



Portfolio Holder Decision Making Session

Portfolio Holder for Business, ip&e, Culture and
Commissioning (North)

Thursday 29th October 2015 at 11am

REDESIGN OF CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY SERVICE

Responsible Officer: Michael Lewis/Vicky Turner
Email: michael.lewis@shropshire.gov.uk
vicky.turner@shropshire.gov.uk

1. Summary

This report seeks Portfolio Holder agreement for the transfer of the management of Cleobury Mortimer library service from Shropshire Council to Cleobury Country Ltd - a social enterprise that supports and nurtures a variety of business and community development schemes in the town and surrounding area.

Shropshire Council will transfer the day to day running of Cleobury Mortimer Library to Cleobury Country Ltd who will run the service under a 3 year contract.,

The library will remain in its existing location in the Cleobury Country Centre with the number of staffed hours increasing. Cleobury Country Centre staff will be trained to Library Assistant level and will run the same range of library services currently available to users of the library.

Some alterations to the library space within Cleobury Country Centre will be made. A customer service pod and small office will be created but this will not reduce the amount of book shelving space. Awareness of the library and the services delivered there will be improved through additional signage.

This report provides details of the background to this proposal along with the outcome of a six week formal public consultation carried out between 26th August and 7th October 2015, the feedback from an open evening and the completion of an Equality and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)

2. Recommendations

- That the management of Cleobury Mortimer library service is transferred from Shropshire Council to Cleobury Country Ltd from an agreed start date. This agreement will run for 3 years and be supported by a contract between Shropshire Council and Cleobury Country Ltd
- To delegate authority to the Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business, ip&e, Culture and Commissioning (North) to take any further decisions relating to the delivery of the recommendation

Reason(s) for decision:

The agreement of the above recommendations will result in –

- The opportunity to maintain a modern, sustainable and accessible library service in Cleobury Mortimer, that reflects the council's vision for a transformed library service as described in its successful Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) bid
- The opportunity to utilise TCA funding in 2015/16 and contribute to the successful delivery of the wider Community Hub programme in Shropshire

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

3.1 Timetable of consultation and engagement work

Activity	Date
Proposals on future management of library presented to Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Library Group	24 th August 2015
6 week formal public consultation	26 th August to 7 th October 2015
Email to existing library users sent out to explain the survey, share the web link and options for completing the survey.	18 th September 2015
Cleobury Library open evening as part of the consultation	7 th October 2015

3.2 Formal consultation process and results

A formal public consultation has been carried out in Cleobury Mortimer, and with existing library users, to gain feedback on proposals for the future of the library service.

The consultation ran for 6 weeks from 26th August to 7th October 2015, and was available online via Shropshire Council's website. Paper copies of the consultation document were made available in the library and press releases were issued to promote the survey, along with publicity through social media. Details of the consultation were also emailed to registered users of Cleobury Mortimer library and shared with members of the Friends group.

In the document members of the public were provided with details of the current Cleobury Mortimer library service, including the operating costs of the library. The details of 2 proposals were provided along with the opportunity for members of the public to suggest alternative operating models for the library, as long as they made the same, or similar savings to the described proposals.

Proposal 1 was Shropshire Council's preferred option and was for Cleobury Country Ltd to take on the management of the library service resulting in an increase in staffed hours, a retention of the current services, some changes to the design of the library space to provide a customer service contact area and a new office space and additional external signage. A copy of the consultation document is attached as Appendix 1.

Proposal 2 was Shropshire Council continuing to run the library with reduced staffed hours and no changes to the library space.

A total of 42 people responded to the consultation, although not all answered all the questions. The results of the consultation are as follows and a full list of responses and comments is included as Appendix 2.

Proposal 1 – Transferring the management of the library to Cleobury Country Ltd was supported by 30 people (71.43%). 12 people (28.57%) opposed the proposal.

Proposal 2 – Shropshire Council continuing to run the library with reduced staffing hours was supported by 11 people (26.83%). 30 (73.17%) were against this proposal

Those opposed to Proposal 1 stated a reduced quality of service due to the proposed changes to the staffing arrangements of the library as the reason for their opposition.

The key reason why people did not support Proposal 2 was that the reduced number of hours the library would be staffed would make it more difficult for people to access services

As part of the consultation members of the public were able to put forward alternative proposals for the library.

18 people responded to this section of the consultation. In total 12 alternative proposals were suggested, which can be grouped together in the following categories –

- Provision/retention of trained/qualified library staff
- Alternative redesign of the county library service
- Charging for services

These alternative suggestions have been considered and are not thought appropriate to take forward for the following reasons.

Provision/retention of trained/qualified library staff

Our intention is for Cleobury Mortimer Library to provide a robust and successful library service continuing to offer the full range of services if Proposal 1 is adopted. Cleobury Mortimer Library has never been run by a qualified librarian on site but by library staff who have been fully trained. Often new library staff come to us with no previous library experience or qualifications; they are trained on the job and gain their knowledge and expertise through experience and ongoing training and support from librarians and library managers. Our intention is to provide that same level of training to the Cleobury Country Centre staff to enable them to provide the same services that are currently provided; it is certainly not our intention to train them purely in administrative tasks. It means that the community would benefit from having access to the full range of library services for 42 hours a week instead of the present 23.5.

There would still be a Shropshire Council librarian based in Ludlow making regular visits and on hand to give advice and guidance. The library would remain a part of the Shropshire Libraries network and be involved in countywide and national library initiatives; it would still benefit from the help and advice of librarians with countywide responsibilities for the service and the strategic overview.

Alternative redesign of the county library service

Shropshire Council is moving towards becoming a commissioning council and using a number of approaches to achieve this. It has been confirmed that locality commissioning is the approach being used to achieve the redesign of the smaller branch libraries to ensure that they remain a sustainable service within communities. Reviews of the larger libraries and the mobile library service will also be undertaken. 'Redesigning Shropshire's library service and customer service points' – report to Shropshire Council Cabinet 14th October 2015 is referenced in this decision report as one of the Background Papers.

Charging for library services

Shropshire Council delivers its library service under the Public Library and Museums Act 1964, which states that library authorities must provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it and lend books and other printed material *free of charge* for those who live, work or study in the area. Therefore, the council is not able to charge for its core activity of lending books.

The formal consultation exercise has shown clear support for Proposal 1 - the transfer of the library management service to Cleobury Country Ltd. The alternative operating model in Proposal 2 received less public support and the alternative proposals are not considered to be viable, or to provide the same level of savings to Shropshire Council as Proposal 1.

3.3 Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigation plans in place
Decision making on recommendations not made in a timely fashion, which impacts on the ability to complete the transfer in 2015 and consequently the delivery of the TCA bid programme	Advice from the council's Legal & Democratic Services has been sought to ensure the decision making process is correct and in line with the council's constitution. Attention has been paid to the creation of a Decision Report, Background Papers and Appendices that contain the relevant data and information needed by the Portfolio Holder to make his decision.
The consultation process undertaken is not deemed robust and is formally challenged	A 6 week formal consultation and additional focussed engagement work has been undertaken. The formal consultation period has enabled alternative proposals to be put forward. The feedback from this activity has been recorded, analysed and used to inform both the recommendations in the report. The Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Library, and members of the Cleobury Country Ltd. Board have also been involved in the consultation from an early stage
The completed ESIIA does not robustly demonstrate how it will take mitigating measures to address the possible high negative impact identified.	An ESIIA has been completed using the information gathered during the period of formal consultation. It has not identified any high negative impacts associated with this recommendation.
The delivery of the public library service is compromised by being delivered alongside other services available within Cleobury Country Centre	Discussions between the council's library management and the staff at Cleobury Country Centre are in place and will continue to ensure that each is aware of the needs and expectations of the other. A Service Level Agreement will be put in place between the council and Cleobury Country Ltd. to formalise the service delivery details of the public library and this will be monitored by the council's library management.
The full funding package required to complete the transfer and redesign works cannot be delivered	Initial outline costs for works to Cleobury Country Ltd. to facilitate the transfer of the library and its day to day operation have been sought and are achievable in both time and budget. A tendering process will be undertaken once authority for the transfer has been gained.

4. Financial Implications

The value of the contract between Shropshire Council's Library Service and Cleobury Country Ltd between the financial years 2016/17 and 2018/19 will be £22,000 per annum, which will achieve an annual saving of £7,450 on Cleobury Mortimer's Library's 2015/16 net controllable budget. In addition to this, Customer Involvement will provide Cleobury Country Ltd. with £1,500 per annum in order to provide a customer services offer.

5. Background

5.1 Shropshire Council's budget is reducing and the way in which it delivers services is changing. We are in the 2nd year of a 3 year financial plan through which £80m will be saved. Shropshire's current and future population demographics means that vital services such as looking after elderly people and vulnerable children have to be prioritised. Changes to all local and strategic services are unavoidable. The Shropshire Council Cabinet approved budget reduction for the library service of £1.147m means that the budget available for Cleobury Mortimer library will not be sufficient to deliver the service in the current way. This applies to all of our libraries across the county and the back office function of the service, not just Cleobury Mortimer. We are seeking local solutions to these challenges that will result in a sustainable, if altered library service that meet our statutory duties.

The council is working with partners to re-design existing face-to-face customer-focused services, including its branch libraries to provide places where residents can access services and get the information and advice that both helps them and enables them to help others within their community. This joint-working and co-creation approach is being taken across the county, and services are being redesigned to be delivered by others in flexible ways that best suit their locality and meet the individual needs of people ensuring that those who have specific needs can access services appropriately.

We want to align the future of our libraries with our commitment to locality commissioning, community asset/service transfers and to building resilient communities. If libraries stay directly under council management, then it is likely that our imperative to reduce their operational costs will result in a radical reduction in opening hours or the closure of some. We will have lost the opportunity to impact on a wider set of outcomes and it will become more challenging for us to deliver the services locally that make a difference to people's lives.

The redesigned library service will result in a range of different delivery activities including face to face provision, digital and virtual provision and an outreach programme targeted at specific groups. Alongside this change the network of library buildings will be reconfigured.

The library network will include -

- 6 strategic library hubs in major towns to improve accessibility and cater for the larger populations in the larger market towns.
- 10 local hubs/libraries offering core community services in partnership with town and parish councils, local organisations or voluntary and community groups, with a core aim of increasing opening hours.

Cleobury Mortimer library is in the latter group and since early 2014 Shropshire Council alongside key local partners in the town has been discussing and developing opportunities for new ways of delivering the services currently housed at Cleobury Country Ltd., in Cleobury Mortimer. Proposals for Cleobury Country Ltd. to deliver the Customer Service Point (CSP) have also been agreed.

5.2 Shropshire Council's preferred option for Cleobury Mortimer's library service is that the management is transferred from Shropshire Council to Cleobury Country Ltd. This agreement will run for 3 years and be supported by a contract between Shropshire Council and Cleobury Country Ltd.

5.3 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 provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it and lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

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 recommendations within this report will enable this statutory duty to be met. The recommendations do not propose the closure of the public library or a reduction in the service, they propose a model of delivery that is sustainable at a time of tremendous change in public services.

5.4 The library service in Cleobury Mortimer will reflect the vision for a transformed library service as described in Shropshire Council's TCA bid. The library is located in a natural hub of activity that also contains the Cleobury Country Centre, the school and the sports centre. There is real opportunity for the users of this hub of services – who may not be current library members - to benefit from the transferred library service proactively providing the information, advice and guidance and prevention services for mental and physical well-being for all. A Health Zone with the range of Books on Prescription and reminiscence resources will be a key part of the library service and valued activities such as Rhyme Time will continue.

5.5 Another element of the wider vision, reflected in the TCA bid, is the development of Community Connectors. Community Connectors will transcend services, organisations and sectors, but will be specific to a locality. They will be helpful, knowledgeable, friendly and interested people based in communities who know about everything that goes on in places – community and voluntary-wise and have the attitude and aptitude to match people's interests and needs with these. As part of a community's team of first line of support they will also have a knowledge and understanding of the service delivery in their locality and will have a relationship with the people delivering these services that mutually adds benefit to their work. They will be part of an early help team that could also include, amongst others, those delivering information, advice and guidance services, library staff, customer service staff, Community Enablement Officers, town/parish council officers, Community & Care Co-ordinators and volunteers. In Cleobury Mortimer the Community Connector role could work with activities across the town to link up people with services – specifically focussing on building connections between the library and other places of activity.

5.6 With the support of the Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) and Association of Local Councils (ALC), the council has received Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) funding to redesign a number of libraries and Customer Service Points in 2015/16. Investing in this redesign must result in ongoing revenue savings for the council. The proposal to transfer Cleobury Mortimer library to Cleobury Country Ltd. will result in annual revenue savings of £7,450 per annum.

5.7 The development of the recommendations being made in this report has been informed by engagement and consultation with Cleobury Mortimer residents. This includes a 6 week formal consultation and focussed engagement with Protected Characteristic groups that were identified through the completion of an Equality & Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA).

5.8 Shropshire Council is committed to take mitigating actions to address any concerns that have been raised by consultees in response to the proposal to transfer the library to Cleobury Country Ltd, and these are detailed in this report and in an ESIIA detailed in Appendix 1.

6. Additional Information

Attached within the Background Papers and Appendices

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, given the extent of the engagement and consultation and the responses to these, and having considered all the information, including

- i. the responses received from the formal consultation
- ii. engagement with the Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Library and the management of Cleobury Country Ltd
- iii. completion of a ESIIA assessment
- iv. the level of savings and social value to be achieved through the transfer of the library to Cleobury Country Ltd
- v. the opportunity to create a redesigned library service that plays a key role in providing information, advice and guidance to residents of Cleobury Mortimer and the surrounding area, whilst also complementing the wider work of Cleobury Country Ltd -

transferring the management of the library from Shropshire Council to Cleobury Country Ltd will enable the council to achieve its ambition of keeping its branch libraries open, redesigning the service to provide an important social, economic and community facility in Cleobury Mortimer and assist in meeting its financial challenges.

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

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Shropshire Council's Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014-20172. Shropshire Council's Commissioning Strategy 20143. Shropshire Council's Transformation Challenge Award bid 2015/164. Redesigning Shropshire's library service and customer service points – report to Shropshire Council Cabinet 14th October 20155. Frequently Asked Questions to accompany the consultation document August 2015 |
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<p>Key Decision: Yes</p>

<p>Included within Forward Plan: Yes / No</p>
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<p>If a Key Decision and not included in the Forward Plan have the General Exception or Special Urgency Procedures been complied with: Yes / No</p>

<p>Name and Portfolio of Executive Member responsible for this area of responsibility:</p>

<p>Cllr Steve Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Business, ip&e, Culture and Commissioning (North)</p>
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<p>Local Members:</p>

<p>Cllr Gwilym Butler Cllr Madge Shineton</p>

<p>Appendices:</p>

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cleobury Mortimer Library Public consultation document August 20152. Cleobury Mortimer Library consultation results and comments October 20153. Feedback from Cleobury Mortimer Library open evening 7th October 20154. ESIIA Assessment for Cleobury Mortimer Library October 2015 |
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Declaration of Interest

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed Date

NAME:

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR:

- I have to declare an interest in respect of this report

Signed Date

NAME:

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR:

(Note: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out in the report, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

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Signed

Portfolio Holder for

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and pro-forma is returned to Democratic Services for processing.

Additional comment :

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Note: If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chief Executive and the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance (S151 Officer) and, if there are staffing implications the Head of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Portfolio Holder: Your decision will now be published and communicated to all Members of Council. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication.