

To: community groups and organisations
in Essex

Our ref:
Date:

MLCH/O
18 September 2017

Dear colleagues and residents,

**Public consultation on proposed changes to the Mobile Library Service
19 September - 6 November**

I would like to invite you to help us make decisions on the future of the mobile library service.

At Essex County Council, we know how much people value their mobile libraries. But we also know that in recent years, fewer and fewer people have been taking advantage of them. Combined with other factors, such as vehicles which are coming to the end of their working lives, we have reached a point where the right thing to do is look again at how we provide these services.

This is why we are consulting you about how we create a new library service which is a better fit with people's lives across Essex.

We want a service which is available at a place and time which suits users; a service which is flexible enough to help volunteers set up a community library in a village hall, pub, sports club or shop. We want a service where volunteers deliver books directly to the door, and can stop to chat with the residents so that we contribute to reducing social isolation. These services already work well in villages across Essex and we want to extend that provision. We want a service which is able to respond to different local needs and settings and to have books available to more people more of the time.

We don't want a service which wastes money by having mobile library buses parked in locations at times when no one visits, which is unfortunately what happens on some occasions now.

Most of all, we want you to get involved and have your say on our ideas and share your own. You can find more information about our proposals and complete the survey at libraries.essex.gov.uk

Separate surveys are also available online for children and young people under 16 and in EasyRead. If you would rather complete the survey on paper, pick up a copy of the consultation pack at any library or mobile library and return it using the business reply envelope in the pack (no stamp needed).

If anyone in your organisation needs help to complete the survey, would like it in large print or would like a printed copy of the children and young people's or EasyRead versions, please call 0345 603 7628.

The deadline for replies is 6 November 2017.

All the responses from the consultation will be analysed and a formal report produced. This will be published on the consultation website and available on request for those without internet access. The analysis will be used to help us decide what changes will be implemented.

I am very much looking forward to finding out what you think about our proposals, and reading your own ideas about how we can shape a better service in the future.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Susan Barker
Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities & Customer

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