



Committee and Date

Cabinet

12 July 2017

Draft Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, 2018 to 2023

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1.0 Summary

This report seeks approval to consult on a new draft Library Services Strategy (the Strategy) for Shropshire. Shropshire Council is proud of its library services. This Strategy reflects our ambition and commitment to continue to unlock the huge potential that library services have to impact positively on individuals' lives while at the same time delivering local priorities. Whilst acknowledging that this is a particularly challenging time for library services, it is also clear that they are highly valued by local communities and stakeholders alike. The next five years are crucial for the long-term sustainability and success of public library services in Shropshire.

The Strategy sets out a vision to make libraries in Shropshire the heart of their communities. In support of this vision, the Strategy describes four strategic objectives:

1. Improving literacy and encouraging reading
2. Improving and sustaining the health and well-being of Shropshire communities
3. Encouraging communities to be inclusive and prosperous
4. Ensuring that libraries become more enterprising and self-sustaining

The Strategy sets out a hierarchy of library services provision and describes how the Council can meet its statutory requirements to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" by providing:

- Static library provision within six Tier 1 locations – Library Hubs – and seven Tier 2 locations – Community Libraries.
- 277 Mobile Library stops, principally responding to challenges of an ageing population and access to services in a rural context.
- Digital library services including 24-hour access to a range of lending and information resources

The hierarchy of library services provision is intended to inform decisions on future investment and revenue support. The Strategy does not set out to close any existing library services, but it does recognise that the Council will need to prioritise where it provides financial support.

100% of Shropshire residents will be able to access static libraries within one of these thirteen locations or a mobile library stop within a 20-minute drive time. In setting this out we recognise that the way that people access library services is much more complicated than this simple analysis suggests, for example, not everyone has access to a car, and that public and community transport options in rural areas are more limited.

The Strategy also reaffirms the Council's commitment to investing in digital services and to supporting a range of "core and targeted library services".

Once the Strategy is approved the Council will work with a broad range of interested parties to develop a co-ordinated and jointly owned detailed five-year implementation plan.

2.0 Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

- A.** Comment on and confirm the draft Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, 2018 to 2023.
- B.** Confirm that a ten-week public and stakeholder consultation is undertaken on the draft Library Services Strategy for Shropshire prior to bringing the outcomes of the consultation and the final Strategy back to Cabinet for approval.
- C.** Confirm a delegation to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure Services to finalise the draft Strategy and public consultation before a report is brought back to Cabinet in Autumn 2017.

REPORT

3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

A number of risks related to the successful implementation of the strategy have been identified.

Risk	Mitigation actions
Confirmation of the Library Services Strategy and the proposed minimum library provision fails to comply with Section 7 of the Public Library and Museum Act 1964 (see below)	There are no proposals to close any static libraries and the Council will continue to support "community groups" to develop sustainable funding solutions to their long-term management. Where solutions cannot be found for libraries that fall outside the Council's assessment of its minimum requirement to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons",

	<p>the Council may as a last resort consult on possible closure. From our detailed assessment, we believe that the proposed provision described within this report will meet the Council's statutory requirements and will provide library services for all residents in the county.</p>
<p>Adoption of the Strategy results in a detrimental impact to individual and community outcomes including literacy, health and well-being, prosperity, etc.</p>	<p>The Council recognises that it will take time and resources, staff and financial, to support the development of sustainable library services. This is why the Strategy proposes to phase in new arrangements within the context of the development of a detailed five-year action plan.</p> <p>The Council has a strong commitment to working to promote equality, diversity and social inclusion. The potential impact of the Strategy on library users, particularly those who might be impacted by any change has been assessed through the completion of an Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment - see Appendix 3. This will be kept under review in response to the public and stakeholder consultation and other relevant circumstances.</p>
<p>Lack of stakeholder engagement and public involvement in the development of the Strategy results in challenge to the Strategy and resultant delay to its adoption as a framework for future Council investment and support</p>	<p>Advice has been received from the Libraries Task Force, Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (CILIP) and Society of Chief Librarians in the development of the draft Strategy.</p> <p>A ten-week public and stakeholder consultation will take place on the draft Strategy prior to final completion and approval. The consultation will be promoted via the Council's web site and to existing library users via static and mobile library services.</p>
<p>Lack of staff and financial resources to implement the Strategy, including investment in improvements to services and ongoing revenue support</p>	<p>The Council will continue to apply dedicated expert library staff resources to the implementation of the Strategy and, where appropriate, will use the Community Enablement Team to support local facilitation.</p> <p>Where appropriate, investment will be</p>

	<p>sought from external funding organisations, such as the Arts Council and DCMS. Capital investment proposals will be appraised through the Council's capital programme on an "invest to save" basis.</p> <p>Proactive "back office" support across a range of countywide library functions will continue to be provided to community managed libraries.</p>
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The Council's statutory responsibility

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (section 7). In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

In providing this service, local authorities must, among other things:

- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b)) Note that there are exceptions for example for the notification of the availability of reserved items and library overdue charges, and for the lending of audio visual material.

The Council also has statutory duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [section 149: Public Sector Equality Duty](#) in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees. An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment is included within **Appendix 3**. This will be kept under review in the context of the outcomes of public and stakeholder consultation, the finalisation of the Strategy and the development of a detailed implementation plan.

The hierarchy of provision described within the Strategy does not set out to close any existing static library, but it does recognise that the Council will need to prioritise where it provides financial support. Any individual proposals for significant investment and / or decommissioning in static libraries will be brought back to Cabinet with further individual ESIIAs. These assessments will consider the potential impact for people in, for example, the groupings of Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Gender, and Religion and Belief.

However, the Strategy does set out proposals to reduce the number of mobile library stops based on a thorough assessment of alternative provision and the potential impact to library users. In designing future proposed stops, we have retained stops for borrowers who would be unable to travel to an alternative

stop because of a lack of transport or mobility problems. We have also identified housebound readers who either will continue to receive a service via the mobile library or will receive a home library service from a nearby static branch. Volunteers will be recruited to choose books from the mobile library and to deliver to housebound readers in their village. Where possible, after school stops have also been retained.

4.0 Financial implications

Shropshire Council is projected to have a funding gap of £36.6 million by the end of 2019/20.

Shropshire library services has achieved £1.015m savings over the past three financial years. This has been achieved through significant service redesign to provide a library service that embraces different delivery models; through the transfer of smaller libraries to town and parish councils or community organisations, investment in digital and virtual services, and through the delivery of an ambitious outreach programme targeted at meeting council outcomes.

This report is written on the assumption that the Council wants to continue to support a “comprehensive library service” across the county for the benefit of the community, but that it needs to do this based on a thorough understanding of need and budget constraints.

The current Council annual revenue budget in support of the delivery of library services breaks down as follows:

Library services	Current Net Controllable* Budget for 2017/18
Library Hubs x6	£870,720
Community Libraries x15	£306,150
Mobile libraries x4	£184,440
Library development & support including IT & Community directory	£534,020
Library Materials – book fund	£218,500
Library Management	£166,240
Total	£2,280,070

*excludes the cost of internal support services and ‘below the line’ costs

Going forward the Strategy proposes an approach in which there is a potential long-term financial commitment to supporting the provision of libraries within six Tier 1 Library Hub locations¹, a fleet of mobile libraries and a range of “back office” functions.

The Strategy is based on the delivery of a Mobile Library Service to 277 of the existing 354 stops. This means that 78% of the existing stops will continue. These changes will enable the Council to make a saving of £46,110 whilst protecting the service for those in greatest need.

The Strategy proposes to move to cost neutral provision for 15 Tier 1 and Tier 2 Community Libraries while recognising that in some cases this may require time limited investment and support.

Specifically, the Strategy aims to achieve cost neutral provision at all seven Tier 2 facilities by the end of 2022/23 and at all eight Tier 3 facilities by the end of 2018/19. This would save the Council approximately £143,000 per annum by the end of 2018/19, increasing to approximately £329,000 per annum from the end of 2022/23.

This can be summarised as follows:

Library		Financial Support	Number of Libraries	Library Description
Statutory Library Provision	Tier 1 Library Hubs	Ongoing revenue support	6	Shrewsbury Oswestry Market Drayton Whitchurch Ludlow Bridgnorth
	Tier 2 Community Libraries	Cost neutral to the Council by the end of 2022/23	7	Library at the Lantern, Shrewsbury Cleobury Mortimer Church Stretton Bishop's Castle Ellesmere Pontesbury Albrighton
	Mobile Libraries	Ongoing revenue support	277 stops	
Tier 3 Community Libraries		Cost neutral to the Council by the end of	8	Broseley Shifnal Wem Highley

¹ For an explanation and list of proposed tier 1, 2 and 3 libraries see section 8.0

	2018/19		Craven Arms Much Wenlock Gobowen Bayston Hill
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Revenue support to a number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 community libraries is currently subject to existing operating agreements, but it is anticipated that following the end of these agreements, ongoing revenue support will be determined according to the status of the library described above. It is recognised that revenue support will need to be negotiated on an individual basis to reflect different local circumstances.

Shropshire Council was successful in winning a £520,000 share of the Government's £89.4m Transformation Challenge Award in 2015. To date the funding has assisted with the redesign of six of its libraries (and Customer Service Points) through transferring the management of each library service, Customer Service Point and the building they are housed in to community-based enterprises, and to developing these as "community hubs". The funding has also been used to increase the capacity and confidence of town and parish councils and voluntary organisations to take on the delivery and management of assets and services.

Beyond the balance of funding remaining the Council will continue to work to acquire external funding to support the future sustainability of library services. Access to the Council's Capital Programme will also be pursued as appropriate. Projects will be subject to a capital appraisal on an individual basis. Where the responsibility for the management of services is being transferred to new organisations, an "invest to save" approach may be adopted within the context of wider commercial discussions and considerations.

It is recognised that the detailed approach described here may need to be reviewed in the light of the Council's financial strategy and emerging forecast financial position.

5.0 Current library services provision

Library services in Shropshire operate through a network of community libraries, mobile libraries and other services, which together provide access to library services in every market town and in all parts of a very rural and sparsely populated county. In more detail the library service in Shropshire includes (at June 2017):

6 libraries run by Shropshire Council within large market	Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Market Drayton
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towns and main urban centres	
7 community libraries run by Shropshire Council within local market towns	Gobowen, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill, Wem, Library at the Lantern, Pontesbury, Much Wenlock
8 community libraries run by local community group / town councils, etc. within local market towns	Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Craven Arms, Highley, Shifnal, Cleobury Mortimer, Ellesmere
4 Mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council	Cover 354 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours long on a fortnightly rota
Stoke Heath Prison Library	Operated under contract from Her Majesty's Prisons
Specialist library services	Digital Library Services Home Library Service Community Directory Music and Drama Service Reading Group Service Visitor Information Services (in Bridgnorth and Church Stretton) Gateway to a range of Council, other public and partner services (in some locations)

In summary, the core library offers provided through the services described above include:

- A free, safe, neutral space
- Free computer and Wi-Fi use
- Free book loans for all ages and all abilities (large print, dyslexia friendly, Quick Reads titles)
- Free 24 hours e-library (e-books, e-magazine, e-newspapers, Community Directory)
- Free online and library reference resources
- Free social space for a variety of groups to learn and socialise
- Reading Group, Home Library, Music and Drama service

Recent countywide trends for a number of usage measures for Shropshire's library services are shown below:

Shropshire Libraries Totals	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	% change	% change from
Visits	1,340,186	1,278,112	1,067,825	1,032,582	1,000,012	- 25%	-3%
Active Users ²	47,634	44,286	41,564	41,639	46,249	-3%	11%
Computer Time Used (mins)	5,824,934	6,026,964	5,504,397	4,773,696	4,453,632	- 24%	-7%
Total Loans	1,274,871	1,197,643	1,080,888	963,019	892,001	- 30%	-7%
Requests	87,281	80,217	80,930	74,068	65,963	- 24%	-11%
Event attendance	29,192	34,000	32,691	33,144	38,226	31%	15%
No. of volunteers	192	272	332	412	323	68%	-21%
No. of volunteer hours	7,775	10,202	10,003	11,482	13,119	69%	14%
Enquiries ³	274,316	255,371	281,210	289,717	332,146	21%	15%
E-book loans	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,841	14,426	n/a	375%
E-magazine loans	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,181	9,267	n/a	29%
Home Library Service users	171	160	199	155	102	- 40%	4%
Wi-Fi use	New Wi-Fi installed across libraries in March 2016. Use since then has increased by 17.6% with an average of 1,988 users per month.						

² **Active Library User** figures indicate the number of people registered at a particular library who have used any Shropshire library over the previous 12 months. 'Use' is defined as borrowing/returning an item of library stock or using library computers. Postcodes of active library user data have been mapped using the Ordnance Survey Codepoint file. This matches postcodes to postcode centroids and not exact locations, locations can refer to more than one address (usually a cluster of 15 addresses). The coordinated position will always be within the notional geographical extent of the postcode.

³ The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy definition of an enquiry is "any question, however received (e.g. in person, by letter, by phone) leading to the active involvement of staff in identifying and answering problems posed by library users".

The overall decline in key measures reflects national trends. Online developments mean that it is now easier to access a range of library services without actually visiting a library. This includes renewing and requesting items and accessing a selection of online resources, plus newer services such as e-books and e-magazines. While the use of these remote services is increasing, there has generally been a corresponding reduction in the number of physical visits to libraries and in the use of library computers.

The number of total loans will also have been affected by the wider availability of discounted paperbacks in supermarkets and from online retailers, and the reduction in the library book fund in recent years.

6.0 Background to the development of a new Library Services Strategy

Three reports taken to the Environment Services Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2014, 22nd June 2015 and 11th July 2016 summarise progress made on the countywide redesign of library services.

A report taken to Cabinet on the 14th October 2015 confirmed that a “locality commissioning approach” would be adopted for the introduction of new management arrangements at smaller libraries and that a new management and delivery structure would be developed for the larger principal market town libraries (Library Hubs). Further reports taken to Cabinet on 27th July 2016 confirmed the closure of Shawbury Library and a reduction in opening hours to a number of libraries.

The key objectives of the draft Library Services Strategy are to:

- Analyse the supply and demand for library services and design innovative services that are fit for the future.
- Ensure that the delivery of library services is undertaken with full reference to relevant strategic and local priorities including well-being considerations and financial constraints.
- Clarify the role of the Council as commissioner, provider, partner and/or enabler of library services.
- Confirm an approach for Council support for the future provision of library services.
- Maximise engagement with existing and potential customers and key stakeholders.

In developing and delivering a draft Library Services Strategy for Shropshire, we have applied the following underlying principles:

- The provision of information and reading will remain fundamental to public library provision, but will take account of the shifts in society and the opportunities provided by technological developments.
- The importance of libraries as community spaces, as a hub for people, for creativity, learning, information, for the delivery of other services

and for providing a wide range of support to local communities and people.

- The opportunity to work with individuals and organisations as co-creators and co-deliverers of libraries and the services delivered within them so that they best reflect the needs of local communities.

7.0 Draft Library Services Strategy, 2018 to 2023

In developing a new draft Library Services Strategy for Shropshire expert input has been provided from the Libraries Task Force, the Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals and the Society of Chief Librarians. We have used this input, alongside consideration of other library strategies and best practice elsewhere, to develop Shropshire's draft Strategy.

The draft Library Services Strategy, 2018 to 2023, is included as **Appendix 1**. The Needs Assessment, included as **Appendix 2**, should be read as part of the overall Strategy.

The draft Strategy does not include a detailed implementation plan; rather it sets out the context within which a plan will be developed. We propose to develop this plan based on feedback on the public consultation on the Strategy and by working with a broad range of partners and stakeholders.

Key elements and recommendations from the Strategy are included within this report.

Our Vision is to make libraries in Shropshire the heart of their communities.

Our Mission is to work in partnership with others to empower everyone to live healthy, resilient and fulfilling lives, and to provide library services that inspire people's learning and enjoyment.

We will achieve this by implementing the following Strategic Objectives:

1. Improving literacy and encouraging reading
2. Improving and sustaining the health and well-being of Shropshire communities
3. Encouraging communities to be inclusive and prosperous
4. Ensuring that libraries become more enterprising and self-sustaining

Library services will continue to provide a "universal offer" in physical library spaces and across the full range of digital and virtual platforms. Libraries will serve all sections of the community, while concentrating resources to where they are most needed and can be most beneficial including:

- Both ends of the age spectrum – children and older people. Libraries will continue to play a key role in "signposting" older people to a range of community based "preventative" services, and in promoting literacy and providing activities that support children, young people and families

- Disadvantaged communities and people. Libraries will, for example, continue to support people who lack computer and internet skills and who need help to find work.

In developing this Strategy, the Council recognises two important considerations:

- It will take time to develop and nurture new approaches. Time will be needed to develop collaborative community working, to up-skill the local community workforce and to widen the market of potential library service providers.
- Each community / town is different and whilst there are some common issues, a one-size fits all approach is unlikely to work.

8.0 What this means in practice

Our Strategy is underpinned by an understanding of the unique character of Shropshire and the opportunities and issues facing its residents. We have developed a detailed Needs Assessment, **Appendix 2**, for Shropshire in support of recommendations made within the draft Strategy. From this, we have developed the following key considerations for the design of a hierarchy of library services provision:

1. Accessibility
2. Usage of the facilities
3. Population including population density and its demographic make up
4. Deprivation

We have applied this approach to the design of a hierarchy of library services provision. This hierarchy is intended to inform decisions on future investment and revenue support. It does not set out to close any existing library services, but it does recognise that the Council will need to prioritise where it provides financial support.

Proposed hierarchy of library services provision

Library Services Provision	Details
Tier 1 Library Hubs (urban centres & larger market towns)	Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Market Drayton
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad opening times to reflect the wide catchment areas served • Staffed libraries • Conveniently located within “Community Hubs” - multifunctional spaces, gateways to a range of services, co-location of partners, etc. • Part of the Library Network retaining access to stock, requests service, reading groups,

	<p>digital services etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presumption for on-going management by Shropshire Council within arrangements that provide value for money within the provision of a “comprehensive” library service • Revenue support for the provision of library services; opportunity for partner organisations to “add value” to provision via partner funding • “Back office support” provided by Shropshire Council Libraries Team • Proactive approach to on-going investment in support of improved facilities • Proactive approach to the development of innovative approaches to the use of library spaces and to raising income
<p>Tier 2 Community Libraries (smaller market towns)</p>	<p>Library at the Lantern, Cleobury Mortimer, Church Stretton, Bishop’s Castle, Ellesmere, Pontesbury and Albrighton</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible opening times to reflect local need • Staffed libraries supported by volunteers • Conveniently located within “Community Hubs” - multifunctional spaces, gateways to a range of services, co-location of partners, etc. • Part of the Library Network retaining access to stock, requests service, reading groups, digital services etc. • Hosted and managed by local community organisations within contract arrangements with Shropshire Council that provide value for money within the provision of a “comprehensive” library service • Maximum of five year time limited tapered revenue support linked to a plan to achieve sustainable and cost neutral provision (to the Council) by the end of 2022/23 • “Back office support” provided by Shropshire Council Libraries Team • Proactive approach to investment in support of improved facilities • Proactive approach to the development of innovative approaches to the use of library spaces and to raising income
<p>Tier 3 Community Libraries</p>	<p>Broseley, Shifnal, Wem, Highley, Craven Arms,</p>

(smaller market towns)	Much Wenlock, Gobowen, Bayston Hill
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible opening hours • Volunteer management, supported by staff where part of the Library Network • Managed by local community organisations within contract arrangements with Shropshire Council • Maximum of one year time limited tapered revenue support linked to a plan to achieve sustainable cost neutral provision (to the Council) by the end of 2018/19 • On-going “back office support” provided by Shropshire Council Libraries Team, where sustainable revenue funding requirements are met • Potential “one-off” investment in support of improved and sustainable facilities
Stoke Heath Prison Library	Operated under contract from Her Majesty’s Prisons – supported by Shropshire Libraries
Mobile Libraries: Approximately 277 stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to rural areas • Likely to be managed by Shropshire Council Libraries Team • Fortnightly rota • Part of the Library Network • Offering a broad range of information and advisory support to potentially vulnerable and isolated individuals
Digital Library Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24-hour access • e-lending • e-resources • Community Directory

All library services supported by Shropshire Council will provide a number of core and targeted services.

Core and targeted library services

<p>Core library services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books loans for adults, children and teenagers • Specialist Book collections for Parents and Carers, Special Situations, Books on Prescription • e-books, e-magazine, e-newspapers • Music & Drama lending Service • Free WIFI • Free computer use • Online reference resources • Home library service • Rhyme & Story Times for pre-schoolers • Reading Groups • Gateway to a range of Council, other public and partner services
<p>Targeted library services</p>	<p>Initiatives that support the Strategic Objectives for Shropshire library services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving literacy and encouraging reading • Improving and sustaining the health and well-being of Shropshire communities • Encouraging communities to be inclusive and prosperous • Ensuring that libraries become more enterprising and self-sustaining
<p>Shropshire Council Libraries Team Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative support including training, library IT systems and public computers and stock management • Marketing and publicity • National and local library initiatives • Reading Groups • Development of library services

Based on our assessment of need the Council considers that it can meet its statutory requirements to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons” by providing:

- Static library provision within six Tier 1 locations – Library Hubs – and seven Tier 2 locations – Community Libraries.
- 277 Mobile Library stops, principally responding to challenges of an ageing population and access to services in a rural context.

- Digital library services including 24-hour access to a range of lending and information resources

The table below summarises the percentage of the Shropshire population that live within 20 minutes of a Tier 1 library hub, Tier 2 community library and mobile library stop; 20 minutes of a Tier 1 library hub and Tier 2 community library; and 25 minutes of a Tier 1 library hub.

Distance	Population estimate	Percentage of the total population
Within 20 minutes' drive time of 6 Tier 1 Library Hubs + 7 Tier 2 Community Libraries + 277 Mobile Library stops	311,400	100%
Within 20 minutes' drive time of 6 Tier 1 Library Hubs + 7 Tier 2 Community Libraries	294,141	94%
Within 25 minutes' drive time of 6 Tier 1 Library Hubs	284,286	91%

Source: Estimated figures are based on using Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2015, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

It is also noteworthy that approximately 37% of the Shropshire population live within 20 minutes of a library within a neighbouring authority area.

In adopting this approach, we recognise that the provision of library service is not simply a question of proximity but also of availability and quality.

In setting out a hierarchy of library services provision it is important to emphasise that there are no proposals to close **Tier 3 Community Libraries** – i.e. Broseley, Shifnal, Wem, Highley, Craven Arms, Much Wenlock, Gobowen, and Bayston Hill. The Council will continue to work with a broad range of local partners to try to find sustainable solutions to the long-term management of all of its libraries. Within these arrangements, the Council will continue to provide a full range of “back office” support to local organisations. Where a local solution cannot be found the Council may consider closure as a last resort following public consultation, the development of a Needs Assessment and ESIIA, and a Cabinet decision.

9.0 Implementation and review of the Library Services Strategy

Once, following public consultation, the Library Services Strategy is confirmed, a detailed five-year implementation plan will be developed.

The detailed implementation plan will be reviewed in the context of the Council's financial position. Any proposals for significant investment and / or decommissioning will be brought back to Cabinet.

The draft Strategy, its delivery and review, is set in the context of Shropshire Council's three high-level outcomes and Performance Management Framework:

- Healthy people
- Resilient communities
- Prosperous economy

What will success look like?

Shropshire Libraries will have a clear brand linked to the seven national library Universal Offers. We will help to build healthy, thriving and resilient communities. Investment in our staff, information technology and our services will place libraries at the heart of their communities.

Specifically we aim to:

- invest in our staff, IT and infrastructure
- improve access through the provision of a full range of online services and targeted opening hours
- provide a quality range of well publicised services across our libraries
- improve library usage and visits using effective marketing and by exploiting digital services
- improve processes and systems for greater efficiency
- operate at lower cost
- operate as community facilities working in partnership and alongside additional services
- use trained volunteers to improve added value library services and enhance the free statutory library offer
- exploit opportunities to work with partners to develop commercial services
- promote key health and wellbeing opportunities

Shropshire Libraries will nurture ambition, support health and well-being, challenge inequality, grow the economy and create more learning and employment possibilities. Fit for purpose library buildings lying at the heart of their communities.

Review of the Library Services Strategy

Usage of library service provision will be monitored and kept under review. However, the focus will change to reflect a broad range of measurements that reflect the varied usage of spaces and services and the co-creation and delivery of new management arrangements. Ongoing efforts will be made to encourage participation by users and non-users.

The potential impact of the on-going redesign of library services will continue to be reviewed and monitored. The council also has statutory duties under the

[Equality Act 2010](#) and [section 149: Public Sector Equality Duty](#) in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

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

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Review of Shropshire library opening hours, Cabinet, 27 July 2016
Proposals for the closure of Shawbury Library and for alternative library service Provision, Cabinet, 27 July 2016
Shropshire Council library service, the next five years, Environment Scrutiny Services Committee, 11 July 2016
Redesigning Shropshire Council's library service and customer service points, Cabinet 14 October 2015
Update - future commissioning and provision of library services, Environment Services Scrutiny Committee, 22nd June 2015
Future commissioning and provision of library services and community co-location, Environment Scrutiny Services Committee, 8 December 2014

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Lezley Picton, Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture

Local Members:

All local members

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Library Services Strategy for Shropshire 2018 - 2023
Appendix 2 – Informing the development of the Council's approach to the future provision of library services, a Needs Assessment
Appendix 3 - Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment