

# South Gloucestershire Council

**COMMITTEE:** ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**DATE:** 7 SEPTEMBER 2016

**REPORT TITLE:** COUNCIL SAVINGS PROGRAMME: PUBLIC LIBRARIES (ALL WARD(S))

## **Purpose of Report**

1 To agree a new default model for public library provision in order to achieve Council Savings Programme targets; and to agree arrangements for the operational implementation of this model.

## **Policy**

2 Public libraries help deliver a number of the Aims and Objectives laid out in the Community Strategy, including ensuring the social, cultural, health and education needs are met, giving children and young people the best start in life and creating a fair place for all

3 The service contributes to delivery of Aims and Objectives within the Council Strategy including enabling access to council services and those of partner organisations providing an entrance route to vital services such as welfare, homelessness and debt advice through close working arrangements with the third sector. It also provides support for cohesive neighbourhoods, having a skilled workforce and helping residents to enjoy the best possible physical and mental health.

4 The Council Strategy sets out the role of libraries under 'Our Council' which sets an Objective to have satisfied & well informed customers which is to be achieved by 'Improving the customer experience and shaping services around individual requirements and real need' to be measured through % customer enquiries dealt with at the first point of contact.

## **Council Savings Programme**

5 The Council Savings Programme adopted as part of the 2014/15 budget set out savings of £812k to be achieved "by looking at future provision and how buildings and services can be operated more effectively across the councils portfolio (for example through the potential development of community hubs). This target assumed £91k property savings.

6 The library savings target was specified as £500k, made up of a £484k saving in 2017/18 and a further £16k to be achieved in 2018/19.

7 In February 2016 the delivery date for library savings target was changed to support implementation, and the savings target changed to £650k in total, made up of a £234k saving in 2017/18 with a further £416k to be achieved in 2018/19.

8 In January 2016 the Communities Committee agreed to introduce Co-Located Community Hubs for Kingswood, Yate and Patchway where this best serves our communities, but not to introduce Integrated Community Hubs.

9 This report considers how operation of the public library service will achieve savings in line with the Council Savings Programme. Operational work on Co-Locating, or in response to opportunities for the physical development of all library premises, will continue as normal.

10 The Prison Library service is outside the scope of this review as it is delivered under a separate paid contract.

11 The gross annual running cost of the public library service in 2015/16 was as follows:

**Figure A: Costs of library service in 2015/16**

<b>Cost area</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Stock	£285,296
Transport	£54,143
IT etc.	£102,343
Third party (Libraries West and external projects)	£119,591
Other supplies	£73,948
Premises	£421,573
Staffing	£1,746,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,821,001</b>

12 Some £217k income was raised through hire charges, lettings, grants and through fines, leading to a net annual running cost of £2.6m.

13 In January 2016 the Communities Committee considered three options for achieving the library savings target. These were:

- Option LIB1: Close high-cost services / low use services and those close to existing main libraries and reduce other opening hours with a local opportunity to reduce impact
- Option LIB2: As above plus minimal staffing in satellite libraries with a local opportunity to reduce impact
- Option LIB3 Close all libraries except identified main libraries

14 Option LIB2 was the Council's preferred option of these three and was used as the basis for public consultation in order to gather views and knowledge to develop an alternative approach.

15 The level of response to the consultation was very high. In total the council received 3,644 survey responses as well as 94 letters and emails, 123 letters from children, two posters, and 13 petitions along with significant amount of feedback from public roadshows and through social media. There were also representations from political parties and parish councils. The full consultation report is available on the Council's website, while key findings included:

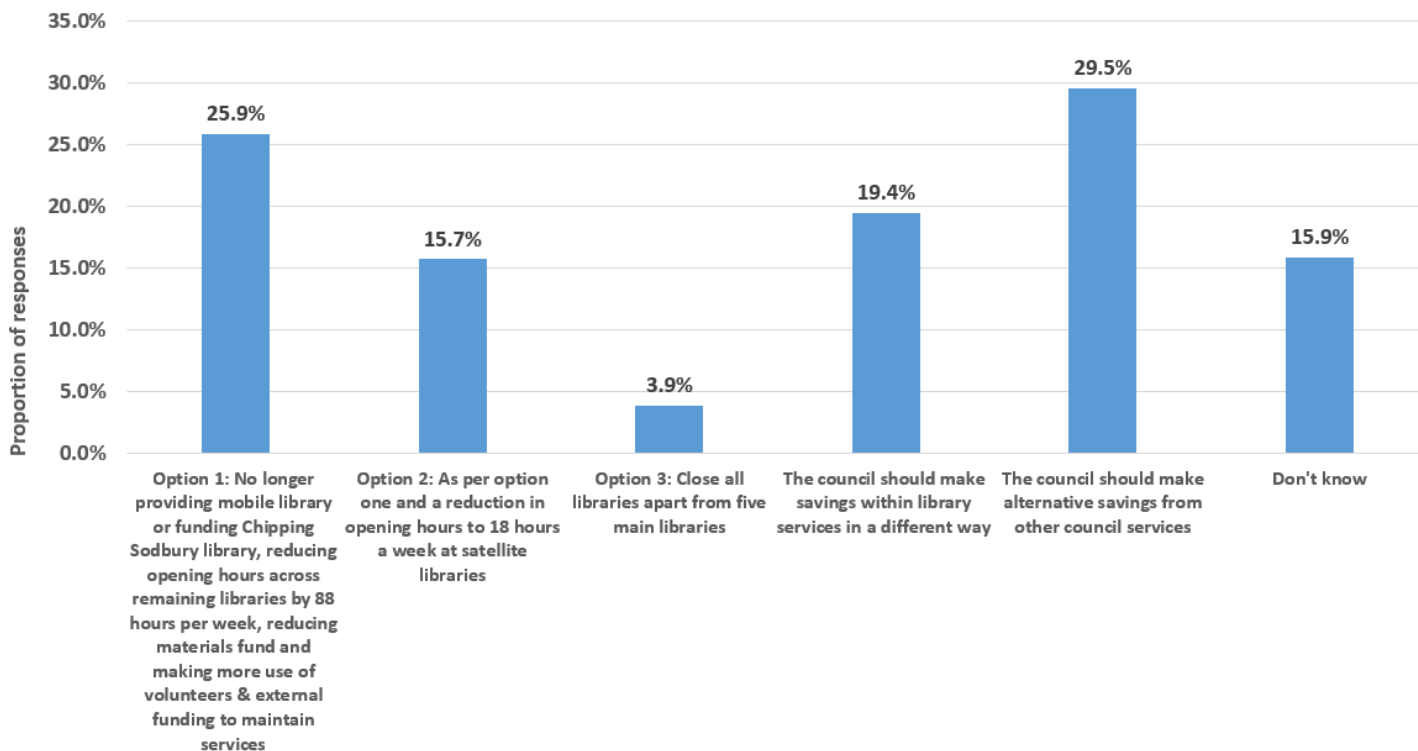
- The most important aspect of the library service to consultation respondents was 'Having a library local to you', with 1,369 people (61%) ranking it as the most important aspect and only 20 (1%) ranking it as the least important aspect

- The next most important aspect was ‘Having a good range of books and other stock available’ (429 responses, 19% rating it as most important)
- The least important aspect to consultation respondents was ‘Having access to computers and Wi-Fi’, with 910 people (41%) ranking it as the least important aspect and 70 (3%) ranking it as the most important aspect
- The next least important aspect is ‘Providing a good range of events and activities’ (548 responses, 24%) rating it as least important)
- Respondents felt that changes to opening hours should reflect usage patterns in individual libraries
- Respondents felt that we should explore income generation
- Respondents felt that we should not transfer the running of libraries to external bodies, especially for-profit commercial organisations
- Respondents felt that volunteers should only be used to support paid staff and should not be used to run library services in isolation. Discussion with the voluntary sector, trades unions and staff identified that there would be strong opposition to any replacement of paid staff with volunteers in delivering core services.

16 The consultation brought users together to campaign for their local library and demonstrated the strong feeling and support for libraries. Future proposals could aim to build on this support.

17 The table below demonstrates the level of support for the identified options. Some respondents gave more than one answer, so figures are proportion of respondents, not responses.

**Figure B: Proportion of respondents to public consultation expressing support for each identified option**



## **A new model for the library service**

18 In setting its default option for achieving library savings the Council was very clear that this was intended to help residents understand the impact of these savings. Through the public consultation it was made clear that the Council was actively looking for a better alternative. The consultation document itself stated “The council is keen to hear from local people, service users, staff, local communities and other interested parties of any alternative suggestions or ideas for the provision of library services. This could include creating a library trust, staff mutual, commercial operation.”

19 In addition, staff continued to research developments in library services across the country, in order for the Council to be able to consider adopting the very latest innovative approaches trialled and proven elsewhere.

20 By utilising new approaches to service delivery elsewhere, and building both on the responses to the public consultation and on extensive discussion with interested and involved groups across South Gloucestershire, a new model of service delivery has been developed. This provides a comprehensive change to previous plans by utilising new technology to increase the times public libraries are open to the public while still making a significant reduction in the revenue cost. This model is described in some detail below, as Option LIB4. It is acknowledged that the option to run unstaffed self-service libraries was not supported in the consultation. However for most libraries the proposal LIB4 uses unstaffed hours to extend core opening hours which will still be staffed by professional staff, rather than replace those staff with unstaffed hours. Option LIB4 has therefore been designed to take account of the feedback given in the consultation while still delivering significant savings.

***Option LIB4: Install Open Plus to make library facilities available from 9am to 8pm 7 days a week while introducing Community Centre Libraries in place of the mobile library and keeping Chipping Sodbury library open with local support.***

*Open Plus extending opening hours for Council run libraries*

21 Several local authorities have successfully adopted a new system called Open Plus. This is the name of the system developed by Bibliotheca which has led the way in introducing this facility nationally and internationally. Other providers are now offering their own systems to achieve the same results. If the Council agrees to implement this option a procurement exercise will be carried out, and the system eventually installed may not be named Open Plus. For ease of understanding and comparison to other library authorities the phrase Open Plus has been used throughout this report.

22 Open Plus uses modern technology to make the full range of library services available for public use without the need for staffing. This technology includes access using pre-approved library cards, and the use of CCTV for security and the identification and management of problems. There will also be a full security for each library. Users are able to issue and discharge stock themselves, using self-service facilities the library service has invested in over the past few years, and to access the IT. More information on Open Plus is attached as Appendix 2.

23 Open Plus is currently being installed at Bradley Stoke library, and will go live later this autumn. This will enable all requirements of operating it to be tested within South Gloucestershire prior to an ambitious roll out to all libraries. Using Open Plus residents would be able to use libraries, and to borrow and return stock, from 9am to 8pm, seven days a week. This provides a 101% increase in opening hours of those libraries as shown in Figure C.

24 For safety reasons under 16s would only be able to access libraries using Open Plus when accompanied. This could be by their guardians, or through group use such as school class visits could also be made.

25 Library staff would be available and on duty to help provide support and help to users at programmed and advertised times (staffed hours). The Council would also fund a service to respond to any emergency situations.

26 The level of staffed hours cannot be confirmed until the final costs of Open Plus are known. Other authorities report an average capital cost of about £25,000 per library, but this cost will vary according to each building, its layout, condition, and services installations. The average revenue cost of the annual maintenance contract with Open Plus itself is about £1,500 per site, and allowance has been made for increased utilities costs and other premises costs on a pro-rata basis.

27 Indicative costs based on the average costs elsewhere, have been calculated and used to estimate the staffed opening hours which the Council could afford to continue to provide.

28 There would be 3 tiers of staffed hours, based on current usage and issue levels, as described below. Tier 2 libraries would have more staffed hours than Tier 1; Tier 3 libraries would have more staffed hours than Tier 2. Staffed hours will be reviewed on a regular basis in the future to take account of future changes in use and demand

**Figure C: Tiers for staffed hours, based on level of issues and visits in 2015/16**

	<b>Issues 2015/16</b>	<b>Visits 2015/16</b>	<b>Tier</b>
Bradley Stoke	156,907	146,356	3
Yate	168,604	135,707	3
Thornbury	91,123	102,069	3
Hanham	84,561	74,006	2
Kingswood	66,541	73,368	2
Filton	54,778	72,940	2
Emersons Green	79,204	65,791	2
Downend	73,184	63,598	2
Staple Hill	53,902	53,780	2

	<b>Issues 2015/16</b>	<b>Visits 2015/16</b>	<b>Tier</b>
Patchway	27,708	38,033	1
Winterbourne	42,578	36,235	1
Cadbury Heath	37,629	31,639	1

29 Different levels of staffed hours will achieve different levels of saving for the Council Savings Programme. Three levels for this are shown below, in order to enable the Committee to see the impact of different savings levels. Option LIB4A shows the impact of reducing staffed hours in order to meet the current savings target of £650k per annum; LIB4B a saving of £600k; and LIB4C the impact of a reduction in order to meet the original savings target of £500k.

**Figure D: Staffed hours for Option LIB4A – delivers £650k savings per annum**

Library	Current staff opening hours	Proposed staffed opening hours			Open Plus Opening hours	Change in total hours availability	
		Staffed hours	Change from current position	% change		Hrs per week	% change
Bradley Stoke	45.5	29	-16.5	-36%	77	+ 31.5	+ 69%
Cadbury Heath	33.5	17.5	-16	-48%	77	+ 43.5	+ 130%
Chipping Sodbury	20	0	-20	-100%	77	+ 57	+ 285%
Downend Library	41.5	21.5	-20	-48%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Emersons Green	38	21.5	-16.5	-43%	77	+ 39	+ 103%
Filton Library	41.5	21.5	-20	-48%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Hanham	41.5	21.5	-20	-48%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Kingswood	41.5	21.5	-20	-48%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Patchway	33.5	17.5	-16	-48%	77	+ 43.5	+ 130%
Staple Hill	34	21.5	-12.5	-37%	77	+ 43	+ 126%
Thornbury	44	29	-15	-34%	77	+ 33	+ 75%
Winterbourne	34	17.5	-16.5	-49%	77	+ 43	+ 126%
Yate	49.5	29	-20.5	-41%	77	+ 27.5	+ 56%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>268.5</b>	<b>-229.5</b>	<b>-46%</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>+ 503</b>	<b>+ 101%</b>

**Figure E: Staffed hours for Option LIB4B – delivers £600k savings per annum**

Library	Current staff opening hours	Proposed staffed opening hours			Open Plus Opening hours	Change in total hours availability	
		Staffed hours	Change from current position	% change		Hrs per week	% change
Bradley Stoke	45.5	29	-16.5	-36%	77	+ 31.5	+ 69%
Cadbury Heath	33.5	24	-9.5	-28%	77	+ 43.5	+ 130%
Chipping Sodbury	20	0	-20	-100%	77	+ 57	+ 285%
Downend Library	41.5	24	-17.5	-42%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Emersons Green	38	24	-14	-37%	77	+ 39	+ 103%
Filton Library	41.5	24	-17.5	-42%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Hanham	41.5	24	-17.5	-42%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Kingswood	41.5	24	-17.5	-42%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Patchway	33.5	24	-9.5	-28%	77	+ 43.5	+ 130%
Staple Hill	34	24	-10	-29%	77	+ 43	+ 126%
Thornbury	44	29	-15	-34%	77	+ 33	+ 75%
Winterbourne	34	24	-10	-29%	77	+ 43	+ 126%
Yate	49.5	29	-20.5	-41%	77	+ 27.5	+ 56%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>-195</b>	<b>-39%</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>+101%</b>

**Figure E: Staffed hours for Option LIB4C – delivers £500k savings per annum**

Library	Current staff opening hours	Proposed staffed opening hours			Open Plus Opening hours	Change in total hours availability	
		Staffed hours	Change from current position	% change		Hrs per week	% change
Bradley Stoke	45.5	35	-10.5	-23%	77	+ 31.5	+ 69%
Cadbury Heath	33.5	24	-9.5	-28%	77	+ 43.5	+ 130%
Chipping Sodbury	20	0	-20	-100%	77	+ 57	+ 285%
Downend Library	41.5	26	-15.5	-37%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Emersons Green	38	26	-12	-32%	77	+ 39	+ 103%
Filton Library	41.5	26	-15.5	-37%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Hanham	41.5	26	-15.5	-37%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Kingswood	41.5	26	-15.5	-37%	77	+ 35.5	+ 86%
Patchway	33.5	24	-9.5	-28%	77	+ 43.5	+ 130%
Staple Hill	34	26	-8	-24%	77	+ 43	+ 126%
Thornbury	44	35	-9	-20%	77	+ 33	+ 75%
Winterbourne	34	24	-10	-29%	77	+ 43	+ 126%
Yate	49.5	35	-14.5	-29%	77	+ 27.5	+ 56%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>-165</b>	<b>-33%</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>+101%</b>

30 Once the number of weekly staffed hours are determined the actual opening hours will be established following further public consultation and analysis of current busy / quiet periods. Provision will be made for libraries to be checked once a day when they are unstaffed.

#### *Use of Volunteers*

31 South Gloucestershire libraries already use volunteers to provide enhanced services (such as supporting people to use IT and visiting those who are housebound). Public consultation results showed residents felt that volunteers should only be used to support paid staff and should not be used to run library services in isolation.

32 Option LIB4 therefore involves volunteers continuing to be used to provide enhanced services but not being used to support core provision. There are some areas (Chipping Sodbury; Community Centre Libraries) where volunteers would be used to provide a service in place of the Council and these are described below.

#### *Chipping Sodbury library*

33 Consultation feedback gave strong support for a library in Chipping Sodbury but as the Communities Committee report highlighted the library is in close proximity to Yate and due to its size the library offers limited library services – essentially the loan of books and access to 3 PCs.

34 It is therefore proposed that if there is sufficient commitment from a local volunteer group to staff this library to justify the capital investment, and if the owners of the property agree to the necessary changes, the Council funds self-service and Open Plus provision and continues to meet the ongoing revenue costs of Chipping Sodbury library. The Council's library service would also provide professional expertise and stock to the local group.

#### *Mobile library / Community Centre Libraries*

35 The mobile library remains very expensive per user as described in Appendix 1 paragraph 1.2, and it is still proposed to withdraw the service. Four communities, based in rural areas, responded to the consultation document to express an interest in operating Community Centre Libraries and it is felt other communities may be interested in this opportunity once the arrangements are confirmed. These would be a mini library within a community centre with a range of library books to suit the needs of that community.



36 The library service would supply:

- Regular exchange of books – possibly every month depending on need
- Access to the library issue system – this would allow the centres to issue / discharge items, this would be required if we were to support with supplying specific book requests
- Access to the library catalogue – see [www.librarieswest.org.uk](http://www.librarieswest.org.uk)
- Supply of reservations – the frequency of visits would need to be agreed and it might that the volunteers collect from their nearest library on a regular basis
- Training of volunteers – this would be around using the system, how to look for books and useful websites for book information

37 The community centre would supply:

- Secure display of books
- Named volunteer for contact
- Shelving to display stock
- Access to Wi-Fi to upload data

38 Although only four areas have come forward at this stage the Council could support up to 10 community centre libraries. These would help to provide a local library service in line with what respondents highlighted as being important in the consultation.

39 In addition the home library visiting service will continue to be provided to meet the needs of those with disabilities which prevent them from being able to visit a community library.

40 The cost of operating such a scheme is estimated at £5,000 per annum.

#### *Support for individual libraries*

41 As part of the public consultation on changes to the library service, local groups including Town and Parish Councils were given the opportunity to express interest in working with the Council to secure additional opening hours to those funded by South Gloucestershire Council. Some Parish Councils have indicated they may be willing to do so, and initial conversations held with all of these. Further, more detailed, negotiations will take place after the Council has established its default model of provision, so there is greater clarity on the opening hours this Council will provide and the cost per opening hour.

42 In addition, some groups have indicated they may be willing to form formal friends groups for individual libraries which could support fundraising activities especially if they gain charitable status. The cost of this one-off support will fall over different financial years, and can be met from existing resources.

### *Stock rotation*

43 Consultation feedback showed having a good range of books and stock available is the second most important factor to residents (first being having a local library).

44 As part of the changes required in order to meet savings targets the stock fund will be reduced by some £81k (32%). However in order to continue to provide a good range of books and stock and to maximise the use made of available stock some £12,000 will be invested in new software which uses a sophisticated algorithm to maximise use of stock by ensuring all libraries have a constant new range of titles with particular emphasis on the subjects most popular at that particular library.

### *Staff*

45 The new model is based on three tiers of staff:

- Professional librarian – these are professionally qualified staff
- Library Customer Services Supervisor\* (formerly Senior Library Assistant.) These will be responsible for staff and buildings as well as front line delivery
- Library Customer Services Assistant\* – these are trained front line staff delivering the service

\* Indicative job titles only

46 For operational management purposes libraries would be grouped into geographical clusters. Each cluster would be come under the remit of a qualified librarian, who would be responsible for managing the LCSSs and a specialised area of work on a matrix management basis.

**Figure E: Staffed hours for Option LIB4C – delivers £500k savings per annum**

<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Libraries</b>
1	Yate Library, Thornbury Library, Winterbourne Library
2	Bradley Stoke Library, Filton Library, Patchway Library
3	Downend Library, Staple Hill Library, Emersons Green Library
4	Kingswood Library, Hanham Library, Cadbury Heath Library

47 The qualified librarian posts supporting the delivery of services to children and stock development will be retained as part of core provision.

### *Financial Impact*

48 The 'ball park' costs of LIB4 described above have been calculated using averaged figures from elsewhere.

49 While other authorities quote capital costs of around £25k per library, until our individual libraries have been assessed a figure of £30k per library has been assumed along with a small contingency allowance giving an estimated £300k-£400k capital cost. This capital scheme would need to be approved by the Policy & Resources Committee, and it is proposed to fund the spend through the following means:

- Approximately £100k Section 106 monies are available;

- Delivery of changes for October 2017 will lead to an over-achievement of £60k in 2017/18 savings;
- An allocation could be made from the ECS IT reserve of at least £30k; and
- The above three sources of funding total up to £190k.

50 The initial proposal is that the balance is funded by prudential borrowing, which will cost approximately £16k per annum. Elsewhere on your Committee's agenda is a report that shows the Department is projected to underspend this year by £222k. If this underspend is confirmed at the year end, it may therefore be possible to use this underspend and avoid the use of prudential borrowing. This would require the agreement of this Committee and Policy & Resources Committee and will also depend on the Council's overall financial position at the year end. In addition, if capital costs rise prudential borrowing will be required to finance the capital spend.

51 Option LIB4 is flexible enough to deliver different levels of saving dependent on the staffed hours provided, as shown above in options LIB4A; LIB4B, and LIB4C. These are summarised in the Table below.

**Figure G: Financial and service impact of different Options**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Change in Hours Open</b>	<b>Change in Staffed Hours</b>	<b>Financial impact</b>
LIB 1	- 19%	- 19%	- £500,000
LIB 2	- 40%	- 40%	- £650,000
LIB 3	- 57%	- 57%	- £1,000,000
LIB 4A	+ 101 %	- 46%	- £650,000
LIB 4B	+ 101 %	- 39%	- £600,000
LIB 4C	+ 101 %	- 33%	- £500,000

52 If any option other than LIB2 or LIB4A is adopted the Environment and Community Services Committee will need to identify savings elsewhere in its budget to meet this shortfall.

## **Options**

53 All three Options considered by the Communities Committee in January 2016, and described in Appendix 1, remain viable. A new option – LIB4 – is described above, with different levels of saving categorised as LIB4A, LIB4B and LIB4C. The Environment and Communities Committee has the options of:

- adopting LIB1 as the default model for future library provision:
- adopting LIB2 as the default model for future library provision:
- adopting LIB3 as the default model for future library provision:
- adopting LIB4A as the default model for future library provision:
- adopting LIB4B as the default model for future library provision:
- adopting LIB4C as the default model for future library provision:
- amending any of these options and adopting that as the default model for future library provision
- adopting a new option as the default model for future library provision
- Not reducing the cost of Library Services and meeting this savings target elsewhere within its budget.

54 There is limited public support for any of the options previously considered (LIB1; LIB2 and LIB3), of which LIB1 is the least unpopular.

55 Through its public consultation the Council actively sought a different approach that would enable it to achieve savings while continuing to provide an excellent library service. Option LIB4 responds to the concerns expressed in that consultation, and utilises the latest national developments to extend service availability. Option LIB4C is recommended as this provides optimum staffed hours availability within the extended hours libraries will be available for use, even though it only achieves savings of £500k per annum.

### **Future Innovation**

56 As a result of this decision the Council will set a default model for its future public library service. During the past 12 months the Council has continued to engage closely with the Department for Culture, Media & Sport as the Government develops a new national Library Ambitions Strategy. This will help further shape future service delivery.

57 This report proposes that the Council adopts the innovative Open Plus approach which has been trialled elsewhere in order to help maintain library accessibility while reducing costs. Irrespective of the decision made, further reports should be brought to the Environment and Community Services Committee on a regular basis in order that the Council can consider the potential adoption of other exciting and innovative approaches being developed elsewhere This could include some of the following;

- *Fablabs* where the latest digital fabrication equipment is provided for use by small business and members of the community (e.g. 3D printers). They are often supported by local universities and colleges and provide access to both equipment and skilled volunteers to provide shared access to resources. They build on the basic ethos of libraries which brings together resources for sharing within the community.
- *Coding clubs* – these encourage members of the community especially young people to take an interest in computer coding. They are usually supported by volunteers and encourage people's invest in the STEM agenda
- *Small business support hubs* for people who might currently work mainly from home or use local coffee shops as a base. Through bringing people together they support the local economy and provide a hub for exchange of ideas and an affordable touch down unit. As a community they can also access advice and support from local agencies. The development of the Open Plus option allows such units to operate with minimal library support.

## **Risk Assessment**

### **Finance Implications**

58 The financial implications of the recommended option (LIB4C) are summarised in Appendix 4.

59 The net revenue budget for the Library Service is £2.6m in 2016/17. The Council Savings Programme savings target for the Library Service review included in this Committee's current and future revenue budget is £650,000 in total, with a £234,000 saving anticipated in 2017/18 increasing to £650,000 from 2018/19 onwards as approved by Council in February 2016. It should be noted that any shortfall against this savings target would require further permanent savings to be identified elsewhere in this Committee's revenue budget.

60 The recommended option LIB4C is estimated to achieve permanent savings of £500,000. This is a shortfall of £150,000 against the Council Savings Programme savings target for this review of £650,000. This Committee would be required to identify £150,000 of further savings or income when setting its 2017/18 revenue budget in order to offset the £150,000 shortfall. The figures quoted in this report are estimated at this stage of the review and will require further verification before they can be finalised.

61 A one-off sum of up to £30k would be set aside from existing resources over different financial years to support the establishment and formalisation of friends groups for individual libraries as part of the adoption of option LIB4C.

62 It is proposed that a recommendation is made to Policy and Resources Committee to approve a new capital scheme of up to £400,000 for the implementation of Open Plus in keeping with the requirements of adopting option LIB4C. This scheme would be initially funded by s106 (£100k), use of the ECS IT reserve (£30k), overachievement of the 2017/18 savings (£60k) and prudential borrowing (£210k). Elsewhere on your Committee's agenda is a report that shows the Department is projected to underspend this year by £222k. If this underspend is confirmed at the year end, it may therefore be possible to use this underspend and avoid the use of prudential borrowing. This would require the agreement of this Committee and Policy & Resources Committee and will also depend on the Council's overall financial position at the year end. Again, the figures quoted in this report for the implementation of Open Plus are estimates. The estimated annual maintenance costs for Open Plus have been included in the costings for option LIB4C.

63 If capital costs rise as a result of individual library surveys, further prudential borrowing will be required to finance the capital spend. The revenue cost of this will fall on ECS Committee and offsetting savings would be required to meet these costs.

Tim Parfit, Finance Manager

☎ 01454 863115

## **Legal Implications**

64 The Council is required by the Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service although this is not defined. There are no legal implications to introducing the default service models presented as LIB1, LIB2 and LIB4.

65 Through the public consultation carried out to date the Council has ensured that consultation on potential service changes included all identified options, and both residents and potential providers have had the opportunity to put forward alternatives.

Andrew Griffiths, Solicitor and Team Leader

☎ 01454 863037

## **Human Resources Implications**

66 Initial estimates is that there is likely to be a reduction of 30% of current staff and this is likely to result in redundancies. Steps will be taken to mitigate this reduction by searching for redeployment and or by seeking volunteers for redundancy.

Gaynor Fisher, HR Business Partner

☎ 01454 868193

## **Sustainability Implications**

67 The proposed model will extend library opening hours, increasing the Council’s overall energy and water consumption. It will thus have a negative environmental impact unless renewable energy can be provided or emissions offset. Energy efficient lighting will assist in reducing carbon emissions from longer opening times. Efficient options for heating and cooling should be assessed.

Catherine Jacobs, Transport and Environmental Policy Manager

☎ Tel 01454 862570

## **Social Implications**

68 Public libraries provide residents, and particularly vulnerable residents, with access to significant and important services. Following public consultation the report proposes a model for future service delivery which will extend the availability of core library services.

Robert Walsh, Head of Safe and Strong Communities

☎ 01454 865818

## **Economic Impacts**

69 Libraries can help support local people in seeking jobs, through providing a base for job clubs and through access to the IT that is increasingly needed for Universal Jobmatch and in order to apply for jobs. All library staff are trained in accessing these key tools in order to help applicants using library facilities. These facilities are also available at DWP Jobcentre Plus venues.

70 Libraries are also host to job and work clubs and provide access to the free business information service, which is also available via email/phone from Libraries South West

Antony Merritt, Strategic Economic Development Manager

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## **Equality Impact Assessment**

71 A draft Equality Impact Assessment was included with the public consultation documentation. An updated version of that EqIAA has been prepared, and this is summarised in Appendix 3 with this report.

72 A comprehensive Initial EqIAA accompanied the consultation on changes to the library service and as a result of the consultation findings, a full EqIAA has been produced. This is shown as a background paper to this Committee Report and an Executive Summary of the EqIAA is attached as Appendix 3.

73 Option LIB4 is based on the detailed results of all the consultation and analysis and provides an optimum level of service within the funding available. Negative impacts have been identified, however, mitigating actions have also been identified and these offer a far greater degree of mitigation than the pursuance of option LIB1.

74 A key element of LIB4 is the introduction of Open Plus. Key equalities issues related to Open Plus itself are as follows:

- **Age:** Usage of Open Plus membership will be restricted to adults aged 16 and over. This is due to safeguarding of young people and is a common policy across other authorities. Under 16s will still be able to use the library with their parents/guardians but the latter will be totally responsible for them whilst in the library and cannot leave them unattended in the library. Children and young people will still be able to use the library during staffed hours and opening hours will need to be aware of the demand from children and young people when being agreed.
- **Gender:** Reports from other authorities suggest there is a higher take up of Open Plus by men, this could be due to the concerns some women may have entering a building where there are no staff. The service will be encouraging groups to use the building during the Open Plus hours to create a positive atmosphere within the building

75 Volunteers operating Community Centre Libraries or staffed hours at Chipping Sodbury will require equalities training in the council's equality policies and processes, in order to ensure the quality of service provided by existing trained staff is maintained. This training is currently provided to staff within operational budgets and resources, and will be sufficient to meet the needs of volunteers.

76 As such, Option LIB4C has been identified by this EqIAA as the preferred option.

Robert Walsh, Head of Safe and Strong Communities

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## Privacy Impact Assessment

77 Community libraries would mean volunteers have access to users' personal information held in the library management system. They would therefore be required to follow the Council's data protection policies in order to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Robert Walsh, Head of Safe and Strong Communities

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## Risks, Mitigations & Opportunities

78 Changes to library service have proved controversial across the country and a number of successful judicial reviews have been mounted where the necessary processes have not properly been followed. The Council has therefore followed a phased consultation and decision making process in considering this topic.

79 Following that consultation a new option has been identified which achieves most of the majority views expressed by residents. This approach more than doubles the hours libraries are available for stock lending purposes although it will not achieve the full savings laid out in the Council Savings Programme

80 The estimated costs included in this report for both the capital and revenue impact of Open Plus are based on indicative information from the supplier and from other organisations who have installed similar systems in libraries. There is a risk that following detailed work the actual costs could be different to this. Mitigation for this risk would be adjustments to service provision such as staffed hours.

## Conclusions

81 As part of the Council Savings Programme a total of £650k savings are to be made in the public library service.

82 Following public consultation a new default model for library service provision is proposed. This model will increase library opening hours, but the recommended variation will only achieve library service savings of £500k.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the Environment and Communities Service Committee:
  - i. Adopts Option LIB4C (Installing Open Plus to make library facilities available from 9am to 8pm 7 days a week while introducing Community Centre Libraries in place of the mobile library and keeping Chipping Sodbury library open with local support.)
  - ii. Recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee that up to £400k capital is allocated for the implementation of Open Plus, to be initially funded through prudential borrowing; Section 106 funding for libraries; the ECS IT reserve; and an over-achievement of revenue savings by the library service in 2017/18.



- iii. Recommends to Policy & Resources that the funding package for the capital spend be reviewed at the year end to consider if there is an opportunity to substitute revenue contributions for prudential borrowing;
- iv. In setting its budget for 2017/18, identifies further savings of £150k in order to meet the shortfall in achievement of Council Savings Programme targets.
- v. Delegates to the Director of Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Environment and Community Services Committee, authority to finalise operational implementation of savings option LIB4C

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### **Background Papers**

Council Strategy 2012-2016, South Gloucestershire Council.

Council Savings Programme, South Gloucestershire Council, February 2014

Equality Impact Assessment on changes to Library Service, 2016 (available at [www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/library-review](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/library-review))

Future of Library Services in South Gloucestershire: Consultation report, South Gloucestershire Council, Summer 2016 (available at [www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/library-review](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/library-review))

Sustainable Communities Strategy, South Gloucestershire Partnership, 2012

### **Appendices**

- 1. Options for achieving library savings, January 2016
- 2. Open Plus
- 3. Summary of Equality Impact Assessment on changes to library service, 2016
- 4. Revenue financial implications for option LIB4C