

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 15 SEPTEMBER 2016

LIBRARY SERVICE RECONFIGURATION

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CUSTOMER AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER- COUNCILLOR LIZ CLARE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 In January 2016 as part of the budget strategy and savings exercise proposals were put forward to close six of our nine libraries, (Newport, Madeley, Stirchley, Hadley, Dawley, and Donnington) plus the mobile library and reduce the book fund, to help contribute towards the £30m savings target set for delivery before 2017. A public consultation exercise was undertaken in January of this year which explained that although there was no desire to see libraries close, the financial pressures that the Council finds itself facing as a result of the Government's funding cuts left us with little option but to review the scale of the current library service offer.
- 1.2 As a result of that public consultation our Town and Parish council partners namely Great Dawley Town Council, Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council, Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council and Donnington & Muxton Parish Council along with HLC learning community expressed concerns that their local library would be closing and indicated that they would be interested in running a community lead library. At the same time cabinet members decided that that as a result of the first public feedback in January, the council intended to continue to run and operate Newport Library and Madeley Library however with reduced opening hours. These libraries, along with our libraries at Southwater and Wellington also provide a First Point services and that level of service is difficult to replicate under a Community lead library model. As a result the savings targets for the library service was reduced to reflect the decision to continue to keep Newport and Madeley open as council run libraries with First Point provision.
- 1.3 During the Spring, discussions have been held with the Town and Parish Councils referred to in 1.2 above along with HLC learning community regarding their proposals to open community lead libraries. Following those proposals, and to seek feedback from residents on a revised set of library opening hours, a second and more detailed consultation on the future of the library service was undertaken during

June and July of this year. The outcome of that consultation has been key in shaping the proposals that are now being recommended in this report.

- 1.4 Taking into account the feedback from both sets of consultations this report recommends that the council no longer operates and runs libraries in Dawley, Donnington, Hadley and Stirchley but embraces the proposals from the respective Town and Parish Councils listed in 1.2 along with HLC learning community to open new community lead libraries in their area. In doing so the council will provide financial support through a 'partnership funding deal' outlined in more detail within the Summary Impact paragraphs of this report, which will see library provision sustained in these areas as a result of the commitment from the Town and Parish Councils for at least the next 6 years.
- 1.5 The Council will provide arms length support to the new community lead libraries by allowing access to the use of the councils ICT library loan system, help to decided on refreshing book stock, the provision of some new books each year and support for training volunteers who are expected to help staff the new community lead libraries alongside town and parish council employees. Although these libraries will be run by Town and Parish Councils they will remain part of the statutory library service allowing residents to return and borrow books from either a community lead library or a council run library providing a seamless service to our residents despite these changes. It should also be noted that a number of town and parishes are proposing to open their community libraries for longer than the current council run Neighbourhood Libraries in their area providing an enhanced level of access.
- 1.6 The Council will continue to operate and run Southwater, Madeley, Newport and Wellington Libraries however it is proposed that the opening hours, staffing and number of activities in these libraries are reduced from Autumn 2016 as outlined in paragraphs 4.3.10 to 4.3.17 of this report.
- 1.7 It is proposed that from October 2016 Oakengates Library will continue to be run by the Council as it is part of Oakengates theatre however it will be open fewer hours during the week. Oakengates Town Council have however agreed to fund the opening of the library on Saturday mornings when the theatre is not due to open and these days will be operated by Library staff.
- 1.8 Unfortunately no organisation has come forward to help continue the mobile library service therefore this will cease to operate from 31st March, 2017. The Council has an excellent on line library service with a growing number of e.books available to download and as a result of the public consultation exercises a number of residents have come forward to volunteer to help expand our home library service which is already well utilised by our more vulnerable customers. The home library service enables residents who are unable to visit a library to reserve books and have them delivered to their home by a volunteer. We will be promoting both these services to help to mitigate the loss of the mobile library service.

- 1.9 The council will be reducing the book fund which is used to purchase new books each year by 50% however Newport Town Council have agreed to provide some additional funding to help sustain current book levels at Newport Library

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to approve that:-

- 2.1 The Council will continue to operate and manage libraries including a First Point Service at Southwater, Wellington, Newport and Madeley Library.
- 2.2 The Council will continue to operate Oakengates Library which remains part of Oakengates Theatre and staffed and run by the theatre team on a day to day basis
- 2.3 Dawley, Stirchley, Hadley and Donnington Libraries close by the end of this year as council run libraries
- 2.4 The Council to provide partnership funding deals to assist the respective Town and Parish Councils listed in 1.2 and HLC learning community to set up and run new community lead libraries in Dawley, Stirchley, Donnington & Hadley, which will help to sustain library provision in those areas for at least the next 6 years and assist the council to achieve the library savings target.
- 2.5 In addition to the partnership funding deals the council will provide arms length support to the new community lead libraries by sharing the use of the current library loans ICT system, provision of new book stock, help to refresh book stock and support to train new volunteers required to staff the new community lead libraries
- 2.6 That from 31st March 2017 the mobile library service ceases to operate if no organisation comes forward in that timescale with a firm proposal to run it.
- 2.7 That from Autumn 2016 the four remaining core Council run libraries (Southwater, Wellington, Madeley & Newport) including Oakengates Library amend their opening hours as described in the report and informed by public consultation to help achieve the savings target
- 2.8 That approval is given for the introduction of the new charges as described in the report.
- 2.9 That approval is given for Madeley Library to relocate into Anstice Memorial Hall, or another community run facility in the future, subject to ongoing negotiations with Madeley Town Council.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?

Libraries are a key community facility which contributes to several of our co-operative priorities. These include Education and Skills, Health and Wellbeing and Children and Young People

Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?

The recommendations in this report will have an impact on the users of Library Services right across the Borough

The Library service has prepared an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the initial proposals and this documentation has been updated to reflect the feedback from the public consultation exercises and the revised proposals. (See Appendix A) The Equalities Impact Assessment illustrates how the service aims to mitigate any adverse impact on groups covered by the legislation.

TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE

The change to opening hours and the opening of the new community lead libraries will be commence from autumn 2016 and take place through until January 2017

The mobile library service will close from 31st March 2017.

FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes
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The savings from the reduction in opening hours of Southwater, Wellington, Newport, Oakengates and Madeley Libraries total £177k. This assumes a part year saving being achieved in 2016/17 from implementation in the autumn.

The cessation of the Mobile Library service delivers a saving of £41k from the reduced staff and vehicle costs and the restructure of the Library Development Team will deliver £101k.

The Council has made one off funding available to support the transfer of services to Partnership Organisations over a 3 year period. This is paid as Transitional Grant Funding which requires the Partnership Organisation to prepare a business case to the Council demonstrating the sustainability of the service they are taking on over a 6 year period. The business case will include details of how the organisation will fund the service going forward. The new Community Lead Libraries will result in further savings of £64k.

In total savings of £383k are being delivered from these proposals, with the shortfall of £14k against the £397k target being addressed in 2017/18 when the work with Madeley Town Council around the anticipated move to Anstice is complete.

MLB 17.08.16

LEGAL ISSUES | Yes

Local Authorities have a statutory duty 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, taking into account local needs and within available resources.

Two key requirements of the 1964 Act are to encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and to lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

In addition to the 1964 Act other legal obligations that must be considered include:

- Equality Act 2010 and section 149: Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Local Government Act 1999 and section 2: Best Value Duty;
- Localism Act 2011; and
- Previous legal challenges of local authority decisions.

The current leading view of the Courts of the meaning of what amounts to a comprehensive service is:

“it cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive . . . means a service accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies . . .

An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.”

In relation to the mixed urban and rural nature of the Telford & Wrekin area the key factors for decision makers would appear to be that there is reasonable ability to access the proposed service provision by all residents of the Borough. This means that distances and time taken to reach a library must be reasonable and any particular problems, whether physical disabilities, or created by age or family considerations, must be capable of being met, whilst balanced against the material consideration of budgetary constraints.

The Equality Duty has been considered in the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment under which the needs of the local community and protected groups have been assessed by way of comparative analysis to identify the implications of proposals on vulnerable communities.

The Council has also sought to meet its duty to consult service users and other groups by consultation on proposals at a formative stage to allow responses to be taken into consideration at the decision making stage.

As with any decision made by the Authority affected persons have a right of challenge through a number of means including Judicial Review. In addition under the 1964 Act the Secretary of State has a statutory power to intervene when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service. She/He will only intervene after careful consideration of local authorities’ compliance with the terms of the 1964 Act. This power to

intervene has been utilised on only one occasion since 1964, with a public inquiry in Wirral in 2009, however the Secretary of State has been known to issue 'Minded To' Letters to various local authorities in respect of proposals to reduce library provision.

Although proposals made in this report recommend a degree of reduction in service provision, when balanced against budgetary constraints and considering the alternative range of approaches taken by the Council to maintain the provision of library services as far as possible, it is likely to be the case that it can be shown that the statutory duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient service" is being adequately met.

PM: 17 August 2016

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Details contained further in the report.
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IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	
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PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction and Background

4.1.1 This report sets out the proposed reconfiguration of the library service in the context of the Council's budget proposals. This includes the outcomes from two extensive public consultations during the first half of this year on the future of the service, and sets out a number of proposals for consideration. The report also highlights a number of potential risks and wider impacts that these proposals will have for individuals and communities as well as our future ambitions for the service.

4.1.2 The key objectives addressed in this report are:-

- Achieving 2017/18 budget strategy savings through the reconfiguration of the service
- Maintaining service provision through partnership working with communities and other agencies specifically our Town and Parish Councils and Hadley Learning Community
- Minimising impact on communities, particularly older and young people

4.2 Current Service Provision

4.2.1 The Council currently has a network of four main libraries, five neighbourhood libraries and a mobile library. There is also a Support and Development team, Home Library Service and an online library service.

4.2.2 The main libraries are Madeley, Newport, Southwater and Wellington. These libraries are open longer hours and provide a full range of services including First Point where staff handle customer service enquiries and transactions on behalf of the Council. The Development Team also organise activities in these libraries, catering for all age groups.

4.2.3 The current Neighbourhood libraries are Dawley, Donnington, Hadley, Oakengates and Stirchley. These are open fewer hours than the main libraries and do not offer a First Point Service.

4.3 Proposed Reconfiguration of the Library Service

4.3.1 The four existing core libraries will remain managed and staffed by Telford & Wrekin Council. However it is proposed that the opening hours, staffing and number of activities in these Council libraries are reduced from October 2016. The libraries will remain open on their busiest days and when most people want to use them.

4.3.2 It is proposed that from October 2016 Oakengates Library will continue to be run by the Council as part of the theatre operation, partially supported by funding from Oakengates Town Council.

4.3.3 The remaining neighbourhood libraries will close as council run libraries but new community lead libraries and will be opened and operated by either Town and Parish Councils or in Hadley's case by HLC school with support from the Parish Council.

4.3.4 The community libraries, (Dawley, Donnington, Hadley and Stirchley) will still be part of the Council's statutory library provision. This means Telford & Wrekin Council will offer arms length support and will therefore continue to maintain and pay for the following:

- Access to the library stock with a regular turnover of titles in each location.
- Members will still be able to borrow and reserve books from any library council run or community lead
- An agreed selection of new stock each year
- Use of the library management system so that books can be issued and returned as well as reserved in other libraries, and new members can join
- Access to Telford & Wrekin Council's public computers and free WiFi access
- Access to e-resources such as our digital books, audio-books, magazines; Ancestry.com etc.
- Initial training for Town and Parish Council and school library volunteers
- Advice on stock management and layout
- Promotions such as the Summer Reading Challenge

4.3.5 All day to day operations at the community lead libraries will need to be undertaken by either existing staff employed by the Town and Parish Councils or HLC school, or through the use of unpaid volunteers who will be recruited and managed by the Town and Parish Councils or HLC School directly. Self-service will be available at all of the community lead libraries.

- 4.3.6 A service level agreement will be produced for each of the community libraries that will specify the roles, functions and responsibilities of the partner organisations and the resources and support that will be provided by Telford and Wrekin Council.
- 4.3.7 The Home Library Service is managed by the Library Development Team and supported by volunteers who deliver books to people who are unable to visit the library because they have a disability or are carers. There are no changes proposed for this service. However the take up of this service is likely to increase in the future as a result of the mobile library service closing so we will be looking to recruit additional volunteers to help manage demand.
- 4.3.8 In January it was proposed that the Mobile Library Service would cease. Unfortunately despite our best efforts no organisation has come forward with a firm offer to run the Mobile Library Service. We will continue to explore opportunities however unless someone comes forward with a viable proposal before March 2017 then the mobile library service would cease from that point. We will be promoting our Home Library Service and on line services to those affected to help mitigate the loss of this part of our service.
- 4.3.9 One of the largest area of cost in the current library budget is staffing, so achieving the required savings will require a reduction in staffing for the remaining 5 council run libraries. A formal consultation with staff and unions commenced on 5th September, with the proposed new structure coming into effect in January 2017. The launch of the staff restructure consultation has been timed to coincide with the launch of a number of other restructures across the Council, to increase the opportunities for library staff to be redeployed in the organisation and reduce the likelihood of compulsory redundancies.

4.3.10 **Southwater Library**

From October 2016, it is proposed that Southwater will be staffed and open for 42 hours per week which is a reduction of 4 hours per week.

Proposed new staffed opening times	(Current opening times)
Monday 10am to 5pm	(10am to 6pm)
Tuesday 10am to 5pm	(10am to 6pm)
Wednesday 10am to 5pm	(10am to 6pm)
Thursday 10am to 5pm	(10am to 6pm)
Friday 10am to 5pm	(10am to 6pm)
Saturday 10am to 5pm	(10am to 4pm)

Customers already self-serve book issues and returns from 9am to 10am Monday to Friday, which would continue.

4.3.11 **Wellington Library & First Point**

We will continue to offer the current full range of self-service opening times, but increase the number of hours this Library will be unstaffed. This will include moving to self-service only all day on a Wednesday and after 1pm on a Saturday.

Wellington Library will remain open on Sundays for self-service and will be promoted across all libraries as the one library available on a Sunday

Proposed new staffed opening times (Current opening times)

Monday 10am to 5pm (10am to 6pm)
Tuesday 10am to 5pm (10am to 6pm)
Wednesday Self-serve only (10am to 6pm)
Thursday 10am to 5pm (10am to 6pm)
Friday 10am to 5pm (10am to 6pm)
Saturday 10am to 1pm (10am to 4pm)
Sunday Self-serve only

It is also proposed to reconfigure the design of Wellington Library to move the community history and study area into the area of the library which is currently used for meeting rooms, which will allow options to be explored to use the lower ground floor area for an alternative purpose. Discussions are currently ongoing with the Wellington Town and Parish Council who are interested in using this space.

4.3.12 Madeley Library & First Point

From October 2016, it is proposed that Madeley Library will be staffed and open for 24 hours per week which is a reduction of 11 hours per week.

Proposed new staffed opening times (Current opening times)

Monday 10am to 5pm (10am to 5pm)
Tuesday 10am to 5pm (10am to 5pm)
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 10am to 5pm (10am to 6pm)
Friday Closed (10am to 5pm)
Saturday 10am to 1pm (10am to 4pm)

Although the library will remain in its current location for the time being, Madeley Town Council have expressed their interest in potentially moving the library in future to be co-located in the Anstice Memorial Hall which Madeley Town Council are hoping to bring back into community use. This may enable us to provide a longer range of opening hours during which the library will be open for self-service. No date is yet set for any move.

4.3.13 Newport Library & First Point

From October 2016, it is proposed that Newport Library will be staffed and open for 24.5 hours per week which is a reduction of 10.5 hours per week.

Proposed new staffed opening times (Current opening times)

Monday Closed (10am to 4pm)
Tuesday 10am to 5pm (10am to 5pm)
Wednesday 10am to 5pm (10am to 6pm)
Thursday Closed
Friday 9am to 4pm (9.30am to 5pm)
Saturday 9.30am to 1pm (9.30am to 4pm)

As part of our reduction in a staffed library service, a self-service machine will be installed in Newport to facilitate the issue and return of books.

4.3.14 Oakengates Library

From October 2016, it is proposed to be staffed and open for 12 hours per week which is a on a par with the current number of hours it is open.

Proposed new staffed opening times	(Current opening times)
Monday 10am to 1pm	(10am to 2pm)
Tuesday Closed	
Wednesday 10am to 1pm	(12pm to 4pm)
Thursday 2pm to 5pm	(Closed)
Friday 2pm to 5pm	(10am to 2pm)
Saturday 9am to 1pm	

Oakengates Library is currently co-located inside Oakengates Theatre and is mainly self-service, with any customer support being provided by Theatre Staff. There is no First Point service provided from Oakengates Library.

Oakengates Town Council has agreed to provide financial support to allow the library to remain open for 4 hours on a Saturday, which often falls outside of the normal opening hours of the Theatre.

Outside of these guaranteed opening hours, customers can access the library for self-service whenever the theatre is open to the public, this may include some longer hours on a Saturday and some Sundays if the theatre is open for an event.

4.3.15 Dawley Community Lead Library

From Autumn 2016 it is proposed that the library that is currently situated within the Telford Langley School will close. Great Dawley Town Council will then open a community library in Dawley House, located on Dawley High Street. The library will be renamed Dawley & Malinslee Community Library.

All day to day staffing of the facility will be undertaken by the Town Council using a combination of Town Council staff and volunteers. It is proposed the library will be open for 23 hours per week which is an increase of two hours per week and a self service machine will be installed at Dawley House.

Proposed new opening times	(Current opening times)
Monday 9am to 1pm	(Closed)
Tuesday 9.30am to 4.30pm	(9.30am to 1pm and 1.30pm to 5pm)
Wednesday 9am to 1pm	(9.30am to 1pm)
Thursday 9am to 1pm	(Closed)
Friday 9am to 1pm	(9.30am to 1pm and 1.30pm to 5pm)
Saturday Closed	(10am to 2pm)

4.3.16 Donnington Community Lead Library

From autumn 2016 it is proposed that Donnington Library will cease to be a Telford & Wrekin Council run library, and become a community library which is run by Donnington & Muxton Parish Council. The library will remain in its current position which is alongside the Parish Council Offices. The parish propose to make changes to the layout of the building to facilitate this.

All day to day staffing of the facility will be undertaken by the Parish Council using a combination of Parish Council staff and volunteers. It is proposed the library will be open for 18 hours per week which is an increase of 2 hours per week and a self-service machine will be installed at Donnington Library.

Proposed new opening times	(Current opening times)
Monday 9am to 3pm	(10am to 2pm)
Tuesday 9am to 3pm	(Closed)
Wednesday Closed	(1pm to 5pm)
Thursday 9am to 3pm	(Closed)
Friday Closed	(10am to 2pm)
Saturday Closed	(10am to 2pm)

It is possible that these opening hours may be extended to open 9am to 3pm Wednesday and Friday and some hours on a Saturday dependant on availability of Parish Council staff and the ability to recruit volunteers.

4.3.17 Hadley Community Lead Library

From autumn 2016 it is proposed that Hadley Library will cease to be a Telford & Wrekin Council run library, and become a community library which is run by the Hadley Learning Community with financial support from Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council. The Library will remain located as part of the school.

All day to day staffing of the facility will be undertaken by the Learning Community using a combination of their existing school staff and volunteers.

It is proposed the library will be open for 18 hours per week which is a reduction of one hour per week and a self-service machine will be installed at the library.

Proposed new opening times	(Current opening times)
Monday 2pm to 5pm	(10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm)
Tuesday 2pm to 5pm	(Closed)
Wednesday 2pm to 5pm	(10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm)
Thursday 2pm to 5pm	(Closed)
Friday 2pm to 5pm	(1pm to 5pm)
Saturday 10am to 1pm	(10am to 1pm)

4.3.18 Stirchley Community Lead Library

From autumn 2016, it is proposed that Stirchley Library will cease to be a Telford & Wrekin Council run library, and become a community library which is run by Stirchley

and Brookside Parish Council. All day to day staffing of the facility will be undertaken by the Parish Council using a combination of Parish Council staff and volunteers.

The library will remain at the Sambrook Centre and it is proposed it will be open for 35 hours per week which is an increase of 22.5 hours per week. The self-service machine will remain in the library.

Proposed new opening times	(Current opening times)
Monday 9.30am to 4.30pm	(10am to 1pm)
Tuesday 9.30am to 4.30pm	(2pm to 5pm)
Wednesday 9.30am to 4.30pm	(2pm to 5pm)
Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm	(Closed)
Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm	(1pm to 5pm)

4.3.19 Mobile Library

In January it was proposed that the Mobile Library Service would cease from 31st March 2017 as it is not a cost effective service for the small number of users that it has. No organisation has come forward during the consultation with any firm offer to run the Mobile Library Service across the whole of Telford and Wrekin. At the time of writing this report it is recommended that we continue with the proposed closure of the service unless a viable partnership bid emerges.

The Council will continue to provide a comprehensive home library service for those residents who are eligible and will be working to promote the superb on line offer of e.books, magazines etc. which are all available to download from the website.

4.3.20 Library events and community activities

Our library development team provide a wide range of activities and events for all ages which enhance our library offer. Activities for children and younger people include, Bounce & Rhyme and Storytime sessions, Reading Hacks, Summer Reading Challenge plus holiday events and Code Clubs. The team run ICT courses and access to Ancestry sessions which are popular and well attended; in addition they manage the teams of community history, ICT and home library service volunteers. There is also a dedicated project worker who works directly with vulnerable people and those suffering from dementia.

As part of the reduction in library service costs, there will be a corresponding reduction in the range and amount of events, activities and development work that the service will be able to provide however a number of roles in the revised library services staffing structure remain dedicated to the provision of these services within the remaining council run libraries.

The library service is a vital component in our plans to increase digital inclusion across the Borough and enable more residents to be able to channel shift to using online services. The Council will therefore be prioritising activities that support people to develop their ICT skills.

Priority will also be given to events and activities that are focused on promoting reading and literacy to children and young people. This will include continuing to mentor and develop young volunteers and the Bookstart and Summer Reading Challenge programmes.

The Council will also continue to provide specialist support to services for library users with dementia or other health barriers that prevent them from accessing mainstream library provisions.

Other events, activities and developments will be dependant on resource and budget restraints, or the ability to access external funding, such as Art Council England grants.

Some popular activities that do not fall within these priorities may have to become self-funded in the future by introducing charges for attendance. For example, author visits or ancestry workshops.

4.3.21 Reduction in Book Fund and introduction of new charges

As part of the budget strategy consultation in January, it was proposed that the funding to purchase new books and digital resources be reduced by 50% from April 2016. This reduction in funding means there will be a reduction in the number of new titles being purchased by the library service each year. The focus will need to be on mainstream titles with as broad an appeal as possible, and will reduce our ability to stock more specialist or niche titles.

Newport Town Council have agreed to make an annual financial contribution towards the book fund, which will be used to procure new titles whilst ensuring that the Council maintain a larger stock at Newport Library than would have been possible without their assistance.

4.3.22 It is also recommended that some new charges are introduced into the library service, with all additional income generated being ring fenced to the purchase of new books and resources to help mitigate the reduction in the book purchase fund.

These charges are:

- £1.00 for the second replacement of a lost or stolen adult library card
- 50p per title to place a reservation for books from our stock

4.3.23 We are also recommending that the Council pass on to customers any charges that are incurred by ordering books that have been reserved via the inter-library loan service (currently up to £5 per title), or are ordered from the British Library (£16 per title).

4.4 Results of the consultation

4.4.1 As part of the Council budget consultation in January 2016 the public were asked about the proposed changes to the library service. It was proposed that the nine libraries be reduced to three, the mobile library service would stop and there would

be a reduction in the budget for replacement books, all of which would save the Council £548,220. During this initial consultation we asked people if they would like to be kept up to date with our proposals and if they would like to be involved in further consultation on library services planned for the summer. In total 928 separate comments were received.

- 4.4.2 Local people asked us to look for a way to keep all nine libraries running. Having listened to feedback, the Council agreed to continue to directly run Madeley, Newport, Oakengates, Southwater and Wellington libraries and reduce the saving libraries needed to make to £483,220.
- 4.4.3 During the consultation the Council were also approached by a number of Town and Parish Councils and Hadley Learning Community School who all wanted to operate four community libraries to keep a library service accessible to the public
- 4.4.4 As the specific library service savings were refined there was a need for a different kind of timely targeted consultation with residents, service users and stakeholders. During June and July 2016 we carried out an 8 week consultation to help us understand the impact that the proposed changes can have and possible ways to mitigate any negative impact for our residents.

Our consultation and communication plan included the following:

- An online video highlighting the proposed changes to library services.
- A static display about the changes and the consultation in each of the 9 libraries.
- An online library survey on the budget section of the Council website – www.telford.gov.uk/budget. This survey was widely promoted throughout the consultation.
- A survey of the Community Panel.
- Paper copies of the survey in libraries and affected Town and Parish Council Offices.
- Information out to people who signed up to be further involved in the summer consultation and to those signed up to the Council's News for You.
- Information out to key stakeholders including organisations who use the libraries including schools.
- Information to residential homes and nurseries that use the mobile library service.
- Consultation workshops with library volunteers.
- Information to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Arts Council.
- Signposting opportunities for people to get involved and give their views on the library consultation including Facebook and Twitter.
- Postcards signposting the consultation.
- Press releases and a radio interview with a senior library manager.

Cabinet Members, the Senior Management Team, Library Services Managers and representatives from relevant Town and Parish Councils delivered a number of consultation road show events. One held at each of the 9 libraries.

All responses have been taken into consideration in the production of this report.

4.4.5 Participation in the consultation

- Questionnaire response rates (total of 975)
- On-line (web) 446
- Paper 529
- Face to face events 75 attendees

4.4.6 There was a good level of participation in the consultation on the proposals for changes to the library service and the responses clearly demonstrate the high value that service users place on their local library.

4.4.7 The key findings of the consultation are:

- One of the main concerns that respondents had was that children and young people would have limited access to library services because of the reduction in Saturday's opening hours. One of the ways to mitigate against children being disadvantaged by this is for teachers to visit the library with children during the school day. Several schools already encourage parents to enrol their children into the library service. The classes then make regular visits to the library to enable the children to change books. The library service will ensure that teachers are made aware of this facility through direct communication with schools and the Schools' Improvement Team
- Another general concern was that customers would not be able to use self-service and would miss the contact they had with staff. It is only in the case of Wellington library when there will be times of the day when there aren't staff available to help. In all of the other libraries there will either be staff or volunteers on hand to assist people in accessing computers, finding books and using the self service machines.
- There were mixed opinions as to whether libraries should make charges for activities and services. The majority of people felt it was reasonable to charge for reservations or lost tickets. However some respondents were concerned that charging for lost tickets and activities would further disadvantage people who are economically deprived. It has therefore been decided that the first replacement ticket will remain free of charge. At this stage the library service will not be charging for activities but will ask for donations so that money can be raised to extend the range of events they offer. Several respondents suggested a range of fundraising ideas and the library service will investigate the introduction of 'Friends Groups' in 2017/18.
- The large majority of respondents would be able to continue to use their local library, or an alternative, if the recommended changes to opening hours are approved
- 15.38% of respondents said that the proposed change to opening hours at Oakengates would prevent them from being able to access the service.

However, the offer of funding from Oakengates Town Council to enable the library to open on Saturday mornings will address the needs of many of these respondents

- There were mixed responses to the proposal that four of the libraries should become community lead libraries. Although many people recognised that this was a far better prospect than closing libraries, there were concerns about that quality and level of service that would be provided if they were operated by volunteers and non-library staff. However, these libraries will still remain part of the Council's statutory library network and training and support will continue to be provided to the partnership organisations. Whilst it is recognised that this will not replace the skills of professional staff it will ensure that libraries are providing the best possible service within the budget constraints placed on the Council.
- There were mixed views as to whether the relocation of the study and community history areas at Wellington would be a disadvantage or advantage. Several respondents said that they felt the community history area would be more accessible on the ground floor. However several respondents said that they were concerned about the study area being moved to the ground floor as this area would no longer be quiet.

4.4.8 All of the comments regarding the individual community lead libraries will be shared with the relevant partnership organisation so that they can consider how they reflect the views when developing their service.

4.5 Legal Challenge

4.5.1 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a free, comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all who wish to use it. There is no national definition of "comprehensive and efficient". Experience to date demonstrates that a mixed economy of service delivery is unlikely to result in intervention by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport due to a failure to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. However, the scale of the proposed reduction in directly managed libraries could leave the authority vulnerable to challenge/ministerial intervention. In considering the future of its library services, the Council must be mindful of its statutory duty under the Act and consider that the proposals will enable it to continue to run a comprehensive and efficient service which takes account of the needs of local communities, within the budget available.

4.5.2 Members should note that other library authorities have been challenged in the courts on the statutory duty, Equalities Act and their consultations. Those which have faced legal challenge have been cited as failing to undertake full equalities impact assessments or adequate public consultation but have to date not faced full intervention or public inquiry as a result of non-compliance with the 1964 Public Libraries Act. If there were to be a legal challenge, there would be additional costs.

4.5.3 The Library service prepared an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the initial proposals and this documentation and has now been updated in the light of

the secondary consultation and the revised proposals. (See Appendix A) The Equalities Impact Assessment illustrates how the service aims to mitigate any adverse impact on groups covered by the legislation.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 A full community impact assessment has been undertaken in relation to the recommendations in this report which have been adjusted to take into account the views expressed through the consultation process. (Appendix A).

6 PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A - Community Impact Assessment
Appendix B – Consultation results and analysis

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