends “family friendly” times

Improved access and services for children

Northants – planning to introduce a children’s mobile to target playgroups, carers, parents, early years settings (vehicle on order)

Staffs – provide after school visits in larger villages, very successful

Kent – considering developing a young people’s mobile as part of a replacement programme for mobiles.

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Access to Internet

- Lincs - not publicised - budget, many short stops, main emphasis on access to council information (low use) and Libraries' management information system (much used)
- Notts – considering within review of mobiles – many short stops currently (report awaited)
- Staffs – Burton Mobile (see below)
- Derbyshire (and probably many others) - provide IT on mobiles – not investigated further

Access to information and advice services eg. council services, police, youth services via physical presence and/or virtual access

- Staffs - Burton Mobile contains space for “one stop shop” – used by various agencies, also IT access
- Lincs- Lincup project offers online access via PCs on 6 mobiles to council services and information, health and police services. Take up is low, they expect to increase after publicity

Stops near other public services -supermarkets, garden centres etc

- Notts –
 - Mobile provides stops in Sainsburys car park, Worksop on Saturdays. Started Oct 04
 - Limited success, possibly due initially to time of year (Xmas, weather) and siting at bottom of car park. Cost per issue unsustainable. However 41% of membership (39 people) are new members
 - Plans to extend visits to adjacent communities - one not served by a mobile, the other an area of social deprivation served by a mobile, but Saturday service would enable children to use. Also considering involving local school, community groups etc, provision of IT, and sessions by advice agencies, police etc
- Kent – considering visits to garden centres for 06/07
- Shropshire – largest mobile provided near Sainsburys in Oswestry for 2 years – initial approach by Sainsburys. Very successful, targeted at children, funding ran out.
- Staffs – approached Morrisons, stop for an hour, users return items to any library, very successful. Less success at an indoor ski slope (Leisure Centre) where most visitors were not local

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Visits to isolated industrial estates

- Northants - carried out initial investigations – little interest identified
- West Berks - planning (Oct 04) – (waiting for more info).

Dedicated vehicle for targeting meeting places, events

- Kent – two new mobiles on order- may pilot as “extras” rather than bring into schedule. Considering developing a programme of visits to places where people meet. Thinking especially of targeting older people – church halls, community centres, and possibly making bookable

Dedicated vehicle serving a particular community eg area of social deprivation, or where take up of library services is low

- Staffs – Burton Mobile
 - Provides long term stops in a socially excluded urban area, including some minority ethnic communities. Offers a service 8? (6.25?) hours a week shared between 4 wards. Includes Saturday morning (about to extend to afternoon), but not evenings
 - Additional to existing services – obtained funding (various local organisations put in bids, community consultation and this project was chosen).
 - Includes: stock – books, videos, DVDs, IT (for Internet etc), and one –stop shop advice suite
 - Uses mobile phone technology – slow and expensive, developing wireless technology
 - Some parents from cultural minority groups prefer children using IT in the bus – feel there is less chance of exposure to undesirable websites than in larger premises with more PCs
 - Considered very successful. Approx. 45 visits per week (6/7 per hour?) and 79 issues a week (11/12 per hour?) Feb – June 2005.

Travelling Libraries

- East Riding Travelling Library (award winning)
 - Replaces a number of smaller static libraries based in village halls and old trailer library stops
 - Community consultation indicated that opening hours of small libraries were too short and inconvenient, stock not changed often enough
 - Three vehicles in operation? (not checked), first one early 2003, plans to extend to 6 over 5 years
 - Each library spends 9-10 hours a day in each community visited. Communities will be visited weekly with a different vehicle with different stock each week over 4 weeks
 - Facilities equivalent to a static library – books, audio visual material, access to Internet and library management system, displays, staff facilities – recently

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- No current statistics of use – but Sept 04 article indicates issue figures at least trebled (from old trailer libraries)
- Staffs Travelling Library
 - To be introduced in Sept 05, based on East Riding model
 - Will target a few villages with fairly substantial population of 5,000+ (including Gnosall)
 - Larger vehicle than a standard mobile, with more stock, 2 PCs and private interview facilities
 - Will become a village's "library for the day" – for 10 hours, going into evening
 - Will test wireless technology
 - Will need double staffing (long hours)

Visits to traveller sites

- Essex – had some initial funding (Children's Fund, Essex)
 - In conjunction with local primary schools with traveller children on roll, Traveller Education Service and others
 - 8 mobiles make weekly stops at 5 sites and 8 primary schools
 - Many testimonies of value from teachers, traveller parents, very enthusiastic traveller children
 - Very successful – looking towards extending
- Lincs – awaiting from Toni Francks (Claire Leach – Internet access on mobiles very useful for travellers)

Use of smaller vehicles for areas of sparse population, larger ones for urban areas

- Staffs – Best Value Review showed that it was not cost effective to send large double staffed vehicles into many rural areas. Introduced smaller single staffed vehicles for rural areas; and larger double staffed vehicles with more IT, weekend and evening hours for urban areas

Serving sheltered accommodation as part of the regular mobile service

- Staffs – previously 2 vehicles were dedicated to serving residential and sheltered accommodation and day centres. Use of service at residential homes has decreased (fewer residents capable of reading since introduction of care in the community), deposit collections introduced. Use by sheltered housing increasing – now covered by regular mobile services.
- Northants – also had dedicated vehicle for residential accommodation- now reverting to deposit collections)

CO-LOCATED SERVICES

Schools, Colleges, Learning Centres

Some examples are dual / integrated use, some separate room in same building. Some replace mobile.

Cornwall:

- Separate room in school, replacing mobile service – run by library staff, (St Keverne, established April 05)

- Mini-library in separate room in school, open in term time only, run by volunteers. Sparsely populated area. Mobile continuing to provide wider choice, stops and exchanges stock. Not performing well. Volunteers falling off – mainly parents recruited by school, head left and successor less enthusiastic. Evaluation report in progress. Contact Becky Rowland early August if need to pursue detail. (Morwenstow, established Oct 04)

- New community library, integrated with school library, run by library staff, 6 hrs a week (Upton Cross, Bodmin Moor, established Dec 99)

- Northants - new library within new school, integrated with school library, urban area new housing estate, edge of Northampton (Wooton Fields, Northants, opened Nov 04). Awaiting more information.

- Lincs - a few examples at Coningsby/Tattersall, Gartree, Branston (Branston is also a Community Access Point – see Virtual Access)

- Staffs- joint initiative with a Community Partnership, separate public library within school, kept separate for security (Knutton). Another similar initiative about to open at Gnosall, will replace mobile stops (other than sheltered housing)

- Kent – currently considering library access points in a secondary school and two primary schools

Village Halls/ Community Centres

- Cornwall - mini-libraries for pre-school children and parents in village halls in partnership with Sure Start, operated by Sure Start Playgroup parents during weekly playgroup sessions. Parents issue books to each other (laptops). Books exchanged via mobile. (Blisland, St Breward etc)

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- Kent – plans to develop range of services tailored to community in village halls and other local venues, run by volunteers. These access points could provide any combination of books, computers, telephone point, display of information (notice board or electronic), community events (reading group, sessions for babies (babybounce & rhyme, local history talks etc.). Limited progress-aware of need to build up good community links first, rather than impose ideas. Some present points already exist in village halls – volunteers often “set in their ways”. Consider that it may take time to turn around.
- Worcs- 2 small libraries run by volunteers in village halls – small bookstock and Peoples Network terminals- may use as model for further developments (not followed up)
- Cambs – Little Downham (lost static library in 1996), now in village hall, run by volunteers, with café facilities, became a model for development by community groups following the decision in 2002 to close 10 static libraries
- Northants - Grange Park. Under development. Also includes doctors’ surgery (awaiting more info)

Use of other local services – shops, pubs, post offices

- Suffolk- Library Links project, Beacon status, 2002.
- Collections of books in shops, post offices with computer link- free requests (if collected at the point), some with self-service issue, checkout, renewal.
- Two levels of Link. Older ones (eg Horringer) offer a service with a computer for Link users to issue their books. The newer one 'Bookends' at Rougham does not.
- “Links seem to work better in a post office setting where the staff are used to handling money and giving advice”. Rougham model considered best where the host gets a one off payment of £250 then gets a payment per issue (c15p). “Works better than the other model where we pay £1000 per year in two payments to the host as there is an element of paying for performance which encourages the host to stay interested”
- Quality of the host considered crucial to success of project. Contract essential so both parties know what they are signing up to.
- The Links provide a service, but are not heavily used. Rougham issues around 100 items a month and some of the older ones 80-100 items but lots of items are dropped off there (so this provides another service).

Village contacts given for us to contact for more information, visit to Suffolk offered (Brandon King). Library Links on a back burner, new Administration in place, not clear yet of intentions for rural provision

- Shropshire – collections in a garage and a post office. Mobile continues to visit the communities and exchanges stock. Low use, but offers long opening hours to communities. Not extending the scheme.
- Cumbria – pub/brewery run as a cooperative, (Hesket Newmarket)

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Drop-off points (request items on Internet)

- Staffs – one in a telecottage (Warslow), another in a high school (Madeley). Not well used – under review.
- Suffolk – part of Library Links (above)

Books by post

- Lincs – this was one of the options offered to rural housebound people as part of a survey in 2002 (Haggis and Goulding). It was a quite a popular choice amongst the 19 people interviewed (after personal visit) but the most expensive option at c£3.50 per issue.
- Wolverhampton Libraries - carried out research in 2003, which included experiences of other authorities. This showed that there could be a market by mainly working people and students for a mailing service. Cost and logistics of return of items seemed to be the most problematic areas.

VIRTUAL ACCESS TO LIBRARY AND COUNCIL SERVICES

- Lincs:
 - Originally placed a number of PCs in village halls, doctors' surgeries, post offices, residential and sheltered accommodation (SRB funding)
 - Recently replaced one in a pub and one in a post office, but did not renew those in village halls. Problems with limited access, locked room, room in use etc. Very much dependent on an interested contact. Statistics were difficult to get on the first round (now better software in place).
 - Hospital sites well used, more put in recently, partly funded by health sector. Also developing points in residential and sheltered accommodation in cooperation with District Council, who are providing staff support.
 - Now an e-govt project.
- Lincs – provide access to county and district council services/information via a joint use school/community college.
 - Pilot project: Branston Community Access Point was established Jan 05, jointly by county and district council. Based on Lincup* electronic database (also on mobiles – see above). Run by library staff, partial funding from district council, c18 enquiries a month.
 - Working towards similar in other districts. Plans to develop a touch screen system, cash management facility, links to new Customer Service Centre and eventually CRM software.

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- Kent – considering developing access to library service’s website, catalogue, Internet etc via public access points in schools, shops, community centres, health centres.
- Notts – freephone links to council information points and “Telly talk” facilities in community resource centres (awaiting info – not clear on Libraries’ role)
- Cornwall with Plymouth – “Cyber library” developed in partnership to provide learning resources electronically. Access via website to wide range of databases, including subscriptions eg Britannica, Times, DNB). Portal for young people – what’s on, issues faced by young people. Particular emphasis on local area. Not specifically for people in rural areas, but supports them.

USE OF STATIC LIBRARIES

- Kent- reviewing poorly performing static libraries and engaging library staff with community with a view to getting ideas and partners on board, including parish councils. Considering locating a rural post office in a library, to be run by library staff
- Staffs –
 - developed a learning centre, containing a Learndirect access point, at Talke (poor performer). Local residents obtained funding. Very successful, well used.
 - Similar development planned for Norton Canes (also a poor performer) to provide office and meeting room (shortage of facilities in village). Still awaiting community funding.