



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday, 15 March 2022

**Committee:
Cabinet**

Date: Wednesday, 23 March 2022

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting. The Agenda is attached

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public, but this will be limited for health and safety reasons. If you wish to attend the meeting please email democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check that a seat will be available for you.

Members of the public will be able to access the live stream of the meeting by clicking on this link:

www.shropshire.gov.uk/cabinet23mar2022

Tim Collard Interim Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services

Members of Cabinet

Lezley Picton (Leader)

Gwilym Butler

Dean Carroll

Rob Gittins

Kirstie Hurst-Knight

Simon Jones

Cecilia Motley

Ian Nellins

Ed Potter

Your Committee Officer is:

Amanda Holyoak

Tel: 01743 257714

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting (Pages 1 - 14)

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 February 2022

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is not later than **5.00 pm on Thursday 17 March.**

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions from Members of the Council. Deadline for notification is not later than **5.00 pm on Thursday 17 March 2022.**

6 Scrutiny Items

7 Shropshire Library Strategy (Pages 15 - 120)

Lead Member – Councillor Cecilia Motley – Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism and Transport

Report of Mark Barrow, Director of Place attached

Tel 01743 258915

8 Update to Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Pages 121 - 150)

Lead Member – Councillor Simon Jones - Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health

Report of Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place – attached

Tel: 01743 258916

9 Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme (Pages 151 - 200)

Lead Member – Councillor Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism and Transport

Report of Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place – attached

Tel: 01743 258916

10 Crowmeole Lane Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Controlled Bus Gate (Pages 201 - 238)

Lead Member – Councillor Ian Nellins – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets & the Green Economy

Report of Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place, attached

Contact: 01743 258916

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Committee and Date

Cabinet

23rd March 2022

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022

**In the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

10:30am – 12:40pm

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

Present

Councillor Lezley Picton (Chairman)

Councillors Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Rob Gittins, Kirstie Hurst-Knight,
Simon Jones, Cecilia Motley, Ian Nellins and Ed Potter

15 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

16 Disclosable Interests

Members were reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting.

Councillor Lezley Picton declared a Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 15, Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework, and Agenda Item 16, Shrewsbury Town Centre Redevelopment Phase 1 and stated that she would leave the meeting during consideration of these items, taking no part in the debate or vote.

Members were advised that agenda item 17 would be brought forward, prior to the discussion on items 15 and 16.

17 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

18 Public Questions

Public questions were received from the following:

Ian Matthews, in relation to Shrewsbury town centre development
Save our Shirehall, in relation to Shirehall
Stephen Mulloy, in relation to affordable housing and pecuniary interests.

The full questions and responses provided to them are available on the web page for the meeting: [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 16th February, 2022, 10.30 am – Shropshire Council](#)

19 **Members Question Time**

Member questions were received from the following:

Councillor Rob Wilson – in relation to the full Business Case for the North West Relief Road.

By way of supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked if there was any limit on the funding available through DfT and associated timescales from the LEP for funding. Clarification would be sought and provided to Councillor Wilson.

Councillor Rob Wilson – in relation to the SUDS at Cornovii Developments. By way of supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked whether there were any aspirations for additions such as rainwater gardens. Councillor Dean Carroll advised that he would speak to the Director of the Cornovii Development Board to seek a response.

Councillor Julian Dean – in relation to Green Homes
Councillor Dean stated that the Economic Strategy of the Council should focus on the development chains and skills that are required if Shropshire Council are to do the required decarbonisation of housing.

Councillor Julian Dean – in relation to street trees.
Councillor Dean felt that the policy should state what happens when trees are removed.

Councillor Alex Wagner (read aloud by Councillor David Vasmer) – in relation to local cycling and walking infrastructure plan funding.
By way of supplementary question, Councillor Vasmer asked whether the funding had been accounted for twice. It was confirmed that the funding had been awarded and then received and had not been accounted for twice.

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall – in relation to an update on Code Red Warning for Humanity.

The questions and responses provided to them are available from the webpage for the meeting, in addition to the recording of the meeting:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 16th February, 2022, 10.30 am – Shropshire Council](#)

20 Scrutiny Items

Councillor Claire Wild, Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, presented a report from the Financial Strategy and Budget Monitoring Task and Finish Group, who had been asked to carry out the scrutiny of the budget setting for the 2022-2023 financial year, the medium term-financial strategy and capital strategy, and to monitor performance against the budget and strategy.

Councillor Wild thanked those Members who had attended the Task and Finish Groups and to the staff involved.

It was requested that the Group scrutinises the consultation process which had just been undertaken so that we can learn from it and make it easier for the public to understand.

The commitment to a full analysis of the budget for next year was welcomed.

Members noted the report.

21 Determination of Admission Arrangements 2023 - 2024

Councillor Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education presented a report that sought Cabinet approval to formally determine the admission arrangements 2023-2024 for Shropshire Council's community and voluntary controlled schools.

Members noted that no changes had been proposed to Shropshire Council's admission arrangements 2023-2024 from those determined last year. Consultation on the arrangements was therefore not required, but a formal determination by Shropshire Council must now take place by 28 February 2022.

Carol Sneddon and her team were thanked for their hard work.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1. That Cabinet formally determine the admission arrangements 2023-2024 for Shropshire's community and voluntary controlled schools.
- 1.2. That Cabinet, by the determination of the school admission arrangements 2023-2024, agrees to the publication of the

arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021 and to the notification of this to parties specified in the Code.

22 **Capital & Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2026/27 - Final**

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources, presented a report which outlined the financial strategy for 2022/23 – 2026/27, updating the position from the previous position as approved by Cabinet in January 2022 and reflecting latest information on resources and expenditure pressures. Thanks were given to staff for delivering a budget under difficult circumstances due to a one year settlement being confirmed in December.

Members noted that there was discrepancy in the final budget figure within different reports. The Director of Resources would confirm the final figure and refer back.

Members questioned why the Commercial Investment Programme had £3.4million of unallocated funds. Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure advised that the Council were seeking the right investments to secure the best financial return. This would be staged over a number of years whilst a more robust supply chain is established.

Councillor Butler urged members to bring forward any alternative budget proposals as soon as possible to enable them to be given the consideration they deserved.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet Members:

- A. Agreed and recommended to Council the 2022/23 budget of £597.560m outlined in the Budget Book at Appendix 3, including the savings proposals outlined in section 4.5 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy(MTFS) at Appendix 1.
- B. Noted the changes required to the 2022/23 budget as a result of the Final Local Government Settlement and revised business rates and collection fund estimates.
- C. Noted the revised funding gap for the years 2023/24 to 2026/27.
- D. Approved the recommended level of general balances to support the 2022/23 revenue budget of £18.712m, noting that the projected balance is presently significantly below this for 2022/23.

- E. Noted the projected recommended level of general reserves for the following four years at £27.033m in 2023/24, £27.574m in 2024/25, £28.226m in 2025/26 and £30.760m in 2026/27.
- F. Agreed the adoption of the Capital Strategy 2022/23 – 2026/27 attached as Appendix 2.
- G. Noted the prioritised capital schemes identified at Appendix 2 section 8 including the need to identify and confirm funding sources for these schemes.
- H. Agreed the revised Capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 section 6 and Annex B to the Capital Strategy.

23 Treasury Strategy 2022/23

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the annual report which proposed the Treasury Strategy for 2022/23 and recommended Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Treasury Team were congratulated on their work to date.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet recommends that Council:-

- a) Approve the Treasury Strategy for 2022/23
- b) Approve the Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 1, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.
- c) Approve the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 2 in accordance with the DLUHC Guidance on Local Government Investments.
- d) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 3.
- e) Authorise the Section 151 Officer to exercise the borrowing powers contained in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to manage the Council's debt portfolio in accordance with the Treasury Strategy.
- f) Authorise the Section 151 Officer to use other Foreign Banks which meet Link's creditworthiness policy as required.

- g) Authorise the Section 151 Officer to progress and finalise the restatement and amendment of Cornovii Development Ltd loan agreements.

24 Fees and Charges 2022/23

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resource presented the annual report outlining the budgeted income to be received in 2022/23 and the proposed level of fees and charges to be applied by Shropshire Council in 2022/23.

Concerns were raised over the proposed increases to parking charges, especially in outlying towns. It was suggested that any proposed increases should be referred to the Place Overview Committee.

It was noted that any increase to parking fees should be considered in context and should be realistic, balanced and in line with bus charges to incentivise bus travel.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet Members:

- 1.1 Noted the breakdown of the total income for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and in particular that the proposed 2022/23 charges for discretionary services represent only £41.768m of the £82.293m of income derived from Fees and Charges.
- 1.2. Approved the charges for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 3 to be implemented 1 April 2022.
- 1.3. Noted that as previously agreed, any changes to fees and charges proposed by Shropshire Community Leisure Trust Ltd. in relation to the outsourced leisure facilities will only be referred to cabinet and council for approval if the proposed increases exceed Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the preceding November.
- 1.4. Subject to restrictions or exemptions identified in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill it was recommended to Council that:
 - I. Social Housing rents for 2022/23 are increased by 4.1% from 4th April 2022.
 - II. Affordable rents for 2022/23 are increased by 4.1% from 4th April 2022.
 - III. Shared Ownership rents continue to be set at 2.75% of the outstanding capital value of the home at the time of sale and thereafter increased each April in accordance with the terms specified in the lease agreements.

IV. Service charges continue to be set based on actual cost.

25 **Estimated Collection Fund Outturn For 2021/2022**

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resource presented the report which set out the estimated Collection Fund surpluses/deficits for 2021/22 as at 15th January 2022 for Council Tax and 31st January 2022 for Non-Domestic Rates for the year ending 31st March 2022, and respective shares notifiable to the major precepting authorities.

Members were advised that there was currently a campaign to encourage residents to receive their council tax bills digitally. For each household that signs up to e-billing, Shropshire Council will plant a tree to help Shropshire go "green".

RESOLVED:

Cabinet Members:

- 1.1. Noted the overall Collection Fund estimated deficit of £20.031m for the year ending 31st March 2022, comprised of an estimated surplus of £2.915m for Council Tax and an estimated deficit of £22.946m for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR).
- 1.2. Noted the estimated surplus/deficit incorporates the three year phasing of the 2020/21 in year deficit.
- 1.3. Noted the estimated deficit for NDR will be offset by the receipt of s31 grants for extra reliefs awarded as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.4. Noted the distribution of the Collection Fund estimated surplus for Council Tax and deficit for NDR to the major/relevant precepting authorities and the Secretary of State.
- 1.5. Noted Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated deficit of £8.995m, comprised of an estimated surplus of £2.393m for Council Tax and an estimated deficit of £11.388m for NDR.
- 1.6. Noted the inclusion of Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated surplus for Council Tax and deficit for NDR in the 2022/23 budget.

26 Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2021/22

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resource presented the report which outlined the treasury management activities of the Council in the third quarter of 2021/22.

Members attention was drawn to the low interest rates achieved by the internal treasury team with a return of 0.11% on the Council's cash balances, outperforming the benchmark by 0.17%, with a return in excess of 3% on real estate investments.

RESOLVED:

Members accepted the position as set out in the report.

27 Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2021/22

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resource presented the report which set out the projected revenue expenditure for the financial year 2021/22 as at Quarter 3, and the Capital expenditure up to the end of Quarter 3 and the main budget variances and mitigating plans were outlined to help bring expenditure within budget by year end.

Reassurance was requested that the revenue budget for Acton Scott Historic Working Farm would remain in the budget for the next financial year. It was confirmed that the budget would not be removed at present; however the Council was not in a position to pre-empt the future of Acton Scott and would be looking at various options alongside the Acton family for how the farm could be operated in the future. A report would be coming back to Cabinet in the near future.

Concern was raised that it appeared that there had not been a great deal of progress in the reduction of the projected overspend since Q1. Members were advised that the bulk of expenditure took place between Q2 and Q3 which have an impact on the figures presented within the report.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet Members:

- A. Noted that at the end of Quarter 3 (31st December 2021), the full year revenue forecast is a potential overspend of £4.346m;
- B. Considered the impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance.

28 **Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2021/22**

Councillor Rob Gittins, Portfolio Holder for Digital, Data and Insight presented the Q3 performance report which showed progress against outcomes within the Corporate Plan: A Healthy Environment, A Good Place to do Business, Sustainable Places and Communities, More People with a Suitable Home, Embrace our Rurality, Care for those in Need at any Age and Your Council.

Members noted that overall, performance was positive; however challenges still remained with regards to Looked after Children and the Homelessness Strategy. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education provided clarification that the increase in repeat referrals represented one or two families with all monthly referrals being scrutinised and that this percentage increase (0.7%) was not a cause for concern. Members acknowledged the court delays with regards to Looked After Children and that this was currently being worked on.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet Members:

- A. Considered and endorsed, with appropriate comment, the performance to date.
- B. Considered the emerging issues in this report as set out in paragraph 8.3
- C. Reviewed both the appendix and performance portal to identify any performance areas that they would like to consider in greater detail or refer to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

29 **Variation to West Mercia Energy Joint Agreement**

Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resource presented the report which advised Members of the requirement for the WME Joint Agreement to be varied to update the distribution formulae for surpluses each year. The new method ensures that if any Member Authority adjusts their margin independently, the impact is limited to the Member Authority making the change.

Members noted that Herefordshire had already obtained approval to agree to the amendment.

Councillor David Vasmer questioned how the agreement would be affected by the increase in energy prices. Councillor Butler extended an invitation to Councillor Vasmer to attend the next meeting of the WME Joint Committee for further information.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet approved that:

- 1.1. The West Mercia Energy Joint Agreement be varied to amend the formulae for the distribution of the accumulated surplus each year as set out in section 5 of this report;
- 1.2. Authority is delegated to the Executive Director of Resources to finalise and approve the execution of the variation to the Joint Agreement.

30 Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework

After declaring an Interest, Councillor Lezley Picton left the room and Councillor Ed Potter took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Councillor Ed Potter, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning presented the report which set out the outcomes of the consultation and presented the final Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework document for approval.

Members welcomed the report and felt that it was a positive step forward in increasing visitor numbers and job opportunities.

Concerns were raised that the visuals differed from those presented as part of the Shrewsbury Town Centre Redevelopment. There was further concern regarding the lack of a bus station, which had been identified as a key element in the consultation.

Reassurance was provided to Members that there were no discrepancies between the two proposals; the framework proposed focussed on a specific area and not the whole town centre. Members were assured that new bus facilities would be a feature of the new Riverside Development.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet agreed to:

- 1.1. Acknowledge the outcomes of the consultation process, as summarised in this report.

- 1.2. Approve the final Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework document (appendix A), incorporating amendments informed by the outcomes of the consultation process.
- 1.3. In line with the current Local Plan and the draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016-2038), and specifically draft policy S16.1 (2), it is agreed that the Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework (SDF), being an associated masterplan document of the Big Town Plan, is to be considered as a material consideration in decision making on relevant planning applications. The weight afforded to the SDF in decision making will be dependent upon the circumstances of each application.

31 Shrewsbury Town Centre Redevelopment Phase 1

Councillor Ed Potter, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning presented the report on progress of the due diligence, feasibility and business case preparation for alternative development options for the former Pride Hill shopping centre, the provision of multi-agency office accommodation and associated activities in Shrewsbury town centre.

It was noted that the scheme would bring forward objectives that had been identified in the Big Town Plan and included sustainable transport options.

Concern was raised that the proposals were inconsistent with those of the Smithfield Strategic Development Framework and that a different response to the consultation may have been received if the visuals had been the same.

Further concern was raised that there were no corporate or economic strategies in place, together with the lack of LTP4 and LCWIP which raised questions as to how the scheme could be approved at present. It was felt that the project could be taking away from the priority of getting policy in place before investing in infrastructure. Members were assured that the new "mobility strategy" for the Big Town Plan had been commissioned and these issues would be addressed as part of that work.

Further information was requested regarding the consultation fees of £3million and a request was received for full member consultation at each stage of the development, without delegating authority to officers. The Executive Director of Place would respond to the requests for further information.

Certain Members felt that consideration should be given to investing and improving existing infrastructure and that these were long term aspirations for new investment based on a one year budget. Members were reminded that discussions had been ongoing since 2018 and that the process had to be started at some time.

Members noted that immediate investment in Shirehall was required as the building had to meet current health and safety regulations whilst still in operation. Members were advised that significant structural work would need to be carried out to bring the building up to standard for ongoing use due to its original concrete construction, including heavy use of asbestos. It was also stated that any long-term refurbishment works to Shirehall to improve efficiency would not be comparable to that of a modern, purpose-built building.

Concern was raised regarding staff being encouraged to work from home and not in Shirehall. It was confirmed that this was in line with government guidance due to Covid and that whilst fire safety work is ongoing, restrictions on the number of people in the building were in place.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council to:

- 1.1. Approve the preferred option identified in the outline business case for the construction of a Multi-Agency Hub, on the site identified by the Smithfield Riverside master planning process and take forward as a capital project; such approval limited at this stage to progressing the project to detailed design (RIBA Stage 3: Spatial Coordination, or equivalent), requiring funding of £1.715m. A further report will be presented to Council for final approval of the design, gross development cost and funding for the construction of the project.
- 1.2. Approve the submission of a planning application for the demolition of the Riverside Shopping Centre and the former Riverside medical practice to facilitate the construction of the proposed Multi-Agency Hub within the current gross cost estimate for demolition of £3.853m, and to take forward as a capital project to completion of tender documentation and receipt of tenders.
- 1.3. Approve the preferred option identified in the outline business case, and submission of a planning application for the demolition of the former Pride Hill shopping centre, for the delivery of a leisure-led redevelopment of the site, with the adjacent Raven Meadow's surface car park, for a multi - storey travel hub and associated

development and take forward as a capital project; such approval limited at this stage to progressing the project to detailed design (RIBA Stage 3: Spatial Coordination, or equivalent), requiring funding of £1.580m. A further report will be presented to Council for final approval of the design, gross development cost and funding for the construction of the project.

- 1.4. Delegate responsibility to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning to progress the capital projects (1.1 – 1.3 above), to include, but not limited to, the following:
 - 1.4.1. Progress a procurement and delivery strategy for Smithfield Riverside, incorporating the projects summarised in items 1.1 -1.3 above.
 - 1.4.2. Progress life-cycle carbon assessments in relation to the projects summarised in items 1.1 and 1.3 above.
 - 1.4.3. Engage with the Environment Agency, via the River Severn Partnership, to seek opportunities provided by the national Defra Adaptive Pathways Pilot for the River Severn, to assess and manage climate related risks, incorporating adaptation into the design and delivery of the Smithfield Riverside development programme.
 - 1.4.4. Enter negotiations with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure the 'Getting Building' funding remains relevant to the Pride Hill project; scope and agree variations as required to the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA).
 - 1.4.5. Identify funding of £3.295m to deliver the above development activities, as scheduled in appendix C.
- 1.5. Further to recommendation 1.1, declare the Shirehall building and associated environs within the site boundary marked in red in appendix I, surplus to requirements.
- 1.6. Delegate responsibility to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, to agree and implement the disposal and marketing strategy as the recommended option for the Shirehall site; agree terms and conditions of sale, all subject to approval at Full Council.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

- 2.5 The development of this Strategy has been informed by a public consultation process and a specialist report around the potential for Library transformation.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet agrees to the Draft Library Strategy and appendices being published for public consultation in March 2022.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 Risks associated with the Draft Library Strategy are shown in appendix 3. A risk management log will be updated and 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 with risk owners.
- 4.2 Human Rights: No adverse impact expected.
- 4.3 An Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) (Appendix 4) has been developed as part of the library transformation 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 services. The ESHIA will continue to be updated following consultation over the coming months as services are implemented as part of the strategy.
- 4.4 The implementation of the Draft Library Strategy with a robust Library Implementation Plan has the potential for greater freedom with place-based developments for local communities building on Shropshire Council's organisational principles. Where collaboration and opportunities are identified, this development has the potential to further support and engage local communities.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The initiatives identified in the Draft Library Strategy create potential for savings and/or increased income. This will depend on local circumstances and each library will be considered in turn. It is therefore not possible to specify the financial impacts at this stage, but it is anticipated that over the duration of this strategy

considerable savings/ income generation will be made. It should be noted that the 2022/23 budget includes two specific savings targets in relation to library services and so any savings or additional income identified through the proposals in this strategy would be allocated to these savings targets:

- Review of library provision £191,930
- Libraries – Implementation of changes under the Library Transformation Project £50,000

Any savings would aim to retain community access to library services by identifying efficiencies, as outlined above. Investment will be required to release benefits with savings and income opportunities. Further work and engagement with internal and external stakeholders will be needed as part of the Library Transformation Plan. Any significant changes will be subject to public consultation.

5.2 Table 1: savings and/or opportunities

Ref	Opportunity
1.	Review all library locations. Make savings through some building consolidation and co-location dependant on community need and library location.
2.	Libraries can host Shropshire Local customer service points. Potential for a corporate recharge to subsidise library front line service. Approximate savings of £12,000
3.	Changes to opening hours. If associated with introduction of single staffing, this could lead to savings, but safest planning assumption should be changing the pattern of existing aggregate opening times. Approximately £5,000
4.	Combined mobile service. May offer some economy of scale savings but depends on service design. Approximately £30,000
5.	Target reduction of approx. 33% as a minimum of frontline transaction processing as a result of installing more self-service machines. Aim to release a percentage of staff costs to deliver amalgamated services to support provision of Shropshire Local. Approximately £35,000 2023/24
6.	Staff redesign When combined with some co-location, there is an opportunity to change staffing models, consolidating the premises management aspect of roles and allowing for possible oversight of more than one library. Approximately £50,000
7.	Single staffing to be explored. As some libraries are co-located with other council services, having periods of single staffing will become possible. The co-location reduces concerns about risk to staff who might otherwise work

	alone. If adopted, this is a further opportunity to release some capacity.
8.	Reducing subsidy to community run libraries. Shropshire's eight community run libraries receive combined net subsidy annually of c£178,000. Wider change with local consultation should be a catalyst to reset expectations about support and potentially reduce the subsidies.

5.3 Table 2: income generation opportunities

Ref	Opportunity
9.	Adult Social Care and Health commissioned activity. Scope and value tbc.
10.	Job Centre Plus commissioned activity. Discussions are taking place about closer working with Job Centre Plus to support in particular youth employability initiatives. Scope and value tbc.
11.	Children's Services commissioned activity. Activity has been funded through Children's Services to co-ordinate and deliver holiday activities for 5,500 children (funding of 1 library development FTE effort in 2020/21). Potential to use position on Early Help Board to be commissioned to support other Children's Services work. Scope and value tbc.
12.	Room rentals. Agreement made with Corporate Landlord for library services to keep income received for renting out rooms in libraries. £2,000 income target set.

5.4 Table 3: investment considerations

Ref	Investment considerations
13.	New library management system to replace Axiell Galaxy Library Management System, which is an old system, supported through annual rolling contracts. (i) Feasibility study (c£10,000). In-house delivery saving c£10,000 (ii) Procurement and implementation of new system £30,000 approximate saving of c£15,000/an
14.	Install self-service machines. Priority Capital investment of c£152,000. - included in the Capital Strategy 2022-23 – 2026/27 approved by Council 24/02/22
15.	Other digital equipment. (i) To support development of community support for digital skills. (c£110,000).

	(ii) Video and sound equipment to allow staff in libraries to record video clips to go online. (c£9,500).
16.	Building refurbishment. Work has shown need to create practical and flexible environments - for example including booths for private internet use and shelves on wheels.
17.	Recruitment, training and skills development associated with new structure. Development of workforce strategy will create training requirements. (c£75,000 including additional volunteer training). Capability development will require some recruitment to development roles. (Costs tbc).

The investment considerations detailed in Table 3 will be subject to funding bids submitted to the Arts Council and other bodies and so at this stage, have not been built into the Capital Programme for 2022/23 except for the self-service machines with a budget of £152,000.

6 Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 Libraries have an important role to play in translating our climate change and carbon reduction objectives into action on the ground by local communities and businesses. Local libraries provide a trusted source of information about the Council's Climate Action Plan, signposting residents to helpful information and tools, to help them adopt practical solutions for low carbon lifestyles (Appendix 5).
- 6.2 Libraries at Bridgnorth, Oswestry, Ludlow, Church Stretton and Shrewsbury have already benefitted from building retrofit improvements to improve the energy efficiency and carbon performance of their lighting and heating and similar improvements are planned in Market Drayton. These improvements will reduce carbon emissions from these buildings by over 50 tonnes per year and will also significantly reduce energy consumption. This helps to demonstrate to local residents and businesses that the library service is leading by example when it comes to practical carbon reduction measures.

7 Background

- 7.1 Shropshire Council is statutorily responsible 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 the delivery of a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

- 7.2 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))
- 7.3 The DCMS Taskforce's 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021' document emphasised that library authorities need to:
- think long-term and strategically as they plan and transform their library service and
 - do this in consultation with their staff and communities
- 7.4 This is especially important given the challenging times councils face. They are looking for more radical and transformational approaches to providing local services as they cope with pressures on resources, increasing demands for social care and changing expectations from local communities. The way people use libraries, and their expectations of public services are changing. Financial, technological, and demographic challenges are increasing. Standing still is therefore not an option for Library Services.
- 7.5 The proposed transformation of Library Services as part of the Draft Library Strategy is to enable the redesign of libraries to provide a more sustainable service model that will contribute to the delivery of the Shropshire Council organisational principles and Vibrant Shropshire, Cultural Strategy, whilst still meeting our statutory duty.
- 7.6 "Community Libraries":
- Are the natural home for cross sector working for the transformation of services around people
 - Should be "neutral" and inclusive venues at the heart of the community
 - Where 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
- 7.7 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.

- 7.8 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 Pontesbury as part of the development of the Pavilion in partnership with Pontesbury Parish Council and Friends of Pontesbury Library, Cleobury Country and Enterprise Southwest Shropshire shows us how successful collaborations can be. Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health and primary health care all see co-location as the way forward.

8 Strategic Ambitions

- 8.1 Shropshire Library Service five-year strategy will:** - Re-shape following a set of strategic ambitions based directly on the Shropshire Plan, Shropshire Councils organisational principles and Vibrant Shropshire, Cultural Strategy. We will also build on the work developed as part of the Library Transformation highlighting the importance of targeting delivery to support the needs of communities and strengthen the capability of staff to aid in community development.
- 8.2** We will challenge established ways of working to position collaborative resources and services to deliver a provision that maximises impact and future sustainability
- 8.3** These are outlined below utilising the Shropshire Council organisational principles:

We have identified six **Strategic Priorities** to achieve our vision for the next five years:

1. Improved opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity

Reading, Literacy, Culture and Creativity are increasingly important parts of library services, we will create relationships that ensure libraries enhance people's lives as a place of discovery, diversity, and interactivity.

2. Improved health and wellbeing of Communities

We will strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.

3. Promote Economic Recovery and Growth

We will support the development of small, medium businesses, entrepreneurs and job seekers. Deliver digital technology for internal and for loan, business information, free and low-cost access to business intelligence, market research, 1 to1 training, innovative spaces and intellectual property support.

4. Communities that are resilient and inclusive

We will highlight the key role we play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will, with technological support provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups a cross all ages.

5. Library services that are more innovative and sustainable

We will increase our contribution to Local and National cross cutting aims for reducing social isolation, living independently and embracing rurality. Utilise technology to free up staff interventions to work creatively to support an improved quality of life and sustainable communities.

6. People are enabled to discover the digital world

We will provide a 21st century service that enables people of all ages to get online, and ensure they have the skills to engage with the digital world safely and effectively. Help to build digital confidence for day-to-day life as part of community and workforce development.



9 Additional Information

9.1 Consultation

9.2 Over 900 people responded to our initial Draft Library Strategy consultation that ran during October/November 2019. During National Libraries Week we engaged over 400 library users with our quick snapshot survey and Library Roadshows. We were also able to capture views from several non-users.

9.3 The key themes from the consultation were:

- Overall levels of satisfaction with library services are high.
- Borrowing books and other items remains the main reason why people visit their library.
- Customers view library staff as the most important aspect of the service. Opening times and range/quality of library stock are also very important.
- Library staff are highly rated regarding customer service and approachability.
- In terms of the future many people are keen for libraries to stay as they are. People argue strongly for the importance of libraries to individuals and communities.
- The largest proportion of responses were from female library users aged 60+. Levels of engagement with those under 30 was very low.

9.4 The findings from this consultation have informed the development of this Draft Library Strategy. The key themes suggest we need to balance the needs of our 'traditional' users alongside the needs of other library users. Developing services to attract new users is also essential to ensure that libraries stay relevant in the future.

10. Conclusions

10.1 Shropshire Library Services have a long-established role in supporting communities to develop their skills and employability. As part of our strategic ambitions, we will target communities to improve their opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity as well as places of discovery, diversity, and interactivity.

10.2 Partnerships are being developed to help economic growth with local business and entrepreneur's key regeneration priorities. The new Destination Management Plan will build on the trusted role libraries and cultural services play in being windows to information, visitor accommodation, events and attractions helping to reinvigorate our towns and villages.

- 10.3 We will help to strengthen the Council’s role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing partnerships for people living in the county. This will highlight the key role Library Services play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. Also increasing our contribution to local and national cross cutting aims of reducing social isolation, living independently and embracing rurality. Library Services remain at the heart of the communities we serve as a trusted service that is able to lead the Council in refocusing its collaborations with Shropshire’s towns and villages.
- 10.4 The way society interacts continues to revolutionise our lives. Library Services will facilitate a 21st century outlook focusing on a carbon neutral approach that enables people of all ages, through Shropshire Local, to be informed, get online and ensure they have the relevant skills to navigate the digital world safely and securely. This will enable cost savings for the Shropshire Council and greater interactions and satisfaction for our communities.
- 10.5 Specialist advice was commissioned to advise on the Draft Library Strategy and suggested a clear plan to transform Library Services. If agreed, this will guide the implementation of this Draft Library Strategy over the next 3 years to ensure services address local community needs, offer excellent value for money, and provide support to local people and businesses, including through Shropshire Local as appropriate. The transformation is likely to be different in each community and may include co-location of services, more community led approaches and closer working with community organisations and other Council departments.

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



Community
Overview Committee

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Transport

Local Member

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Shropshire Library Strategy 2022-27 Executive

Summary, Final Draft

- Appendix 2 - Shropshire Library Strategy 2022-27, Final Draft
- Appendix 3 - Risks
- Appendix 4 – Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
- Appendix 5 – Climate Change Appraisal
- Appendix 6 - Consultation Report

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Foreword

Shropshire Libraries are a vibrant service at the heart of our communities. We provide environments that allow people to feel safe, where generations of people meet freely in a public space and where learning, discovery and innovation are encouraged.

Shropshire has a strong tradition of communities coming together when the need arises, and this has been evident with the Covid pandemic when working in partnership to deliver their local public services.

We are grateful to all the community partnerships in these challenging times whose continued commitment, time and resources enable the delivery and future development of library services.

This library strategy outlines our promise as Shropshire Council, and sets out the priorities we will focus on to deliver a commercial, contemporary and adaptable community service for the future.

It outlines our vision and strategic objectives, highlights the importance of libraries within the community, describes our core offer and provides a clear direction for the future of Shropshire Libraries. We see corporate and community collaborations as being integral to the long-term sustainability of the service. We will work together with our friendly, highly skilled and experienced staff, to build on our offer around Reading, Information, Digital, Health, Learning, Culture and Creativity.

Cllr Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Tourism & Transport

“Our Library and Information Service forms an important part of a broader culture and community service offer, which is now positioned within our Place Directorate. Shropshire Libraries are the first choice of the Council and community partners for providing information, assistance, and services within local communities.

The Library and Information Service is always seeking new opportunities to support Shropshire Council’s wider corporate priorities and help build resilient and prosperous communities; reflecting how we are all living and our-developing community need.

The Library and Information Service responds well to changing situations and is currently moving to help in stimulating economic growth, together with local community access to learning, knowledge, health and wellbeing, whilst increasing the invaluable support from our volunteers.”



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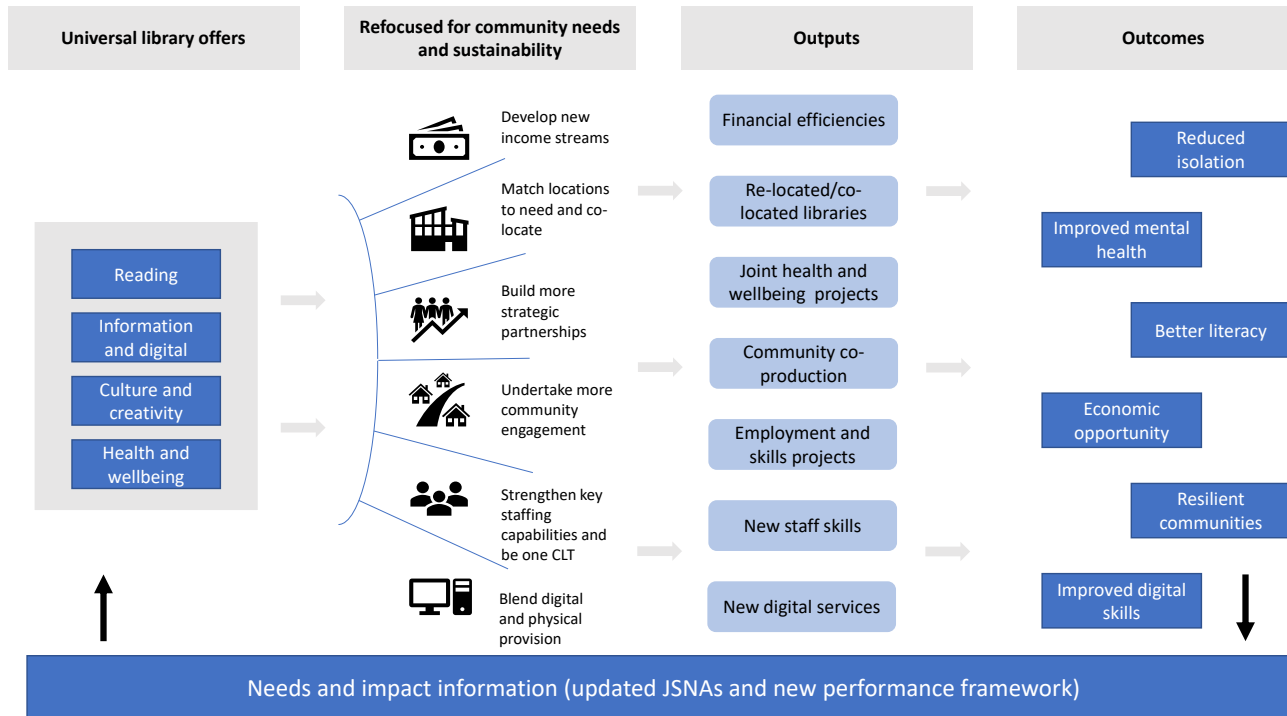
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1.0 Introduction

Shropshire Library Service is a major force for community cohesion across the county. Supported by dedicated, multi-disciplined staff and volunteers, we serve a wide range of functions: sources of knowledge; promoters of literacy; signposters to early intervention; a focus for local events and networks; as well as a force for fun, exploration and friendship.

This Strategy describes the changes library services will make to be at the forefront of the council’s future relationship with its residents and a critical partner in delivery of the county’s priorities.

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This Shropshire Library Strategy aims to change the way library services operate so that we can extend our work further into the mainstream of the way the council and its partners work with Shropshire’s communities. It will ensure that library services reach the people who need them most and that co-design and joint delivery with partners serve the priority needs of the county.

The changes represented in this Strategy are summarised in figure 1.

The development of this Strategy has been informed by a public consultation process and work commissioned around the potential for Library transformation.

The Vision, Mission and Priorities highlighted in this Strategy reflect these findings.

2.0 The National Perspective

Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

Library authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons’ for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7).



The Arts Council is the development agency for libraries and makes the case to local and national government for continued investment in public libraries and promotes libraries to potential funders. Strengthens the sector with a shared vision for service delivery, securing sufficient resources, brokering partnerships and developing skills

Libraries Taskforce support by the published ‘Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021’ in which it sets out the strategic vision and commitment for public libraries in England, recognising the challenging times that councils are facing running library services, calling for radical thinking to protect frontline library services and acknowledging the need for councils to work in ‘new and different ways’ to ‘thrive and not just survive’.



Libraries Connected is a charity led by national heads of libraries and partly funded by Arts Council England as the Sector Support Organisation for libraries. Its vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK.

The Universal Offers cover Culture, Digital Health Information Learning Reading are the six key areas of service that customers see as essential to a 21st Century library service. They provide a positive vision of the power of libraries and support the development of new innovations for communities.

CILIP is the UK library and information association and works to improve services, develop librarian’s expertise and champion the profession. They are the independent voice for national information professionals. Guided by a Royal Charter they develop and improve library and information services.



3.0 The Shropshire Perspective

VIBRANT SHROPSHIRE

2021-2031 Cultural Strategy for Shropshire

Our vision by 2031, Shropshire’s vibrant culture will be inspiring more people, both local communities and visitors alike, to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.

Our shared cultural ambition over ten years, is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. We want the importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing, and the economy to be reflected in happier and healthier communities, and for cultural venues and activities to lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.

The Shropshire Plan

Shropshire Council is currently developing a new Shropshire Plan, the current priorities are shown below (subject to change). Many of these indicative key priorities will be delivered through this Library Strategy:



Healthy People

- We will tackle inequalities and poverty in all its forms, enabling children, young people, adults and families to achieve their full potential.
- We will provide early support and interventions to Shropshire’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and adults, reducing risk and enabling them to achieve their potential and enjoy life.
- We will work with partners to develop, commission and deliver the right services and support that meet needs of children, young people, adults and families in the right place, at the right time, that are high quality and value for money.
- We will support Shropshire residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, choosing healthy lifestyles and preventing ill-health, reducing need for long term or hospital care.

Healthy Economy

- We will provide access to lifelong learning, supporting people and our communities to prosper, and through providing the right skills developing greater productivity and improved wages.
- We will develop Shropshire as a vibrant destination for people that attracts people want to live in, work, learn and visit.
- We will deliver excellent connectivity and infrastructure, increasing access to social contact, employment, education, services and leisure opportunities.

- We will ensure an appropriate mix of housing in the right areas of the county when supporting people with disabilities and to attract the right workforce for the employment needs and opportunities located there; reducing distances travelled to work.

Healthy Environment

- We will deliver the Council’s Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- We will enable safe, sustainable, diverse and inclusive communities that pull together by reducing anti-social behaviour and risk of harm; ensuring services and purchased products are safe; and adopting the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover from all household waste.
- We will maintain, protect, and enhance our outstanding natural environment, promoting positive behaviours and greater biodiversity and environmental sustainability.
- We will promote the means to tackle climate change and reduce the carbon footprint including the adoption of low carbon energy for council’s assets and for communities.

Healthy Organisation

- We will work with partners and people to achieve shared priorities to meet current and future need and deliver improved outcomes, with children, young people, adults and families voices influencing change.
- We will communicate clearly and transparently about what Shropshire Council delivers, signposting to the right places for services and support.
- We will put our resources in the right place using accurate data, insights, and evidence to support the delivery of the organisation’s priorities and balance the books.
- We will enable a happy, skilled, healthy, empowered, and proud workforce that influences and leads change.
- We will focus on diversity and inclusion for the workforce, addressing any inequalities.
- We will ensure councillors are supported to advocate for their constituents but to also be ambassadors for the council.

Zero Carbon Shropshire 2030



Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and agreed a Strategy Framework in December 2019 which established the objective of net-zero corporate carbon performance by 2030. Our vision is for Shropshire Council to become carbon net-neutral by 2030 and assist in the ambition for Shropshire to become carbon net neutral in the same year.

4.0 Rural Shropshire

Shropshire is a large rural county, the second largest inland county in England, with a population density of 1 person per hectare. Around 57% of Shropshire’s population of 323,136 people (2019 mid-year population estimates) live in villages, hamlets and dwellings dispersed throughout the countryside. The remainder live in one of the 17 market towns and key centres of varying size, including Ludlow in the south and Oswestry in the north, or in Shrewsbury, the central county town. This geographic spread of diverse communities creates the social, economic and cultural patchwork set in flourishing natural environments that contributes to the quality of life of Shropshire people.

The rolling green landscape, open spaces and the culture and heritage of the County make Shropshire an attractive place to live, work and visit, whether in rural areas or within one of the historic market towns, with excellent schools, low crime rates and opportunity for everyone.

Shropshire has a rich cultural heritage to discover and natural landscapes to explore, for residents and tourists alike. There are Roman and Iron Age sites; castles and historic buildings; theatres and museums; the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers 23% of the county; parts of two World Heritage Sites, rivers and canals; walking and cycling routes including one of the largest Rights of Way networks in the country; geology and wildlife; and natural and industrial archaeology.

Our large geography means that our economy operates and reaches in different directions. We have Birmingham and the Black Country south and east, Wales on our longest border to the west and Manchester and Staffordshire north and east, as well as Herefordshire and Worcestershire to the south.

Shropshire is a beautiful and attractive place appealing to visitors and drawing people to move here, and there are opportunities and challenges which need to be considered in this strategy.

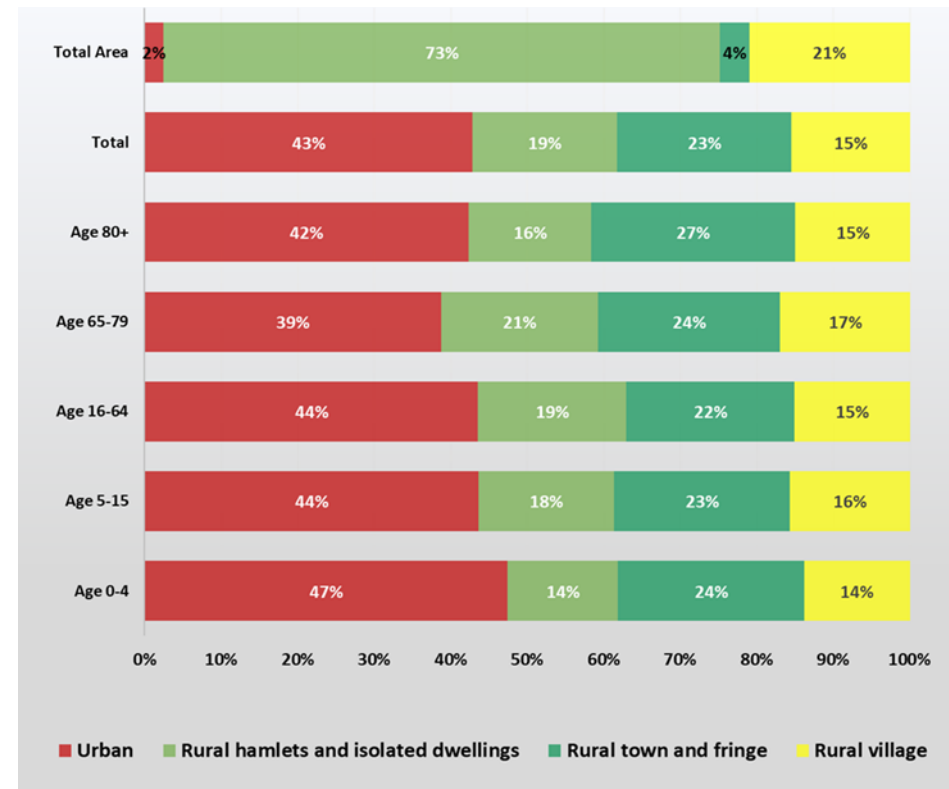


Figure 1: Shropshire geographic area and population by age range

The population is older with the proportion of people aged 65 years and over being well above the national average and this is projected to continue. A higher proportion of Shropshire's older population live in rural areas rather than urban areas, whilst young adults leave the county to go to university or for employment, and there is a falling birth rate. Population growth is due to the in migration of adults.

This is an established pattern that presents future tests and opportunities to innovate and find solutions both for the Council and others. By 2041 the working age population (16-64) will be almost the same size as the dependent population (0-15 and 65+). Whilst this doesn't reflect the growing proportion of people aged 65 and above in the workforce, it does provide a strong indication that as Shropshire's population is getting older the proportion and number who are of working age is projected to be reducing.

There is also a projected growth in single person households in the future, particularly in the 65 years and older age group, which may change demand for types of housing and the need for social care support over time.

Health needs in Shropshire do vary from place to place, but there are some conditions which are more prevalent, and which are preventable. Cancer, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, obesity and diabetes are amongst these conditions. Some of the prevalence of the conditions may be linked to the older age of the population but raising awareness and promoting the changing of lifestyles and behaviours across all age ranges will help people remain healthy for longer. Considering healthy life expectancy at birth by gender illustrates the differences between places on the expected average age that a person would be diagnosed with a disability or condition that would require treatment. This suggests that both males and females living in rural areas are likely to have more healthy life years, particularly in the south of Shropshire.

Shropshire is one of the most self-contained local authority areas in the country. 71% of working people that live here also work here, although the south of the county does see more people commuting out for their work. Those who travel out of the county for work earn more per week than those who live and work here.

Whilst there are a small number of large employers, the majority are SMEs (small and medium sized businesses) with a higher proportion at the smaller end of the scale. Shropshire is a low wage economy and has a gross value added (GVA) that is lower than the England average with the gap continuing to grow.

The rural, sparsely populated nature of this county, along with demographics, prevalence of SMEs and health and care needs, demonstrate why the network of Libraries across the county are so important.

5.0 Shropshire's Library Offer

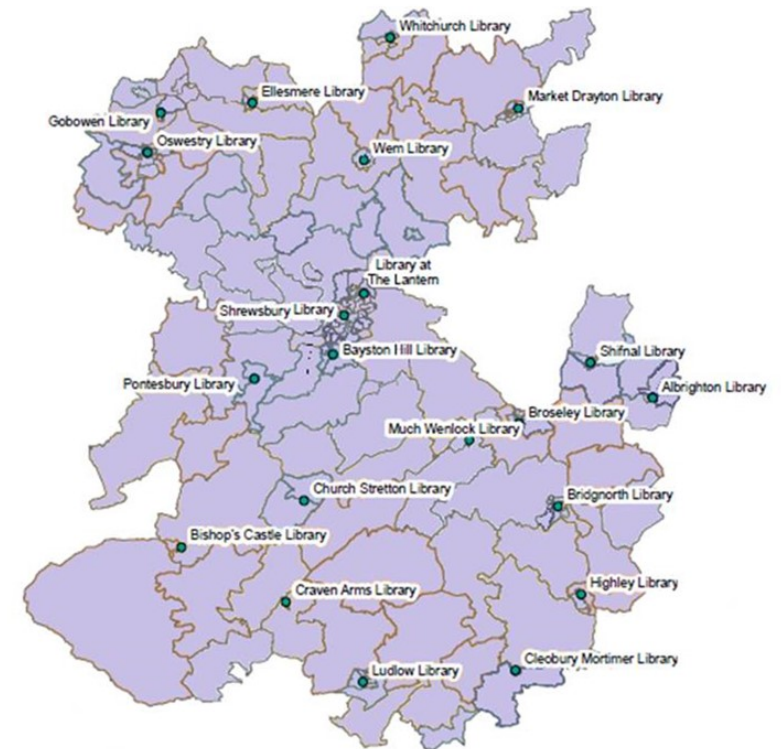
Shropshire Library service operates through a network of twenty-one static libraries, a prison library, three mobile libraries, digital and development services which together provide access to library services in every market town and most parts of a very rural and sparsely populated county.

- ❖ 6 Principal market town libraries run by Shropshire Council: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Market Drayton
- ❖ 7 Local market town community libraries run by Shropshire Council: Gobowen, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill, Wem, Library at the Lantern, Pontesbury, Much Wenlock
- ❖ 8 Local market town community libraries run by local community groups / Town Councils, etc.: Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Craven Arms, Highley, Shifnal, Cleobury Mortimer, Ellesmere
- ❖ 3 Mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council cover 274 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota
- ❖ Stoke Heath Prison Library Operated under fully funded contract from Her Majesty's Prisons

The overall picture of Shropshire's library locations is one where resources are thinly spread across a high number of branches:

- ❖ It has one of the highest numbers of libraries amongst its statistical neighbours. It has 24 service points, of which three are mobile libraries compared to an average of 17 libraries across the group¹.
- ❖ Its total revenue expenditure for 2019/20 was lower than the national average and the average of its statistical neighbours.
- ❖ It has 13,463 residents per branch, which is considerably lower than the national average of 25,526 and is lower than the average of its statistical neighbours.

This needs to be seen in the context of the county's rurality. However, there is a need to review the library locations to maximise potential and to allow them most easily to respond to need.



¹ Statistical neighbours as per CIPFA Stats Comparative Profile, 2018-19 Actuals and 2019-20 Estimates are: Herefordshire, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Wiltshire, Central Bedfordshire, North Somerset, Stockport, York, Isle of Wight, Calderdale and Solihull and cover service points open for more than 10 hours a week.

6.0 What do Shropshire Library Services do for us?

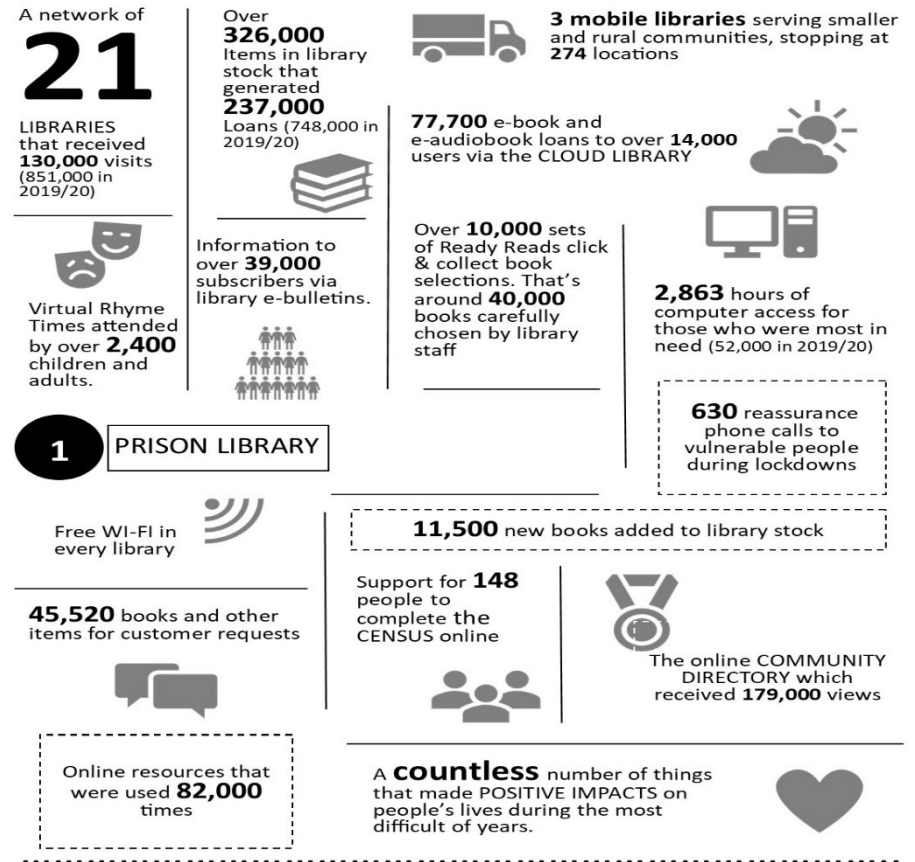
Shropshire Libraries are a vibrant service at the heart of our communities. We provide environments that allow people to feel safe, where generations of people meet freely in a public space and where learning, discovery and innovation are encouraged.

Libraries in Shropshire are increasingly at the heart of their communities, providing safe, trusted spaces which host a huge range of services and activities that support Shropshire residents to lead full and healthy lives. Our ambition and commitment is to continue to unlock the huge potential that library services have to impact positively on individuals' lives whilst at the same time delivering local priorities.

Libraries already provide:

- ❖ Quality information and digital support ensuring staff have the skills to support services.
- ❖ e-services that enable individuals and communities to develop skills to find answers and to inform life choices and feel safe online.
- ❖ Accessible resources that embrace technology.
- ❖ Bookstart, which is a national programme for parents and carers to enjoy books with their children from any age.
- ❖ Universal Reading Offer, which supports the growth of a literate, empathetic and confident society.
- ❖ Health and Wellbeing partnerships to promote healthy living provide support and engagement opportunities supported by inclusive spaces; signposting and information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities.
- ❖ Work with the business, education, culture and health sectors to facilitate economic growth with appropriate developments for communities
- ❖ Investment in spaces that are flexible, inclusive and attractive vibrant multi-functional spaces.
- ❖ Training for staff in line with development strategies to ensure a flexible, confident work force equipped to respond to any future needs of our communities

Despite services being severely restricted by Covid, in 2020/21 Shropshire Libraries provided.....



7.0 How are we doing?

Library Services Feedback

Feedback obtained through the Library Strategy consultation phase 1 engagement survey 1 October 2019 to 10 November 2019. There were 909 survey responses.

80%

rate Shropshire Libraries as very good (48%) or good (32%). 2% rate the service poor. The remaining 18% don't have an opinion or don't know.



The greatest barrier to using library services is.. **limited opening hours**

The **range of library resources** and lack of choice is considered the second greatest concern.

Other concerns include:

- Lack of investment in library buildings/loss of space.
- Library charges/loan fees.
- The online catalogue.



What people like best.. **Welcoming library staff members**

The **library resources** are the second best thing about libraries in Shropshire.

Other things people like best include:

- Community location/facilities.
- Library events and groups.
- The Mobile Library.

Oswestry library is a lovely friendly library. All staff most helpful. I only came to live in Oswestry 18 months ago and obtained a lot of information from the library and have made new friends from some of the groups they hold re Chatter Natter and Books Aloud. Also computer sessions very good and excellent choice of books.

Bridgnorth library is excellent. The premises are spacious and attractively presented. Information about the area and what it offers is clearly presented and the staff are always pleasant, helpful and always knowledgeable.

My children and I love Church Stretton library and visit every week. SUPER staff, a lovely setting and space, and great range for us to choose from. We feel so welcome and wanted there and would be lost without it.

The current library spaces as community hubs and focal points as other traditional community places disappear.

We believe that the library is not a luxury: it is a practical tool and vital public space for individuals and families. It is a resource for parents with young children, for school children without a place to work at home, for job seekers trying to gain new skills and employment, for elderly people living in isolation, for community groups and, increasingly, an incubator for new ideas and businesses to come to fruition.

I feel the library is a real hub of information for people from all walks of life and social demographics. It can bring communities together as it is quite diverse in its content. A physical structure with amenities is important for those less well off or with less IT resources at home/ the elderly that are not as tech savvy.

Libraries are the heartbeat of communities. Shropshire Council should be proud of what they have on offer in their libraries.

The library on Church Stretton is such a community hub. Mothers and toddlers. Elderly folk. People who don't have computer internet access at home. Please don't take it away.

Over 900 people responded to our initial draft Library Strategy consultation that ran during October/November 2019. 90% of respondents were identified as current users. During National Libraries Week we engaged over 400 library users with our quick snapshot survey and Library Roadshows.

The key themes from the consultation were:

- ❖ Overall levels of satisfaction with library services are high.
- ❖ Borrowing books and other items remains the main reason why people visit their library.
- ❖ Customers view library staff as the most important aspect of the service. Opening times and range/quality of library stock are also very important.
- ❖ Library staff are highly rated regarding customer service and approachability.
- ❖ In terms of the future, respondents were keen for libraries to stay as they are. People argue strongly for the importance of libraries to individuals and communities.
- ❖ The largest proportion of responses were from female library users aged 60+. Levels of engagement with those under 30 was very low.

The key themes suggest we need to balance the needs of our 'traditional' users alongside the needs of other library users. Developing services to attract new users is also essential to ensure that libraries stay relevant in the future.

A full report showing the consultation findings can be found in appendix 1.

8.0 The importance of Libraries

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to fund and ‘provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons’ for all those who live, work or study in the area. In providing this service, Councils must, among other things, encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service and lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

The best library services enable, empower and equalise:

- Enable communities to fulfil their potential and live fuller lives
- Empower them to make informed decisions
- Equalise through supporting residents, regardless of background

Libraries can act as ‘anchor institutions’ as a vital part of the social infrastructure that supports local communities. They provide a county-wide platform where people will find help, inspiration, access to knowledge and learning, connections, community and fun. This platform is central to the health and wellbeing, economic support and cultural offers of the council and its partners.

Library services are for all Shropshire’s communities, but actively seek to reach those who stand to benefit most, many of whom are amongst those the services do not yet reach and are in most need.

The Local Government Association (LGA) (2017) has produced a report that considers the future priorities for libraries. The report suggests libraries should be:

- Seen as genuinely integral to the delivery of local Council’s broader corporate strategies.
- Increasing impact, by working in partnership with other agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Considering the adoption of new service delivery models to reduce costs, share risks and generate new sources of income.

However, they also agree that reading and borrowing books and other resources are a key reason why people use libraries and that any other roles for libraries should not undermine this.

9.0 Key challenges

We are experiencing considerable change as individuals and communities. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving the EU and attempts to mitigate climate change are impacting all of us. The table below highlight some key challenges we are facing and suggests how our Library Services can contribute proactively to provide solutions.

	Key Challenge	Evidence	How Libraries can help
1	A growing aging population, increasing social isolation and mental ill health.	In November 2020, 19% of adults experienced some form of depression (almost doubling from 10% prior to the pandemic), while 17% of adults experienced some form of anxiety, this increased with those people who were suffering from financial hardship. 48% of adults reported that their wellbeing had been impacted by the pandemic ² . This is not a new issue, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Community Life Survey 2019-20 found that 37% of people in England experience loneliness, at least occasionally, and young people (16-24) were the most likely to feel lonely 'often or always' ³ .	These trends suggest there is a growing need for community support and for people of all ages to re-connect and feel part of their community. Library services have huge potential to support individuals and communities. Some examples of what they already do include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Social prescribing ❖ Early years activities ❖ Community groups ❖ Libraries of Sanctuary ❖ Support for those with special needs or disabilities ❖ Mobile libraries and home delivery services
2	The need for businesses and those who are self-employed to adapt and innovate, along with support	The UK unemployment rate in November 2020 was estimated at 4.8%, 0.9% higher than in November 2019 ⁴ . This is predicted to rise to between 5-11% in 2021/22 ⁵ . Young people (aged 16-24) have seen the most significant rise in unemployment, whilst more people over 65 were in work. The figures were driven by the reduction in part-time jobs and the self-employed, especially women. Small businesses were impacted more than larger businesses.	Libraries have the advantage of being based in the heart of local communities, so can often reach out to more people than traditional business hubs, especially the more disadvantaged, women and those from BAME backgrounds. Libraries can play a central role in meeting the needs of individuals including economic recovery, with help

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/latest>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-life-survey-201920-wellbeing-and-loneliness/wellbeing-and-loneliness-community-life-survey-201920>

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/november2020#:~:text=The%20UK%20employment%20rate%20was,higher%20than%20the%20previous%20quarter.>

⁵ https://obr.uk/docs/ExecSumm_November_2020.pdf

	needed for the unemployed.	As Shropshire has higher than average micro-businesses (90.5% compared to 89.4% in WM) and self-employed people (14.8% compared to 10.7% UK), and more people working in accommodation and food (9.9% compared to 7.7% UK) the impacts are likely to be more significant locally than in the UK generally ⁶ .	and training for job seekers and entrepreneurs, and helping local artists and arts organisations to continue their work. Libraries can develop cultural partnerships, which help to support creative industries and to provide information for the growing staycation market, helping tourism businesses to grow and adapt.
3	Children and young people falling behind with school or college work and special needs not being met	Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, there was growing concerns about the number of children not receiving a formal education. According to Local Government Association research ⁷ , in 2018/19, more than a quarter of a million children in England may have missed out on a formal full-time education which equates to around 2% of the school age population. According to a report by Young Minds ⁸ , the Covid-19 pandemic has had considerable impact on children and young people. They found that it had a negative impact on young people's mental health, that with most young people not attending school at that time and many not having access to resources and materials with which to learn, there will be a subsequent detrimental effect on both academic attainment and wellbeing. The impact of this, particularly on groups who are already disadvantaged, is likely to widen existing inequalities and to contribute to a rise in young people looking for mental health support.	Libraries provide activities that support children learning at home, reducing isolation and included new events created in partnership with local artists and arts organisations. These could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Safe spaces for children and free computer and internet access ❖ Homework clubs ❖ Class visits ❖ STEM and code clubs, which help children and young people with computer programming, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. ❖ Makerspaces. where people gather to co-create, share resources and knowledge and work on projects. ❖ National reading and learning partnerships
4	Localisation and the need for locally based services,	The Office for National Statistics ⁹ found that 46.6% of people were working from home in April 2020. According to a speech by David	As localisation continues, the need for a free, high-quality, local venue is likely to increase. As a dispersed, rural county, more people working from

⁶ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157170/report.aspx?town=shropshire>

⁷ <https://www.local.gov.uk/children-missing-education>

⁸ <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/policy-reports/what-impact-is-the-covid-19-pandemic-having-on-education/>

⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/coronavirusandhomeworkingintheuk/april2020>

	activities and entertainment	Ramsden, from the Bank of England ¹⁰ , this is likely to be the start of a transformation change in work patterns, with people tending to work longer hours. He argues that it does, however, offer more opportunities for women, older people and people with disabilities, as it removes some of the barriers to going out to work but there will be some who need to develop their IT skills and who will need space out of the home.	home in Shropshire will offer more opportunities to develop libraries as work bases and meeting venues. As many of these will be more used to an office environment, it can be assumed that space for working out of the home and for meetings will be required. Libraries can also offer local venues for cultural events and activities.
5	Increased demand for trusted on-line resources and entertainment, along with a drive for online service delivery	By February 2020, 96% of households in Great Britain had internet access, up from 93% in 2019 and 57% in 2006 when comparable records began ¹¹ . However, 13% of people never go online ¹² . Older people and those in the DE demographic class were more likely to not use the internet (27% of DE adults, 30% of adults aged 65-74, and 51% of adults aged 75+) and that 2% of households with children do not have access to the internet. More than half (52%) of people who did not go online said that they were just not interested in doing so, while 6% said that they do not have the right equipment, or it is too expensive.	Libraries have been providing IT access to the community for some time and since the Covid-19 lockdowns, have rapidly developed their online resources. Activities taking place across the country include Rhyme Time sessions, Story Times, Lego clubs, Code clubs, reading and book groups and e-festivals. They are uniquely placed as a safe environment to offer support and equipment to help people get online and develop their skills.
6	Impact of reduced public spending and austerity	After 10 years of austerity, Local Government has seen significant impact on budgets and the ability to deliver services. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies ¹³ , cuts to funding from central government have led to a 17% fall in English councils' spending on local public services since 2009/10: equal to nearly £300 per person. Councils'	Library Services can deliver a range of core Council priorities in the heart of the community, helping people to access services on line and enabling better working across Council Services to reduce impacts on other services and helping keep people out of the social care system.

¹⁰ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/speech/2020/the-potential-long-term-effects-of-covid-speech-by-dave-ramsden.pdf?la=en&hash=FA29F3EE33EF0439FF20F0EBE91E55B4F64DA9B6>

¹¹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2020>

¹² https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/196408/online-nation-2020-summary.pdf

¹³ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14563>

	spending is increasingly focused on social care services; in 2021/22, 62% of Shropshire Council's total expenditure was on social care. ¹⁴	
7	<p>Mitigation of Climate Change</p> <p>Shropshire Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has pledged to reduce Shropshire's carbon output to zero by 2030. Some activities that are being delivered include solar panels on public buildings, greenspace provision in the Local Plan and support for low carbon, high tech businesses. Plans include better insulation in homes, solar farms, habitat restoration, increasing active travel and reducing waste¹⁵. Delivering services online will also be important to help reduce vehicle use.</p>	<p>As effective community hubs in the heart of the community, libraries could be where this facilitation happens; bringing people together, providing information and space, and promoting opportunities to get involved. Being based in the community, this would reduce travel to meetings and the buildings could become show cases for energy saving adaptations.</p>
8	<p>Longer-term impacts on society of the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving the EU and climate change</p> <p>It has been argued that the Covid-19 pandemic has polarised society, with the least wealthy being hit the hardest. The result could be further inequality. This could be coupled with ongoing changes in consumer behaviour, patterns of work and the role of technology, resulting in significant impacts on individual's lives and communities. The focus on growing economic prosperity could bring with it further mental health issues and lack of social cohesion.</p>	<p>Libraries are well placed to help deliver sustainable recovery based on better understanding of local needs. They change lives for the better by helping people to help themselves, bringing people together and providing support and guidance. Libraries can introduce new ideas and opportunities to people and give them the confidence to use these skills to improve their quality of life.</p>

¹⁴ <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/18528/budget-book-2021-22-final.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://zerocarbonshropshire.org/zcsplan/>

10.0 Other considerations

The Integrated Care System for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin aims to join up primary and preventative health and care approaches to increase health and wellbeing across the area. It is part of a national initiative through NHS England, under which all areas of the country are covered in this way to coordinate services and plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups. The role of Libraries in achieving these goals needs proactive consideration as the new system is developed.

The impact of leaving the European Union has yet to be fully realised. This will emerge within the next few years and will impact on the actions needed in the implementation plan.

Over the lifetime of this strategy there are some other potential initiatives, which, if introduced, could impact on how we use and get involved in Libraries, including:

- The introduction of 5G and 6G connectivity
- The development of game-changing new technologies
- Potential for long term and permanent changes to working patterns and the Shropshire economy.

As it is difficult to predict when, or indeed if, these changes will come about, and the impact they will have if they do, this strategy will be reviewed after five years, and amended to take account of circumstances at that time. In the meantime, the three-year implementation plan will be a working document that can be updated as necessary to take advantage of new opportunities or address new concerns.



11.0 Shropshire Library Strategy

Vision

Our **Vision** is for library services in Shropshire to be at the heart of our communities making connections to improve people's lives.

Our **Mission** is to provide physical and digital library services and spaces that inspire people's learning, imagination and discovery, to connect and fulfil an individual's potential, health and well-being and articulate the value of library services to our communities.

We have identified six **Strategic Priorities** to achieve our vision for the next five years:

<p>1. Improved opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity</p> <p>Reading, Literacy, Culture and Creativity are increasingly important parts of library services, we will create relationships that ensure libraries enhance people's lives as a place of discovery, diversity, and interactivity.</p>
<p>2. Improved health and wellbeing of Communities</p> <p>We will strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.</p>
<p>3. Promote Economic Recovery and Growth</p> <p>We will support the development of small, medium businesses, entrepreneurs and job seekers. Deliver digital technology for internal and for loan, business information, free and low-cost access to business intelligence, market research, 1 to1 training, innovative spaces and intellectual property support.</p>
<p>4. Communities that are resilient and inclusive</p> <p>We will highlight the key role we play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will, with technological support provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages.</p>
<p>5. Library services that are more innovative and sustainable</p> <p>We will increase our contribution to Local and National cross cutting aims for reducing social isolation, living independently and addressing the challenges of rurality. Utilise technology to free up staff interventions to work creatively to support an improved quality of life and sustainable communities.</p>
<p>6. People are enabled to discover the digital world</p> <p>We will provide a 21st century service that enables people of all ages to get online, and ensure they have the skills to engage with the digital world safely and effectively. Help to build digital confidence for day-to-day life as part of community and workforce development.</p>


12.0 Who will we focus on?

Libraries are for everyone and are accessible to all. However, the future library services will proactively target needs rather than be “needs neutral”. This means that in addition to providing library services that are available to all across Shropshire, the priority will be to use resources to find and help people who stand to benefit most, and also to work with other organisations to deliver this. An Equalities Assessment is available (appendix 2).

Targets include:

- ❖ **Public Health, Adult Social Care and Health** – being commissioned to develop initiatives jointly with adult social care and health teams. There is a strong, nationally recognised social prescribing offer to build from, which can place libraries at the heart of the preventative agenda of the emerging Integrated Care System. Discussions to date have identified opportunities in areas including:
 - Becoming part of the day care offer for people with learning disabilities, alongside other culture and leisure facilities.
 - Support to Shropshire’s 33,000 informal carers.
 - Serving as hubs for people to see and try out assistance technology.
 - Joint information provision initiatives, with events to be attended by NHS and public health staff.
- ❖ **Children’s Services** – Shropshire libraries have a long tradition of providing space for stimulating learning activities for children, including Rhyme Times, creative workshops with musicians and poets, reading groups, class visits from schools and craft events. We have recently begun working with Children’s Services to provide and co-ordinate activities funded through the national Holiday Activities and Food Programme to enrich the school holiday experience of 5,500 children. More generally, libraries can build on their contacts to help the early help hubs in reaching more families who may need support.
- ❖ **Economic growth** – building on libraries’ role in supporting small businesses, as they do for example with advice on digital, environmental and sustainability issues through the *Let’s Do Business in Shropshire* programme. Libraries will increasingly offer support to job creators in small businesses, by providing access to information such as professional and academic property databases, the British Library’s IP Centre offer, market research, company information on patents, trademarks, design and copyright. Investment could be sought to create privacy pods for use for online meetings, technology for blended meeting rooms and other equipment including tablets and laptops to assist small businesses. Libraries also offer great potential for co-working space, to establish libraries as key partners to help job seekers and small businesses, with both practical support and opportunities for networking.



13.0 Our Priorities

1. Improved opportunities for reading, literacy, culture, and creativity

We have a unique position within our communities, offering a wide range of services that are available to all. Reading, Literacy, Culture and Creativity are important parts of library services, creating relationships that ensure libraries enhance people's lives as a place of discovery, diversity, and interactivity. Reading and literacy are fundamentally important life skills that enable families to be healthier, happier, more self-assured and more resilient. This also empowers greater investigation and innovation allowing libraries to move towards expanding the services we give our customers and the commercial opportunities offered through a range of high-quality activities.

We will explore direct delivery and partnership opportunities to....

- ❖ Further develop inclusive family learning activities to support the home learning environment and lifelong learning, encouraging reading for pleasure and literacy
- ❖ Maintain and, where possible extend library materials in response to circumstances to ensure inclusivity of access to literature and creative opportunities.
- ❖ Enable staff, customers, entertainers and the curious to envisage how culture and technology could be used to make library services more accessible.
- ❖ Empower staff, people and communities to experience and co-create cultural enrichment.
- ❖ Embed opportunities for a wider range of arts, culture events and performances, allowing staff to own projects and share their experiences and knowledge with their teams and communities.

2. Improved health and wellbeing of Shropshire Communities

Shropshire Library services play an important role in supporting and maintaining quality health and wellbeing outcomes of people living in the county. Our partnership work around health and wellbeing is recognised and shared on the national level as an example of good practice.

Partnerships with Public Health, NHS and the voluntary and community sector will be strengthened through new ways of working, through the Integrated Care System. Being part of this collaboration will help support complex individual need. To enable this, we will strive for investment in health and wellbeing resources, fit for purpose environments and trained professional staff expanding on the possibilities of people centred support.

Highlighting national, regional and local campaigns gives us focus to engage people around their health and wellbeing in a meaningful, friendly and non-clinical way.

We will work with partners to....

- ❖ Expand on work with Public Health, NHS, GPs, voluntary, community and other professional organisations to deliver health and wellbeing support in the community through Social Prescribing and other health related initiatives
- ❖ Invest in health and wellbeing resources to lower the health inequality gap
- ❖ Increase staff confidence through training and development
- ❖ Engage communities to explore living well in a creative way to generate curiosity and aspiration
- ❖ Expand on opportunities to deliver library service benefits to the most vulnerable and/or living in the most rural areas
- ❖ Support wellbeing of families and individuals throughout different stages of life
- ❖ Provide accessible environments, activities and resources for people with specific needs, such as visually impaired, hard of hearing, people living with dementia, autism and other needs

Case Study

Social Prescribing

Shropshire Libraries Social Prescribing shortlisted for LGC awards 2019, involves tailor- made client focused library inductions. By introducing clients to helpful resources like Reading Well Books on Prescriptions, local community help groups, library social groups, volunteering and other related supportive information, the client can participate in a variety of activities that support recovery and social inclusion.

Aim:

- ❖ Strengthen resilience of communities and empower individuals regarding their health and wellbeing
- ❖ Improve the wellbeing of residents through social interventions
- ❖ Reduce GP patient appointments

How do libraries fit in?

- ❖ Support equality of health information through resources and local knowledge
- ❖ Provide a neutral, free, friendly, warm and non- judgemental environment
- ❖ Have events, advice sessions, groups and clubs to support wellbeing
- ❖ Have friendly knowledgeable staff to encourage social interaction



3. Promote economic recovery and growth

Libraries also have a strong role in supporting small businesses, for example with advice on digital, environmental and sustainability issues through the Let's Do Business in Shropshire programme.

We will...

- ❖ Support the development of small, medium businesses and entrepreneurs in partnership with economic growth, private sector and community providers, and the Marches Growth Hub.
- ❖ Deliver digital technology for internal use and for loan, business information, free and low-cost access to business intelligence, market research, 1-to-1s, training, innovative interactive spaces and intellectual property support.
- ❖ Develop strategic community library business hubs as focal points for business owners and entrepreneurs who are seeking the relevant information, support, and knowledge needed to grow.
- ❖ Provide access points to free business support and resources in partnership with the Marches Growth Hub and other partners to provide:
 - Practical advice to help get your business off the ground, from business plans to market research.
 - Provide information on the basics of intellectual property and how to protect products, websites and brands.
 - Provide up-to-date quality information on intellectual property and tools for researching key industries, with professional expertise.
 - Provide information advice sessions to enable individuals to discuss ideas in confidence, helping to develop business ideas and business plans.
 - Work with partners to support local businesses through the 'Let's Do Business in Shropshire' programme
- ❖ Work with Destination Management Partners to support the Visitor Economy through information, events, Visitor Information Centre's and volunteers

Case Study

Rhyme Time Volunteer

Volunteering at Shrewsbury Library has helped one of our library assistants to pursue her aspirations as a teaching assistant. After leading the half-hour Rhyme Time sessions at the library with up to 60 attendees. She was able to receive a reference from Shropshire Libraries that supported her application to volunteer in a Primary School, assisting in classrooms. Utilising her training for Excellence in Story and Rhyme Time she helped to innovate delivery in the library. Her new-found skills enabled her to secure a place as a trainee teaching assistant as well as a fully funded level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education.

Grace is looking forward to qualifying as an Early Years Educator we have been delighted to help support her in achieving her goals. She has been a fantastic volunteer who was very popular with the Rhyme Time attendees and who really helped lessen the workload for staff here at Shrewsbury Library.



4. Communities that are resilient and inclusive

Library services have a key role to play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We provide services and events that help address health needs, impact upon the wider factors of health and contribute to tackling health inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages whilst improving confidence and reducing social isolation. As trusted, safe and welcoming community spaces, libraries offer a route for public services to reach communities, providing access to information and signposting, creating social spaces for people to come together and access services that encourage learning and ambition, improve skills and self-confidence, promote wellbeing and individuality and reducing loneliness and isolation.

We will:

- ❖ Enable people to protect and improve their mental health, and to support those with mental health conditions to prevent escalation whilst encouraging recovery to live healthy and happy lives.
- ❖ Understand loneliness and deliver services to help lessen its effects by providing services that enable people to connect.
- ❖ Encourage understanding and tolerance between generations within our spaces
- ❖ Create space to allow kindness to be talked about and experienced.
- ❖ Identify and promote sustainable and effective mobile services to meet the needs of our communities.
- ❖ Develop environmental, social and economical workable services that meet local community needs.
- ❖ Maintain and improve visits and digital networks to ensure that we are relevant for business, innovation and entertainment.
- ❖ Ensure energy use is mitigated to reduce the impact on climate change and wider environment.
- ❖ Continue to work with Town, Parish councils and local organisations to deliver community focussed and managed services.
- ❖ Work with internal and external partners to identify and target those at risk and provide pro-active arrangements that support communities.
- ❖ Work with and support the development of volunteers to support and enhance library services

5. Libraries that are more innovative and sustainable

Increasingly our Libraries are contributing significantly to National and Local cross cutting aims such as reducing social isolation, living independently and addressing the challenges of rurality. This is vital to supporting an improved quality of life and sustainable communities in Shropshire

We will:

- ❖ Embed Libraries firmly within planning frameworks such as Place Plans, the Cultural Plan and the Community and Rural Strategy.
- ❖ Working with other sectors e.g. The Shropshire Culture Compact. We will also embed Libraries within their work to create models of good practice and develop skills and knowledge within the creative sector to deliver new programmes.
- ❖ Increase employability by supporting skills and learning, and helping people back into work
- ❖ Expand the visitor information and tourism offer to grow visitor economy through enhanced connectivity and innovation
- ❖ Invest in Library spaces so they are flexible and attractive vibrant multi-functional spaces
- ❖ Explore further opportunities for co-location
- ❖ Seek funding to invest in our IT infrastructure digital equipment and invest in our staff in terms of IT training
- ❖ Continue to invest in Staff Development in line with the Public Library Skills Strategy, Shropshire Council's Workforce Strategy to ensure a flexible, confident work force equipped to respond to any future needs of our communities
- ❖ Identify new funding streams for innovative services and explore ways of increasing income generation
- ❖ Develop better marketing of our spaces and services
- ❖ Work with volunteers to provide activities and services particularly suited to the local area
- ❖ Continuously assess our ability to respond effectively to unplanned circumstances, altering our services to reflect the restrictions in place whilst ensuring high quality delivery

6. People are enabled to discover the digital world

In the 21st century it is vital that people of all ages can get online, and that they have the skills to engage with the digital world safely and effectively. Basic digital confidence is essential for day-to-day life and to thrive within the workforce. Beyond that basic level the digital world offers incredible opportunities to connect with others, to engage with cultural and creative experiences, and to broaden learning and understanding in new ways. This has been highlighted during the Covid pandemic. Effective digital engagement has the potential to improve a person's employability, to improve mental well-being throughout all life stages, and to help people stay independent in their own homes for longer. Many people are at risk of being excluded or left behind as technology moves on, so Shropshire Libraries are playing a key role to enable digital access, to give people the skills they need, and to provide digital services that people want to use. We want to build on this role by further enabling people to participate in the digital world.

We will....

- ❖ Ensure that our IT and digital services and equipment are robust, as up to date and relevant as possible for what our customers need.
- ❖ Ensure that staff have the skills to deliver services that reflect the digital needs of communities and individuals.
- ❖ Work with partners to deliver projects that are either wholly digital, or that include digital elements that complement our physical services.
- ❖ Continue to explore new ways of creating and sharing our own digital content to further develop Shropshire Libraries' vibrant online community.
- ❖ Look for innovative and emerging technological solutions to transform the services we deliver and the ways that we deliver them.
- ❖ Work with partners, staff and volunteers to place library services at the heart of digital support and learning for Shropshire.
- ❖ Be proactive in seeking funding to develop digital projects and to invest in new equipment and solutions.

14.0 Operations

Partnerships

Achieving sustained impact requires working with communities to understand their needs and working strategically with partners to support the outcomes that most matter to Shropshire. Library services will work more closely with other parts of the council and partner organisations, across health and care, economic growth and climate change agendas.

Venues

We will retain a tiered mixed economy model of Library provision through our Libraries across the town and rural villages of Shropshire supported by a mobile service, where possible, covering the more rural areas ensuring everyone has access to resources relevant to their needs.

Each library location will be reviewed, taking account of potential to serve areas of greatest need; proximity to other Libraries; patterns of use; and suitability of buildings. This may lead to some co-locations with other services. This will involve working with community organisations and Town and Parish Councils to explore service delivery options.

Technology

Self-service lending kiosks will be installed in all libraries, along with full adoption of contactless card-payments. This will enable a deliberate shift in the balance of staffing from routine customer service tasks, to service development and community impact roles, a shift which emulates best practice elsewhere.

Opening Hours

Opening hours will also be reviewed, aiming to target opening times at periods when the service is most able to reach and attract those with the greatest needs, for example to support study and self-led learning, or family activities and enrichment.



"Self-service machines in Wembley library" by Julia Chandler/Libraries Taskforce is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

Staffing

The focus on meeting priority needs will require strengthening of some of library services' capabilities, in particular: service development (including partnership building and income and grant generation); community engagement; data and intelligence; digital; and marketing and communications. This will be enabled by release of some staff capacity from processing transactional services, following the introduction of self-service machines.

This should be associated with a change to the current library services structure, supported by a clear workforce strategy. This will enable Library staff to further shift their focus from reactive transactions, to proactive community engagement.

Realising Shropshire Local.

The council is exploring the extension of its Shropshire Local contact model. Shropshire Local recognises how digital services offer increasing opportunities for residents and businesses to navigate Council services in a self-service manner. It aims to offer assisted digital support and to develop customers' own skills so that they can "self-serve" for future needs. Libraries will be integral to this development, with co-location and integration with their wider information provision role. This will facilitate immediate signposting to a wider range of community or preventative services.

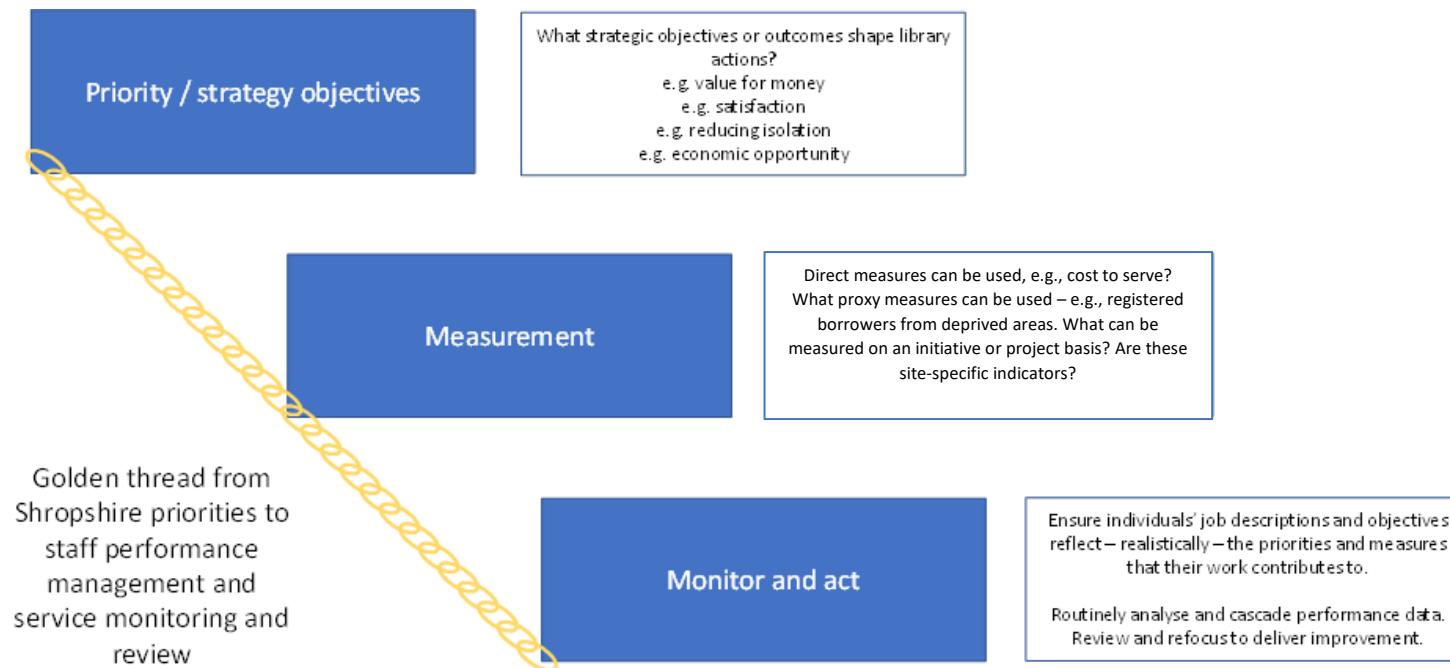
One mobile service.

Shropshire's three mobile library routes work with partners in fire, police, health and local village halls to offer a service that maximises the ability of local stops to combat loneliness and social isolation. Options are being piloted to combine the mobile library service with mobile services for Shropshire Local and a health promotion bus. This may consolidate the role of libraries as a gateway to information and support in a rural context.

15.0 How will we measure success?

The diagram below outlines a new approach to Performance Management, which will be developed over the next 12 months. Building on existing monitoring, the key aim should be to find indicators of impact. These will be aligned with delivery partners and their priorities. This could include measures such as:

- ❖ Usage of the Library Services by adults in most deprived areas.
- ❖ Usage of the Library Services by young people entitled to free school meals.
- ❖ Percentage of Library Service users who have been supported by library staff to access/use library IT services or equipment in the last 12 months and agree/strongly agree that their ability to access and use online resources/services has improved due to support provided by library staff.



16.0 Resources

Due to continued pressure on public finances, there is a need to ensure that all Services provide value for money. This Strategy creates opportunities to reduce ongoing public subsidy for Library Services, whilst increasing income. However, investment will be required to realise benefits. These opportunities are summarised below.

Opportunities for subsidy reduction:

- ❖ Review all library locations, potentially making savings through some building consolidation and co-location.
- ❖ Libraries may host Shropshire Local. Further work is being undertaken to consider both the community and financial impacts of this.
- ❖ Exploration of changes to opening hours.
- ❖ Combined mobile service, which may offer some economy of scale savings but depends on service design.
- ❖ Savings on frontline transaction processing as a result of installing more self-service machines.
- ❖ Redesign staff roles to better enable new ways of working.
- ❖ Exploring opportunities to reduce subsidies for community Library Services.

Income generating opportunities include:

- ❖ Co-producing initiatives with Adult Social Care and Health, Job Centre Plus and Children's Services.
- ❖ Exploring opportunities to maximise returns from space in buildings.
- ❖ Maximising external funding for specific activities.

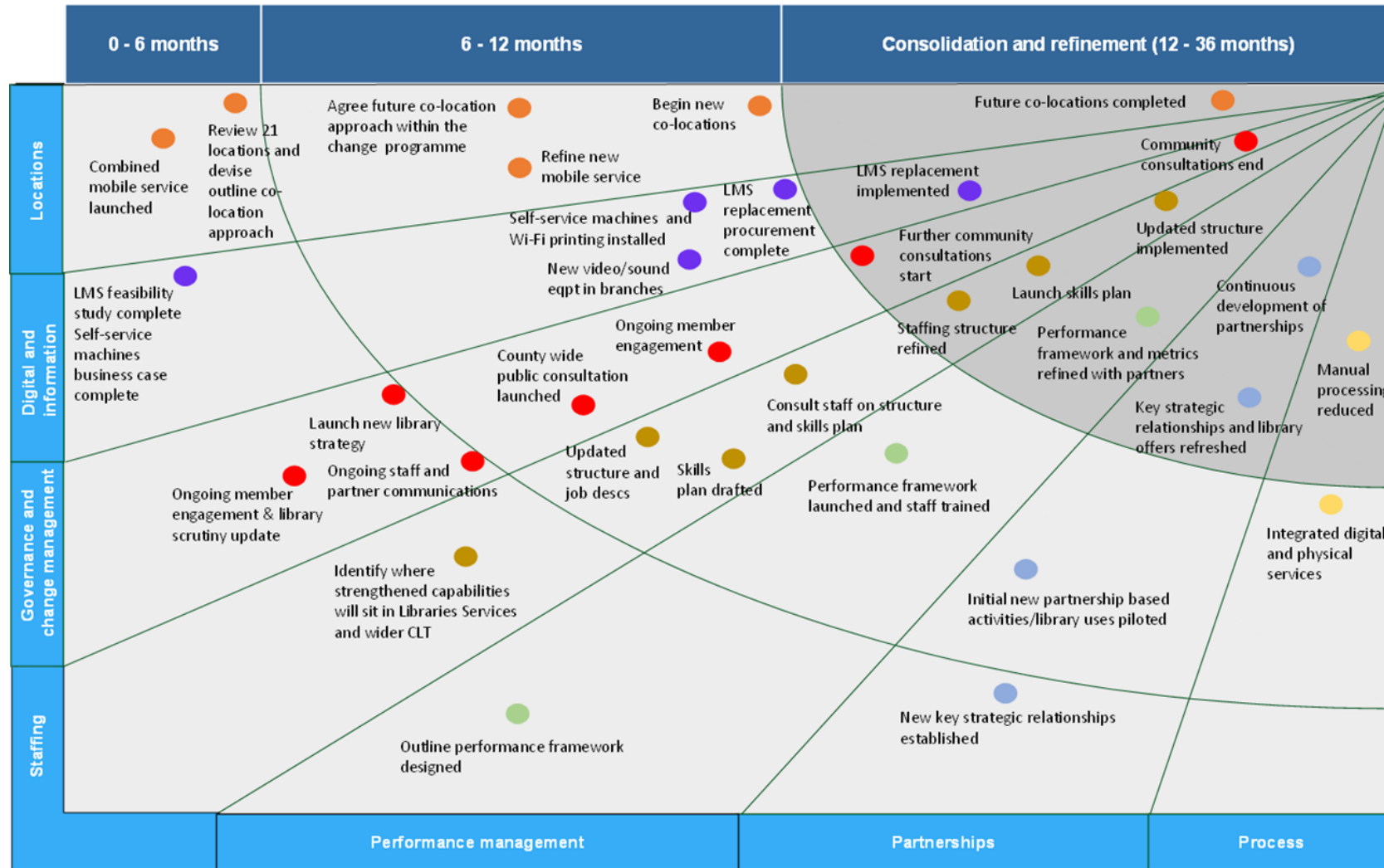
Investment requirements include:

- ❖ New library management system.
- ❖ Self-service machines.
- ❖ Other digital equipment to support development of community support for digital skills.
- ❖ Building refurbishment to create practical and flexible environments - for example including booths for private internet use, blended meetings screens and equipment for business meetings and shelves on wheels.
- ❖ Recruitment, training and skills development associated with new approach.

The subsidy reduction that will be achieved will depend on local circumstances and each library will be considered in turn. It is therefore not possible to specify the financial impacts at this stage, but it is anticipated that over the duration of this strategy considerable savings/ income generation will be made. Any savings would aim to retain community access to library services by identifying efficiencies, as outlined above.

17.0 Implementation Plan

A detailed implementation plan will be developed and delivered to address the priorities highlighted in this Strategy. This will be a three-year working document, which will be updated as required. A summary of work needed is shown in the diagram below.



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Shropshire Library Strategy 2022-27

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Shropshire Libraries are a vibrant service at the heart of our communities. They provide environments that allow people to feel safe, where generations of people meet freely in a public space and where learning, discovery and innovation are encouraged. Shropshire has a strong tradition of communities coming together when the need arises, and this has been evident with the Covid pandemic when working in partnership to deliver their local public services.

This library strategy outlines our promise as Shropshire Council, and sets out the priorities we will focus on to deliver a commercial, contemporary and adaptable community service for the future.

It outlines our vision and strategic objectives, highlights the importance of libraries within the community, describes our core offer and provides a clear direction for the future of Shropshire Libraries. We see corporate and community collaborations as being integral to the long-term sustainability of the service. We will work together with our friendly, highly skilled and experienced staff, to build on our offer around Reading, Information, Digital, Health, Learning, Culture and Creativity.

This Strategy describes the changes library services will make to be at the forefront of the council's future relationship with its residents and a critical partner in delivery of the county's priorities.

This Shropshire Library Strategy aims to change the way library services operate so that we can extend our work further into the mainstream of the way the council and its partners work with Shropshire's communities. It will ensure that library services reach the people who need them most and that co-design and joint delivery with partners serve the priority needs of the county.

The development of this Strategy has been informed by a public consultation process and a commissioned report around the potential for Library transformation.

The Vision, Mission and Priorities highlighted in this Strategy reflect these findings.

Shropshire's Library Offer

Shropshire Library service operates through a network of twenty-one static libraries, a prison library, three mobile libraries and development and online services which together provide access to library services in every market town and most parts of a very rural and sparsely populated county.

- ❖ 6 Principal market town libraries run by Shropshire Council: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Market Drayton
- ❖ 7 Local market town community libraries run by Shropshire Council: Gobowen, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill, Wem, Library at the Lantern, Pontesbury, Much Wenlock
- ❖ 8 Local market town community libraries run by local community group / Town Councils, etc.: Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Craven Arms, Highley, Shifnal, Cleobury Mortimer, Ellesmere
- ❖ 3 Mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council cover 274 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota
- ❖ Stoke Heath Prison Library Operated under fully funded contract from Her Majesty's Prisons

As one of the largest landlocked county's Shropshire's library locations is one where resources are thinly spread across several branches:

- ❖ It has one of the highest numbers of libraries amongst its statistical neighbours. It has 24 service points, of which three are mobile libraries compared to an average of 17 libraries across the group¹.
- ❖ Its total revenue expenditure for 2019/20 was lower than the national average and the average of its statistical neighbours.
- ❖ It has 13,463 residents per branch, which is considerably lower than the national average of 25,526 and is lower than the average of its statistical neighbours.

This needs to be seen in the context of the county's size and rurality. However, there is a need to review the library locations to maximise potential and allow them to easily respond to community need.

¹ Statistical neighbours as per CIPFA Stats Comparative Profile, 2018-19 Actuals and 2019-20 Estimates are: Herefordshire, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Wiltshire, Central Bedfordshire, North Somerset, Stockport, York, Isle of Wight, Calderdale and Solihull and cover service points open for more than 10 hours a week.

What do Shropshire Library Services do for us?

Libraries in Shropshire are increasingly at the heart of their communities, providing safe, trusted spaces which host a huge range of services and activities that support Shropshire residents to lead full and healthy lives. Our ambition and commitment is to continue to unlock the huge potential that library services have to impact positively on individuals' lives whilst at the same time delivering local priorities.

Libraries already provide:

- ❖ Quality information and digital support ensuring staff have the skills to support services.
- ❖ e-services that enable individuals and communities to develop skills to find answers and to inform life choices and feel safe online.
- ❖ Accessible resources that embrace technology.
- ❖ Bookstart, which is a national programme for parents and carers to enjoy books with their children from any age.
- ❖ Universal Reading Offer, which supports the growth of a literate, empathetic and confident society.
- ❖ Health and Wellbeing partnerships to promote healthy living provide support and engagement opportunities supported by inclusive spaces; signposting and information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities.
- ❖ Work with the business, education, culture and health sectors to facilitate economic growth with appropriate developments for communities
- ❖ Investment in spaces that are flexible, inclusive and attractive vibrant multi-functional spaces.
- ❖ Training for staff in line with development strategies to ensure a flexible, confident work force equipped to respond to any future needs of our communities

How are we doing?

Over 900 people responded to our Library Strategy consultation that ran during October/November 2019. 90% of respondents were identified as current users. During National Libraries Week we engaged over 400 library users with our quick snapshot survey and Library Roadshows.

The key themes from the consultation were:

- ❖ Overall levels of satisfaction with library services are high.
- ❖ Borrowing books and other items remains the main reason why people visit their library.
- ❖ Customers view library staff as the most important aspect of the service. Opening times and range/quality of library stock are also very important.
- ❖ Library staff are highly rated regarding customer service and approachability.
- ❖ In terms of the future, respondents were keen for libraries to stay as they are. People argue strongly for the importance of libraries to individuals and communities.
- ❖ The largest proportion of responses were from female library users aged 60+. Levels of engagement with those under 30 was very low.

The key themes suggest we need to balance the needs of our 'traditional' users alongside the needs of other library users. Developing services to attract new users is also essential to ensure that libraries stay relevant in the future.

Shropshire Library Strategy

Vision

Our **Vision** is for library services in Shropshire to be at the heart of our communities making connections to improve people's lives.

Our **Mission** is to provide physical and digital library services and spaces that inspire communities, learning, imagination, discovery, and health.

We have identified six **Strategic Priorities** to achieve our vision for the next five years:

<p>1. Improved opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity Reading, Literacy, Culture and Creativity are increasingly important parts of library services, we will create relationships that ensure libraries enhance people's lives as a place of discovery, diversity, and interactivity.</p>
<p>2. Improved health and wellbeing of Communities We will strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.</p>
<p>3. Promote Economic Recovery and Growth We will support the development of small, medium businesses, entrepreneurs and job seekers. Deliver digital technology for internal and for loan, business information, free and low-cost access to business intelligence, market research, 1 to1 training, innovative spaces and intellectual property support.</p>
<p>4. Communities that are resilient and inclusive We will highlight the key role we play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will, with technological support provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages.</p>
<p>5. Library services that are more innovative and sustainable We will increase our contribution to Local and National cross cutting aims for reducing social isolation, living independently and addressing the challenges of rurality. Utilise technology to free up staff interventions to work creatively to support an improved quality of life and sustainable communities.</p>
<p>6. People are enabled to discover the digital world We will provide a 21st century service that enables people of all ages to get online, and ensure they have the skills to engage with the digital world safely and effectively. Help to build digital confidence for day-to-day life as part of community and workforce development.</p>


Operations

Partnerships

Sustained impact requires working with communities to understand their needs, strategically with partners to support outcomes. Library services will work more closely with other parts of the council and partner organisations, across health and care, economic growth and climate change agendas.

Venues

We will retain a tiered mixed economy model of Library provision across the town and rural villages. Each library location will be reviewed, taking account of potential to serve areas of greatest need.

Technology

Self-service kiosks will be installed in all libraries, along with contactless card-payments. This will enable a deliberate shift in the balance of staffing from routine customer service tasks, to service development and community impact roles.

Opening Hours

Opening hours will also be reviewed, aiming to target opening times at periods when the service is most able to reach and attract those with the greatest needs.

Staffing

The focus on meeting priority needs will require strengthening of some of library services' capabilities, in particular: service development (including partnership building and income and grant generation); community engagement; data and intelligence; digital; and marketing and communications. A change to the current library services structure, supported by a clear workforce strategy, will enable Library staff to further enhance their roles with less reactive transactions, to proactive more community engagement.

Shropshire Local.

The council is exploring the extension of its Shropshire Local community interactions. Shropshire Local digital offer increases opportunities for residents and businesses to navigate Council services. It offers self-service, assisted digital support and customers skills learning for their future online needs. Libraries will be integral to this development, with co-location and integration with wider community information provision.

Mobile Services.

Shropshire's library mobiles in partnership with the voluntary sector, health and local services will help to maximise the ability of local areas to combat loneliness and social isolation. Options are being piloted to combine the mobile library service with Shropshire Local and a health promotion. This will strengthen the role of libraries as a gateway to information, communication and support.

Resources

Due to continued pressure on public finances, there is a need to ensure that all Services provide value for money. This Strategy creates opportunities to reduce ongoing public subsidy for Library Services, whilst increasing income. However, investment will be required to realise benefits. These can be summarised as opportunities for subsidy reduction; through colocation, the introduction of self-service machines, changes to staffing and reviewing opening hours, and income generation; through venue hire, external grant funding and co-production of new activities. Realising these will require investment in new equipment and software, building refurbishment and training.

The subsidy reduction that will be achieved will depend on local circumstances and each library will be considered in turn. It is therefore not possible to specify the financial impacts at this stage, but it is anticipated that over the duration of this strategy considerable savings/ income generation will be made. Any savings would aim to retain community access to library services by identifying efficiencies, as outlined above.

How will we measure success?

A new approach to Performance Management, which will be developed over the next 12 months. Building on existing monitoring, the key aim should be to find indicators of impact. These will be aligned with delivery partners and their priorities. This could include measures such as:

- ❖ Usage of the Library Services by adults in most deprived areas.
- ❖ Usage of the Library Services by young people entitled to free school meals.
- ❖ Percentage of Library Service users who have been supported by library staff to access/use library IT services or equipment in the last 12 months and agree/strongly agree that their ability to access and use online resources/services has improved due to support provided by library staff.

Timescales

The Library Strategy Implementation Plan for this work will be developed and delivered over the next 3 years, working with communities at each library venue to best address local community needs, offer excellent value for money, and provide support to local people and businesses, including through Shropshire Local as appropriate.

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Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 A risk management log will be updated and 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 with risk owners.

Risks

Description of Risk	Risk Impact	Risk Level Minor, Major Significant, Certain
Community has adversative response to library strategy and the proposed implementation	Development of transparent consultation and community engagement with consistent messaging and feedback.	Significant
Council savings have an adverse effect on Library service budget with reduced resources.	Set out resource requirements as far as possible link to wider Culture Leisure and Tourism (CLT) change and whole council change programme.	Significant
Uncertainty about future locations delay changes to staffing.	Adopt an incremental roll out. Set priorities and target libraries where a move is expected for early adoption.	Major
Possible conflict between Library Transformation Strategy and Shropshire Council Target Operating Model	On-going collaboration to identify management, resources and future developments	Major
Shropshire Local delivery timetable to other areas of the library network and community.	On-going staff, human resources and customer feedback with training, resources and development before reconfiguring locations	Significant
Dependency on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) from Community and Rural Strategy delays review of locations.	Build contingency into plan with partners, understand what aspects can be piloted.	Minor
Process for ordering self-service machines delays plan and associated reduction of time spent	Now part of capital investment program with timescales adjusted for implementation.	Major

Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal Appendix 3

on transactional processes.		
Adverse effect to self-service implementation affecting low customer take up or limited reduction in transaction times.	Reconfigure library locations with library counters and near entrances (based on experience in other authorities). Change management, including robust staff and customer consultation to encourage service ownership.	Major
If Culture Leisure and Tourism (CLT) restructure timetable has adverse effect on affects transformation timetable.	Identify key dependencies and prioritise areas and communities as part of implementation.	Major
Staff and union consultation resists changes to structure.	Consult unions on changes with careful staff communications strategy. Emphasise opportunities, career development and training.	Major
Partnerships develop but partners are unable to co-fund or "commission" libraries to deliver.	Extensive community engagement with partners to inform assumptions about increases in service development.	Minor
Payments for commissioned work does not cover actual costs.	Work closely with finance business partner to understand real costs and inform bids.	Major
Insufficient resources are available to deliver transformation.	Set out resource requirements. As far as possible link to wider CLT change and whole council change programme.	Significant

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Initial Screening Record 2021-2022

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Draft Shropshire Library Service Strategy 2022- 27

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Michael Lewis

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		No

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations
<p>Shropshire Libraries provide environments that allow people to feel safe, where families meet freely in a public space and where learning, discovery and innovation are encouraged.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way people and communities interact and along with local focus for market towns and villages. Shropshire Council is undergoing a transformation to develop new ways of working, which includes the development of a new operating model to serve local communities. The library service remained open for large periods during lockdown as well as providing book collection and home delivery services, putting events online, and remained a core part of community resilience in partnership with other cultural services, health, social care and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>To obtain feedback to inform the development of a new strategy, an engagement plan was designed to include 2 periods of consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 (six weeks) - open questions to obtain feedback from local people concerning what they would like the strategy to focus on.

- Stage 2 (Six weeks) - a copy of the draft strategy to see if any amendments and changes are needed prior to final agreement and sign off.

The consultation survey was designed to find out:

- How libraries are currently being used (to support existing data held by the service)
 - Why people use libraries and which library services people most
 - What prevents people using library services
 - How satisfied library users are with current services
 - Whether there are any areas of dissatisfaction and requested improvements
 - Changes people would like to see in the future
 - What people would like to see included in the next library strategy .

Shropshire Council asks key equality and diversity monitoring questions within its public consultations. This helps identify whether relevant groups within the community have been adequately included in the consultation and whether the respondents are representative of the wider community. 909 people completed the survey, either online, or at their local library. A significant number of paper surveys were used to ensure that people had a choice of how to respond (many people would prefer not to complete online surveys). The response from local communities during the 6-week period was good with large numbers of people completing the survey and providing comprehensive responses to questions with many taking the time to complete detailed comments. All 2,677 comments have been read and each one tagged with the main themes.

The overall impact of the proposed Library Strategy, informed by the public consultation, is that it will be positive across groupings in the community. This is given its breadth of ambition and approach to social inclusion, and the recognition of the rurality of the county, the opportunities of digital content to promote inclusion and access across the area, and the optimisation proposed of libraries as free, high-quality, local venues.

Given that there are low numbers of under 30s using the service at present, efforts will need to be made to maximise the positive impacts of the proposed Library Strategy for this age grouping.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

An Implementation Plan will be delivered as part of the Strategy and Library Transformation, setting out the actions for place-based delivery over the next three to five years. This will be monitored annually, with a report published as part of scrutiny that sets out the progress against the library’s strategic ambitions.

The intention is that the Library Strategy and Transformation will be reviewed after 5 years, with a new 5-year strategic plan being published following a full evaluation in 2027. We will liaise with elected representatives and communities to seek

collaborative feedback on an ongoing basis about impacts for people in with Protected Characteristic and for those at risk of social exclusion. It is recognised that there will be ongoing engagement with people with Protected Characteristics through community partnership.

We will target specific groups such as children and young people, families, people with physical disabilities, people with experience of mental and emotional distress and people for whom loneliness and isolation, due to factors including rurality and limited access to facilities and services can lead to negative impacts upon their health and well-being. This will be through projects and partnerships already under way and through identification of comparator good practice. Actions may then be more readily identified from evidence gathered to enhance the positive impact of the Strategy for these groupings, leading to better outcomes overall for communities in Shropshire.

There will be ongoing review and feedback of service delivery utilizing customer feedback and critical stakeholders to create accessible digital and physical delivery, including managing and benchmarking performance against best practice.

Associated ESHIAs

Shropshire Library Strategy ESSIIA 2018 -2023, Cultural Strategy ESIIAs 2021-2031, Leisure ESIIAs 2018- 2023, the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy 2018-2028, and the Shropshire Museums Strategy 2018 - 2023.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change considerations

This is the section in which to please outline any actions to mitigate negative or enhance positive impacts in terms of economic, environmental, or wider societal considerations, and actions to review and monitor the overall impact of the service change accordingly.

Climate change

The purpose of the corporate Climate Strategy & Action Plan is to generate a positive response to the urgent challenge of climate change and its likely adverse effects across Shropshire and its communities. The Strategy identifies how the Council proposes to deliver its objective of becoming net carbon neutral by 2030 and make a positive contribution to the county's transition to a low carbon future through:

- Powering down energy and resource consumption and carbon emissions through energy efficiency measures and the adoption of low carbon technologies;
- Powering up the production of renewable energy from Council property;

- Capturing and storing carbon to offset residual emissions;
- Working with others in our supply chain and the wider community and through our regulatory roles to highlight the challenge of climate change and foster positive responses, including opportunities for clean growth, across Shropshire, consistent with the Council's strategic vision and objectives.

Libraries have an important role to play in translating climate change and carbon reduction objectives into action on the ground by local communities and businesses. Local libraries provide a trusted source of information about the Council's Climate Action Plan, signposting residents to helpful information and tools, to help them adopt practical solutions for low carbon lifestyles.

Health and well being

Library and public health partnerships are based on evidence and includes:


- Promotion of healthy lifestyles through public health campaigns and events with use of current data to understand the health conditions, lifestyles and patterns of disease that affect Shropshire people. This also helps to identify health inequalities across different areas.
- Health and Wellbeing partnerships to promote healthy living provide support and engagement opportunities supported by inclusive spaces; signposting and information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities.
- Strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.
- Highlighting the key role libraries play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will utilise technological support to provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages.

Economic and societal/wider community

- Work with the business, education, culture and health sectors to facilitate economic growth with appropriate developments for communities
- Investment in commercial and community spaces with partners to ensure that they are flexible, inclusive and attractive vibrant multi-functional spaces.
- Training for staff in line with development strategies to ensure a flexible, confident work force equipped to respond to any future needs of our communities

- Sustained impact requires working with communities to understand their needs, strategically with partners to support outcomes. Library services will work more closely with other parts of the council and partner organisations, to help focus agendas.



Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer carrying out the screening Michael Lewis Library Service Manager		31.01.2022
Any internal service area support*		
Any external support** Mrs Lois Dale Rurality and Equalities Specialist		

*This refers to other officers within the service area

**This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name Michael Lewis		31.01.2022
Accountable officer's name Clare Featherstone Head of Culture Leisure and Tourism		31.01.2022

*This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

Libraries support us in an everyday way, throughout our lives. Walk into any library and see toddlers, mums and dads at Story Time, studious teenagers and the local job club. And while just about everybody is getting online, around a quarter of us don't have access at home. Whilst anything can happen in a library, something you rarely see is money changing hands. Perhaps the odd overdue charge, a small fee to attend a workshop or borrow a film but overwhelmingly library services are free for all at the point of use.

This library strategy outlines our vision and strategic objectives, highlights the importance of libraries within the community, describes our core offer and provides a clear direction for the future of Shropshire Libraries. We will work together with our experienced staff, to build on our offer around Reading, Information, Digital, Health, Learning, Culture and Creativity and business support

Shropshire Library services have identified clear Vision, Mission and strategic ambitions that express the way in which our services will develop over the next five years:

Our **Vision** is for library services in Shropshire to be at the heart of our communities making connections to improve people's lives.

Our **Mission** is to provide physical and digital library services and spaces that inspire people's learning, imagination and discovery, to connect and fulfil an individual's potential, health and well-being; and articulate the value of library services to our communities.

Our new Shropshire library service five-year strategy will: - Re-shape following a set of strategic ambitions based directly on Shropshire Councils Organisational Principles and Cultural Strategy. We will also build on the work developed as part of Library Transformation work highlighting the importance of targeting delivery to support the needs of communities and strengthen the capability of staff to aid in community development.

We will challenge established ways of working to position collaborative resources and services to deliver a provision that maximises impact and future sustainability.

Core community, economic and health and well-being challenges, especially loneliness and isolation in a rural context, coupled with skills out-migration, mean that the need for libraries' participatory role is ever more crucial. These are highlighted in our strategic ambitions to:

- **Improved opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity**

Reading, Literacy, Culture and Creativity are increasingly important parts of library services, we will create relationships that ensure libraries enhance people's lives as a place of discovery, diversity, and interactivity.

- **Improved health and wellbeing of Communities**

We will strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.

- **Promote Economic Recovery and Growth of the County**

We will support the development of small, medium businesses and entrepreneurs. Deliver digital technology for internal and for loan, business information, free and low-cost access to business intelligence, market research, 1 to1 training innovative spaces and intellectual property support.

- **Communities that are resilient and inclusive**

We will highlight the key role we play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will, with technological support provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages.

- **Library services that are more innovative and sustainable**

We will increase our contribution to Local and National cross cutting aims for reducing social isolation, living independently and addressing the challenges of rurality. Utilise technology to free up staff interventions to work creatively to support an improved quality of life and sustainable communities.

- **People are enabled to discover the digital world**

We will provide a 21st century service that enables people of all ages to get online, and ensure they have the skills to engage with the digital world safely and effectively. Help to build digital confidence for day-to-day life as part of community and workforce development.

Cross-cutting Principles

- ❖ Articulate our value and develop services to meet community aspirations in line with council priorities, focusing on the most vulnerable and promoting independent living
- ❖ Proactive development and participation into a network of hubs that work best for service delivery, communities and council priorities.
- ❖ Grow our financial foundation by investigating income opportunities to enhance service excellence and supplement core services.

- ❖ Invest in digital technology that supports automation of transactions to offer a comprehensive blended physical and digital delivery.
- ❖ Illustrate professional specialisms and expertise to co-deliver developmental opportunities within the organisation.
- ❖ Coordinate up to date information, customer feedback processes and intelligence gathering to increase our market presence, support innovation and successful collaboration.
- ❖ Optimise our community partnerships to develop collaborative information intelligence gathering that enhances organisational ambitions.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Shropshire Council have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7). the intended audience is all those who live in, work in or study in Shropshire, to which we may add those who visit or travel through our county.

There will be additional interest in our strategy and outcomes at local, regional, national and central governmental level with a legal focus from parliamentary committees.

We also have interest from other local authorities, and library, information and cultural institutions, particularly the Arts Council, Libraries Connected, CILIP Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport as part of the Libraries Taskforce and the Local Government Association (LGA).

Evidence used for screening of the service change

In February 2014, Arts Council England undertook a review of how public libraries and their services contribute to the economy.

The central challenge in placing a value on libraries contribution to the economy is that they are provided either entirely free at the point of use or for minimal cost. This means that the typical economic valuation such as Gross Value Added (GVA)) does not provide a realistic value.

As the traditional metrics for measuring the economic contribution of an industry are not appropriate in a public library context, researchers use three different hypotheses as to how public libraries make a contribution to the economy:

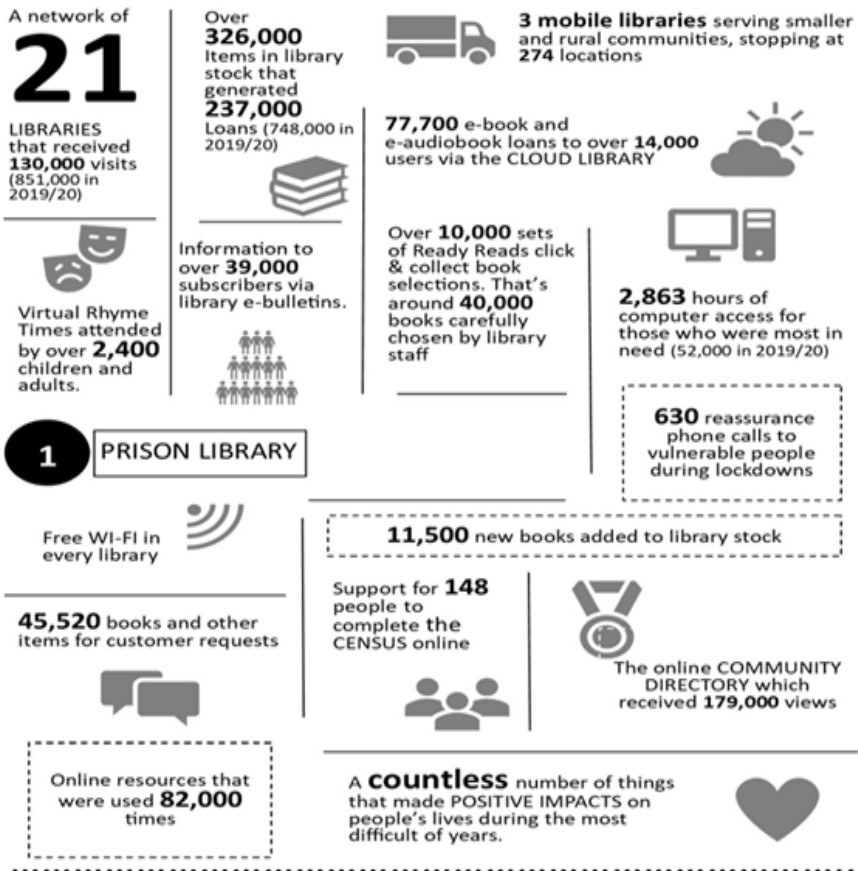
- as economic actors (economic impact)
- as institutions that facilitate the creation of economic value in the local economy (place-based economic development)
- as libraries' output consists overwhelmingly of non-market goods. All of the economic valuation methods that have been applied to libraries start from this same challenge. But diverge in terms of:
 - the degree to which they try to compensate for the inability to use consumer spending as an accurate proxy of value
 - the assumptions on where (and how) economic value is created
 - the methods that they deploy to measure the economic contribution of libraries

Financial impact – a simple assertion that libraries are important actors in the local economy: they employ a significant number of people, they purchase goods and services and attract visitors who make other expenditures as part of visit.

Place-based impact – public library buildings can be catalysts for regeneration because of the visitors that they draw to the location and the enhancement to the image of the area.

Benefit-cost analyses and 'total economic value' approaches –are founded upon the premise that libraries deliver a variety of services to individuals that have value even though these are not paid-for (as they bring a range of social, educational and cultural benefits)..

Despite services being severely restricted by Covid, in 2020/21 Shropshire Libraries provided.....



Shropshire Library Service will also be developing a new approach to Performance Management, which will be developed over the next 12 months. Building on existing monitoring, the key aim should be to find indicators of impact. These will be aligned with delivery partners and their priorities. This could include measures such as:

- Usage of the Library Services by adults in most deprived areas.
- Usage of the Library Services by young people entitled to free school meals.
- Percentage of Library Service users who have been supported by library staff to access/use library IT services or equipment in the last 12 months and agree/strongly agree that their ability to access and use online resources/services has improved due to support provided by library staff.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Over 900 people responded to our Library Strategy consultation that ran during October/November 2019. During National Libraries Week we engaged over 400 library users with our quick snapshot survey and Library Roadshows. We were also able to capture views from several non-users.

The key themes from the consultation were:

- Overall levels of satisfaction with library services are high.
- Borrowing books and other items remains the main reason why people visit their library.
- Customers view library staff as the most important aspect of the service. Opening times and range/quality of library stock are also very important.
- Library staff are highly rated regarding customer service and approachability.
- In terms of the future many people are keen for libraries to stay as they are. People argue strongly for the importance of libraries to individuals and communities.
- The largest proportion of responses were from female library users aged 60+. Levels of engagement with those under 30 was very low.

To obtain feedback to inform the development of a new strategy, an engagement plan was

designed to include 2 periods of consultation:

- Stage 1 (six weeks) - open questions to obtain feedback from local people concerning what they would like the strategy to focus on.
- Stage 2 (Six weeks) - a copy of the draft strategy to see if any amendments and changes are needed prior to final agreement and sign off.

The first phase of engagement opened on the 1 October 2019 and closed on 10 November 2019.

Members of the public and stakeholders could choose to provide feedback in a range of ways:

- By completing a survey
- By email and postal feedback for any more detailed comments
- By attending one of the roadshows held during National Libraries Week:
 - o Monday 7 October 10am to 3/4pm – Oswestry Library
 - o Tuesday 8 October 10am to 3pm – Bridgnorth Library
 - o Wednesday 9 October 10am to 3pm – Ludlow Library
 - o Thursday 10 October 10am to 3pm – Shrewsbury Library
 - o Friday 11 October 10am to 1pm – Whitchurch Library
 - o Friday 11 October Library 1pm to 4pm– Market Drayton

The consultation survey was designed to find out:

- How libraries are currently being used (to support existing data held by the service)
- Why people use libraries and which library services people most

- What prevents people using library services
- How satisfied library users are with current services
- Whether there are any areas of dissatisfaction and requested improvements
- Changes people would like to see in the future
- What people would like to see included in the next library strategy

The key themes suggest we need to balance the needs of our 'traditional' users alongside the needs of other library users. Developing services to attract new users is also essential to ensure that libraries stay relevant in the future.

It should be noted that there was a problem with a small number of surveys. Some of the paper surveys had been stapled incorrectly and the back page was the wrong way around. This meant that some of the paper copy respondents from Oswestry area (approximately 33 people) did not complete some questions including the question about their ideal library of the future and what they would like to see in the Library Strategy.

In any consultation it is important to understand the characteristics of those who have responded. This understanding can allow any gaps to be filled and additional targeted engagement to take place.

Shropshire Council asks key equality and diversity monitoring questions within its public consultations. This helps identify whether relevant groups within the community have been adequately included in the consultation and whether the respondents are representative of the wider community. 909 people completed a survey, either online, or at their local library. A significant number of paper surveys were used to ensure that people had a choice of how to respond (many people would prefer not to complete online surveys).

The response from local communities during the 6-week period was fantastic, not only did large numbers of people complete a survey but they provided comprehensive responses to questions and most took the time to complete detailed comments.

All 2,677 comments have been read and each one tagged with the main themes. This report also includes example comments to better illustrate the type of comments received.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)			Targeting children and young people, older people who are socially isolated, and volunteering opportunities	
<u>Disability</u> (please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)			Social Prescribing, clinical spaces and health initiatives with physical and digital accessibility	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Target carers and Child development in relation to numeracy literacy and play	

<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)		Identify and reach out to our range of diverse communities		
<u>Religion and belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Sex</u> (this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)			Targeting children and young people, older people, those who are socially isolated, job seekers and communities that do not engage with local authority services or opportunities	

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
<p>Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p>				<p>Impact expected to be neutral or positive</p>
<p>Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p>			<p>Social Prescribing, clinical spaces and health initiatives with physical and digital accessibility</p>	
<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p>				<p>Impact expected to be neutral or positive</p>
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services?</p>			<p>Impact expected to have a long-term</p>	

<p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p>			<p>positive contribution to the information provision and spaces available for consultation at a community level.</p>	
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Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

The public sector has seen significant change since the last Library Strategy was produced in 2018; in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, current economic climate and associated budget pressures, economic growth aspirations aiming to significantly increase the population and business base of Shropshire, and the growing need for library information and clinical spaces with activities for health and wellbeing. This is having an impact on the voluntary and private sectors with a greater need to have a clear, evidence-based, plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach as part of the organisational principles is being developed with a focus on, delivering across multiple agencies and integrating activity across local authority services, partner organisations and business.

Cabinet gave approval in February 2020 to the use of health impact assessments. This proposed Strategy provides an opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, in order to more fully capture the health and wellbeing benefits expected. It is timely that such approval was sought and given, as the decision was made just before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Shropshire, and as the Council is now seeking to focus and shape local outcomes to improve health and wellbeing across groupings through joint efforts across sectors, utilising emerging national evidence and national learning points. This is particularly so for people in ethnic minority groupings, for men, for people who are obese, and for older people, and for people who whom loneliness and isolation can lead to mental ill health.

Maximising the positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits includes is upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities.

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, an ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the Protected Characteristic groupings and our tenth category of Social Inclusion. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation eg young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive. Examples of this approach include the Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Economic Growth Strategy 2017-2021

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to thus visibly show we are taking what is called due regard of the needs of people in protected characteristic groupings

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Part Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people or households that we may describe as vulnerable.

Examples could be households on low incomes or people for whom there are safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, e.g., Age. Another specific vulnerable grouping is veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces, who face particular challenges with regard to access to Health, to Education, and to Housing.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.

- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for individual and for communities, and as such we are asking service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, much as they have been doing during 2020-2021, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities. A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a common-sense idea. It is a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.

- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly, to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and wellbeing.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community?

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk more, and as there will be reductions in emission leading to better air quality.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and well being of the wider community.

An example of this could be: an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be: a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further information on the use of ESHIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

For further guidance on public health policy considerations: please contact Amanda Cheeseman Development Officer in Public Health, via telephone 01743 253164 or email amanda.cheeseman@shropshire.gov.uk

Appendix 5- Shropshire Library Strategy 2022-27 Cabinet Report

4. Climate Change Appraisal

- 4.1 Libraries have an important role to play in translating our climate change and carbon reduction objectives into action on the ground by local communities and businesses. Local libraries provide a trusted source of information about the Council's Climate Action Plan, signposting residents to helpful information and tools, to help them adopt practical solutions for low carbon lifestyles. (Appendix 5)
- 4.2 Libraries and the Draft library strategy can contribute to the Council's adopted Climate Strategy as follows:
- **Energy and fuel consumption** – many library buildings are already being upgraded using Government grant money to decarbonise heating and lighting. Library displays and staff can help to raise awareness of the need to reduce carbon from heating and energy use and the need to travel. Carbon savings from improvements to library buildings will be quantified and reported corporately.
 - **Renewable energy generation:** the planned upgrades to library buildings will include opportunities to generate renewable energy through the inclusion of roof mounted solar panels wherever practicable, as a contribution to the Council's adopted objective of becoming energy self-sufficient by 2030.
 - **Carbon offsetting or mitigation:** The Draft Library Strategy and the operation of library buildings is unlikely to provide additional opportunities to offset or mitigate carbon emissions.
 - **Climate change adaptation:** libraries are key pieces of community infrastructure and displays and library staff can help to raise awareness of the measures which may be needed to adapt to the effects of more extreme weather and to improve resilience to increased risks to the health and wellbeing of Shropshire's residents, economy and natural environment.
- 4.3 Libraries can host community events and programs that raise awareness, promote resilience and adaptability to the climate crisis and the results of a lower carbon lifestyle. The library service will identify opportunities to work collaboratively on these

issues with climate action groups associated with the Shropshire Climate Action Partnership.

Library Strategy Consultation 2019

Feedback Report

November 2019



1. Background and Methodology

Shropshire Council highlighted the need for a new library strategy following a period of significant financial change. The current strategy is based on a three-tier hierarchy of library services to inform how resources are financed and managed. That hierarchy will continue to underpin funding decisions to ensure library services are sustainable for the future. However, a refreshed strategy can offer a robust vision with clear priorities for the library service of the future.

To obtain feedback to inform the development of a new strategy, an engagement plan was designed to include 2 periods of consultation:

- Stage 1 (six weeks) - open questions to obtain feedback from local people concerning what they would like the strategy to focus on.
- Stage 2 (Six weeks) - a copy of the draft strategy to see if any amendments and changes are needed prior to final agreement and sign off.

The first phase of engagement opened on the 1 October 2019 and closed on 10 November 2019. Members of the public and stakeholders could choose to provide feedback in a range of ways:

- By completing a survey
- By email and postal feedback for any more detailed comments
- By attending one of the roadshows held during National Libraries Week:
 - Monday 7 October 10am to 3/4pm – Oswestry Library
 - Tuesday 8 October 10am to 3pm – Bridgnorth Library
 - Wednesday 9 October 10am to 3pm – Ludlow Library
 - Thursday 10 October 10am to 3pm – Shrewsbury Library
 - Friday 11 October 10am to 1pm – Whitchurch Library
 - Friday 11 October Library 1pm to 4pm – Market Drayton

The consultation survey was designed to find out:

- How libraries are currently being used (to support existing data held by the service)
- Why people use libraries and which library services people most
- What prevents people using library services
- How satisfied library users are with current services
- Whether there are any areas of dissatisfaction and requested improvements
- Changes people would like to see in the future
- What people would like to see included in the next library strategy

It should be noted that there was a problem with a small number of surveys. Some of the paper surveys had been stapled incorrectly and the back page was the wrong way around. This meant that some of the paper copy respondents from Oswestry area (approximately 33 people) did not complete some questions including the question about their ideal library of the future and what they would like to see in the Library Strategy.

2. Consultation Respondents

In any consultation it is important to understand the characteristics of those who have responded. This understanding can allow any gaps to be filled and additional targeted engagement to take place. Shropshire Council works to ask key equality and diversity monitoring questions within its

public consultations. This helps identify whether relevant groups within the community have been adequately included in the consultation and whether the respondents are representative of the wider community.

909 people completed a survey, either online, or at their local library. A significant number of paper surveys were used to ensure that people had a choice of how to respond (many people would prefer not to complete online surveys). The response from local communities during the 6 week period was fantastic, not only did large numbers of people complete a survey but they provided comprehensive responses to questions and most took the time to complete detailed comments. All 2,677 comments have been read and each one tagged with the main themes. This report also includes example comments to better illustrate the type of comments received.

Chart 1 shows that most of those responding to the stage 1 engagement were members of the public (752), followed by library volunteers (32) and voluntary and community sector groups and organisations (18). 25 people also provided other roles and they included friends of library groups, librarians, parents, teachers, authors and small businesses.

Chart 1 Survey respondents by type

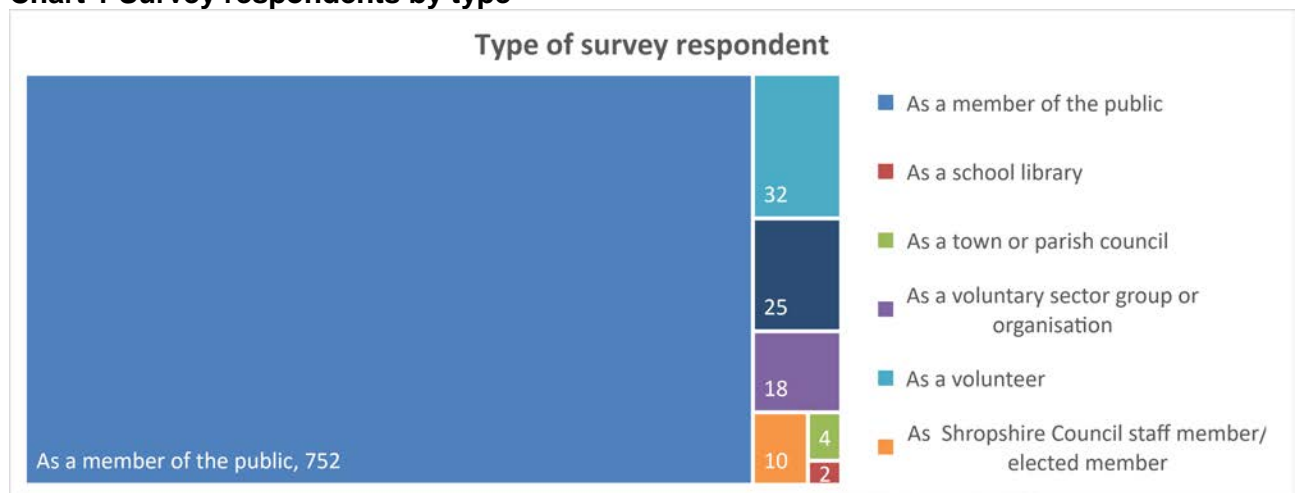
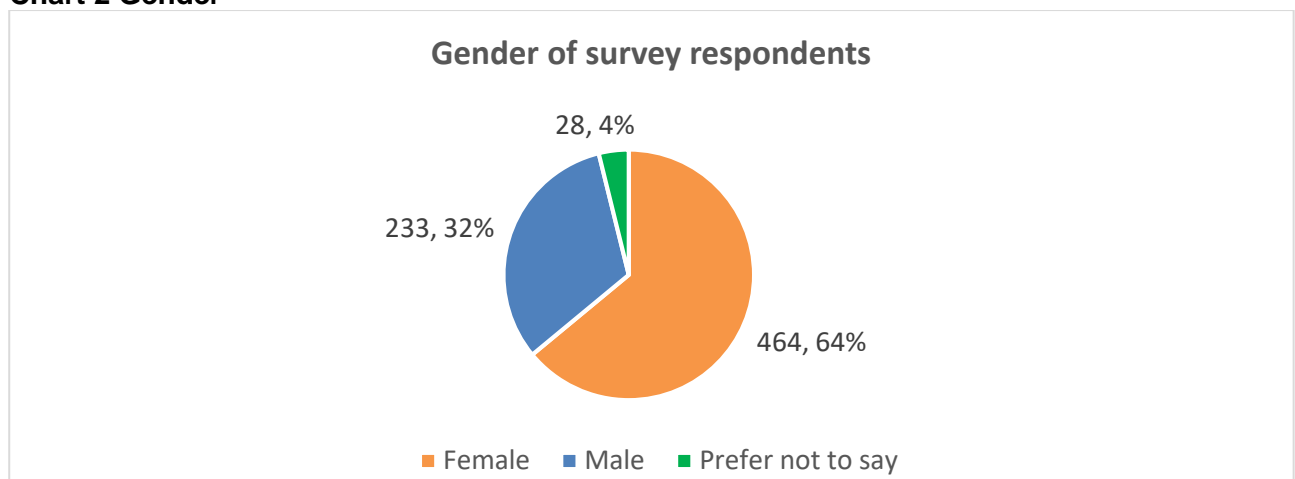


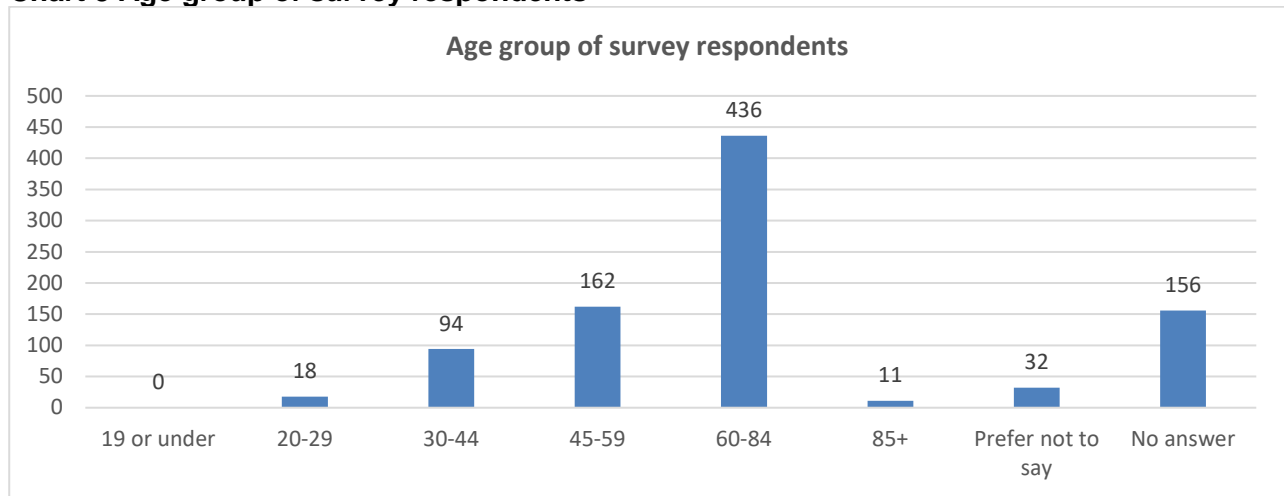
Chart 2 highlights that more women responded to the survey than men. 184 people chose not to answer the question so there could have been a number of male respondents within that group. None of the equality and diversity questions within surveys are mandatory, it is recognised that people may not wish to provide personal information and there are clear explanations to explain why Shropshire Council collects the data and that people may choose not to respond. Overall there were responses from both genders, but it is worth bearing in mind, particularly in advance of the stage 2 consultation that men have been slightly underrepresented in the first part of the engagement on the new library survey.

Chart 2 Gender



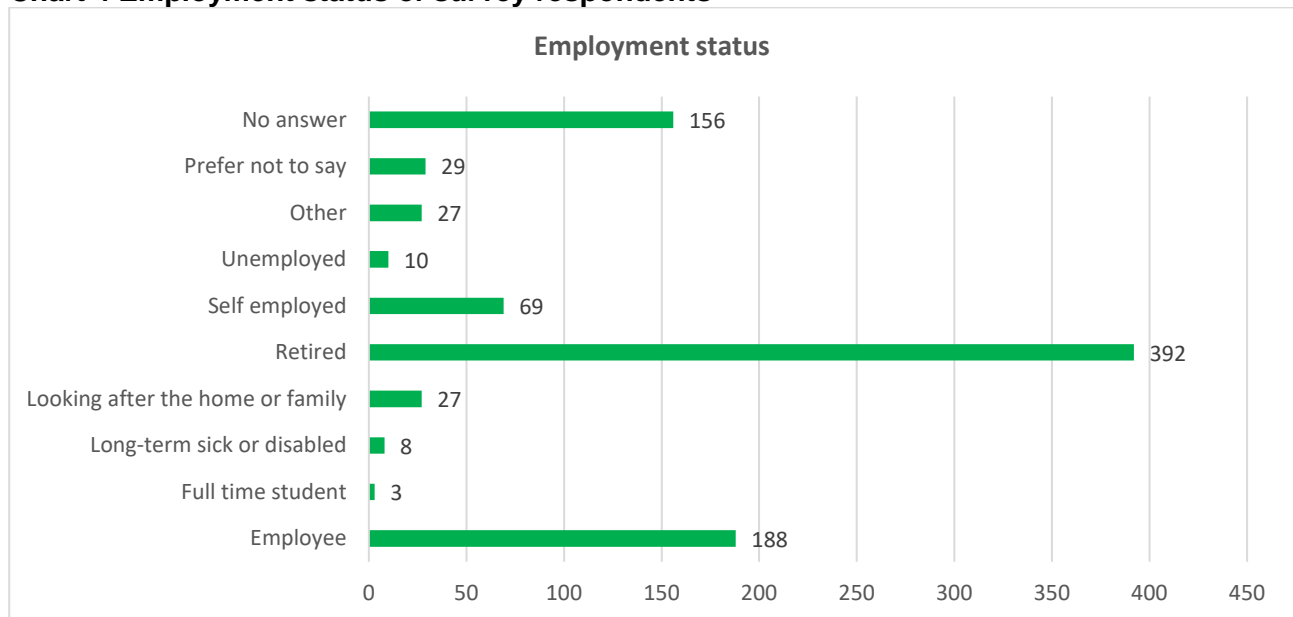
Libraries seek to provide services to all age groups within the community and Chart 3 highlights which age groups were involved in responding to the survey. There were no responses from those under the age of 19 and only 2% were in the 20 - 29 year olds age group. The largest group of respondents (48%) were aged 60-84.

Chart 3 Age group of survey respondents



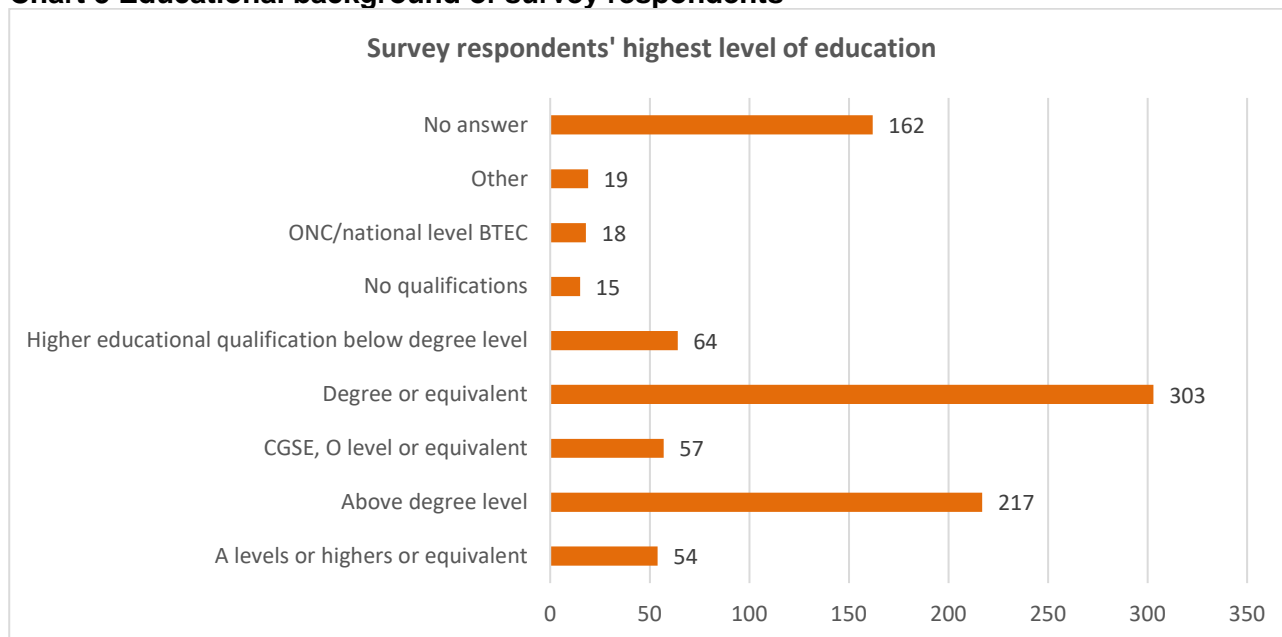
Considering the employment status of survey respondents, it is possible to see that 43% of those engaged in the survey were retired, 29% were employed or self-employed. This links to some of its helpful context for the feedback and comments received through the survey.

Chart 4 Employment status of survey respondents



Libraries have an important role in our communities in terms of education and literacy. An additional question was included as a result to ask 'What is the highest level of education you have completed?' Chart 5 displays the results. This feedback is helpful and can help the Library Service to understand whether people of all academic levels are using libraries and responding to the consultation. The feedback suggests that survey respondents are educated to a high level. 33% have degrees of equivalent qualifications and 24% are educated above degree level, so in total 57% have degrees or higher qualifications. Further analysis by age group, highlights that age wasn't an influencing factor in educational background and there are a mix of ages within each educational level grouping.

Chart 5 Educational background of survey respondents



Other questions used to understand diversity of respondents included questions asking about disability and ethnicity. 9% of people responded to say they have a long-standing illness or disability that limits their daily activity. It is helpful to know that these survey respondents were included in the sample (the comments do include references to different accessibility needs and provide very helpful feedback). Considering ethnicity shows that 75% of respondents were White (British, Irish, Polish, gypsy or Irish traveller, other white). 1% were from a different ethnic grouping and the remainder chose not to respond to the question.

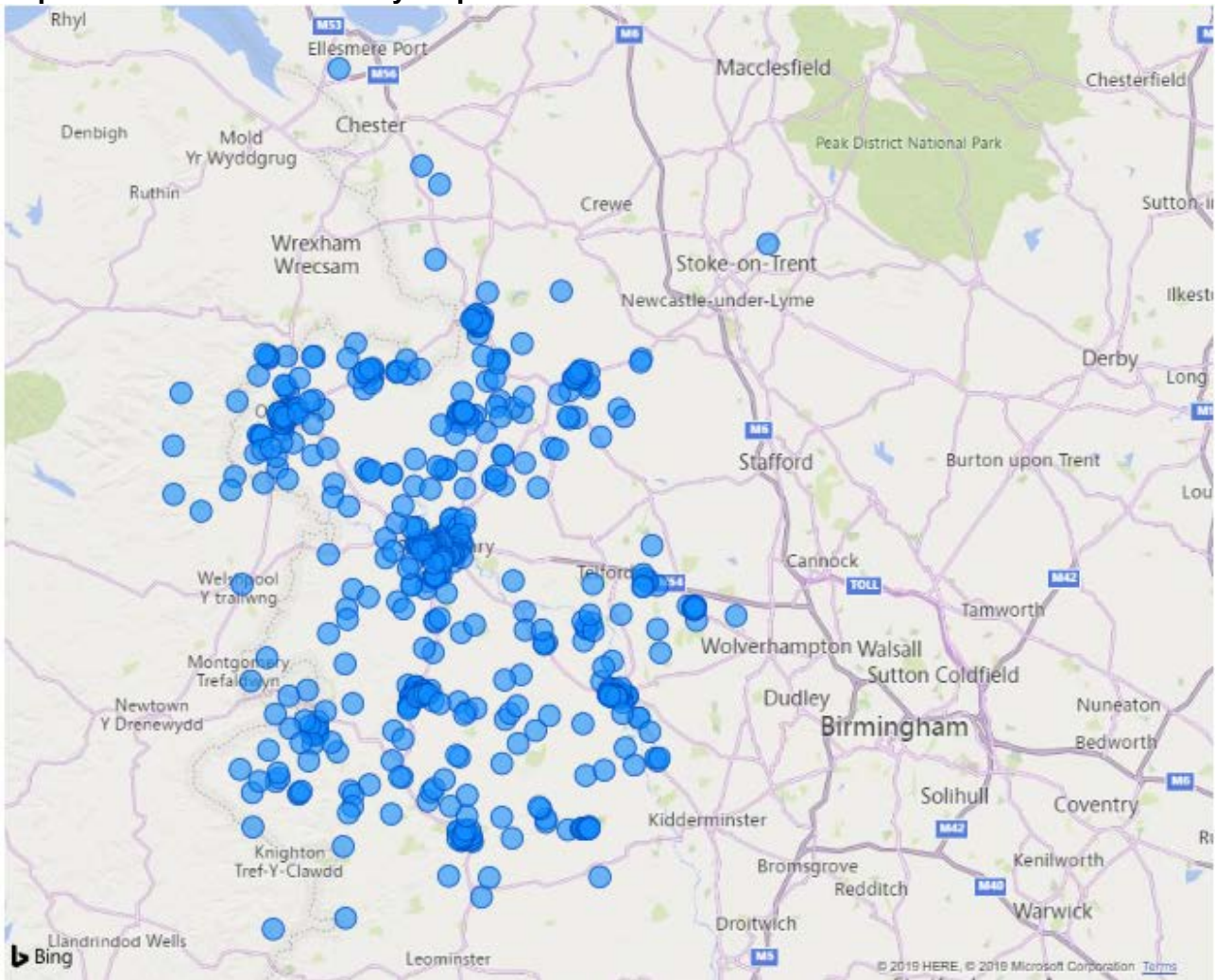
Shropshire Council places a strong emphasis on ensuring people of all characteristics can influence change as part of consultation processes. It should be noted that in order to ensure any future policy or service changes do not negatively impact on people of different characteristics and backgrounds, Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) are undertaken. An ESIA will be completed as part of the consultation and the stage 2 engagement process allows for any engagement gaps to be filled.

The final question used to understand characteristics was location. In a large rural county it is important to ensure that people from across Shropshire have had the opportunity to participate in any consultation. Map 1 displays where survey respondents live.

Map 1 highlights that a very good spread of responses was received from across the county and slightly further afield with additional responses within areas surrounding Shropshire to all sides. This suggests that people are travelling from out of area to visit Shropshire's libraries as well as use by local residents. Oswestry, Market Drayton and Whitchurch libraries catchment areas seems to extend over the borders more than perhaps others do. A few locations have not been included on the map but the analysis highlights that a small number of people responding to the survey live in other locations in the UK including near to Hereford, Weston-Super-Mare, London, Bangor and Hartlepool.

Postcodes have also been used to analysis the data against other responses and where findings are significant these are included as maps elsewhere in the report.

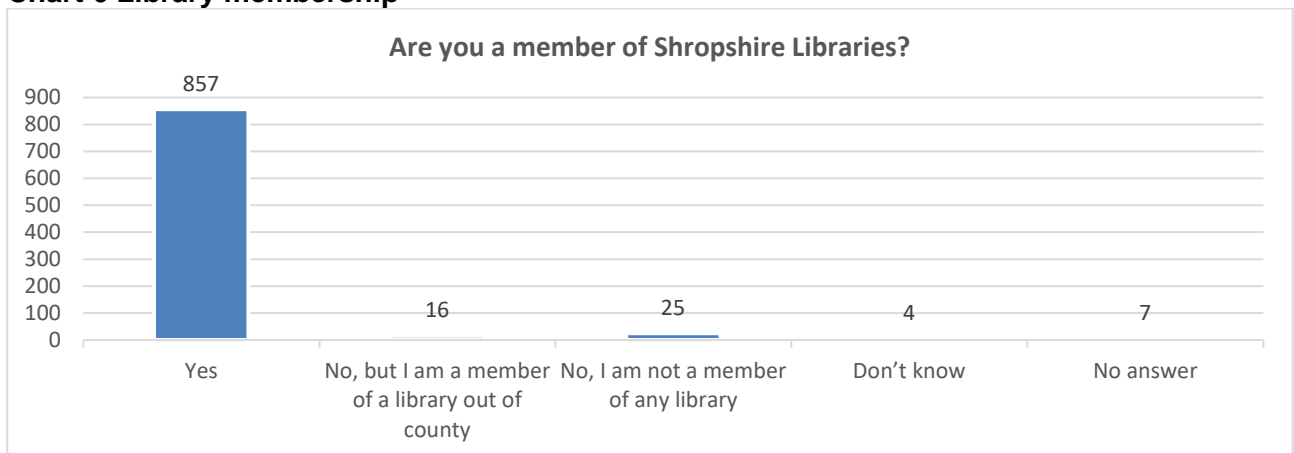
Map 1 Home location of survey respondents



3. Current use of libraries

The survey included a number of questions designed to better understand how people are currently using the libraries so that information, alongside other sources, may inform the next library strategy. The results reflect the fact that most respondents were current library users and not many people completed the online survey as non-library users. When asked ‘Are you a member of Shropshire Libraries?’ 94% responded ‘yes’. Chart 6 displays the results.

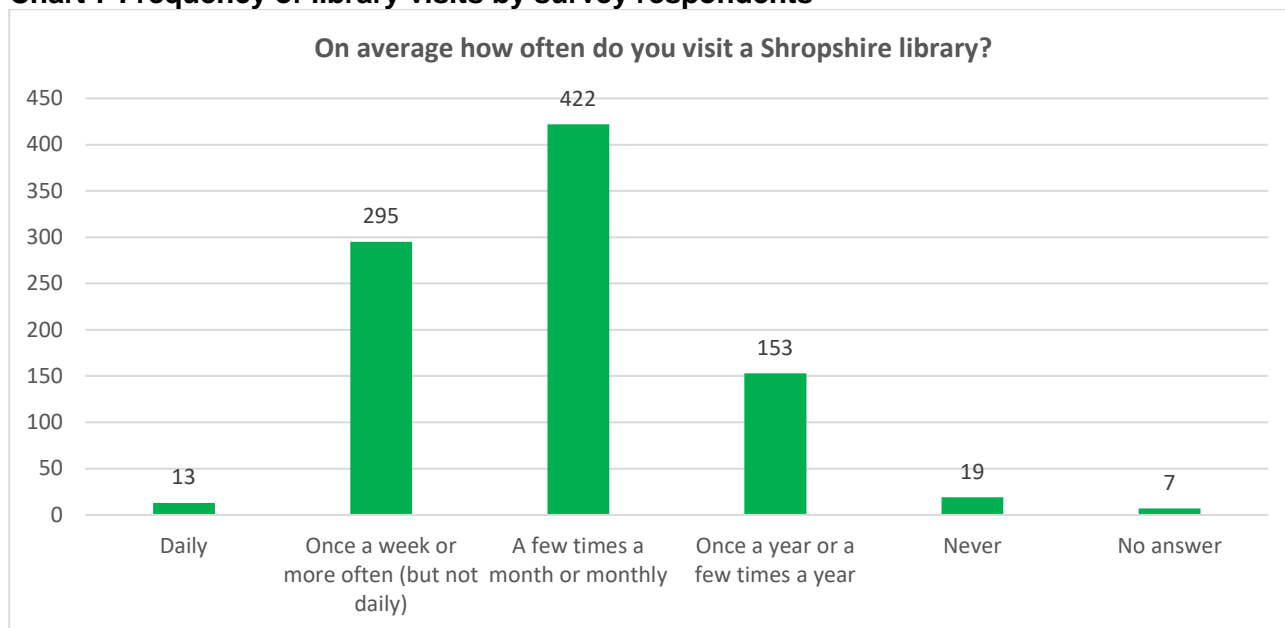
Chart 6 Library membership



The overwhelming response from members of Shropshire Libraries means survey respondents have the knowledge and experience to be able to provide informed feedback about library services.

The survey also asked ‘On average, how often do you visit a Shropshire library?’. There were 8 categories provided but a few of those have been combined to simplify the feedback and make Chart 7 easier to interpret. 80% of all respondents visit a library at least once a month (34% of those once a week or more). Only 19 (2%) of the 909 survey respondents never visit a Shropshire library. This highlights that not only were most survey respondents members of Shropshire Libraries but they are also frequent users.

Chart 7 Frequency of library visits by survey respondents



Map 2 and Table 1 have been used to show which libraries the survey respondents visit. The results highlight that some of the survey respondents use more than one library. 247 of the survey respondents visit Shrewsbury Library (20%), followed by Oswestry Library (11%), Ludlow Library (8%) and Church Stretton Library (8%). All of the libraries were represented by users within the survey responses, including the mobile libraries.

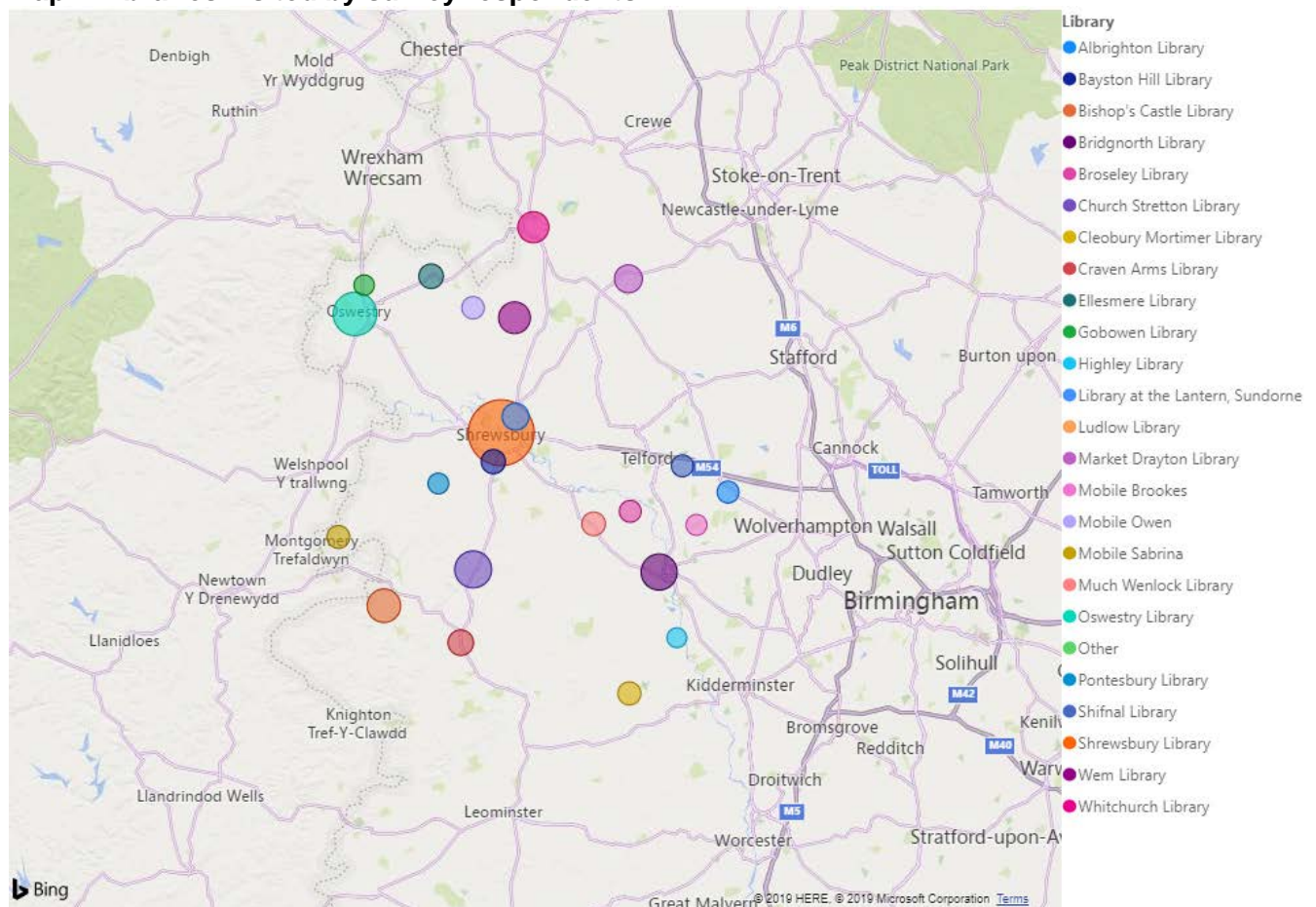
Table 1 Libraries visited by survey respondents

Library	Number	%	Library	Number	%
Albrighton Library	16	1	Market Drayton Library	48	4
Bayston Hill Library	28	2	Much Wenlock Library	25	2
Bishop’s Castle Library	77	6	Oswestry Library	130	11
Bridgnorth Library	91	7	Pontesbury Library	10	1
Broseley Library	16	1	Shrewsbury Library	247	20
Church Stretton Library	95	8	Shifnal Library	16	1
Cleobury Mortimer Library	22	2	Wem Library	68	5
Craven Arms Library	35	3	Whitchurch Library	64	5
Ellesmere Library	30	2	Mobile Brookes	11	1
Gobowen Library	8	1	Mobile Owen	19	2
Highley Library	5	0	Mobile Sabrina	21	2
Library at the Lantern, Sundorne	42	3	Other	19	2
Ludlow Library	95	8	Total	1238	100

The mobile libraries have been mapped on to Map 2 by choosing one location to represent them (Mobile Brookes was mapped at its Badger stop, Mobile Owen at its English Frankton stop, and Mobile Sabrina at its Chirbury stop). There was no particular reason for choosing these locations to map the mobile library use over any other locations – the aim was just to include mobile libraries by allocating locations to the north, west and east of the county. The map of mobile library stops can be found on the library webpages here: <https://shropshire.maps.arcgis.com> The aim of Map 2 was to show volumes of survey respondents as users of libraries and the size of each circle represents the numbers of users.

It should be noted that the ‘other’ category (19 survey respondents selected that they use other services) are not included on Map 2. Other includes the online services, Book club services at Shirehall, archives and out of area services.

Map 2 Libraries visited by survey respondents



The survey asked people why they visit libraries. It is not at all surprising to find that the main reason for visiting is to read, borrow or return books and other library items (81% of survey respondents selected this response). Other reasons for visiting were also selected by large numbers of people. 268 people visit a library to participate in groups/events, 274 to access information/advice services and 192 to use a library computer or the Wi-Fi. Chart 8 displays the results.

An open question was included within the survey in case anything had been missed from the list provided. The survey asked ‘Are there any other main reasons you visit the library?’. It was anticipated that not many people would respond with additional reasons for visiting but 89 people provided written comments. Within those 89 comments there were some key themes and Table 2 summarises the themes.

Chart 8 Reasons survey respondents visit libraries

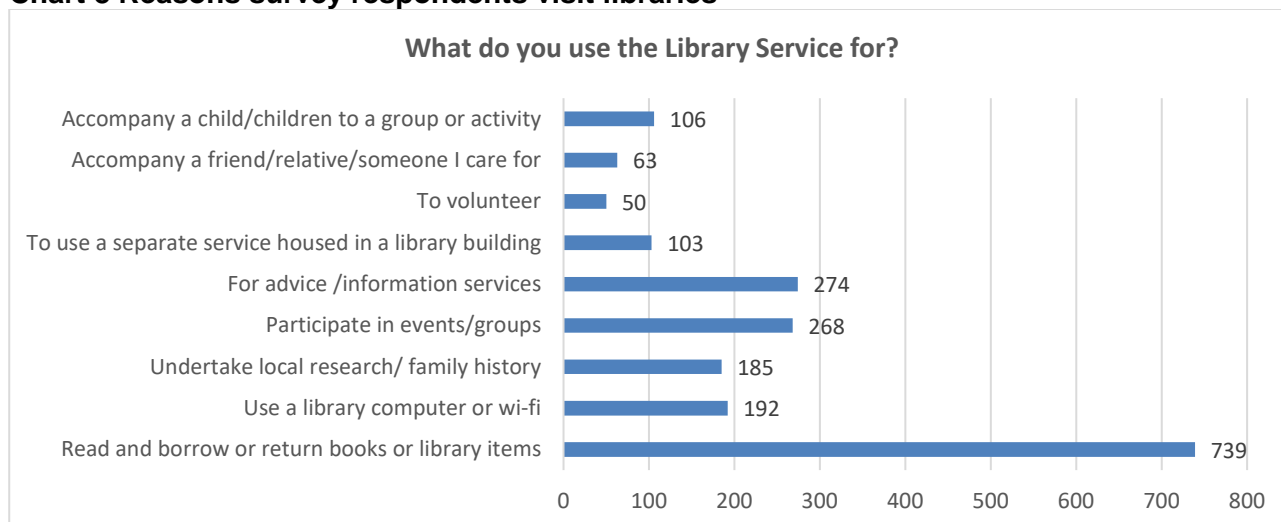


Table 2 Comment Themes - Other things people use their library for

Theme	Number	%
To read (including newspapers)	18	19
Art and other exhibitions	11	11
To study/ work	10	10
To run a group/ display information	10	10
To attend talks/ meet people	8	8
For research	8	8
To print/ photocopy	7	7
Reading group/writing group/ book club	6	6
To read notice board	5	5
To borrow for other people	4	4
Other	10	10
Total	97	100%

Table 2 highlights that some people included multiple themes/points within the comments they provided. The most common point made was that people like to visit a library to browse and read, this was followed by viewing art or exhibitions, to study/work and to run a group or display information. Example comments are included below:

Example comments: Other reasons people visit a library

- *The library is a lifeline for me. My husband has dementia and I cannot focus or concentrate at home. The library provides a quiet haven with Wi Fi and coffee where I can relax and have peace to work or read.*
- *Cleobury library has provided services I could not access elsewhere in the locality, together with professional impartial support, access to computers and printing. I use it to support my leisure reading needs and have requested books from the catalogue on a regular basis. These enable me to better support my mental health.*
- *As a local archaeologist, historian and artist, the library is more than just about the books it holds - although their local history collection is an invaluable resource that is not duplicated elsewhere. The library is a hub for meeting with others interested in local history, as well as connecting with new artists and library volunteers. As a hub for community involvement, the Library has been absolutely key to me meeting new people who share my interests and furthering both community participation and jobs opportunities. It is no exaggeration to say that I would not be half so much a part of the Oswestry community - as an archaeologist, artist or volunteer - if it wasn't for the way the Library works to bring people together.*

- *Useful notices of local events on display in the hallway. Somewhere quiet away from the noisy world we seem to have created outside.*
- *Most of my reading is done in the library itself. I do research into my hobbies there and also make notes while I am there, I probably spend 1hr to 2 hrs there at a time.*
- *To see the small art and craft exhibitions there. To browse and relax.*
- *I am a housing support officer and am one of the staff from our team who provide an advice and support drop-in at Bridgnorth library. I also use the library on occasions separate to the drop-in, as a meeting place with clients, particularly for new clients (a safe place to meet) and also when we have work to complete that requires internet access.*

Not having anticipated such good feedback under the ‘other category on the question ‘What do you use the Library Service for?’ question, an open-ended comment box was included on the survey to capture other feedback about use of libraries with the question ‘Are there any other main reasons you visit the library?’ 161 people made comments and the results are shown in Table 3. Some people made more than one pain point within their answer. The main themes within responses were categorised and the results shown below.

Table 3 Comment Themes – Reasons for visiting the library

Theme	Number	%
Social interaction/ clubs/ groups	45	25
Information	25	14
Environment / quiet place	17	10
Children's books and activities	15	8
Range and quality of books	14	8
Research/ study/ work	12	7
Printing and other council services	12	7
Read newspapers / magazines	7	4
Exhibitions	6	3
Toilet	5	3
Hearing aid service	2	1
Other	17	10
Total	177	100%

The top reason for visiting a library was for social interaction/to attend clubs/groups, followed by to obtain information. The comments were really interesting to read and some examples are included below.

Example comments: Reasons for visiting a library

- *Browsing for books I might wish to borrow and read, something which is not possible to do online at sufficient depth.*
- *It is a pleasant place to meet other people and chat and keep up to date with the community.*
- *To interact with other people. Very important when you are elderly and live alone. The staff are always friendly and welcoming - ready to help anyone with a problem.*
- *To sometimes browse books/purchase a book from the books for sale table. Supervise grandchildren selecting a book to take home and to view noticeboards and displayed art work.*
- *I love libraries & they have made a huge difference to my happiness & Wellbeing. I have benefitted from many years of access to wonderful books and information, so have all my family.*
- *To find out about local events. To use reference library. To use photocopier. To read papers and publications. To get stimulation about what to read.*
- *When my wife is shopping in Shrewsbury, if I can, I retreat to the Central Library. Sanity in a mad world...*

- *Talking books for elderly blind relative. This service has been essential in keeping her cheerful and engaged with literature. Excellent.*
- *To introduce my child to library services and keep her interested in reading.*

4. Feedback on library services

Many of the questions used within the survey were designed to obtain feedback from library users. This feedback is an important part of the information that can inform the next Library Strategy. The 909 survey respondents provided comprehensive responses and many helpful comments. One important question was included to obtain an overarching view of how people feel about the Library Services: 'Overall, how do you rate Shropshire's library services?'. Chart 9 shows the results.

Chart 9 Survey respondents' overall feedback for Shropshire's library services

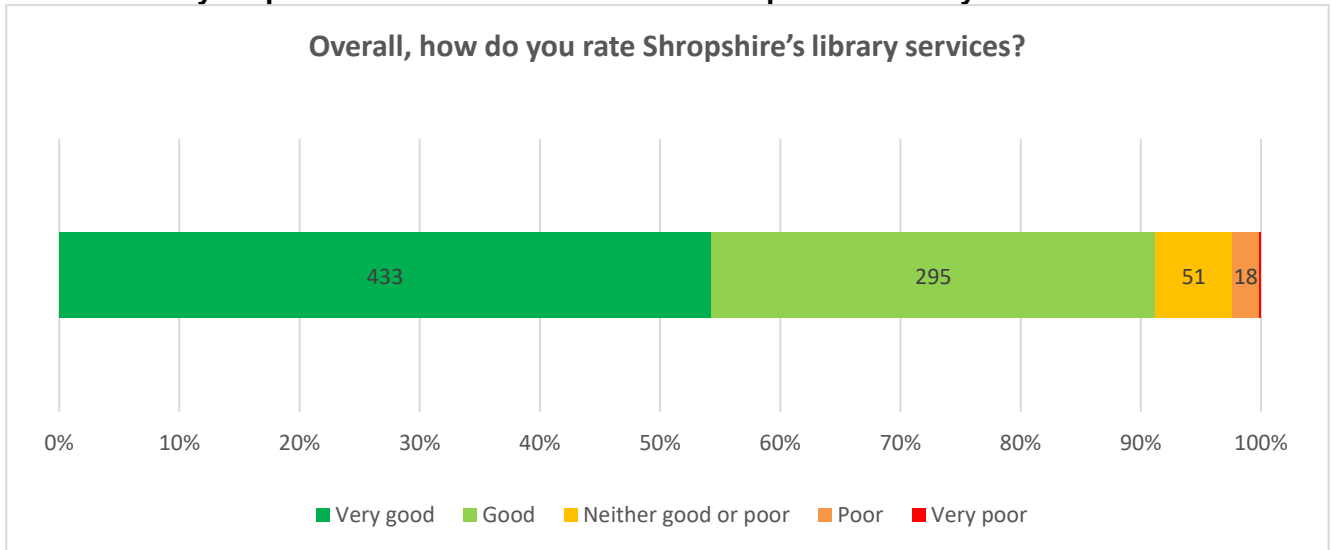


Chart 9 highlights the overwhelmingly positive response received. 80% of those who responded to the survey rated the library services as very good (48%) or good (32%). 18 people (2%) selected poor and 1 (0.11%) very poor. 6% didn't have an opinion and 12% did not answer the question (109 people).

Additional analysis was undertaken against this feedback to see if there were any characteristics that influenced the feedback provided. Analysis was undertaken against how often people visit libraries. This highlighted that frequency of visits did not really influence opinion. Frequency of visits varies among the 19 people who rated library services poor or very poor (1 person), with the 19 visiting at varying frequencies spread across the categories provided. Similarly, analysis was undertaken by mapping responses and this didn't show any pattern. Those who rate library services as poor/very poor, live in different locations across the county and do not share the same local libraries.

To gain a more detailed understanding of feedback on library services, survey respondents were asked to rate different elements of service. Chart 10 contains the results. The different elements of service asked about included customer services, buildings/space, the collection, online services and other services provided.

Chart 10 Survey respondents' feedback for key elements of library services

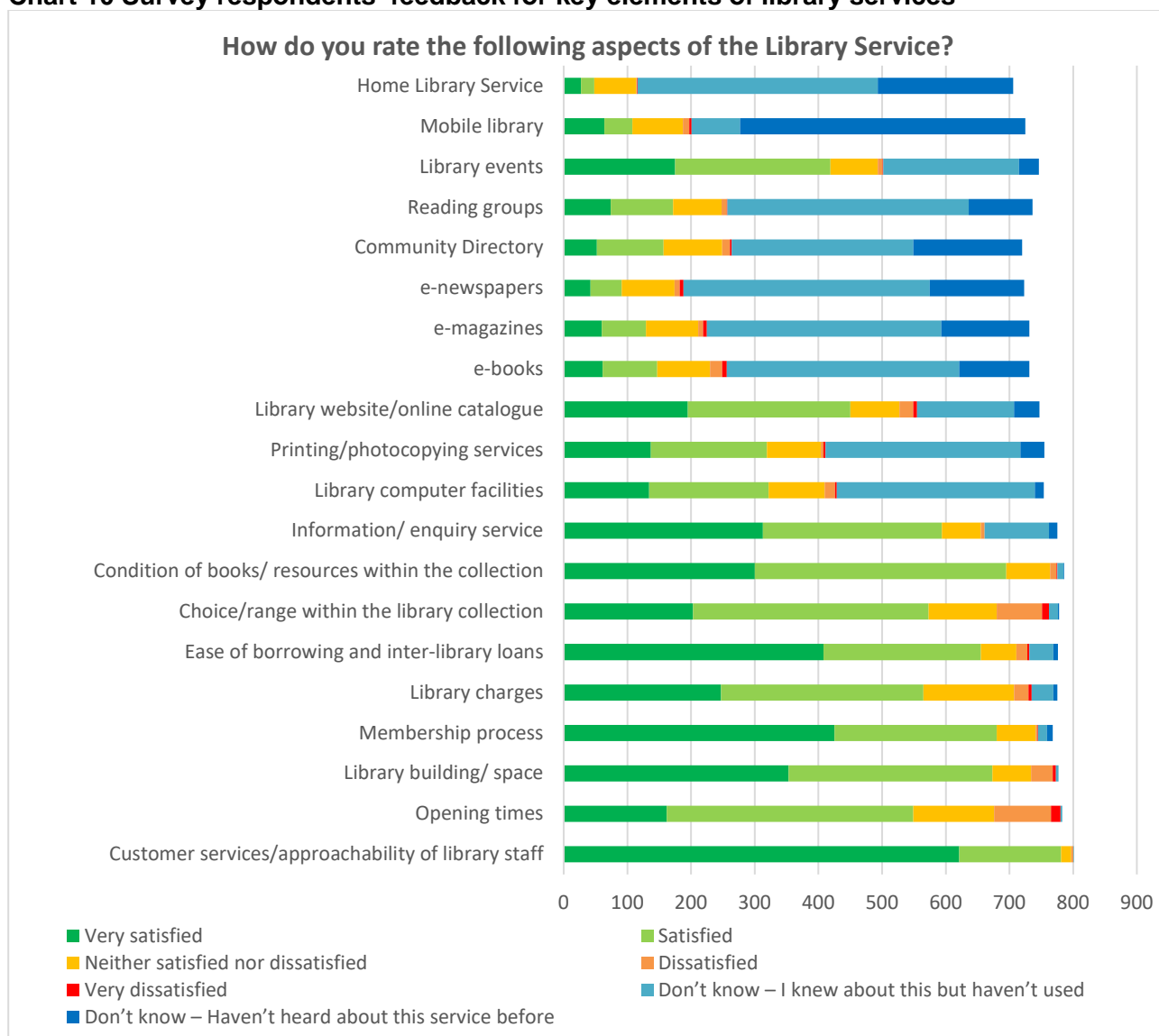


Chart 10 supports the results shown in Chart 9 highlighting overall satisfaction with all elements of library services. The feedback is very helpful and indicates where use of library services is lower among the survey respondents and where survey respondents hadn't heard of services. In particular, knowledge of/awareness of the mobile library, home library service, community directory, e-magazines, e-newspapers and e-books is lower compared to other services. Levels of dissatisfaction are greater for opening times, choice/range within the library service, library building/space, library charges and the library website/online catalogue than for other services. Levels of satisfaction are greatest for customer services/approachability of library staff, and condition of library resources.

To obtain a little more feedback on any areas of dissatisfaction, survey respondents were asked 'If you are 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with any services, please explain why.' 187 people left comments. For this question, many people listed multiple reasons for dissatisfaction within their answers. By far the most commonly mentioned issue was dissatisfaction with library opening times/hours followed by limited choice/range/new materials within the collection. The example comments really help to highlight how people are feeling about the library service. Although satisfaction is very high overall, the issues that people aren't happy about are shared concerns and not restricted to one or two individuals but form more widespread community feedback. It should be noted that 3% of the comments (7 comments) were not really expressing dissatisfaction at all but were either positive or neutral in nature.

Table 4 Comment Themes – Reasons for dissatisfaction with services

Theme	Number	%
Opening hours	73	28
Choice/range/new materials	64	24
Loss of library space	19	7
Quality of online service/materials	19	7
Inter-library loans and charges	17	6
Mobile library service	12	5
Computer facilities and Wi-Fi	10	4
Quality of building and facilities	9	3
Impact of cuts/austerity in general	7	3
Other	27	10
Positive or neutral comments	7	3
Total	264	100%

Example comments: Reasons for selecting ‘dissatisfied or very dissatisfied’.

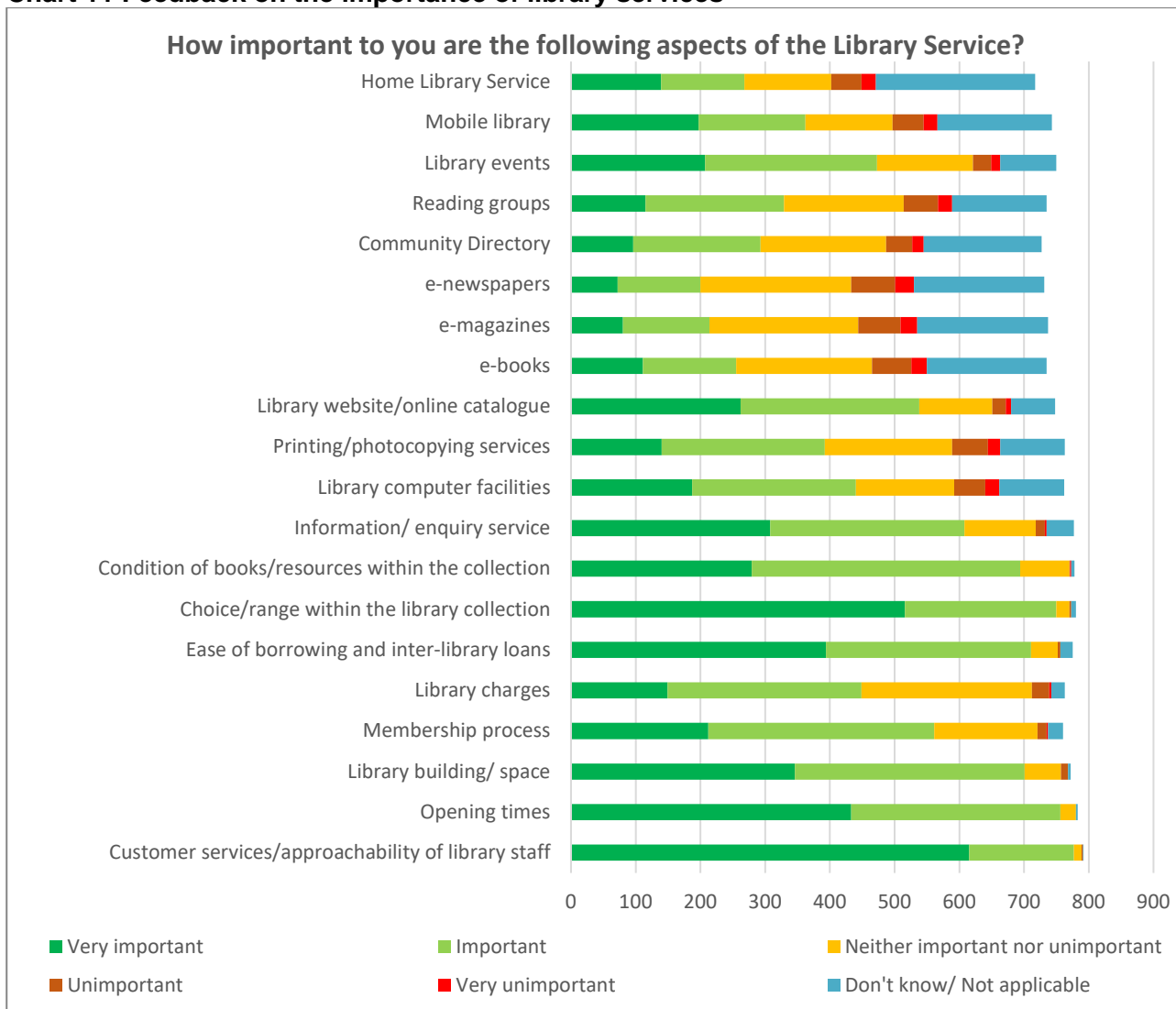
- *I like the majority of the workforce, work 9-5, Mon-Fri, so the only time I can visit my local library is on a Saturday morning. Not very inclusive unless you are an OAP or not working.*
- *The library times were cut on the last review. Very difficult to return books if you work. Range of books, a lot of series where there is only one! So, either stock is not being replenished when books are discarded, or stock is generally not been increased. The online catalogue often the search will be fruitless on the title but will bring up a whole list of books by the author including the one you’ve just searched for. E-books! Didn’t know you did these, have never seen them in the catalogue, where are they? E-magazines are great, but the reader software doesn’t always work.*
- *Need more evening opening times. Audiobooks are too expensive to borrow, you might as well buy it on Ebay or Amazon, used prices are similar to borrowing.*
- *I am severely site impaired and have found that there has been a limited number of audiobooks which I have been interested in. Also, not sure if the books are all accessible have tried this book found it difficult to access so did not bother again. Also do not know if the computers in the library have accessible software.*
- *The choice of books is very limited, and I think it is unfair that just because my local library is so small I have to pay every time I order a book from another Shropshire Library. I think there should be an OPAC in the Library so that users can search the catalogue on the premises. At the moment I have to do that at home, and I worry that children and young people are not learning how to do searches for when they go into Higher Education. Finally, the Shropshire catalogue is extremely basic with no keywords and just reviews from other readers rather than proper bibliographic information.*
- *The area available for book display was cut once the ground floor was taken away. This naturally results in a huge loss of choice - this doesn’t affect me because I order books from other libraries but throughout Shropshire there are some books and authors not available.*
- *I returned to Shrewsbury 4 years ago after living in a vibrant modern city in Australia. The libraries there were an amazing public resource and stood very proudly as a service that was helping to grow and shape individuals & communities. They were viewed as critical to a civilised modern society. They weren’t stuffy old-fashioned places, made sure they catered for all ages & types of people, & the general attitude was one of positive engagement & proactive creative services e.g.: international guest speakers & authors with wine & nibbles for a very small fee, clubs & community events, school visits, story time for pre-schoolers & elderly, homework & revision help. Support with computer learning, learning to read or English as a 2nd language etc. Obviously, funding makes a huge difference but that can improve when attitudes & expectations change it’s amazing what can happen with creative drive.*
- *Library web pages are not easy to find and use. Have a clunky, poorly designed feel. Layout and sometimes wording are unhelpful. Know from other library service websites/pages that it*

can be better than this. Use slightly larger print, more colour, more space, and more friendly, simpler text.

- Computer facilities are somewhat out of date and prone to crashing etc. Website is not easy to use or locate library pages. Common complaint we hear is that mobile libraries do not always turn up and notification is not sent to regular borrowers.
- It is evident that library services in Shropshire are seriously underfunded.

Another theme explored within the survey was how important particular library services are to people. This helps to develop a better understanding of how library users would prioritise services. Chart 11 is similar in style to Chart 10 and included the same list of services for consistency.

Chart 11 Feedback on the importance of library services



The results included in Chart 11 highlight that the top 5 services survey respondents believe are most important are: customer services/approachability of library staff, opening times, choice/range within the library collection, ease of borrowing and inter-library loans; and the library building/ space. The services considered least important are e-newspapers, e-magazines, e-books, reading groups and printing/photocopying services.

The survey asked 'Is there anything you don't like about library services, or anything that stops you visiting as often as you would like?' This question was designed to understand if there are any barriers preventing people from using library services and any issues that may need to be addressed through the new library strategy. There were 261 comments and a few people made more than one point. Table 5 summarises the feedback received.

Table 5 Comment Themes – Barriers to using library services

Theme	Number	%
Restricted opening hours	134	48
Limited choice/ range/ new books	34	12
Building facilities/ not enough space/ toilets etc.	16	6
Noise/ too busy	10	4
Distance/ challenge travelling there	10	4
Lack of parking/ cost of parking	8	3
Reservation costs/ other charges	8	3
Would like more groups/events	7	2
Impact of cuts in the service	5	2
Mobile visits short/limited	4	1
Limited computer facilities	2	1
Lack of self-service/return box	2	1
Waits/ borrowing from other areas	2	1
Other	20	7
Nothing don't like	19	7
Total	281	100%

7% of all the feedback included comments to suggest there is nothing people don't like about the library services they receive; there was some very nice feedback and a few examples have been included below. By far the greatest barrier to using library services is considered to be opening hours (48% of all the themes within the comments) followed by limited choice/range/new books (12%).

Example comments: Barriers to using library services

- *The selection of books does not seem to change as often as it did in the past.*
- *The more you reduce a service or limit opening hours, the less people use it.*
- *Not enough late opening on weekdays for working people to access.*
- *A slightly later opening time one evening and opening on Saturday afternoon may benefit full-time workers who wish to access the library.*
- *I work full time Mon-Fri so the only time I can get to the library is on a Saturday morning which isn't always possible. One evening a week where it is open slightly later would make such a difference, or a way to drop off returned books outside of opening hours. When we lived in Gloucestershire last year their library services offered free reservations from any library in the county, which given my local library was a tiny community one made a big difference. It would be brilliant if Shropshire could offer this too, but I do appreciate that budget/transport constraints mean that this may not be possible.*
- *The interior of Shrewsbury Library is shabby (carpets etc), and the toilets are inadequate.*
- *Find it quite depressing sometimes to see how library services in Shropshire and the UK generally are deteriorating under austerity and neglect, whilst I experience amazing public and academic libraries in Germany and the Nordic countries which I visit regularly. Libraries there are still valued, respected, funded, and most of all, used by most of the population.*
- *I find some of the holiday events for children/young people rather disruptive and noisy - I'm happy to see young readers being encouraged but impact assessment on regular users is also required. I find far too many non-library events at Bridgnorth - knitting groups etc... which don't link to the library as a space for reading, writing and research. Some of these monthly/fortnightly events are highly disruptive.*
- *I don't like the charge for reserving a book from another library. I would prefer access to the whole catalogue and free request/reservation. I do not need to access the physical books during the choosing process. But children do need to access physical books to encourage reading.*

- *I have recently been forced to use a wheelchair. Although Whitchurch library is well laid out sadly there are often large pieces of furniture i.e. tables quite close to the shelves. Which while not impeding someone on foot creates too narrow a space for me to navigate thus preventing me from reaching some bookshelves.*
- *The reliability of the computers! It is not unknown for me to have to drive to wales to use a computer!*

Positive comments (no dislikes or barriers):

- *Nothing I don't like about library services in Oswestry.*
- *Bridgnorth library is excellent. The premises are spacious and attractively presented. Information about the area and what it offers is clearly presented and the staff are always pleasant, helpful and always knowledgeable.*
- *Everything about Wem Library and the mobile library are very much needed in this rural area, especially as public transport isn't available anymore where I live.*

Following questions asking about areas of dissatisfaction and dislikes and barriers, it was important to also ask survey respondents about the things they like. The survey included the question 'What do you like most about our library services?'. There were 570 comments and many people covered more than one theme within their comment. Table 6 displays the results. The staff at libraries and the welcoming atmosphere they create are the most common thing people like about Shropshire libraries, this is followed closely by the library resources/books. In many ways it is important to read all the comments to get a real feeling for people's views. The example comments included below provide a flavour of the types of comment provided.

Table 6 Comment Themes – Things people like most about library services

Theme	Number	%
Staff/ welcoming atmosphere	255	36
Books/loans/resources	234	33
Location/ convenience/ facilities	140	20
Groups/ events	29	4
Mobile Library	22	3
Computers	12	2
Information Services	12	2
Total	704	100%

Example comments: Things people like most about library services

- *The friendliness and approach-ability of staff who are always happy to help.*
- *Oswestry library is a lovely friendly library. All staff most helpful. I only came to live in Oswestry 18 months ago and obtained a lot of information from the library and have made new friends from some of the groups they hold re Chatter Natter and Books Aloud. Also computer sessions very good and excellent choice of books.*
- *Wem library - the staff are welcoming, helpful and knowledgeable. I am researching and writing a book and use the computers a good deal. The newspaper archive is especially useful.*
- *My children and I love Church Stretton library and visit every week. SUPER staff, a lovely setting and space, and great range for us to choose from. We feel so welcome and wanted there and would be lost without it.*
- *I was enjoying the rhyme time with my Granddaughter. Jenny told us about the book bag. I joined up for my Granddaughter - she loved the book bag and the folk-singing week we took 10 toddler books.*
- *Apart from borrowing library books on a regular basis, there is a social element to being in the library, sometimes seeing people I know and exchanging thoughts on various books and authors. In particular, I think the provision made for the pre-school children is excellent - introducing them to books / stories, learning the boundaries of behaviour in their environment and hopefully learning and remembering something in the process.*

- *I have used libraries regularly all my life and they have added greatly to my knowledge, writing ability and many leisure activities. It is a positive service - most public services are not. It brings people together. It is everywhere so if I am away from home, I can use any local library. An excellent service I would pay more for.*
- *For information; to know they are available at a nominal charge. From a personal point of view being retired and widowed, volunteering gives me a chance to meet up with others; finding their preferences on reading matter and generally mixing and chatting. It gets me out of the house to do something positive. A lifeline.*
- *The library service is a very valuable service. It can be used by everyone in the community from the young to the old. So good value for money especially in Bishops Castle as this has one of the highest rates of users both young and old. You can see this if you regularly visit as I do. It can be used for different reasons such as recreational, education, fact finding, hobbies etc. Reading is an excellent way to stimulate the brain and keep it active. As everyone would agree this is so important. It has a social aspect too especially important in the countryside such as Bishops Castle. Rural communities need a good library service as public transport can be limited. The elderly cannot carry large numbers of books on and off a bus with their shopping. Young people need to be encouraged to pick up a book and read it. A library gives them this opportunity and costs the parents nothing. Books are good for your mental health, they can help relax you, lose yourself for a while and help you think better. Keep all our libraries open and I believe you should actually invest more money in them not less. I am sure you could find ways of bringing revenue in such as advertising for people, doing exhibitions for paintings and crafts. Some companies may like to sponsor your local library.*

Communication was also included as theme within the consultation survey, to inform future work and the library strategy. A key question was 'How do you usually find out about library services and information?'. The results suggest people are using multiple methods to find out about library services. Chart 12 highlights that library emails, newsletters and marketing is the most popular followed by use of noticeboards/leaflets and word of mouth. There were lots of other suggestions within the 'other, please describe' box provided. 60 people made a comment in the 'other' box and many made multiple other suggestions. These have been analysed and the results displayed within Table 7. A large number of people are visiting the library in person as their main method of finding out what is happening at their local library, others hear from Friends of the Library groups and another other category included library news within local newsletters.

Chart 12 Communication methods used to keep informed about library services

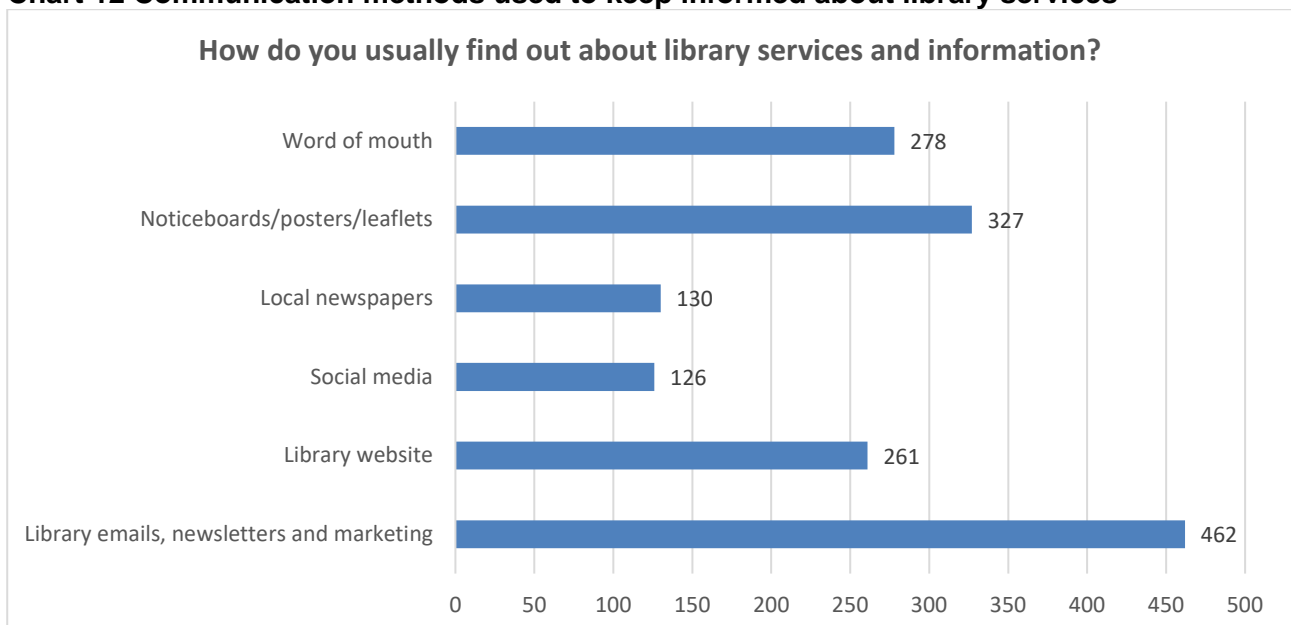


Table 7 Comment Themes – Other methods of accessing library communications

Theme	Number	%
In person/ visiting the library	55	62
Friends of the library	10	11
Local newsletters/ Parish Magazine	6	7
Council emails	3	3
Mobile Library Driver	3	3
Telephone	2	2
Website	2	2
Don't hear news at all	4	4
Other	4	4
Total	89	100%

Example comments: Other methods of accessing library communications

- *Probably more from the library staff than any of the above.*
- *Staff at the library. Ludlow staff are very helpful.*
- *From driver of library van.*
- *Member of Friends of Church Stretton Library.*
- *The email service is invaluable.*
- *I learnt about this survey from Mr Boddington's excellent blog about the Council.*
- *Friends of the Library emails.*

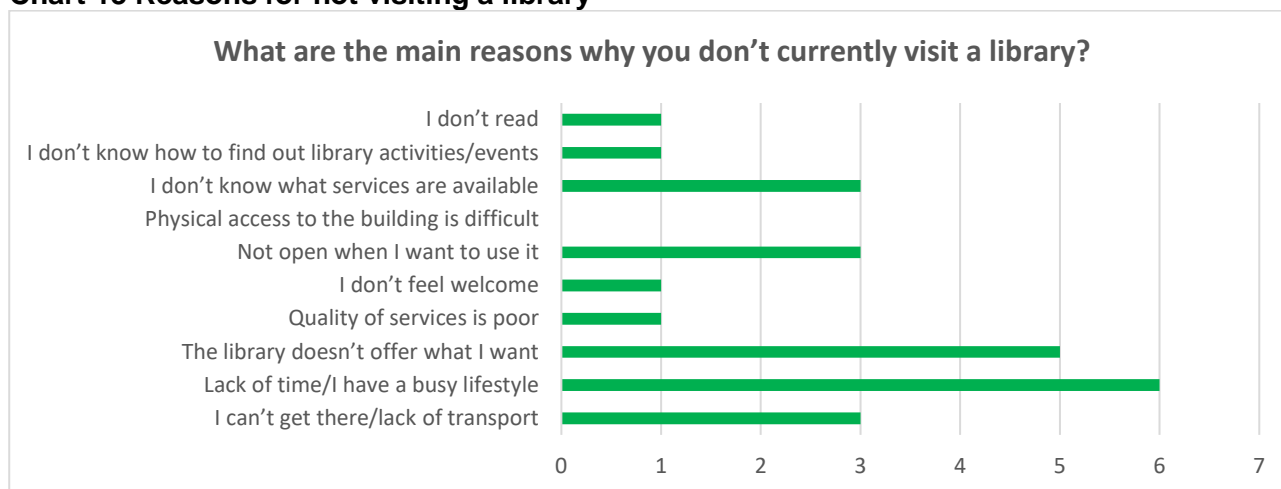
5. Feedback from non-library users

The survey was designed to also obtain feedback from non-library users and had two key questions from people who don't use libraries:

- What are the main reasons why you don't currently visit a library? and
- What, if any, changes or additional services are needed to encourage you to visit a library (or access services online) in the future?

Only 19 people, from the 909 total, indicated that they never visit a library so the information is limited. Chart 13 provides the information available. The main reason non-users give is that they don't have time to visit a library. A few people provided other reasons and mentioned using online services instead of a library.

Chart 13 Reasons for not visiting a library



11 of the 19 non-library users made comments when asked 'What, if any, changes or additional services are needed to encourage you to visit a library (or access services online) in the future?' The main change was evening opening/longer opening hours (3 comments). Other changes, all with 2 comments each, included improved range of books, Improved building facilities, better communication and new online services/technology.

Example comments: Changes to encourage library use

- *State of the art IT services to get children interested in books/reading. What will take a child off a computer game to visit a library? Interactive reading games, 3D/4D reading experiences.*
- *More current books, books from lists such as top 100 fiction of all time etc, and all of the books in a series rather than being able to read the first one but not the next.*
- *Find a bigger building, they are doing their best with the space provided and the resources they have, the library manager is also doing a good job, but I feel more priority should be given to longer opening hours and more professional staff i.e. a chartered librarian in each branch.*
- *Ref Mobile Library: The Mobile Library offers an excellent service. But, like and Ice Cream van, there should be ways of highlighting its arrival. And like busses there should be a "Library Stop" street sign with timetable. Ref On-Line Services: There needs to be better communication of what is available and how to access it. The Shropshire portal should have Library Services flagged up on the front page. Placing Libraries under 'Leisure and culture' might reflect the Portfolio holder's brief or be 'the correct' term to encapsulate Libraries, but it's a real turn-off. 'Leisure' makes reading is just for those with time on their hands; 'Culture' makes reading elitist. Just flag it up boldly: 'Library: Ideas & Facts'*

6. The Future and the Library Strategy

One of the main aims of the survey was to look ahead and obtain suggestions and ideas for shaping the future of library services. Three open questions were used to gain feedback. The first question was 'Libraries are changing in line with changing demands from library users. Describe your ideal library for the future...'. Table 8 displays the results. 626 comments were made, some included multiple themes/points. The top theme was that people don't want any changes and want libraries to stay as they are. This reflects the high levels of satisfaction with library services. However, the next few top themes from the comments highlight that people would like to see longer opening hours, an increase in the range of resources/choice, more community activities/facilities at libraries so that they form 'hubs' and building and facility improvements. Other themes included comments that people would like to see café facilities within libraries and more groups/activities/events. All these suggestions would require additional investment of resources into libraries, however, the example comments help to better illustrate the feedback received, they highlight that most people don't really expect significant changes or investment but emphasis on ensuring libraries are designed for, and open to everyone in the community.

Table 8 Comment Themes – The library of the future

Theme	Number	%
No change/ keep as is	132	18
Opening Hours and access	164	22
Increased range of resources	147	20
Community hub / facilities	81	11
Building and facility improvements	73	10
Café	47	6
Groups/events/activities	44	6
Online	31	4
Ideas and suggestions	16	2
Other	16	2
Total	751	100%

Example comments: The library of the future

No change

- *I am a traditionalist - I like things that work well and hate change for change's sake.*
- *By definition, a library is where all members of the public of any age can gain pleasure in reading, whether for educational needs, general information or pleasure, so why change a format which has stood us well in the past. Change is not necessarily for the best.*

Value library

- *Friendly staff, our visits (Me and my Downs Syndrome sister in our 40s) are a joy, very important, something we love together and never fails to cheer when times are hard. I think this is so for many users - libraries perform an important social service - one of those things that makes life worth living and probably helping to ward off mental health issues - undoubtedly I would say. A good choice of books- obviously. New books, classic, modern classics, non-fiction, poetry.*
- *I think Oswestry library have got it right. In the 18 months I have lived in Oswestry they have introduced new groups which are well attended. They also do lots for children both pre-school and for children in the holidays. They are doing a great job. I just want them to carry on with the good work.*

Community and inclusivity

- *Libraries are the heartbeat of communities. Shropshire Council should be proud of what they have on offer in their libraries.*
- *All things to all people. An online information, renewal etc service seems inevitable.*
- *Accessible to all - especially catering to and introducing libraries to the young and audio books to the elderly. Bishops Castle library as the ideal - spacious, welcoming, informative staff, strong friends of the library promoting events etc.*
- *Libraries are key public service providers and should therefore be available to all citizens - especially in rural and poorer communities.*

Ideas and suggestions

- *To stay open. Libraries are very important and need to remain. Things like the NatWest community banker every other Friday is an essential idea. More of this kind of thing.*
- *Encouraging children to read is very important in society. Libraries provide a massively important service in encouraging young people to read and they allow people to access reading material when they might not be able to afford to buy it. Libraries should therefore be welcoming to all people of assorted ages and backgrounds. I would like to see the events continue, which cannot be achieved unless there is a physical service rather than an online only offering.*
- *Very true there have been many technological advances made in our libraries in recent years and are a credit to all concerned. Sadly, though in this survey there is not mention to one of the libraries greatest assets and they are the frontline personnel. These very knowledgeable and friendly people perform and provide a sterling service for all. My question is being a library user what part will these heroes play in your plan in the coming years?*
- *More books films and CDs to borrow. Cafe for food and drinks. Storytelling for adults and children.*
- *A welcoming community hub where advice and support are readily available. A place where a variety of groups can meet, facilitated and/supported by library staff. A venue for community events, exhibitions and performances. The library should be open in the evenings on some days. Visitor information could be available on Sundays in the summer.*
- *Libraries have wonderful potential - if they have sufficient space and funding. They should be a central part of any community. A cafe, everyone likes a cuppa, and a place to read, good selection of books - new books very important. Newspapers and magazines are important too. Computers are essential, as is help for those who are not confident using them. Local art hung on the walls, local crafts for sale. Good space for small local groups to get together. Continuing children's story times and art sessions. Volunteer hub for the local community.*

- *A space which is attractive, accessible and welcoming to all and which encourages life-long learning and entertainment through access to printed and digital media. A space which retains strong links with other public service organisations such as the health service, police and mental health services.*
- *I see Libraries as places of lifelong learning, research, culture, and knowledge. Also, a community hub that provides information and activities across all age ranges. Libraries remove barriers to information and learning, provides access to community engagement and have the ability to improve people's mental health. Libraries provide an experience and a 'buzz' to explore the knowledge of our own and other worlds. A gift shop (books and local art) could support Shropshire funds, likewise, a cafe would generate income and provide a relaxing place to read.*

All survey respondents were given a space within the survey to make any comments they wanted to about the future of library services in Shropshire. A suggestion was that the comments could include consideration of any gaps in current services or good practice from other places. Table 9 provides the summary of the main themes from the comments. 407 people made comments in total and some made more than one main point within their comment. 37% of the points made within the comments were about keeping libraries open, protecting them through ongoing investment and highlighting the necessity of having a library within a community (particularly rural communities). Because the open nature of the question resulted in a range of responses to this question, the comments have been split into four main groups of examples: importance of libraries, compliments, ideas and good practice, and strategy/approach.

Table 9 Comment Themes – Other comments: the future of Shropshire’s library service

Theme	Number	%
Keep libraries open/ library needed in community	171	37
Idea or suggestion	95	21
Strategy/ Council's approach	56	12
Opening hours	35	8
Compliment for library or a service	29	6
Satisfied as things are	29	6
Comment general	25	5
Example good practice elsewhere	16	3
No real comment to make	6	1
Total	462	100%

Example comments: Other comments: the future of Shropshire’s library service

Importance of libraries

- *All the libraries should be kept open. They are particularly vital in rural areas, which might not have the public transport to reach larger centres.*
- *Provision needs to be maintained at current level especially regarding access in more rural areas and increased to facilitate threats to social cohesion.*
- *It is essential to maintain a good library service especially for people who can't access all the facilities at home. A home library service is essential for people who are housebound and mobile service for villages.*
- *I just wish that the government would value the importance of libraries to the same extent as they did 100 years ago. Libraries contribute to the education and literacy of the community.*
- *Please don't cut it back. Libraries were crucial to developing my love of learning and reading as a child and have continued to be important to me throughout my life.*
- *Losing our mobile library (Sabrina route) would leave many of our elderly readers unable to access books. We are a very small village with very few services and poor public transport.*
- *I feel the library is a real hub of information for people from all walks of life and social demographics. It can bring communities together as it is quite diverse in its content. A physical*

structure with amenities is important for those less well off or with less IT resources at home/ the elderly that are not as tech savvy.

- *The library on Church Stretton is such a community hub. Mothers and toddlers. Elderly folk. People who don't have computer internet access at home. Please don't take it away.*

Compliments

- *Our library in Albrighton is perfect in every way for many reasons. No changes required.*
- *Bishop's Castle library currently excellent & together with Enterprise House could be used as a template for good practice.*
- *Our library in Church Stretton is a pleasure to be in. It's a beautiful building with very pleasant and helpful staff. There are good talks and a popular book group. I would like the library to host a writing group.*
- *I find the staff at Shrewsbury library excellent in all ways and for me no gaps in the current service.*
- *Oswestry is a beacon of good practice.*
- *Shropshire libraries are the best compared to Oxfordshire, Reading and Cornwall.*

Ideas and good practice

- *Closer partnerships with local schools and colleges. I know the Library in Oswestry already has good relationships with local schools, but I've seen libraries that do a good job of being formal venues for outreach and community teaching from larger academic institutions: Glyndwr University, Chester University, Shrewsbury College, etc. All these could be potential teaching partners.*
- *Oxford libraries run a language cafe-time when foreigners have a chance to practise English conversation, for English people to have a chance to meet speakers of other languages-it is great for inclusivity and integration. Would these be appropriate in Shropshire?*
- *Stronger links with schools to establish the idea of lifelong learning. Highlight local authors to encourage writing and reading. Equip one of the Mobile Library vehicles especially for young people. Liaise with the Youth Services and establish a regime of calling on each of the youth Clubs once a year to show what's available and how to access it. Give membership to each primary school child.*
- *Easily accessible with appropriate opening hours. A wide range of books and an efficient arrangement for inter-library loans. A welcoming atmosphere with a good use of space. An outgoing approach which encourages people, especially children, to use the facilities. The library in Chester is a good example of a versatile approach.*
- *I've heard of initiatives like tool libraries etc - perhaps the library can be used to reduce the need to buy stuff?*
- *Shrewsbury Libraries app, to make loaning resources easy. In the college I work at, the students use 'My Cirqua' app to loan/request books.*
- *Free inter-loans from other libraries as in Devon and Gloucestershire.*
- *Engagement with socially excluded and reading schemes.*
- *Access for the elderly to choose books to read. I have noticed that when very elderly a major pleasure for many is the ability to read. It is my belief that this enhances emotional well-being at a challenging time.*
- *I travel a lot, and so see how public libraries are adapting in plenty of other countries. From the US, in particular, I see projects such as repair cafes and libraries-of-things helping to foster sustainability and broaden the community remit of libraries. I also see the way that Libraries are able to use and manage larger-scale subsidised meeting spaces to facilitate niche conferences and events that sometimes struggle to find venues - I've seen libraries hosting autism-friendly film screenings, disabled-friendly sports, gaming club meets, 3D-printing enthusiasts meets, etc. I know it's a bit of a cliché now, but cafes and eating spaces seem an important part of this as well. I've seen cafes that are partnerships with ethnic communities, social welfare projects, spiritual communities, etc. These places can offer low-cost, good quality food - but also critically important "hang out" spaces for people with few other options. But what I've also seen in the cases where such cafes work well is an honest understanding of the informal social care such spaces offer, and correct staffing with trained personnel who can deal appropriately - and*

meaningfully - with all that brings with it. Perhaps too "big scale" for Oswestry, but something that could be talked about.

Strategy and Council approach

- *It needs a fundamental shift in thinking nationally and among local decision-makers: do we want libraries contributing to an educated and informed population and to cohesive and supportive communities, or do we let libraries deteriorate further because we don't care or imagine a commercial solution is always better?*
- *Making sure children's activities are an important part of the strategy - we need to ensure that new readers and library users are encouraged.*
- *I would like to see a commitment to a more equitable funding system that is designed to make all our libraries places for Shropshire to be proud of, and all the professional staff supported and trained.*
- *Accepting that money is tight it may seem that libraries are not important enough to merit proper funding. That is so foolish. The services are vital to so many sections of the community - the young, so they learn the love of books which will help them throughout their education and life, the old who can find support and company - in the books and in the library service across the board. And everyone in between for whom libraries can add interest and joy to their lives.*
- *I would hate an automated library - face-to-face contact is really important for community facilities. Not just for getting advice but also for those people who are isolated and lonely.*

A specific question was included within the survey to encourage people to comment on the new library strategy and what it should contain. Although further consultation/engagement is planned, this more open style of questioning was designed to get a feeling of what is most important to community members. There were 305 comments. Table 10 summarises the feedback. Some of the comments included themes raised previously within comments to other questions. Opening hours was mentioned quite frequently and also many people didn't want to see any changes but hope libraries can stay as they are. The example comments highlight again, that people are really concerned that there will be further reductions in library services due to a lack of local authority budgets. This was a very strong concern highlighted throughout the whole survey within the comments made. Many people view the new strategy as a means to implement reductions in library services. The example comments have been grouped into two main themes: Investment in libraries and rural communities and ideas and suggestions.

Table 10 Comment Themes - Thinking about the new library strategy, is there anything you would like to see included?

Theme	Number	%
Rural community hubs	62	19
Investment	51	15
New ideas and suggestions	47	14
Books/Choice	35	11
Opening hours	27	8
Keep it as it is	25	8
Encouraging reading	21	6
Mobile library	12	4
Accessibility	14	4
Other	36	11
Total	330	100%

Example comments: The Library Strategy

Investment in libraries and rural communities

- *I would like to see more resources spend on libraries and staffing levels/ opening hours. You can only keep libraries vibrant and alive, if you invest and keep them accessible at all times.*

- *Forward planning, so libraries are not constantly feeling under threat every year because of uncertainty about money. A recognition that these services in rural areas are more than 'just' a library. They are part of the beating heart of the community.*
- *I think libraries are vitally important community spaces, that we should be expanding right now rather than contracting. We need more, not less, mutual/community support.*
- *Funding for smaller community libraries - these are vital especially in the most rural communities.*
- *More consideration for Tier 2 and 3 libraries which serve smaller and often financially struggling communities in more rural areas which have lost other services.*
- *Fairer funding across all three tiers - rather than charging people living in tier 2 and 3 areas twice, though surcharges on town/parish council.*
- *The current library spaces as community hubs and focal points as other traditional community places disappear.*
- *Continue with a community hub including council and registrar services etc.*
- *Continued movement towards being community spaces, offering more than just books. An emphasis on being welcoming, warm and friendly and providing quality care to our customers.*

Ideas and suggestions

- *Certainly, make use of the libraries for other purposes. Ludlow is likely to lose its central Post Office in the near future and it would be good to see that re-located in the Library building. If it's safe enough for the Local Council to use, then it could easily be used to provide a Post Office service.*
- *Cafe with a nice ambience and sitting areas which would attract people to building. Baby feeding/changing rooms. Community meeting rooms with regular free or low-cost events. Outdoor seating to have lunches or sit & relax? Play area for children/grandchildren?*
- *Having a small cafe in the library would encourage people to come in and they would then be able to see what is available. It would be good to have more sessions for children to meet authors or characters from their favourite books. Maybe to see a small charge for certain events in the library which might help to generate some income.*
- *I would like the personal library cards to have a bar code so you can store on your phone rather than be expected to card your card around all the time.*
- *Charging area for I-Pads and Phones etc.*
- *Talks/workshops from authors and illustrators, coffee shop, gift shop, creative writing courses.*

7. Organisational Responses

There were 8 written consultation responses from local organisations (many of those were town and parish councils). Many of these responses were comprehensive and detailed and each have been considered. To help highlight some of the feedback extracts have been included below under some key themes.

Extracts from written consultation responses

The consultation

- *Those attending the Engagement event in Bridgnorth on October 8th learned that such events would only be held in Tier 1 LibrariesNo notifications of the Consultation had yet been sent to Tier 2 and Tier 3 Libraries.*
- *We welcome the launch by Shropshire Council of a new consultation exercise on the future of libraries in the county..... We are concerned that the lack of publicity about the public consultation will mean people taking part in the consultation will be mainly from Tier 1 Library users.*
- *We have concerns about the sparse publicity about this consultation...*

- *As a Friends of Library group we are disappointed that Shropshire Library Service did not notify us of this consultation, despite the fact that the online documentation for this consultation says they want to hear from Friends of Library Groups.*

The value and importance of libraries

- *Provision of library internet access has become even more crucial for those who do not have access at home, particularly given the increasing reliance on web-based access to government and local government services.*
- *Shrewsbury Library: The building has a very high historic value due to its connections with Charles Darwin; it is amazing that the very room that Darwin studied in continues as a place of learning. I cannot think of another public library in the UK that has such nationally important academic connections apart from possibly Karl Marx at the British Library...*
- *Bishop's Castle Library is at the heart of our community. Its co-location with other community, social and business services in Enterprise House is highly valued....The Library plays a critical role in child development and adult education, as well as providing access to the internet and the www. It is an institution that underpins thriving communities in southwest Shropshire.*
- *We believe that the library is not a luxury: it is a practical tool and vital public space for individuals and families. It is a resource for parents with young children, for school children without a place to work at home, for job seekers trying to gain new skills and employment, for elderly people living in isolation, for community groups and, increasingly, an incubator for new ideas and businesses to come to fruition.*
- *Libraries will continue to have an important role in providing information to the local community. This includes information to help people to stay healthy, live with long-term medical conditions and be signposted towards reliable information on the internet....*

Concerns about the tiered approach

- *The Parish Council contends that the funding assumptions underpinning this tiered Strategy are neither sustainable nor fair, particularly to the town's parishes and community organisations, in respect of both Tier 2 and Tier 3 Libraries. This is because the households in those parish & towns would be contributing not only to the funding of Tier 1 libraries, through the county council tax, but also increasingly funding their own libraries through local council tax...*
- *Our experience suggests that the 2018 strategy of attempting to outsource the hosting and management of Tier 2 Libraries is neither practical nor feasible.*
- *....the funding assumptions underpinning the three-tiered Strategy are neither sustainable nor fair with the service also being used by residents from other parish area.*
- *We have always had concerns about the inequalities produced by a strategy in which libraries in the largest (Tier 1) towns would continue to be fully funded by Shropshire Council through council tax income collected from across Shropshire, with smaller towns being expected to pay again for their Tier 2 Libraries from an additional local council tax.*
- *...suggests a need to revisit the rigid distinctions between libraries in different tiers, so that the additional costs to library users is spread more fairly across the county.*
- *...the Council strategy – supporting libraries in the 6 largest towns – is wholly misconceived. The larger towns have a population or tax base sufficient to support their library and, indeed all the other services which the Unitary Council has withdrawn from the rural market towns....*

Concerns about transfer of responsibility to small organisations

- *Over the last three years, Shropshire Council has undertaken to transfer the funding and management to the Parish Council. Despite having supportive residents, willing to contribute some funding, it is difficult to expect a small local community to take on the employment of staff, with all of the risks and uncertainties associated with sickness and retirement liabilities.*

- *Only small community groups are likely to want to operate Tier 2 Libraries as there is no profit to be made. These groups will be too small to take on employing staff, running a payroll and managing pensions.*
- *Bishop's Castle Town Council has, very responsibly, tried to step in where Shropshire Council has withdrawn. The result is the highest precept in the county: £215.*
- *Having a Tier 2 library, Church Stretton is testimony to the unworkability of this approach. Over the last three years, Shropshire Council has undertaken a procurement exercise, seeking to transfer the funding and management to a community organisation in the town. Despite having a well-supported Friends of the Library, willing to contribute some funding, it has foundered on the impracticability of expecting a small local community organisation to take on the employment of staff, with all of the risks and uncertainties associated with sickness and retirement liabilities.*

The value of volunteers and Friends Groups

- *We have found since the end of the formal process we have been able to develop more productive relationships with Shropshire Library Services, the Town Council, and other partners. We therefore recommend a partnership approach rather than formal tendering exercises in future attempts to engage community and other local players in supporting the running of library services.*
- *A strong Friends of Church Stretton Library Group not only contributes funding to the Library's core book lending role, it has also developed a broad programme of activities for all ages based in the Library.*
- *We advocate a more flexible approach that supports local communities in library fundraising activities, and is responsive to the fundraising capacities, and pressures on, different places and populations.*
- *We recommend the setting up of a network of Friends of Library groups so that representative from different groups can meet, learn from each other's experiences, and support individuals wanting to start a new Friends group in their local community*
- *As a Friends Group we see ourselves as having a crucial role in enabling local communities to develop imaginative strategies for securing the future of libraries as the hub of communities..."*

The new strategy

- *We affirm that Shropshire Council's policy should be reversed in the interests of equability. Shropshire Council constantly urges 'Rural Proofing' on the government – rightly so – but it does not rural proof its own policies.*
- *...it is anticipated that the Library Service is to be entirely funded and managed by local community groups within five years – this needs to be reconsidered in the Strategy Review....this proposal is not feasible...*
- *...it is hoped that Shropshire Council will undertake a fundamental re-appraisal, particularly about a more equitable and sustainable way of funding and managing the Library Service into the future.*
- *The Town Council urges Shropshire Council to undertake a fundamental reappraisal of its proposed approach, such that it shares the financial responsibility more equitably across all town and parish councils and is more capable of achieving the declared outcome of sharing the benefits countywide, through not only joint financial but also joint managerial arrangements with local councils and community organisations*

The more formal responses contain some common themes and it is important that these issues are fully explored in advance of both designing and undertaking the second stage of engagement and consultation.

8. Conclusion

There was a fantastic response to the phase one engagement survey designed to obtain feedback prior to designing a new library strategy. The written responses received were also helpful and highlighted the issues organisations would like to see covered within the new library strategy. The volume of responses, and the comments made, highlight that local people, overall, value library services and members of the public are very satisfied with the services libraries offer.

There was a strong sense of fear that a new strategy could bring further reductions in service due to the impact of austerity on public sector budgets. Areas of concern include reductions in library opening hours, reduced choice within the library resources available and lack of investment in buildings and equipment/facilities. Organisational concerns cover the tiered approach within the existing strategy and the allocation of resources, reliance on town and parish council support and small community organisations; and the lack of a clear, long term and sustainable plan for library services. There are calls to review the tiered approach and reconsider some of the principles upon which the current library strategy is based.

Organisations support a partnership approach to the future of library services would like to see greater collaboration within the next stages of work. There is a recognition of the role volunteers and Friends of Library groups can play and responses highlight that the future of libraries must be designed through a community approach.

Feedback suggests that members of the public would like to see greater investment in libraries. People see library services as an essential part of rural communities, providing spaces that offer social interaction and attract all members of the community through an inclusive approach.

The ideas and suggestions within the survey responses suggest, whilst people do not want to see significant changes within libraries, they would like to see greater stability and the role of libraries strengthened as community spaces offering a range of services at the heart of Shropshire's rural communities.

Please note that a short summary report is also available.

Analysis undertaken by the Feedback and Insight Team, Information, Intelligence and Insight Unit, Shropshire Council 14 November 2019. SD



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet
23 March 2022

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

Update to Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

Responsible Officer

Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place

e-mail:

mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 258916

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. A proposal to consult on an updated Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy to address the use of additional civil (financial) penalties for the purposes of enforcing electrical safety standards and minimum energy efficiency requirements relating to private rented property.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council has a responsibility to regulate private rented domestic accommodation to ensure it is safe to live in, free from health and safety hazards and meets minimum energy efficiency levels. Houses in multiple occupation (HMO) must be licensed and comply with additional requirements relating to health and safety.
- 2.2. Cabinet approved the current Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy ('the PRSH Enforcement Policy') in July 2019. This Policy was brought into effect to reflect a range of new powers that were given to the Council under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, which included, amongst others, the power to impose civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution.
- 2.3. The new powers were and continue to be aimed at:
 - tackling criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords;
 - improving standards in the private rented sector; and
 - ensuring that private rented accommodation is safe, well managed and that property is adequately maintained.

- 2.4. Regulations made under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Housing Act 2004 and the Energy Act 2011 have now extended the powers of the Council to permit civil penalties to also be imposed, as an alternative to prosecution, specifically in relation to electrical safety standards and minimum energy efficiency levels of private rented domestic property.
- 2.5. The current PRSH Enforcement Policy has been updated to incorporate the additional civil penalty powers and a draft of the updated PRSH Enforcement Policy ('the updated Policy') has been produced for consultation.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves for consultation, with any necessary amendments, the draft updated Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy as set out at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That Cabinet instructs the Head of Business and Consumer Protection to undertake a six-week period of consultation and to bring the draft updated Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, together with all feedback received from the consultation, back to Cabinet for further consideration and final approval.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Shropshire has a wide range of good landlords and letting agents who take their legal responsibilities seriously and provide decent well-maintained homes.
- 4.2. However, there are also a number of rogue, criminal and irresponsible landlords who knowingly flout their legal obligations and rent out accommodation that is substandard, unsafe, unlicensed and/or has poor energy efficiency levels. These landlords create an unfair trading environment that undermines the operation of legitimate and law-abiding businesses.
- 4.3. The current PRSH Enforcement Policy already sets out the enforcement activities that the Council may use to tackle the majority of these concerns, which, in turn, supports good landlords to flourish.
- 4.4. The powers available to the Council have been extended. The Council may now, as an alternative to prosecution, also impose civil

penalties on landlords who are in breach of their duties contained in the following regulations:

- The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 ('the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations')
- The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 ('the Energy Efficiency Regulations')

- 4.5. The specific duties set out within the above Regulations, where a civil penalty may now be imposed, are detailed in Section 3.0 of the updated Policy.
- 4.6. The updates to the current PRSH Enforcement Policy, together with the Council's [Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy](#), provide a framework that will assist the Council to improve the safety and energy efficiency of private rented accommodation.
- 4.7. Effective enforcement in relation to private rented accommodation, including the use of civil penalties, is likely to improve the life chances of the population generally and particularly those with protected characteristics such as the elderly, those with disabilities and families with children.
- 4.8. An Equality, Health and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (EHSIA) is currently being undertaken. It is anticipated that the outcome will demonstrate an increased positive impact on health, equality, and social inclusion. The conclusions from the formal assessment will be brought before Cabinet, together with the feedback from the consultation, and the outcome of both of these will inform the final content of the updated Policy.
- 4.9. Regulation 11 of the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations gives the Council the power to impose civil penalties of up to £30,000. It is for the Council to determine the level of any civil penalty up to this maximum.
- 4.10. Regulation 38 of the Energy Efficiency Regulations gives the Council the power to impose civil penalties of up to £5,000. It is for the Council to determine the level of any civil penalty within certain individual maximum levels for different types of breaches.
- 4.11. Unlike the civil penalties that are already included in the current PRSH Enforcement Policy, there is no statutory guidance recommending or advising that the Council should develop and document a policy to determine how the level of civil penalties under the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations and the Energy Efficiency Regulations should be determined.

- 4.12. There is, however, non-statutory guidance in relation to the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, which recommends that the Council should develop and document such a policy and that it would be appropriate to consider both the Council's current PRSH Enforcement Policy and the statutory guidance that the Council was required to have regard to when the current Policy was initially developed. There is no equivalent guidance in relation to the Energy Efficiency Regulations.
- 4.13. As a result, the above civil penalty powers could be used by the Council without updating the current PRSH Enforcement Policy. However, by choosing to incorporate these additional powers into the updated Policy, this provides a framework for the Council to enable reasonable decisions to be made and to mitigate the reputational and financial risks that may result from any legal challenge. A failure to update the current PRSH Enforcement Policy may also limit the ability of the Council to improve the safety and energy efficiency of private rented accommodation.
- 4.14. There is a risk that any substantial increase in the number of private rented sector housing related investigations, where civil penalties are an option, is likely to give rise to a corresponding pressure on existing and limited staffing resources, including resources within Legal Services.
- 4.15. In all instances where civil penalties are being considered as an alternative to prosecution, the Council will still have to be satisfied that if the case were to be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court, there would be a realistic prospect of conviction, i.e., the standard of proof remains the same as if the decision had been taken to institute legal proceedings. The Council needs to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that the offence has been committed before imposing a civil penalty. For this purpose, officers involved in cases will consult the Crown Prosecution Service Code for Crown Prosecutors and liaise with Legal Services before any decision is made to impose a civil penalty.
- 4.16. In order to ensure civil penalties are used fairly and are set at an appropriate level, the following factors, as set out in the statutory guidance, first published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) in April 2017, will be considered:
- severity of the offence
 - culpability and track record of the offender
 - harm caused to the tenant
 - punishment of the offender
 - whether it will deter the offender from repeating the offence
 - whether it will deter others from committing the offence

- whether it will remove any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the offence
- 4.17. Where it is intended that civil penalties will be used for the purposes of enforcing the Housing Act 2004 or the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, both culpability and harm will be taken into account. It is proposed that the method, contained within Section 7 of the updated Policy, will be used to determine the individual level of any penalty imposed.
- 4.18. Where it is intended that civil penalties will be used for the purposes of enforcing the Energy Efficiency Regulations, it is proposed that the method, contained with Section 8 of the Policy, will be used to determine the individual level of any penalty imposed; in particular, the impact on the following factors will be taken into account:
- the health of the tenants
 - the environment
 - the cost of heating the property
 - the level of fuel poverty
- 4.19. The approach set out in Sections 7 and 8 of the updated Policy aims to minimise the risk of legal challenge. In the event of such a challenge, the approach will increase the likelihood that the Council will be able to successfully defend such a challenge. However, it is impossible to entirely eliminate the legal risks associated with the use of civil penalties; nevertheless, the updated Policy will assist the Council to mitigate the risks associated with any adverse outcome.
- 4.20. Both the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations and the Energy Efficiency Regulations provide landlords with the right to make representations to the Council against the intention to impose a civil penalty and ultimately, they have a right of appeal to a First-tier Tribunal. The Tribunal is an informal body that has the power to quash, confirm, cancel or change any notice, order or decision made by the Council, including increasing or reducing the level of civil penalties.
- 4.21. The Government has made it clear that offenders must not derive any financial benefit from their offending and Tribunals have been briefed on what is expected of them in relation to the use of civil penalties. Whilst Shropshire Council's use of these powers remains untried and untested, there is growing evidence that other local authorities are successfully using the powers where it is appropriate to do so.
- 4.22. The consultation will be made available on the Shropshire Council website and will be open to the public and all stakeholders to put forward their comments. All key stakeholders will be contacted

directly and signposted to the consultation details on the Council's website.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Monies received by the Council from the payment of civil penalties can be retained by the Council to further the delivery of the Council's statutory functions relating to the enforcement activities covering the private rented sector. Any funds that the Council fails to spend on these statutory functions must be paid into central Government's Consolidated Fund.
- 5.2. A First-tier Tribunal would consider any appeal against the imposition of a civil penalty and an unfavourable outcome may adversely affect the Council's income.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. It is not possible to quantify the outcome of the updated Policy in relation to climate change impacts.
- 6.2. Nevertheless, the fundamental purpose of the Energy Performance Regulations is to drive up energy performance of rented accommodation by setting a minimum energy efficiency level for such properties.
- 6.3. Whilst the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations are primarily focused on the electrical safety of rented properties, the energy efficiency is likely to be indirectly improved if the electrical installations are modern and effectively optimised from a safety perspective.
- 6.4. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that where enforcement powers are used to ensure compliance with both the Energy Performance Regulations and the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, there will be a positive climate outcome, particularly in relation to energy and fuel consumption. There is a strong likelihood of significant improvements for tenants on low incomes, with associated co-benefits such as improved physical health and mental wellbeing.
- 6.5. With respect to renewable energy sources, proactive enforcement of the legal requirements may also prompt landlords to consider fitting roof-mounted solar panels to reduce energy use and costs for their tenants or to generate an income stream from their property assets.
- 6.6. It is acknowledged that enforcement of both the Energy Performance Regulations and the Electrical Safety Standards

Regulations will not generate any potential opportunities for carbon offsetting or specific measures to improve resilience to climate related extreme weather events.

7. Background

- 7.1. In Shropshire, the private rented sector represents 17% of the housing market, which equates to approximately 25,000 properties.
- 7.2. The updated Policy sets out enforcement criteria regarding private rented sector housing, which supplement the generic approach to enforcement described in the Council's [Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy](#).
- 7.3. The updated Policy is aimed at the regulation of the private rented sector, which includes housing association properties and not those owned by Shropshire Council.
- 7.4. The supplementary private rented sector housing enforcement activities set out in the updated Policy include the licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMO), the service of statutory notices as well as the following measures introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Housing Act 2004 and the Energy Act 2011 which aim to tackle rogue landlords/letting agents and improve the private rental sector:
 - Civil penalties which can be used as an alternative to prosecution
 - Rent Repayment Orders (RROs)
 - Database of rogue landlords/property agents
 - Banning Orders for the most prolific offenders
- 7.5. The updated Policy takes into account the statutory guidance entitled, 'Civil penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 – Guidance for Local Housing Authorities', issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in April 2017 (updated in April 2018).

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. The supplementary private rented sector housing enforcement activities, including the licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMO), which were set out in the current PRSH Enforcement Policy have been retained in the updated Policy.
- 8.2. The housing stock managed by Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STARH) is owned by the Council and, in law, is not held to be private rented housing. For this reason, the updated Policy does not apply to housing managed by STARH.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. In order to ensure the Council can utilise civil (financial) penalties as an effective enforcement tool to promote compliance with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 and The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, it is good practice that the current Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, which was approved by Cabinet in July 2019, is updated.
- 9.1. A draft of the updated Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy has now been produced and is ready for formal consultation. Cabinet Members are being asked to agree the draft and approve the consultation process.

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

[Shropshire Council Private Rented Sector Enforcement Policy adopted by Cabinet, July 2019](#)

Statutory guidance for local housing authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities):

- [Civil penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, first published in April 2017](#)
- [Database of rogue landlords and property agents under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, first published April 2018](#)
- [Rent repayment orders under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, first published April 2017](#)

Non-statutory guidance for local housing authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities):

- [Banning Order Offences under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, first published April 2018](#)
- [Electrical safety standards in the private rented sector, first published June 2020](#)

[Shropshire Council's Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy approved by Council, July 2018](#)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Simon Jones, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Local Member

The report has county wide application.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

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DRAFT PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Date policy adopted:
Adopted by:
Date of implementation:
Next review period:

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- Appendix A – Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Shropshire Council ('the Council') is committed to improving standards in private rented sector housing, ensuring accommodation is well managed, properly maintained, safe and habitable.
- 1.2 The private rented sector plays an important role in the county's housing market. The Council shares the Government's desire to support good landlords and agents who provide decent well-maintained homes and to crack down on unscrupulous landlords who are flouting the law and seeking profit from their noncompliance.
- 1.3 The Council is keen to strike the right balance on regulation in order to avoid stifling investment in this sector. A small number of rogue or criminal landlords knowingly rent out unsafe and substandard accommodation. The Council is determined to create a level playing field for all landlords by dealing robustly with criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.
- 1.4 The Council provides advice and guidance to assist landlords and property agents in complying with their legal requirements.
- 1.5 The Council advises tenants of their rights and obligations and how they can try and resolve a situation prior to any enforcement being required by the Council. Private tenants are expected to contact their landlord to report any issues before contacting the Council. This ensures that landlords are aware of issues and gives them an opportunity to resolve them. There is further information on how to report issues on the Council's [website](#). Where works are needed, tenants are expected to co-operate with the landlord to facilitate the repair. Social tenants are expected to go through the complaints' procedure of the relevant Housing Association prior to any involvement being required by the Council.
- 1.6 The Council has specific powers to impose civil penalties and other measures, introduced under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, to crack down on criminal, rogue, and irresponsible landlords; these include:
 - Civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution for certain specified offences
 - Extension of rent repayment orders to cover illegal eviction, breach of a banning order, failure to comply with an improvement notice and certain other specified offences
 - Database of rogue landlords and property agents who have been convicted of certain offences or received multiple civil penalties
 - Banning orders for the most serious and prolific offenders

- 1.7 Regulations made under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Housing Act 2004 and the Energy Act 2011 have extended the powers of the Council to also permit civil penalties to be imposed on landlords who are in breach of their duties in respect of the requirements set out in:
- The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 ('the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations')
 - The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 ('the Energy Efficiency Regulations')

- 1.8 This Policy explains how the Council can use these civil penalties and other measures and sets out how the level of the civil penalties will be determined.

2.0 Purpose and Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy sets out enforcement criteria regarding private rented sector housing which supplements the generic approach to enforcement described in the [Council's Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy](#).

- 2.2 This policy is aimed at the regulation of the private rented sector which will include housing association properties except those owned by Shropshire Council.

- 2.3 The supplementary private rented sector housing enforcement activities set out in this policy include the licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMO), the service of statutory notices as well as the following measures introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Housing Act 2004 and the Energy Act 2011 which aim to tackle rogue landlords and improve the private rental sector:

- Civil penalties which can be used as an alternative to prosecution
- Banning Orders for the most prolific offenders
- Database of rogue landlords/property agents
- Rent Repayment Orders (RROs)

- 2.4 This policy takes into account the following statutory guidance for local housing authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities):

- Civil penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, issued April 2017 (updated April 2018)
- Database of rogue landlords and property agents under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, issued April 2018
- Rent repayment orders under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, issued April 2017

- 2.5 This policy takes into account the following non-statutory guidance for local housing authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities):

- Banning Order Offences under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, issued April 2018
- Electrical safety standards in the private rented sector, first published June 2020

3.0 Regulation of Private Rented Sector Housing

- 3.1 The Council responds to complaints from tenants and other residents about private rented sector housing, prioritising the complaints based on an assessment of the risk and seriousness. If enforcement action is necessary, a variety of regulatory powers may be used to address and resolve the problem.
- 3.2 Housing issues will primarily be dealt with under the Housing Act 2004; however, this is not exclusively the case and, where circumstances are appropriate, other legislation will be used including:
- Energy Act 2011: we will use this when there are concerns about the energy efficiency of a property, which is adversely impacting or may adversely impact the environment, the health of tenants, the cost of heating the property and/or the level of fuel poverty of the tenants
 - Housing and Planning Act 2016: we will use to tackle criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords and where there are concerns about the electrical safety standards in a property
 - Environmental Protection Act 1990: we will use this where a property defect is considered prejudicial to health or causing a nuisance
 - Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015: we will use this where there is a lack of smoke alarm or where there is no carbon monoxide detector in a room with a solid fuel burning appliance.

Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

- 3.3 The HHSRS is set out in Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 (see Appendix A). It is a method of assessing how likely it is that the condition of a property will cause an unacceptable hazard to the health of the occupant(s). There are two categories of possible hazards:
- Category 1 hazards represent a serious danger to health and the Council has a duty to take appropriate action to deal with these
 - Category 2 hazards represent a lesser danger and, although it has no duty to take action, the Council will exercise its power to reduce category 2 hazards through appropriate action
- 3.4 The HHSRS is an evidence-based risk assessment procedure which considers any one of 29 hazards that may be present in a dwelling. The risk that any such hazard may impact on the most vulnerable, potential occupant of that dwelling is then used to generate a score. These scores are categorised to determine the consistent level of duty the Council has with regards to the seriousness of hazards that can cause harm in dwellings and then what enforcement action is the most proportionate and suitable in each case.
- 3.5 The approach followed by The Council when making decisions in respect of enforcement decisions is set out in the Council's Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy. We aim to achieve compliance through advice, this policy provides supplementary enforcement information in relation to private rented sector housing provisions.

- 3.6 Charges will be made for any formal enforcement action that the Council takes based on cost recovery of officer time (see Council's fees and charges for further information).

Electrical Safety Standards Regulations

- 3.7 The Electrical Safety Standards Regulations require landlords to have electrical installations inspected and tested by a person who is qualified and competent, at least every 5 years. This applies to all new tenancies commencing on or after the 1st July 2020 and existing tenancies from the 1st April 2021.
- 3.8 Landlords have a duty to supply existing tenants with a copy of the electrical safety report within 28 days of the inspection and new tenants must also be given a copy prior to occupying the property. If the Council requests the report, it must be supplied within 7 days.
- 3.9 The report, usually an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR), will show whether the electrical installation is safe for continued use. If the report indicates that remedial work is required (C1 – Danger Present, or C2 – Potentially dangerous) or further investigation needed without delay (FI), the landlord must complete this work within 28 days, or within the period specified in the inspection report if this is less than 28 days.
- 3.10 There may also be Category 1 or Category 2 hazards present for electrical safety and the Council may choose to take enforcement action and/or carry out works in default to remove this hazard under the Housing Act 2004.
- 3.11 If the report requires remedial work, or further investigation, landlords must provide written confirmation that the work has been carried out to their tenant and to the Council within 28 days of completing the work.
- 3.12 If the landlord fails to comply with the remedial notice, or if the EICR indicates that urgent remedial action is required and the landlord has not carried this out within the period specified in the report, the Council may, with the consent of the tenant, carry out the work and recover the costs incurred.
- 3.13 A landlord is not in breach of the duty to comply with a remedial notice if the landlord can show they have taken all reasonable steps to comply. Where the landlord (or electrician) has tried to gain access to the property to undertake the work and the tenant has prevented this, then this may be considered as reasonable steps.

Energy Efficiency Regulations

- 3.14 All domestic privately rented properties must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with a rating of Band A-E. If the current certificate is F or G, the landlord is required to make the necessary improvements to raise the EPC rating to a minimum of E unless they have a valid exemption in place.
- 3.15 The minimum standards do not apply to registered providers of social housing or a body registered as a social landlord.
- 3.16 In certain circumstances, landlords may be able to claim an exemption from this prohibition. This would need to be registered on the National Exemptions Register. There are various exemptions that apply to the prohibition on letting a

property with an energy efficiency rating below E. If a property meets the criteria for any of the exemptions, a landlord will be able to let the property once they have registered the exemption on the Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register.

- 3.17 Further details on exemptions can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-rented-sector-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-exemptions/guidance-on-prs-exemptions-and-exemptions-register-evidence-requirements>
- 3.18 The Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register can be searched at:
<https://prsregister.beis.gov.uk/NdsBeisUi/register-search-exemptions>

4.0 Statutory Notices

- 4.1 Where the issuing of a statutory notice is considered necessary, Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 and Regulation 8 of the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations permit the Council to make a reasonable charge for issuing certain notices as a means of recovering certain administrative and other costs incurred. The Council wants to work with landlords to resolve issues as quickly as possible; for this reason, the cooperation of the landlord is a key factor that will be taken into account when determining the amount of administration expense incurred.
- 4.2 Where the Council is permitted to do so, it is the intention that it will charge for all notices served in accordance with the Housing Act 2004 and the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations unless there are extenuating and exceptional circumstances that would indicate this is disproportionate to the desired outcome; the amount will be dependent upon the time taken to resolve the issue(s) with the landlord. The hourly rate used for the purposes of this calculation will be published on our website.
- 4.3 Section 50 of the Housing Act 2004 gives the Council powers to recover the expenses incurred as a result of issuing statutory notices. A charge can be placed as a local land charge on the property to which it relates. This is recorded in the register of local land charges kept by the Council. This register is normally searched during a property sale by purchasers.

Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme

- 4.4 Following an inspection and subsequent assessment, where the rating shows that there are hazards which are classed as Category 1, the Council is under a duty to take appropriate enforcement action. Where the rating shows the hazard is classed as Category 2, the Council is not under a duty to take action but it may still do so where it is deemed necessary and proportionate to the hazard.
- 4.5 The forms of appropriate enforcement action that can be taken are as follows:

For Category 1 Hazards:

- Emergency remedial action under (Housing Act 2004, Section 40)
- Emergency prohibition order (Housing Act 2004, Section 43)

For Category 1 or Category 2 Hazards:

- Improvement notice (Housing Act 2004, Section 11 & Section 12)
- Prohibition order (Housing Act 2004, Section 20 & Section 21)
- Hazard awareness notice (Housing Act 2004, Section 28 & Section 29)

- Demolition order (Housing Act 1985, Section 265(1) & Section 265(2))
- Declaring the area in which the premises concerned are situated to be a clearance area (Housing Act 1985, Section 289(2))

Electrical Safety Standards Regulations

- 4.6 Where the Council has reasonable grounds to believe that a landlord is in breach of one or more of the duties under the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, and the inspection report relating to the property does not indicate urgent remedial action is required, the Council must serve a remedial notice on the landlord within 21 days.
- 4.7 Where an inspection report indicates that urgent remedial action is required and the Council is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the landlord has not undertaken the required works with the specified period in the report, the Council may, with the consent of the tenant(s), arrange for an authorised person to take the required urgent remedial action. In such instances, the Council must service a notice on the landlord and occupier(s) or fix the notice to a conspicuous part of the premises with 7 days of the urgent remedial works commencing.

Energy Efficiency Regulations

- 4.8 Under the Energy Efficiency Regulations, if the Council believes a landlord may be in breach of the prohibition on letting a sub-standard property, it may serve a compliance notice requesting information from the landlord to help it decide whether a breach has occurred. The Council may serve a compliance notice up to 12 months after a suspected breach occurred on the current landlord. As such, it is good practice for landlords to retain records and request records when buying properties.

5.0 CIVIL (FINANCIAL) PENALTIES

- 5.1 Sections 23 and 126 and Schedules 1 and 9 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 gives the Council the power to impose civil penalties of up to £30,000 on individuals and organisations, as an alternative to prosecution, for certain offences in both the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- 5.2 Civil penalties are intended to be used against landlords who are in breach of one or more of the sections of the Housing Act 2004 listed below:
- Section 30 - Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice
 - Section 72 - Offences in relation to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation
 - Section 95 - Offences in relation to licensing of houses under Part 3 of the Act
 - Section 139 - Offences of contravention of an overcrowding notice
 - Section 234 - Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- 5.3 In addition, civil penalties can be used in relation to a breach of a banning order under Section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- 5.4 Although only one civil penalty can be issued (as an alternative to prosecution) for each of the first four offences listed in paragraph 5.2 and the one offence referred to in paragraph 5.3 above, a civil penalty can be issued for each separate breach of the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 ('HMO

Management Regulations’).

- 5.5 Regulation 11 of the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations gives the Council the power to impose civil penalties of up to £30,000 on a landlord who has breached any one of more of the duties relating to the safety of electrical installations placed on a landlord under these Regulations.
- 5.6 Regulation 38 of the Energy Efficiency Regulations gives the Council the power to impose civil penalties of up to £5,000 in total per property:
- where it is satisfied that the landlord is, or has, at any time within the preceding 18 months let a sub-standard property; or
 - where the landlord has failed to comply with a compliance notice requesting information for the purposes of checking whether a breach of the Regulations has occurred.
- 5.7 If the Council is satisfied that it has a reasonable prospect of a conviction in a particular case, it will consider a civil penalty in the first instance and only by exception will it seek alternative disposal measures such as prosecution or formal caution. In addition to civil penalties or other disposal measures to deal with any offences/breaches, works in default to remove hazards may also be considered.
- 5.8 All cases where civil penalties are being considered as an alternative to prosecution will still have to satisfy the beyond reasonable doubt standard of proof that would be required if the decision had been taken to institute legal proceedings.
- 5.9 Any monies received from the payment of civil penalties is retained by the Council and used to further the delivery of the Council’s statutory functions relating to the enforcement activities covering the private rented sector.

6.0 Factors to be considered to determine the level of civil (financial) penalty

- 6.1 In order to ensure that a civil penalty is set at an appropriate level, the Council will consider the following factors as set out in the statutory guidance entitled ‘Civil penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 – Guidance for Local Housing Authorities’ issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in April 2017 (updated in April 2018).

a) The severity of the offence

The more serious the offence, the higher the civil penalty should be.

b) The culpability and track record of the offender

A higher penalty will be appropriate where the offender has a history of failing to comply with their obligations and/or their actions were deliberate and/or they knew, or ought to have known, that they were in breach of their legal responsibilities. Landlords are running a business and should be expected to be aware of their legal obligations.

c) The harm caused to the tenant

The greater the harm or the potential for harm, the higher the civil penalty will be.

d) The punishment of the offender

A civil penalty should not be regarded as an easy or lesser option compared to prosecution. While the penalty should be proportionate and reflect both the severity of the offence and whether there is a pattern of previous offending, it is important that it is set at a high enough level to help ensure that it has a real economic impact on the offender and demonstrates the consequences of not complying with their responsibilities.

e) Whether it will deter the offender from repeating the offence

The ultimate goal is to prevent any further offending and help ensure that the landlord fully complies with all of their legal responsibilities in future.

f) Whether it will deter others from committing the offence

While the fact that someone has received a civil penalty will not be in the public domain, it is possible that other landlords in the local area will become aware through informal channels when someone has received a civil penalty. An important part of deterrence is the realisation that (a) the local housing authority is proactive in levying civil penalties where the need to do so exists and (b) that the level of civil penalty will be set at a high enough level to both punish the offender and deter repeat offending.

g) Whether it will remove any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the offence

The guiding principle here should be to ensure that the offender does not benefit as a result of committing an offence, i.e. it should not be cheaper to offend than to ensure a property is well maintained and properly managed.

7.0 Determining the Civil (Financial) Penalty Amount - Housing Act and Electrical Safety Standards Regulations

7.1 The table below provides an indication of the level of penalty that is likely to be appropriate taking into account both culpability and harm.

HARM	HIGH	£15,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - £24,999	£25,000 - £30,000
	MEDIUM	£10,000 - £14,999	£15,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - £24,999
	LOW	£0 - £4,999	£5,000 - £9,999	£10,000 - £14,999
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
CULPABILITY				

7.2 £30,000 is the maximum level of penalty permitted under the legislation.

7.3 The starting point in each band will be the mid-point, i.e. for Band 1 the mid-point will be £2,500.

7.4 The penalty may be increased by £1,000 for each aggravating factor up to a maximum of the top of the band level determined above.

7.5 The penalty may be decreased by £1,000 for each mitigating factor up to a maximum of the bottom of the band level determined above.

- 7.6 When considering aggravating and mitigating factors the penalty imposed must remain proportionate to the offence.
- 7.7 An offender will be assumed to be able to pay a penalty up to the maximum amount unless they can demonstrate otherwise.
- 7.8 In determining the level of harm the Council will have regard to:
- the person, i.e. physical injury, damage to health, psychological distress
 - the community, i.e. economic loss, harm to public health
 - other types of harm, i.e. public concern/feeling over the impact of poor housing conditions on the local neighbourhood
- 7.9 The nature of harm will depend on the personal characteristics and circumstances of the victim, e.g., a tenant.
- 7.10 Where no actual harm has resulted from the offence the Council will consider the relative danger that persons have been exposed to as a result of the offender's conduct, the likelihood of harm occurring and the gravity of harm that could have resulted.
- 7.11 Factors that indicate a higher degree of harm include:
- multiple victims
 - serious or psychological effect on the victim
 - victim is particularly vulnerable

7.12 Examples of Harm Categories

High	Housing defect giving rise to the offence poses a serious and substantial risk of harm to the occupants and/or visitors; e.g. danger of electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning or serious fire safety risk
Medium	Housing defect giving rise to the offence poses a serious risk of harm to the occupants and/or visitors; e.g. falls between levels, excess cold, asbestos exposure
Low	Housing defect giving rise to the offence poses a risk of harm to the occupants and/or visitors; e.g. localised damp and mould, entry by intruders

- 7.12 In determining culpability the Council will have regard to four levels of culpability. Where the offender:
- has the **intention** to cause harm, the highest culpability where an offence is planned
 - is **reckless** as to whether harm is caused, i.e. the offender appreciates at least some harm would be caused but proceeds giving no thought to the consequences, even though the extent of the risk would be obvious to most people
 - has **knowledge** of the specific risks entailed by their actions even though they do not intend to cause the harm that results
 - is **negligent** in their actions

7.13 Examples of culpability

High (Deliberate Act)	An intentional breach by a landlord or property agent or flagrant disregard for the law. For example, by failing to comply with a notice or regulations.
High (Reckless Act)	An actual foresight of, or willful blindness to the risk of offending, but decides to take the risk nevertheless. For example, failing to comply with a strict liability in the HMO regulations.
Medium (Negligent Act)	The failure of the landlord or property agent to take reasonable care to put in place and enforce proper systems for avoiding the offence. For example, partial compliance with a schedule of work to an enforcement notice but failure to fully comply with all schedule items.
Low (Low or no culpability)	The offence committed has some fault on the part of the landlord or property agent but there are other circumstances for example obstruction by the tenant to allow a contractor access for repairs, or damage caused by tenant negligence.

8.0 Determining the Civil (Financial) Penalty Amount – the Energy Efficiency Regulations

8.1 Poor energy performance in a property can adversely impact the health of tenants, the environment, the cost of heating the property and the level of fuel poverty. The degree to which these factors are or may be impacted may be taken into consideration when determining the amount of any civil penalty.

8.2 If the Council confirms that a property is (or has been) let in breach of the Energy Efficiency Regulations, it may serve a civil penalty up to 18 months after the breach and/or publish details of the breach for at least 12 months. The Council will decide on the level of the penalty, up to the maximum limits set by the Regulations. The maximum level of the penalties varies depending on the type of breach:

- up to £2,000 and/or publication penalty, for renting out a non-compliant property for less than 3 months
- up to £4,000 and/or publication penalty, for renting out a non-compliant property for 3 months or more
- up to £1,000 and/or publication penalty, for providing false or misleading information on the Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register
- up to £2,000 and/or publication penalty, for failure to comply with a compliance notice

8.3 The maximum amount per property is £5,000 in total.

8.4 The Council will impose the maximum penalty level for any breach of the Energy Efficiency Regulations; however, where representations are received that demonstrate the breach/breaches occurred due to extenuating and exceptional circumstances, the level of the penalty will be independently reviewed by a senior manager and may be reduced.

- 8.5 A civil penalty will be imposed only after engagement with the landlord has been attempted in order to discuss how:
- the property can be improved
 - what grants (if any) are available for improvements
 - how to register a valid exemption
- 8.6 In addition to imposing a civil penalty, the Council may also impose a publication penalty. This means that the Council will publish details of the landlord's breach on a publicly accessible part of the Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register. The Council decides how long to leave the information on the Register; however, it will be available for view by the public for at least 12 months.
- 8.7 The information that the Council may publish is:
- the landlord's name (except where the landlord is an individual)
 - details of the breach
 - the address of the property in relation to which the breach occurred
 - the amount of any financial penalty imposed

9.0 RENT REPAYMENT ORDERS

- 9.1 Rent Repayment Orders were introduced by the Housing Act 2004 to cover situations where a landlord has failed to obtain a licence for a property where one is required.
- 9.2 The use of these Orders has now been extended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to cover a wider range of offences. These are outlined below:
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice served under the Housing Act 2004
 - Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order served under the Housing Act 2004
 - Breach of a Banning Order made under the Housing and Planning Act 2016
 - Illegal eviction or harassment of the occupiers of a property under the Protection of Eviction Act 1977
 - Using violence to secure entry to a property under the Criminal Law Act 1977
- 9.3 Rent repayment orders can be granted to either the tenant or the Council. If the tenant paid their rent themselves, then the rent must be repaid to the tenant. If rent was paid through Housing Benefit or through the housing element of Universal Credit, then the rent must be repaid to the Council. If the rent was paid partially by the tenant with the remainder paid through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, then the rent should be repaid on an equivalent basis
- 9.4 A rent repayment order can be made against a landlord who has received a civil penalty in respect of an offence, but only at a time when there is no prospect of the landlord appealing against that penalty.
- 9.5 The Council must consider a rent repayment order after a person is the subject of a successful civil penalty and in most cases the Council will subsequently make an application for a rent repayment order to recover monies paid through Housing Benefit or through the housing element of Universal Credit.

- 9.6 The Council will also offer advice, guidance and support to assist tenants to apply for a rent repayment order if the tenant has paid the rent themselves.
- 9.7 Where a landlord has been convicted of the offence to which the rent repayment order relates the First-tier Tribunal must order that the maximum amount of rent is repaid, capped at a maximum of 12 months.
- 9.8 An Order can also be applied for where an offence has been committed but a landlord has not been convicted of one of the above offences. In this instance the First-tier Tribunal will need to be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the landlord has committed the offence. In this instance when considering how much rent should be recovered the following factors will be taken into consideration:
- the Rent Repayment Order should have a real economic impact on the offender and demonstrate the consequences of not complying with their responsibilities
 - the level of the penalty should be such that it is likely to deter the offender from repeating the offence
 - the imposition of the Order will be in the public domain so robust and proportionate use of them will dissuade others from committing similar offences
 - removal of any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the offence

10.0 BANNING ORDERS

- 10.1 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 gives the Council the option of applying for a Banning Order to prevent a person from managing rented property, where they have been prosecuted for a relevant offence.
- 10.2 In deciding whether to apply for an Order the following will be considered:
- the seriousness of the offence to which the person has been convicted
 - any previous convictions the person has for a banning order offence
 - whether the person has at any time been included in the database of rogue landlords and property agents
 - the likely effect of the banning order on the person and anyone else who may be affected by the order
- 10.3 Banning Orders must be for a minimum of 12 months except for certain exemptions.
- 10.4 Any person who is subject to a Banning Order may not hold an HMO licence.

11.0 DATABASE OF ROGUE LANDLORDS AND LETTING AGENTS

- 11.1 The database will contain details of landlords and property agents who have been convicted of a Banning Order offence or have received two or more civil penalties by any local authority in any 12-month period.
- 11.2 Banning order offences are specified in legislation and can be for landlords or property agents who have been convicted of particular serious offences and/or are repeat offenders. A number of offences set out in the regulations are not directly

related to housing, such as fraud, sexual assault, misuse of drugs, theft and stalking. To result in a banning order such an offence must be committed:

- against or in collusion with her/his tenant or licensee (or member of her/his household) or at (or in relation to) the property let out, and
- at a time when the offender was a landlord or property agent of that property, and
- by an offender who was sentenced in the Crown Court.

11.3 The offence can also be for relevant housing offences including any offence under the Housing Act 2004, committing or causing overcrowding, providing a local authority with false or misleading information, continuing to let to illegal immigrants, or illegally evicting or harassing as residential occupier.

11.4 Their details can be entered on the National Database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents. This national database is an important tool to assist local authorities and prospective tenants identify landlords who have failed to maintain their properties to the required standard.

12.0 Powers of Entry

12.1 Authorised officers have a power of entry to properties at any reasonable time to carry out its duties under Section 239 of the Housing Act 2004 provided that they have given 24 hours' notice to the owner (if known) and the occupier (if any) of the premises they intend to enter. These duties are:

- Enter a property to carry out an inspection
- Take any appropriate persons with them
- Take equipment or materials with them
- Take measurements, photographs or make recordings
- Take samples of articles or substances

12.2 If admission is refused, then a warrant may be granted by a Justice of the Peace on written application. A warrant under this section includes power to enter by force, if necessary.

12.3 No notice is required where entry is to ascertain whether an offence has been committed under certain sections of the Act relating to HMOs.

13.0 Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation

13.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a mandatory licensing system for certain types of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The aim of licensing is to ensure that every licensable HMO is safe for the occupants and visitors and is properly managed.

13.2 An HMO is a house or flat that is occupied as a main residence, by more than one household, where occupiers share facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and WCs. This would include, for example, houses containing bedsits, a combination of bedsits and self-contained flats where the bedsits share facilities, and also shared houses and hostels. In addition, houses entirely converted into self-contained flats not in

strict compliance with the Building Regulations 1991, with at least one third occupied as flats on short tenancies are classed as HMOs.

- 13.3 Since 1 October 2018, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 extends mandatory HMO licensing, so HMOs occupied by five or more people, in two or more households, must obtain a licence, irrespective of the number of storeys of the property. This is a mandatory legal requirement.
- 13.4 The responsibility for applying for a licence rests with the person having control of or the person managing the property.
- 13.5 The Housing Act 2004 sets out a number of HMO licensing related offences all of which carry an unlimited fine, including:
- Operating an unlicensed HMO or allowing an HMO to be occupied by more persons than a licence allows
 - Breach of licence condition
 - Supplying incorrect information in a licence application
- 13.6 A civil penalty can be issued as an alternative to prosecution for each separate breach of the HMO management regulations.
- 13.7 In addition to the above, a landlord who operates an unlicensed HMO can be subject to a Rent Repayment Order (RRO). The Council may also decide to apply a Civil Penalty for certain offences using the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- 13.8 Any breach of a licence condition will, in principle, initially be dealt with informally. However, if the breach is serious and affects the safety of the occupants or the responsible person does not carry out necessary works within an agreed timescale, the Council will pursue enforcement action in line with the [Council's Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy](#).
- 13.9 In serious cases an Interim Management Order (IMO) transfers the management of a residential property to the Council for a period of up to twelve months. In exceptional circumstances the Council can also apply for a Final Management Order (FMO) which can last for up to five years.
- 13.10 Licence Holders and HMO Managers will be assessed in order to determine whether they are a fit and proper person having regard to:
- any previous convictions relating to violence, sexual offences, drugs and fraud
 - contraventions of any laws relating to housing, public health or landlord and tenant issues, including those dealt with by way of civil penalties
 - any convictions for unlawful discrimination
 - previous HMO licence refusals
 - training and qualifications through professional bodies and/or landlord accreditation schemes
 - Basic Disclosure result - the Council requires that a Basic Disclosure is undertaken for the proposed licence holder and manager of the HMO. Where a company is either the licence holder and/or the manager, each Company Director/Partner will be required to undertake a Basic Disclosure

14.0 Works in Default

- 14.1 In certain circumstances the Council may decide to carry out works detailed in any enforcement notice or order. Such action can be taken with or without the agreement of the responsible person. If works in default are undertaken a civil penalty can still be imposed or a prosecution considered.
- 14.2 The Council is not obliged to carry out the works in default and reserves the right not to do so. The Council will avoid actions that may encourage owners, landlords and agents to be non-compliant, such as carrying out costly works in default where it may be difficult for the Council to recover its costs.
- 14.3 When taking action with the agreement of the person concerned, the Council may take any action which that person is required to take in relation to the Notice/Order. However, taking action by agreement will only generally be considered where it is felt that the relevant person is, for whatever reason, incapable of organising, executing and overseeing the necessary works. Any such work undertaken will be at the expense of the person concerned.
- 14.4 Taking action without the agreement of the person concerned, will be considered as a course of action in the following circumstances:
- where there is a significant risk to health and safety
 - where a person has failed without “reasonable excuse” to comply with the requirements of an Improvement Notice
 - where reasonable progress, in relation to the requirements of the Notice/Order, is not being made
 - where it is likely that the Council will be able to recover its costs
- 14.5 Where the Council has, under the Housing Act 2004, undertaken works in default, or exercises its power to take Emergency Remedial Action, it will seek to recover the cost of the work carried out and our reasonably incurred expenses for organising the work. The costs incurred will carry interest from the date of service until payment of all sums due under the demand at a rate of the Bank of England Base Rate +2% calculated at the point the charge is payable. The Housing Act 2004 allows a Local Land Charge to be placed on the premises to which it relates
- 14.6 Where the Council has undertaken remedial works under the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, steps will be taken to recover reasonably incurred costs.

15.0 APPEALS

In relation to Civil Penalties

- 15.1 There is a right of appeal to a First-tier Tribunal and must be made within a specified time from the date a notice is served. Tribunals are informal bodies and do not operate like courts. They will hear cases presented by each side.
- 15.2 The Council will rigorously defend its decision to issue civil penalties and take appropriate enforcement action where a person fails to pay a civil penalty.

Housing Act 2004 and Electrical Safety Standards Regulations

- 15.3 The Council is required to issue a 'notice of intent' to issue a civil penalty. Under this notice a landlord has 28 days within which to make representations to the Council about the proposal to impose a financial penalty. At the end of this period, should the Council still propose to issue the civil penalty, they must serve a 'final notice' imposing the penalty.
- 15.4 On receipt of a final notice imposing a civil penalty a landlord can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal against the decision to impose a penalty and/or the amount of the penalty. The appeal must be made within 28 days of the date the final notice was issued. If an appeal is made, the final notice is suspended and therefore the civil penalty is not payable, until such time as the appeal is determined or withdrawn.
- 15.5 The appeal will involve a re-hearing of the Council's decision to impose the civil penalty and may be determined having regard to matters of which the Council was unaware. The Tribunal has the power to confirm, vary (increase or decrease) or cancel the civil penalty that the Council has issued.
- 15.6 The First-tier Tribunal can also dismiss an appeal if it is satisfied the appeal is frivolous, vexatious or an abuse of process, or if the appeal has no reasonable prospect of success.

Energy Efficiency Regulations

- 15.7 The landlord may make a request for a review of the Council's decision to serve a civil penalty notice within the period stated in the notice. Following the review, should the Council confirm the penalty notice, the landlord may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal on the following grounds:
- the issue of the penalty notice was based on an error of fact or law;
 - the penalty notice did not comply with a requirement imposed by these Regulation; or
 - in the circumstances of the case, it was inappropriate for the penalty notice to be served.
- 15.8 If an appeal is brought, the penalty notice is suspended and, therefore, the civil penalty is not payable until such time as the appeal is determined or withdrawn. The First-tier Tribunal may quash, confirm or modify the penalty notice.

In relation to Other Matters

- 15.9 Under the Housing act 2004, there is a right of appeal to the 'appropriate tribunal' in relation to improvement notices, prohibition orders, licence decisions, management orders, overcrowding notices and emergency measures.
- 15.10 Under the Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, there is a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal in relation to remedial notices, emergency remedial notices and recovery of costs.

16.0 Housing Associations

- 16.1 Housing Associations that are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (Private Registered Providers) normally have published arrangements for reporting problems and clear response times for tenants to address problems. Where tenants consider that repairs have not been carried out to their satisfaction each Housing Association has a complaints procedure that tenants should follow. As a result of this, the Council will not normally investigate issues from tenants of Private Registered Providers, unless the reporting and complaints procedure of the Provider in question has been followed and the landlord has then failed to take appropriate action.
- 16.2 For those Housing Associations that are not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing but have similar arrangements in place as the Private Registered Providers to allow tenants to address problems, the Council will not normally investigate issues from such Housing Association tenants, unless the reporting and complaints procedure of the Housing Association in question has been followed and the landlord has then failed to take appropriate action.
- 16.3 For those Housing Associations that are not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing and there is evidence that the Housing Association does not have appropriate arrangements in place to allow tenants to address problems and raise complaints, the Council will normally consider the problems being experienced by the Housing Association tenants and determine whether an investigation is appropriate.

APPENDIX A The Housing, Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS)

The HHSRS provides an objective framework that Local Authorities must use to assess and rate 29 broad categories of hazard. These are summarised as follows:

- Dampness, excess cold/heat
- Pollutants e.g. Asbestos, Carbon Monoxide, lead
- Lack of space, security or lighting, or excess noise
- Poor hygiene, sanitation, water supply
- Accidents – falls, electric shocks, fires, burns, scalds
- Collisions, explosions, structural collapse

The system provides a means of comparing the risks associated with different types of hazard. Some are slow and insidious in their effect, like dampness and cold, whilst others are quick, such as falls. Some hazards are more likely to result in death, such as carbon monoxide, others are very unlikely to cause death e.g. noise or poor layout of amenities.

When an inspector finds a hazard, two key tests are applied – what is the likelihood of a dangerous occurrence as a result of this hazard in the next 12 months and if there is such an occurrence, what would be the likely outcome. This assessment is based on the risk to the actual, or potential, occupant who is most vulnerable to that risk. Each assessment of a hazard carried out using HHSRS results in a score.

This score is calculated using the following formula:
Risk (likelihood) x Outcome = Numerical Score

The calculation includes a 'weighting' to reflect the more serious outcomes. Once the score has been decided it is given a banding. The table below shows the hazard bands:

BAND	HAZARD SCORE RANGE	
A	5,000 or more	CATEGORY 1 HAZARD
B	2,000 to 4,999	
C	1,000 to 1,999	
D	500 to 999	CATEGORY 2 HAZARD
E	200 to 499	
F	100 to 199	
G	50 to 99	
H	20 to 49	
I	10 to 19	
J	9 or less	

If a hazard score falls into Bands A to C, this is classed as a Category 1 hazard. Those rated in Bands D and lower will fall into the residual category, Category 2.

The hazard score does not dictate the action to be taken, but if Councils find a Category 1 hazard in a home, they have a mandatory statutory duty to take the most appropriate action. Where a Category 2 hazard exists, there is no such similar duty; instead the Act confers a power to take action.

Consultation Version 2022



Committee and Date

Cabinet

23 March 2022

Item

Public

Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme

Responsible Officer

e-mail: James.willocks@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254374

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. In March 2021, the Government announced a new, long-term National Bus Strategy for England. From April 2022, only LTAs with an Enhanced Partnership in place, or following the statutory process to decide whether to implement a franchising scheme, will be able to access new and existing streams of Government bus funding.
- 1.2. Shropshire Council published its notice of intention to form an Enhanced Partnership by the required deadline of the 30 June 2021 and to publish an initial scheme by the 1 April 2022. The Shropshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme has been created in collaboration with those Bus Operators operating a registered public bus service in Shropshire and the Shropshire Community Transport Consortium

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On Monday 15th March 2021, Government launched Bus Back Better, a £3 million national bus strategy for England outside London. It aims to rejuvenate local bus services for passengers.
- 2.2 The strategy was aimed at delivering cheaper, more frequent and more reliable bus services for passengers
- 2.3 The government requires all Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and to set up an Enhanced Partnership, as defined in the Bus Services Act 2017.

- 2.4 On the 31st October 2021 the council published it's Bus Service Improvement Plan and submitted this to the Department for Transport.
- 2.5 The successful realisation of all BSIP themes, aims and objectives is reliant on funding coming forward through the BSIP process.
- 2.6 At the time of submitting this report, the BSIP funding allocation is unknown, but an announcement is expected from the Department for Transport later in March or early April 2022.
- 2.7 The council has previously published a Notice of Intent to proceed with the development of an Enhanced Partnership.
- 2.8 An Enhanced Partnership is the legal framework between the council and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services for passengers. Creating an Enhanced Partnership does not however preclude the Council from considering franchising in the future.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. To approve the formation of the Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme, as laid out in Appendix A
- 3.2. To note that the establishment of this initial scheme will not place any additional financial burden upon the bus operators or the Council, until the outcome of the Shropshire Bus Service Improvement Plan bid has been made known, at the time of writing this report the outcome of that bid is expected at the end of February 2022.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Once the outcome of the Councils Bus Service Improvement Plan funding submission is known, a revised Enhanced Partnership Plan will be submitted to the council's cabinet to reflect the ambitions that can then be achieved through any funding allocation, this will be accompanied by a more detailed assessment of any risks associated with the introduction of that revised plan.

- 4.2. An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact assessment (ESHIA) has been completed and is attached as Appendix B
- 4.3. The initial Assessment has highlighted that there is potential for a Low Positive impact across all nine Protected Characteristic groupings set out in the Equality Act 2010, as well as the tenth grouping of people that we think about in Shropshire, of Social Inclusion. This is of particular relevance to Shropshire as a large and sparsely populated rural county, as this tenth category is there to help us to seek to ensure that we consider the needs of rural households, households on low incomes, households in fuel poverty, and those we may consider to be vulnerable. For these households, public transport via bus needs to present as a safe and economically viable proposition, as well as one on which they may reasonably depend in order to access education and training, employment, health care, and cultural, leisure, shopping and sporting facilities and services.
- 4.4. This assessment is based upon the current draft Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (as we await the outcome of the Councils funding submission).
- 4.5. Should the Council be successful with its £98 million funding submissions thought its BUS Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) a new ESHIA will be undertaken. Shropshire has an ageing population: and an increasing proportion of bus journeys are made by concessionary pass holders, with a corresponding decline in use by fare paying passengers. The equality impact upon the intersecting groupings of Age, Disability and Social Inclusion may therefore present the greatest potential to move from Low Positive to Medium Positive. This is also the case with regard to health and well being impacts.
- 4.6. Should the Council choose not to form an EP scheme, there is a significant risk that the Council would lose its annual Bus Service Operators Grant of £512,447 and precluded from bidding for any future DfT funding awards.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The establishment of this initial scheme will not place any additional financial burden upon the bus operators or the Council, there is within the scheme the option to vary its ambitions once the outcome of our funding submission is known

- 5.2 Once the allocation of the funding allocation is known, a Cabinet report will be submitted to highlight the specific details of that award and the impact it will have on the public transport network and the benefits that will bring.
- 5.3 Should there be no funding awarded a report will be submitted to Cabinet detailing the potential impact that will have on the public transport networks going forwards.
- 5.4 Failing to form an Enhanced Partnership with the bus operators would preclude the LTA and bus operators from receiving any funding from the £3bn budget to support buses through the Government's Bus Back Better Strategy. It would also prevent the LTA from submitting future funding bids to support Public Transport.
- 5.5 In addition, failure to form an EP would also bring to an end the annual ringfenced Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG) of £512,447 which is paid to the Council to part fund operator provided bus services.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. In its recently published Decarbonising Transport Plan, the government set out its vision for a net zero transport system. In the plan, public transport and active travel will be the natural first choice for residents' daily activities. We will use our cars less and be able to rely on a convenient, cost-effective and coherent Shropshire public transport network. The bus can be the most efficient user of road space and a vital part of an environmentally friendly local sustainable transport system.
- 6.2. In order to meet this ambition, funding through the Department of Transport's Bus Back Better Strategy will be crucial and a statutory requirement to attract that funding is to have an Enhanced Partnership Scheme in place.

7. Background

- 7.1. In March 2021 the government published 'Bus Back Better, a National Bus Strategy for England', which highlighted a general decline in bus patronage since the 1950s whilst traffic congestion and emissions have continued to increase. COVID-19 has caused a significant shift from public transport to the private car. To avoid the worst effects of a car led recovery the government wants the country to shift back quickly, by making radical improvements to local public transport as normal life returns. Government considers buses are the quickest, easiest and cheapest way to do that.

- 7.2. Greater emphasis will now be placed on partnership working, where Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and bus operators form statutory partnerships to define bus networks, service levels, and fares strategies. The government expects all LTAs to develop Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and set up Enhanced Partnerships (EPs), as defined in the Bus Services Act 2017. The strategy represents the greatest change since 1985 and provides the opportunity to give LTAs more control.
- 7.3. Through the strategy, LTAs and bus operators are asked to commit to forming a statutory Enhanced Partnership (EP) and to jointly develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Dependent on how ambitious the BSIP is, LTAs and bus operators could benefit from £3bn of total government funding.
- 7.4. Bus Partnership Schemes are partnerships between the Council and Local Bus Operators to improve the quality of public transport, details of how the Partnership scheme will operate is highlighted in Appendix A
- 7.5. On 30 June 2021 the Council committed to forming an Enhanced Partnership with the bus operators across the area. In line with government's tight timescale, on 31 October 2021, the Council published its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), developed jointly with the bus operators., community transport organisations, based upon the comprehensive customer engagement survey and the resulting ambitions of local people and visitors.
- 7.6. A BSIP was published by the required deadline and submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) setting out indicative capital and revenue spend required to implement the plan in future years.
- 7.7. Once the draft EP Plan and Scheme had been prepared, a statutory consultation of key stakeholders on the draft EP Plan and EP Scheme was undertaken, this statutory stakeholders were, Transport Focus, Chief of Police, Traffic Commissioner, Bus Users Shropshire, Competition and Markets Authority and Neighbouring Local Authorities.
- 7.8. The government recognises the time pressures that LTAs are under and understands that the ambitions within it will be limited whilst the funding position is unknown.
- 7.9. This initial EP Scheme can be amended at a future point once the outcome of the Councils £98 million Bus Service Improvement Plan funding submission is known.
- 7.10. The EP Plan and Scheme will be published on the council's website.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. The Council needed to form and publish an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme to ensure it was in a position to qualify for any current and future funding awards.
- 8.2. The Council submitted a very ambitious package of transformational changes to the DfT as part of its BSIP submission and when the outcome of that funding bid is determined, we will submit a variation of the current EP scheme to cabinet, which will reflect these ambitions.

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

- Shropshire’s Bus Service Improvement Plan Prospectus, submitted to the Department for Transport.

Cabinet Member

Cecilia Motley

Local Member

All

Appendices

- Appendix A – Shropshire’s Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme
- Appendix B - ESHIA

Shropshire Bus Partnership: Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

December 2021

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Definitions

In this document, the following capitalised terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below:

1985 Act	Transport Act 1985
2000 Act	Transport Act 2000
2017 Act	Bus Services Act 2017
Bus Operators (or Operators)	All providers of Qualifying Bus Services
The Council, Shropshire Council or SC	Shropshire Council
Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation	A formal variation of the relevant Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) as a result of the mechanism set out in the EP Scheme, which will then constitute a formal variation of the relevant scheme for the purposes of s.138E(1) of the 2000 Act.
Facilities	Those facilities referred to in Part B which shall be deemed such for the purposes of s.138D(1) of the 2000 Act.
Shropshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (or Shropshire BSIP, or BSIP)	The Bus Service Improvement Plan published by Shropshire Council.
Shropshire Bus Partnership Board	The committee of Shropshire bus operator representatives, council representatives and stakeholders responsible for considering recommendations put forward for inclusion in Enhanced Partnership Plans, Schemes or Scheme Variations.
Shropshire Enhanced Partnership (or Enhanced Partnership or EP)	The Enhanced Partnership covering the geographic extent of the administrative boundary of the Borough of Shropshire, shown for identification purposes at Figure 1.
Measures	Those measures referred to in Part B which shall be deemed as such for the purposes of s.138D(2) of the 2000 Act.
Non-qualifying Bus Service	Services excluded from classification as Qualifying Bus Services.
Qualifying Bus Service	A registered local bus service with one or more stopping place within the geographical area of the Enhanced Partnership, except for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school or works registered local bus services not eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cross-boundary registered local bus service with less than 10% of their registered mileage within the Enhanced Partnership area. • A service operated under section 22 of the 1985 Act. • A registered local bus service which is an excursion or tour. • A service run under sections 89-91 of the Transport Act 1985 where the authority retains all the revenue from that service. • Any other registered local bus service that the Shropshire Bus Partnership Board decides should be excluded from all or specific requirements of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme. <p>For the avoidance of doubt, a list of Qualifying Bus Services will be published at the start of each Council financial year.</p>
Requirements	<p>Those requirements placed upon Bus Operators identified as such within Part B, which shall be deemed as such for the purposes of s.138C 2017 Act.</p>

1. Part A - Enhanced Partnership Plan

The Shropshire Enhanced Partnership for Buses is made in accordance with Section 138G(1) of the Transport Act 2000 by Shropshire Council.

The Plan comes into effect on 1 April 2022 and will remain valid until revoked.

Introduction

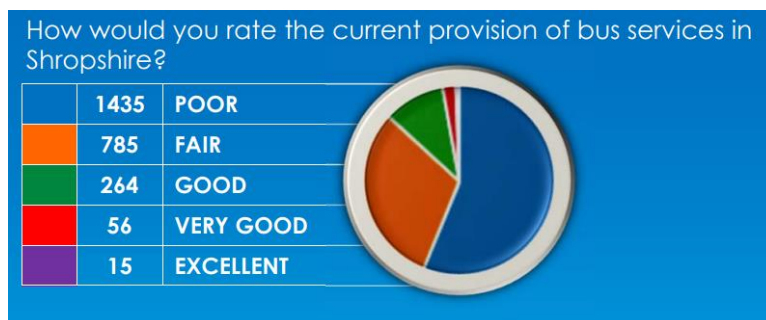
- 1.1 The National Bus Strategy provided a welcome focus on improving bus services across the country. The requirement to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) gave a real opportunity for Shropshire Council to come together with its local bus operators to collectively consider the current bus service offer to residents and how it could be enhanced. The formation of a Bus Partnership that meets regularly has been a useful forum to highlight issues, discuss ideas and put forward potential solutions.
- 1.2 High car ownership and use, coupled with dispersed population, make for challenging conditions for bus services in Shropshire. The bus is not viewed as an attractive option for those with a choice.
- 1.3 The Shropshire Bus Partnership has provided the focus for collaborative working and forms the basis of the Enhanced Partnership. This will in turn facilitate the successful implementation of the planned measures, once levels of funding secured from Government are known.
- 1.4 With a relatively modest injection of funds sought through the BSIP, significant improvements can be made to the bus network in Shropshire. More buses, running to more places at more times, with cheaper fares and quicker journey times, will improve the image of buses and increase their contribution towards the better economic, social and environmental well-being of Shropshire's residents.
- 1.5 Drawing on the BSIP, this document fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan for Shropshire. Initially, this will facilitate the introduction of an EP Scheme aimed at supporting and developing bus services across Shropshire, to achieve the objectives set out in the BSIP.
- 1.6 In accordance with the statutory requirements for an EP Plan, this document includes:
 - Overview and map of the geographical area covered
 - Factors affecting the local bus market

- Summary of passengers' experiences in using bus services and the priorities of users and non-users for improvements
- Trends in bus use and service offer
- Objectives that are sought for bus service provision
- Interventions needed to achieve the desired outcomes
- Governance arrangements
- Competition test

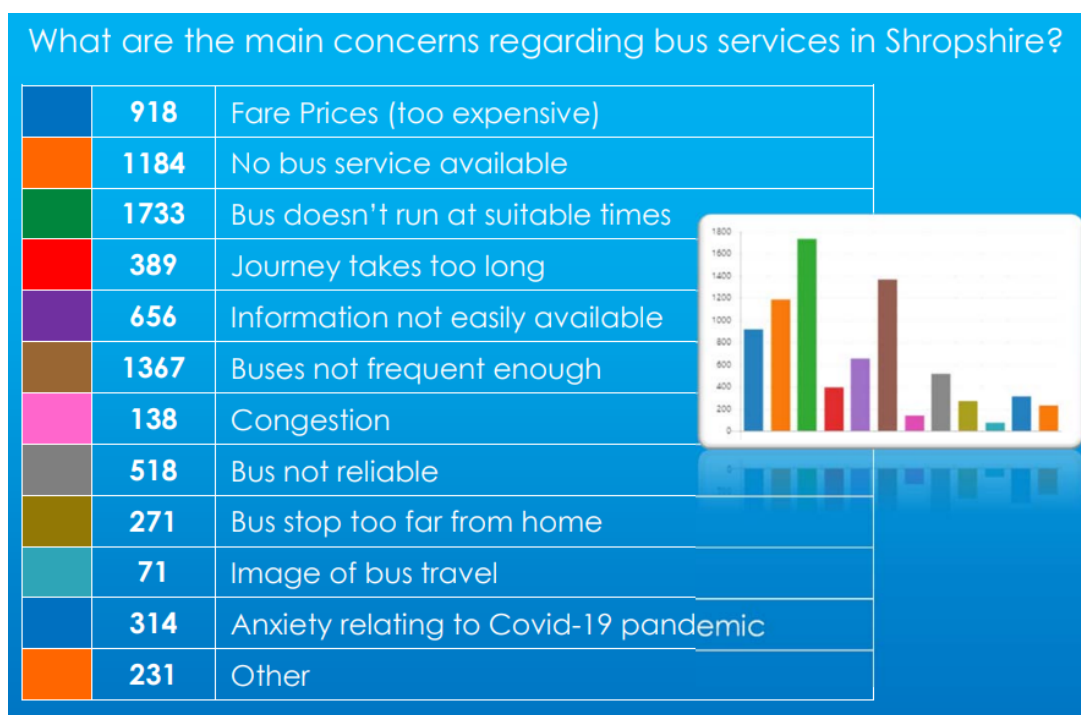
2. Bus travel in Shropshire

What do people think about local bus services?

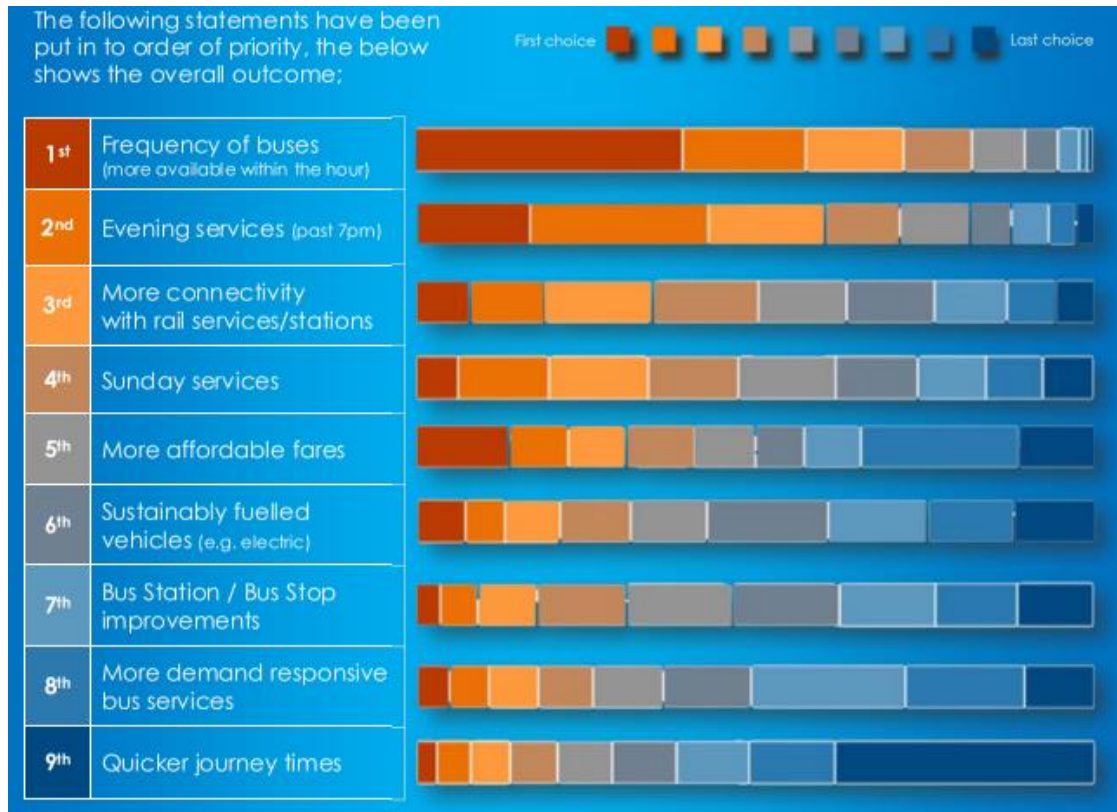
2.1 A survey undertaken during summer 2021 provided useful insights into residents' views of bus services. 2,555 responses were received from people across all parts of Shropshire.



2.2 Bus services were generally viewed as poor, particularly because they were not available, didn't run at convenient times or were too infrequent.



2.3 The survey asked people to prioritise the types of improvements they would like to see in Shropshire's bus services. The following chart shows the responses, highlighting the desire for more frequent buses, the provision of evening services and greater connectivity.



2.4 Respondents were asked to rank a number of statements relating to various improvements. The top 10 are shown here.

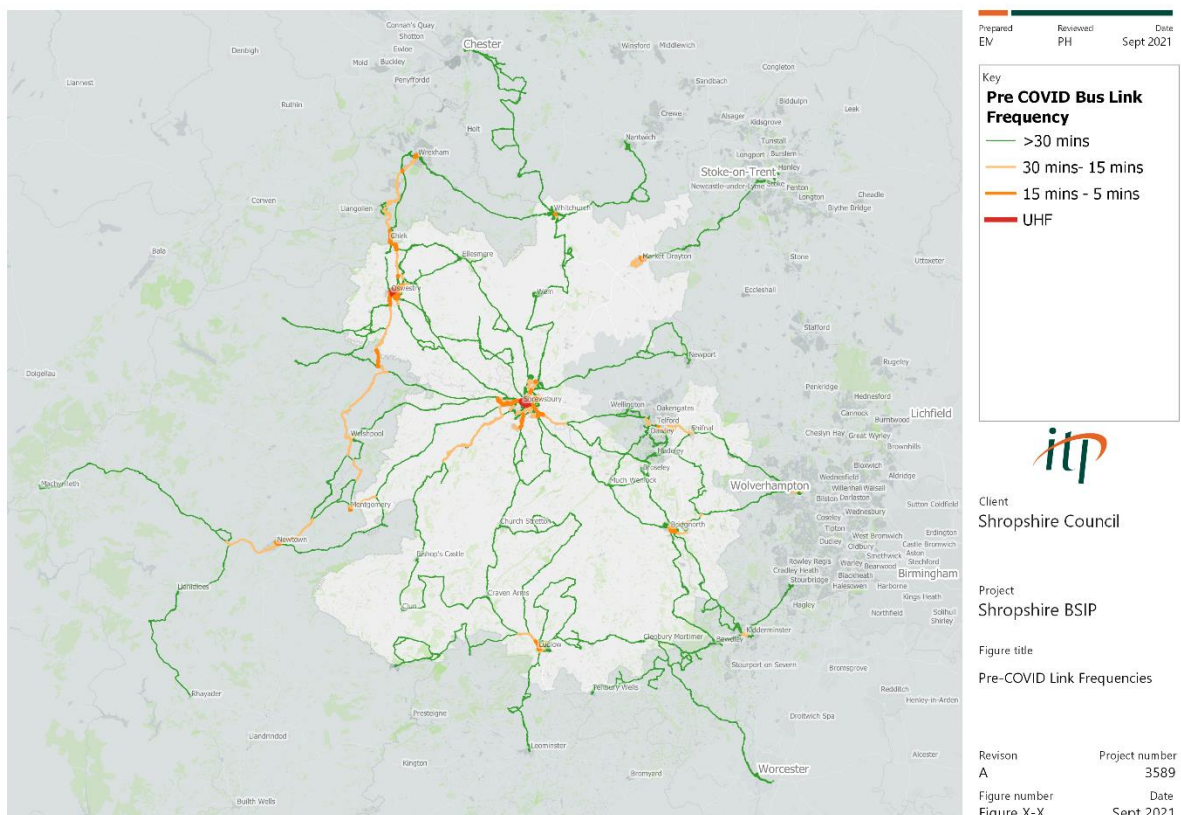
2.5 The Bus Service Improvement Plan was developed in response to the survey findings and residents' priorities.



3. Current position

Introduction

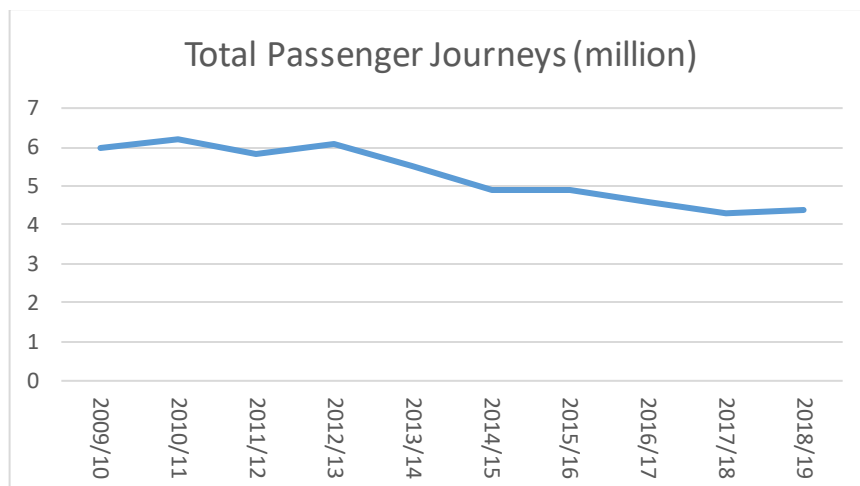
- 3.1 Local bus services are vital to the community, connecting rural areas to urban centres, enabling residents to access health services, shopping, leisure and the ability to commute to and from work. Shropshire’s public transport network has historically operated unaltered for many years with little investment to market services and increase patronage. This has resulted in many services being subsidised by the Council (68%) with poor coverage particularly in more rural areas. Where services do operate in these areas, timetabling tends to be infrequent and not meet the needs of passengers very well.
- 3.2 The largest operator is Arriva, with two other smaller independent companies based in the county. A number of other operators are located in neighbouring areas. There is a high proportion of older vehicles and fares tend to be quite high.
- 3.3 The pre-Covid bus network and service frequencies are shown on the following map.



Bus travel trends

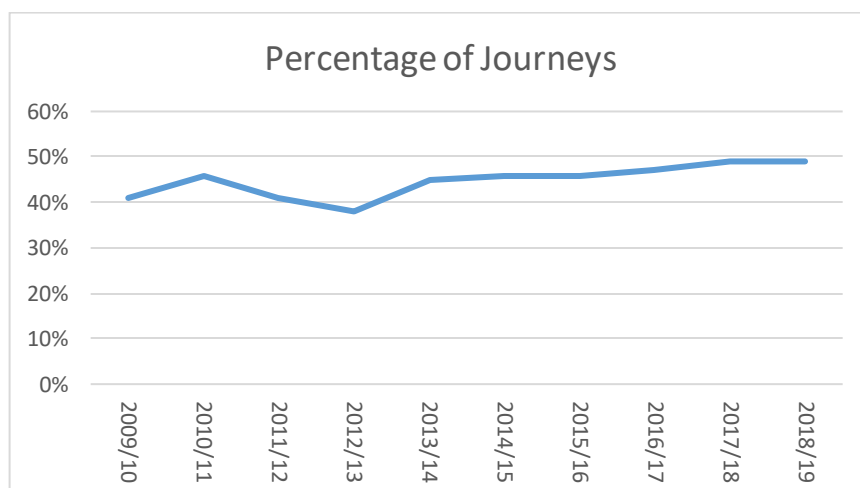
- 3.4 Shropshire has seen a downward trend in bus passengers over the last decade, from 6m in 2009/10 to 4.4m in 2018/19.

Shropshire bus passenger trends¹



- 3.5 The following figure shows the overall proportion of elderly and disabled passengers journeys made with a concessionary pass. The percentage increased from 41% in 2009/10 to 49% in 2019/19.

Concessionary travel trends in Shropshire²

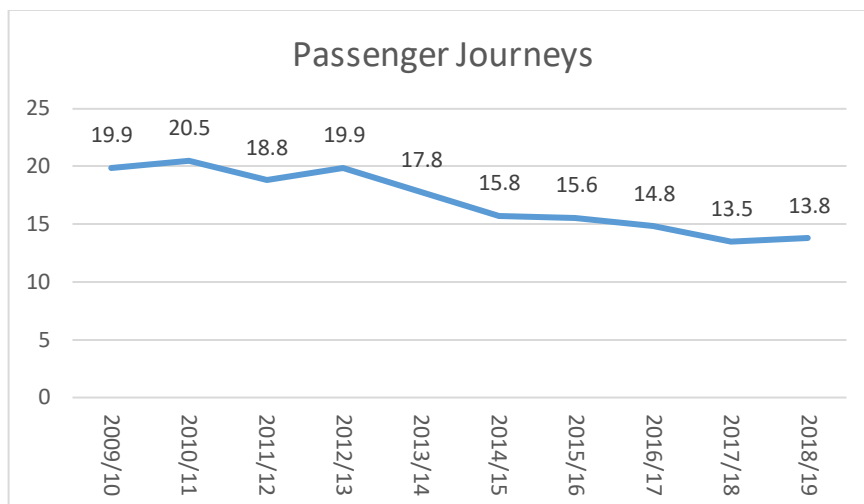


¹ Based on DfT bus statistics Table BUS0109, as published June 2021.

² Based on DfT bus statistics Tables BUS0109 and BUS0113, as published June 2021

- 3.6 Over the past decade, there has been a steady decline in the number of bus passenger journeys per head of population from 19.9 in 2009/10 to 13.3 journeys in 2018/19, a reduction of 31%.

Bus passenger journeys per head of population



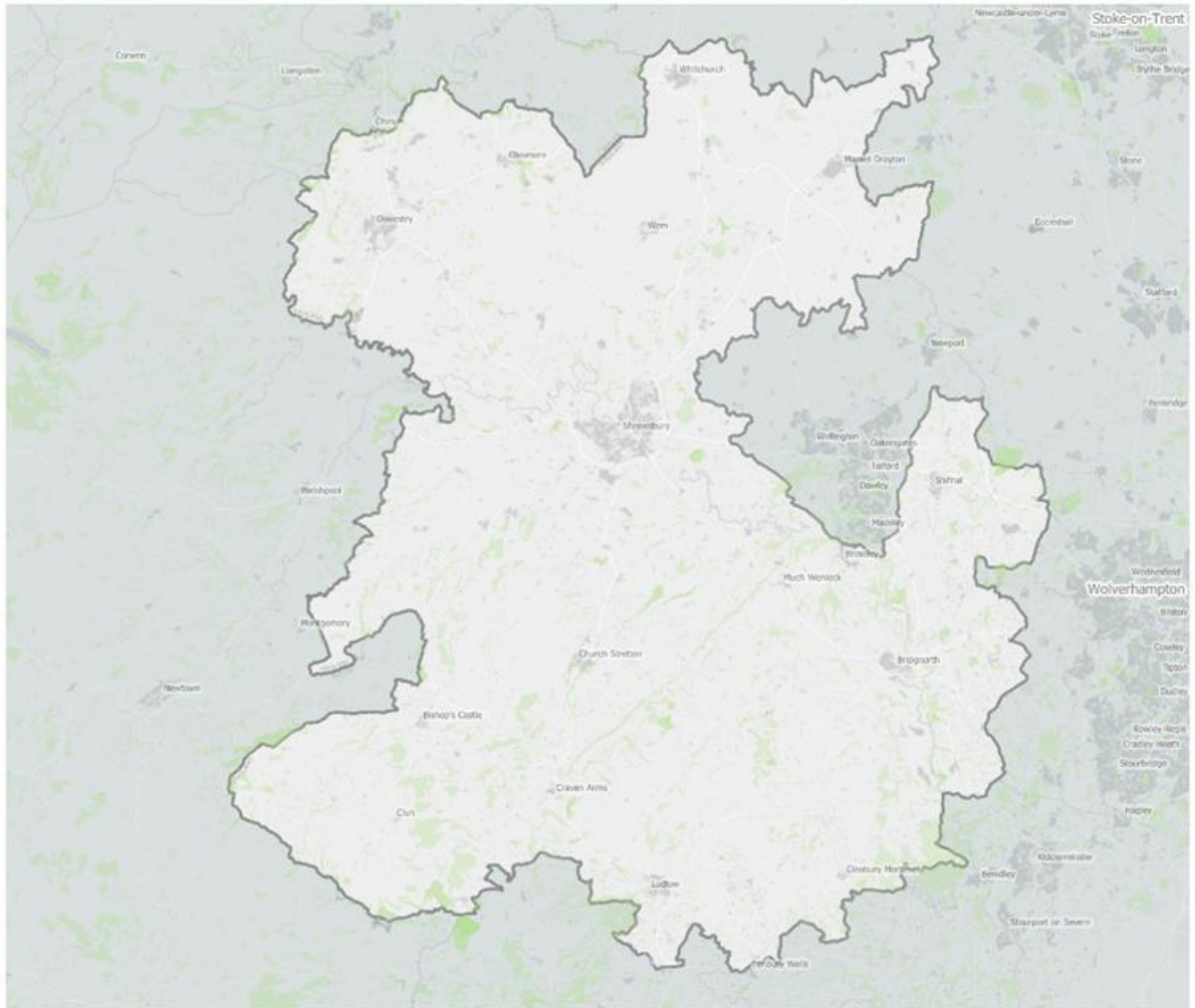
Challenges

- 3.7 There are a number of challenges for the Shropshire bus network, as follows:
- Shropshire is the second largest inland county in England, with 330,000 people spread over 1250 square miles.
 - As a significantly rural area, travel demands are sparse and diverse and many journeys quite long. This means that there is a high dependence on journeys by car.
 - There is an ageing population; an increasing proportion of bus journeys are made by concessionary pass holders, with a corresponding decline in use by fare paying passengers.
 - Bus provision is not commercially viable, meaning that many services rely on local authority support.
 - Resources are spread thinly, so services are limited, offering poor levels of connectivity and limited access to facilities and services, and there is a lack of investment in infrastructure and buses.

4. Enhanced Partnership Plan

- 4.1 The Shropshire Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan covers the whole of Shropshire.

Figure 4-1 Shropshire Enhanced Partnership Plan area



- 4.2 The Plan provides the backdrop for specific EP Schemes that will detail actions and developments to be taken jointly by partners to deliver improvements in bus services in Shropshire that will help meet the following goals and objectives.

Vision, goals and objectives

- 4.3 The Enhanced Partnership seeks to facilitate the delivery of the BSIP vision and objectives, as follows.

Vision

Buses are excellent; they play a significant role in the life of Shropshire and its people, offering convenience and choice for all.

Overall goal

To revitalise bus travel in Shropshire, by improving its image and useability, and so increasing use and underpinning a positive cycle of growth and development of bus services.

Objectives

Develop an understandable and integrated public transport network that is attractive to use.

- Provide a quality experience in respect of all aspects of using the bus.
- Tackle the perceived and actual deficiencies of the bus compared to the car.
- Allow the bus to play a greater role in supporting wider policies and strategies relating to economy, environment, health and wellbeing.
- Increase the commercial viability of bus services.

- 4.4 The key delivery stages of the BSIP are set out in the following graphic.



BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Based on the public survey & operator feedback for Shropshire



Recovery

A continuation of the fare support that the DfT has provided throughout the pandemic, ensuring that we have the foundations of a bus network to build upon, to meet the ambitions of the National Bus Strategy;

- Funding from the DfT to continue tapered support for bus services as they recover, and passenger numbers remain depressed
- Should the above fare support be made available, we would also need to maintain concessionary fare payments at pre-covid levels.



Levelling Up

Funding to improve the Public Transport Offer to passengers that reflects the needs of a rural area, this is not an expectation that we simply replicate service levels of metropolitan areas, but a fair reflection of a minimum that bus users in rural areas should expect;

- 30 minute service frequencies on key inter-urban routes
- Improved service frequencies in our towns
- Longer operating hours
- Monday to Sunday bus operations on key services
- More affordable fares
- Bus priority
- Real time passenger information
- Staffing costs to implement and administer the BSIP



Building Back Better

This reflects the ambition and innovation required to truly transform the public transport offer in Shropshire and ensure public transport becomes a legitimate choice of travel in a rural county, realising the positive additional benefits that come with that (the economy of our towns, transport decarbonisation, social and rural isolation, access to health and essential services to name a few).

- Rural Connect (DRT)
- Green Buses
- Additional Services
- Shrewsbury Connect (operational costs)
- Multi operator ticketing
- Passenger information improvements (website, app & branding)
- Greater integration with the Rail Network.
- Passenger Hub Improvements

Whilst funding submission details are still being finalised, the total bid will be in excess of £90 million and reflect the ambition to impact positively other key strategic workstreams, on a local and national level.

The BSIP submission is a live working document and there is the opportunity to revise/refine the elements within the submission as we move through the process.

Funding sources

- 4.5 The Enhanced Partnership will draw on multiple funding sources to deliver the desired outcomes of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s), as appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Funding provided by Central Government
 - Council capital funding
 - Council revenue funding
 - Developer contributions
 - Operator investment
 - Reinvestment of operator revenue generated by schemes
 - Other external funding opportunities

Management

- 4.6 Following the launch of the National Bus Strategy in March 2021, Shropshire Council convened a Bus Partnership Board, to which all bus operators were invited and most have attended. This met monthly to oversee the development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, published at the end of October 2021.
- 4.7 The Council published its notice of intent to develop an Enhanced Partnership on 27 June 2021.
- 4.8 The Shropshire Bus Partnership Board comprises representatives of:
- Shropshire Council
 - All operators of local bus services in Shropshire
 - Shropshire Community Transport Consortium
- 4.9 The Partnership Board has been supported and chaired by representatives of transport consultancy ITP.
- 4.1 Operating under agreed Terms of Reference, the Bus Partnership Board is responsible for the introduction and management of the EP, in addition to prioritising the planned improvements set out in the BSIP, based on funding received from Government. The Board will be responsible for the development of any future EP Schemes and agreeing variations to existing Schemes or the EP Plan.

- 4.2 In addition to the formal organisational framework, Shropshire Council officers have liaised with neighbouring authorities to ensure that plans are compatible and with representatives of Shropshire Bus Users.
- 4.3 As required by the EP guidance, the following were formally consulted on this Plan:
- Transport Focus
 - Traffic Commissioner
 - Chief Officer of Police
 - Competition and Markets Authority
 - Neighbouring authorities
 - Local MPs

Small and medium sized operators

- 4.4 Given the variety of bus operators involved (in terms of market share, fleet size, company turnover and structure), it is important to ensure that the effects of the Enhanced Partnership do not unduly negatively impact smaller operators' ability to engage or to comply with requirements.
- 4.5 As such, the needs of small and medium-sized operators (SMOs) have been considered in the development of the Enhanced Partnership, with opportunities for all bus operators to participate throughout, either through individual discussions or through attendance at the Partnership Board meetings. The Plan seeks to support improvements in all aspects of bus provision, regardless of the size of operators providing services.

Competition

- 4.6 The Enhanced Partnership has been subject to the Competition Test as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The assessment, undertaken by Shropshire Council concluded that there will be no adverse impact on competition. The implementation of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and associated Scheme is aimed at delivering improvements to bus services for passengers in a deregulated environment. The Enhanced Partnership will not impact on competition, as operators will be free to amend and introduce services in the area, provided that the standards that apply to all operators are met.

Review and monitoring of the EP Plan and Scheme

- 4.7 Once the EP Plan and Scheme are made, they will be reviewed by the Bus Partnership Board annually, following the review of the BSIP. Shropshire Council will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 3 months to complete.
- 4.8 The review will include consideration of:
- The arrangements for consulting passenger representatives on the effectiveness of the EP
 - The objectives set for improving the quality and effectiveness of bus services
- 4.9 A public engagement exercise will be undertaken each year, to gather the views and opinions of both bus users and non-users. This will take the form of an online survey. Some of the same questions asked in the survey undertaken to inform the development of the BSIP will be used, in order to track the impact of any measures introduced. Also, there will be questions to help monitor progress towards BSIP targets, particularly in respect of levels of satisfaction with different elements of service. The opportunity will also be taken to gauge how effective the Enhanced Partnership has been and the impact it has made.
- 4.10 Furthermore, the Bus Passenger Charter will invite feedback from bus users on an on-going basis. Again, this will be collated to inform future developments. There will also be on-going dialogue with the bus user representative group, Shropshire Bus Users.
- 4.11 All insights and feedback will be reported regularly to the Bus Partnership, in order that consideration can be given to new measures and facilities to be included in the EP Scheme.
- 4.12 Monitoring reports for the BSIP will be produced every 6 months to demonstrate progress towards the objectives and targets set.

Variations to the EP Plan

- 4.13 Consideration will be given to potential EP Plan variations highlighted either by one of the organisations represented on the Shropshire Bus Partnership Board or by any operator of a qualifying bus service. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to the Enhanced Partnership Board administrator.

- 4.14 On receipt of a valid request for a variation, SC will reconvene the Shropshire Bus Partnership Board, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. Any proposal to proceed with the variation will lead to the Council notifying stakeholders and operators of the intention to vary the EP Plan. The planned variation will then be subject to the operator objection and consultation processes set out in s138L of the Transport Act 2000. Having passed through these, SC will make the EP Plan variation, subject to the approval of the Council.

Revocation of the EP Plan

- 4.15 If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Plan to be revoked, the Bus Partnership Board will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in the section 'Variations to the Plan' (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).
- 4.16 If the EP Plan is revoked, then any associated EP Schemes will be revoked automatically, as a Scheme cannot exist without a Plan. Equally, if all associated Schemes are revoked, the EP Plan would automatically be revoked.
- 4.17 If at any point in the future, the EP Plan area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Plan document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

5. Part B – Enhanced Partnership Scheme

The Enhanced Partnership Scheme (1) for Buses is made in accordance with Section 138G(1) of the Transport Act 2000 by Shropshire Council.

The Scheme comes into effect on 1 April 2022 and will remain valid until revoked.

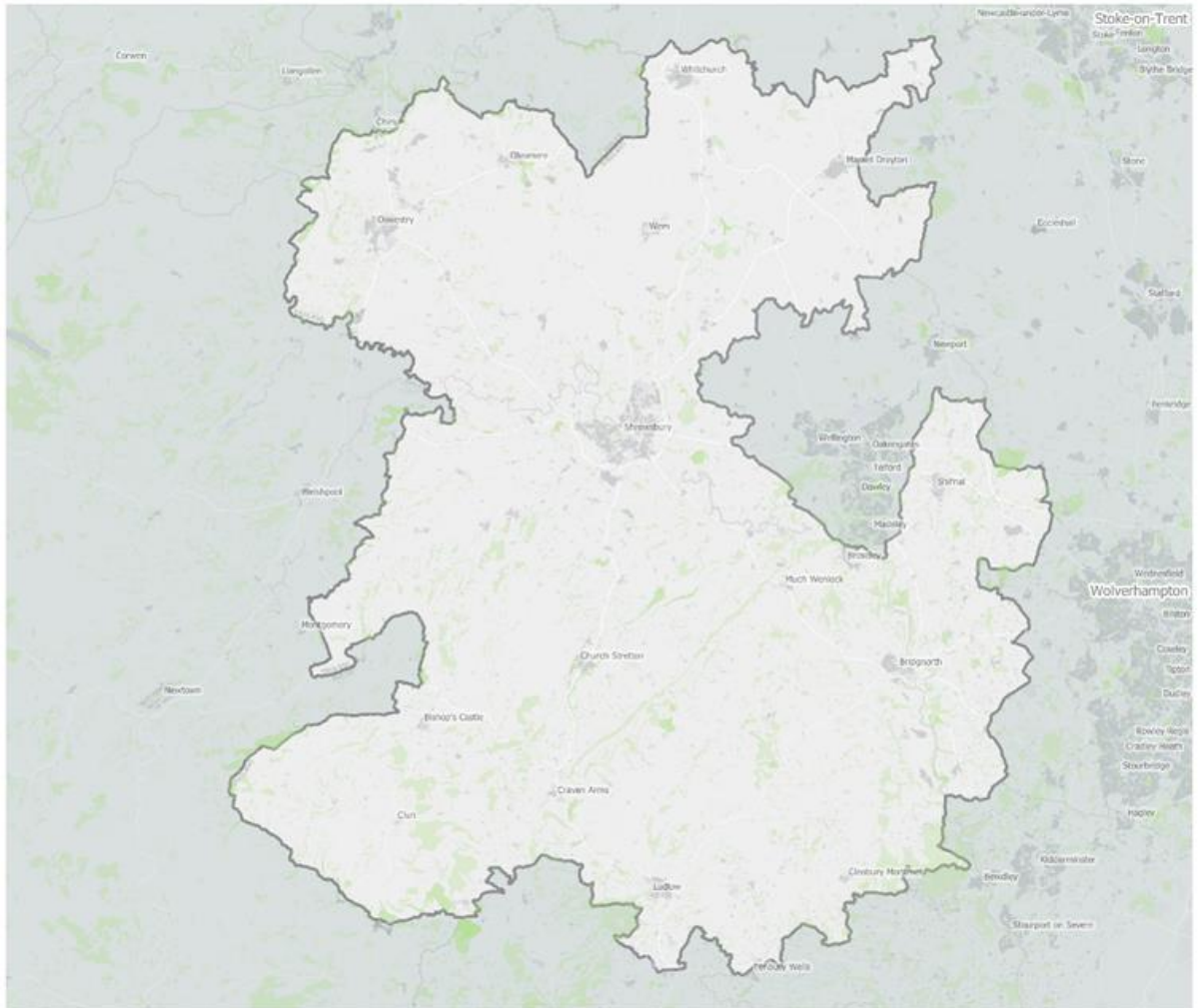
EP Scheme content

- 5.1 This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an EP Scheme as set out in s138 of the Transport Act 2000. It includes sections on:
- Scope of the EP Scheme and commencement date
 - Requirements on the local authority
 - Requirements in respect of qualifying local bus services
 - Details of EP Scheme management
- 5.2 The EP Scheme can only be put in place if an associated EP Plan has been made. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the associated Shropshire EP Plan.
- 5.3 The EP Scheme has been jointly developed by Shropshire Council, bus operators that provide local bus services in the EP Scheme area and other stakeholders on the Shropshire Bus Partnership. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Local Transport Authority and operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the associated EP Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Scope of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

- 5.4 The EP Scheme will facilitate the improvement of local bus services operating in Shropshire.
- 5.5 The EP Scheme covers the same area as the Shropshire EP Plan, namely the entire administrative area of Shropshire Council (SC). The Scheme includes all qualifying local bus services, which are those registered local bus services operating in Shropshire, except those that are exempt as indicated below in the 'Exempt services' section.
- 5.6 For the avoidance of doubt, a list of qualifying local bus services will be published at the start of each Council financial year.

Figure 5-1 Shropshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme Area



EP Scheme duration

- 5.7 The EP Scheme will commence 1 April 2022. It will have no specific end date but will be reviewed at least annually.

Exempt services

- 5.8 The following services are exempt from the requirements of the EP Scheme:
- A school or works registered local bus services not eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant.

- A cross-boundary registered local bus service with less than 10% of their registered mileage within the Enhanced Partnership area.
- A service operated under section 22 of the 1985 Act.
- A registered local bus service which is an excursion or tour.
- A service run under sections 89-91 of the Transport Act 1985 where the authority retains all the revenue from that service.
- Any other registered local bus service that the Shropshire Bus Partnership Board decides should be excluded from all or specific requirements of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

Requirements of Shropshire Council

- 5.9 Shropshire Council will provide various facilities and measures as set out in Column C of the following table.

Requirements in respect of qualifying local bus services

- 5.10 Operators of qualifying local bus services will be required to meet the requirements set out in Column D of the following table.

Table 5-1 Enhanced Partnership Scheme commitments and requirements

Shropshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme: commitments and requirements (commencing April 2022)

Elements to be progressed that are not reliant on BSIP funding from the DfT

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
Element	Description	Local authority commitments (facilities and measures)	Bus operators' commitments (requirements on qualifying local bus services)
Shropshire Public Transport website	New website with comprehensive information about all bus, rail and community transport services across Shropshire.	<p>Manage the establishment and development of the website, including commissioning, design and content.</p> <p>Launch website by 31 October 2022.</p>	<p>Support the development of the website, providing information and content and links to it from operators' own websites.</p> <p>Promote and advertise the website once launched.</p>
Bus Passenger Charter	Charter setting out what passengers can expect when using bus services across Shropshire.	<p>Agree and publish Bus Passenger Charter by 1 April 2022.</p> <p>Monitor adherence to Charter and public feedback.</p> <p>Establish appropriate passenger feedback and engagement procedures by 1 June 2022.</p>	<p>Adopt and adhere to the Bus Passenger Charter.</p> <p>Promote the charter to passengers and encourage feedback.</p> <p>Agree how operators will proactively support and be part of any passenger feedback and engagement procedures by 1 June 2022.</p>

<p>Roadworks coordination and liaison</p>	<p>Ensure that systems are in place to minimise disruption to bus services from roadworks.</p>	<p>Introduce and maintain processes and procedures for SC and utility companies to co-ordinate roadworks and liaise with affected bus operators over potential disruption at the earliest consideration of works.</p> <p>Have processes in place to notify bus operators of short notice and emergency roadworks.</p>	<p>Active participation in agreed processes.</p> <p>Provide appropriate points of contact for liaison.</p>
<p>Planning and development</p>	<p>Ensure that bus service considerations are built into new development proposals from the earliest possible time.</p>	<p>Involve bus operators in discussions around new development proposals at the earliest possible opportunity.</p>	<p>Engage as necessary with SC and developers.</p>
<p>External funding bids</p>	<p>Maximise external funding for public transport provision and development</p>	<p>Lead and/or support external funding bids to facilitate improvements to public transport services.</p>	<p>Co-operate with and support external funding bids, providing data as necessary and within requested timescales.</p>

Element that is reliant on BSIP funding from the DfT (i.e. can only be progressed if funding is secured)

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
Element	Description	Local authority commitments (facilities and measures)	Bus operators' commitments (requirements on qualifying local bus services)
Appropriate post-pandemic bus network	Ensure that the bus network matches post-pandemic demands and overall aspirations.	Subject to DfT funding, provide financial support for bus services that are still suffering from low patronage from April 2022, subject to agreeing a transition plan for each service put forward by the operator.	Devise a transition plan for each service, with agreed measures to promote/increase usage, and setting out on-going financial support requirements.

Variations to the EP Scheme

- 5.11 Consideration will be given to potential EP Scheme variations highlighted either by one of the organisations represented on the Shropshire Bus Partnership Board or by any operator of a qualifying bus service. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to the Enhanced Partnership administrator.
- 5.12 On receipt of a valid request for a variation, Shropshire Council will reconvene the Shropshire Bus Partnership Board, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all representatives of local bus operators and Shropshire Council present, the Council will make the EP Scheme variation. Parties not represented at the meeting will be deemed to be abstaining from the decision.
- 5.13 If there is not unanimous agreement amongst representatives of local bus operators and Shropshire Council present, then the proposed variation will be put to the operator objection mechanism, but with a reduced objection period of 14 days, replacing Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 section 138L (2) (c). The proposed variation will be advertised on the Council's website and emailed to operators of qualifying local services in the EP Scheme area. If the proposed variation passes the operator objection mechanism, the Council will make the EP Scheme variation, subject to the approval of the Council.

Revocation of the EP Scheme

- 5.14 If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Scheme to be revoked, the Bus Partnership Board will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in the section 'Variations to the Plan' (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).
- 5.15 If, for some reason, the EP Plan is revoked at any time, the EP Scheme would automatically be revoked, as it cannot exist without an associated EP Plan in place. Equally, if this Scheme (and in the absence of any other Schemes) is revoked, the EP Plan would automatically be revoked, as it cannot exist without a Scheme.
- 5.16 If at any point in the future, the EP Plan and Scheme area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Scheme document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Initial Screening Record 2021-2022

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Andy Evans

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		No

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

<p>Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations</p> <p>The initial Assessment has highlighted that there is potential for a Low Positive impact across all nine Protected Characteristic groupings set out in the Equality Act 2010, as well as the tenth grouping of people that we think about in Shropshire, of Social Inclusion. This is of particular relevance to Shropshire as a large and sparsely populated rural county, as this tenth category is there to help us to seek to ensure that we consider the needs of rural households, households on low incomes, households in fuel poverty, and those we may consider to be vulnerable. For these households, public transport via bus needs to present as a safe and economically viable proposition, as well as one on which they may reasonably depend in order to access education and training, employment, health care, and cultural, leisure, shopping and sporting facilities and services</p> <p>Should the Council be successful with its £98 million funding submissions through its BUS Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) a new ESHIA will be undertaken. Shropshire has an ageing population: and an increasing proportion of bus journeys are made by concessionary pass holders, with a corresponding decline in use by fare paying passengers.</p> <p>The equality impact upon the intersecting groupings of Age, Disability and Social Inclusion may therefore present the greatest potential to move from Low Positive</p>
--

to Medium Positive. This is also the case with regard to health and well being impacts.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

A Customer Charter is being developed to sit alongside the Enhanced Partnership Plan to hold accountable the members of the partnership against the improvements that have been cited in the plan itself. This of course is dependent upon funding from Government to put in place improvements within the plan itself.

ADD

The Plan has set out the following with regard to review and monitoring. It will be important to ensure that these measures themselves incorporate due regard to the needs of people within the nine Protected Characteristic groupings, as well as to our tenth grouping in Shropshire of social inclusion.

- Once the EP Plan and Scheme are made, they will be reviewed by the Bus Partnership Board annually, following the review of the BSIP. Shropshire Council will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 3 months to complete.
- The review will include consideration of:
- The arrangements for consulting passenger representatives on the effectiveness of the EP
- The objectives set for improving the quality and effectiveness of bus services
- A public engagement exercise will be undertaken each year, to gather the views and opinions of both bus users and non-users. This will take the form of an online survey. Some of the same questions asked in the survey undertaken to inform the development of the BSIP will be used, in order to track the impact of any measures introduced. Also, there will be questions to help monitor progress towards BSIP targets, particularly in respect of levels of satisfaction with different elements of service. The opportunity will also be taken to gauge how effective the Enhanced Partnership has been and the impact it has made.
- Furthermore, the Bus Passenger Charter will invite feedback from bus users on an on-going basis. Again, this will be collated to inform future developments. There will also be on-going dialogue with the bus user representative group, Shropshire Bus Users.

- All insights and feedback will be reported regularly to the Bus Partnership, in order that consideration can be given to new measures and facilities to be included in the EP Scheme.
- Monitoring reports for the BSIP will be produced every 6 months to demonstrate progress towards the objectives and targets set.

Associated ESHIAs

None at this stage, but again, should we be successful with our funding bid then it is very likely that this service change could have a positive impact across a number of the Council's strategies. ***A second assessment will take place once the funding outcome is known.***

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change considerations

Our Bid for funding would if successful positively impact on all 3 areas, ie Climate Change, Health & Well Being and have a wider Social, Community and Economic benefit.

In its recently published Decarbonising Transport Plan, the government set out its vision for a net zero transport system. In the plan, public transport and active travel will be the natural first choice for residents' daily activities. We will use our cars less and be able to rely on a convenient, cost-effective and coherent Shropshire public transport network. The bus can be the most efficient user of road space and a vital part of an environmentally friendly local sustainable transport system.

In order to meet this ambition, funding through the Department of Transport's Bus Back Better Strategy will be crucial and a statutory requirement to attract that funding is to have an Enhanced Partnership Scheme in place.

It will need to be recognised that high car ownership and use, coupled with dispersed population, make for challenging conditions for bus services in Shropshire. The bus is not viewed as an attractive option for those with a choice.

The Enhanced Partnership seeks to facilitate the delivery of the BSIP vision and objectives, as follows, and in so doing to enhance the potential positive social, community and economic benefits.

Objectives

Develop an understandable and integrated public transport network that is attractive to use.

- Provide a quality experience in respect of all aspects of using the bus.

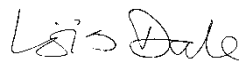
- Tackle the perceived and actual deficiencies of the bus compared to the car.
- Allow the bus to play a greater role in supporting wider policies and strategies relating to economy, environment, health and wellbeing.
- Increase the commercial viability of bus services.

Whilst the current draft Enhanced Partnership is not a reflection of the potential that could be achieved should we be successful with our funding bid, below are some of the main areas of our BSIP submission that we believe will have a positive impact.

- Recover funding from the DfT to continue tapered support for bus services as they recover, and passenger numbers remain depressed.
- 30 minute service frequencies on key inter urban routes
- Improved service frequencies in our towns
- Longer operating hours
- Monday to Sunday bus operations on key services
- More affordable fares
- Bus priority
- Real time passenger information
- Rural Connect (DRT)
- Green Buses
- Additional Services
- Shrewsbury Connect (operational costs)
- Multi operator ticketing
- Passenger information improvements (website, app & branding).
- Greater integration with the Rail Network.
- Passenger Hub Improvements

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i> Andy Evans		28/02/22
<i>Any internal service area support*</i>		

<i>Any external support**</i>		14 th March 2022
Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist		

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Accountable officer's name</i>		

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
<p>In March 2021 the government published 'Bus Back Better, a National Bus Strategy for England', which highlighted a general decline in bus patronage since the 1950s whilst traffic congestion and emissions have continued to increase. COVID-19 has caused a significant shift from public transport to the private car. To avoid the worst effects of a car led recovery the government wants the country to shift back quickly, by making radical improvements to local public transport as normal life returns. Government considers buses are the quickest, easiest and cheapest way to do that.</p> <p>Greater emphasis will now be placed on partnership working, where Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and bus operators form statutory partnerships to define bus networks, service levels, and fares strategies. The government expects all LTAs to develop Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and set up Enhanced Partnerships (EPs), as defined in the Bus Services Act 2017. The strategy represents the greatest change since 1985 and provides the opportunity to give LTAs more control.</p>

Through the strategy, LTAs and bus operators are asked to commit to forming a statutory Enhanced Partnership (EP) and to jointly develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Dependent on how ambitious the BSIP is, LTAs and bus operators could benefit from £3bn of total government funding.

Bus Partnership Schemes are partnerships between the Council and Local Bus Operators to improve the quality of public transport

The National Bus Strategy provided a welcome focus on improving bus services across the country. The requirement to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) gave a real opportunity for Shropshire Council to come together with its local bus operators to collectively consider the current bus service offer to residents and how it could be enhanced. The formation of a Bus Partnership that meets regularly has been a useful forum to highlight issues, discuss ideas and put forward potential solutions.

The Shropshire Bus Partnership has provided the focus for collaborative working and forms the basis of the Enhanced Partnership. This will in turn facilitate the successful implementation of the planned measures, once levels of funding secured from Government are known.

With a relatively modest injection of funds sought through the BSIP, significant improvements can be made to the bus network in Shropshire. More buses, running to more places at more times, with cheaper fares and quicker journey times, will improve the image of buses and increase their contribution towards the better economic, social and environmental well-being of Shropshire's residents.

Drawing on the BSIP, the document being taken to Cabinet fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan for Shropshire. Initially, this will facilitate the introduction of an EP Scheme aimed at supporting and developing bus services across Shropshire, to achieve the objectives set out in the BSIP.

In accordance with the statutory requirements for an EP Plan, the document includes:

- Overview and map of the geographical area covered
- Factors affecting the local bus market
- Summary of passengers' experiences in using bus services and the priorities of users and non-users for improvements
- Trends in bus use and service offer
- Objectives that are sought for bus service provision
- Interventions needed to achieve the desired outcomes
- Governance arrangements
- Competition test

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All those who live in, work in and visit Shropshire
Current and potential future bus and public travel operators
House of Commons Select Committee on Transport
National Government
Neighbouring local authorities
Shropshire Community Transport Consortium
Strategic partnerships including the County Councils Network (CCN), the Rural Services Network (RSN), and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

Evidence used for screening of the service change

- Shropshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan Prospectus, submitted to the Department for Transport.
- 'Bus Back Better, a National Bus Strategy for England' (March 2021)

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

On 30 June 2021 the Council committed to forming an Enhanced Partnership with the bus operators across the area. In line with government's tight timescale, on 31 October 2021, the Council published its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), developed jointly with the bus operators., community transport organisations, based upon the comprehensive customer engagement survey and the resulting ambitions of local people and visitors.

The survey undertaken during summer 2021 provided useful insights into residents' views of bus services. 2,555 responses were received from people across all parts of Shropshire

As required by the EP guidance, the following were formally consulted on this Plan:

- Transport Focus
- Traffic Commissioner
- Chief Officer of Police
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Neighbouring authorities
- Local MPs

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)				Low Positive
<u>Disability</u> (please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)				Low Positive
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low Positive
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low Positive
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low Positive
<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)				Low Positive
<u>Religion and belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Low Positive
<u>Sex</u>				Low Positive

(this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Low Positive
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)				Low Positive

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?				Low Positive
Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing? For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?				Low Positive

<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p>				Low Positive
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p>				Low Positive

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

In March 2021 the government published ‘Bus Back Better, a National Bus Strategy for England’. This followed a general decline in bus patronage since the 1950s whilst traffic congestion and emissions have continued to increase. COVID-19 has caused a significant shift from public transport to the private car. To avoid the worst effects of a car-led recovery – cities and towns grinding to a halt; pollution, road injuries, respiratory illness and carbon emissions all rising – the government wants the country to shift back quickly, by making radical improvements to local public transport as normal life.

ADD from the EP Plan

There are a number of challenges for the Shropshire bus network, as follows:

- Shropshire is the second largest inland county in England, with 330,000 people spread over 1250 square miles.
- As a significantly rural area, travel demands are sparse and diverse and many journeys quite long. This means that there is a high dependence on journeys by car.
- There is an ageing population; an increasing proportion of bus journeys are made by concessionary pass holders, with a corresponding decline in use by fare paying passengers.

- Bus provision is not commercially viable, meaning that many services rely on local authority support.
- Resources are spread thinly, so services are limited, offering poor levels of connectivity and limited access to facilities and services, and there is a lack of investment in infrastructure and buses.

The Enhanced Partnership seeks to facilitate the delivery of the BSIP vision and objectives, as follows.

Vision

Buses are excellent; they play a significant role in the life of Shropshire and its people, offering convenience and choice for all.

Overall goal

To revitalise bus travel in Shropshire, by improving its image and useability, and so increasing use and underpinning a positive cycle of growth and development of bus services.

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, an ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the Protected Characteristic groupings and our tenth category of Social Inclusion. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation eg young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive. Examples of this approach include the Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Economic Growth Strategy 2017-2021

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to thus visibly show we are taking what is called due regard of the needs of people in protected characteristic groupings

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Part Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people or households that we may describe as vulnerable.

Examples could be households on low incomes or people for whom there are safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, e.g., Age. Another specific vulnerable grouping is veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces, who face particular challenges with regard to access to Health, to Education, and to Housing.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.–You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for individual and for communities, and as such we are asking service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, much as they have been doing during 2020-2021, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities. A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a common-sense idea. It is a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and well being.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community?

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk more, and as there will be reductions in emission leading to better air quality.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and well being of the wider community.

An example of this could be: an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be: a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further information on the use of ESHIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

For further guidance on public health policy considerations: please contact Amanda Cheeseman Development Officer in Public Health, via telephone 01743 253164 or email amanda.cheeseman@shropshire.gov.uk

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Committee and Date

Cabinet, 23 March 2022

Item

Public

Crowmeole Lane Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Enforced Point Closure

Responsible Officer: Rose Dovey, Interim Active Travel Manager

e-mail: Rose.dovey@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252658

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from Cabinet to implement a permanent point closure on Crowmeole Lane following the expiry of the Experimental Traffic Regulations Order (ETRO) on 18 September 2022.
- 1.2. The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions) (England) Regulations 2022 ("New Regulations") come into force on the 31 May 2022. The New Regulations have been introduced to allow local authorities outside of London to have the necessary legislative enforcement powers (under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004) for moving traffic contraventions and to encourage behavioural shift towards sustainable travel choices by keeping pedestrian and cycle facilities clear of vehicles to promote cycling. It supports the commitment made by the Prime Minister in launching the Government's broader policy to further promote Active Travel choices.
- 1.3. A trial point closure was introduced on Crowmeole Lane, Shrewsbury on 18 March 2021 using funding granted from the Department for Transport's (DFT) Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF). In line with the EATF's objectives to deliver quick emergency interventions to make walking and cycling safer in urban areas, the aim of the trial point closure was to create a safe corridor for walking and cycling to/from residential areas to access employment (including the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (a major employer) as well as schools and key services in the area. This funding was received at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic prior to the Local and Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) being commissioned.

- 1.4. This report outlines the results of the public (statutory) consultation exercise and traffic surveys in the area. This data informs the recommendations to implement a permanent point closure using camera enforcement technology to deter vehicles from contravening the road closure and encourage more active travel use. Approval of this report provides the opportunity to learn and evaluate the effectiveness and public acceptability of using these civil enforcement powers and camera technology to encourage more active travel use, or potential use of this technology in other future public realm or transport schemes as appropriate.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The trial point closure scheme on Crowmeole Lane was introduced via an ETRO for a period of eighteen months (From 18 March 2021 – 18th September 2022). The scheme closes a section of Crowmeole Lane from its junction with Rad Valley Road to its junction with Sandiway, in both directions (See Figure 1) to all vehicular traffic except buses. The physical location of the point closure allows for residents in surrounding streets to access their properties from Crowmeole Lane but prevents through access for vehicles allowing for a lightly trafficked and therefore, safer route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Figure 1: Crowmeole Lane Point Closure Plan



- 2.2. Crowmeole Lane is characterised as being a long winding corridor with numerous pinch-points and blind-spots along its length and limited footway provision. It provides a key north-south connection between the Radbrook and Meole areas to the south (with key destinations including Radbrook Primary School, Meole Brace Primary School, the Priory Secondary School as well as the Radbrook Green shops, post offices and key services) and the Bowbrook and Copthorne areas to the north (with key destinations including the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (a major employer), Oxon Primary School and key services).
- 2.3. The trial point closure scheme is currently formed of signage only with no physical barriers to prevent access by through traffic. The lack of physical barriers have compromised the effectiveness of this scheme evidenced by the number of drivers who ignore the point closure and drive through it. *Moderate numbers of pedestrians and cyclists have been recorded as using this route and the results of a public consultation exercise indicate that there is a level of support in the community for trialling a follow-up scheme with enforcement measures in place to prevent drivers from contravening the road closure.*
- 2.4. A proposed permanent point closure would close off the same section of Crowmeole Lane, between its junction with Rad Valley Road to its junction with Sandiway Road (in both directions) as the current trial point closure. It would prevent through access by all vehicles except buses and would allow for a safer corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. The intention would be to enforce the point closure under the New Regulations using camera technology such as Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) or Closed-Circuit Television following the New Regulations coming into force and subject to obtaining an Order from the Secretary of State. Note that to obtain this Order, it is a requirement to undertake a six-week public consultation exercise to ensure there is a sufficient level of public support. This technology is not yet in operational use by the council. The New Regulations give Council the opportunity to commission, learn and evaluate the effectiveness and public acceptability of using these civil enforcement powers and camera technology to encourage more active travel use and apply these learnings to wider or future schemes across the County for various projects as required.
- 2.5. Funding is available through the Department for Transport administered Active Travel Fund (Tranche 2) and Capability Fund 2021/22 to apply for both the supply of hardware, software and back-office support for administration of the scheme (including reviewing contraventions and Parking Contravention Notice (PCN) progression) for the first two years. The estimated Year 1 cost of outsourcing these capabilities is between £18,980 - £20,980 (VAT exclusive) plus an administration fee for each Parking Contravention

Notice (PCN) issued. The estimated Year 2 (and ongoing) annual cost would be £5,980 (VAT exclusive) per annum for software maintenance and support, plus, an administration fee of £8.06 for each PCN issued. It is anticipated that the Year 2 and ongoing costs would be funded from the income produced from PCN's issued. Data from other local authorities indicates that income generated from similar schemes are likely to exceed the expected cost. See Appendix 3 for detailed costs and Appendix 4 for Bus Gate data.

- 2.6. Schedule 3 of the New Regulations set out the procedures for a uniform regime of differential penalty charges and certain discount and surcharge periods, which applies to parking, bus lanes and moving traffic enforcement regimes, including ignoring no entry signs on point closures. The Higher-Level Penalty Charge is £60 and the Lower-Level Penalty Charge is £40. The New Regulations allow for a 50 per cent discount if the PCN is paid early. It also recognises the need to promote compliance and help motorists understand the consequences of contravening moving traffic enforcement regimes. Accordingly, it recommends that for a period of six months following the implementation of the moving traffic enforcement regime or scheme, at each camera location, local authorities should issue warning notices for first time moving traffic contravention. The warning notice should advise that any further contravention will result in the issue of a PCN.
- 2.7. Prior to the introduction of the New Regulations, approved local authorities outside of London were permitted to enforce moving traffic contraventions through 'bus gates' under Road Bus Lane Contraventions (Approved Local Authorities) (England) Order 2005. A bus gate is a section of road where through access is prohibited by all vehicles except buses, pedestrians and cyclists, allowing for bus service reliability and a safer corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. This legislation will be superseded by the New Regulations.
- 2.8. An analysis of other UK local authorities' bus gate schemes shows that even with the promotion of compliance, there is still expected to be a relatively consistent (albeit low) number of vehicles contraventions recorded at the site of moving traffic enforcement regimes over time (see Appendix 4). Unfortunately, no data was available on the proportion of warning notices that were issued for first time moving traffic contraventions versus recidivist moving traffic contraventions. Additionally, it is not clear from the traffic surveys undertaken on site in July 2021 whether traffic contraventions recorded were first time or recidivist contraventions. The lack of data means that is difficult to estimate how many moving traffic contraventions will be recorded over time and what the estimated revenue will be if the proposed point closure is implemented. It is recommended that any revenue collected from the proposed point closure that is in excess of the ongoing running costs is ring-fenced to fund future active travel activities.

2.9. It is obvious from the analysis of other local authorities' bus gate data that the installation of moving traffic enforcement regimes result in a significant reduction in vehicular traffic through a defined corridor, creating a safer environment for active modes. The lack of baseline data on vehicle flows and pedestrian and cyclist numbers on Crowmeole Lane prior to the installation of the current point closure trial (see Section 7) means that it is difficult to predict with a high level of accuracy whether the current and proposed trials have increased active mode share on the corridor and whether vehicle contraventions will decrease as a result of installing camera enforcement technology. In all likelihood, with the promotion of compliance, including the placement of signage and road markings (in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and Section 18 of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, the number of vehicles contravening the proposed point closure will be lower than the number of contraventions recorded through the traffic surveys (see Section 7) and will be likely to decrease over time as drivers become more aware of the scheme.

3. Recommendations

3.1. That Shropshire Council approves:

1. The proposal to implement a permanent point closure on Crowmeole Lane following the expiry of the current ETRO on 18 September 2022
2. Seek to enforce moving traffic contraventions under the newly introduced Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provision) Regulations 2022 when in force and subject to the Secretary of State making an Order.
3. To procure the supply of camera enforcement technology hardware and software capabilities and back-office support for administration of the proposed point closure (including review of contraventions and Parking Contravention Notice (PCN) progression) to a third-party provider.
4. That any revenue collected from the proposed point closure in excess of the ongoing running costs is ring-fenced to fund future active travel activities.
5. The monitoring and evaluation of vehicle contraventions as well as pedestrians and cyclist on Crowmeole Lane to inform future learning and application to wider or future schemes, projects or initiatives across Shropshire.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. Risk Assessment

4.1.1. **Risk:** There is likely to be an increase in vehicular traffic on surrounding roads as a result of the point closure as evidenced by the traffic surveys undertaken during the Crowmeole Lane point closure trial which saw a 32% increase in daily traffic flows on Oakfield Road and a 10% increase in daily traffic flows on Red Deer Lane.

4.1.2. **Mitigation:** Traffic surveys will be undertaken every six months to monitor changes in traffic volumes on surrounding roads. Currently, traffic volumes on these roads remain moderate despite the increased flows observed during the Crowmeole Lane point closure trial. If monitoring shows a continual increase in traffic volumes on surrounding roads, funding is available through the DfT administered Capability Fund to implement targeted travel behaviour change activities in the community, including School Travel Planning and community cycle skills activities.

4.1.3. **Risk:** An increase in the traffic volumes on surrounding roads, including Oakfield Road and Red Deer Lane as the parallel alternative through routes may increase the chances of road traffic accidents occurring on those roads.

4.1.4. **Mitigation:** As part of Shropshire Council's statutory duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988, it is required, in conjunction with West Mercia Police, to identify and assess accident cluster sites as well as develop and prioritise appropriate measures to prevent road accidents from occurring. To date, neither Oakfield Rd nor Red Deer Lane have been identified as accident cluster sites with known highway risks. Although it is likely that the proposed Crowmeole Lane trial will result in increased traffic on these roads, the daily vehicle flows will remain moderate and it is unlikely that there will be an increase in the number of injury crashes in the area. However, traffic flows on surrounding roads will be monitored on a six-monthly basis and if continual increases in traffic flows are observed, travel behaviour change interventions (as outlined in section 4.1.2) will be implemented.

4.1.5. **Risk:** The point closure may increase the risk of injury crashes between active mode users and buses due to the point closure bus exemption.

4.1.6. **Mitigation:** Comparative research of other local authorities' point closures and bus gates show that conflict between the modes is rare. The service frequency of buses along Crowmeole Lane is currently low with one bus service in each direction hourly between the hours of 9.34am and 4.41am (Monday – Saturday) - which is outside of morning peak hours and outside of commuter peak hours (note: this is not outside the school afternoon peak hours). Additionally, bus driver education will be put in place if the proposed point closure is implemented, the aim of which will be to encourage bus drivers to travel at low speeds along this corridor (< 20mph) and be vigilant of pedestrians and cyclists at all times.

4.2. Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment

4.2.1. There is a low to medium positive impact anticipated across the Protected Characteristic grouping, particularly for the groupings of Age, Disability, and Pregnancy and Maternity, as well as the tenth grouping used in Shropshire, of Social Inclusion. This is outlined in the Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA), which has been carried out and is attached to this report (see Appendix 1).

4.2.2 This is because the point closure is anticipated to result in safety gains for pedestrians, cyclists and other active modes, including users of mobility scooters, wheelchair users, and people with pushchairs and prams. Furthermore, in Human Rights terms, the proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure is likely to be most relevant to Article 2 of the Human Rights Act – The Right to Life. The presence of an enforceable point closure will be likely to have a favourable impact on the likelihood of injury crashes occurring, particularly injury crashes involving pedestrians and motor vehicles and cyclists and motor vehicles.

4.2.3 It is envisaged that the potential impact for the Disability grouping will be low positive in that the point closure will prevent through access by private vehicle but will result in safety gains for those people in the Disability groupings who choose to walk, cycle or use other active modes (including mobility scooters). In terms of the point closure preventing through access by private vehicle, alternative parallel through routes (Oakfield Rd, Red Deer Rd/Squinter Pip Way) can be used by those who are reliant on this mode to access their daily needs. The physical location of the point closure (see Figure 1) still allows for residents in surrounding streets to access their properties by private vehicle from either the northern or southern Crowmeole Lane entry/exit. The point closure also allows buses to travel through, giving those within the Disability grouping the option to travel by bus through this corridor.

- 4.2.4. There are positive health and wellbeing impacts likely to accrue for pedestrians and cyclists, stemming from improved opportunities for safer walking and cycling. The improvements to perceived safety are likely to lead to positive mental health and wellbeing by encouraging certain groupings to walk and cycle. This is particularly important for those with caring responsibilities such as parents with babies and small children, those who have physical and/or learning disabilities and their carers, and those who are considered to be vulnerable, for example, elderly people who also have physical mobility challenges. There are also potential health and well-being impacts in terms of road safety for schoolchildren and their families and carers, as well as teaching and support staff, because the proposed point closure is in the vicinity of a number of schools.
- 4.2.5. Specific actions proposed to enhance the anticipated positive impacts will focus upon communication of the measures across a range of potential audiences and the monitoring of any associated impacts.
- 4.2.6 Ongoing communication, engagement and public consultation with residents and key stakeholders will be needed to take account of potential negative impacts of the proposed point closure in terms of equality, social inclusion and health considerations. This includes access for residents to their properties and key destinations in the area as well as the effects of traffic displacement on the parallel north-south routes (Oakfield Road and Red Deer Road/Squinter Pip Way). Mitigation efforts will draw upon the negative feedback obtained during the consultation period for the trial point closure and what actions are proposed to review and monitor any negative impact in terms of equality, social inclusion and health considerations

4.4. Impact on Communities and Others Consultation

- 4.4.1. The Local Member for the Radbrook ward area, where the proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure is located, has been consulted with as part of the current point closure trial as well as throughout the development of the proposed scheme. Additionally, if Council were to endorse the recommendation to implement a permanent point closure on Crowmeole Lane, it will be required, as part of an application for an Order to the Secretary of State to designate part of the network (Crowmeole Lane, between Sandiway (northern access) and Sandiway (southern access) as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions, to undertake a six-week statutory consultation exercise. Significant objections to the proposal may result in a decision to not progress with the scheme.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. It is anticipated that the costs associated with the recommendations in the report will be funded from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 (ATF2) and Active Travel (Capability Fund). There will be ongoing revenue costs of £5,959 per annum, it is anticipated that this will be funded from the revenue generated from PCNs issued. If for any reason the proposed point closure does not yield sufficient revenue to fund the ongoing annual costs, funding can be sourced from existing Transport budgets. The effectiveness of the scheme, including revenue generated and ongoing costs of the scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis. See Appendix 3 for detail of the estimated input metrics.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure will likely have numerous positive outcomes in terms of climate change through encouraging modal shift from vehicular modes to active modes of transport. Expected outcomes include:

6.1.1. **Reduced energy and fuel consumption:** Mode shift to active transport is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing transport emissions. In 2017, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG emissions) from road transport made up around a fifth of the UK's total GHG emissions¹. Modal shift to active modes, alongside the adoption of low and no emission cars and vans is key as the UK looks to move towards the government's target of adopting net zero emissions by 2050. In order to encourage modal shift to active modes, there needs to be a large-scale provision of safe active travel corridors that connect people to employment and education as well as key services and shopping facilities.

6.1.2. **Renewable energy generation:** this decision doesn't create any opportunities to generate renewable energy.

6.1.3. **Carbon offsetting:** this decision doesn't create any opportunities for carbon off-setting.

6.1.4. **Climate change adaption:** The prospective providers of the camera enforcement technology have confirmed that the equipment is designed to be resilient to the extremes of temperature and other adverse weather effects, including excessive rainfall.

7. Background

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS), [Road transport and air emissions - Office for National Statistics](#)

- 7.1. As part of its Covid-19 response, the Government announced in May 2020 a £250m Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to deliver quick emergency interventions to make cycling and walking safer. Council received a funding grant of £86,000 in June 2020 which was used to fund two schemes – A trial point closure on Crowmeole Lane, Shrewsbury and a trial one-way system and contraflow cycleway on New St (A488), Shrewsbury. Cabinet should note that EATF was made available prior to the development of the LCWIP which, upon its approval, will be the formal Plan moving forward for progressing all Active Travel schemes and funding opportunities.

- 7.2. The trial point closure on Crowmeole Lane was introduced via an ETRO on 18 March 2021 and is expected to run for a period of eighteen months – until 18 September 2022. Statutory consultation for this scheme took place between 18 March – 18 September 2021. 83 responses were received of which 37% (n=31) supported and 24% (n=20) objected to the scheme and 39% (n=32) did not specify whether they supported the scheme or not. Although the results from the Public Consultation exercise were inconclusive with the highest proportion of respondents not specifying whether they supported the scheme or not, a higher proportion of respondents (37%) supported the trial scheme than opposed it (24%). These results provide the level of confidence needed to recommend a permanent ETRO. However, there will be an additional opportunity for the public to express their support or opposition for the scheme as part of the six-week consultation exercise which will be undertaken as part of the application to the Secretary of State for an Order to designate part of the network (Crowmeole Lane, between Sandiway (northern access) and Sandiway (southern access) as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions.

- 7.3. A key concern for those respondents that opposed the scheme or did not specify whether they opposed or supported the scheme was the belief that it had resulted in traffic displacement onto surrounding roads, mainly Oakfield Rd which is an alternative north-south route located parallel to the east of Crowmeole Lane. Traffic surveys undertaken both before (March 2021) and after (June 2021) the implementation of the scheme show that traffic displacement has occurred as a result of the scheme (See Appendix 2), however, even with these increases, traffic flows along adjacent corridors remain moderate. Other concerns raised were that the point closure was being ignored by many motorists resulting in a redundant scheme, that there was inadequate consultation undertaken prior to the introduction of the scheme, the scheme caused a delay to emergency services and that there were no traffic issues prior to the introduction of the scheme that warranted its implementation.

- 7.4. Many respondents that supported the scheme also commented that the point closure was being ignored by motorists and many suggested that physical restrictions should be put in place stop this from happening. Respondents who supported the scheme also commented that the point closure made walking and cycling pleasanter and safer and that it has been a positive experience for local residents. Surveys undertaken in July 2021 show that there a moderate number of pedestrians and cyclists were recorded using the facility each day, both as a through route and as an access route for local residents. Unfortunately, no baseline surveys were undertaken prior to the implementation of the scheme which means that it cannot be ascertained whether the scheme resulted in an increase in cyclists and pedestrians nor along this corridor (see Appendix 2 for further detail).
- 7.5. The traffic surveys undertaken in July 2021 captured a daily average of 31 vehicles contravening the point closure. The data collected on traffic contraventions was recorded at a singular site which meaning that it cannot be ascertained whether this traffic was resident or non-resident traffic. Accordingly, as outlined in Section 2.7, it is not possible to use this data to base an assumption on the estimated number of recidivist contraventions over time. Appendix 2 contains further detail on vehicle contraventions recorded at the site of the point closure.
- 7.6 The traffic survey data indicates that the aim of the trial Crowmeole Lane point closure, which was to create a safer corridor for walking and cycling to/from residential areas to employment, education and key local services in the area, has been compromised by the number of vehicles contravening the point closure. This, combined with the physical characteristics of the road environment, including narrowness and lack of forward visibility on certain parts of the corridor, and moderate numbers of pedestrians and cyclists using the route, creates a hazardous environment.
- 7.7. Council's Active Travel Programme Board reviewed the results of the public consultation exercise and the traffic surveys at their quarterly meeting in December 2021. It was agreed at this meeting that scoping work would be undertaken to investigate the suitability of implementing a point closure that is enforceable using camera technology such as Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) or Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV). Section 8 provides additional information on the findings of this scoping work that has not already been covered in this report.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. As outlined in section 2.5, Highways staff, in discussion with key Investigative, Compliance and Interventions staff have concluded that there is currently insufficient in-house capacity to undertake

the role of monitoring and reviewing traffic contraventions as well as issuing PCNs. If the proposed permanent point closure was to be implemented upon the expiry of the current trial point closure, this would need to be outsourced to an external supplier with the necessary procurement and contractual approvals obtained as appropriate. This would provide an opportunity to test, evaluate and learn the technology for any potential future schemes.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. This report has outlined the limitations of the current trial point closure on Crowmeole Lane in terms of the number of vehicle contraventions recorded at the site which has most likely had an impact on the perceived safety of walking and cycling along the corridor. In support of the commitment made by the Prime Minister in launching the Government's broader policy to further promote Active Travel choices post COVID-19, this report recommends that a permanent point closure is implemented using camera enforcement technology to deter vehicles from contravening the point closure thereby encouraging more use by active modes.
- 9.2. Civil enforcement of the point closure by Council can be carried out under the New Regulations from 31 May 2022 onwards following the successful application for an Order made by the Secretary of State designating all or part of the network as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions. Due to the current lack of capacity for enforcement with Council, the administration of the point closure will need to be outsourced to an external supplier.
- 9.3. If Council endorses the recommendation to implement an ANPR enforced point closure on Crowmeole Lane by way of making the ETRO permanent, it will be a requirement to undertake a six-week long public consultation exercise, as part of the application to the Secretary of State for an Order to designate part of the network (Crowmeole Lane, between Sandiway (northern access) and Sandiway (southern access) as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions. If the results of the public consultation exercise showed support for introducing an Order as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions, the implementation of the permanent point closure would take place upon the expiry of the current ETRO on 18 September 2022.

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

None

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Ian Nellins

Local Member

Julia Evans (Radbroke Ward)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Appendix 2: Traffic Survey Data Analysis

Appendix 3: Input Metrics: Proposed Crowmeole Lane Bus Point Closure.

APPENDIX 1; EQUALITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESHIA)

Shropshire Council

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) Initial Screening Record 2021-2022

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change

Crowmeole Lane (Shrewsbury) Permanent Point Closure Proposal

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening

Rose Dovey, Interim Active Travel Manager

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	x	
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		x

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

The current trial arrangement affects all people in the given area, both residents and others who use Crowmeole Lane as a through route to access their destination by private vehicle. This may have an impact across a range of Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly those with physical or learning disabilities and their carers, and families with children, including those attending schools in the area.

It is envisaged that the potential impact in equality terms will be low to medium positive for the groupings of Age, Disability, and Pregnancy and Maternity, and for the tenth grouping used in Shropshire, of Social Inclusion. This because the point closure is anticipated to result in safety gains for pedestrians, cyclists and other active modes, including users of mobility scooters, wheelchair users, and people with pushchairs and prams.

It is envisaged that the potential impact for the Disability grouping will be low positive in that the point closure will prevent through access by private vehicle but will result in safety gains for those people in the Disability groupings who choose to walk, cycle or use other active modes (including mobility scooters) on this corridor. In terms of the point closure preventing through access by private vehicle, there

are alternative parallel through routes (Oakfield Rd, Red Deer Rd/Squinter Pip Way) that can be used by those people who rely on the private vehicle to access their daily needs. The physical location of the point closure (see Figure 1) still allows for residents in surrounding streets to access their properties by private vehicle from either the northern or southern Crowmeole Lane entry/exit. The point closure also allows buses to travel through giving those people within the Disability Grouping the option to travel by bus through this corridor.

The permanent point closure is expected to present the following positive impacts:

- Potential for lower traffic on north/south routes for pedestrians and cyclists and other active modes resulting in increased safety for active modes. The full length of Crowmeole Lane will not be completely traffic-free as residents will still require access to their properties. However, traffic is expected to reduce substantially along the length of the corridor resulting in improvements to pedestrian and cyclist safety. The traffic free section of the corridor (aside from buses) is located between the Crowmeole Lane/Rad Valley Road junction and the Crowmeole Lane/ Sandiway (northern access) where there is no footway provision on the eastern side of the road and where there is only partial footway provision (45m) on the western side of the road. This is one of the key pinch-points along the corridor where the potential for vehicular and cyclist or pedestrian conflict is highest.
- Support for active travel choices, specifically in relation to accessing workplaces, education, retail and key services on foot and by cycle.
- Increased reliability for bus services

The permanent point closure is anticipated to present the following neutral or negative impacts:

- There is no physical improvement to pedestrian footway widths or dedicated cycle facilities. Pedestrians will have intermittent access to dedicated footways along the length of the corridor as follows with pedestrians and cyclists and buses (one per hour in each direction, Mondays – Saturdays, between 9.34am – 16.41pm) sharing the carriageway along the length of road where no footway is available (see below)
 - The footway which begins at the Crowmeole Lane/Mytton Oak Rd junction continues on both sides of the road for approximately 160m before it terminates at the Crowmeole Lane/ Churchill Rd (northern access) junction on the eastern side of Crowmeole Lane. The footway then resumes for a length of 45m on the eastern side of the road between the Crowmeole Lane Bridge and the Sandiway (northern access).
 - The footway on the western side of Crowmeole Lane terminates at the Crowmeole Lane/Churchill Rd (southern access) junction. Note that this junction is closed to vehicular traffic through the placement of concrete bollards.
 - The footways on both sides of Crowmeole Lane resume at the location of the Crowmeole Lane/Sandiway (southern access) junction and continue up to the Crowmeole Lane/Radbrook Rd junction.
- Increases in traffic flows on parallel north-south through routes, mainly Oakfield Road (located to the east of Crowmeole Road) and Red Deer

Road/Squinter Pip Way (located to the west of Crowmeole Road). An increase in traffic may have a detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties on these streets in terms of noise and visual intrusion. The increase in vehicular traffic on these routes was monitored as part of the Crowmeole Lane trial point closure. Surveys showed that there has been a 32 per cent increase in vehicular flows on Oakfield Road and a 10 per cent increase in vehicular flows on Red Deer Road since the trial commenced. Traffic flows along these roads still remain moderate.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

Specific actions proposed to enhance the anticipated positive impacts will focus upon communication of the measures across a range of potential audiences and the monitoring of any associated impacts.

Ongoing communication, engagement and public consultation with residents and key stakeholders will need to take account of potential negative impacts of the proposed point closure in terms of equality, social inclusion and health considerations. This includes access for residents to their properties and key destinations in the area as well as the effects of traffic displacement on the parallel north-south routes (Oakfield Road and Red Deer Road/Squinter Pip Way).

Mitigation efforts will draw upon the negative feedback obtained during the consultation period for the trial point closure and what actions are proposed to review and monitor any negative impact in terms of equality, social inclusion and health considerations. This is set out in detail in the section on specific consultation and engagement with audiences and target groups.

Members of the community have raised concerns that the West Midlands Ambulance Service Maintenance Depot, which is located in the Longden Road Industrial Depot (located to the south of Crowmeole Lane) is currently being used by ambulances responding to emergency calls and to access the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. This is outside the realms of the planning permissions granted to it in 2012 which authorises use for the hub for maintenance purposes only. If the proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure is endorsed by Cabinet, Council will ensure that targeted engagement with emergency services will take place prior to the implementation of the schemes and that impacts of equality and social inclusion considerations are part of these discussions.

The Council will also continue to keep abreast of comparator approaches by other local authorities, building upon the knowledge gained from analysis of approaches in Leicester City Council in particular.

Associated ESHIAs

Generic ESIIA covering 15 Covid-19 response temporary highway schemes across the county.
ESHIIAs in relation to measures implemented for Shrewsbury under temporary Traffic regulation Order April 2021

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change considerations

Climate change

As per the relevant section in the committee report, the proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure will likely have numerous positive outcomes in terms of climate change through encouraging modal shift from vehicular modes to active modes of transport. Expected outcomes include:

Reduced energy and fuel consumption: Mode shift to active transport is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing transport emissions. In 2017, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG emissions) from road transport made up around a fifth of the UK's total GHG emissions^[1]. Modal shift to active modes, alongside the adoption of low and no emission cars and vans is key as the UK looks to move towards the government's target of adopting net zero emissions by 2050. In order to encourage modal shift to active modes, there needs to be a large-scale provision of safe active travel corridors that connect people to employment and education as well as key services and shopping facilities.

Renewable energy generation: this decision doesn't create any opportunities to generate renewable energy.

Carbon offsetting: this decision doesn't create any opportunities for carbon off-setting.

Climate change adaption: The prospective providers of the camera enforcement technology have confirmed that the equipment is designed to be resilient to the extremes of temperature and other adverse weather effects, including excessive rainfall.

Health and well being

The positive health and wellbeing impacts that are likely to accrue for pedestrians and cyclists stem from improved opportunities for safer walking and cycling. The improvements to perceived safety are likely to lead to positive mental health and wellbeing by encouraging certain groupings to walk and cycle.

This is particularly important for those with caring responsibilities such as parents with babies and small children, those who have physical and/or learning disabilities and their carers, and those who are considered to be vulnerable, eg people who may be old and also have physical mobility challenges.

There are also potential health and well-being impacts in terms of road safety for schoolchildren and their families and carers, as well as teaching and support staff, because the proposed point closure is in the vicinity of a number of schools.

Economic and societal/wider community

The point closure will provide a walking and cycling facility which will enhance the liveability of the wider community in the sense that there will be a quietly trafficked corridor in which both individuals and families can walk and cycle both for leisure and for transport purposes. The facility will also provide enhanced access to local

shops and facilities by foot or cycle thereby encouraging the local community to visit local shops and services rather than drive to shops further afield. This, in turn, provides an economic benefit for local shops and services.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>		
<i>Any internal service area support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist		28 th February 2022

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Accountable officer's name</i>		

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

A trial point closure was introduced on Crowmeole Lane, Shrewsbury on 18 March 2021 using funding granted from the Department for Transport's (DFT) Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF). It was introduced as an eighteen-month trial under an ETRO which expires on 18th September 2022.

In line with the EATF's objectives to deliver quick emergency interventions to make walking and cycling safer in urban areas, the aim of the Crowmeole Lane trial point closure was to create a safe corridor for walking and cycling to/from residential areas to access employment (including the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (a major employer) as well as schools and key services in the area. This funding was

received at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and in advanced of the draft Local and Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) being commissioned.

The scheme closes a section of Crowmeole Lane from its junction with Rad Valley Road to its junction with Sandiway (northern access), in both directions to all vehicular traffic except buses. The physical location of the point closure allows for residents in surrounding streets to access their properties from Crowmeole Lane but prevents through access for vehicles allowing for less traffic on the route and thus making it a safer route for pedestrians and cyclists.

The proposed service change is seeking to:

1. Implement a permanent point closure on Crowmeole Lane (in the same location as the current trial point closure) under the newly introduced Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provision) Regulations 2022 following the expiry of the current ETRO on 18 September 2022.
2. Outsource both the supply of camera enforcement technology hardware and software capabilities and back-office support for administration of the proposed point closure (including review of contraventions and Parking Contravention Notice (PCN) progression) to a third-party provider.
3. Monitor and evaluate vehicle contraventions as well as pedestrians and cyclist on Crowmeole Lane to inform future learning and application to wider or future schemes.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The current trial arrangement affects all people in the given area, both residents and others who use Crowmeole Lane as a through route to access their destination by private vehicle.

This includes children and their families and carers accessing the schools in the area, as well as teaching and support staff, and also the emergency services, specifically the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Target groups also include the elected Shropshire Council councillor for the ward, along with Shrewsbury Town Council Councillors and the MP for the town.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Appendix 2 to the report to Cabinet details full traffic survey data analysis

Traffic surveys undertaken both before (March 2021) and after (June 2021) the implementation of the scheme showed that traffic displacement onto surrounding roads has occurred as a result of the scheme. The surveys showed that the average daily vehicle flows increased from 1,308 to 1,930 on Oakfield Rd and 2,116 to 2,357 on Red Deer Lane. This represents a 32% increase in traffic on

Oakfield Rd and a 10% increase in traffic on Red Deer Lane after the implementation of the scheme. However, even with the increase in traffic on both roads, daily flows along both roads remain moderate.

Further traffic surveys (cordon counts) were undertaken in July 2021 on Crowmeole Lane to obtain the number and type of pedestrians (including children) and cyclists using the facility. Unfortunately, baseline surveys were not undertaken prior to the installation of the point closure so it cannot be ascertained whether there was any change in pedestrians and cyclists nor traffic volumes on this corridor as a result of the scheme. However, the July surveys show a moderate number of pedestrians and cyclists using the facility each day

The Council has also drawn upon an analysis of published bus gate data (contraventions) from other local authorities, shown in the committee report at Appendix 3, in order to provide an understanding of trends in number of traffic contraventions recorded over time as a result of implementing moving traffic contravention regimes.

Leicester City Council (LCC) has the most comprehensive published dataset out of all the local authorities. LCC currently have fifteen bus-gates in operation which they monitor and collect revenue from for recorded contraventions. The first bus gate was installed in April 2013 with the most recent bus gate installed in March 2020. Figure 9 shows an analysis of nine months of data (contraventions) across five different bus-gate sites in Leicester measured from the initial installation of each bus gate. These five sites were chosen because they offered the most complete continuous datasets out of all the fifteen sites. It should be noted that data recorded for sites 7 and 8 are low for Month 1 because the cameras were installed later in the month (meaning a full month's data was not collected). However, aside from the initial peak in the number of contraventions recorded at Sites 6, 7 and 8 the analysis shows little change in the number of vehicle contraventions each month.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The trial point closure on Crowmeole Lane was introduced via an ETRO on 18 March 2021 and is expected to run for a period of eighteen months – until 18 September 2022. Statutory consultation for this scheme took place between 18 March – 18 September 2021. 83 responses were received of which 37% (n=31) supported and 24% (n=20) objected to the scheme and 39% (n=32) did not specify whether they supported the scheme or not. Although the results from the Public Consultation exercise were inconclusive with the highest proportion of respondents not specifying whether they supported the scheme or not, a higher proportion of respondents (37%) supported the trial scheme than opposed it (24%).

Table 1 contains the negative feedback obtained during the consultation period for the trial point closure and what actions are proposed to review and monitor any negative impact in terms of equality, social inclusion and health considerations.

Impact of proposed point closure (based on feedback from trial point closure consultation)	Actions proposed to review and monitor any negative impact
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<p>The trial point closure has resulted in traffic displacement onto surrounding roads</p>	<p>The impact of the trial point closure in terms of traffic displacement onto surrounding roads was monitored and it was concluded that although traffic flows had increase on parallel north-south routes, traffic levels remain moderate and do not adversely affect equality and social inclusion considerations. Monitoring of traffic levels on parallel north-south routes will continue if the proposed point closure scheme is implemented with negative effects in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations mitigated (as outlined above).</p>
<p>The point closure was being ignored by many motorists resulting in a redundant scheme</p>	<p>The purpose of implementing the proposed point closure, which will be monitored using camera enforcement technology and enforced under the newly introduced Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provision) Regulations 2022, will be to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety along this key corridor. This approach will increase the efficacy of the scheme which will in turn have a positive impact on equality and social inclusion considerations.</p>
<p>Inadequate consultation was undertaken prior to the introduction of the trial scheme</p>	<p>Limited consultation was undertaken prior to the implementation of the trial point closure because Council was instructed by Government to expedite measures that promoted walking and cycling over public transport use during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As outlined above, Council will undertake public consultation, communication and engagement with residents, businesses and key stakeholders to ensure all views are heard and all impacts in equality and social inclusion considerations are thought through.</p>
<p>The trial point closure has caused a delay to emergency services</p>	<p>Council did not receive any feedback from emergency services through the formal consultation process for the trial point closure. Similarly, no such feedback from emergency services has been received by Council to date.</p>

	<p>Members of the community have raised concerns that the West Midlands Ambulance Service Maintenance Depot, which is located in the Longden Road Industrial Depot (located to the south of Crowmeole Lane) is currently being used by ambulances responding to emergency calls and to access the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. This is outside the realms of the planning permissions granted to it in 2012 which authorises use for the hub for maintenance purposes only. If the proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure is endorsed by Cabinet, Council will ensure that targeted engagement with emergency services will take place prior to the implementation of the schemes and that impacts of equality and social inclusion considerations are part of these discussions.</p>
<p>There were no traffic issues prior to the introduction of the scheme that warranted its implementation.</p>	<p>Residents have expressed concerns about the unsafe environment for pedestrians and cyclists on Crowmeole lane for a number of years. Crowmeole Lane is characterised as being a long winding corridor with numerous pinch-points and blind-spots along its length and limited footway provision. It provides a key north-south connection between the Radbrook and Meole areas to the south (with key destinations including Radbrook Primary School, Meole Brace Primary School, the Priory Secondary School as well as the Radbrook Green shops, post offices and key services) and the Bowbrook and Copthorne areas to the north (with key destinations including the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (a major employer), Oxon Primary School and key services). These factors led Council to select Crowmeole Lane as being an ideal location to trial a point closure to create a safe corridor for walking and cycling in line with the EATF's objectives to deliver quick emergency interventions to make walking and cycling safer in urban areas. This trial received more support</p>

	than opposition during public consultation, therefore it is proposed to introduce a permanent point closure at this location.
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Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)			X	
<u>Disability</u> (please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)			X	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			X	
<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)				Neutral

Religion and belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Neutral
Sex (this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)			X	

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?			X medium positive: improvements to perceived safety and to road safety	
Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing? For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food,			X medium positive: improved opportunities for safer walking and cycling	

reduce drinking and smoking? .				
Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health? For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation? .			X medium positive: improved opportunities for safer walking and cycling	
Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services? For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services? .				X neutral

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

In terms of **climate change**, a range of mitigation measures could contribute towards improving the health and well-being of Shropshire’s residents by facilitating more walking and cycling, in response to the improving perceived safety, and by facilitating the increased use of more sustainable and active modes of transport that can help people to become fitter and healthier.

In terms of **Human Rights**, the proposed Crowmeole Lane point closure is likely to be most relevant to Article 2 of the Human Rights Act– The Right to Life. The presence of an enforceable point closure will be likely to have a favourable impact on the likelihood of injury crashes occurring, particularly injury crashes involving pedestrians and motor vehicles and cyclists and motor vehicles (see section 4.1.4).

Guidance Notes

10. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include

safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, an ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the Protected Characteristic groupings and our tenth category of Social Inclusion. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation eg young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive. Examples of this approach include the Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Economic Growth Strategy 2017-2021

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to thus visibly show we are taking what is called due regard of the needs of people in protected characteristic groupings

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Part Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should

serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

11. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people or households that we may describe as vulnerable.

Examples could be households on low incomes or people for whom there are safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, e.g., Age. Another specific vulnerable grouping is veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces, who face particular challenges with regard to access to Health, to Education, and to Housing.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.–You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for individual and for communities, and as such we are asking service area leads to

consider health and wellbeing impacts, much as they have been doing during 2020-2021, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities. A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a common-sense idea. It is a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and well being.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community?

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk more, and as there will be reductions in emission leading to better air quality.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and well being of the wider community.

An example of this could be: an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be: a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further information on the use of ESHIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

For further guidance on public health policy considerations: please contact Amanda Cheeseman Development Officer in Public Health, via telephone 01743 253164 or email amanda.cheeseman@shropshire.gov.uk

^[1] Office for National Statistics (ONS), Road transport and air emissions - Office for National Statistics

APPENDIX 2 – TRAFFIC SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

- 1.1. Traffic surveys undertaken both before (March 2021) and after (June 2021) the implementation of the scheme showed that traffic displacement onto surrounding roads has occurred as a result of the scheme. The surveys showed that the average daily vehicle flows increased from 1,308 to 1,930 on Oakfield Rd and 2,116 to 2,357 on Red Deer Lane. This represents a 32% increase in traffic on Oakfield Rd and a 10% increase in traffic on Red Deer Lane after the implementation of the scheme. However, even with the increase in traffic on both roads, daily flows along both roads remain moderate.
- 1.2. Further traffic surveys (cordon counts) were undertaken in July 2021 on Crowmeole Lane to obtain the number and type of pedestrians (including children) and cyclists using the facility. Unfortunately, baseline surveys were not undertaken prior to the installation of the point closure so it cannot be ascertained whether there was any change in pedestrians and cyclists nor traffic volumes on this corridor as a result of the scheme. However, the July surveys show a moderate number of pedestrians and cyclists using the facility each day. Site 1 was located where the traffic signage has been placed (see Figure 2) which is close to where the road crosses the River Bowbrook. There are no footways over the bridge and pedestrians have to walk in the narrow carriageway. Site 2 (See Figure 3) was located close to the junction with Radbrook Road, there are footways to access each side of the road, one at the roadside on the western side, the other setback on the eastern side. The weather was dry throughout the week that the surveys were undertaken.

Figure 2: Site 1



Figure 3: Site 2

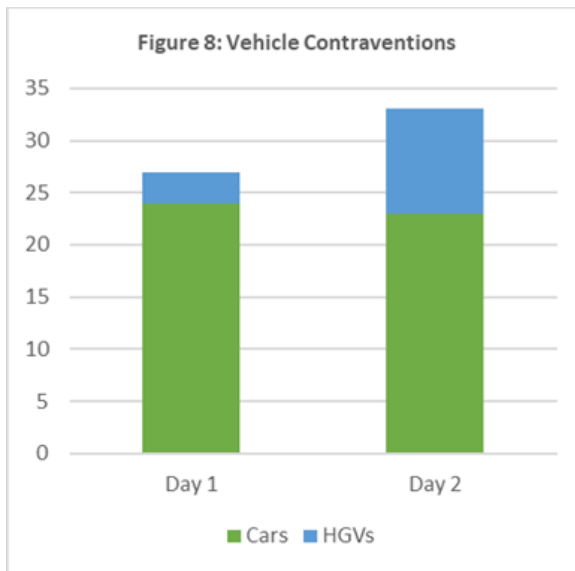


- 1.3. Pedestrians and cyclists recorded as travelling through both sites were deemed to be non-resident active travel users whereas those pedestrians and cyclists travelling through just one of the sites were assumed to reside in one of the surrounding streets accessed from either the Sandiway southern or northern accesses (there are no property accesses from Crowmeole Lane itself).
- 1.4. Figures 4 -7 show the weekday and Saturday daily average number of pedestrians and cyclists (resident vs non-resident) using the facility. Analysis of the northbound dataset shows that just under two-thirds of pedestrians and the majority of cyclists are using the facility as a through route on the weekdays. On Saturdays, the proportion of pedestrians using the facility is much lower indicating that residents may be utilising it more to access

employment located to the north of Crowmeole Lane (for example, The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital – a major employer). Analysis of the southbound dataset shows that the majority of pedestrians and cyclists are using the facility as a through route indicating it is being well-used to access the schools and employment located in the Radbrook and Meole Brace areas. On Saturdays, the proportion of residents using the facility is higher than the weekdays suggesting it may be used by residents more to access shops and local services rather than for access to employment or education.



- 1.5. The traffic surveys undertaken in July 2021 also captured the number of motor vehicles contravening the point closure across two separate weekdays. The data collected on traffic contraventions was recorded at Site 1 only meaning that it cannot be ascertained whether this was resident or non-resident traffic. Analysis of that data showed that 28 vehicles and 33 vehicles contravened the point closure on Day 1 and 2 respectively giving a daily average of 31 vehicles contravening the point closure. As illustrated in Figure 8 nearly one-third of those vehicles contravening the point closure on Day 2 were Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) suggesting that these vehicles are using this route for local delivery vehicles purposes or for access to and from the Longden Road Industrial Depot located to the south of Crowmeole Lane



APPENDIX 3

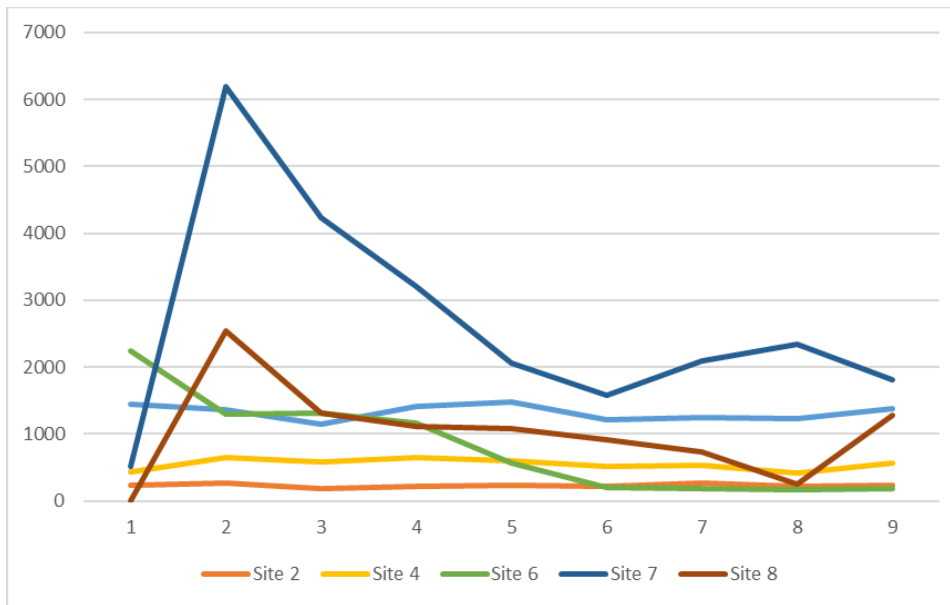
Table 1: Input Metrics: Proposed Crowmeole Lane Point Closure

Stage	Input Metrics		
	Resources	Cost	Funding source
Year 1	Point Closure Set-up – Installation of ANPR camera equipment and associated back-office support	£13,980 Capital (exc VAT)	Active Travel Fund Tranche 2
	Integration of ANPR capabilities within Chipside (Council’s current provider of parking enforcement software that enables Council to issue warning notices, requests for payment of a parking fee or further information)	£5,000-£7,000 Revenue (exc VAT)	Capability Fund
	Year 1 Cost = £18,980 - £20,980 (ex VAT)		
Year 2	Ongoing software maintenance and support	£5,950 Revenue (exc VAT)	Capability Fund
	Year 2 Cost = £5,950 (ex VAT)		

APPENDIX 4: ANALYSIS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES' BUS GATE DATA (CONTRAVENTIONS)

- 1.1. As outlined in section 2.7 of this Cabinet Report, an analysis of published bus gate data (contraventions) from other local authorities has been undertaken to provide an understanding of trends in number of traffic contraventions recorded over time as a result of implementing moving traffic contravention regimes.
- 1.2. Leicester City Council (LCC) has the most comprehensive published dataset out of all the local authorities. LCC currently have fifteen bus-gates in operation which they monitor and collect revenue from for recorded contraventions. The first bus gate was installed in April 2013 with the most recent bus gate installed in March 2020. Figure 9 shows an analysis of nine months of data (contraventions) across five different bus-gate sites in Leicester measured from the initial installation of each bus gate. These five sites were chosen because they offered the most complete continuous datasets out of all the fifteen sites. It should be noted that data recorded for sites 7 and 8 are low for Month 1 because the cameras were installed later in the month (meaning a full month's data was not collected). However, aside from the initial peak in the number of contraventions recorded at Sites 6, 7 and 8 the analysis shows little change in the number of vehicle contraventions each month.

Figure 9: Bus Gate Contraventions across 5 sites in Leicester



8.1.5. The analysis of the LCC bus-gate data and associated reports indicated that those sites that experienced a peak in the number of contraventions in the weeks following the installation of the bus gate (sites 6,7 and 8) had inadequate signage or road markings indicating the presence of the bus-gate. Reports which provided an analysis of complaints received in regard to the bus gates indicated that there had been inadequate communications on the installation of the bus gate meaning that some people may have been unaware they were contravening a bus gate. These factors may have contributed to the higher numbers of vehicles inadvertently crossing into the bus gate and receiving PCNs.

8.1.6. The analysis of the LCC bus gate data indicates that of the PCN's issued, approximately 40 per cent were paid before the due date, resulting in a 50 per cent discount. Accordingly, approximately 60 per cent of PCNs were paid after the due date meaning the recipient was liable to pay the full amount due. Applying this trend, Table 2 provides an indication of how much revenue would be received if 100 PCNS were issued per week.

Table 2: Input Metrics: Proposed Crowmeole Lane Point Closure Trial

NUMBER OF PCNS ISSUED (PER WEEK)	PENALTY FEE	REVENUE GENERATED (PER WEEK)	REVENUE – PROCESSING FEES (£8.06 PER PCN)
40	£20 (HALF PRICE)	£800.00	£477.60
60	£40 (FULL PRICE)	£2,400.00	£1,914.40
TOTAL		£3,200.00	£2,394.00

