



| <u>Committee and Date</u> | <u>Item</u> |
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| Environment and Scrutiny Services Committee 2.00pm, 8 th December 2014 | 6 <u>Public</u> |

FUTURE COMMISSIONING AND PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND COMMUNITY CO-LOCATION

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1. Summary

This report summarises progress and next steps on the county-wide redesign of library services.

Local public consultation on the future of Library Services is being managed at a community level through 'community conversations'. Shropshire residents are being invited to help shape the future direction of their local library and customer service points with local community based consultations. As the way people use services continues to evolve and the shifting emphasis from the Council as the provider to the commissioner, the status quo is no longer an option.

Libraries are "traditional" services that are delivered directly by Shropshire Council in buildings within Shropshire's market towns. We would like to use these buildings and appropriate community facilities to underpin our new Community Co-location plan and to act as a catalyst for the changing way in which services will be delivered in the future.

We have piloted a redesigned library service in Highley which is managed by Halo Leisure alongside other leisure and community activities provided within the Severn Centre. In 2014 the library in Craven Arms moved to the Craven Arms Community Centre and is run by a local social enterprise organisation, the South Shropshire Furniture Scheme, with on-going support provided by Shropshire Council.

Other initial delivery models are being developed in Gobowen, Shawbury, Broseley, Bishops Castle, Shifnal, Church Stretton and Cleobury Mortimer

The approach is being undertaken by the library team who are aided by key community stakeholders, Local Joint Committees (LJCs) the Community Enablement Team (CET) and Locality Commissioners to facilitate the commissioning of library services and involves an assessment of potential providers and an evaluation of need. Communities are integral to these community conversations and will continue to be engaged and involved throughout the process.

Service level agreements and funding mechanisms for the redesign work to respond to specific areas of unmet need in LJC areas are being developed as each community conversation takes place. . Progress is also being made with the library buildings themselves and community asset transfers are also being considered.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committee members provide feedback and comment in respect of progress to date and the next stages of the library redesign work.
- 2.2 That Scrutiny Committee provide feedback and comment on the co-location of services development at the major market towns.
- 2.3 That Scrutiny Committee receives a further update in respect of the library redesign and co-location model in spring 2015.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 A risk management log is being maintained for all aspects of work associated with transition of the library redesign. This enables identification and assessment of risks, as well as identification of mitigating actions.
- 3.2 Human Rights: No adverse impact expected
- 3.3 Equalities Impact and Needs Analysis (EINA) have been developed for the 22 services as part of the future development work and local consultation to enable a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the analysis. A low level risk has been identified: access in rural areas. It is expected that this risk will be mitigated by the partners supporting local developments and reconfiguring mobile library services. The EINAs will continue to be updated over the coming months as the final models are shaped.
- 3.4 The future redesign has the potential for greater freedom in local communities. Where collaboration and opportunities are identified, this development has the potential to further support and engage local communities.
- 3.5 Environment: No adverse impact expected.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Library services have to meet a savings target of £1.3 million over the three year period 2014/15 to 2016/2017.
- 4.2 First year savings of £430k have been achieved through a range of efficiency savings and improved operating arrangements, as well as through voluntary redundancies.
- 4.3 Savings in the next two years will be delivered through transferring the operation of a number of libraries to community organisations or town or parish councils, and/or by working in partnership with these organisations to manage provision differently. This will result in reduced 'back office' and management costs, as well as significantly reduced costs of directly delivery.

- 4.4 The redesign model will leave a remaining net controllable Libraries budget of £2.2. million.

5. Background

- 5.1 The proposed redesign of library services as part of the co-location of services is to enable the redesign of Libraries to provide a more affordable service model that will contribute to the delivery of the Shropshire Council Commissioning Plan and Libraries Strategy.
- 5.2 The 22 library network has developed over a number of years to reflect the needs and circumstances of communities, including the most isolated. Currently there are four levels of service for lending and reference provision via community libraries, complemented by the mobile library service, home library service and central support services.
- 5.3 The library levels have been developed to give a clear indication of the range of resources and support a customer can expect. They also help to define the library opening hours, level of staff, numbers of public computers and expected performance. They are reviewed quarterly to monitor performance and to help improve our service delivery.
- 5.4 These are:
- Level 1- urban centres: Shrewsbury, Oswestry;
 - Level 2 - larger market towns: Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton and Whitchurch;
 - Level 3 - smaller market towns and outlying rural areas: Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ellesmere, Shifnal and Wem, Bayston Hill and The Library at the Lantern.
 - Level 4 - rural areas: Cleobury Mortimer, Gobowen, Highley, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury and Shawbury.
 - 4 mobile libraries cover the north, central, south east and south west of the county.
- 5.5 We want these services to underpin our new co-location plan and to act as a catalyst for the changing way in which services will be delivered in the future. Co-locating services provides a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community activity and bring residents, the local business community, and smaller organisations together to improve the quality of life in their areas.
- 5.6 Within this context we have created a broad model in which to help start the community conversations. These are categorised into four areas with each detailing how in the future they could be delivered differently:
- 5.7 **Community Libraries:**
- **Larger Community Libraries** - Shropshire Council/Town Councils/ key VCS partner run.
 - **Smaller Community Libraries** – community/voluntary sector/Town Council run with necessary support.
 - **“Independently run” Community Facilities** - community run with an ambition to be largely self-reliant.

5.8 Our approach is based on having these community conversations in each market town, with some already well advanced in areas such as Bishops Castle, Church Stretton and Gobowen. By working in partnership we are able to review and rationalise local “assets” - buildings, money, people, organisations and skills - to better align local resources in support of better outcomes for local communities.

5.9 It is hoped “Community Libraries” will be:

- The natural home for cross sector working and for the redesign of services around people
- Be “neutral” and inclusive venues at the heart of the community
- Where ever possible be owned and run by the community for the community
- Recognise the capacity of the community and are underpinned by strong local networks, relationships and a commitment to a common cause
- Place the emphasis on providing the right support to people at the right time within their communities where community self-help is the norm

5.10 We recognise the importance of technological solutions to assist remote access to services. We know that face to face contact is important to our most vulnerable residents to aid support within their community and reduce expensive professional involvement.

5.11 Service delivery will look different within each community as their design will reflect local need, demographics and assets. The transformation work that we have already undertaken in Highley and Craven Arms shows us that libraries, customer service points, children's services, adult social care, public health and primary health care all see co-location as the way forward.

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| List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) |
| Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder): Councillor Gwilym Butler |
| Local Member: All local Members |
| Appendices |
| None |