ACTION TO BE TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PORTFOLIO DECISION OF:
Cabinet Member for Finance

Agenda – Part: 1	KD Num: KD3968
Subject: Libraries Self Service Kiosks	
Wards: N/A	
Cabinet Members Consulted:	
Councillor Andrew Stafford	

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1.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library Service is a front line statutory universal service serving all age, sex and demographic groups in the Borough of Enfield. The service is delivered from 17 branch libraries spread geographically across the borough. Enfield has the largest number of branch libraries in London, alongside Hillingdon.

An invest to save bid was agreed as part of a Restructuring DAR and ratified at Full Council meeting in July 2012, the savings being realised from the 2011/2012 staffing budget. Self-service machines will be bought with self-service technology to complete the agreed efficiency saving and implement the final phase of the restructuring plan.

The Library & Museum Service was awarded funding of £439,000 to roll out RFID self-service across all static library sites, and has gone through the procurement process to appoint a supplier to provide self-service kiosks, payment kiosks, security gates and other required RFID equipment, systems and tags, including installation, maintenance and staff training.

In addition, Libraries will be buying additional self-service kiosks and replacement staff pads to replace existing self-service equipment in libraries that are now considered to be legacy equipment and therefore cannot be upgraded to Windows 7 in line with Council requirements. This purchase will be funded from the IT programme Innovation Fund.

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2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approve purchase orders being raised to the appointed supplier from the procurement process, for self-service kiosks, staff readers, security gates and other required RFID equipment. Approve purchase orders being raised for replacement counters and other necessary equipment as outlined in the agreed spend to save plan. The total value is £440,375 to be funded as previously agreed. The cost is for a five year refresh period and includes support and Serco costs.
- Approve the release of £259,630 from the IT programme budget to purchase additional self-service kiosks and staff readers to replace Windows XP equipment that cannot be upgraded. The cost is for a five year refresh period and includes support and Serco costs.

3(a). BACKGROUND

Research shows that the average library user is not a purposive browser but wishes to complete their transaction in as few minutes as possible. Fewer staff means potentially longer queues at point of service leading to frustration and poorer customer service. Self-service supported by floor walkers and queue busters rather than two or three static staff behind a counter provides a better customer journey even for those members of the public needing staff support. This is evidenced by fewer complaints at those libraries with self-service compared for instance to Edmonton Green our second busiest branch where queuing and frustration leads to regular incidents.

The Library Service has been driving forward the need for customers to self-serve over the last 5 years. Self-service kiosks have been installed at seven libraries already and customers are used to logging on to the internet to view and manage their library accounts to renew and request items, and check the catalogue via web access and 24/7 automated telephone access. In the financial year 2012/2013, 77% of all transactions at self-service enabled branches were made through the kiosks by customers themselves. Even at our smallest branch, Enfield Island Village, customers conducted 75% of their transactions through the kiosk.

Customer First is working with the Library Service to identify practical ways to support the Customer First vision and formalise the view of libraries as gateways to wider Council service. Self-service is absolutely in line with this Customer First vision and is in fact vital in order to free staff from library counters and enable them to develop a useable wider skill set. Until self-service is delivered borough wide, a percentage of staff are tied to library counters and unable to support the programme. This is especially the case at the larger busier branches such as Edmonton Green where 300,000+ visits take place every year and support for Customer First is high on the agenda.

The technology is changing and improving rapidly and new software available has the potential to allow customers to pay their council tax, buy parking tickets and pay fees and charges directly via kiosks that will also issue and return a book or DVD to them.

At the seven libraries that already have self-service equipment, these use XP technology. The Council requires that these are replaced or upgraded to Windows 7 in 2014. The Library Service owns the equipment and has a maintenance agreement with Axiell through their contract with Bibliotheca. Bibliotheca/Axiell has reported that the existing self-service equipment is now considered to be legacy equipment and therefore cannot be upgraded to Windows 7 in line with Council requirements.

Affected machines are in Enfield Town Library, Ridge Avenue Library, Ordnance Road Library, Fore Street Library, John Jackson Library, Enfield Island Village Library, and Millfield House Library.

3(b). PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The Council undertook a competitive procurement using the Pro 5 Government framework. Suppliers on the framework bid in line with the specification that the Council provided. The specification was split into essential and desirable criteria, and suppliers were scored on this and their proposed price. Three suppliers bid, and the supplier with the highest score was awarded preferred supplier status subject to contract (see Part 2 of this Report).

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Bibliotheca/Axiell have reported that existing self-service equipment in libraries is now considered to be legacy equipment and therefore cannot be upgraded to Windows 7 in line with Council requirements. The appointed supplier is also unable to upgrade the software in all the legacy machines.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Library staffing levels in branches with RFID equipment assume self-service capability and there is a significant degradation in the level of service provision when self-service capability fails. The legacy equipment will not be maintained beyond April 2014, so must be replaced.
This also provides an opportunity to improve self-service provision with more user friendly and reliable technology.

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

The invest to save bid agreed in July 2012, awards funding of £439,000, which will be used to purchase the required RFID self-service equipment and associated costs to meet the efficiency saving and implement the restructuring plan for Libraries.

The release of £259,630 from the IT Innovation Fund will be used to purchase the replacement self-service equipment now considered out of date in seven libraries, which cannot be updated to Windows 7 in line with Council requirements.

The Council's procurement process has been followed, and a supplier chosen in line with agreed procedures.

See Part 2 of this Report.

6.2 Legal Implications

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 S.7 provides that "it shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient, library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof". The proposed recommendations are consistent with the discharge of this duty.

The Council is entitled to call-off from a framework agreement. In doing so the Council must comply with the terms of that framework. The Council must comply with its obligations with regards to obtaining Best Value under the Local Government (Best Value Principles) Act 1999.

The agreements shall be in a form as set out under the framework and to be approved by the Assistant Director of Legal Services.

6.3 Property Implications
N/A

7.   KEY RISKS
See attached

8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8.1 Fairness for All
Investment in the library service ensures a modern and responsive service is available to all residents and ensures equality of access across all communities in the borough.

8.2 Growth and Sustainability
By investing in the library service Enfield Council is ensuring sustainability in to the future

8.3 Strong Communities
Libraries are a focal point for local communities and the investment will contribute to raising the profile of the service for local people.

9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS
The implementation of self service technology will contribute to the Council's channel shift agenda, improve throughput of transactions at point of delivery and enable the service to fully support the council wide move towards online transactions. Self service transaction are a key performance indicator the the Library Service.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS
Self service by the public will reduce the amount of time staff spend using IT equipment.