

# Council will discuss library consultation next week

✖ A new future for Edinburgh's libraries is to be decided next week following a consultation with almost 10,000 people.

The changes will see longer Saturday service for many libraries, whilst £300,000 of reinstated savings agreed in this year's budget will be used to ensure that Sunday opening remains in the six libraries that currently have it.

The changes proposed in the Next Generation Library and Information Service Strategy 2012-2015 will help deliver a modern library service that is more efficient and continues to meet the changing needs of communities.

Almost 10,000 responses were received in response to the call for views from library users, potential library users and various community representatives.

The strategy was viewed as positive, ambitious and achievable and over 80% of the respondents to the consultation felt either positive or neutral about the changes and their effect on access to library services.

Views on the top priorities for investment in libraries services included provision of books, music and DVDs but also highlighted strong support for new technology, such as access to computers, to enhance these facilities.

Councillor Deidre Brock, Culture and Leisure Convenor, said: "In Edinburgh we're extremely proud to be bucking the national trend by prioritising our libraries as a key service. Whilst other councils are closing, or considering closing libraries, in the last month we have opened our newest public library at Drumbrae and are well underway with our plans for the new

Craigmillar Library Hub.

"This public consultation has genuinely helped us decide on the best direction for our libraries service in the next few years. These are very difficult financial times but I am proud to say that rather than closing libraries, we are opening new ones and responding to the public by investing in the services that are important to them."

The strategy also sets out a vision for the next few years that would see libraries working closely with other Council and partner agencies through community hubs. The service would continue to build on excellent customer relations and look to foster a love of reading among more members of the community.

Libraries would continue to make the best use of technology and resource by developing the online services such as E-books and IT courses.

Close attention will also be paid to developing the fabric of library buildings to bring the service forward into the 21st century. To date major refurbishment has been carried out at Stockbridge, Portobello and Morningside Libraries.

Councillors will be asked to consider the report and agree the strategy at the Culture and Leisure Committee next Wednesday 22 February 2012.