

Changes to library services: Phase 2

Consultation document

Introduction

South Gloucestershire Libraries provide a statutory service to everyone in South Gloucestershire and this is currently delivered through a network of 13 branch libraries and one mobile library. Most libraries currently provide the following services and facilities:

- A comprehensive range of books, audio books and books in large print
- Access to computers and a range of software and free Wi-Fi access
- Information services
- DVDs and CDs for hire
- Photocopying (except Chipping Sodbury Library)
- Language learning packs
- A wide range of learning opportunities
- Newspapers and magazines
- A range of children's events and school holiday activities
- Space for hire

The council savings programme is our response to national austerity measures and the sharp fall in the amount of grant funding received from central government. The Council has already saved £56million mainly through efficiency measures but we are now planning to save a further £22million by 2019-20. All areas of the council have been given outline savings targets on this journey towards 2020.

Our library service has been identified as an area which could potentially contribute towards these savings. To understand how this might be achieved we ran a consultation over spring and summer 2016. This consultation is referred to here as 'consultation phase 1'.

The Environment and Community Services Committee considered the results of consultation phase 1 and has selected a preferred option for the future of the library service. This preferred option is now the subject of a further round of consultation, referred to here as 'consultation phase 2'. This next round of consultation is happening in autumn 2016. Comments are also still welcomed on the proposals set out in consultation phase 1.

What happened in consultation phase 1?

There was a large response to consultation phase 1, with more than 3,600 people responding and making more than 15,000 individual comments.

The consultation outlined three options for how the required savings could be achieved, as well as asking for suggestions for other alternative ways to make savings. Respondents were asked for their opinion on issues relating to the three options such as the importance of different aspects of the library service, the suitability of the potential options and their feelings about potential service changes such as the closure of the mobile library service.

Full details of consultation phase 1 including the full consultation results and committee report can be found here: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/library-review/>.

Headline results from phase 1

- 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.

The committee report that was published as a result of this consultation took account of the points made above, and outlined a new preferred option which aims to deliver the required savings while safeguarding those things which people told us were most important to them. This new preferred option is explained fully in the following pages.

What is the new preferred option?

Having considered the feedback given in consultation phase 1, the Environment and Community Services Committee has selected a new preferred option which is now the subject of a further round of consultation. This option is as follows:

Install open access technology to make library facilities available from 08:30am to 19:30pm 7 days a week while introducing Community Centre Libraries in place of the mobile library and keeping Chipping Sodbury library open with local support.

The key points of this new preferred option are:

- The savings target would be reduced from £650,000 to £500,000 (within a budget of £2.6million), enabling staffed opening hours to be reduced by a smaller amount than proposed in consultation phase 1.
- The service would introduce an 'open access' technology to enable libraries to open without staff, extending opening times by nearly 100% on current hours (through a one off investment in the equipment required).
- The mobile library service would be replaced with community centre based libraries across South Gloucestershire and run by volunteer groups.
- South Gloucestershire Council would fund the costs of running the Chipping Sodbury Library building with the service being delivered by volunteers
- The bookfund would be reduced by £81,000

The second round of consultation seeks views on this preferred option, along with any suggestions for alternative options, from interested stakeholders.

The preferred option is described in detail over the next few pages.

Staffing and opening hours

Currently libraries are open between four and six days a week, with a range of hours between 20 per week in Chipping Sodbury and 49.5 in Yate. All these hours are staffed.

In the future, the council is proposing that libraries are divided into 'tiers' based on their usage levels, arranged into geographic 'clusters' to enable staffed hours to be coordinated at a local level and given a staffed opening hours pattern which reflects local use.

Current library opening hours are as follows:

Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total hours
Bradley Stoke	10:30-18:00	10:30-20:00	Closed	10:30-18:00	10:30-20:00	09:30-17:00	11:00-15:00	45.5
Cadbury Heath	09:00-19:00	Closed	Closed	09:00-17:00	09:00-17:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	33.5
Chipping Sodbury	Closed	09:30-12:30 13:30-17:00	09:30-12:30 13:30-17:00	Closed	09:00-13:00	09:30-12:30	Closed	20
Downend	09:30-19:00	Closed	09:30-17:00	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	41.5
Emersons Green	Closed	10:30-20:00	Closed	10:30-20:00	10:30-18:00	09:30-17:00	11:00-15:00	38
Filton	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	41.5
Hanham	09:00-17:00	09:00-19:00	Closed	09:00-17:00	09:00-17:00	09:30-17:30	Closed	41
Kingswood	09:30-17:00	09:30-17:00	09:30-19:00	Closed	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	41.5
Patchway	Closed	09:00-19:00	09:00-17:00	Closed	09:00-17:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	33.5
Staple Hill	Closed	09:30-19:00	Closed	09:30-17:00	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	34
Thornbury	08:45-17:30	08:45-17:30	08:45-19:00	Closed	08:45-17:30	09:30-17:00	Closed	44
Winterbourne	Closed	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	Closed	34
Yate	09:30-19:00	09:30-19:00	Closed	09:30-19:00	09:30-19:00	09:30-17:00	11:00-15:00	49.5
Mobile	19 public hours per week; the rest is spent travelling between stops							19
Total hours	70.25	96.75	49.25	69.00	106.75	93.50	12.00	516.5

In the preferred option each library would have some staffed hours (with additional hours being provided as part of an 'open access' system, explained later in this document, when no staff will be present). The follow sections explain how staffed hours would be decided for each library.

Tiers

The number of staffed hours per week for each library proposed is based on current usage levels. For busier libraries we have proposed slightly more staffed hours than other libraries which are less busy. There are three 'tiers' of hours:

Library	Items issued	Visits	Tier	Proposed staffed hours per week
	2015/16	2015/16		
Bradley Stoke	156,907	146,356	3	35
Yate	168,604	135,707	3	35
Thornbury	91,123	102,069	3	35
Hanham	84,561	74,006	2	26
Kingswood	66,541	73,368	2	26
Filton	54,778	72,940	2	26
Emersons Green	79,204	65,791	2	26
Downend	73,184	63,598	2	26
Staple Hill	53,902	53,780	2	26
Patchway	27,708	38,033	1	24
Winterbourne	42,578	36,235	1	24
Cadbury Heath	37,629	31,639	1	24

Geographic clusters

In order to try and ensure that there is always a staffed library available in the local area, the libraries have been grouped into geographic 'clusters' wherever possible. Within each cluster, the staffed hours have been arranged so that there should always be at least one library with staffed hours available from Monday to Saturday. The times of these staffed hours may vary and options for these are given later in this consultation document.

The proposed 'clusters' are as follows:

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

Options for staffed opening hours

Feedback from consultation phase 1 was that people valued having a library local to them and that any changes to staffed hours should be made based on patterns of usage. We have therefore drawn up three different options for staffed hours which take into account this feedback.

Having looked at various staffing patterns across the week and across the four clusters, the council has drawn up some options for how staffed hours could be arranged. Option 1 is based on current usage levels across the week. Option 2 is a similar pattern of hours but with libraries closing for an hour over lunchtime, and option 3 gives a more regular spread of staffed hours across the week but with less hours each day.

None of the options outlined below include Sunday opening hours. This is due to higher costs of employing staff on a Sunday.

We would like to hear your views on these proposals, along with any alternative suggestions for patterns of staffed opening hours.

Opening hours option 1:

Option 1 proposes opening hours that reflect current usage patterns. Usage tends to be busier in the mornings. Opening and finishing times vary to reflect current usage patterns. Details of usage patterns can be seen in the information packs provided in the phase 1 consultation and available from libraries.

Cluster 1

Cluster 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total hours
Thornbury	09.30-17.30		09.30-17.30	09.30-17.30	09.30-17.30	09.30-12.30		35
Winterbourne		10.00-17.00	10.00-17.00		10.00-17.00	09.30-12.30		24
Yate	10:00-17:00	10:00-18:00		10:00-18:00	10:00-17:00	10.00-15.00		35
Total hours for cluster 1	15	15	15	16	22	11	0	94

Cluster 2

Cluster 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total hours
Bradley Stoke	09.30-18.00	09.30-17.00		09.30-18.00	09.30-17.00	09.30-12.30		35
Filton	10.00-17.00	10:00-18:00		09.30-17.30		10.00-13.00		26
Patchway		10.00-17.00	10.00-17.00		10.00-17.00	10.00-13.00		24
Total hours for cluster 2	15.5	22.5	7	16.5	14.5	9	0	85

Cluster 3

Cluster 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total hours
Downend	09.30-17.30		09.30-17.00		10.00-17.00	09.30-13.00		26
Emersons Green		10.00-18.00		10.00-18.00	10.00-17.00	10.00-13.00		26
Staple Hill		09.30-17.30		10.00-17.00	09.30-17.30	10.00-13.00		26
Total hours for cluster 3	8	16	7.5	15	22	9.5	0	78

Cluster 4

Cluster 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total hours
Cadbury Heath	09.00-17.00			10.00-16.30	10.00-17.00	10.00-12.30		24
Hanham	10.00-17.00	09.30-17.30		09.30-17.30		09.30-12.30		26
Kingswood	09.30-17.30		09.30-17.30		10.00-17.00	09.30-12.30		26
Total hours for cluster 4	23	8	8	14.5	14	8.5	0	76

Opening hours option 2:

Option 2 is based on the same hours as option 1 above, but some libraries could close for one hour over lunchtime. This would allow the hour of staffed time to be added onto the start of the day, the end of the day or a mixture of both. This time could be added to staffed hours on any day of the week. The downside is that users would be unable to access a staffed library for one hour in the middle of the day.

As part of the consultation we would like to hear how people think this additional time could be used if this option is selected.

Opening hours option 3:

The third option for opening hours is to open the library for a much shorter time period every day. This has the advantages of keeping libraries open every day from Monday to Saturday, however it is not based on current usage patterns. The hours could start later in the day, for example 1.00 – 5.30, and extend past the end of the school day. Some of these staffing patterns may prove difficult to resource.

Other opening hours options:

These are just three options for how opening hours could be structured to make the savings. These options are not set and they could evolve and change as a result of this consultation and conversations with stakeholders and service users over the coming months.

We are keen to hear from people about any alternative proposals that they may have for staffed opening hours.

Mobile Library

The mobile vehicle has already passed its useful shelf-life and is in need of replacement. A decision has been taken to delay replacement pending this review.

Consultation phase 1 described how the mobile library is the most expensive library per user in South Gloucestershire. It costs £80,000 per year and analysis of 12 months' data showed:

- 578 people borrowed an item and a further 200 people used it to return items borrowed from another library. This results in a cost per user of £102 per year compared to an average of £51 per user per year across all South Glos libraries
- 87% of mobile library members also visit a static library. This mean there are only 101 unique users of the mobile library service at a cost of £792 each.

If the current mobile library service were to be withdrawn, vulnerable residents would be supported through the existing home visit service provided to the elderly and the housebound.

Consultation phase 1 proposed that the mobile library no longer be supported by South Gloucestershire Council, with vulnerable residents being supported through the home visit service or being encouraged to use other library locations. There were a number of comments expressing concern at the impact on older people and people with disabilities, and 501 people stated that the service should not be cut. However there were also 235 comments stating that the council should no longer provide the mobile library service.

In the preferred option the council is proposing to cease providing the mobile library service but instead work to develop a network of community libraries based in community centres which would be managed and staffed by volunteers but using South Gloucestershire library service stock and IT systems. This reflects the importance put on having a local library service by respondents to consultation phase 1. 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.

Four communities in rural areas responded to the consultation document to express an interest in operating community centre libraries and it is considered that 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.

The council could support up to 10 community centre libraries. Further details of how these community centre libraries would run (including how to express an interest in running a community library) is available on request.

Chipping Sodbury Library

Chipping Sodbury library is currently funded and staffed by South Gloucestershire Council. Consultation phase 1 described how the library premises costs are £9k per annum as it is leased at a peppercorn rent. However the majority of costs relate to staff (£33k) and IT and this library costs £42k to run.

Consultation phase 1 proposed the council no longer funds Chipping Sodbury library and the service either be supported through external local funding / volunteers or users be encouraged to visit Yate library instead.

Many people took the opportunity to comment on the proposals for Chipping Sodbury: 417 people felt that there should not be any cuts, but 268 people said they did not use the library. A similar number of comments (238) either expressed concern about the loss of a community resource or said that the library should be closed.

In the preferred option the council is proposing to continue funding the costs of Chipping Sodbury library building on the understanding that a volunteer group would provide the staff to keep the library running. This would mean the library would still be available as a community resource for local people to access. The council's library service would also provide professional expertise to the group and stock and IT support for the library

Book fund

South Gloucestershire libraries provide a wide range of books and other materials for customer use. As part of these proposals there would be a reduction in the book fund of around £81,000 within a current book fund of £285,000. 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.

This software would use 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.

Open access

All libraries in South Gloucestershire contain books, PCs and space for people to meet and study. In the last few years the library service has adopted IT systems which allow users to access services without the need for staff support.

These IT systems allow people to issue and return items (with 85% of our items issued now being via our self-service kiosks and many people choosing to log on to PCs). In 2016 we also introduced a self-printing service which allows users to pay for printing from the PCs.

The council is considering an option to build on this use of technology by introducing a swipe card 'open access' system which would allow registered users who have been through a short induction session to enter the library when staff are not present. Users will be able to issue books and use facilities such as the computers and printers. This proposal is subject to cost and risk assessments.

Eligible library members will be able to apply to use the open access system. Members will use their existing library card and will receive a full induction to understand how to access and safely use library buildings when there are no staff on duty. The council's preferred option is that users under 16 years old would not be able to access library buildings without a member over the age of 16.

It is proposed that open access would be available at all library sites from 08:30am-19:30pm 7 days a week.

Open access is being proposed as a way to mitigate the effects of a possible reduction in staffed hours, while recognising the value that staff bring to library users. The use of open access would increase the number of hours that a library was available which may mean that people who are currently unable to use the service may have the opportunity to do so.

Capital funding for open access will be found from outside the library service budget as a one-off payment for installation. This funding cannot be used to pay for staffing which is an ongoing annual cost.

It is therefore important to note that the funding for open access is not being proposed as an alternative to funding staffed hours, and if open access was not implemented then the staffed hours in this preferred option would not correspondingly increase.

Some more information about open access:

Q: How does open access work?

A: Registered library members will be able to use their existing library card with a PIN to 'swipe in' to the library. Their card will act as a key to release the door lock and the door will open. All the services – lights, heating, and computers – will be activated upon entry.

The library will be covered by CCTV which will record both inside the building and outside, and each person entering will be recorded.

At closing time an announcement will warn people in the library that the building is closing. These announcements will commence 15 minutes before the actual close time. The lights will also gradually dim as a visual cue that the library is about to close. Once closed, if someone has not left the building, an alarm will be activated and security staff will be alerted.

Q: How will users register for open access?

A: All library users over the age of 16 will be able to register for open access. The registration process will include an induction session to learn how open access works.

Q: What services can I use in open access hours?

A: Everything you can do when staff are present – use the quiet space to meet or study, borrow or return books and other items through the self-service kiosks, use the computers and Wi-Fi, or use the printer/photocopier.

Q: What are the proposed open access hours?

A: We are proposing that open access is available from 08:30am-19:30pm 7 days a week. Some of these hours would be staffed. This will still allow groups to use the libraries in the evenings (with most meetings starting at 19.30 in the way that they currently do and people to visit the library early in the morning (e.g. on way to school / work).

Q: Can anyone use the library during open access hours?

A: The current proposal is that any library member over the age of 16 can register to use open access. Those under the age of 16 would be welcome to use the library during open access hours when accompanied by a parent or carer who is registered for the scheme. During registration and induction, staff will explain how it works and what to do if there are any problems.

Q: How will you stop unauthorised people entering the building?

A: The open access system will record everyone who enters and exits the library. Using CCTV images the council will be able to take appropriate action in response to any incidents. As part of the induction users will be informed of the fact that these images are being recorded.

Q: What if something doesn't work?

A: We will provide a fault reporting book on the library counter. If you leave a note about something not working – or a comment about any aspect of the open access service – we will attend to it as soon as possible. Additionally, each library will be checked by security staff on each day that there are no library staff present.

Q: Could I get locked in?

A: There will be automatic announcements warning people that the library will be closing. The closure procedure will be explained to users as part of their induction when they register to use the service so they are aware of closure procedures. If anyone is still in the library after closure an alarm will trigger and security staff will be alerted.

Q: What are the costs of open access?

A: The initial cost to set up open access is estimated at £300,000-£400,000 which will not come from the library budget. The cost of opening per hour is about £1.50 per hour. The proposal is subject to costs not exceeding £400,000 and satisfactory risk assessments.

Q: Who do we think the additional service will benefit?

Opening the library for longer hours will not only benefit existing users but may result in people who do not use the existing service becoming library users. The buildings will also be available to local groups to hold meetings at no charge.

Q: Do we have open access already?

A: Open access technology is currently being installed at Bradley Stoke library. The decision to install this technology was not taken as part of this review, but was made possible because of the opportunity presented by the ongoing leisure centre development alongside community infrastructure contributions received from housing developers in the local area. Once open access is live in Bradley Stoke we will be reviewing its progress and looking to learn any lessons we can. This learning will be taken into account as part of the decision-making process at the end of this consultation.

Q: Do I have to use open access?

A: No. Under these proposals, staffed hours will still be available at all libraries and the use of the libraries while in open access mode would be entirely voluntary.

Further comments on consultation phase 1

While the broad purpose of this phase 2 consultation is to seek views on this preferred option, the consultation is a process in two stages and comments are welcomed about all proposals that have been included in both phases 1 and 2.

How can I find out more, get involved and have a say?

Further information

We welcome comments on the options outlined in this paper for our library services and to understand better what the impact of any changes could be on service users, the provision of services and the wider community.

The consultation is open between 10 October 2016 and 02 January 2017.

To support this consultation, the council is making available a wide range of information available:

- A Frequently Asked Questions document giving more information about the library service and these proposals. We will add to this as the consultation is running
- The library services review equality impact assessment
- The report (and appendices) that went to Environment and Community Services committee on 7 September 2016, including the revised recommendations setting
- Some national reports on libraries
- The full report from consultation phase 1

- Information packs for each library outlining the current services provided and usage information, opening hours, running costs, satisfaction information, membership information and levels of staffing and volunteering

Our dedicated consultation webpage is: **www.southglos.gov.uk/librarychanges**

Ways to have your say

You can find out more or tell us your views by:

- Completing our consultation survey – available from the library or [online](#)
- Email: consultation@southglos.gov.uk
- Write to: FREEPOST RTCT-JXLE-EETT, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Library Consultation, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, BRISTOL, BS15 9TR
- Phone: 01454 868154

We will be holding two public meetings during the consultation period, as well as giving presentations at [community engagement forums](#).

The public meetings will be:

- Yate Library, Tuesday 1st November at 7pm
- Kingswood Library, Thursday 10th November at 7pm

Details of consultation events or meetings can be found on our website. If you would like someone to talk to your group or organisation about these proposals, please contact us using the details above to arrange.