

Eastbourne Area Committee

Wednesday 26 June 2002

Mobile Library Service - Information Note

1. The new criteria for the operation of the mobile library service, agreed by County Council on 19 February 2002, are as follows :

- Priority will be given to rural areas with little or no access to public transport (identified with the help of T&E)
- Stops within a two mile radius of a static library will be discontinued unless there are particular reasons for continuation e.g. cases of urban deprivation where stops are funded by SRB, Surestart etc. or if there are particular access problems at a static point
- Priority will be given to stops affording access to disabled users, where other criteria can be met, particularly if the stop is a collection point for story tapes from the Equal Access Centre, many of these are based on sheltered housing/residential homes.
- Stops should be for a minimum of 20 minutes, to allow staff to set up and close down now that they are single staffed and, to allow use of the lift by people who may have difficulty with steps.
- In future stops should have a minimum average issue of 40 items per hour open (previous rationale for withdrawing stops was under 10 issues per stop, taking into account the above criteria)
- All applications for new stops should be accompanied by the names and signatures of 20 people who have undertaken to use the stop on a regular basis and should comply with stated criteria currently in existence
- Parish Councils should be kept apprised of mobile library stops within their locality and will be consulted over the possible withdrawal of failing stops.

2. Having applied these criteria to all existing stops following the decision to reduce the fleet of vehicles from four to two, all of the stops in the Eastbourne area except the following were discontinued :

Eastbourne Old Town Avard Crescent

Eastbourne St Leonards Road Homegate

Eastbourne Lottbridge Road Coventry Court

Eastbourne Wannock Road Sovereign Court

Eastbourne Latimer Road

Duke Barnard Court

Langney Priory Road

St Richards Church Court

3. These stops were retained as they are residential homes or sheltered housing sites and offer access to people with disabilities and include stops where materials from the Equal Access Centre are delivered. There is no record of any of the homes in the area ever requesting a mobile stop although some years back we did try to encourage homes to give up static collections and switch to the mobile. This was seen as general good practice for the provision as special services, in as much as users were better able to exercise free choice over which materials they borrowed. Some homes took advantage and went over to the mobile service but other preferred to stay with their own collections.

4. As stated in the criteria, new stops can be put forward and will be considered when the service is reviewed. There is no guarantee that stops can be accommodated – they must fit the criteria and, obviously, there needs to be space in the schedule. The reduction to two vehicles means that timings can be very tight and there may need to be a waiting list for stops in the future. It is recognised that there are a large number of elderly and frail people in Eastbourne, as indeed there are throughout the whole county, but we are unable to serve everyone with two vehicles. Hence the need to have criteria for the service.

5. There is to be a review of the service in November in the light of experience after the revised arrangements have been operating for six months. As part of this review consideration will be given to whether any adjustments should be made and any requests for additional stops will be considered against the agreed criteria. No changes can be made to the schedule until then.

Further information:

1. Five homes/sheltered housing complexes in the Meads area (Elstree Court, Ingham House, Laburnham, Meads House and Stavely Court) are served with boxed book exchanges from Eastbourne Central Library. Overall 21 residential homes in Eastbourne are served from Eastbourne Library and 4 from Polegate Library.

2. Three volunteer organisations serve housebound readers from Eastbourne Central, Willingdon and Polegate libraries (Eastbourne serving approximately 80 people, Willingdon and Polegate 20 each).