

- 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