APPENDIX H

BRIEFING NOTE ON VISIT TO PETERBOROUGH LIBRARY SERVICE

REGARDING LIBRARY OPEN+ SYSTEM

Purpose of the Note

The purpose of this note is to brief the members of the Committee on "SMART Libraries" trial.

Overview

Library Open+ is a system that allows libraries to open and function as normal without the need for staff to be present on site. Centrally installed software controls access to the building, public PCs, and the self-service issue kiosks. CCTV cameras monitor the public areas and entrance.

Borrowers have to sign up to Open+ and in doing so agree to the terms and conditions of the service. Once signed up, access to the building in Open+ mode is via ticket scanner and keypad code.

Peterborough City Council Approach

- Peterborough City Council has had the system installed in all its 10 libraries for about a year;

- Public consultation was the initial starting point for Peterborough. Out of approx. 5,000 responses 74% said that being able to access the building outside normal opening hours would encourage them to use the service more;

- Engagement with lead Cabinet member plus cross party support was key to the success of the project;

- Communications was also an important factor including attendance at public meetings with lead members;

- Open+ plus was initially piloted at 2 libraries followed by audits of remaining sites including risk assessments and consultation with emergency services;

- A tender process was undertaken and roll out programme agreed;

- There is a mixture of staffed and Open+ hours in any one day;

- Open+ assistants can be deployed to a building should the need arise, e.g. technical issues re keypad access;

- Whilst book loans continue to decline (a national trend), use of the buildings and especially computer bookings has risen;

- Community groups make use of the building in Open+ mode. I addition, other key locality workers use the library building as a "work base" and access the Wi-Fi

essential for their day-to-day duties. These include social workers and community police officers;

- There has been no reported abuse of the system in any building, e.g. vandalism, theft or anti-social behaviour.

Potential for Leicestershire

- An audit has been carried out at Syston Library for Open+ and costs are currently awaited for implementation of a pilot;

- Leicestershire County Council currently uses the Open+ supplier for its self-service kiosks in the 16 major market town and shopping centre libraries. The current kiosk contract runs out in July 2017;

Lessons Learned

- Communication seen as key throughout;

- Keep consultation simple and respond to what users say;

- Give positive messages about the benefits of Open+ but do not shy away from difficult questions;

- Keep staff informed;

- Consult with emergency services, consider equalities issues;

- Member and senior management support is essential – provide weekly updates;

- Flexibility;

- Be realistic about what Open+ will and will not do;

- Treat pilot site as a learning curve;

- Ensure governance arrangements in place;

- Ensure supplier/contractor relationship is managed effectively.

Officer to Contact

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