Shropshire Council's Library Service - the next five years

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1. Summary

Shropshire Council is projected to have a funding shortfall of £77 million by 2018/19, resulting in discretionary services such as leisure, libraries, museums, public open spaces and support for youth activities facing significant cut backs and in the worst case scenario closure.

The direction of travel is set, funding will continue to diminish, public sector reform is an integral part of the sector coming to terms with the reduced funds; coupled with this, public libraries need to understand advances in technology as well as people's changing behaviours and needs in this digital age. The next five years are crucial for the long term survival and success of the public library sector.

This report sets out the progress that Shropshire Council has made in redesigning its library services, information on patterns of usage and trends and suggests our future approach to supporting the provision of modern and sustainable library services.

Comments made by Scrutiny members will help with the development of a detailed plan for the future development of library services over the coming five years which will be reported to Cabinet later in 2016.

2. Recommendations

A. That Scrutiny Committee members provide feedback and comment in respect of the council's approach to the redesign of library service, progress made to date and the next stages of the library redesign work.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

Detailed below is a high level overview of the risks associated with the redesign of Shropshire's Library Service.

Risk	Mitigation plans in place
Library redesign fails to comply with S7 Public Library and Museum Act 1964 (see below)	Redesign will comply with the requirements of the act to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service (see below)
Library services fail to meet equality and social inclusion obligations	Will be assessed through the on-going completion and review of Equality & Social Inclusion Impact Assessments; if negative impacts are identified then an action plan will be created to show how these can be minimised.
The transfer of the management of libraries to local community organisations fails to follow EU and UK procurement regulations, state aid restrictions and the Council's own contract standing orders.	Will continue to take legal and procurement advice as appropriate
Detrimental impact to council reputation and to library redesign timetable and approach due to lack of partner engagement and failure to communicate effectively with stakeholders	Resources and time will be invested in early community conversations. A range of information and support will be provided. Decisions will be informed by formal public consultation.
Savings target not achieved due to unrealistic assumptions on future Council revenue support and unforeseen circumstances in the development of new local management arrangements, the implementation of physical building works and the implementation of infrastructure works	The alternative to new locally based community management will be a diminished library service within the Councils management and even in some cases possible closure

The Council's statutory responsibility
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 (section 7). In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

In providing this service, local authorities must, among other things:
- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b)) Note that there are exceptions for

example for the notification of the availability of reserved items and library overdue charges, and for the lending of audio visual material.

"A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is 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."
Ouseley J in Bailey v London Borough of Brent [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin)

The council also has statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and section 149: Public Sector Equality Duty in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

4.0 Financial implications

Libraries' current net controllable budget is £2,536,560, which is split across the following functions:
- Six libraries in principal market towns: £1,306,730
- Sixteen smaller libraries: £310,980
- Mobile libraries: £171,910
- Management, administration, I.T. and support services: £746,940

The above budget takes into account £415,990 ongoing annual savings that are scheduled to be made within 2016/17 through a combination of efficiency savings and improved operating arrangements.

Progress with meeting the 2016/17 savings requirement is described below and further reported on within the report:
- Management & Administration restructure - £221,000 savings proposed – Staff consultation underway at present
- Book fund reduction - £32,000 saving delivered
- Redesign of local libraries - £83,560 savings delivered, with a further £10,880 likely to be delivered within the next few months
- Reduction in opening hours - £55,390 savings proposed – Public consultation underway at present
- Ending of community care provision - £13,160 savings proposed – Implementation pending following end of staff consultation

Further savings have been proposed for 2017/18 in order to support the Council's Financial Strategy 2016-19:
- 2017/18 - £150k savings targeted from transfer of libraries to alternative management arrangements

In addition to this, in order to balance the council's budget in the medium term, there is a requirement that elements of the Libraries budget are reduced to nil cost to the council as quickly as possible, notably the budget relating to the sixteen smaller library branches. A project plan is being put in place to document the timescale in which this could be achieved.

5.0 Background

Two reports taken to the Environment Services Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2014 and 22nd June 2015 summarise progress made on the county-wide redesign of library services.

A report taken to Cabinet on the 14th October 2015 confirmed that a "locality commissioning approach" would be adopted for the introduction of new management arrangements at smaller libraries and that a new management and delivery structure would be developed for the larger principal market town libraries and customer service points.

Shropshire Libraries operate through a network of community libraries, mobile libraries and other services which together provide access to library services in every market town and in all parts of a very rural and sparsely populated county. In more detail the library service in Shropshire includes:

   a. A network of 22 libraries providing library access across the county in 21 towns: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Whitchurch, Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ellesmere, Shifnal, Wem, Bayston Hill, the Library at the Lantern (Shrewsbury), Cleobury Mortimer, Highley, Much Wenlock, Gobowen, Pontesbury, Shawbury, and Broseley. The library network has been developed to reflect the needs and circumstances of communities, including the most isolated. Currently four levels of service, consistent with population distribution within the County, are recognised:
   - Level 1- urban centres – Shrewsbury, Oswestry
   - Level 2 - larger market towns - Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton and Whitchurch
   - Level 3 - smaller market towns and outlying rural areas - Albrighton, Bayston Hill, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ellesmere, Library at the Lantern, Shifnal and Wem.
   - Level 4 - rural areas –Cleobury Mortimer, Gobowen, Highley, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury and Shawbury.

      Libraries provide a range of services including:
   - free WiFi membership for all
   - the lending of books, audio books and DVDs
   - provision of self-help books on a wide range of health conditions
   - 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
   - one-to-one IT help, tailored to individual need and run by volunteers
   - trained staff to issue and return books, answer enquiries, help people to choose books and use computers
   - online services on the Library Service 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
> ➢ information and advice on other services, local groups, etc.

b. Mobile libraries. There are currently 4 mobile libraries covering 350 communities in Shropshire on a fortnightly basis. The mobile library service has access to the full range of materials available at the static branches. Materials can be requested from other libraries either in person or online for collection from the mobile library. The full range of digital services including e-books, e-magazines, newspapers and access to reference sources and information can all be accessed from a mobile library. Trained staff are available on the mobile libraries to offer support and guidance. Partner organisations also occasionally use the mobile library to promote their services and to offer guidance.

c. Home Library Service. This is a free service available to people of all ages who are unable to use or travel to their local library due to disability or mobility issues, illness, or care commitments. It can be a short or long term arrangement depending on individual circumstances. The service is co-ordinated by local libraries but delivered largely through volunteers who choose library books for people and deliver them to their homes. The service involves approximately 120 volunteers and caters for over 200 users.

d. On-line library services. A number of online library services are available including:
> ➢ e-Books - E-Books can be downloaded free of charge. Up to 4 books can be borrowed at any one time for up to 21 days.
> ➢ e-Magazines - Full digital copies of magazines can be downloaded free of charge
> ➢ e-Newspapers - Over 2000 newspapers can be accessed, including most of the UK National papers,
> ➢ e-Community - Shropshire Community Directory is a local gateway to up-to-date information on over 3000 community groups, clubs, societies, support and self-help groups.
> ➢ Online reference - Access to reference materials

6.0 Summary of existing library provision and changing patterns of library usage

Details of static library usage measured by the number of visits, the number of active borrowers, computer time used, the total number of loans and the number of requests are described in Table 1 for the past five years.

Table 1 Static library usage

Static Libraries	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% change over 5yrs	% change from 14/15 to 15/16
Visits	1,358,493	1,303,234	1,245,224	1,038,883	1,001,593	-26%	-4%
Active borrowers*	49,362	46,281	42,944	40,196	40,201	-19%	0%
Computer time used (mins)	6,238,920	5,824,934	6,026,964	5,504,397	4,773,696	-23%	-13%
Total loans	1,305,346	1,185,536	1,118,219	1,010,907	893,033	-32%	-12%
Requests	86,018	85,598	78,655	78,909	71,702	-17%	-9%

* The number of active borrowers is the average of all the monthly figures over the year.

The figure is the total number of people that have been 'seen' by one of the library systems over the previous 12 months (borrowed/returned/requested a book or other item, used a PC in the library, logged in to the online catalogue, borrowed an e-book or logged in to an e-resource).

Table 2 further shows the usage of individual libraries in 2015/16 for the total number of visits, the total number of loans and the number of active borrowers. For each measure individual libraries are shown in descending order.

Table 2 Libraries in order of visits/loans/active borrowers

Visits 2015/16		Total loans 2015/16		Active Borrowers 2015/16	
Shrewsbury (SL)	171,998	SL	148,249	SL	10,011
Oswestry (OS)	171,925	OS	116,199	OS	5,643
Ludlow (LU)	94,346	LU	79,045	LU	3,431
Bridgnorth (BR)	84,262	BR	58,708	BR	3,104
Market Drayton (MD)	75,524	MD	52,217	MD	3,052
Whitchurch (WH)	67,600	WH	43,545	WH	2,340
Wem (WM)	44,568	CS	38,339	CS	1,488
Cleobury Mortimer (CM)	35,995	BH	32,804	WM	1,209
Church Stretton (CS)	35,487	HL	29,302	AL	1,024
Library at the Lantern (HL)	28,154	BC	27,082	EL	1,009
Bishop's Castle (BC)	27,782	EL	25,242	HL	906
Ellesmere (EL)	22,413	WM	24,895	BC	830
Highley (HY)	21,382	AL	22,302	BH	794
Shifnal (SF)	19,651	PO	17,612	ST	771
Bayston Hill (BH)	18,253	BY	14,689	SF	723

Albrighton (AL)	17,821	WK	13,879	BY	634
Broseley (BY)	14,838	SF	13,803	PO	554
Stoke Heath (ST)	12,427	ST	13,673	CM	550
Pontesbury (PO)	8,876	CM	12,443	WK	526
Much Wenlock (WK)	8,833	CA	11,829	CA	491
Gobowen (GO)	8,346	GO	10,275	HY	413
Craven Arms (CA)	6,950	SY	5,253	GO	312
Shawbury (SY)	3,937	HY	4,475	SY	268

Table 3 shows mobile library use over the past five years.

Table 3 Mobile Library usage

Mobile Libraries	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% change over 5 yrs	% change from 14/15 to 15/16
Visits	30,086	36,952	41,358	40,044	41,114	37%	3%
Active Borrowers*	1,390	1,353	1,342	1,368	1,438	3%	5%
Total Loans	79,745	89,335	79,424	69,981	69,986	-12%	0%
Requests	1,697	1,683	1,562	2,021	2,366	39%	17%
Enquiries	4,946	3,466	6,617	6,008	8,051	63%	34%

*Active borrowers have borrowed a book in the last twelve months

Table 4 shows library usage for attendance at events, the number of volunteers and the number of enquiries.

Table 4 Other library usage measures

All Shropshire Libraries	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% change over 5yrs	% change from 14/15 to 15/16
Event attendance	28,307	29,192	34,000	32,691	33,144	17%	1%
No. of volunteers	326	192	272	332	412	26%	24%
No. of volunteer hours	6,437	7,775	10,202	10,003	11,482	78%	15%
Enquiries	254,811	274,316	255,371	281,210	289,717	14%	3%

The overall decline in key measures broadly reflects national trends which are described in Table 5:

Table 5 National library usage (Reference CIPFA)

National Libraries Totals	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	% change over 5yrs	% change from 14/15 to 15/16
Visits	318,368,248	310,691,339	293,142,016	285,090,352	268,705,359	-15%	-5%
Active borrowers	11,919,554	11,411,561	10,321,235	9,883,258	7,543,235	-36%	-23%
Computer time used (hours)	35,847,528	35,818,839	32,839,424	27,148,810	21, 665,869	-39%	-20%
Total loans	324,501,502	309431874	282416232	266,643,672	238,027,478	-26%	-10%
Requests	15,796,333	15,729,092	14,782,283	14,327,815	10,808,964	-31%	-24%

Within Shropshire, online developments mean it has now become easier to access a range of library services remotely, such as renewing and requesting items, e-magazines and e-books, and a wide selection of online reference resources. This will have had an impact on the number of physical visits, but other measures have seen an increase. For example, over the 5 year period 'online' loans (items renewed remotely via the web) increased by 33% and the number of requests placed online increased by 86%.

The number of total loans will also have been affected by the wider availability of discounted paperbacks in supermarkets and from online retailers. Music CDs have also been withdrawn during this period due to lack of demand, and DVD rentals are decreasing. Once again digital developments play a part, and as the service develops its e-book and e-audio services this should have a positive impact on total loans and will attract new users.

The overall drop in computer time used is a reflection of the increase in ownership of internet devices, particularly smartphones and tablets. This in turn is reflected by a considerable rise in Wi-Fi use within libraries, which has gone up by 210% during the 5 years. This trend is likely to continue as Wi-Fi provision was extended to more library branches early in 2016. However, provision of library internet access now becomes even more crucial for those who do not have access at home, particularly given the rise of digital by default services.

Volunteer IT support is a key feature of our digital offer, and the number of volunteer hours has increased by 78% since 2011/12. This increase in volunteer engagement is also down to an expansion of the Home Library Service and proactive recruitment of volunteers to support specific service functions e.g. help with library shelving duties, running story sessions for children and adults, and providing local history advice. Some libraries also have Friends Groups who support the service locally by helping to organise a range of activities and events, carrying out some specific library duties and by acting as library advocates in their communities.

The number of user enquiries in libraries has increased over the 5 years shown. However, within those figures there has been a shift away from the traditional 'reference' enquiries, and an increase in enquiries relating to use of computers and the internet. This has necessitated library staff acquiring and developing new skills in order to provide the support demanded by customers. This also links to national

initiatives such as the Digital and Information skills training that was completed by all library staff in 2015.

Attendance at library events has also gone up. This is a reflection of the increased number of events particularly those which tie-in with library Universal Offers e.g. events for the Summer Reading Challenge, health and well-being events with partner organisations, and digital advice sessions. Much work has also been done to co-ordinate the promotion of library events, with social media channels proving particularly successful in this regard.

7.0   Progress with the redesign of Library Services in Shropshire

Appendix 1 details progress to date with the redesign of our static libraries. This is summarised below. Progress with all work will be reported back by the end of September as part of the larger current engagement work with town and parish councils.

A locality commissioning approach to confirm new management arrangements for the smaller libraries (and customer service points where appropriate)
Our vision is that within our smaller market towns traditional face to face services will be delivered through community enterprises that are already active within those communities. These enterprises are best placed to utilise their links into communities and therefore maximise every contact that is made with them.

Seven libraries have been transferred to new local community management arrangements:
- Albrighton, Shifnal, Broseley, Cleobury Mortimer, Craven Arms, Bishops Castle and Highley

Two libraries are continuing to be managed by Shropshire Council, pending the introduction of new local arrangement with financial support from the local parish councils and other funders:
- Pontesbury and Gobowen

Discussions are well advanced at:
- Bayston Hill, Ellesmere and Much Wenlock

Following a lengthy process of local consultation and engagement a consultation has recently closed proposing the potential closure of Shawbury library, the county's least used library. The consultation is supported by a detailed Needs Assessment, an ESIAA and by recommendations for alternative provision. A report is going to Cabinet on the 27th July 2016.
Visit http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/

The Portfolio Holder decision to move the library in Church Stretton of the 27th March 2015 has now been quashed and work is underway to seek a suitable solution. Alongside this Church Stretton Town Council is planning to consult with the public on the future of local services.

A new management and delivery structure for the larger principal market town libraries (and customer service points)
Within Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry and Whitchurch discussion are currently underway with local Town Councils to explore opportunities

for alternative local management arrangements, firstly potentially by town councils and secondly by other organisations.

Discussions are now well advanced in Shrewsbury and Market Drayton with proposals expected to be brought forward for public consultation in the autumn.

Alongside local discussions on potential future management arrangements the Council is undertaking a review of library opening hours and back office support.

Review of opening hours
Proposed changes to opening times are currently subject to public consultation for 12 libraries. The proposals to change library opening hours do not affect libraries that have already transferred to alternative community management arrangements or are being directly supported by local parish council and other funding.

The new times suggested in the proposals reflect the on-going decline in library visits and the increasing use of remote services, and on an analysis of visitor numbers to each of the libraries to identify the quietest periods. Proposals focus on reducing library opening hours at quieter times, at evenings and weekends, ensuring that people have access to services across the county when they are most used.
Visit http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/

Review of back office support
Detailed proposals to review management and administration support are currently subject to a staff consultation.

Investment in online services
In March 2016 funding from Arts Council England of £19,000 enabled the installation of Wi-Fi in libraries that did not previously provide it. Existing Wi-Fi installations that did not meet modern standards were also upgraded as part of this project.

A new e-book lending service has recently been launched to enable Shropshire library users to borrow e-books free of charge. Shropshire was one of 10 library authorities in the UK to pilot the new Cloud Library platform. As a member of the Cloud Library advisory council the library service was able to help shape the development of this new service.

The library online catalogue has recently been upgraded to a new version which offers a much improved experience to library users. Browsing is improved due to the inclusion of book jacket images, and items can be easily requested or renewed via the website.

Considerable work has been done to build the online presence of libraries on social media networks. Twitter has proved particularly successful with many individual library branches now running their own Twitter accounts. This enables libraries to engage with a wider audience, particularly those who might not otherwise connect with the service. In conjunction with this targeted email marketing is now taking place using the GovDelivery digital communication platform.

8.0 Towards the development of a Vision, Principles and Aims for the delivery of Library Services in Shropshire

Library Services, the next five years - a national perspective
The national perspective for libraries is developed through initiatives through several key organisations. The Library Taskforce's role is to enable the delivery of the recommendations from the Independent Library Report for England and to build on and add value to existing good practice, partnerships and other activities that are already supporting public libraries. They also promote libraries to national and local government and potential funders, creating a strong and coherent description of the contribution public libraries make to society and to local communities. The Taskforce report to Ministers (via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Government Association (LGA).

In their vision for the 21st century, the Library Taskforce in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) see the purpose of the public library network as contributing to the delivery of seven areas:
- reading and literacy
- digital literacy
- health and wellbeing
- economic growth
- culture and creativity
- communities
- learning

SCL and partners including The Arts Council, The Library Taskforce and The Reading Agency in their commitment to keeping library services relevant and accessible have identified six key areas of service delivery, the Universal Offers, essential to public libraries and have developed a shared strategy for the future. The Universal Offers cover the key areas of service delivery which customers and stakeholders see as essential to a 21st century library service. They are:
- Reading Offer
- Information Offer
- Digital Offer
- Health Offer
- Learning Offer
- New Culture Offer

The Universal Offers have been informed by customer research, tested with stakeholders and customers and developed in partnership with SCL, Reading Agency and Arts Council England. The aim of each of the offers is to develop a core package of accessible quality resources and partnerships with national support that is delivered locally and shaped to meet local priorities.

In Shropshire, Libraries are the Council's long term investment in relationships with local communities. They combine unconditional local space with an appealing offer (originally book lending) for everyone. People have the option of connecting with knowledge, information, support and entertainment. They also have the opportunity to connect with each other and with those who would serve them, not least with public services. Public libraries are greatly liked by Shropshire people, even if significantly under-used. As a brand, they have enormous potential as channels to market for other public services.

Looking forward Shropshire Council's job is to create the context that enables library services to impact positively on the lives of the people of Shropshire. But it is local communities and people that must make libraries come alive.

Our **vision** is to provide and support inspiring library services for learning, information and enjoyment

A core set of three **principles** will underpin the delivery of public library services:
- The provision of information and reading will remain fundamental to public library provision, but will take account of the shifts in society and the opportunities provided by technological developments;
- The importance of libraries as a community spaces, as a hub for people, for creativity, for the delivery of other services and for providing support to local communities and people;
- Empowering communities, providing leadership, opportunities to engage and support to local people, seeing them as co-creators and co-producers of libraries and the services delivered within them.

In taking forward our vision for a library service a number of **aims** respond to anticipated present and future library service needs:
- Provide everyone in Shropshire with access to library services
- Put customers at the heart of everything we do
- Encourage and enable access to informal learning
- Promote literacy and inspire reading
- Provide activities and information that improve health and well-being
- Provide opportunities for job creation and business development
- Provide welcoming community spaces that are open to all
- Enable access to digital information and services
- Build partnerships that place libraries at the heart of communities
- Deliver and develop targeted services for those in most need
- Provide services and activities to support children, young people and families
- Develop innovative services that reflect the changing roles of libraries

9.0   Meeting the future library needs of residents in Shropshire

It is proposed to develop a detailed plan for the future development of library services over the coming five years which will be reported to Cabinet in the autumn. This report will explore in more detail the future shape of library services in response to future needs. Some early considerations, which will be developed further within the Cabinet report, are provided below.

Meeting the future library needs of residents in Shropshire
We plan to provide access to library services using a combination of delivery methods:
- The provision of static library services
- The provision of public access computers and access to WiFi
- The provision of a mobile library service
- Home library services for people unable to readily get out and about
- The development on on-line library services

Looking forward a range of detailed information and evidence will be brought together to inform the development of the Council's approach including:

- Existing patterns of library service usage
- Users (and non-user) surveys
- The population density within Shropshire

- Changing population and increasing healthcare needs
- The location of static libraries and 15 minute drive times
- The location of mobile library stops
- Equality & Social Inclusion Impact Assessments

The provision of static library services

In developing building based library services we want to continue to:
- Support the development of modern sustainable libraries through the active involvement of community based enterprises in the day to day operation of the library with ongoing back office support provided by Shropshire Council.
- Explore opportunities to co-locate libraries with other services and partners within "community hubs"; places where local residents can access a range of services in one place that give them the best chance of finding the support that they need within their community.

In taking this forward we are not precious about buildings and locations; the most important thing is to locate services where people already gather for complimentary activities; for example a community centre, a rural pub, cafe or a bookshop.

In applying this approach Shropshire Council proposes to recognise three distinct levels of library provision.

1. Principal Libraries
   - Full range of library services within staffed libraries within the six largest market towns – Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth & Ludlow.
   - Community Hubs, multifunctional spaces, gateways to a range of services, co-location of partners
   - Hosted and managed by appropriate local partners within contract arrangements with Shropshire Council
   - Minimum opening hours
   - A range of activities that respond to local need
   - Full "back office" support provided by Shropshire Council
   - Part of the library "network"
   - Centres of support for community libraries and community activity

2. Community Libraries
   - Flexible provision that responds to local circumstances within smaller market towns potentially including, but not exclusive to – Albrighton, Bayston Hill, Bishops Castle, Broseley, Church Stretton, Ellesmere, Gobowen, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury, Shawbury, Shifnal and Wem
   - Managed by appropriate local community organisations within contract arrangements with Shropshire Council
   - Sustainable and cost neutral provision to the Council
   - Strong broad volunteer input and governance, not necessarily staffed
   - Full "back office" support provided by Shropshire Council
   - Part of the library "network"
   - Potential closure and replacement with alternative library provision in the event of no alternative sustainable management approaches

3. Independent Libraries
   - Independent managed, reflecting local circumstances
   - Advisory support and guidance provided by Shropshire Council
   - Not part of the library "network"

Investment in managing and replenishing book stocks

Shropshire continues to be part of a regional consortium of library authorities for the procurement of stock supply services, and will look for opportunities to expand this consortium when new contracts are required. The current contract for the Library Management System runs until October 2018 so the Council will be keen to investigate any further consortium arrangements that could be brokered.

The library service is currently working with its main suppliers to set up direct delivery of stock to library branches, thus replacing the current single-point delivery model. This will contribute to back-office savings as part of the current staff restructure and will enable the service to review its van delivery provision.

The provision of mobile library services

The last major review of mobile library services was in 2011 when the fleet was reduced from 8 vehicles to 5, by a member led task and finish group. All stops were reviewed and reorganised according to a set of criteria laid down by the group. A further vehicle was removed from the service when its lease expired in 2012.

Mobile library provision will be kept under review alongside other library services, and in particular when there is a better understanding of future static library provision.

Home library services for people unable to readily get out and about

The development of home library services will remain a priority but as technology changes delivery mechanisms will be kept under review.

The development of on-line library services

The range of e-book stock will be expanded to cater for increasing demand. Downloadable e-audio books will be introduced as the use of physical CD audio books decreases. Opportunities for integrating this digital stock into the overall online catalogue will be explored, in order to provide a single point of access for users. The use of other online resources such as Ancestry and British Newspaper Archive will be monitored and kept under review.

Opportunities for self-service facilities in libraries are currently being considered, with a view to replacing existing self-service units and introducing new facilities where appropriate. Emerging technologies could also play a role in this, particularly new software that would enable users to issue and discharge items themselves via smartphones.

Improvements to the library online catalogue are planned which would make the website mobile responsive. This would give users a much better online experience when using smartphones and tablets.

The provision of free public access to the internet

The new Wi-Fi in libraries will support other service developments such as Code Clubs and IT support sessions. Consideration will also be given to the potential for Wi-Fi printing that would enable users to print direct from their mobile devices. Provision of library computers for free access to the internet will remain a priority, however the use of these will be monitored and will inform the ongoing hardware replacement programme.

Volunteer support for library services

The library service has had some success using the 'Do-it' volunteering recruitment portal, so would look to build on this by expanding the scope of volunteering

opportunities offered. There is particular scope for volunteers to support story times in libraries, adult 'Time to Listen' sessions, the reading group service, IT advice sessions and home library services.

10.0   Actions to review and monitor the delivery of library services

Usage of library service provision will be monitored and kept under review. However, the focus will change to reflect a broad range of metrics that reflect the usage of spaces and services and the co-creation and delivery of new management arrangements.

Alongside this the Council will continue to look at best practice elsewhere, encourage comments and ideas from local residents and actively encourage the participation of local community groups in the development of alternative approaches for delivering library services.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) Redesigning Shropshire Council's library service and customer service points, Cabinet 14 October 2015 Update - future commissioning and provision of library services, Environment Services Scrutiny Committee, 22nd June 2015 Future commissioning and provision of library services and community co-location, Environment Scrutiny Services Committee, 8 December 2014
Cabinet Member: Cllr Stuart West, Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture
Local Members: The redesign of Shropshire Council's library service has a potential county wide impact affecting all local members
Appendices: Appendix 1 - Progress with the redesign of Shropshire Council face-to-face customer services