

This document is one of the supporting topic papers of West Berkshire Council's supplementary guidance series 'Delivering Investment from Growth – West Berkshire Council's approach to securing developer contributions towards local infrastructure, services and amenities'. It is intended as a guide for landowners, developers and residents and sets out how the Council will deal with planning applications where a contribution towards public library facilities will be sought.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Libraries play a key role in underpinning education in its broadest sense. The information they supply promotes a wider understanding of the past, offers individuals the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge and gives everyone the opportunity to enjoy a rich and varied cultural life.
- 1.2 Public libraries have an increasingly important role to play in making available the wealth of information now being provided electronically across the world, they also often form a focal point for the local community improving self confidence and stimulating learning at all levels. New technologies will allow citizens to use their local libraries as an interface with Government at all levels.
- 1.3 West Berkshire Library and Information Service aims to provide access to informational, educational, cultural and recreational library materials in a variety of formats and technologies and to be responsive to the public library needs of the community. The service seeks to encourage independent learning and lifelong reading enjoyment.

2.0 National Library Standards

- 2.1 As a library authority West Berkshire Council has a statutory duty to provide a public library service and to ensure that it is "comprehensive and efficient". Whilst its obligation to lend extends only to those who live, work or study full time in the District, it has a duty to allow access to all comers to each of the District's libraries.
- 2.2 In addition to its statutory duties, the library service has to meet a number of National Library Standards which together constitute a nationally recognised acceptable level of service. Additional development will have a direct effect on a number of these standards, in particular those requiring:
 - 88% of the population to live within 1 mile of a static library;
 - 100% of the population to live within 2 miles of a static library.
(Whilst the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will take into account mobile library provision, the above standards are a requirement towards which the Council is expected to work).
 - the provision of 6 electronic workstations per 10,000 population
 - the provision of 216 new items of stock added per year per 1,000 population.

- 2.3 In planning to meet the National Library Standards, the Council has taken into account the current population. Any development, be it residential or commercial, which increases the potential number of library users to which the authority has an obligation to lend, will undoubtedly impose an additional financial burden on the service. While the revenue costs of providing such a service should be met by increased council tax collection, the initial one off costs cannot be met in this way and a contribution from developers is sought for service improvements appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. These improvements will range from the enhancement of stock and ICT facilities to the extension of existing buildings or provision of new buildings. All contributions will underpin the existing service provision and will ensure that the Council maintains progress towards meeting the national standards.

3.0 Service Provision Requirements

- 3.1 In addition to complying with the national standards, each authority is required to set local standards and targets. West Berkshire's local standards for library service provision state that the Council will seek to ensure that:
- Communities with up to 1,500 people are to be served by mobile libraries;
 - Communities with populations between 1,500 and 4,000 are to be served by permanent or container libraries open from 10 - 30 hours a week;
 - Communities with a population of 5,000 or more are to be served by a branch library open not less than 30 hours per week;
 - Space standards in static libraries were set so that any new library building provided 28 square metres of space per 1,000 catchment population, subject to an absolute minimum size of 200 square metres.

4.0 Annual Library Plan

- 4.1 The Council is required to submit an Annual Library Plan (ALP) to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) by the end of September each year. The ALP provides the strategic framework for delivering library services in West Berkshire over the coming year and includes local standards and targets. It is used to drive service provision to the highest possible standard measured against the Government's national library standards.
- 4.2 The preparation of an Annual Library Plan will ensure that the justification for seeking contributions to library services is constantly updated and relevant. It will enable any contributions deemed necessary to be channelled in the most appropriate way to maximise service delivery. It will also establish a clear relationship between the development proposed and its likely effect on the provision of library services in a clear and transparent way in accordance with Circular advice.
- 4.3 Current service weaknesses are identified in the Annual Library Plan. Whilst funding from developers is not intended to cover this existing shortfall, any contributions would be used to ensure that it is not exacerbated by additional development.

5.0 Provision of Libraries

- 5.1 The West Berkshire Library Service is currently provided from nine static libraries, two mobile libraries and one Community Learning and Information Vehicle (CLIVe) in partnership with other public and voluntary agencies. The mobile libraries cover every parish within the authority's boundaries, providing library and information services to the rurally isolated, the housebound and those in residential or care homes.
- 5.2 The additional need generated by a development may be met in a number of ways. A development may justify the provision of a new library or require the upgrading of an existing service, e.g. from a container or mobile library service to a permanent building, an extension to an existing building, additional mobile library stops, or a combination of the above.
- 5.3 For smaller developments, contributions may be sought for additional stock or public access PCs. As West Berkshire Library Service operates as a single unit with book stock being accessible through all libraries, any additional stock will form part of the total stock of the service and would not necessarily all be located permanently in the library nearest the development.
- 5.4 New developments which include the provision of sheltered accommodation or other specialised housing for elderly or disabled people will require the extension of the mobile or housebound library service.
- 5.5 The level of provision required will be based on the estimated increase in library use the development is expected to generate. The cost of provision includes the cost of stock and furniture and fittings as well as the building itself. The required standards and precise nature of contributions will reflect local need; but as a guide will be sought on the basis set out below.

6.0 Cost of Enhancement / New Facilities

Residential Development

- 6.1 Based on West Berkshire's minimum library floorspace standards per 1,000 population, it is possible to attribute the additional library space generated by each additional dwelling (using information on average household size). This can then be multiplied by the cost per square metre of library floorspace (based on a combination of average and estimated capital costs of library provision in West Berkshire). In order to determine an appropriate level of contribution per additional dwelling, the following formula has been derived:-

Contributions from Residential Development

$$\frac{\text{Total cost of floorspace}}{\text{Total floorspace}} \text{ (actual and estimated costs)} = \text{Average cost per m}^2$$

Average cost per m² = **£2,400**

West Berkshire minimum floorspace requirements for a static library:
28m²/1000 population = 0.028m² per person

Floorspace (m²) per person x average household size 2002 = floorspace per dwelling
0.028m² x 2.54 = **0.071m² per dwelling**

Cost per m² x Floorspace (m²) per dwelling = cost per dwelling
£2,400 x 0.071m² = **£170 per dwelling**

- 6.2 On this basis a contribution of £170 per dwelling will be expected to ensure that adequate off-site provision can be made for the increased demand in the district.

Commercial Development

- 6.3 Contributions will also be expected from commercial development on the basis that library authorities have a statutory obligation to lend to those who work in the district. The level of contribution required has been set with reference to the number of library members living outside West Berkshire as a proportion of total library membership. This is based on the premise that a proportion of commuters into West Berkshire will make use of library services. In the absence of travel to work data from the 2001 census, it is considered appropriate to use this methodology as being representative of the potential number of additional non-resident library members that will be generated by additional commercial development.
- 6.4 An alternative approach would be to apply the following methodology. Information on the total number of employees in employment in West Berkshire is taken from the Annual Employment Survey. By applying the same proportion of residents commuting out of West Berkshire as recorded in the 1991 census and subtracting it from the current economically active population, it is possible to ascertain the number of commuters into the district. Based on this methodology, 35% of employees in West Berkshire, live outside the district. This compares well with information on current non-resident library membership levels of 32%.
- 6.5 It is recognised that different types of commercial development will generate different levels of employees. The floorspace:employee ratios set out within the core guidance are applied to ascertain an appropriate level of contribution per person. The floorspace:employee ratios are derived from English Partnerships and on a study by Roger Tym for SERPLAN in 1997 and are considered conservative estimates (see this SPG's Core Guidance Paper Table 2). Contributions will be assessed on the net additional number of employees generated as follows:-

Contributions from Commercial Development

$$\frac{\text{Cost per dwelling}}{\text{Average household size}} = \text{Cost of Library Provision per person}$$
$$= £170 / 2.53 = £67.20 \text{ per person}$$

$$\frac{\text{Library Members Outside West Berks}}{\text{Total Number of Library Members}} \times 100 = \text{Commercial Membership Rate (\%)}$$

$$\text{Commercial Membership Rate} \times \text{Cost per Person} = \text{Contribution per Person}$$
$$32 \% \times £67.20 = \textbf{£21.50 per person}$$

$$\frac{\text{Total Floorspace}}{\text{Floorspace:Employee Ratio}} \times \text{Contribution per person} = \text{Floorspace Contribution}$$

- 6.6 A contribution of £21.50 per person will therefore be expected from commercial developments which meet the thresholds set out in this SPG's Core Guidance Paper Table 2, having regard to the table of Floorspace:Employee Ratios.

7.0 Contacts

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Sources/ Documents referred to:

National Library Standards – Department of Culture Media and Sport
Annual Library Plan – West Berkshire Council
Annual Employment Survey - Nomis