

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF A KEY DECISION CABINET

ITEM:	CUSTOMER SERVICES AND LIBRARIES
Members Present:	Councillors: AW Johnson (Leader), H Bramer, D Harlow, PM Morgan (Deputy Leader), PD Price, P Rone.
Date of Decision:	13 October 2016
Exempt:	No
Confidential	No
<p>This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates and This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.</p>	
<p>A notice was served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in connection with key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</p>	
Urgency/Special Urgency: (As defined in Constitution)	No
Purpose:	To agree the model for future operation of customer services and libraries across the county.
Decision:	<p>THAT:</p> <p>a) option three as detailed in the report and appendix 1 be approved providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retained library service in Hereford city and the five market towns; • realign customer services in the five market towns to form a centralised face to face service in Hereford city, supported by improved online access using the 'Better Off' service; • transfer of delivery of library services at Belmont library to a community group; • operational delivery of Bromyard library to be provided by HALO under a service level agreement; • subject to council approval of the capital programme, £133,000 investment in equipment and remodelling of existing premises to provide more efficient utilisation of space and increased access to online payment facilities;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remodel the operation of the county library service, retaining delivered library and schools library services with a view to achieving more integrated and efficient delivery; and • a review of the charging model and income generation potential; <p>b) with a view to development of a longer term enhanced service model providing prevention and early help to children, families and vulnerable adults an option appraisal on the potential use of children centre buildings and libraries be undertaken along with the opportunity of creating a network of well-being hubs;</p> <p>c) soft market testing of future delivery of the remodelled library service be undertaken during 2017; and</p> <p>d) the assistant director communities be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement recommendations a) and b) and c) above within the agreed budget envelope.</p>
<p>Reasons for the Decision:</p>	<p>The recommendations are reflective of the public consultation and the mitigation outlined in the needs and impact assessment. The recommendations meet a high proportion of the budget savings whilst retaining the library presence in the market towns, support for community libraries, retaining the schools and delivered library service and customer services in Hereford where the bulk of the queries are dealt with.</p> <p>Over the next year the council will continue to review its support for signposting, advice and early help, along with the operation of children’s centre services and creation of well-being hubs outlined in the corporate plan. These decisions are to be made mindful of the roles customer services and libraries can make in being existing public access sites.</p>
<p>Options Considered:</p>	<p>The alternative options are listed in appendix 1 “Profile of service and options”. These are based on:</p> <p>Savings programme – retaining the current network of libraries and customer service centres with a range of savings. However, this does not meet the budget saving requirement of the medium term financial strategy (MTFS).</p> <p>Centralised model – focus service delivery on Hereford through retaining the customer services centre and library in the city. There would be a withdrawal of funding from libraries in the market towns, with the option of becoming community libraries (e.g. self-financed locally with an element of support from the county library service). Although this is the only option which delivers in full the savings proposed in the MTFS it is not recommended because of the negative impact on communities in market towns reflected in the findings of the needs and impact assessment. This is combined with the risk of legal challenge</p>

	<p>associated with closure.</p> <p>Enhanced service – to provide additional service from the library sites based on additional early help, well-being, provision for children, and advice that would support wider priorities of the council and activities outlined in the corporate plan. This to be part of the recommendations developing a cross directorate approach to maximise the use of the retained libraries.</p>
<p>Conflict of Interest ■ (See below):</p>	
<p>Date the key decision is due to take effect:</p>	<p>19 October 2016</p>

<p>COUNCILLOR AW JOHNSON Date: 13 October 2016 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p>

- a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who is consulted by the member which relates to the decision;

And

- in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of dispensation granted by the relevant local authority’s head of paid service.