

## **Introduction – What is this consultation about?**

Shropshire Council is working with partners to re-design existing face to face customer focused services, to create places where residents can easily access services and get information and advice that both helps them and enables them to help others within their community. This is to help us to create and maintain 'Resilient Communities' at a time of reducing public service budgets and increasing pressure on services due to the changing demographics of the county.

Important elements of Resilient Communities are the creation and development of Community Hubs and the provision of advice, information and signposting at an early and preventative stage that supports the health and well-being of both individuals and communities.

In Shropshire's market towns our vision is that traditional face to face services will be delivered through community enterprises that are already active within those communities. A community enterprise is the same as a social enterprise, i.e. an organisation trading for social purpose with any profits reinvested rather than going to shareholders. A community enterprise is based in, and provides benefits to, a particular local neighbourhood or community and is an organisation run for the community. These enterprises are best placed to utilise their links into communities and therefore maximise every contact that is made with them.

This work is also linked to savings, and therefore we are working to ensure that through redesign we find ways to continue to deliver high quality services, at a lower cost, but with a better overall outcome for the individuals and communities.

Over the last year, Shropshire Council, key local partners including Enterprise South West Shropshire (ESWS) and South Shropshire Housing Association (SSHA) have been discussing and developing opportunities regarding new ways of delivering and improving the services currently housed in Enterprise House, Bishop's Castle. This includes the library service.

Shropshire Council is now seeking responses to proposals relating to the future delivery of the library service in Bishops Castle. These proposals are detailed in this consultation document. We want to stress that as no formal decision has yet been made, there is also an opportunity for alternative proposals to be made. The information we receive through the consultation will be used to inform any decision making on the future delivery of the library service and the management of the library building within Enterprise House.

The potential impact of the proposals on library users, particularly those who might be impacted more by any change is being assessed through the completion of an Equality & Social Inclusion Impact Assessment.

This period of consultation will run from Monday 20th July to Monday 31st August 2015. Completed forms can be returned to the library at Enterprise House  
Comments can also be submitted online by going to [shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved](http://shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved) and searching for Bishops Castle Library Consultation.

A set of answers to Frequently Asked Questions is also available and copies will be available alongside this consultation document.

## **Background to existing services in Bishop's Castle**

### **Enterprise House**

Enterprise House is located in Station Street in Bishop's Castle, and is run by Enterprise South West Shropshire, a Social Enterprise that supports and nurtures a variety of business and community development schemes in the town and surrounding area.

Enterprise House itself provides a range of services including an IT Centre and training room; business support unit; meeting rooms; equipment hire for local businesses and community groups, and a booking service for the SpArC theatre. There are also business units and offices at the site which are let to local businesses and organisations including Bishop's Castle Dial-a-Ride, whose services are run from the site.

The building also hosts a number of Shropshire Council led services including Bishop's Castle Library, a Customer First Point and Registry Office through which customers can access a number of Council led services.

### **Bishop's Castle Library**

The Library offers the following services –

- Free membership for all
- Opening times – Mon 10 to 2; Tuesday 10 to 1, 2 to 7; Friday 10 to 1, 2 to 7; Saturday 9.30 to 1.
- The lending of adult books, audio books and DVDs
- A children's library area and range of books for children from age 0 upwards
- A collection of books for teenagers
- A selection of books in large print
- Regular exchange of books with other libraries
- Request service - obtaining books from other libraries requested by customers
- Free access to public computers for library members
- Trained staff to issue and return books, answer enquiries, help people to choose books and use computers
- Online services on the Library website for use 24/7
- Regular events such as story-times, rhyme-times, class visits from local schools, adult and teenage reading groups, author talks and social events in partnership with the Library Friends' group.

### **Shropshire Council's preferred proposal**

Shropshire Council's preferred proposal for the future delivery of the library service in Bishops Castle is to transfer the responsibility for its day to day management to Enterprise South West Shropshire. This would result in the service continuing to be delivered in its current location in Enterprise House with the same opening hours. The

library service would continue to provide 'back office' support and the library would be run under an agreed Service Level Agreement between Shropshire Council and Enterprise South West Shropshire.

The proposal includes opening up the space between the library and the IT facility and introducing facilities for self-service in the library.

The library service and Enterprise South West would be jointly committed to providing all the existing library functions with opportunities to develop services. The result for Bishops Castle of these changes would be a robust library service with a secure future.

Some changes to Customer Services and Registrar Services offered at Enterprise House are also proposed. Information about the proposed changes to the Customer Services is available at the Customer Service Point at Enterprise House. There has been a county-wide consultation on the future delivery of Registrar Services.

Whilst this is the council's preferred option, it does not have a closed mind to other proposals or suggestions that are made through this consultation period.

### **What the consultation is for - What proposals are being made?**

Two proposals are included in this consultation document, together with the opportunity for you to put forward your own ideas on how the library could be delivered in the future.

The results of the consultation will be collated, analysed and considered by Shropshire Council and used to inform any decision making on the future delivery of the library service in Bishops Castle. If you would like to be kept updated on this work please include your contact details at the bottom of this form.

This period of consultation will run from **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July** to **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015**.

Consultation forms and copies of the answers to Frequently Asked Questions are available at the library in Enterprise House and responses can left there.

The potential impact of the proposals on library users, particularly those who might be impacted more by any change is being assessed through the completion of an Equality & Social Inclusion Impact Assessment.

The consultation information can be found on-line at the Shropshire Council website and responses can be submitted online. Go to **[shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved](http://shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved)** and search for Bishops Castle Library Consultation

When considering these proposals it will be helpful to bear in mind the Shropshire Council vision for community hubs and the role of libraries in the future, and also what the Council's statutory duties to deliver libraries are. These are listed below.

### **Clarification of the council's statutory duties to deliver library services**

Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 ("the PLMA")

Under the provisions of the PLMA, the Council, as a library authority, has a statutory duty (not a discretionary power) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons wishing to make use of it.

The PLMA does not define what is meant by “comprehensive and efficient”. However it does provide that the library authority must make facilities for borrowing books and other materials available to people who live, or work, or are undergoing full-time education in Shropshire. It also provides that in fulfilling the duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service, it shall in particular have regard to the desirability of:

- Providing facilities for the borrowing of, and reference to, books and other printed matter, pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirement both of adults and children; and
- encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service, providing advice as to its use, and making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required; and
- securing co-operation between the library authority and others exercising public functions within the county.

The options proposed within this document will meet this statutory duty. Other alternative proposals made as part of the consultation would also have to meet this statutory duty.

#### **Details of the current library service and building for comparison purposes**

	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>DETAIL</b>
<b>Management organisation</b>		Shropshire Council
<b>Area of floor space</b>		150 sq m
<b>Opening hours</b>		Monday 10 to 2 Tuesday 10 to 1, 2 to 7 Wednesday Closed Thursday Closed Friday 10 to 1, 2 to 7 Saturday 9.30 to 1
<b>Parking</b>		Public parking on site.
<b>Access to IT</b>		Public computers available free to library members.
<b>Information and advice about other services</b>		Provided by Library and Enterprise House staff
<b>Space for community activities</b>		The Library is used for meetings of Friends of the Library group, Friends' social events, author events, children's story-times and activities and class visits from local schools.

<b>Volunteers to support the service</b>		Volunteers from the Friends' group organise events and fundraising activities. Library volunteers help with shelving of books.
<b>Wi-fi</b>		Available in the building.
<b>Impact on the use of the building</b>		None
<b>Direct running costs for Shropshire Council</b>		£36,360