

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>30 JUNE 2011</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>REDESIGN OF DELIVERED LIBRARY SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LIBRARY SITES</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO AREA:</b>	<b>ENTERPRISE AND CULTURE</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** Open

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

To agree remodelling of the Delivered Library Services from a universal mobile service to a home delivery service based upon the needs of the users, and to encourage delivery of community library sites.

### **Key Decision**

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.

It was included in the Forward Plan.

### **Recommendations**

**THAT:**

- (a) the redesign of the Delivered Library Services in favour of a home delivery service based upon the needs of the users and the withdrawal of a universal mobile library service be agreed; and**
- (b) local groups and organisations be invited to consider operating community based libraries.**

### **Key Points Summary**

- The library service has been engaged in the government sponsored Future Libraries programme. One of the recommendations of that report was a remodelling of the delivered services on the basis of need, in conjunction with the development of community led library sites.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Mick Ligema Cultural Services Manager on (01432) 260631

- The proposed changes to the service involve the extension and development of the current home delivery service whereby the needs of users are assessed against set criteria.
- Those current mobile library users who would not be eligible for home delivery would be encouraged to access the service through the main libraries and through community libraries.

## **Alternative Options**

- 1 The alternative option would be to continue with the current universal mobile library service. This option is inherently expensive and would not deliver the required savings.
- 2 The service would need to consider the closure of main libraries or community transfer to achieve the budget targets.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3 The changes proposed aim to create a more targeted service for people who would not be able to access library services through any other means. Through this more targeted approach there is potential to work with other partners and services to provide a range of information services.
- 4 The library service is required to make £200,000 cost reductions during 2011-12, £40,000 of which is expected to come from the review of the Delivered Services.

## **Introduction and Background**

- 5 The Delivered Library Service currently provides a library service for 996 mobile library users and 115 Home Delivery users who receive a service direct to their homes.
- 6 The basis on which mobile library users receive the service is not currently related to needs.
- 7 The government sponsored Future Libraries Programme report recommends a redesigning of rural library services through a restructuring of mobile/delivered library services to focus on individuals most in need and to encourage local self-reliance.
- 8 The report also recommends a locality-based approach to enable community organisations to become involved in the running of libraries and supporting access to library services.
- 9 The recommendations are a product of the background of the Future Libraries Programme, the need to meet financial challenges, and to provide a library service with long term sustainability.

## **Key Considerations**

- 10 The universal mobile library service will be withdrawn and an increased home delivery service will be provided to customers, based upon their health and mobility needs.
- 11 In locations without a main library, community library hubs offer the potential to support continued access to a wider library services.
- 12 The change is required because of financial pressures from the comprehensive spending review and the consequent need to reduce the library budget, and the move towards an approach of providing a service in rural communities on the basis of need.

- 13 The proposals will result in a reduction of the delivered services budget of at least £40,000 for 2011/12 financial year
- 14 The proposal links to national government priorities for increasing community involvement in the running of local services.
- 15 Dialogue has taken place with a number of current community transport or home visit providers to see how the home care service can be delivered and enhanced through existing networks. Also, discussions have taken place with health and education professionals on a shared approach to distributed information and services to those who need it.
- 16 The service will seek to explore and facilitate the development of neighbourhood and community library provision, for example in village shops or community halls. This will be in places where there is evidence of significant past use of the mobile library service, which can be easily accessed by different parishes and hamlets.
- 17 Parish Councils will be invited to discuss options for delivering community library services in their communities.
- 18 The approach is consistent with the overall strategy for sustaining library services, primarily:
  - Retaining Hereford City and the market town library functions, integrated with a wide range of customer services
  - Developing a network of community and neighbourhood libraries – run by local groups or organisations and operated in a way that meets local needs and circumstances
  - Targeted access to library stocked through the home delivery services, combined with other education and social care functions
  - Continuation of targeted delivered services to venues such as day and residential centres (currently 24)
  - On-line access to book stock and reference
  - School library service and wider outreach activity (e.g. book clubs and events) maintained.
- 19 Initial discussions have taken already place with partners and organisations. Subject to the decision of Cabinet, these will be continued with a view to a September 2011 implementation. Notice will be distributed to users at the beginning of July 2011 of the changes being made to the service and to begin the process of identifying who will receive the home delivery service on the basis of need.

## **Community Impact**

- 20 There are currently 996 users of the mobile library service.
- 21 It is calculated that approximately 200 of these current users will be eligible for the home delivery service. The remainder would need to access the service through existing service points or one of the new community sites.
- 22 Those likely to be affected are people without their own transport or to transport links within their villages; those with a physical disability; the elderly who may struggle to carry a large number of books from a static library.

- 23 An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and has supported the criteria by which people will be assessed for a home delivered service.
- 24 Library facilities are widely valued within the county. The redesign of the mobile service was outlined during the setting of the 2011/12 Council Budget and in briefings. A communications strategy for the users, local media, local members and parish councils will be implemented.

## **Financial Implications**

- 25 The current budget for the Delivered Library Services is £178,317 which includes the costs for the current mobile library service, the home delivery service, the nursing home service and the stock delivery service around the libraries.
- 26 The proposals will result in a net minimum saving of £40,000 for 2011/12. The cost per user for the remodelled home delivery service based upon staffing, vehicles and fuel would be £114 per annum based upon there being 300 users.

## **Legal Implications**

- 27 The 1964 Libraries Act does not require local authorities to provide a mobile library service. Nonetheless, the needs of those most vulnerable members of the community will continue to be met through the home delivery service and are addressed in the impact statement.
- 28 Any staffing reductions will be managed in accordance with current policies and procedures.

## **Risk Management**

- 29 A key risk will be the perception that the most vulnerable will not be able to access the service. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. There will be a period during which the need for the changes to the services will be explained to current users those assessed as in need will be given access to alternative methods of access to the service. This risk will be managed within the service.
- 30 If the changes are not made to the Delivered Library Service then the budget reductions will not be met. Given the commitment to maintain a county wide library service, the only alternative would be to consider closure of the branch libraries and a further reduction of the service. This risk is to be managed within the directorate.

## **Consultees**

- 31 Through the Future Libraries Programme consultation:

Council members  
Library staff  
User Groups  
Non user Groups  
Partners and stakeholders

## **Appendices**

- 32 None.

## **Background Papers**

Herefordshire and Shropshire Future Libraries Programme Final Options Report February 2011.