

Broseley Library, Customer Service Point and Car Park consultation

Frequently Asked Questions

Background:

What is meant by developing library and customer service point services in a way that best meets the needs of the local community?

Shropshire Council is continuing to develop as a commissioning Council and to setting out its future commissioning intentions. Alongside this the Council is considering which parts of its business might be best delivered locally and will seek to reflect this within its future commissioning intentions.

Specifically the Council wants to work with partners to re-design existing face to face customer focused services including its libraries and customer service points in order to provide places that residents can easily access services and get information and advice that both helps them and enables them to help others within their community.

Our vision is that traditional face to face services will be delivered outside Shropshire Council by community focused enterprises who recognise and support the important role that organisations and individuals who are active in their communities have.

This approach, often referred to as localism, is also a key part of the government's effort to decentralise power and to support communities to be more empowered and to have a bigger say on the issues that matter to them.

What is your vision for library services redesign in more detail?

We want to:

- Support the development of modern sustainable libraries achieved by the active involvement of community partners in the day to day operation of the library. Ongoing "back office" support provided by Shropshire Council.
- Explore opportunities to co-locate libraries with other services and partners within "community hubs" and to create synergies where appropriate.
- Provide flexible space to allow for community events, meetings etc. as well as library Rhyme Times, Time to Listen, author events, local history sessions etc.
- Provide public access computer facilities and free Wi-Fi provision.

What is your vision for customer service point redesign in more detail?

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.

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 localities, specifically the Town Council and the Library Service. By doing this, people will be able to access a much wider range of help and services than we currently offer.

In addition to direct face to face help, we will install a telephone and a computer both of which will be free to use so that our customers have an extended range of ways to contact us and conduct business with Shropshire Council.

Library:

Will the library remain in its current location?

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

What are the Council's Statutory Duties to delivery Library Services?

Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 ("the PLMA") states that 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
- 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
- securing co-operation between the library authority and others exercising public functions within the county.

Within the preferred proposal to transfer the day to day management of the library to Broseley Town Council Shropshire Council will retain the overall statutory responsibility for library provision.

Will the opening hours of the library change?

Within the preferred option it is planned to at least maintain the existing opening times of the library.

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

Broseley library will still be staffed, but within the preferred option the local library staff will no longer work for Shropshire Council. Existing local staff will have the chance to transfer to work for Broseley Town Council. Support to the local staff and to the local library operation will continue to be provided by Shropshire Council employed staff working at the nearby larger libraries.

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 provide?

Both Council's wish is create a long term sustainable approaches to the on-going provision of local library and customer service point services.

The nature of future roles and responsibilities, support, risk, etc. will be defined within a service level agreement between Shropshire Council and Broseley Town Council. Within this Shropshire Council will continue to provide a range of "back office" support functions, principally in access to the library management system, book stock, training, professional support, the support of a librarian based in Bridgnorth, etc.

What assurances are there if Broseley Town Council can't continue to run the library?

Shropshire Council will have a three year service level agreement with BTC, which will define the support and funding provided and how risk is managed by both parties. The intention is to extend the agreement every three years.

BTC and Shropshire Council are keen to work together to establish a viable and sustainable model for running the library. However, if BTC 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.

BTC would not be financially penalised if, for whatever reason, the Town Council was obliged to withdraw from the Service Level Agreement before the end of the agreement.

Are any changes planned to the library building or internal layout?

Within the preferred option Shropshire Council has funding available from central government to make alterations to Broseley Library to accommodate the Town Council moving their offices into the Library.

We anticipate that the library will look and feel very similar to its current set up.

The proposals put forward will see some changes to the layout of the library. External funding has been secured by Shropshire Council to help make these changes. In the longer term both Councils are keen to explore ways of getting other local community services to join together to use the building to dealing with the public.

Is the library accessible to people with disabilities?

Yes, the building is accessible for wheelchair users. Staff delivering services at the building will receive training to help them assist customers with disabilities to access the range of services available at the building

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.

Would the Town Council become the owner of the library building and car park under Option 1?

The library (and car park) were published on the Community Asset Transfer list. This is a list of assets that the Council would consider disposing of either via a long term lease or through a freehold transfer to a community organisation. In this particular case a long term lease with Broseley Town Council is being proposed.

Customer Service Point:

Will I still be able to get my blue badge and bus pass?

Yes, staff will be able to help you make your application between set times or you can self-serve using the new public computer.

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

Library staff will be on hand to help and advise if you cannot complete a form.

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, a new public computer will be available and staff will be on hand to help if needed.

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?

The service will be available for at least the same opening hours as the library which is an increase from current opening times.

Will the staff at the library know enough to be able to help me?

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

General question:

Will a continuous service be possible if alterations to the building were made?

We would do our best to ensure that there is minimum 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 **Wednesday 16th September until Wednesday 28th October 2015.**

Comments can also be submitted online by going to **shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved** and searching for **Broseley Library, Customer Service Point and Car Park Consultation** You can also submit your comments on the survey forms available at the library.

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

A report on the results of the consultation will also be made available on the Shropshire Council web site, in the library and in the Town Council offices.