

This document provides answers to questions about the services available at Enterprise House, and how these will be affected by the proposals put forward in Option one in the consultation document.

Frequently asked questions:

- **Will the library remain at Enterprise House?**

Yes the intention is for the library to remain in its existing location at Enterprise House.

Under the provisions of the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964 the council has a statutory duty (not discretionary powers) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons wishing to make use of it.

The act does not define what is meant by “comprehensive and efficient”. However it does provide that the library authority must make facilities 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 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

- **Will the opening hours of the library change?**

The opening times of the library and Enterprise South West Shropshire’s other services are different, but it is planned to at least maintain the existing opening times of the library, and possibly extend them too.

- **How will the library be staffed? Will the existing library staff stay?**

The library will still be staffed, but the staff will no longer work for Shropshire Council. Existing staff will have the chance to transfer to work for Enterprise South West Shropshire.

- **What happens if the staff are ill, on leave, or have to attend training courses?**

ESWS would have to find cover for staff from within the organisation, as the staff will be employed by that organisation. They would still have to provide a service to customers as outlined in the Service Level Agreement between them and Shropshire Council.

Shropshire Council will continue to provide essential library related training the library staff need.

- **Will we still be able to request books from other libraries and from libraries outside Shropshire?**

Yes, these services will continue as they are now.

- **What support will the Library Service still provide?**

Shropshire Council's Library Service will support the library in three ways: a regular supply and exchange of books, the provision of public computers and the support of a librarian based in Ludlow.

- **The Friends of the Library pay for a lot of the children's events in the library. Would the Friends be expected to provide all its own craft materials in the future?**

No. For the Summer Reading Challenge events, materials will still be provided by Shropshire Council. The Friends may continue to put on their own events and provide funding for craft materials, authors and entertainers as they do now.

- **Will the mobile library service still run from Enterprise House?**

The mobile library service is run centrally from Shrewsbury and is separate to the library at Enterprise House. It will continue to run on its existing arrangements and the mobile library van will still be based at Enterprise House.

- **What assurances are there if Enterprise South West Shropshire can't continue to run the library?**

We will have a three year service level agreement with ESWS, which will provide them with security over that period. The intention is to extend the agreement every three years. ESWS and Shropshire Council are keen to work together to establish a viable and sustainable model for running the library in Bishop's Castle.

However, if ESWS can't run the service for any reason the library would revert back to Shropshire Council who would explore the option of running the library with another local partner. Shropshire Council also own the lease on the Enterprise House building so that gives extra security around the library remaining in that building.

- **I've heard there will be a self-service machine installed in the library. Does this mean there will be no staff?**

No, staff will be very important to the library. The advantage of a self-service machine is that staff can spend more time with customers and the library can open for longer hours.

We know that the social interaction at the library between staff and customers is important. Through Enterprise House Shropshire Council will also be looking to deliver a wide range of services to the community and the library being in the building will be important to this process.

- **Will the layout of the library change?**

Shropshire Council has funding available from central government to make alterations to Enterprise House to make it more user friendly. No changes have yet been finalised, but could involve a better entrance to Enterprise House; better links between the ESWS business centre and the library area, and alterations to make the building more energy efficient. We are also keen to hear from the Friends of Bishop's Castle library about any alterations to the library that they would like to see undertaken as part of this process.

However we anticipate the library will look and feel very similar to its current set up, with no significant layout changes.

- **Are other libraries in Shropshire changing too?**

Yes this is part of a wider process across the county. Shropshire Libraries must save £1.3 million over the next 3 year period, and we're reviewing how services are delivered at all Shropshire's libraries. Consultations are taking place at a local level through "community conversations"

Nationally the way libraries are run is also changing, with the community taking a bigger role in the running of libraries, so this process isn't unique to Shropshire.

- **When will these changes happen?**

The changes are planned to start in October 2015, but will be subject to a public consultation before the changes take place.

- **How will the consultation take place?**

The six week consultation will take place, giving people a chance to have their say on proposed changes. This will be online or through paper copies available in Bishop's Castle.

The consultation will run from 20th July to 31st August

The community can put forward alternative proposals, but these need to make equal or better cost savings for the Council to consider them.

When the consultation has ended the responses will be considered and a recommendation will be made about the future of the library.

Customer Service Point

Bishop's Castle's Customer Service Point is located in Enterprise House, in a separate office to the library and Enterprise House Business support centre. It is open three days a week for members of the public to drop in and speak to a member of the Customer Service team.

The Customer Services Department helps people to access their Shropshire Council services, with things like applications for Blue Badges and Bus Passes, planning, Council Tax and Housing Benefit enquiries being the most popular reasons for calling in to see us.

We understand the importance of a face to face service to many of our customers who may not be able to use alternative means of doing business such as over the telephone or online or who need help to use these alternatives.

As with other departments, we need to make budgetary savings across our operation which spans the whole of the Shropshire area but we want to do so in a way that does not diminish the level of service that people can access in their locality.

We are looking at new and attractive ways of providing help in order for us to meet our budgetary targets, otherwise we would face having to reduce our services in Bishop's Castle to just one day a week.

Our proposal

We want to make sure that people are still able to get the direct help they need, when they need it and we therefore propose working in partnership with other providers of help and advice in the town in general, and specifically Enterprise House. By doing this, people will be able to access a much wider range of help and services than we currently offer.

Our proposal is that the staff at Enterprise House deliver the Customer Services function on our behalf. Staff will be able to help customers with paperwork, offer general information and help customers to access Council services directly via a customer freephone linked to the Customer Service Centre and via a public computer for online services.

In this way, those customers willing and able to use self-service facilities will have them provided free of charge whilst those who need help to use our services will still have that help on hand.

The staff at Enterprise House have often helped customers on the days when Council staff are not on site and by engaging them to run this for us will help to increase the opening hours and improve the service.

Frequently asked questions:

- **Will I still be able to get my blue badge and bus pass at Enterprise House?**

Yes, staff at Enterprise House will be able to help you or you could complete the application online via the computers available at the centre.

- **What happens if I need help to fill out a form?**

The staff at Enterprise house will be able to offer help with this.

- **I can't use a computer, how will I get help with what I need?**

When you see someone at a Customer Service Point they usually do what is needed via their computer so don't worry if you can't use one yourself because the same help will be available.

- **If I use the phone at the new points of contact who does it get me through to?**

The phones are linked directly to Shropshire Council's Customer Service Centre who will be able to deal with most things for you.

- **What sort of services can I get over the phone?**

We can provide almost all of the same services over the phone including making payments.

- **Will the Customer Service Centre opening hours change?**

Because the staff at Enterprise House will be able to help you the service will actually be available for longer than it is currently.

- **Will the staff at Enterprise House know enough to be able to help me?**

Customer Services staff will train the staff at Enterprise House and make sure that they are kept up to date when things change. Also, support will be available via helplines should they need help.

- **When might this happen?**

We would aim to have the new service up and running before the end of this financial year.

- **How can I have my say?**

You can complete one of our customer survey forms which are at Enterprise House, you can complete the online survey form

General frequently asked questions:

- **What happens to the staff currently running these services for the council as a result of these changes?**

Under option one the Staff who run the library would transfer from Shropshire Council to Enterprise South West Shropshire.

- **What will happen to other services available at Enterprise House?**

We anticipate the existing services at Enterprise House such as the Dial-a-Ride, Business Support, IT Centre and Village Outreach will continue to run as they do now, with no change to these services. Businesses whose offices or workshops are located at Enterprise House will not be affected.

- **Where will I access the registrars service?**

The registrars service will be dealt with separately as part of a countywide consultation exercise, but the plan is for the service to remain available in Bishop's Castle on a pre-booked basis.

- **Are any other changes planned at Enterprise House?**

The proposals put forward will see some small changes to the layout of Enterprise House. External funding has been secured by Shropshire Council through the Transformation Challenge Award to make these changes.

We hope these changes will allow more services to be delivered at the venue by Shropshire Council and our Partner organisations..

- **Is parking available at Enterprise House?**

Yes, there is space for approximately 15 cars at Enterprise House. Additionally there is a large public car park approximately 300 metres from the building, and on street parking is also available close by.

- **Is Enterprise House accessible to people with disabilities?**

Yes, the building is accessible for wheelchair users. Some services are located on the upper floor of the building which is accessible via a lift. Staff delivering services at the building will also receive training to help them assist customers with disabilities access the range of services available at the building

- **Will there be continuous service whilst these changes take place?**

Yes, we would do our best to ensure that there is no disruption to our customers during any alterations to the building or transfer of services to new locations in the building.

Next Steps:

We are seeking public comments on these proposals from **20th July until 31st August.**

You can submit your comments on the prepared forms available at Enterprise House, the library

Comments can also be submitted online by going to **shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved** and searching for **Bishops Castle Library Consultation**

If you would like to be kept updated on how Shropshire Council uses the results of the consultation please leave your name and contact details on the consultation form.