

## Topic Paper 8 – Libraries and Archives Infrastructure Provision

This document is one of the supporting topic papers of Suffolk’s supplementary guidance “Section 106 Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk”. It is intended as a guide for landowners, developers and residents and sets out how Suffolk County Council will deal with planning applications where contributions towards libraries and archives provision may be sought.

---

### 1 CALCULATION OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

- 1.1 Local authorities have a duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to all who live, work or study in the area.
- 1.2 In July 2011, the Council adopted a new Vision and Access Model for library services. In December 2011, it decided to put library services into Suffolk’s Libraries Industrial and Provident Society (“Suffolk Libraries”) which is responsible for enabling the delivery of library services under a contract with SCC.
- 1.3 The Access Model, outside the urban areas of Ipswich, and Lowestoft, uses Borough and District Council Local Plans as the framework for library services. This is because they support and sustain rural communities; they identify centres of services across the county, from Major Centres to Towns to Key Service Centres to Local Service Centres and Primary Villages. The Council proposes to arrange library services around these frameworks as they cater for patterns and tiers of service access across the county and build on a sustainable planning model.
- 1.4 For the urban areas of Ipswich and Lowestoft, the Council proposes to use deprivation as the guiding framework: any additional provision would be prioritised to focus on the worst areas of deprivation.
- 1.5 The Access Model, for the long term future, is based on a mix of libraries and community outreach, with in most cases an extended period of transition when this could mean change from current access points. It recognises the opportunities that sharing premises with other services and businesses brings, and encourages an innovative approach where library services might be co-located in existing or new premises.
- 1.6 Library services are community hubs which:
  - Provide for reading and literacy through books to borrow, books to download and through activities
  - Address loneliness and social isolation, and provide a shared community space where people feel safe
  - Help with learning and skills and finding a job
  - Provide activities that improve health and well-being
  - Provide information and the internet, both self-service and with the help of skilled staff
  - Loan out films and music for hire, currently DVDs and CDs

- 1.7 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) previously published national standards for library provision and used to monitor Library Authorities' performance against the standards. Whilst these national standards are no longer a statutory requirement they form the basis for Suffolk County Council's in-house standards, which form the basis of the contract with Suffolk Libraries..
- 1.8 Public Libraries, archives and new development: a standard charge approach (May 2010), by the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council, sets out an approach for calculating and securing developer contributions as part of Section 106 agreements and for future application under the Community Infrastructure Levy. The financial charge for the developers is based on a national benchmark charge for each person expected in a new housing development. The charges are based upon average cost and space benchmarks for library, archive and museum provision, supported by extensive survey work.
- 1.9 The two main parameters of a standard charge for public libraries are:
- A space standard. The standard recommends a figure of 30 square metres per 1,000 population as a benchmark for local authorities, and
  - A construction and initial fit out cost; taking the authoritative RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) Building Cost Information Service data, the national average, and currently recommended benchmark figure, is £3,514 per square metre.
- 1.10 A calculation using the national benchmark figure above suggests a cost of £105,420 (30 x £3,514) per 1,000 people, or £105 (rounded) per person in new housing. These figures do not include any land purchase costs or VAT.
- 1.11 Regionally adjusted standard charge figures for public libraries for East Anglia suggests a construction and initial fit out cost of £3,233 per square metre and £97 per person in new housing.
- 1.12 In Suffolk we currently use a construction and initial fit out cost of £3,000 per square metre, which suggests a cost of £90,000 (30 x £3,000) per 1,000 people, or £90 per person in new housing. This is £7 per person below the suggested regionally adjusted standard charge figures set out in the paragraph above.
- 1.13 Local authorities seek to ensure that their libraries meet national standards and expectations, and provide the quality of service that people need, expect and will use.
- 1.14 For significant development in Towns, Key Service Centres or Core Villages (or equivalent as defined in the Local Plans) where there is no existing static library provision, the Council will expect a new static library to be provided, co-located with other services. Where a library already exists, a contribution to increasing or improving the library's facilities is expected. For development proposals in or adjacent to urban areas, such as in Ipswich and Lowestoft (taken in isolation or co-located), that may generate a population of around 5,000 people, an assessment of whether there is need for a new static and co-located service point will be made.
- 1.15 Similarly, new communities with a population of around 2,000 people should be assessed against the Library Access Model. In these instances, a financial contribution to allow outreach from an existing library, improvements to the local library offer, or the provision of an unstaffed library point will be considered.

- 1.16 The Suffolk Record Office is inspected and approved by The National Archive under the Public Records Act 1958 as a place for local records to be deposited with proper security and environmental measures to preserve them. They come from a wide range of sources from councils and churches to schools, hospitals, businesses, estates and individuals dating back from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The material all relates to the history of Suffolk and can be in any format from maps and plans to newspapers, parchment or microfilm. It is all made available to anyone who needs to see it in the public search rooms in the three offices. The collections continue to grow each year as new items are added, with new development increasing pressure on space.
- 1.17 Developer contributions calculated in accordance with the above methodology will be requested where existing facilities are unsuitable to cater for increased use arising from a planned development. The contributions will be used either to fund improvements to existing facilities, or to fund the provision of new facilities.
- 1.18 Contributions may be pooled, in line with regulations, from a number of developments in order to realise these objectives.
- 1.19 In many instances, socio-economic impact assessments - to inform policy and decision makers about the potential benefits, as well as the probable adverse impacts - will be required to be undertaken to inform final heads of terms.