

CABINET MEETING – 4 SEPTEMBER 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Future Library Services

Author(s):

Executive Director People Services

Purpose of Report:

To:

- inform Cabinet of the results from the second phase of consultation on future library services;
- propose a service model to deliver the new vision for library services which has considered the findings from phase 1 and 2 of the consultation programme, usage patterns and releases efficiencies; and
- outline an implementation plan for the introduction of the future library service

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) note the information about the current service, the financial context and feedback from the recent consultation programme
- (ii) agree the future service model, including the development of library hubs, community libraries and the expansion of the community engagement and outreach programme to take library services into non-traditional community venues
- (iii) agree the implementation plan for the introduction of the new service offer.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?

***Yes**

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The proposed future service model ensures library services will continue to be accessible to all residents of the city whilst delivering the required significant efficiencies from the budget. Library services will be modernised through the use of technology and retained static provision where usage is high.

Services will be delivered through library hubs, community libraries and community outreach programmes enabling services to be taken to communities, in particular, those that need the most support to engender reading and learning.

The council has used evidence taken from the consultation programmes, population, usage and performance and service costs to inform the final proposed future service model.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Do nothing – this is not considered a viable option given the significant decline in the use of traditional static library services and the need to implement efficiencies and reduce costs.

To increase the proposed number of community libraries thereby decreasing the number of libraries proposed for closure – this is not considered a viable option given the significant decline in the use of traditional static based Library Services, the need to implement a new vision and service offer and the need to implement efficiencies and reduce costs.

Reduce the number of static libraries further – given the outcome of both periods of consultation and the current demand for static provision proposed to be retained, further reduction of the portfolio is not considered appropriate at this time. In the event that further demand levels and economic environment alter then this aspect of the service can be considered further.

Impacts analysed:

Equality ☒ Privacy ☐ Sustainability ☐ Crime and Disorder ☐

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

Scrutiny Committee:

FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICES

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PEOPLE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the results from the second phase of consultation on future library services
- 1.2 To propose a service model to deliver the new vision for library services which has considered the findings from phase 1 and 2 of the consultation programme, usage patterns and releases efficiencies.
- 1.3 To outline an implementation plan for the introduction of the future library service.

2. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:-
 - (i) Note the information about the current service, the financial context, and feedback from the recent consultation programme.
 - (ii) Agree the future service model, including the development of library hubs, community libraries and the expansion of the community engagement and outreach programme to take library services into non traditional community venues.
 - (iii) Agree the implementation plan for the introduction of the new service offer.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An initial report on future library services was presented to Cabinet on 13 February 2013. This report provided an overview of library services in Sunderland and feedback from an initial engagement exercise. It suggested a new vision for future library services and proposed a two stage consultation process to develop the vision and to inform the future service offer.
- 3.2 A further report was presented to Cabinet on 19 June 2013. Using the findings of the first phase of the consultation process, this report proposed a revised vision and a new service model based on the development of library hubs, community libraries and the expansion of outreach activities into communities. The report proposed further consultation on
 - the proposed future service model of library hubs, community libraries and community outreach activities
 - how the service can support individuals to access future services and make appropriate and adequate provision for those impacted by the changes

- Identifying appropriate community outreach opportunities to increase access to services.
- 3.3 At the meeting Cabinet agreed the report including the proposed vision and future library service model and further consultation.
- 3.4 Further details of the consultation and findings are detailed in section 5.

4. POLICY, FINANCIAL AND SERVICE CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Library Service is a statutory function of local government. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 states:

“ It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.”

The library service must:

- Serve both adults and children
 - Be available to everyone and meet any special needs required by members of the local community
 - Encourage participation and full use of the service
 - Provide materials in sufficient number, range and quality to meet general and specific requirements of those in the community
 - Provide value for money, working in partnership with other Authorities and agencies
- 4.2 In addition to delivering this statutory function, the vision and proposed future service model detailed in section 6, supports the delivery of the city's economic, social and educational policy. As outlined previously, one example of a key policy driver is the Marmot Report. Cabinet will recall that Marmot supports the council's view that equal opportunities in early years provision supports child development. The new vision for library services enables the council to support a range of policy recommendations in the Marmot Report including providing good quality early years education and childcare proportionately across the gradient, which will be supported through targeted outreach provision at children from disadvantaged families.
- 4.3 The revised vision and proposed service model will enable library services to contribute to the council's corporate outcomes framework, providing access to quality learning environments through readily

available reading material, quality information services and learning opportunities.

- 4.4 The council has made efficiency savings of approximately £100m over the last 3 years and now faces a similar, further amount to be saved over the next three years, with the library service to contribute £850,000. It therefore becomes ever more important that all available resources are targeted at a range of universally accessed services but are equally focussed on enabling and supporting residents to actively engage in community and city life.
- 4.5 The future library service model will continue to allow significant universal access and will target resources to engage those residents who need or would most benefit from increased access and support. The proposals also take account of consultation feedback to support the development of more confident readers, offer access to new electronic reading formats and the retention of trained and qualified library staff.

5. CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

- 5.1 Following agreement from Cabinet a two phase approach has been undertaken to consult on the proposed vision and new service model for future library services.
- 5.2 The first phase of consultation was undertaken from 27 February to 25 March 2013. This period of consultation concentrated on the proposed vision for future library services and on gaining an understanding of the needs and preferences of current and potential customers in relation to how library services should be provided in the future within the resources that are available. The results from this phase of consultation were used to inform the future service model and revised vision. They were presented to Cabinet on 19 June 2013.
- 5.3 The second phase of consultation was undertaken from 20 June until 21 July 2013. A variety of methods were used to inform our thinking about the new service model and to enable the service to develop appropriate provision for those identified as impacted by the changes. These included:
- A survey, available online and in print format from 20 June to 21 July (Appendix 3). This was promoted and widely available from static libraries, museum venues, leisure centres, partner organisations and via the council's consultation calendar and website. Information was circulated to partners and the voluntary and community sector. Residents who do not use library services currently were also targeted in locations across the city.
 - Engagement sessions with Elected Members in wards where libraries are proposed for closure, Area People Boards, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Area Networks, Equality Forums and library service employees.

- Open days at City Library and Arts Centre, Houghton Library and Customer Service Centre, Sandhill Library and Customer Service Centre, Bunnyhill Library and Customer Service Centre and Washington Town Library and Customer Service Centre during which library employees were available to enable residents to share their views and ask questions.

A copy of the Consultation and Engagement Calendar is available at Appendix 2.

5.4 Findings of Second Phase of Consultation

This section summarises some of the key messages from the consultation on future library proposals.

5.4.1 Usage

As in phase one of the consultation, the majority of respondents are library users (96%) and again library users are more likely to be female and aged 55+ years. Forty-one percent of respondents say they currently use one of the proposed library hubs as their main library, 31% currently use proposed community libraries and 29% currently use one of the libraries proposed for closure as their main library.

5.4.2 Future access and impacts

When asked, the majority of respondents agree that they understand why the council needs to make changes to the library service (51%) and agree that they will be able to access library services based on the proposed changes (63%), although a significant minority disagree in both cases. A higher proportion of respondents disagree (47%) that they will be able to access library services online than agree (36%).

Eighty-eight percent of respondents say they will use at least one of the 11 proposed libraries in the future based on proposed changes, with 9% each saying they will use online library services and take part in activities in the local community, 7% who will order books online and 3% who will use Books on Wheels. Thirteen percent of respondents say they will be unable to access library services.

Sixty-four percent of respondents believe the proposed changes will have at least some impact on them with 30% thinking it will be a significant impact. Thirty percent believe there will be no impact on them.

Respondents whose main library is proposed for closure are most likely to feel significantly impacted, are least likely to understand why the council needs to make changes and least likely to feel able to access services in the future. Respondents with a disability, those living in East Sunderland and younger respondents (under 55's) tend to be more likely than their respective counterparts to feel significantly impacted and unable to access services.

Some of the main concerns that respondents have regarding the proposals centre around:

- Opening times including lack of evening and weekend availability for those who work
- Travel issues including travel costs, increased travel time and distance, lack of transport, poor public transport arrangements and difficulties in using public transport due to for example age, health and travelling with children and difficulties in carrying books
- Negative impacts for particular groups including older respondents, those with health issues and disabilities, children, young people and families, those living in deprived areas and job seekers, in terms of accessing services and social interaction
- Loss of computer/internet access
- The future of library buildings and impact on communities
- Alternative/remaining provision in terms of aspects such as parking, accessibility and increased pressure on facilities and services.

5.4.3 Alternative suggestions

Both phases of the consultation have highlighted the value of library services to both individuals and communities and a number of consultation respondents and activity outside of the consultation such as the 'Hand's off Sunderland Libraries Campaign' has expressed a desire to keep either specific or all Sunderland libraries open.

Some of the more commonly suggested alternatives to the proposals include keeping libraries open or extending opening hours through the use of volunteers, keeping all libraries open but on reduced hours, generating income in libraries to protect them and making cuts elsewhere. In addition, 11 expressions of interest have been received in terms of alternative uses of library buildings, some of which may permit continuation of some elements of library services.

5.4.4 Opening times

Library hubs are proposed to be open 40+ hours per week and community libraries open for a minimum of 15 hours per week. As might be expected, respondents are more likely to think the opening hours for library hubs are suitable than community libraries. Respondents with children tend to be less likely to think opening hours are suitable. The main issues in respect of community library opening hours relate to the need for evening opening, Saturday opening and more hours, which corresponds with other aspects of the consultation. Young people also suggested seasonal opening and quiet study areas during exam time.

The majority of respondents say they will not visit a library hub at night. For those who will, City Library and Arts Centre is the most popular venue and the most preferred nights for the library hubs are as follows:

- Monday – Sandhill Centre Library
- Wednesday – Bunny Hill Library, City Library and Arts Centre, Washington Town Centre Library.
- Thursday – Houghton Library

5.4.5 Alternative venues for online reservations and activities and

events

Thirty-four percent of respondents would be willing to access one of the proposed venues for collecting online reservations, the most popular being a community centre, although popularity of venues does vary across different groups. Those aged under 35 years tend to be most receptive to online reservations overall whilst respondents whose main library is proposed for closure, older respondents (particularly aged 75+) and those with a disability are less likely to reserve online.

Fifty percent of respondents would be willing to access one of the proposed venues for events, activities and courses, the most popular again being a community centre followed by a school. Those aged 25 to 34 years and those with children are more receptive overall and again older respondents (particularly aged 75+) and those with a disability are somewhat less receptive. The most popular events, activities and courses that respondents might be interested in getting involved in are computer/IT courses, arts and crafts and activities for children and young people.

5.4.6 Promotion

The importance of effectively promoting the new service to both existing and potential users is highlighted. The best ways to let respondents know about library services are through libraries, via email and by post/through the door, although it should be borne in mind that this is largely based on existing library users.

6. NEW SERVICE MODEL

6.1.1 The revised vision for the new library service is:

‘Future library services will provide high quality, accessible reading, information and learning for all, therefore, supporting the development of individuals and communities to play an active role in the city and to enable them to achieve to their full potential’

6.1.2 The consultation confirmed that respondents main use of libraries was to borrow books; alongside the traditional lending of books the new library service will support literacy development, increase access to and progression in lifelong learning opportunities, and encourage social engagement. A number of respondents confirmed their interest in e-books and technology and in support of this the service will embrace modern technological and e-based service developments. It is expected that some respondents will likely need demonstrations and encouragement in this area and these will be provided.

These developments will mean access to reading materials in a number of formats so that choice and accessibility is wider and more convenient for those who have competing pressures on their time, different abilities or physical disabilities. It may also contribute to a reduced carbon footprint.

6.1.3 Although services will continue to be delivered from 11 static service points, as has been requested throughout the consultation, services will also be taken out into communities, in particular, to those communities that need the most support to encourage / engender reading and learning, whilst continuing to ensure accessibility for children and older people. During phase 2 of consultation, respondents with a disability and those with children highlighted there may be some difficulties in accessing the retained service points, with those in the East of the City saying they were impacted the most. Services will be delivered in a range of neighbourhood venues that local people access and that are accessible to them. Engagement work commenced during the consultation process will continue to enable adequate access to services that people feel happy with.

6.1.4 The table below summarises the 6 components of the new library service

LIBRARY HUBS
COMMUNITY LIBRARIES
COMMUNITY VENUES
SCHOOLS
OUTREACH
E-ENABLE

6.2 Library Hubs

6.2.1 Consistency in the provision of core library services across the five areas of the city will be supported by the establishment of a library hub in each area. These hubs will enable service provision to be tailored to local community needs and provide a base from which community outreach programmes can be supported.

It is proposed that the following libraries will become library hubs:

East: City Library and Arts Centre

West: Sandhill Centre Library and Customer Service Centre

North: BunnyHill Library and Customer Service Centre

Coalfields: Houghton Library and Customer Service Centre

Washington: Washington Town Centre Library & Customer Service Centre

All library hubs will be open for more than 40 hours a week over six days, with each hub open on one weekday evening based on feedback from the consultation process. Opening hours will be reviewed one year from implementation, taking into account demand, usage patterns, and ongoing customer feedback. This will enable the service to respond to any impacts of seasonal usage or usage coinciding with exam times for example.

Services provided from hubs will include access to:

- A wide selection of reading materials for free loan in a range of formats for adults, children and young people, including

“boomboxes” which provide access to national talking newspapers and magazines

- A comprehensive range of information resources and services, including access to the Driving Theory Test and the GO Citizen study Resource for candidates preparing for the Life in the UK Test
- Reservation services
- ICT, the Internet and online information resources
- Health information and resources
- Learning opportunities, working collaboratively with a range of partners including Age UK Sunderland, City of Sunderland College, Family and Adult Community Learning, Northern Learning Trust and the Workers Educational Association (WEA)

For example:-

A series of pilot courses run by City of Sunderland College in numeracy, ICT and employability skills including:

- a 10 week employability course at City Library and Arts Centre from 23 September 2013. Course content will include applying for jobs and courses, preparing for an interview, introduction to work, action planning to improve performance.
- an 8 week numeracy course in Houghton Library from 23 September 2013.
- a 10 week Introduction to computing course in all library hubs from January 2014. Students will learn the basics of using word processing and spreadsheets, file management, the internet and email.

Following review and evaluation of this pilot programme, additional courses will continue to be developed, Further learning opportunities will be developed through working with the Northern Literacy Trust, who will continue to deliver entry level programmes in learning to read and write from each of the library hubs where there is a demand.

- Free careers guidance and job search sessions provided by qualified careers advisers from the National Careers Service to support progression in learning and work
- Council Customer Services
- Access to local history information
- Community information
- Trained library and information staff providing high quality services
- Space for community activity, debate, displays and events
- Visitor information

6.3 Community Libraries

- 6.3.1 In addition to the five library hubs identified above, library services will also be delivered from six community libraries, each providing access to core library services, reflecting a geographic distribution of static libraries across the city.

It is proposed to confirm the following libraries will become Community Libraries:

East: Ryhope Library and Customer Service Centre

West: Kayll Road Library

North: Fulwell Library

Coalfields: Hetton Library and Customer Service Centre, and Shiney Row Library and Customer Service Centre

Washington: Washington Millennium Centre Library

It is proposed that the Community Libraries will open for a minimum of 15 hours per week for the delivery of “core” library services. These opening hours will be reviewed and refined to reflect current usage and the results of the recent consultation. Opportunities to extend opening hours will be possible through the Volunteer Development programme (see below). In addition Community Libraries will host a variety of outreach activities (see below) in addition to the “core” hours.

A wide range of factors have been taken into consideration when determining which libraries will become community libraries including detailed examination of population and proximity, current usage and performance, asset management costs and service costs.

Services provided from community libraries will include access to:

- A selection of reading material for free loan for adults, children and young people in a variety of accessible formats
- A range of information resources and services, including access to the Driving Theory Test and the GO Citizen study resource for candidates preparing for the Life in the UK Test
- Reservation services
- ICT and the Internet and online information resources
- Selected reader development activities
- Selected learning opportunities and information e.g. we are exploring with the City of Sunderland College the possibility of offering the Steps4Change Programme for young people aged 16+ who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) at Ryhope Library. This programme covers drug and alcohol awareness, employability skills, independent living, maths and english
- Resources that reflect the diversity and needs of the local community
- Local history information
- Community information
- Trained library staff providing high quality services
- Space for community activity, debate, displays and events
- Visitor information

- 6.3.2 The 11 library buildings proposed to be retained in the new service model accounted for 87.75% of all library visits in 2012/13. These facilities will form the basis of the statutory provision and collectively ensure that 100% of Sunderland residents will continue to live within 2 miles of a static library.

6.3.3 To enable the delivery of the future library service model it is proposed to decommission 9 libraries based on current usage, performance, cost per visit and asset management assessment. The libraries proposed for closure are:-

- Doxford Park
- Easington Lane
- East Herrington
- Fence Houses
- Hendon
- Monkwearmouth
- Silksworth
- Southwick
- Washington Green

6.4 Community venues

Throughout the consultation process the service has engaged with residents, partner organisations and the city's community and voluntary sector to explore the potential for joint working on the delivery of future library services. A range of community venues have been identified from which library services will be delivered through community book collections, on-line reservation pick-up points and reading related activities. These include children's centres, community centres, extra-care housing provision, and the premises of a wide range of voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) including VCOs operating from some of the library buildings proposed for closure.

Examples include:-

- working with children's centres across the city to develop community book collections and story, rhyme and reading-based craft sessions. This will include those based in voluntary and community sector premises e.g. Austin House in Southwick.
- working with GENTOO and Housing 21 to locate community book collections within existing and planned extra-care housing schemes, to deliver activities such as reminiscence sessions and to explore the possibility of setting up collection points for on-line reservations. This includes discussions about continuing to offer services from Beckwith Mews in Silksworth.
- developing community book collections with the Arts Studio and Foundations in Hendon.

6.5 Schools

The Schools Library Service (SLS) operates as a traded service, currently 82 schools from across the city have taken up the option to buy into the service. The service is part of ASCEL, a national membership network of Senior Children's and Education Librarians, who work together to stimulate developments and share initiatives relating to children and young people in public libraries and

educational services, working actively with a range of national and local organisations to:

- promote the value of library services for children
- jointly agree policies and strategies to develop and sustain services
- promote discussion and exchange of ideas through training, continuing professional development, an annual conference and a members' website.

The future library offer will continue to develop and capitalise on this arrangement to ensure that the literacy development of children, families and communities are at the forefront of all initiatives.

Schools may be receptive to playing a broader role in the delivery of library services e.g. providing access to book collections or family learning. Some meetings to explore these possibilities are already scheduled; targeting particularly schools in those wards where libraries are proposed for closure. Contact will be made with all schools in the autumn term to ask for expressions of interest in working collaboratively.

All schools across the city will continue to be encouraged to subscribe the SLS to ensure they have an appropriate level of professional literacy support to maintain and improve standards of literacy and reading for pleasure across all of the key stages.

6.6 Community outreach programme

6.6.1 The community outreach programme will complement the static library provision, taking services, books and reading-related activities to underserved and target groups in non-traditional settings outside the walls of library buildings. This will also support those respondents in the consultation, who may be impacted by the closure of a local library, by introducing and promoting services in their immediate locality, therefore reducing travel costs, longer distances to carry books and socialisation.

6.6.2 The enhanced community engagement team will facilitate access to library services in each area of the city, working with partners to locate and engage with residents who could and should benefit from services.

They will continue to build up a detailed insight into the needs of communities, designing activities and innovative ways of accessing library services that will spark interest and provide a bridge to progression in learning. They will deliver library outreach programmes to existing and new customers including children and families, targeting in particular areas of deprivation to increase the number of service users. The service will aim to meet the diverse and changing needs of all communities, through research and adapting and tailoring services to meet residents' needs.

6.6.3 The community engagement and outreach offer will have 4 strands:

- Activities related to books, reading and learning
- Books at Home
- Community Book Collections
- Volunteer Development

Examples that will be delivered during the first six months of the new service's operation are included below. The programme will grow and develop as the new service model is embedded.

6.6.4 Activities related to books, reading and learning

- Storychair and story carpet - it is proposed to work with schools and other community groups to design and develop a story chair and story carpet as a piece of art work that will be installed in each hub library to encourage greater engagement with children and families. The programme will start as a creative writing project and craft session, working with a range of community groups and develop into a bespoke storychair / carpet, so each hub library will have a different chair that will stimulate creativity and ownership.
- Rhyme, story, song and story sack sessions in Children's Centres - from October 2013 the service will deliver a regular programme of rhyme, story, song and story sack sessions in Children's Centres.
- Schools - it is proposed to work with all schools in the city to encourage and support their pupils to become library members and engage with library services. Libraries will enable author visits for example through NCBF (Northern Children's Book Festival) which sees library authorities across the region bid for children's authors to go into schools and facilitate literacy/creative writing sessions.
- Reading Groups - building on existing reading groups e.g. for visually impaired young people at Sandhill Centre, the health and wellbeing reading group in Washington and the reading group to support people recovering from a stroke, we propose to develop further reading groups across the city. This will include reading, poetry and reminiscence groups across extra-care housing in the city.

6.6.5 Books at Home

The library service has successfully worked in partnership with the RVS (previously WRVS) for more than a decade, to deliver the Books on Wheels service to people in their own homes who have mobility problems or other health issues that prevent them from visiting a library.

Feedback from the consultation process has highlighted the need for better promotion of library services, particularly Books on Wheels and to ensure that the isolated and vulnerable are aware of the services

that exist to support them. In response to this we propose to rebrand Books on Wheels as Books at Home, relaunching and extending the service with additional volunteers. The service also lends itself to becoming a befriending and social service in addition to book lending as the volunteers build relationships with the customer in their own home as the result of regular monthly visits.

6.6.6 Community Book Collections (CBCs) (See Appendix 5)

CBC's comprise a range of stock issued from the library service to community venues and groups reflecting the venue/group's needs and requirements e.g. CBC's in Children's Centres may consist of fiction suitable for children under 5, fiction suitable for parents/carers and non-fiction related to cooking, health, exercise, crafts and returning to learning or work. All members of the community group are then able to access the stock on an honesty basis. Depending on the location and need, some CBC's would be supported by staff and additional activities. Collections would be changed regularly, depending on usage and demand which would continue to be evaluated.

6.6.7 Volunteer development

It is proposed to make available increased opportunities to volunteer in library services without reducing the quality or the integrity of the existing service, by building on existing opportunities and introducing new ones as appropriate. These may be short term tasks or those requiring a more regular commitment, e.g.

- Books at Home Volunteers (see paragraph 6.5.5 above).
- Reading Activists (a national initiative through the Reading Agency) - to support young people to develop activities for other young people, building a range of transferable skills related to event organisation.
- Summer Reading Challenge Young Volunteers (a national initiative through the Reading Agency) - young people supporting library staff to deliver craft activities for other young people age.
- a pilot 'Confident Reader' scheme with Sunderland University - proposed to go live in autumn 2013 with students volunteering to read with adults and children who need additional support and encouragement to enhance their reading ability.
- Extending opening hours in community libraries

Through the consultation process interest has been shown in volunteering opportunities in the following areas which will be progressed:

Activity volunteer - extending and enhancing the service provided by supporting library based sessions and events across the age range.

Library Ambassador – promoting the role of the library within the community and encouraging usage of library services.

Local Studies volunteer – appropriate support with local and family history programme and digitising local resources as needed.

Try IT – support with basic IT support.

Special Project volunteer – e.g. recording the synopsis of audio-books on “Penfriend” technology to encourage independent browsing by visually impaired customers.

An introductory information session for potential volunteers will be arranged in early autumn 2013. All activities involving volunteers will be managed in line with the national occupational standards for volunteer managers.

6.7 E- enable - ICT and the future e-offer

- 6.7.1 A critical part of modernising the service and operating a future service model will be the incorporation of sustainable modern technological and e-based services. Customers can already manage their accounts online 24/7, renewing books, checking the library catalogue, reserving materials and have access to a wide range of online information resources including online dictionaries, news archives and family history resources. These services will be re launched and enhanced to include:
- 6.7.2 Access to e-book and e-audio book collections provided via the library website. E-readers and digital books are growing in popularity. In some genres and some markets, digital books can outsell their printed versions and there is a growing demand to borrow digital books from libraries. The latest information from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) shows that 242,381 e-books and 77,780 e-audio books were available for loan in public libraries across the UK as at March 2012. E-lending has the potential to increase access to services by groups that are currently under-represented amongst library users and to revolutionise the reading experience of some customers e.g. partially sighted readers who can increase font size or change lighting levels appropriately.
- 6.7.3 The cross-sector LASH (Libraries Access Sunderland Scheme) partnership with the university and college libraries, enabling anyone who lives, works or studies in the city to access a wider range of resources, including specialist academic and technical information.
- 6.7.4 Refreshed and updated ICT provision in all library hubs and community libraries, loan of digital devices for those without other access, access to wi-fi services (where possible and appropriate), development of on-line reservation service with collection from appropriate community venues and development of an “app” for smart phones to enable a range of activities including catalogue searching and mobile borrowing.

6.8 Capital Investment Programme

- 6.8.1 In support of the implementation and delivery of the future library services model a programme of capital investment in library services will be undertaken. This will include:

- Reconfiguration and refurbishment of the City Library and Local Studies library to improve access to services and to support the realisation of efficiencies
- Refreshed and updated ICT provision in all library hubs and community libraries
- Introduction of the e-book and e-audio book service
- Wi-fi enabling specific locations

6.9 Workforce Engagement and Development

6.9.1 Employees have been fully engaged in the development of the new service model and the associated staffing proposals through enhancements to existing communications, workforce development and performance management processes namely:

- Employee engagement sessions held at each stage of the consultation and review process with the opportunity to find out about and contribute to the formulation of proposals for the future service offer.
- A Frequently Asked Questions process, with updates circulated to all employees on a weekly basis.
- Regular meetings with Trade Unions representatives and dialogue with the council's Transformation Consultation Group.

6.9.2 The employee proposals designed to deliver the new service model include service management and technical expertise to ensure that the council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities, an enhanced community engagement team to target those who could and should benefit from services, including the most disadvantaged and isolated individuals and communities in the city, and library and information assistants to deliver excellent front-line customer service

6.9.3 It is proposed to introduce a comprehensive induction programme for all employees delivering the future service model. This will include ensuring that everyone fully understands the vision, objectives and operation of the of the new service, is able to deliver the highest standards of customer service, has a thorough working knowledge of all elements of service provision and service partners, including those to which it is appropriate to signpost or refer customers for specialist information e.g. the National Careers Service, Age UK Sunderland. As part of the programme the service will develop and deliver joint training with key partners e.g. with Family Intervention Workers in Children's Centres to develop skills and knowledge and to foster the best possible working relationships with partner organisations to benefit service users.

6.10 Implementation of Future Library Services

6.10.1 The key milestones are:-

Cabinet Report on final proposals	September 2013
Appointment of staff and training for future service	September/October 2013

Development and delivery of marketing and communications plan	September 2013
Rollout of new public access ICT services to all libraries	September/October 2013
Launch of new library service	14 October 2013
Launch of community book collections and outreach programme	14 October 2013
Launch of wi-fi services	14 October 2013
Launch of e-book and e-audio book service	2 December 2013
Launch of app	2 December 2013
Start off refurbishment of City Library and Arts Centre and Local Studies Centre	February 2014
Launch of newly refurbished City Library and Local Studies Centre	April 2014

7 REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 7.1 The proposed future services model ensures library services will continue to be accessible to all residents of the city whilst delivering the required significant efficiencies from the budget. Library services will be modernised through the use of technology and retained static provision where usage is high.
- 7.2 Services will be delivered through library hubs, community libraries and community outreach programmes enabling services to be taken to communities, in particular, those that need the most support to engender reading and learning.
- 7.3 The council has used evidence taken from the consultation programmes, population, usage and performance and service costs to inform the final proposed future service model.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1 Do nothing – this is not considered a viable option given the significant decline in the use of traditional static based Library Services and the need to implement efficiencies and reduce costs.
- 8.2 To increase the proposed number of community libraries thereby decreasing the number of libraries proposed for closure – this is not considered a viable option given the significant decline in the use of traditional static based Library Services, the need to implement a new vision and service offer and the need to implement efficiencies and reduce costs.
- 8.3 Reduce the number of static libraries further – given the outcome of both periods of consultation and the current demand for static provision

proposed to be retained, further reduction of the portfolio is not considered appropriate at this time. In the event that demand levels and the economic environment alter then this aspect of the service can be considered further.

9 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 9.1 A full equalities impact assessment has been developed and has been updated to reflect the findings from both the phase 1 and phase 2 consultations. This is attached as Appendix 6.
- 9.2 The work completed to date has identified that there may be potential negative impacts on disabled users, older people and children. However the Council has considered and identified potential mitigations and has sought additional detailed information from users during phase 2 consultation so that reasonable measures can be put in place where necessary. Details can be found in Appendix 4 and Appendix 6.
- 9.3 For disabled users – any customers who cannot make the journey to an alternative static library because of disability will be offered the Books at Home service, this service will be re publicised and will recruit both volunteers and customers, if needed this could be on a seasonal basis when bad weather may confine people to their home. The Books at Home service also offers social interaction through the volunteers who become befrienders of the customers through a monthly home visit. Depending on where the customers live there could also be other opportunities to engage through community book collections and programmes in sheltered and social housing or through other collections in the nearer locality.
- 9.4 For children – for schools currently visiting libraries proposed for closure alternative options have been explored and by working with partner organisations and schools a programme of library activities for children will continue to be delivered in a range of settings. Alternative provision for children and families will be available through Children's Centres and Community Associations and Leisure Centres where appropriate, also attendance at community fete's and fun days working in partnership with Gentoo and others.
- 9.5 For older people – there will continue to be a core static service in all areas of the city, however any customers who cannot make a journey to an alternative library or outreach collections because of disability will be supported by the Books at Home service (as 9.3)
- 9.6 Twenty community book collections are currently being delivered across the city, this is expected to grow to ensure that all residents have access to a library service in their locality and alternative non traditional venues will continue to be explored as part of ongoing business development.

10 PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

- 10.1 The future library service review is being planned and implemented using the Council's standard project management methodology.

11 FUTURE FINANCIAL MODEL

- 11.1 The final proposals as set out above deliver the required revenue efficiencies of £850,000 per annum. To support the delivery of these efficiencies a capital investment of £500,000 will be required and provision has been made within the capital programme as agreed by Cabinet in February.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Future Library Services – Cabinet Report – 13 February 2013
12.2 Future Library Services – Cabinet Report – 19 June 2013

13 APPENDIX ITEMS

1. Key performance information by library
2. Consultation and Engagement Calendar
3. Copy of Consultation Questionnaire (Phase 2)
4. Analysis of the public consultation (Phase 2)
5. List of community book collections
6. Equality Impact Assessment