



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet
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## Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, 2018 to 2023

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### 1.0 Summary

This report seeks approval for the Library Services Strategy (the Strategy) for Shropshire. Shropshire Council (the 'Council') is proud of its library services. This Strategy reflects our ambition and commitment to continue to unlock the huge potential that library services have to impact positively on individuals' lives while at the same time delivering local priorities. Whilst acknowledging that this is a particularly challenging time for library services, it is also clear that they are highly valued by local communities and stakeholders alike. The next five years are crucial for the long-term sustainability and success of public library services in Shropshire.

The Strategy sets out or **Vision** for libraries in Shropshire to be at the core of their communities.

A public consultation was carried out between 26<sup>th</sup> July and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Within the consultation, we sought responses to specific proposals to reduce the number of mobile library stops from 354 to 277.

Over 700 responses were received to the consultation. 37% of respondents agreed with the vision, mission, objectives and principles set out within the draft Strategy, and 52% agreed to some extent. 35% of respondents agreed with the hierarchy of provision set out within the draft Strategy, and 51% agreed to some extent.

As a result of the consultation a number of changes have been made to the Strategy, including the development of detailed outcomes, and confirmation of a proposed hierarchy of library services provision.

Within this hierarchy, the Strategy describes how the Council can meet its statutory requirements to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" by providing:

- Static library provision within six Tier 1 locations (seven libraries) – Library Hubs – and seven Tier 2 locations (seven libraries) – Community Libraries.
- 281 Mobile Library stops, principally responding to challenges of an ageing population and access to services in a rural context.
- Digital library services including 24-hour access to a range of lending and information resources

In setting out this hierarchy it is important to emphasise that there are no proposals to close any of the seven Tier 3 Community Libraries.

In implementing this Strategy, the Council will continue to work with a broad range of local partners to try to find sustainable solutions to the long-term management of all of its libraries. Within these arrangements, the Council will continue to provide a full range of “back office” support to local organisations. Where a local solution cannot be found the Council may consider closure as a last resort following public consultation, the development of a Needs Assessment and ESIA, and a Cabinet decision.

100% of Shropshire residents will be able to access static libraries within one of the Tier 1 and 2 locations or a mobile library stop within a 20-minute drive time. In setting this out we recognise that the way that people access library services is much more complicated than this simple analysis suggests, for example, not everyone has access to a car, and that public and community transport options in rural areas are more limited.

The Strategy also reaffirms the Council's commitment to investing in digital services and to supporting a range of “core and targeted library services”.

The Council will work with a broad range of interested parties to develop a co-ordinated and jointly owned five-year implementation plan within the context set out in the Strategy and the Council's financial position.

The Strategy sets out the Council's preferred course of action, but the ability of the Council to support library services will be determined as the Council's medium term financial position becomes more clearly defined. Any proposals for the decommissioning of library services will be brought back to Cabinet for determination.

## 2.0 Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

- A. Approve the Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, 2018 to 2023.
- B. Delegate responsibility to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure Services and a broad range of interested parties to co-develop, implement and review a detailed five-year action plan linked to the delivery of the Strategy.

## REPORT

### 3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

A number of risks related to the successful implementation of the Strategy have been identified.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation actions</b>
Adoption of the Library Services Strategy and the proposed minimum library provision fails to comply with Section 7 of the Public Library and Museum Act 1964 (see below)	There are no specific proposals to close any static libraries and the Council will continue to support “community groups” to develop sustainable funding solutions to their long-term management. Where solutions cannot be found for libraries that fall outside the Council's assessment of its minimum requirement to

	<p>provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons”, the Council may as a last resort consult on possible closure. From our detailed assessment, we believe that the proposed minimum provision described within this report will meet the Council’s statutory requirements and will provide library services for all residents in the county.</p>
<p>Adoption of the Strategy results in a detrimental impact to individual and community outcomes including literacy, health and well-being, prosperity, etc.</p>	<p>The Council recognises that it will take time and resources, staff and financial, to support the development of sustainable library services. This is why the Strategy proposes to phase in new arrangements within the context of the development of a detailed five-year action plan.</p> <p>The Council has a strong commitment to working to promote equality, diversity and social inclusion. The potential impact of the Strategy on library users, particularly those who might be impacted by any change has been assessed through the completion of an Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment - see <b>Appendix 3</b>.</p>
<p>Lack of stakeholder engagement and public involvement in the development of the Strategy results in challenge to the Strategy and resultant delay to its adoption as a framework for future Council investment and support</p>	<p>Advice has been received from the Libraries Task Force, Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (CILIP) and Society of Chief Librarians in the development of the Strategy.</p> <p>As a result of an eleven-week public and stakeholder consultation a number of changes have taken place to the Strategy.</p>
<p>Lack of staff and financial resources to implement the Strategy, including investment in improvements to services and ongoing revenue support</p>	<p>The Council will continue to apply dedicated expert library staff resources to the implementation of the Strategy and, where appropriate, will use the Community Enablement Team to support local facilitation.</p> <p>Where appropriate, investment will be sought from external funding organisations, such as the Arts Council and DCMS. Capital investment proposals will be appraised through the Council’s capital programme on an “invest to save” basis.</p> <p>Proactive “back office” support across a range of countywide library functions will continue to be provided to community managed libraries.</p>

### **The Council's statutory responsibility**

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (section 7). In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

In providing this service, local authorities must, among other things:

- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b)) Note that there are exceptions for example for the notification of the availability of reserved items and library overdue charges, and for the lending of audio visual material.

The Council also has statutory duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [section 149: Public Sector Equality Duty](#) in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees. An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment is included within **Appendix 3**. This will be kept under further review in the context of the development of a detailed implementation plan.

The hierarchy of provision described within the Strategy does not set out to close any existing static library, but it does recognise that the Council will need to prioritise where it provides financial support. Any individual proposals for significant investment and / or decommissioning in static libraries will be brought back to Cabinet with further individual ESIIAs. These assessments will consider the potential impact for people in, for example, the groupings of Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Gender, and Religion and Belief.

Proposals to reduce the number of mobile library stops are based on a thorough assessment of alternative provision and the potential impact to library users. In designing future stops, we have retained stops for borrowers who would be unable to travel to an alternative stop because of a lack of transport or mobility problems. We have also identified housebound readers who either will continue to receive a service via the mobile library or will receive a home library service from a nearby static branch. Volunteers will be recruited to choose books from the mobile library and to deliver to housebound readers in their village. Where possible, after school stops have also been retained.

## **4.0 Financial implications**

The Council is projected to have a funding gap of £44 million by the end of 2019/20.

Shropshire library services has achieved £1.015m savings over the past three financial years. This has been achieved through significant service redesign to provide a library service that embraces different delivery models; through the transfer of smaller libraries to town and parish councils or community organisations, investment in digital and virtual services, and through the delivery of an ambitious outreach programme targeted at meeting council outcomes.

This report is written on the assumption that the Council wants to continue to support a "comprehensive library service" across the county for the benefit of the community,

but that it needs to do this based on a thorough understanding of need and budget constraints.

The current Council annual revenue budget in support of the delivery of library services breaks down as follows:

<b>Library services</b>	<b>Current Net Controllable* Budget for 2017/18</b>
Library Hubs (7 libraries at 6 hub locations)	£902,690
Community Libraries x14	£274,180
Mobile libraries x4	£184,440
Library development & support including IT & Community directory	£534,020
Library Materials – book fund	£218,500
Library Management	£166,240
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,280,070</b>

\*excludes the cost of internal support services and 'below the line' costs

Going forward the Strategy proposes an approach in which there is a potential long-term financial commitment to supporting the provision of seven libraries within six Tier 1 Library Hub locations<sup>[1]</sup>, a fleet of mobile libraries and a range of “back office” functions.

The Strategy is based on the on-going delivery of 281 Mobile Library Service stops. This means that 79% of the existing stops will continue. These changes will enable the Council to make a saving of £46,110 whilst protecting the service for those in greatest need.

The Strategy proposes to move to cost neutral provision for 14 Tier 2 and Tier 3 Community Libraries while recognising that in some cases this may require time limited investment and support.

Specifically, the Strategy aims to achieve cost neutral provision at all seven Tier 2 facilities by the end of 2022/23 and at all seven Tier 3 facilities by the end of 2020/21. This would save the Council approximately £82,000 per annum by the end of 2020/21, increasing to approximately £274,000 per annum from the end of 2022/23.

This can be summarised as follows:

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[1] For an explanation and list of proposed tier 1, 2 and 3 libraries see section 8.0

Library		Financial Support	Number of Libraries	Library Description
Statutory Library Provision	Tier 1 Library Hubs	Ongoing revenue support	7	Shrewsbury (Main library & Library at the Lantern) Oswestry Market Drayton Whitchurch Ludlow Bridgnorth
	Tier 2 Community Libraries	Cost neutral to the Council by the end of 2022/23	7	Cleobury Mortimer Church Stretton Bishop's Castle Ellesmere Pontesbury Albrighton Wem
	Mobile Libraries	Ongoing revenue support	281 stops	
Tier 3 Community Libraries		Cost neutral to the Council by the end of 2020/21	7	Broseley Shifnal Highley Craven Arms Much Wenlock Gobowen Bayston Hill

Revenue support to a number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 community libraries is currently subject to existing operating agreements, but it is anticipated that following the end of these agreements, ongoing revenue support will be determined according to the status of the library described above. It is recognised that revenue support will need to be negotiated on an individual basis to reflect different local circumstances.

The Council was successful in winning a £520,000 share of the Government's £89.4m Transformation Challenge Award in 2015. The funding has assisted with the development of new community managed libraries (and Customer Service Points). The funding has also been used to increase the capacity and confidence of town and parish councils and voluntary organisations to take on the delivery and management of assets and services.

The Council will continue to work to acquire external funding to support the future sustainability of library services. Access to the Council's Capital Programme will also be pursued as appropriate. Projects will be subject to a capital appraisal on an individual basis. Where the responsibility for the management of services is being transferred to new organisations, an "invest to save" approach may be adopted within the context of wider commercial discussions and considerations.

It is recognised that the detailed approach described here may need to be reviewed in the light of the Council's Financial Strategy and emerging forecast financial position.

## 5.0 Current library services provision

Library services in Shropshire operate through a network of community libraries, mobile libraries and other services, which together provide access to library services in every market town and in all parts of a very rural and sparsely populated county. In more detail the library service in Shropshire includes (at November 2017):

6 libraries run by Shropshire Council within large market towns and main urban centres	Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Market Drayton
7 community libraries run by Shropshire Council within local market towns	Gobowen, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill, Wem, Library at the Lantern, Pontesbury, Much Wenlock
8 community libraries run by local community group / town councils, etc. within local market towns	Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Craven Arms, Highley, Shifnal, Cleobury Mortimer, Ellesmere
4 Mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council	Cover 354 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours long on a fortnightly rota
Stoke Heath Prison Library	Operated under fully funded contract from Her Majesty's Prisons
Specialist library services	Digital Library Services Home Library Service Community Directory Music and Drama Service Reading Group Service Visitor Information Services (in Bridgnorth and Church Stretton) Gateway to a range of Council, other public and partner services (in some locations)

In summary, the core library offers provided through the services described above include:

- A free, safe, neutral space
- Free computer and Wi-Fi use
- Free book loans for all ages and all abilities (large print, dyslexia friendly, Quick Reads titles)
- Free 24 hours e-library (e-books, e-magazine, e-newspapers, Community Directory)
- Free online and library reference resources
- Free social space for a variety of groups to learn and socialise

- Reading Group, Home Library, Music and Drama service

Recent countywide trends for a number of usage measures for Shropshire's library services are shown below:

Shropshire Libraries Totals	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	% change over 5yrs	% change from 15/16 to 16/17
Visits	1,340,186	1,278,112	1,067,825	1,032,582	1,000,012	-25%	-3%
Active Users <sup>1</sup>	47,634	44,286	41,564	41,639	46,249	-3%	11%
Computer Time Used (mins)	5,824,934	6,026,964	5,504,397	4,773,696	4,453,632	-24%	-7%
Total Loans	1,274,871	1,197,643	1,080,888	963,019	892,001	-30%	-7%
Requests	87,281	80,217	80,930	74,068	65,963	-24%	-11%
Event attendance	29,192	34,000	32,691	33,144	38,226	31%	15%
No. of volunteers	192	272	332	412	323	68%	-21%
No. of volunteer hours	7,775	10,202	10,003	11,482	13,119	69%	14%
Enquiries <sup>2</sup>	274,316	255,371	281,210	289,717	332,146	21%	15%
E-book loans	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,841	14,426	n/a	375%
E-magazine loans	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,181	9,267	n/a	29%
Home Library Service users	171	160	199	155	102	-40%	4%
Wi-Fi use	New Wi-Fi installed across libraries in March 2016. Use since then has increased by 17.6% with an average of 1,988 users per month.						

The overall decline in key measures reflects national trends. Online developments mean that it is now easier to access a range of library services without actually visiting a library. This includes renewing and requesting items and accessing a selection of online resources, plus newer services such as e-books and e-magazines. While the use of these remote services is increasing, there has generally

<sup>1</sup> **Active Library User** figures indicate the number of people registered at a particular library who have used any Shropshire library over the previous 12 months. 'Use' is defined as borrowing/returning an item of library stock or using library computers. Postcodes of active library user data have been mapped using the Ordnance Survey Codepoint file. This matches postcodes to postcode centroids and not exact locations, locations can refer to more than one address (usually a cluster of 15 addresses). The coordinated position will always be within the notional geographical extent of the postcode.

<sup>3</sup> The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy definition of an enquiry is "any question, however received (e.g. in person, by letter, by phone) leading to the active involvement of staff in identifying and answering problems posed by library users".



been a corresponding reduction in the number of physical visits to libraries and in the use of library computers.

The number of total loans will also have been affected by the wider availability of discounted paperbacks in supermarkets and from online retailers, and the reduction in the library book fund in recent years.

## **6.0 Background to the development of a new Library Services Strategy**

Three reports taken to the Environment Services Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2014, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016 summarise progress made on the countywide redesign of library services.

A report taken to Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015 confirmed that a “locality commissioning approach” would be adopted for the introduction of new management arrangements at smaller libraries and that a new management and delivery structure would be developed for the larger principal market town libraries (Library Hubs).

Further reports taken to Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016 confirmed the closure of Shawbury Library and a reduction in opening hours to a number of libraries.

A report taken to Cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 confirmed details of a public consultation to be undertaken on the draft Library Services Strategy and that a further report would be brought to Cabinet with the outcomes of a public and stakeholder consultation with a view to finalising the Strategy. The 12<sup>th</sup> July cabinet report can be viewed at:

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/g3418/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Jul-2017%2012.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

The key objectives of the Library Services Strategy are to:

- Analyse the supply and demand for library services and design innovative services that are fit for the future.
- Ensure that the delivery of library services is undertaken with full reference to relevant strategic and local priorities including well-being considerations and financial constraints.
- Clarify the role of the Council as commissioner, provider, partner and/or enabler of library services.
- Confirm an approach for Council support for the future provision of library services.
- Maximise engagement with existing and potential customers and key stakeholders.

## **7.0 Outcomes of the Public Consultation**

In developing a new Library Services Strategy for Shropshire expert input was provided by the Libraries Task Force, the Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals and the Society of Chief Librarians. Officers used this input, alongside consideration of other library strategies and best practice elsewhere, to develop Shropshire’s draft Strategy.

Over 700 responses were received to a public consultation carried out between 26<sup>th</sup> July and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Included within this were specific responses from the Library Network Forum (comprising representatives from community organisations managing libraries), town and parish councils, library friends groups Shropshire Council Members, and a number of other stakeholders.

In summary, 37% of respondents agreed with the vision, mission, objectives and principles set out within the draft Strategy, and 52% agreed to some extent. 35% of respondents agreed with the hierarchy of provision set out within the draft Strategy, and 51% agreed to some extent.

The detailed outcomes of the public consultation are reported on within **Appendix 1**. We have summarised below the principal changes made to the Library Services Strategy resulting from the public consultation.

<b>Consultation feedback</b>	<b>Proposed changes to the Library Strategy</b>
<p>The vision, mission, objectives and principles were too vague, difficult to understand and not necessarily relevant to the delivery of library services.</p> <p>Library services should provide more help for young and old people and the most disadvantaged members of society.</p>	<p>We have simplified and clarified wording and changed the four strategy objectives into long-term outcomes. To help with understanding of each outcome we have included examples of actions that will be undertaken. We agreed that as well “as providing a universal offer”, library service should be focused at both ends of the age spectrum and at disadvantaged communities and people.</p>
<p>What basis have you used to confirm the hierarchy of library service provision?</p> <p>The proposed hierarchy does not take adequate account of rurality and is based on unrealistic drive times</p>	<p>We have continued to use the following key considerations to inform the design of a hierarchy of library services provision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accessibility</li> <li>2. Usage of the facilities</li> <li>3. Population including population density and its demographic make up</li> <li>4. Deprivation</li> </ol> <p>We recognise that, in some respects, the application of drive times in particular is an unsophisticated approach, which does not fully reflect local circumstances and practical realities. This is why we have considered drive times alongside other considerations, and retained a mobile library service to provide services to rural communities.</p> <p>In setting out a hierarchy, it is not the Council's deliberate intention to close any existing library, but our approach does recognise that there is also a financial reality.</p>
<p>It is unrealistic to expect tier 3 libraries to achieve cost neutral provision by the end of 2018/19</p>	<p>We recognise that balancing costs with our partners may require more time and support and have extended the period of tapered funding support to three years for tier 3 libraries.</p> <p>The strategy also confirms the “back office support” to be provided by the Council. This will be provided free of charge to libraries that continue to be part of the Shropshire library network.</p>
<p>Libraries should continue to be managed by paid expert staff</p>	<p>We value the expertise and professionalism of our paid staff who we recognise as our greatest asset. The Strategy references that all libraries, regardless</p>

	<p>of which tier they are in, will be operated by paid staff and supported by volunteers, where libraries are part of the wider library network.</p>
<p>A number of comments were made in relation to specific libraries, particularly with respect to which tier they should be placed in.</p>	<p>In seeking to finalise the Strategy, we have considered all responses and further analysis, and would make a number of specific responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library at the Lantern, Shrewsbury – We propose to assign this library to tier 1 (as a satellite to the main library in Shrewsbury), rather than tier 2. The Library at the Lantern already forms part of an existing diverse range of services and community meeting spaces, and serves areas of significant deprivation within north Shrewsbury</li> <li>• Wem library – Although the library at Wem is 18 minutes’ drive from alternative provision at Whitchurch, we recognise that it is a popular library serving a significant market town and sparse rural hinterland. We propose to assign this library to tier 2 rather than tier 3.</li> <li>• Church Stretton library – Specific comments relating to the location of the library will be considered within the context of the current exercise to procure a new provider for library services in Church Stretton.</li> </ul> <p>We are otherwise not proposing any changes to the proposed hierarchy of provision, beyond the acknowledgment that further time and support will be provided to tier 3 libraries to achieve “cost neutral” sustainable provision.</p>
<p>A number of comments were made in relation to retaining specific mobile library stops and reviewing stops</p>	<p>Following a review of comments and in the context of issues round rural isolation, disability, absence of alternatives we have retained 2 stops previously proposed for deletion. These are at Clive and Brockton. 2 new stops responding to local need have also been added to give a total of 281 stops.</p> <p>Other comments were made, for example with respect to future housing growth and alternative more appropriate stops; we will continue to keep mobile library services under review as local circumstances change, and will consult locally as appropriate.</p>
<p>A large number of specific ideas were raised during the course of the consultation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income generating and cost saving</li> <li>• Resource and space sharing</li> <li>• Promotion and marketing</li> <li>• Events and activities</li> <li>• Digital services</li> <li>• Mobile services</li> </ul>	<p>We welcome the many ideas that respondees to the consultation have made and look forward to progressing these within the context of the development of a detailed five-year action plan. Our intention remains to work closely with partners in the development of this action plan.</p>

## 8.0 Library Services Strategy, 2018 to 2023

The proposed final Library Services Strategy, 2018 to 2023, is included within **Appendix 2**. The approach set out within the Strategy is underpinned by an understanding of the unique character of Shropshire and the opportunities and issues facing its residents. This is brought together within the Needs Assessment, which forms part of the Strategy and is included as **Appendix 3**.

Key aspects and recommendations from the Strategy are included within this report.

In developing and delivering a Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, we have applied the following underlying **principles**:

- The provision of information and reading will remain fundamental to public library provision, and will take account of the shifts in society and the opportunities provided by technological developments.
- The importance of libraries as community spaces, as hubs for people, for creativity, learning, information, for the delivery of other services and for the provision of a wide range of opportunities and support to local communities and people.
- The opportunity to work with individuals and organisations as partners the delivery of library services that best reflect the needs of local communities.

The Library Services Strategy for Shropshire sets out our **Vision** for libraries in Shropshire to be at the core of their communities. We want to work in partnership with others to empower everyone to live healthy, resilient and fulfilling lives, and to provide library services that inspire people's learning and enjoyment.

We will measure the success of this Strategy through the achievement of the following **outcomes**:

1. Improved opportunities for literacy, reading and culture
2. Improved health and well-being of Shropshire communities
3. Communities that are resilient and inclusive
4. Libraries that are more innovative and sustainable

The draft Strategy sets out a **hierarchy of library services provision** and describes how the council can meet its statutory requirements to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" by providing:

- Static library provision within six Tier 1 locations (seven libraries) – Library Hubs – and seven Tier 2 locations (seven libraries) – Community Libraries.
- 281 mobile library stops, principally responding to the challenges of an ageing population and access to services in a rural context
- Digital library services including 24-hour access to a range of lending and information resources

The Strategy does not set out to close any existing libraries, but it does recognise the need to provide a framework that allows future investment and revenue support to be prioritised.

The Strategy will be supported by the development of a detailed action plan to cover the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

## 9.0 A hierarchy of Library Services provision

We have used the following key considerations to inform the design of a hierarchy of library services provision:

1. Accessibility
2. Usage of the facilities
3. Population including population density and its demographic make up
4. Deprivation

### Hierarchy of library services provision

Library Services Provision	Details
<b>Tier 1 Library Hubs</b> (urban centres & larger market towns)	Shrewsbury (the main library and the Library at the Lantern), Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Market Drayton
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad opening times to reflect the wide catchment areas served</li> <li>• Staffed libraries</li> <li>• Conveniently located within “Community Hubs” - multifunctional spaces, gateways to a range of services, co-location of partners, etc.</li> <li>• Part of the Library Network retaining access to stock, requests service, reading groups, digital services etc.</li> <li>• Presumption for on-going management by Shropshire Council within arrangements that provide value for money within the provision of a “comprehensive” library service</li> <li>• Revenue support for the provision of library services; opportunity for partner organisations to “add value” to provision via partner funding</li> <li>• “Back office support” provided by Shropshire Council Libraries Team at no charge if appropriate</li> <li>• Proactive approach to on-going investment in support of improved facilities</li> <li>• Proactive approach to the development of innovative approaches to the use of library spaces and to raising income</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 2 Community Libraries</b> (smaller market towns)	Cleobury Mortimer, Church Stretton, Bishop’s Castle, Ellesmere, Pontesbury, Albrighton and Wem
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible opening times to reflect local need</li> <li>• Staffed libraries supported by volunteers</li> <li>• Conveniently located within “Community Hubs” - multifunctional spaces, gateways to a range of services, co-location of partners, etc.</li> <li>• Part of the Library Network retaining access to</li> </ul>

	<p>stock, requests service, reading groups, digital services etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosted and managed by local community organisations within contract arrangements with Shropshire Council that provide value for money within the provision of a “comprehensive” library service</li> <li>• Maximum of five year time limited tapered revenue support linked to a plan to achieve sustainable and cost neutral provision (to the Council) by the end of 2022/23; within this context different solutions may be required for different libraries</li> <li>• “Back office support” provided by Shropshire Council Libraries Team at no charge</li> <li>• Proactive approach to investment in support of improved facilities</li> <li>• Proactive approach to the development of innovative approaches to the use of library spaces and to raising income</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tier 3 Community Libraries</b> (smaller market towns)</p>	<p>Broseley, Shifnal, Highley, Craven Arms, Much Wenlock, Gobowen and Bayston Hill</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible opening hours</li> <li>• Staffed libraries supported by volunteers ,where part of the Library Network</li> <li>• Managed by local community organisations within contract arrangements with Shropshire Council</li> <li>• Maximum of three year time limited tapered revenue support linked to a plan to achieve sustainable cost neutral provision (to the Council) by the end of 2020/21; within this context different solutions may be required for different libraries</li> <li>• On-going “back office support” provided by Shropshire Council Libraries Team at no charge, where sustainable revenue funding requirements are met</li> <li>• Potential “one-off” investment in support of improved and sustainable facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stoke Heath Prison Library</b></p>	<p>Operated under full funded contract from Her Majesty’s Prisons – supported by Shropshire Libraries</p>
<p><b>Mobile Libraries: 281 stops</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to rural areas</li> <li>• Presumption for ongoing management by Shropshire Council within arrangements that provide value for money within the provision of a “comprehensive” library service</li> <li>• Fortnightly rota</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the Library Network</li> <li>• Offering a broad range of information and advisory support to potentially vulnerable and isolated individuals</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Library Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24-hour access</li> <li>• e-lending</li> <li>• e-resources</li> <li>• Community Directory</li> </ul>

All library services supported by the Council will provide a number of core and targeted services.

### **Core and targeted library services**

<b>Core library services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books loans for adults, children and teenagers</li> <li>• Specialist Book collections for Parents and Carers, Special Situations, Books on Prescription</li> <li>• e-books, e-magazine, e-newspapers</li> <li>• Music &amp; Drama lending Service</li> <li>• Free WIFI</li> <li>• Free computer use</li> <li>• Online reference resources</li> <li>• Home library service</li> <li>• Rhyme &amp; Story Times for pre-schoolers</li> <li>• Reading Groups</li> <li>• Gateway to a range of Council, other public and partner services</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted library services</b>	<p>Initiatives that support the <b>Outcomes</b> for Shropshire library services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved opportunities for literacy, reading and culture</li> <li>2. Improved health and well-being of Shropshire communities</li> <li>3. Communities that are resilient and inclusive</li> <li>4. Libraries that are more innovative and sustainable</li> </ol>

The table below summarises the percentage of the Shropshire population that live within 20 minutes of a Tier 1 library hub, Tier 2 community library and mobile library stop; 20 minutes of a Tier 1 library hub and Tier 2 community library; and 25 minutes of a Tier 1 library hub.

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Population estimate</b>	<b>Percentage of the total population</b>
Within 20 minutes' drive time of 7 Tier 1 Library Hubs + 7 Tier 2 Community Libraries + 281 Mobile Library stops	311,400	100%
Within 20 minutes' drive time of 7 Tier 1 Library Hubs + 7 Tier 2 Community Libraries	298,210	95%
Within 25 minutes' drive time of 7 Tier 1 Library Hubs	286,423	91%

Source: Based on using Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2016, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

It is also noteworthy that approximately 37% of the Shropshire population live within 20 minutes of a library within a neighbouring authority area.

In adopting this approach, we recognise that the provision of library service is not simply a question of proximity but also of availability and quality.

In setting out a hierarchy of library services provision it is important to emphasise that there are no proposals to close **Tier 3 Community Libraries** – i.e. Broseley, Shifnal, Highley, Craven Arms, Much Wenlock, Gobowen, and Bayston Hill. The Council will continue to work with a broad range of local partners to try to find sustainable solutions to the long-term management of all of its libraries. Within these arrangements, the Council will continue to provide freely a full range of “back office” support to local organisations. Where a local solution cannot be found the Council may consider closure as a last resort following public consultation, the development of a Needs Assessment and ESIA, and a Cabinet decision.

## **9.0 Implementation and review of the Library Services Strategy**

Once, following public consultation, the Library Services Strategy is confirmed, a detailed five-year implementation plan will be developed.

The detailed implementation plan will be reviewed in the context of the Council's financial position. Any proposals for significant investment and / or decommissioning will be brought back to Cabinet.

The draft Strategy, its delivery and review, is set in the context of the Council's three high-level outcomes and Performance Management Framework:

- Healthy people
- Resilient communities
- Prosperous economy

### What will success look like?

Shropshire Libraries will have a clear brand linked to the seven national library Universal Offers. We will help to build healthy, thriving and resilient communities.



Investment in our staff, information technology and our services will place libraries at the heart of their communities.

Shropshire Libraries will nurture ambition, support health and well-being, challenge inequality, grow the economy and create more learning and employment possibilities to underpin continued social and economic development for Shropshire's citizens.

Specifically we will have made significant progress in achieving our outcomes:

1. Improved opportunities for literacy, reading and culture
2. Improved health and well-being of Shropshire communities
3. Communities that are resilient and inclusive
4. Libraries that are more innovative and sustainable

We will know that we have done this when we have:

- invested in our staff, IT and infrastructure
- improved access through the provision of a full range of online services and targeted opening hours
- provided a quality range of well publicised services across our libraries
- improved library usage and visits using effective marketing and by exploiting digital services
- improved processes and systems for greater efficiency
- operated at lower cost
- operated as community facilities working in partnership and alongside additional services
- used trained volunteers to improve added value library services and enhance the free statutory library offer
- exploited opportunities to work with partners to develop commercial services
- promoted key health and wellbeing opportunities

#### Review of the Library Services Strategy

Usage of library service provision will be monitored and kept under review. However, the focus will change to reflect a broad range of measurements that reflect the varied usage of spaces and services and the co-creation and delivery of new management arrangements. Ongoing efforts will be made to encourage participation by users and non-users.

The potential impact of the on-going redesign of library services will continue to be reviewed and monitored. The council also has statutory duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [section 149: Public Sector Equality Duty](#) in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

Alongside this, the Council will continue to look at best practice, encourage comments and ideas from local residents and actively encourage the participation of local community groups in the development and delivery of library services.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

Draft Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, 2018 – 2023, Cabinet, 12 July 2017

Review of Shropshire library opening hours, Cabinet, 27 July 2016

Proposals for the closure of Shawbury Library and for alternative library service Provision, Cabinet, 27 July 2016

Shropshire Council library service, the next five years, Environment Scrutiny Services Committee, 11 July 2016

Redesigning Shropshire Council's library service and customer service points, Cabinet 14 October 2015  
Update - future commissioning and provision of library services, Environment Services Scrutiny Committee, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015  
Future commissioning and provision of library services and community co-location, Environment Scrutiny Services Committee, 8 December 2014

**Cabinet Member:**

Cllr Lezley Picton, Portfolio Holder for Culture & Leisure

**Local Members:**

All local members

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Outcomes of public consultation

Appendix 2 - Library Services Strategy for Shropshire 2018 – 2023

Appendix 3 – Informing the development of the Council's approach to the future development of library services, a Needs Assessment

Appendix 4 - Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment