

**Cabinet**

**8 February 2012**



**Library Strategy**

**Key decision AWH04/11  
MTFP AWH10**

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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Report of Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director, Adults Wellbeing and Health**

**Councillor Maria Plews, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Libraries and Lifelong Learning**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. This report will seek approval from the Cabinet for consultation on the Council's strategy for library services, and proposals to deliver the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings in respect of library services. It will describe proposals for changes to the County's library services, which will require public consultation, as well as setting out proposals for the future management of library services.

**The Library Strategy**

2. This paper sets out proposals for consultation on our library service for the future. It is written in the context of reductions in Government funding, which will mean a reduction in Council spending of £123.5million by 2015, and changing patterns of use of our library services.
3. In preparing the strategy, the Council has reviewed national policy and considered library developments across the country. We have also looked back to the Scrutiny report "Beyond Books" (2009), and considered the responses to the first phase of consultation on the library strategy "Inspire... Include... Inform..." in 2010. We have considered the views of our users as expressed through surveys and the views of the wider public, for example in consultation on the Council's budget proposals. We have also considered how the library service can contribute to the Council's overall aims for the County.
4. In summary our library strategy has the following aims:
  - To inspire a community of reading and learning;

- To create community library hubs, involving local people;
- To be modern and responsive; and
- To ensure that we have a well managed and efficient service;

and to meet the following areas of need:

- reading for pleasure;
- raising confidence, skills and aspirations through access to informal and formal learning facilities, for study, research, self improvement and knowledge;
- the development of individual literacy;
- local community and public service information; and
- a place to meet and participate in community life.

5. In order to support our strategy we propose:

- to keep open all our library buildings, but reduce the opening hours funded by the Council;
- to revise our criteria for the communities that are served by our mobile library service;
- to co-locate libraries wherever possible with other services and to invest to improve their appearance and facilities;
- to drive down our support and management costs; and
- to move our library services into a not-for-profit Trust.

A number of these proposals would be subject to consultation, details of which are set out later in this report.

6. This paper also sets out how we will achieve the £1.457m savings that have already been agreed for the library service over the four years of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **Background and policy context**

7. The Council has a statutory duty, under the Public Library and Museums Act (1964), to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service". The full section is recited under 'Legal Implications' in Appendix 1.
8. The previous Government's policy ("The Modernisation Review of Public Libraries: A Policy Statement" (March 2010)) had reaffirmed the statutory requirement to provide a library service and was clear that books, and the right to borrow them and browse free of charge, must remain at the heart of the library service.
9. The policy emphasised that libraries must also commit to harnessing the opportunities of digital technology, and respond strongly to the decline in use of existing services, whilst being mindful of the current economic climate and the expectation of more customer-focused public services.
10. Within County Durham, the Scrutiny report "Beyond Books, Libraries that Educate, Inspire and inform" (2009) recognised that whilst libraries

continue to play a much needed role in communities, and are well loved, there are challenges that need to be met, including:

- Libraries need to adapt to the needs of younger and future users, including our diverse communities;
- The future success of the service will depend on the quality of buildings, where they are sited, the services they offer and the quality and knowledge of staff;
- Opening hours should reflect local user views;
- Real opportunities to join up services to deliver services in the future in a more collaborative way;

Scrutiny also concluded that a new vision and strategy to modernise and improve the library service for local people was required.

11. Councils across England have been reviewing their library services, seeking to identify savings and to modernise the services they offer. Many areas have looked to reduce elements of their service, for example shorter opening hours, the closure of libraries, or the withdrawal of mobile services.
12. Some have explored alternative models of delivery, for example libraries being provided by volunteers working with residents associations and other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector bodies, with back-up support from the library service, and some (e.g. Wigan) have moved their services into a not-for-profit Trust. The benefits of this approach for Durham County Council are explained in paragraphs 106-110 of this report.
13. It is clear that changing library services can be extremely contentious, for example the Secretary of State intervened in the Wirral over their plans for library services because of concerns that the Council had not consulted properly and that its proposals would not enable it to fulfil its statutory duty. Other Councils (e.g. Brent and Gloucestershire) have recently faced legal challenges to their proposals.
14. In considering any proposals for changes to the library service, the Council must be mindful of its statutory duties, under the 1964 Act and under equality legislation, and the recent guidance (see paragraph 75) from the Government on library services.

### **The Medium Term Financial Plan**

15. The gross library service budget for 2011/12 is £6.191m per annum. The service receives £470,000 in income and our net spend is therefore £5.721m per annum. This income is a combination of fees and charges and funding to provide services on behalf of other organisations (including from central government for the Prison Library Service).

16. The savings required in respect of the library service, as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 23 February 2011, total £1.457m spread over the four years of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), as follows:

*Table 1: Library MTFP savings 2011/12 – 2014/15*

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	£	£	£	£
Previous year's net budget	6,051,000	5,721,000	5,151,000	4,921,000
<b>MTFP saving required</b>	<b>330,000</b>	<b>570,000</b>	<b>230,000</b>	<b>327,000</b>
Net budget	£5,721,000	£5,151,000	£4,921,000	£4,594,000

### The current library service

17. The library service comprises the following key elements:
- A network of 39 public libraries in town centres and local communities (see Appendix 2), plus the staff library at County Hall which also serves as the members resource centre. Town centre libraries are those in the major settlements as defined in the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy;
  - A stock of over 750,000 books available for loan and 210 computers for free public use;
  - The Mobile Library fleet of 5 vehicles, calling at more than 180 settlements throughout the County;
  - "Books on Wheels" for housebound people, delivered by volunteers;
  - The "Book Bus", providing a public library service to some care homes, sheltered housing complexes and day care centres.
  - The Prison Library Service (which is fully funded by Central Government) serving four prisons across County Durham; and
  - Library Online, a web-based service, whereby library members can renew items they have on loan, check the catalogue and make requests for specific books as well as receiving reminders in respect of loaned items
18. Detailed information on the use of libraries, including a profile of each library in the county, has been placed in the Members' library, and some of the key issues are summarised below.
19. The profile of users is as follows:
- Community libraries: 31.8% of all active borrowers are children (0 – 14 years)
  - Town centre libraries: 23% of all active borrowers are children (0 – 14 years)
  - Community libraries: 12.5% of all active borrowers are aged 60+
  - Town centre libraries: 12% of all active borrowers are aged 60+

(Note: an “active borrower” is someone who has borrowed a book in the past 12 months).

20. It can be seen from the above that the majority of users fall within the age range of 15 – 59:

- Town centre libraries 65%
- Community libraries 55.7%

21. According to data derived from the Council’s library information system, on average the library service responds to over 980,000 enquiries and delivers over 14,000 activities and events during each year. Typical events that take place in libraries include:

- family history groups
- stories and crafts for the under fives
- reading groups for adults and children
- after school clubs
- adult learning activity such as computer skills
- health promotion
- job clubs

22. The library service deals with a wide range of enquiries from the public, who may need local information, sign-posting to Council services, assistance with computers or to order a book from another library.

23. Appendix 2 shows that Library opening times vary from 21 hours per week in many of the smaller libraries to 55.5 hours per week at Clayport in Durham City. All libraries open late on at least two evenings per week and all open on Saturday mornings. Bishop Auckland and Clayport open five evenings per week.

24. The library service is used every day by more than 5,000 people on average. Many of these, but not all, are members of the library. At March 2011, the service had 290,108 members, of whom 94,971 were active borrowers<sup>1</sup>. Durham has almost 186 active borrowers per 1,000 population compared with<sup>2</sup> 175.6 per 1000 in local authorities that are similar to Durham, and 194.3 per 1000 nationally.

25. Visitors to the libraries include:

- people who want to borrow books;
- people passing the time of day browsing the collection or reading newspapers;
- adults out of work using the internet to search for jobs or training opportunities;
- school children doing their homework, or as part of a school group visiting the library for story time or to do research;

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<sup>1</sup> Halcyon Computerised management system – data for year end March 2011

<sup>2</sup> Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy 2009/10. Comparator local authorities libraries open to the public at 31 March 2010

- parents and toddlers to introduce young children to the library and to reading;
- adult learners, participating in educational activity; and
- craft groups, using the library as a social space.

26. Peak use of our libraries occurs between the hours of 10am and 12noon and then again between the hours of 2pm and 4pm. Both of these 2-hour time periods are equally well used. The same pattern of peak use applies for those libraries which are only open for part of the day. The period between 5pm and 7pm is in the majority of cases half as busy as at these peak times during the day. In the majority of libraries, the busiest time period of the week is Saturday morning between 10am and 12noon.

27. Table 2 captures some of the key measures of activity in our libraries, showing the trends in use over recent years. It can be seen that there is a mixed picture of performance on the key indicators of library use. For some there is a clear downward trend – such as attendances at events which fell by 16% in the last year. The total visits to the libraries have also fallen for the last 3 years and, significantly, active borrowers have fallen by nearly 4% since 2007/08.

*Table 2: Library usage 2007/08 – 2010/11*

	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Computer session take-up	619,465	607,652	594,290	607,558
Attendees at events	187,855	185,768	184,468	154,472
Enquiries	941,772	952,711	1,023,478	986,884
Membership	274,543	281,277	285,526	290,108
Active Borrowers	98,729	97,844	96,616	94,971
Visits	1,256,653*	2,116,457	2,092,462	2,029,488
Loans	3,323,558	3,385,179	3,395,086	3,361,052

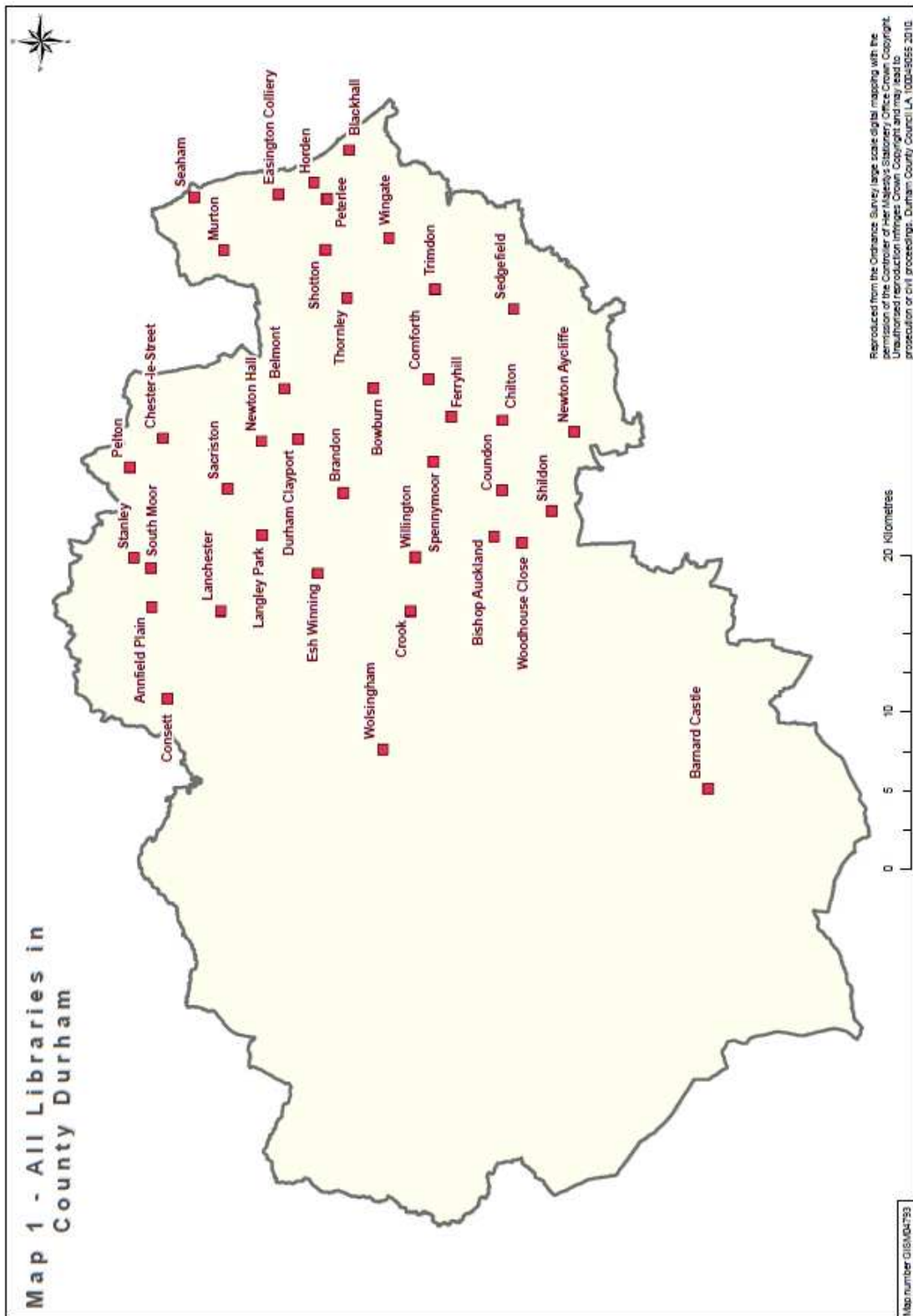
\* Nb - in 2008 electronic visitor counters were installed in all libraries. This enabled the service to monitor and record actual visitor numbers more accurately. Previously manual sample visitor counts had been used.

28. For some indicators there has been little long-term change – such as the total number of loans, or the use of computers. For others there is an upward trend: the level of enquiries has risen by nearly 5% since 2007/08 (despite a fall in 2010/11). In the same period membership has also risen by 5%.

29. The 12 town centre libraries all open for 43 hours or more. Community libraries have very varied opening hours, from 21 hours up to 43 hours each week. Details on the opening hours for libraries are set out in Appendix 2. The town centre libraries account for over 1.75m loans per

annum – over half the total (52.4%) across the whole network. In the majority of cases, they have the best facilities, and the widest range of services. The community libraries provide a similar variety of services to those in the town centres, but tend to be smaller.

30. The current facilities are a mixture of purpose-built and adapted accommodation. They range from the new library at Seaham, which is part of the Council's St John's multi-user centre, to small shop-front premises such as Langley Park. Whilst all the town centre libraries are Council-owned, a few community libraries are in rented accommodation. The map below shows the locations of all the public libraries in the county.



31. Many of the libraries need modernisation and some are poorly located. Plans are being developed to co-locate several of the town centre libraries as part of the Council's customer access points and/or to replace them as part of regeneration schemes for town centres. There are also plans moving forward for the replacement of a small number of community libraries in tandem with other developments such as new health facilities or schools.
32. The libraries that are not being replaced need investment in their fabric: it is estimated there is a total of priority repairs costing £1.036m required over the next four years. These essential repairs include electrical and mechanical works and structural work to the exteriors.
33. The plans for replacement buildings referred to above would reduce this marginally. Further consideration of how capital resources could be used to implement the library strategy is set out at paragraphs 141-145.

### **Outreach and Web Services**

34. In addition to the activity that is carried out in the library buildings, there are other parts of the service that deliver services to local residents in their communities, such as the mobile library service, the book bus, and books on wheels.

### **Mobile Libraries**

35. The Mobile Library service comprises five vehicles visiting 182 different settlements, and stopping at 380 halts over a two week timetable. They operate Monday to Friday, from 9.30am until between 4 and 5.30pm. The mobiles provide only a book loan service, and cannot provide the full range of library services to the communities they serve, for example there is no access to ICT or activities.
36. Currently halts are provided to settlements that are over 1 mile from library buildings, but the service will not call at individual dwellings, nor travel along un-metalled roads or tracks. The duration of halts is determined by the level of use.
37. Many halts are on the fringes of larger settlements where there is a library building (e.g. Dalton-le-Dale between Seaham and Murton), and 74 settlements currently have multiple halts. Residents using many of these halts need to access other services located in the centre of the settlement, such as schools, banks and shops.
38. Membership of the mobile library service has declined from 7,800 in March 2008 to 3,538 in March 2011, of whom 1,452 were active borrowers who use mobile libraries. This represents just over 1.5% of the total number of active borrowers of the library service. Loans through the mobile library



service have declined by 23% from 107,623 in 2007/08 to 82,575 in 2010/11. 25% of mobile library members also use our library buildings, and the library survey (see paragraphs 47-51) showed that 52% of mobile library users owned a car.

39. The survey also showed that 74% of users of the mobile library were over 65, whereas for our library buildings the significant majority of users fall within the age range of 15 – 59. Furthermore, 59% of respondents to the mobile library survey identified that they had a disability.
40. In a six-month review period in 2011, during which the mobile library visited each of the 380 halts on a minimum of ten occasions, 124 of the halts were on average only used by one person on each visit, with 53 halts (serving 44 settlements) having no users at all.
41. The mobile service is comparatively more expensive than the rest of the library buildings. This does not represent value for money: the cost per visit for the Mobile Library Service is £8.68, in comparison with £4.00 at a library building<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Other Outreach Services**

42. “Books on Wheels” is a service provided directly to people in their own homes. Although financed by the Library Service, it is delivered by over 80 volunteers, who take books to over 600 clients who have mobility problems.
43. The Book Bus provides a public library service to vulnerable adults in a number of care homes, sheltered housing complexes and day care centres across County Durham. It enables residents to browse and choose books and maintain their independence. The Book bus service has 781 registered library clients of which there are 423 active library borrowers.
44. The Prison Library Service is delivered by the County Council and is funded by Central Government. It serves four prisons across County Durham.
45. The library service has a large collection of virtual web-based resources. Through these free information services library members can gain access to information, request stock for later collection and renew their loans. The service does not provide e-books for download onto reading devices and personal computers.
46. The national Future Libraries Programme, funded through the Museums Libraries and Archives Council, was established in 2010 to devise options which would enable local authorities to deliver a comprehensive library service which was sustainable in the financial environment of the future.

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<sup>3</sup> Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy 2009/10. Comparator local authorities libraries open to the public at 31 March 2010

Durham's project, "Going Local", focused on a new library offer for rural and isolated users. A Community Book Point (small areas in village halls that enable people to use a computer and order books for collection from the Council's "library on-line") has been trialled in County Durham, but has not proven to be viable.

### **Library Users' Views**

47. The Council regularly surveys the views of users of library services through an annual Public Library User Survey (PLUS). The latest survey against which national comparisons can be made took place in 2009/10 when over 4,000 responses were received from adult users.

48. For adult users, satisfaction tends to be very high, Durham recording 58% of its users saying that the library overall was very good, compared with a national figure of only 48%. Based on the survey information, the following are the key factors which matter most to adult users:

- Library environment (including opening hours, seating, customer care etc): 88% of respondents in County Durham thought that the library interiors were either good or very good, in comparison with 81 % nationally;
- Choice of books: 78% of respondents in County Durham thought that the choice of books was either good or very good, in comparison with 75 % nationally;
- Computer facilities: 85% of respondents in County Durham thought that the computer facilities were either good or very good, in comparison with 73 % nationally; and
- Information provision: 90% of respondents in County Durham thought that information provision was either good or very good, in comparison with 82 % nationally.

49. The area most in need of improvement according to our survey is in the appearance of our libraries, particularly from the outside. 29% of adult users rate the attractiveness of the libraries outside as "very good". Users score the internal environment of our buildings more positively, with the "very good" score standing at 46%.

50. In May 2011 over 1,100 young people responded to a survey. The key issues for younger users (under 16) were similar to adult library users, with a focus on books and computers. The survey also showed that:

- 23.5% of children and young people borrow books for homework purposes, which has increased from 19% in 2007. As children increase in age there is a greater likelihood that they will borrow books for homework purposes (4.9% of the 5 and under age group, compared to 38.7% of 11-15 age group);
- The percentage of children who borrow books so that they 'do not have to buy them' has increased significantly from 18% in 2007 to 30%. This figure is fairly consistent across all age groups;

- 73% of respondents stated that the library had helped them to 'read better' – an increase from 62% in 2007. Responses are most positive in the 6-10 age group with 80% responding that the library had helped them to 'read better';
- 64% felt the library had helped them learn and find new things out (52% in 2007), whilst 54% replied that it helped them to do better at school (45% in 2007).

51. Also in May 2011 a survey was carried of 264 users of the mobile library service. This showed high levels of satisfaction with the service:

- 98% overall satisfaction with the mobile library;
- 97% satisfied with the availability of the mobile library; and
- 99% are satisfied with the standard of customer care.

## **Conclusion**

52. The use of libraries is changing. The numbers of people using libraries to borrow books is in decline, and fewer people are using the libraries' computers than 3 years ago. This reflects the greater choices that library users have, such as the increased availability of best sellers to buy at low prices in supermarkets, higher levels of ownership of home computers, and the growth of downloads of books to read on portable devices.

53. Many of the buildings need refurbishment and/or to be relocated alongside other council (or partner) services.

54. The mobile library service provides an important service to rural communities, but is not well used and does not provide good value for money.

55. The level of use, and the results from the PLUS survey, suggests that libraries remain a highly valued and popular service, serving a large cross-section of the people of the county. They deal with thousands of visitors and enquiries every day and are thus a crucial part of the Council's service offer to local communities.

56. Nevertheless, the Council is having to make reductions in its expenditure as a result of the Government's comprehensive spending review. In consultation with Area Action Partnerships and the wider public on the Council's savings proposals, prior to the Council setting its budget in February 2011, only 18% of those who responded felt that libraries should see a smaller budget reduction than was proposed, with approximately 32% feeling the cut could be higher. The Council has already agreed to reduce spending on library services by £1,457,000 in its MTFP (see paragraph 16).

57. The library service therefore needs to change – both to remain relevant to its users and potential users, and to reduce spending and meet the MTFP target.

## Library Service Budget

58. In summary, the library service budget for 2011/12 is as follows (this excludes capital and central charges):

	£
Libraries (including management, staff, equipment, other day to day running costs)	4,071,000
Book fund	733,000
Books on Wheels & Book Bus	119,000
Bookstore and support for inter-library loans	497,000
Mobile libraries	200,000
Delivery service (vehicles)	90,000
Prison library service*	0
Staff Library*	11,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,721,000</b>

\* Note: the Prison Library service is fully funded by the Home Office and the staff library costs exclude Members and Democratic Support service functions.

59. Comparative data on library service costs is available from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy. This cost is calculated on the gross budget plus central charges. County Durham has a relatively high cost per visit by comparison with other Shire Authorities<sup>4</sup>: £3.22 per visit on average, but £4.00 per visit in Durham. Durham's cost per visit is lower, however, than the average for the North East of £4.10 per visit.

60. County Durham spends more on premises (in terms of repairs, maintenance and day-to-day costs) than our comparator Councils: in 2009/10 this stood at £2.63 per resident compared with £2.00 on average.<sup>4</sup>

61. The Mobile Library service is very expensive by comparison with the building-based libraries, in terms of the cost of each member, each item lent or each visit. For example, in 2010/11, a Mobile Library visit cost on average £8.68 compared with the £4.00<sup>5</sup> (Cipfa) unit cost for a visit to a library building.

62. In 2011/12, the Council has begun the implementation of the MTFP for libraries, making the following savings:

- The book fund has been reduced by £200k;
- Clayport library no longer opens on Sundays, saving £90k;
- The library service's management and support services have been reviewed, saving £405k;

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<sup>4</sup> Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy 2009/10. Comparator local authorities libraries open to the public at 31 March 2010

<sup>5</sup> Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy 2009/10. Comparator local authorities libraries open to the public at 31 March 2010

63. The changes to management and support services have been subject to consultation with staff and have involved a significant reduction in the number of managers. The changes were implemented from October 2011, and have left the library service with a small team of managers, each with oversight of a group of several libraries, operating over a wide area. Some specialist librarian posts have also been removed. The service is now operating on a very lean basis and no further reductions in the management and support costs are proposed.
64. Clayport was the only library in the County that opened on Sundays, and it was less busy than on other days in the week. Following public consultation on the change, the library opened on Sunday for the last time in September 2011.
65. These changes will reduce the library budget by £695k per annum, delivering the £330k saving required in 2011/12 and contributing towards the £570k saving for 2012/13, but leaving a further £762k to be found over the remainder of the MTFP period.
66. The remainder of this report will summarise the consultation to date on the library strategy and set out our proposals for consultation on changes to the service, taking account of the need for library services in County Durham, the feedback we have had on services and the financial savings we need to achieve.

### **Phase 1 consultation**

67. On 16th June 2010, Cabinet agreed to carry out a three month consultation on the draft Library Strategy "Inspire.. Include... Inform...". The Cabinet report from June 2010 is available at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/displayminutes.aspx?meetingid=486>
68. This sought public views on a draft vision and the following six outcomes:
- Inspire a community of reading and learning
  - Include local people to create community library hubs
  - Modern and responsive
  - Improving access through innovation and technology
  - Partnerships at the core of service delivery
  - Well managed and efficient service

### **Headlines from Feedback**

69. During the consultation, 264 feedback forms were received.
70. The majority (94%) of the respondents were library service users. 11 responses were received from organisations including the Museums,

Libraries and Archive Council (MLA), The Arts Council, Durham University, the Primary Care Trust and local Parish and Town Councils. The key stakeholders who responded are listed at Appendix 3.

71. There was overall support for the County Council in its efforts to modernise the library service. There was broad agreement with the vision, although there were suggested modifications to the wording, and there was significant support for most of the outcomes identified within the consultation document.

72. In summary, respondents highlighted the importance of the following issues in planning for library services for the future:

- Maintain access to books;
- Maintain libraries in communities – they are important resources that people want to be retained;
- Maintain a body of skilled staff to deliver the service; and
- Ensure that opening hours reflect local need

73. A summary of the feedback is included at Appendix 4.

### **National Policy Direction**

74. In December 2010, Ed Vaizey (the Minister responsible for public libraries in the Coalition Government) set out his vision for public libraries. This included the need for effective leadership and recognised the role that libraries play in reading and literacy, the digital agenda and working with other public services.

75. He emphasised how Councils must continue to comply with their statutory duty in relation to library services. These are:

- a statement of what the service is trying to achieve;
- a description of local needs
- a detailed description of how the service will be delivered and how the plans will fully take into account the demography of the area and the different needs of adults and children in different areas (both in general and specific terms);
- the resources available for the service, including an annual budget in planning its library services for the future.

### **Proposed Vision for the Library Service in County Durham**

76. The proposed vision for library services in County Durham is as follows:

**Libraries in County Durham will provide books and access to information and services. They will work with their local communities to ensure they meet the needs of the people they serve. They will be welcoming, accessible, vibrant and safe places for all.**

77. This Vision takes account of the feedback from the earlier consultation, the Beyond Books report, the emerging national direction and our understanding of the need for library services in our communities.

78. The Library Service in County Durham will work towards the following aims:

- **To inspire a community of reading and learning**

Libraries will be places where people come together to borrow books, and share a love of reading, supporting literacy and skills development.

- **To create community library hubs, involving local people**

Local people will be able to get involved in shaping and delivering their local services. They will be able to take part in events, find out what is happening in their local community and contribute to community life: they will be the first place that people think of to get reliable and current information.

- **To be modern and responsive**

Libraries will be less formal spaces, flexible in their use and where possible with areas to relax, study and socialise, utilising new technology to improve the service offered and access to it.

- **A well managed and efficient service**

Libraries will work in partnership with other services, co-locating libraries in shared premises where appropriate, using libraries as a base for other services, and being as efficient as we can in management and support services.

## **The need for Library services in County Durham**

79. The current use of the library service, the feedback from service users and our knowledge of those users tells us much about the expressed need for library services in our communities. We have summarised this need into the following five areas that we will therefore seek to meet:

- reading for pleasure;
- raising confidence, skills and aspirations through access to informal and formal learning facilities, for study, research, self improvement and knowledge;
- the development of individual literacy;
- local community and public service information; and
- a place to meet and participate in community life.

80. However, above all, the feedback to the phase 1 consultation stressed the importance to local people of preserving local access to the Library Service. This involves both the library buildings and the outreach services as there are many people who cannot access building-based services either because of mobility difficulties or because of a lack of transport.
81. Some people in rural communities rely on the mobile library service to meet the need for books, and the Book Bus and Books On Wheels are available to meet the needs of vulnerable adults who cannot access our library buildings. These physical services are complemented by the virtual and on-line services giving 24-hour access to the service for all who can access the internet.
82. The 5 areas of need, and the steps we will take to address these and deliver on the outcomes above, are considered further below.
83. **Reading for pleasure:** With over 3million books loaned from Durham's libraries in 2010/11, there is clearly a significant demand for books to read for pleasure. This is further illustrated by the growth of reading groups which have become a popular leisure activity in recent years: the library service supports over 40 reading groups.
84. Through the PLUS survey, our adult users have identified access to a wide choice of books as one of the key needs the library service should meet. This was also true for children and young people. The importance of the availability of books was also stressed in the feedback to phase 1 of the consultation on the library strategy.
85. Clearly, the library service for the future will need to continue to invest in providing a wide and up-to-date range of books and other reading material across all libraries in the county to ensure the service remains relevant to its users. For some however, the book is being replaced with new technology and to continue to be relevant and to provide access to reading materials for all, the library service will need to adapt to the challenges this will bring. As resources allow, we will seek to invest in new technology to enable us to offer access to e-books for loan, including through library on-line.
86. The library service must make books and information available in different formats to cater for the needs of people with sensory impairments.
87. **Information and facilities for study, research, self improvement and knowledge:** Libraries have always provided access to reference material, as well as providing space for individuals to carry out research or to work in relative peace and quiet. Library staff play an important role in supporting library users to find the information or sources they need. Through the PLUS survey, our adult users have identified access to information and computer facilities as one of the key needs the library



service should meet. For children and young people, information to support their schoolwork is one of the key needs.

88. Increasingly the internet is fundamentally important to this function, and whilst ownership of home computers has increased significantly, there are still many individuals (and homes) that do not have access, or who prefer to work or do their research outside the home environment. The Digital Durham programme aims to bring superfast broadband to every single home, business and community to County Durham in the next few years, which will improve access to the internet and on-line library services.
89. Even so, it is proposed that the library service will continue to make available free public access to computers. This is particularly important in those libraries serving deprived communities, where PC ownership is likely to be lower, or where housing conditions may mean schoolchildren have little space at home to do their homework. As resources allow we will also look to provide free wi-fi in all libraries.
90. **Development of individual literacy:** It is estimated that 63% of adults in County Durham have literacy skills below level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grade C), compared to 56% across the UK<sup>6</sup>. Literacy is key to wider employability skills, which is critical given the Council's priority to improve the County's economic performance. Action to address this needs to encompass early years work, introducing reading to pre-school children, working with schools and on into adulthood, working in partnership with the Council's Adult Learning and Skills Service. For children and young people, literacy is one of the key needs libraries can help to meet.
91. Reading for pleasure has been identified as the most important indicator of the future success of a child and improvements in literacy, at any point in life, can have a profound effect on an individual: for example individuals with good literacy are far more likely to be involved in their community.
92. We need to provide and facilitate a range of activities to encourage new users and to support literacy programmes and community use of the libraries. We will work with schools to promote use of our libraries and with the Adult Learning and Skills service to ensure that there is a programme of action for literacy delivered through our libraries, as well as providing a range of wider adult learning opportunities through the libraries.
93. **Local community and public service information:** people need and welcome a local source of information on activities going on in their communities, on entitlements to services, etc. Through the PLUS survey, our adult users identified access to information as one of the key needs the library service should meet. People also need access to the wider services that the Council provides. Libraries will support the delivery of the

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<sup>6</sup> County Durham Economic Assessment: Employment and Skills Evidence Base, by Regeneris on behalf of DCC, 2011

Council's Access to Services strategy, co-locating with other services to provide a joined-up presence in communities.

94. The continuing provision of public access computers will enable people to seek information about services, activities and local employment opportunities. This will be key in deprived and the more rural communities served by our libraries. Library staff have expertise in this field, both in terms of sign-posting individuals to relevant material and in supporting people to get on-line and search for themselves.
95. ***A place to meet and participate in community life:*** libraries have been described as the "living room" of urban spaces. Libraries can provide a space in which all are welcome, and are able to use the services on offer for free. They can provide space for formal activities such as adult learning classes, job clubs or parent and toddler groups, or informal activities such as quiet time away from home for individuals. In some libraries we may need to invest in new furniture to achieve more flexible spaces, and we will aim to have coffee facilities and public toilets in our libraries wherever achievable.
96. We will need to develop this community role in partnership with other local services and community groups, in response to local needs, so each library may develop differently. We believe that by enabling wider use of the library as a community resource, and the on-going provision of activities, we will attract new users to the library service which will help achieve all the outcomes for the service that we have laid out.
97. The service needs to be available at a range of times to ensure it is accessible to users of all ages, from pre-school to retirement. We will ensure that opening hours reflect local preferences, to maximise the potential for wider community use, within the constraints of affordability.

### **Other issues**

98. The role of staff will be vital in meeting these needs and delivering on our proposed outcomes. We are reviewing our workforce and their skills and have introduced additional training, for example in information, advice and guidance. We are putting in place a plan to support delivery of the Council's library strategy.
99. We need to recognise that the strategy will be delivered in the context of the Council's MTFP, and a significant reduction in expenditure on library services.

### **Proposed Changes to the library service**

100. In order to meet the needs described in this document and ensure that action can be taken to meet the strategy in accordance with a reduced

budget for the library service, our strategy (subject to consultation) will be:

- to keep open all our library buildings, but reduce their opening hours;
- to retain our mobile library service but revise our criteria for the communities that are served by it;
- to co-locate libraries wherever possible with other services and to invest to improve their appearance and facilities;
- to drive down our support and management costs; and
- to move our library services into a not-for-profit Trust.

101. This strategy has been developed to take account of national policy and developments as well as local experience and influences, including our understanding of the need for library services locally, and the Council's overall priorities and finances.

### **Savings and Future Library Services in County Durham**

102. In this report we have described the need for library services and how we propose to meet those needs. We will now outline how the balance of the MTFP savings will be achieved through changes to services and through moving the libraries into a new "Trust".

103. Actions are in place to deliver savings of £695k, against a total savings target of £1457k, leaving a shortfall of savings still to be identified to the value of £762k across the MTFP period.

104. There are a number of savings the Council can make that will have no direct negative impact on the service that the public receives. Further measures that will contribute £80k to the savings target in 2012/13 are changes to supplies and support services including income generation. As these changes would have no impact on the level of service to the public, they do not form part of the public consultation.

105. The book fund will be reduced further to save an estimated £66k but work is being undertaken within the library service to identify alternative ways of limiting the effect of this reduction. This will include seeking opportunities for sponsorship, reviewing marketing and trialling community book-giving. Even if the book fund is reduced further the annual book spend for County Durham will still be at a higher level per head than several of our neighbouring and comparator Local Authorities.

### **Trust Status**

106. Cabinet will be considering proposals to establish an NPDO (non-profit distributing organisation – or Trust) to manage its leisure, library and cultural services following a Management Options Appraisal exercise undertaken over the last 9 months. This means that as an organisation it

cannot distribute any surplus or profit it generates, rather it is restricted to reinvesting its resources to furthering its objectives. In other words any surplus must be used to re-invest in service provision.

107. There are a range of fiscal advantages within the NPDO model, including exemption for corporation tax, opportunity for corporate sponsorship and donations utilising gift aid, wider access to grant regimes not open to the Council, plus the use of Charitable status to claim mandatory rating relief (80% of the current national non-domestic rates relief (NNDR) costs), which would provide a saving of up to approximately £214k for the libraries service.
108. There are VAT implications (a net VAT gain of £476k) associated with creation of the NPDO. The VAT implications with regards to the Library services is a VAT cost to the NPDO of circa £72k, though this is mitigated by potential significant VAT benefits to the NPDO from the other services in scope.
109. However, in summary the opportunities of this for the library service include:
- The gain in national non-domestic rates relief. Estimates suggest that this will equate to up to £214k based on the current level of rates that the service pays annually.
  - Potential reductions in overhead costs;
  - New funding opportunities that are not open to statutory bodies.
110. The Council would establish a contract with the Trust that sets out the library service to be provided, in line with the agreed strategy. Contract management arrangements would be put in place to ensure that the Trust delivers the service required by the Council.

## Summary

111. The total annual value of the additional savings that are proposed, in addition to the £695k already being achieved, are thus as follows:

Item	Value (£k)
Supplies and Services	80
Bookfund	66
NNDR Trust status saving	214
Total	360k

112. The measures set out or implemented thus far would deliver total savings of £1055k against the MTFP target of £1457k, leaving a shortfall of £402k, which will need to be met through a reduction in the level of service. The next section of this report sets out proposals for changes in the level of service that would meet this shortfall.

## Mobile Library services

113. As noted in paragraph 38 above, use of the mobile library service is declining: it serves just 1.5% of all active borrowers, and many mobile library members also use our library buildings. Furthermore, many of the mobile halts are on the fringes of settlements where there is a library building, 124 halts had on average only one user, and 53 halts serving 18 settlements had no users at all, in a six-month review period in 2011. The mobile service is also comparatively more expensive than the library buildings: see paragraph 41.

114. Given the savings the Council needs to make, it is proposed that in future the mobile library service would be focussed on the more rural settlements to provide a library service to those communities where accessibility difficulties are greatest. It is proposed that, subject to consultation, mobile library services would be provided to communities on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Distance:** mobile libraries will only call at settlements at least 4 miles from a library building;
- **One halt per settlement:** this will ensure that a service is maintained for the maximum number of rural residents;
- **Standardised halts** for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour or two hours – depending on level of current use;
- **A minimum of one visit every two weeks** to all settlements with weekly visits to larger settlements (see Appendix 6);
- **Halts would be withdrawn if they are not used:** in order to ensure the service is efficient and meets needs, the level of use of all halts would be monitored.

## Implications

115. As noted in paragraph 38 above, use of the mobile library service is declining; it serves just 1.5% of all active borrowers and many mobile library users also use our library buildings. Furthermore many of the mobile halts are on the fringes of settlements where there is a library building, 124 halts had on average only 1 user and 53 halts serving 18 settlements had no users at all, in a 6 month review period in 2011. The mobile service is also comparatively more expensive than the library buildings: see paragraph 41.

116. The revised criteria would require the development of a new timetable so that if these proposals are adopted there may be changes to the stopping times for many of the halts.

117. Settlements which currently receive either 1 or 2 visits per week would receive a reduced service, as a result of fewer halts, less total time spent in the settlement, and reduced frequency of visits. The settlements that may be affected by this are set out in Appendix 6.
118. For those settlements where there are currently multiple halts, if these criteria were adopted in future there would only be a single halt, which would be determined following further local consultation. The settlements that may be affected by this are also set out in Appendix 6.
119. It is possible that some Mobile Library users may not find the proposed new stopping times or halts as convenient for them, and some may no longer use the library service. Our performance figures would then worsen. However, as there are low numbers of people overall using the mobiles, and as some users may migrate to using library buildings, and others may be eligible for the Books on Wheels service, the impact would be likely to be small.
120. If the proposed revised criteria were adopted, a reduction from five operational vehicles (plus two back-up) to one (plus one back-up) would be possible. Costs could be reduced from £200,000 to £80,000 per annum, making a net saving (full year) of approximately £120,000 (reducing the outstanding amount to be achieved through the MTFP to £282k). This saving would arise from staffing reductions and lower vehicle maintenance / operating costs.
121. There would also be savings to the Council's Vehicle Replacement capital programme in future years: in 2013/14 a large mobile library is due to be replaced at an estimated cost of £168k, and there are planned vehicle refurbishment costs of £60,000 over the next two years.

### **Library buildings**

122. Maintaining local services is felt to be vital in a semi-rural county, where transport links can be poor, and where some communities experience significant deprivation. However, if the MTFP target is to be achieved it will be necessary to make a reduction in the level of service provided, and it is proposed this is achieved by reducing library opening hours, rather than by closing libraries. This approach has been adopted in order to retain the full network of libraries to maximise the access to services for people from our communities.
123. In order to achieve the £282k savings required, it is proposed that Town Centre libraries would be staffed to open for a core of 36 hours per week and all community libraries staffed for a core of 20 hours per week. No change is proposed to the hours of opening at Clayport library, because its hours have already been reduced and it is the largest, busiest and most accessible library in the county.

124. The changes proposed to the service would have the following implications:
- Staffing in Town Centre libraries will vary marginally, linked to layout and size factors;
  - The costs assume all community libraries would have 2 staff on duty at all times;
  - Town centre libraries will have limited capacity for outreach work, and community libraries none. This will impact on activities for children such as input to schools, story times, Chatter Books clubs, craft clubs and homework clubs. There could be a reduction in the activities for adults, such as reading groups and family history groups; and
  - Local decisions would be made on the pattern of staffed opening hours, but the costs assume all libraries would be open on Saturday mornings, given the need to provide access for those who work through the week, and because Saturdays are a busy time, as well as on one evening each week. Illustrative opening hours are shown at Appendix 7.
125. Generally, town centre libraries would experience a reduction from their current operating levels of around 10 hours per week (16 - 25%).
126. The impact on community libraries is more variable, given the wide variation in the hours they currently operate. Some community libraries will receive a significantly smaller allocation of staffed hours in the future, and therefore see a larger reduction in their opening hours, and for others the reduction is relatively small. The reduction in opening hours ranges from 1 to 23 hours (5 - 53%).
127. The implications for each library are shown at Appendix 8. In summary, the overall reduction is shown in Table 3 below. This proposal would mean all the libraries would continue to operate, and standardised core opening hours would be introduced, but there would be a reduction in core opening hours – approximately 30% across the network.

*Table 3: summary of impact on library opening hours*

	<b>Existing opening hours per week fully DCC staffed</b>	<b>New hours of DCC staffing</b>	<b>Total reduction of DCC support</b>
Community Libraries	21 – 43 hrs	20 hrs	1 – 23 hrs
Town Centre Libraries	43 – 48 hrs	36 hrs	7 – 12hrs

Clayport	55.5hrs	55.5hrs	0 hrs
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128. The proposals for consultation have been formulated to avoid the closure of the current library facilities. A fundamental part of this proposal is an offer of the core hours that each library would open. There is the potential to develop these core hours further in the future through local community support initiatives.
129. The Council would continue to seek co-location or shared use opportunities to provide its library services in the future. In Crook, work is underway to relocate the library as part of the Customer Access Point in the former Civic Centre. In Durham City changes are planned to the Clayport library to enable a joint desk with the Customer Access Point that is being created next door. Plans are also being developed for other town centre premises.

### *Benefits*

130. This proposal would maximise the number of libraries the Council provides, so that a comprehensive network of library services would be retained, enabling continued ready local access to books and magazines, information, access to Council services, free use of computers, and wider community use of the library. The Council would continue to meet the overall identified needs for library services across the County.
131. This would benefit all communities but particularly those areas of deprivation and rural communities where access can be a greater problem.
132. The opening hours would be sufficient to provide library services at the most popular time periods for use, albeit not necessarily every day, including peak morning and afternoon periods and a Saturday session. Evening opening could be retained in all libraries on at least one day each week. This is illustrated in the examples of the potential opening hours set out at Appendix 7.
133. The reduction in hours, combined with the loss of outreach capacity for community libraries, may have some impact on performance, but it is felt that most active borrowers would be able to adjust their use of libraries to revised opening times. This is considered further as part of the equality impact assessment.
134. Retaining the full network of library buildings also ensures that the fullest offer of service to local communities can be maintained: the mobile service in future would complement the library buildings by providing a book loan service to the more rural communities.

### *Risks*



135. The scale of reductions in opening hours across the whole network is significant, from 1398 to 991.5 in total each week (a reduction of approximately 30%). In some community libraries the reduction is larger, with 3 community libraries seeing a reduction of 23 hours per week. However, 8 community libraries would only have a 1 hour per week reduction.
136. The levels of staffing will not allow for the level of outreach work (such as library staff visiting schools to promote the library) currently undertaken: in community libraries limited outreach work will be possible without community support.

### **Alternative proposals**

137. It should be noted that the same level of saving could be achieved without as significant a reduction in hours in all libraries, but this could, for example, involve closing five community libraries and still reducing hours – so that town centre libraries might open for a core of 40 hrs per week and all community libraries would be staffed to open for a core of 24 hrs per week. Given the importance of retaining local services to maximise the comprehensiveness of the library service, this option has been ruled out.
138. Furthermore, if the option to move to Trust status is not supported, a further £214k in savings would need to be found from the front-line library service to deliver the MTFP. If all the libraries were retained, then (for example) town centre libraries could open for a core of 30 hrs per week and all community libraries could be staffed to open for a core of 11 hrs per week. This option has also been ruled out because the level of service that would be supported was not felt to be sufficient to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

### **Future Investment in the library service**

139. The changes outlined above will require public consultation, and this is considered further below. However, at the same time as reducing expenditure overall, we will need to invest in our buildings order to ensure that the service is fit for the future. Clearly, the library service will need to change in order to deliver our aims for the future, and to meet local people's needs for library services.
140. As has already been noted, the Council is exploring options to provide new library buildings in a number of town centres as part of the Council's accommodation strategy.
141. The Council has also set aside capital for the Library Service over the MTFP period in order to invest in the future. However, the top priority for investment will need to be the backlog of essential repairs and

maintenance, as noted in paragraph 32. It is proposed that the essential works required are carried out over the next 6 years (rather than the usual 4 years). This longer time-scale will allow greater scope for investment in the modernisation of the library service.

142. The total capital available to the service over the next 6 years stands at £1.552m. This figure consists of the annual Repairs and Maintenance allocation of £167,000 plus a Library Modernisation and Repairs capital fund of £550,000:

143. This would allow investment as follows:

	£s
Essential repairs (including remaining prioritised accessibility works)	1036
Modernisation	516
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,552</b>

144. Work will begin in early 2012 on the backlog of repairs and maintenance.

145. The modernisation funds will be used to improve the library buildings and facilities in line with the strategy – for example to create more flexible spaces in libraries.

146. Furthermore, as already noted, we will develop a workforce plan to support the changes that we have proposed.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

147. The Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public authorities to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations.

148. The proposed library strategy supports our commitment to equality by encouraging participation, offering opportunities for learning and providing shared community spaces. There are however elements of the proposal which are likely to impact on particular groups.

149. By definition as a public facing service the proposed reduction in library opening hours and review of mobile library criteria would potentially impact on the public and therefore across any of the protected characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

150. Initial separate equality impact assessments have been undertaken in respect of the proposed library strategy, reductions in opening hours of our library buildings, and in respect of changes to the criteria for the

settlements that would receive a mobile library service. Copies of these are attached at Appendix 9, but the main issues from the assessments are summarised below. They identify initial actions necessary to mitigate the potential impacts, however the overall proposal to reduce opening hours rather than close libraries already mitigates against some negative impacts.

151. The information relating to static libraries is complex and varied as libraries not only deliver reading and information services, but in many cases deliver activities and events and provide space for a wide range of local community uses.
152. Reduction of library opening hours may have a greater impact on older people, children and young people, women and those with disabilities as they are more likely to rely on public transport to travel to other libraries if their local provision was unavailable at suitable times for them. The impact on people with learning disabilities may be greater because they may feel more reluctant to use alternative libraries where they are not familiar with the staff or surroundings.
153. As already noted (see paragraphs 19 and 20) the majority of users of library buildings are working age adults, with around 12% being aged over 60, and 25-30% being 0-14. Reduced operating hours impact differently on these groups, with some such as older people preferring day time services but for those working, or in education, generally evening and weekend services are preferable.
154. There are potential impacts on both men and women through a reduction in library building opening hours with potentially reduced access to activities and local provision. Women, as primary carers, (and children and young people themselves) may be more impacted by a reduction in local provision for activities and places to go for children including story-time sessions for toddlers, homework help, after school and holiday activities. Men are more likely to work full time and participate in family activities on evenings and weekends, although the same is true for working parents of both sexes.
155. Any reduction in hours will involve local discussions to determine the most appropriate opening hours in order to ensure that the most negative impacts of reduced opening times can be mitigated.
156. The mobile library services have a higher proportion of users who are older and we also know that many have disabilities including sensory impairments. It is possible that some mobile library users at some halts or settlements may not find the new stopping times that will need to be introduced, or placement of halts within their settlements, as convenient for them. Furthermore, some settlements will no longer receive a service and public transport links to library buildings may not be available. However, the numbers of people impacted are likely to be relatively small, particularly given that the Books On Wheels and Book Bus

services will be protected: some mobile library users may migrate to these services for vulnerable adults, which may see an increase in demand.

157. There is no evidence available of specific impact in relation to pregnancy, transgender, ethnicity or race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Whilst all groups may be affected by changes to opening hours there is no targeted provision for these groups which will be particularly reduced.
158. The assessments also seek to identify the impact on staff across all static and mobile libraries, the majority of whom are female (except in the mobile library service). This will be considered more fully as part of consultation with staff on the changes.
159. A review of community buildings began in September 2011. The cumulative impacts of that review together with the impacts of reducing the opening hours and the coverage of the mobile library service will be considered in the final report for Cabinet in July 2012.
160. A broad consultation exercise on this strategy will be conducted with customers of library buildings, mobile libraries, library staff and the wider public. The feedback will shape the evidence base for the final Equality Impact Assessment that will be presented to inform the final decision by Cabinet.
161. However, by maintaining the entire current network of 39 public library buildings, whilst there are potential impacts on current and potential library users, as described above, these impacts are greatly reduced in comparison with any potential closure of services.

### **Consultation and next steps**

162. Should Cabinet agree the recommendations in this report, it is proposed that there will be a period of public consultation on the proposals for change that the report sets out.
163. A summary document of the proposals in this report will be made widely available and members of the public and other key stakeholders will be asked to consider the proposals described and respond to a number of consultation questions in a standard response form.
164. The consultation will run for 12 weeks, from 10 February to 4 May 2012. The consultation will be publicised through press releases, letters to stakeholders, posters in libraries and a link on the Council's website. Area Action Partnerships and the County Durham Association of Local Councils will be given the opportunity to receive a presentation on the proposals, and seminars for elected Members will be held. The Safer, Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee will also be invited to comment on the proposals.

165. There will be a dedicated email address to receive consultation response forms; libraries will accept completed forms and a phone line with voicemail will be available. Printed versions of the form will be available at all libraries and council access points together with a reference copy of this and the June 2010 Cabinet reports and the summary document.
166. Once the consultation period has been completed, analysis will be undertaken. A further report would be brought to Cabinet in July 2012, outlining the feedback from the consultation, setting out recommendations in response and presenting the final library strategy, with associated costs and timetable for any changes, for Cabinet approval.
167. Consultation on the human resource implications of these proposals will take place during the public consultation, although no decisions on these implications will be made before Cabinet has made decisions on the shape of the service in the future following consultation. All staff in the library service will be affected by these proposals, except for the management staff who have already been subject to consultation on the reorganisation of their responsibilities.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

168. This strategy aims to create, for the people of County Durham, a financially sustainable library network that is vibrant, modern and enjoyable to visit. It will support the County Council's aims to provide altogether better services.
169. It sets out the need for a library service within County Durham, and shows how the Council can provide a comprehensive library service to meet that need within a reduced budget, delivering its medium term financial plan, whilst retaining its full network of library buildings, which will protect service delivery in many deprived communities, and continuing to provide a mobile library service to rural settlements, as well as dedicated services for people with mobility difficulties.
170. The proposals would reduce the level of service provided, but through working with local communities we can target opening hours to maximise usage in order to meet the need for library services as efficiently as possible. The value of the savings associated directly with reductions in service amounts to 34% of the total MTFP target for libraries.

## **Recommendations**

171. Cabinet is recommended to agree:
- The proposed vision and outcomes for the Library Service

- To undertake public consultation from 10 February to 4 May on the proposals in this report, i.e.:
  - Our overall strategy for library services in County Durham;
  - To revise the criteria for the settlements that mobile libraries will visit, as proposed at paragraph 114;
  - To retain a network of 12 town centre and 27 community libraries; and
  - To reduce opening hours in town centre libraries to 36 hours per week, and in community libraries to 20 per week.
- To receive a further report in July 2012 for a decision on the future of the library service following public consultation.

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## Appendix 1: Implications

**Finance** – The proposals in this report deliver savings for the Council in line with its Medium-Term Financial Plan, and set out an affordable, sustainable model for the library service in the future.

**Staffing** – All staff in the library service would be affected by the proposals in this report. Further consultation with staff will be required.

**Equality and Diversity** – Proposals to reduce the opening hours of libraries and to change the criteria for the settlements to be served by mobile libraries will have a negative impact on library users, many of whom are older people. Initial equality impact assessments in respect of opening hours and mobile libraries have been undertaken and copies are attached (Appendix 9). These will be updated in the light of evidence from the consultation prior to any final decisions on the future.

**Accommodation** – There are opportunities for the rationalisation of the Council's accommodation through co-location of libraries with other services.

**Crime and Disorder** – No direct implications

**Human Rights** – No direct implications

**Consultation** – The proposals in this report will be subject to public consultation as described in paragraphs 162 -167.

**Procurement** – No direct implications

**Disability Discrimination Act** – Library premises are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. Further re-provision will need to consider the requirements of the Act.

**Legal Implications** – General duty of library authorities. S7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

- (1) It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof

Provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.

- (2) In fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability:-

- (a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
- (b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and
- (c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

Under the Act the Secretary of State has a duty to superintend the delivery of the service and to promote improvement of public libraries and can intervene in a service where there is cause for concern.

Furthermore, since councils across the country have been responding to financial cuts, challenges have taken the form of applications for judicial review by interested groups. The focus of the courts has been on consultation and equalities. It has been acknowledged that there is no statutory duty to consult, but other councils involved in the recent cases have done so and the plan for the consultation is contained within the body of the report. Not carrying out a consultation will run the risk of challenge on the basis of the reasonableness of any decision. Compliance with equality duties is addressed within the body of the report and needs to be further addressed in the light of the consultation.

The recent case law has involved councils planning closures of libraries. A common theme that has developed in this and in the report in the Inquiry by the secretary of State into the proposed closure of libraries in the Wirral is that the plans of the council needs to be informed by a needs assessment. The assessment contained within the body of this report will need to be updated and reviewed in the light of the consultation before any final decision is made.



## Library opening hours

<b>Library</b>	<b>Opening hours</b>
<b>Town Centres</b>	
Barnard Castle	44.5
Bishop Auckland	48
Chester le Street	48
Consett	48
Crook	48
Durham – Clayport	55.5
Newton Aycliffe	48
Peterlee	48
Seaham	45
Sildon	43
Spennymoor	48
Stanley	46
<b>Community Libraries</b>	
Annfield Plain	34.5
Belmont	43
Blackhall	37
Bowburn	21
Brandon	39.5
Chilton	25
Cornforth	23
Coundon	21
Easington Colliery	37
Esh Winning	21
Ferryhill	43
Horden	37
Lanchester	21
Langley Park	21
Murton	37
Newton Hall	43
Pelton	21
Sacrison	34.5
Sedgefield	39
Shotton	21
South Moor	34.5
Thornley	23
Trimdon	24
Willington	37
Wingate	21
Wolsingham	32
Woodhouse Close	37

**Consultees to the First Phase of Consultation**

The key stakeholders who were consulted and responded to the first phase of consultation on the Library Strategy are listed below:

Museums Libraries and Archives Council  
Arts Council  
Durham University  
County Durham and Darlington PCT  
Durham County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils  
New College Durham  
Durham City Vision  
Cotherstone Parish Council  
Spennymoor Town Council  
Raby and Keverstone Parish Council  
Shotton Parish Council  
Pittington Parish Council  
Durham Cathedral  
Great Aycliffe Town Council  
Shildon Town Council  
Monk Hesledon Parish Council  
Belmont Parish Council  
Framwellgate Moor Parish Council  
Horden Council  
Stanhope Parish Council  
Barnard Castle Town Council  
Greater Willington Town Council

All other Town and Parish Councils were consulted. Not all responded individually, but the Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils did respond.

More than 250 members of the public also responded.

### Summary of Feedback on Phase 1

The vision put forward in the draft Library Strategy was

*“The library service in County Durham in the 21st century will be dynamic, exciting, confident, open and flexible, shaping and being shaped by the people it serves”.*

76% of respondents agreed with the vision as opposed to 10% who disagreed, and 14% did not comment.

The response to the six outcomes was as follows:

- **Outcome 1** (*“Inspire a community of reading and learning – people will see libraries as centres for reading and learning and the place to go for information”*) was supported by 89% of respondents; with only 4% disagreeing and 7% did not respond.

“you already have people who are committed to reading. It is important that new generation gain the desire to read for pleasure and to expand their horizons” Library User

- **Outcome 2** (*“Include local people to create community library hubs – people are more involved in shaping their local services and engage in community activity together through their library service”*) was endorsed by 76% with 11% disagreeing, whilst 13% did not respond.

“I totally agree, if we lose our library it will isolate many people, older people empathise with the library and feel safe. Libraries are an essential part of the community” Library User

- **Outcome 3** (*“Modern and Responsive – People view the library service as vibrant and exciting and relevant to their lives”*) was supported by 80% with 10% disagreeing and 10% not responding.

“we need to encourage the young people to use all the facilities that the library offers. All libraries should be encouraged to reach out to the young ones” Library User

“You do see people from a good variety of age groups. The growing use of IT is good to see although it should not overpower the traditional meaning of libraries – books” Library User.

- **Outcome 4** (*“Improving access through innovation and technology – People will have improved access and services through the use of technology”*) was agreed by 74% with 12.5% in disagreement, and 13.5% not responding.

“This is definitely needed, Durham County Council are way behind other Councils’ in terms of e book provision” Library User

“Not everyone has a computer at home so there is easy access in the library for all to use” Library User

- **Outcome 5** (“Partnerships at the core of service delivery – People will view the library service as having the latest innovative services”) was supported by the fewest respondents (62.5%), of the remaining, 13.5% disagreed and 24% did not respond. Comments indicate that many respondents were unclear about this outcome.

“This has to happen to keep libraries used by many people, utilisation of the library facilities must be encouraged, start in the schools and get children enthusiastic about using all the library facilities” Library User

“with limited space need to be careful one or more services do not cause detriment to the core function of the library” Library User

- **Outcome 6** (“Well managed and efficient service – The new library service will ensure operational flexibility, sustainability and create skills for the future through robust management and improved efficiency”) was supported by 76.5% although 14.5% did not answer and 9% disagreed.

“The aspirations are great, but the core of what the library currently stands for should not be lost”. Library User.

### **General comments submitted by organisations / key stakeholders**

“Local libraries are needed for accessibility by local people who may lack transport facilities through age or financial difficulties”

“There is a fantastic opportunity to smash down silos and provide transformational long-lasting improvement together with improved services to communities”

“The Strategy acknowledges that Durham Library Service has some catching up to do in a number of areas, particularly with technology.”

“we support the intention to set out key priorities and outcomes for the library service in Durham, and to ensure the manner in which the service is delivered enables these to be achieved. Practice and experience elsewhere across the country suggests it is imperative that this is not a strategy owned by the library service, but rather a whole council strategy for how its library service will deliver priorities in meeting the needs of communities”



**Mobile Libraries**

1. It is proposed that the following settlements that currently get weekly or twice weekly visits would receive one visit per week in future:

- Cockfield
- Evenwood
- Middleton in Teesdale
- Staindrop
- Stanhope

2. It is proposed that 23 settlements (see below) currently served by multiple halts would in future only have one halt. If this proposal is agreed by Cabinet in July 2012 following public consultation, it is further proposed that, a consultation exercise would then be conducted with each of these settlements to identify which halt would best meet their community's needs.

- Butterknowle
- Cockfield
- Eggleston
- Esperley
- Evenwood
- Frosterley
- Gainford
- Hamsterley
- Ingleton
- Ireshopeburn
- Mickleton
- Middleton in Teesdale
- Newbiggin
- Ovington
- Ramshaw
- Rookhope
- Southside
- Stanhope
- St John's Chapel
- Staindrop
- Wearhead
- Westgate

Winston

## Appendix 7

### Sample timetables of opening times for town centre and community libraries

If town centre libraries were to open for 36 hours per week, the opening hours could look as follows:

#### Example 1

Monday	10.00am - 7.00pm	9
Tuesday	10.00am - 6.00pm	8
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am - 7.00pm	9
Friday	10.00am - 5.00pm	7
Saturday	9.30am - 12.30pm	3
<b>Total hours open</b>		<b>36</b>

#### Example 2

Monday	10.00am - 7.00pm	9
Tuesday	8.30am - 12.30pm	4
Wednesday	2.00pm - 6.00pm	4
Thursday	9.00am - 6.00pm	9
Friday	10.00am - 5.00pm	7
Saturday	9.30am - 12.30pm	3
<b>Total hours open</b>		<b>36</b>

If community libraries were to open for 20 hours per week, the opening hours could look as follows:

#### Example 1

Monday	2.00pm - 7.00pm	5
Tuesday	2.00pm - 5.00pm	3
Wednesday	10.00am - 1.00pm	3
Thursday	10.00am - 1.00pm	3
Friday	2.00pm - 5.00pm	3
Saturday	9.30am - 12.30pm	3
<b>Total hours open</b>		<b>20</b>

#### Example 2

Monday	2.00pm - 7.00pm	5
Tuesday	8.30am - 11.30am	3
Wednesday	closed	0
Thursday	10.00am - 4.00pm	6
Friday	2.00am - 5.00pm	3
Saturday	9.30am - 12.30pm	3
<b>Total hours open</b>		<b>20</b>

## Appendix 8

### Proposed future opening hours – Town Centre Libraries open 36 hrs per week, Community Libraries open 20 hrs per week.

Library	Current open hr per week	Proposed open hours	Reduction
<b>Town Centres</b>			
Barnard Castle	44.5	36	8.5
Bishop Auckland	48	36	12
Chester le Street	48	36	12
Consett	48	36	12
Crook	48	36	12
Durham – Clayport	55.5	55.5	0
Newton Aycliffe	48	36	12
Peterlee	48	36	12
Seaham	45	36	9
Sildon	43	36	7
Spennymoor	48	36	12
Stanley	46	36	10
<b>Community Libraries</b>			
Annfield Plain	34.5	20	14.5
Belmont	43	20	23
Blackhall	37	20	17
Bowburn	21	20	1
Brandon	39.5	20	19.5
Chilton	25	20	5
Cornforth	23	20	3
Coundon	21	20	1
Easington Colliery	37	20	17
Esh Winning	21	20	1
Ferryhill	43	20	23
Horden	37	20	17
Lanchester	21	20	1
Langley Park	21	20	1
Murton	37	20	17
Newton Hall	43	20	23
Pelton	21	20	1
Sacriston	34.5	20	14.5
Sedgefield	39	20	19
Shotton	21	20	1
South Moor	34.5	20	14.5
Thornley	23	20	3
Trimdon	24	20	4
Willington	37	20	17
Wingate	21	20	1
Wolsingham	32	20	12
Woodhouse Close	37	20	17



## Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

**NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.**

**You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.**

## Section one: Description and initial screening

<b>Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.</b>	
Service / team or section: Adults Wellbeing and Health, Social Inclusion – Libraries	
Lead Officer: Anne Davison	Start date: 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2011
<p><b>Subject of the Impact Assessment:</b> (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)</p> <p>Library Strategy</p> <p>This impact assessment relates to proposals to consult on the library strategy and linked proposals to deliver medium term financial plan savings.</p> <p>The strategy aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inspire a community of reading and learning;</li> <li>• To create community library hubs, involving local people;</li> <li>• To be modern and responsive; and</li> <li>• To ensure that we have a well managed and efficient service;</li> </ul> <p>and to meet the following areas of need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading for pleasure;</li> </ul>	

- raising confidence, skills and aspirations through access to informal and formal learning facilities, for study, research, self improvement and knowledge;
- the development of individual literacy;
- local community and public service information; and
- a place to meet and participate in community life.

In order to meet these needs and deliver on our aims, our strategy – subject to consultation on proposed service changes – will be:

- to keep open all our library buildings, but reduce their opening hours;
- to revise our criteria for the communities that are served by our mobile library service;
- to co-locate libraries wherever possible with other services and to invest to improve their appearance and facilities;
- to drive down our support and management costs; and
- to move our library services into a not-for-profit Trust.

**Who are the main stakeholders:** General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) –

The main stakeholders involved in these proposals are the general public (children and young people, older people, adults, carers), although DCC employees, elected members, partners such as Surestart and the PCT are also involved.

**Is a copy of the subject attached?** Yes

If not, where could it be viewed?

### **Initial screening**

Prompts to help you:

Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

**Is there an actual/potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?**

Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	y	Disability	y	Age	y	Race/ethnicity	y	Religion or belief	y	Sexual orientation	y
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**How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?**

Reminder of our legal duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone’s disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people
- Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

The overall aims of the library strategy support the commitment to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and involving people in public life by supporting individual learning and development as well as maintaining access to local community facilities. Given that library services are intended to reach everyone in the community there is potential for impact on all of the protected characteristics. There is also potential impact on staff.

This initial screening suggests that the main potential for negative impact relates to proposals to reduce library opening hours and review the mobile library service. Each of those will be subject to a full, detailed impact assessment to inform the final decision. In addition the final impact assessment will consider the impact of proposals to:

- co-locate libraries wherever possible with other services and to invest to improve their appearance and facilities;
- to drive down our support and management costs; and
- to move our library services into a not-for-profit Trust.

Co-location, investment and moving to Trust status may include positive impacts for some groups, for example by improving access to buildings for disabled people, older people and young children. Consultation will be used to inform the final decision. Potential staff changes are more likely to impact on female staff who make up a greater proportion, the age profile of staff shows the majority of staff are under 55. Any changes would be subject to staff HR consultation and with appropriate union involvement.

<b>What evidence do you have to support your findings?</b>
<p>The linked assessments on library opening hours and mobile library service include specific information from the Halcyon system which records details on library membership; human resources profile information and previous consultation</p> <p>Further work – these proposed changes will be subject to formal consultation if approved by Cabinet. This consultation would provide further evidence to support a full impact assessment. Consultation monitoring would identify protected characteristic groups and their responses.</p>
<b>Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – subject to Cabinet decision January 2012      Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011</b>
<b>If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval &amp; sign off.</b>

## Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

<b>Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.</b>			
	Identify the impact: does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
<b>Gender</b>	See separate Library opening hours and Mobile Library EIAs		
<b>Age</b>	Ditto		
<b>Disability</b>	Ditto		
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	Ditto		
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Ditto		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Ditto		

<b>How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?</b>
<p>All libraries provide access to books, information, and works of creative imagination, ensuring equality of access by actively taking account of the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of the surrounding area. They support and encourage the development of computer skills, by enabling all ages to make use of online learning resources and access Council services.</p> <p>By maintaining the existing locations and the entire network of local community space the impact on local communities is minimised.</p>

### Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.			
Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
See separate Library opening hours and Mobile Library EIAs			
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date: from February 2012		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	Library opening hours and Mobile Library EIAs to be completed		
Lead officer – sign off: Strategic Manager Libraries			Date: 16 Dec 2012
Service equality representative – sign off: Head of Social Inclusion			Date: 16 Dec 2012

## Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

**NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.**

**You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.**

## Section one: Description and initial screening

<b>Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.</b>	
Service / team or section: Adults Wellbeing and Health, Social Inclusion – Libraries	
Lead Officer: Anne Davison	Start date: 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2011 Updated 1 : 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2011 Update 2 : 15 October 2011 Update 3: 15 December 2011
<p><b>Subject of the Impact Assessment:</b> (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)</p> <p><b>PROPOSED REDUCTION OF OPENING HOURS IN TOWN CENTRE AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES</b> Potential reduction in opening hours in Durham County Council's (DCC) libraries as an MTFP efficiency saving (AWH10). Potential savings were calculated following analysis of the current costs involved with the operation of libraries.</p> <p>This impact assessment considers initial equalities issues associated with the review of DCCs libraries, and subsequent reduction in opening hours proposals. It focuses on initial impacts to customers and communities who benefit from using the Libraries and initial impacts to staff affected by the potential reduction in opening hours. It then goes on to identify initial actions necessary to mitigate the identified impacts.</p>	

This initial assessment seeks to identify the impacts to customers who make use of libraries. This information is complex and varied as libraries not only deliver reading and information services, but in many cases deliver a range of activities and events and where possible they provide space for a wide range of local community uses. A public consultation exercise will take place on the proposals and this will supplement the evidence base of this Equalities Impact Assessment.

The library service currently consists of a network of 39 libraries in town centres and local communities, plus the staff library at County Hall.

- There are over 750,000 books available for loan;
- Through the Inter-Library-Loan Scheme the library service enables access to wider national and international collections;
- Each year the service makes over 3.3m loans of books, including more than 50,000 health books<sup>7</sup>, deals with over 350,000 requests for books, and enables free local access to over 200 computers;
- Opening times vary from 21 hours per week in many of the smaller libraries to over 55 hours per week at Clayport in Durham City;
- All libraries open on Saturday mornings and between two and five evenings per week. Bishop Auckland and Clayport libraries open five evenings per week;
- The staff library, located in County Hall is open each lunch time for DCC staff to use. It operates Monday to Friday, for a total of 10 hours per week for the loan and return of books and the use of computers.

**Who are the main stakeholders:** General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) –

The main stakeholders involved in these proposals are the general public (children and young people, older people, adults, carers), although DCC employees, elected members, partners such as Surestart and the PCT are also involved.

**Is a copy of the subject attached?** Yes

If not, where could it be viewed?

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<sup>7</sup> Halcyon (Library Computerised Management System)



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**Initial screening**

Prompts to help you:  
Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

**Is there an actual/potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?**  
Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	y	Disability	y	Age	y	Race/ethnicity	y	Religion or belief	y	Sexual orientation	y
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**How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?**

- Reminder of our legal duties:
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
  - Promoting equality of opportunity
  - Promoting good relations between people from different groups
  - Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone’s disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people
  - Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

**Impacts to Customers**

Given that library services are intended to reach everyone in the community there is potential for impact on all of the protected characteristics. This impact is linked to reductions in library opening hours and in opportunities for outreach or specific support for library users, for some this may limit access to local library services which could mean increased travel, cost or time commitment in using alternative locations. Initial assessment using library membership data and library survey results suggests that this impact is more likely to relate to:

- age, particularly on older or younger library users

- disability,
- gender (including pregnancy and maternity).

There is no direct evidence at this stage of specific impact in relation to transgender status, religion or belief and sexual orientation but this will be considered in the full assessment and through consultation evidence.

### **Impacts to staff**

The library service review process has identified proposals to progress to public consultation. This EQIA also seeks to identify the impact on the current staff. Circa 141 full time equivalent (FTE) staff are employed across all 39 Libraries and related support services. It is possible that there may be greater impacts on some staff as the current historic schedule of opening hours varies greatly between communities. Through the proposed introduction of a set of core standardised opening hours, of 36 hours in Town Centres and 20 hours in all community libraries, there may be greater impacts on some specific communities / libraries where no vacancies are held and the larger reductions in opening hours will be made. These staff will be identified following analysis of HR profiles and this information will inform development of specific mitigation following this EQIA review. Regardless of this process, due consideration will be given to those staff who may need to be relocated as a consequence of this proposal and every effort will be made to ensure a work/life balance is taken into account, especially around child care/caring issues or disability.

Staff profile information will be used in the full assessment to consider the impacts, initial evidence from the current workforce profile indicates potential impacts on age and gender. When considered across all libraries there is likely to be a greater potential impact on female staff. The age profile of staff shows the majority of staff are under 55. Staff impacts may include reduced working hours or changes to work patterns which could affect all staff but further detail is required to understand the effects, including any staff with disabilities or from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Information on staff religion or belief and sexual orientation will be considered but monitoring has only recently been introduced so data is minimal. Any changes would be subject to staff HR consultation and with appropriate union involvement.

### **Consultation**

A broad consultation exercise will be conducted with customers, the general public, stakeholders and library staff to identify a range of location specific / community impacts as a result of these proposals. This information will inform a revised EQIA that will be presented to inform the final decision. If the proposed changes are approved then further specific impacts relating to new local opening hours arrangements will be considered as part of the process.

### **Related impact assessments**

The library strategy includes proposed changes to mobile services which are being assessed separately. Impacts from both will be included in the final report before a decision is made.

Changes to bus subsidies introduced in April 2011 have a linked impact to the proposals outlined here, an impact assessment on the bus subsidies was completed at the time and identified that reducing contracted bus services would have a greater potential negative impact upon women, older, younger and disabled users. Consultation indicated preferences for maintaining daytime services which could limit the impact in relation to accessing services, e.g. employment, education, childcare, health appointments however reducing services on evenings and Sundays has a negative impact on some groups, e.g. in relation to social activities, those with care responsibilities, hospital visiting or evening and weekend work patterns.

Evidence from the impact assessment on leisure centre closures will also be considered in the full assessment, whilst the proposals are fundamentally different the consultation and final assessment could provide relevant information on changes to local services and mitigating actions.

A review of community buildings is currently underway, any relevant evidence will also be considered as part of this review.

### **What evidence do you have to support your findings?**

Library user profile – information on active borrowers has been collected from the Halcyon system. Whilst library members are not required to record their equality information there are a number of categories which can provide indicative evidence on age, gender and disability. There is no information available on transgender status, ethnic background, religion or belief and sexual orientation, whilst no services are specifically targeted at these groups there may be evidence from consultation responses which can be used in the final assessment.

HR Profile information – initial evidence of age and gender profile, further information will be included in the final assessment. The current library service consists of 141 FTE posts (in October 2011) across a network of 39 libraries, 5 prisons, 6 vehicles and

specialist support and management services.

Consultation analysis – general library survey responses have been considered along with responses from previous Library Strategy consultation in September 2010. The composition of responses received:

Service user	248	94%
Stakeholder, e. g. Parish Council, National Organisation	12	4.5%
Staff member – library	4	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100%</b>

Further work - these proposed changes will be subject to formal consultation if approved by Cabinet. This consultation would provide further evidence to support a full impact assessment. Consultation monitoring would identify protected characteristic groups and their responses.

**Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – Yes**                      **Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011**

**If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.**

## Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

<b>Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.</b>			
	Identify the impact: does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
<b>Gender</b>	<p>There are impacts on both men and women through reduction in opening hours with potential loss of access to activities and local provision. Impacts include additional travel associated costs and potentially more restricted access to activities through change of venue.</p> <p>Women may be affected by changes to opening hours where they currently use local libraries which fit in with caring responsibilities, work patterns and access to transport. Pregnant women and those with young babies may also be more likely to use local facilities which require no or minimal travel. There are activities, such as Bookstart, which are aimed at babies and their parents or carers.</p> <p>Men may be affected by changes in opening hours as they are more likely to work full time or longer hours which restricts their access to services and opportunities to participate in events or family activities, although the same is true for working parents of both sexes.</p> <p>Whilst gender is not specifically included on membership records the system does include 'Mr', 'Mrs' 'Miss' etc - the available data suggests that there are significantly more female</p>	<p>National and local evidence suggests that women tend to be primary carers and may be more impacted by reduction in local provision for activities and places to go for children including homework help, after school and holiday activities. They are also more likely to use local facilities due to part-time working patterns or reliance on public transport. Demographic information shows there are more older women in the population, including</p>	<p>Should the proposal be approved by Cabinet <b>the following actions apply to all equality groups:</b></p> <p>(1) Maintaining Saturday and some evening opening hours is included in the proposal as a mitigating action.</p> <p>(2) Consultation – ensure this is accessible to all and equality monitoring / responses are analysed for inclusion in final assessment.</p>

	<p>members than male across all categories except under 5 year olds. The Durham library user survey for over 16s in 2011 showed respondents were 65% female and 35% male. This reflects national evidence, the CIPFA library survey for 2009/10 shows returns of 62% female to 38% male in English Counties with 59% female and 41% male in English unitary authorities.</p> <p>The Durham survey also showed that 47% of respondents had walked to the library while 36% drove and 65% owned a car. In relation to employment 16% worked full time, 11% worked part time and 6% were 'looking after the home'. 91% thought opening hours were good or very good. Whilst this evidence is not specific to gender it does provide an indication and will be considered further across the protected characteristics before the final assessment.</p> <p>Staff impacts vary depending on each library staffing profile but the general profile shows 87.5% are female and 12.5% are male. Reduced or changed work patterns may provide positive options in work/life balance for some, for example those with care responsibilities. However, some staff may be negatively affected by reduced income, for example lone parents or women relying on their income to boost pension contributions. Increased travel may also create a negative impact where staff currently live locally, e.g. may cause difficulties for those with school age children or other care responsibilities. Also the recent bus changes mean evening and weekend routes in some areas have been reduced which may mean some staff cannot travel to other locations.</p>	<p>a high proportion who live alone and do not have access to private transport.</p> <p>Local evidence from Surestart suggests that fathers and male carers prefer weekend activities.</p> <p>There is no evidence at this stage of specific impact on transgender people.</p> <p>The staffing profile reflects national and traditional trends in the sector. Many staff in libraries live locally.</p>	<p>(3) Revised opening hours would be subject to further local consultation to identify specific impacts.</p> <p>(4) Further detailed evidence gathered on targeted provision or usage patterns which may be affected by changes – e.g. toddler groups, learning disability groups, 'silver surfers' provision and reading groups.</p> <p>(5) Ensure that the Change Management Toolkit is followed to ensure fair treatment for staff</p>
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<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>Reduction of library opening hours may have a greater impact on older people, children and young people if changes restricted their access to the library.</p> <p>Libraries provide activities including early evening homework support, weekend and holiday activities for young people, access for schools for class visits, and for students and story-time sessions for toddlers or very young children. Some younger children may rely on family or carers to bring them to the library which could be affected by reduced opening hours.</p> <p>The loss of social interaction is also likely to impact more on older people who are more at risk of feeling isolated, there may also be related impacts on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Using the age range classifications held in the computerised library management system (where this information has been provided) the profile of current members for the library service is as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="645 933 1370 1161"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3"><b>Static library users</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>age band</b></th> <th><b>%</b></th> <th><b>number of people</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>under 16</td> <td>22</td> <td>53,830</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 – 59</td> <td>69</td> <td>172,086</td> </tr> <tr> <td>over 60s</td> <td>9</td> <td>22,157</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>69% of registered members fall into an age range of 16 – 59. Whilst those people over 60 only comprise 9% of our registered users.</p>	<b>Static library users</b>			<b>age band</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number of people</b>	under 16	22	53,830	16 – 59	69	172,086	over 60s	9	22,157	<p>Older and younger people may have limited access to personal transport. If they need to use another larger library this may result in increased costs or reliance on others for transport.</p> <p>Older people may be more likely to use local services, some prefer daytime services due to personal safety fears. There are more older women in the population and many live alone.</p> <p>Much of the current outreach and activity work is aimed at encouraging children and young people – e.g. Investing in Children groups, homework clubs and readers groups.</p>	<p>In addition to the actions numbered 1 - 5 above:</p> <p>Ensure that local arrangements take into account use by older and younger people.</p> <p>Identify options to maintain outreach and activities, particularly for children and young people.</p> <p>Books on wheels provision may be an appropriate alternative for some older people.</p>
<b>Static library users</b>																		
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	<p>Total Registered Library Users</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="645 268 1272 384"> <tr> <td>under 16</td> <td>53,830</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 – 59</td> <td>172,086</td> </tr> <tr> <td>over 60s</td> <td>22,157</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Durham library user survey 2011 for over 16s recorded responses from 60% aged 16-64 and 40% aged over 65. 47% of respondents answering the employment question indicated that they were retired.</p> <p>The under 16s survey recorded responses from 17% aged under 6, 47% aged 6-10 and 37% aged 11-15. The active borrower profile shows 36.5% are under 6, 39.4% are 6-10 and 24.1% are 11-15. The survey responses indicated high satisfaction levels with libraries, as a safe and friendly place which is easy to get to and a place they wanted to visit. Other questions asked about book borrowing, computer use, learning and social aspects of library visits. In relation to opening hours 82% of respondents were satisfied.</p> <p>Staff profile shows that 64% are aged under 55 which may affect options for those interested in early retirement or voluntary redundancy. Impacts of reduced or changed work patterns are similar to gender – e.g. some may prefer options for reduced hours to fit around care responsibilities whilst others may be negatively affected by reduced income or increased travel to another location.</p>	under 16	53,830	16 – 59	172,086	over 60s	22,157	<p>Staff profile shows 21% are under 40; 43% aged 41-54; 24% aged 55- 60 and 12% aged over 60.</p>	
under 16	53,830								
16 – 59	172,086								
over 60s	22,157								
<b>Disability</b>	Reduction of opening hours at local libraries may have a greater impact on some disabled people if they were no longer able to access their regular static library at their regular time. People	Some disabled people may rely on carers or other family	In addition to the general actions listed						



	<p>with learning disabilities who are used to going to the library at a routine time may be more affected by changes to the opening hours or feel more reluctant to use alternative libraries, if this would require a change of venue or additional travel.</p> <p>There are potential health and wellbeing impacts for disabled people if they are no longer able to access library provision due to a change in opening hours. This includes physical impacts in relation to general health or managing their condition (through access to Health Information Zones) as well as mental wellbeing if social interaction is lost. Disabled people may be more likely to feel isolated without these opportunities.</p> <p>Disability is not included on membership records. Active borrowers data shows 0.6% categorised as 'concessionary' and 0.04% as 'housebound' both of which would include disabled people. In addition 0.4% are categorised as 'carer/cared for'. These figures are low due to under-reporting but they do provide an indication of the minimum level.</p> <p>The Durham library user survey 2011 for over 16s recorded responses on specific disabilities. Of those using static libraries 57% of respondents to this question recorded no disability or health condition, the remaining responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing – 15%</li> <li>• Eyesight – 16%</li> <li>• Hands/fingers – 9%</li> <li>• Learning disability – 2%</li> <li>• Mental health – 6%</li> <li>• Mobility – 17%</li> <li>• Other – 3%</li> </ul>	<p>members to accompany them, also access to alternative libraries could be affected by limited access to personal or public transport.</p> <p>There is national and local evidence that some people with learning disabilities are affected by changes in service, this may increase the risk that they stop using library services.</p>	<p>above:</p> <p>Identify specific mitigating actions where there is local evidence of use by disabled people, particularly people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Books on wheels provision may be an appropriate alternative for some disabled people.</p>
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	<p>Except for learning disability these response rates are all higher than the English average for 2009/10.</p> <p>Staff profile information on disability is not available at this stage but will be included in the final assessment and reasonable adjustments will be considered in any consultation or proposed changes to individual work patterns. Impacts are likely to be similar to gender and age above along with individual cases where a reasonable adjustment has been made or would be needed.</p>		
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<p>Libraries are equally accessible to all racial / ethnic groups. There is no evidence available of specific impact through changes in opening hours however the potential reduction in outreach activity may impact on traveller communities living on sites in the county.</p>	<p>Outreach activity has been targeted at particular sites to encourage library use.</p>	<p>General actions numbered 1-5</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>Libraries are equally accessible to all religion / belief groups. There is no evidence available of specific impact and no targeted provision in relation to religion or belief which would be affected by changes to opening hours.</p>		<p>General actions numbered 1-5</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>Libraries are equally accessible regardless of sexual orientations. There is no evidence available of specific impact and no targeted provision in relation to sexual orientation which would be affected by changes to opening hours.</p>		<p>General actions numbered 1-5</p>

<p><b>How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?</b></p> <p>All libraries provide access to books, information, and works of creative imagination, ensuring equality of access by actively taking account of the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of the surrounding area. They support and encourage the development of computer skills, by enabling all ages to make use of online learning resources and access Council services.</p> <p>By maintaining the existing locations and the entire network of local community space the impact on local communities is minimised.</p>
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### Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.

The equality impacts of changing the current opening hours and effect on outreach work or activities would have potential negative impacts on all library users and staff. The initial assessment suggests negative impacts are more likely to affect people because of their gender (including pregnancy or maternity), age (particularly older and younger people) and disability. The likely impacts relate to a reduction in access to library services which may mean they need to use another larger library requiring additional travel, cost or time commitment; or alternative provision such as online services or Books on Wheels. Impacts on staff may include reduced hours or changed work patterns, including potential changes to working location. Staff profile shows the majority of staff are women and those aged under 55, further information will be considered in the final assessment.

There may be potential impact on race, further evidence is needed on the effect of reduced outreach activity aimed at traveller communities.

There is no evidence at this stage of a specific impact in relation to transgender, religion or belief and sexual orientation but if the proposal is approved they will be considered again following consultation.

There are potential cumulative impacts associated with recent reductions in bus subsidies which mean that some communities have reduced bus services particularly at evenings and weekends, this will further limit access for those without private transport. The review of community buildings currently underway may also have an impact on some communities, this assessment will be considered.

Initial mitigating actions include consideration of local need in agreeing the final preferred opening hours for each library, options for maintaining a level of outreach or activities through encouraging volunteer support and providing information on alternative services such as online reference books or Books on Wheels.

Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
Updated EIA to be completed if Cabinet approval for progression to consultation	Anne Davison	January 2012	n/a
Further update of initial EIA to be completed on conclusion of consultation period with evidence from Equalities monitoring data.	Anne Davison	May 2012	n/a

HR evidence on the current composition of workforce to be updated for further revisions of the EIA	Anne Davison	May 2012	n/a
<p>If the proposal is approved by Cabinet the following actions will apply:          Consultation – ensure this is accessible to all and equality monitoring/responses are analysed for inclusion in final assessment.</p> <p>Revised opening hours would be subject to further local consultation to identify specific impacts.</p> <p>Further detailed evidence gathered on targeted provision or usage patterns which may be affected by changes – e.g. toddler groups, learning disability groups, ‘silver surfers’ provision and reading groups.</p> <p>Ensure that the Change Management Toolkit is followed to ensure fair treatment for staff</p>	Anne Davison	May 2012	n/a
<p>If the proposal is approved following consultation:</p> <p>In relation to age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that local arrangements take into account use by older and younger people.</li> <li>• Identify options to maintain outreach and activities, particularly for children and young people.</li> <li>• Books on wheels provision may be an appropriate alternative for some older people.</li> </ul>	Anne Davison	tbc	Tbc

<p>In relation to disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify specific mitigating actions where there is local evidence of use by disabled people, particularly people with learning disabilities.</li> <li>• Books on wheels provision may be an appropriate alternative for some disabled people.</li> </ul>			
<p>When will this assessment be reviewed?</p>	<p>Date: February 2012 following Cabinet a decision</p>		
<p>Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?</p>	<p>Mobile Library EIA to be completed</p>		
<p>Lead officer - sign off: Strategic Manager - Libraries</p>			<p>Date: 16 Dec 2012</p>
<p>Service equality representative - sign off: Head of Social Inclusion</p>			<p>Date: 16 Dec 2012</p>

## Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

**NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.**

**You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.**

## Section one: Description and initial screening

<b>Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.</b>	
Service / team or section: Adults Wellbeing and Health, Social Inclusion – Libraries	
Lead Officer: Anne Davison	Start date: date 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2011 Updated 1 : 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2011 (v2) Update 2:
Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)	
<p><b>REDUCTION OF MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE FROM FIVE VEHICLES TO ONE</b></p> <p>Potential reduction in the mobile library service as an efficiency saving (AWH10). Potential savings were calculated following analysis of the costs involved with operation of mobile libraries.</p> <p>This impact assessment considers equalities issues associated with the review of DCCs libraries and proposed reduction in the mobile library service. The assessment focuses on initial impacts to customers and communities who benefit from using the mobile libraries and impacts to staff affected by the potential reduction in mobile library provision. It then goes on to identify initial actions necessary to mitigate the identified impacts.</p> <p>The Mobile Library Service currently consists of five vehicles. Membership of the mobile library service has declined from 7,800 in March 2008 to 3,538 in March 2011, of whom 1,452 were active borrowers (people who have taken a book at least once in the previous 12 months. This is interesting as the mobile library service only contains books so there will only be a minority who come</p>	

to the vehicle for any other purpose). This represents just over 1.5% of the total number of active borrowers of the library service. 1 in 4 mobile library members also access our library buildings.

Given the savings the Council needs to make, it is proposed that in future the mobile library service would be focussed on the more rural settlements to provide a library service to those communities where accessibility difficulties are greatest. It is proposed that, subject to consultation, mobile library services would be provided to communities on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Distance:** Mobile libraries will only call at settlements at least 4 miles from a library building;
  - **One halt per settlement** – this will ensure that a service is maintained for the maximum number of rural residents;
  - **Standardised halts** for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour or two hours – depending on level of current use;
  - **A minimum of one visit every two weeks** to all settlements with weekly visits to larger settlements. These would be:
    - Cockfield
    - Evenwood
    - Middleton in Teesdale
    - Staindrop
    - Stanhope
  - **Halts would be withdrawn if they are not used for any six month period.** Use of all halts would be monitored to ensure the service remained efficient.
- The number of settlements served by mobiles would reduce from 182 to 63. Those settlements which currently receive either 1 or 2 visits per week would have a significantly reduced service, as a result of fewer halts, less total time spent in the settlement, and reduced frequency of visits. Using the proposed revised criteria there would be 1 vehicle visiting 63 individual settlements of which 23 currently have multiple halts.

It is proposed that, for the settlements where there are multiple halts currently, a consultation exercise is conducted to discuss with the communities, which halt best meets their needs. The following 23 settlements (see list below) would be consulted, asking to identify the location of the single halt for their settlement. This would take place following agreement of strategy document at Cabinet in later 2012 following consultation.

Butterknowle	Ingleton	Southside
Cockfield	Ireshopeburn	St Johns Chapel
Eggleston	Mickleton	Staindrop
Esperley	Middleton in Teesdale	Stanhope
Evenwood	Newbiggin	Wearhead
Frosterley	Ovington	Westgate
Gainford	Ramshaw	Winston
Hamsterley	Rookhope	

Through the proposed introduction of a new set of standardised criteria and new routing, including duration of halts and frequency of visits there may be greater impacts on some specific communities. A public consultation exercise will take place on the proposals and this will supplement the evidence base of this Equalities Impact Assessment.

This assessment also seeks to identify the impact on staff. Circa 7 full time equivalent (FTE) staff are employed in delivering the mobile library service. Due consideration would be given to those staff who may need to be relocated as a consequence of the proposal and every effort will be made to ensure a work/life balance is taken into account, especially around child care/caring issues or disability.



Who are the main stakeholders: General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) –  
 The main stakeholders are the general public (children and young people, older people, adults, carers), although employees and elected members are involved.

Is a copy of the subject attached? Yes  
 If not, where could it be viewed?

**Initial screening**

Prompts to help you:  
 Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

**Is there an actual/potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?**  
 Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	y	Disability	y	Age	y	Race/ethnicity	y	Religion or belief	y	Sexual orientation	y
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**How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?**  
 Reminder of our legal duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone’s disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people
- Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

**Impacts to Customers**  
 Given that library services are intended to reach everyone in the community with mobile libraries traditionally used to reach outlying

communities or those without easy access to a static library there is potential for impact on all of the protected characteristics. This impact is linked to reductions in the number and duration of mobile library halts, for some this may mean withdrawal of mobile library access or limited access. Where access is removed or limited this could mean increased travel, cost or time commitment in using alternative locations. Initial assessment using library membership data and library survey results suggests that this impact is more likely to relate to:

- age, particularly on older or younger library users
- disability,
- gender (including pregnancy and maternity).

as these groups are less likely to have easy access to alternative services or may find the new times/halts more difficult to access.

For example the initial assessment identified approximately 77 people who are classed as concessionary borrowers using the mobile library service. These people identify themselves as being blind or partially sighted or have problems holding a book which entitles them to free talking books. It must be noted that this is a minimum indication as there will be other disabled people using the mobile library service at some of the settlements and halts. Alternative existing measures for disabled people include the Books on Wheels service which may be appropriate if they meet the eligibility criteria.

A recent survey of mobile library users (Public Library User Survey 2011) showed that 74% of users of the mobile library were over 65, whereas for our library buildings the significant majority of users fall within the age range of 15 – 59. Furthermore, 59% of respondents to the mobile library survey identified that they had a disability

There is no direct evidence at this stage of specific impact in relation to transgender status, religion or belief and sexual orientation but this will be considered in the full assessment and through consultation evidence.

### **Impacts to staff**

Staff profile information will be used in the full assessment to consider the impacts, initial evidence from the current workforce profile indicates potential impacts on age and gender. When considered across all 5 mobile libraries there are more male staff affected than female. The age profile of staff shows the likely impact is on those aged over 30. Further detail is required to understand the full effects, including any staff with disabilities. Religion or belief and sexual orientation will be considered to ensure fair treatment but will not be included in the impact assessment as monitoring has only recently been introduced and the number of staff is very small. Any changes would be subject to staff HR consultation and with appropriate union involvement.

**Consultation**

A broad consultation exercise will be conducted with customers, the general public, stakeholders and library staff to identify a range of location specific / community impacts as a result of these proposals. This information will inform a revised EQIA that will be presented to inform the final decision. If the proposed changes are approved then further specific impacts relating to new local mobile library arrangements will be considered as part of the process.

**Related impact assessments**

The library strategy includes proposed changes to opening hours in static libraries which are being assessed separately. Impacts from both will be included in the final report before a decision is made.

Changes to bus subsidies introduced in April 2011 have a linked impact to the proposals outlined here, an impact assessment on the bus subsidies was completed at the time and identified that reducing contracted bus services would have a greater potential negative impact upon women, older, younger and disabled users. Consultation indicated preferences for maintaining daytime services which could limit the impact in relation to accessing services, e.g. employment, education, childcare, health appointments however reducing services on evenings and Sundays has a negative impact on some groups, e.g. in relation to social activities, those with care responsibilities, hospital visiting or evening and weekend work patterns.

Evidence from the impact assessment on leisure centre closures will also be considered in the full assessment, whilst the proposals are fundamentally different the consultation and final assessment could provide relevant information on changes to local services and mitigating actions.

A review of community buildings is currently underway, any relevant evidence will also be considered as part of this review.

**What evidence do you have to support your findings?**

Library user profile – information on active borrowers has been collected from the Halcyon system. Whilst library members are not required to record their equality information there are a number of categories which can provide indicative evidence on age, gender and disability. There is no information available on transgender status, ethnic background, religion or belief and sexual orientation, whilst no services are specifically targeted at these groups there may be evidence from consultation responses which can be used in the final assessment.

HR Profile information – initial evidence of age and gender profile, further information will be considered but may not be included in the final assessment as numbers are so small.

Consultation analysis - Responses from Public Library User Survey for mobile library users (2011)

The 2011 County Durham Mobile Library User Survey was distributed in May 2011 to all 5 Durham County Council mobile libraries, 264 responses were received.

- Almost three-quarters of respondents (74%) were aged over 65. (40% in static library survey).
- 78% of respondents were female (60% in static library survey).
- Over half of all respondents (52%) own a car (65% are car owners in static library survey).
- 73% of respondents were retired from work (47% of static library respondents).
- 7% of respondents were economically active (31% in libraries).
- 59% of respondents reported that they had one or more of the listed disabilities/conditions. (43% in static library users).
- 2% of respondents had been users for less than one year

Responses relating to the accessibility of mobile libraries were very positive, with 100% finding the library stop easy to get to. This was reinforced with 91% of respondents able to walk to the library stop, with 84% getting there within 5 minutes.

6% of mobile library respondents drove to the mobile library stop, compared to 36% of static library users. Over half (52%) of mobile library respondents own a car. A quarter of respondents (26%) use the mobile library as well as accessing a static County Durham library, this varied between 14% and 48% at individual mobile library level. 36% of car owners accessed both a mobile and static library.

Further work - these proposed changes will be subject to formal consultation if approved by Cabinet. This consultation would provide further evidence to support a full impact assessment. Consultation monitoring would identify protected characteristic groups and their responses.

**Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – Yes**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.**

## Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

<b>Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.</b>			
	Identify the impact: does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
<b>Gender</b>	<p>There are impacts on both men and women through potential loss of or limited access to local mobile library provision. Where a mobile halt is being withdrawn the impacts include additional travel, associated costs and time commitment, for some who are unable to travel this may mean they cannot access local library services. Where there are changes to location or duration of a halt this could limit access and again for some may mean they cannot access the service.</p> <p>Women are likely to be affected by changes as they currently make up a greater proportion of mobile library users and tend to use local services which fit in with caring responsibilities, work patterns and access to transport. Older women, pregnant women</p>	<p>Durham's older population has more women than men, these women often live alone and are less likely to have access to a car so more likely to rely on local services they can reach on foot or on public transport.</p> <p>Whilst gender is not specifically included on membership records the system does include 'Mr', 'Mrs' 'Miss' etc analysis of this shows: Female registered members – 2,853 Male registered members - 1,345</p> <p>The Durham mobile library user survey in 2011 showed 78% of respondents were female and 22% male.</p> <p>The survey also showed that 91% of respondents had walked to the library while 6% drove there, this compares with 47% of those walking to a static library and 36% driving (responses to over 16s library survey). 52% of mobile library respondents said they owned a car compared to 65% using a static</p>	<p>Should the proposal be approved by Cabinet the following actions apply to all equality groups:</p> <p>Maintaining mobile library services in communities farthest from a static library is included in the proposal as a mitigating action.</p> <p>Consultation – ensure this is accessible to all and equality monitoring/responses are analysed for inclusion in final assessment.</p> <p>Revised locations</p>

	<p>and those with young babies may also be more likely to use local facilities which require no or minimal travel. The survey evidence cited opposite shows that respondents were more likely to walk with 84% of respondents taking less than 5 minutes to reach the mobile. The majority are older women who only use the mobile library service. This group is likely to be affected most by any change.</p> <p>Men may be affected by changes in timings and duration as they are more likely to work full time or longer hours which restricts their access to services and opportunities to participate in events or family activities, although the same is true for working parents of both sexes. Mobile library statistics show that lower numbers of men currently use the service.</p> <p>The majority of staff affected are male.</p>	<p>library. In relation to employment mobile library users responding to the survey were more likely to be retired (73% compared to 47% in the static library survey). Only 2% were employed full time, a further 2% worked part time and 9% were 'looking after the home'. 97% thought availability of mobile library services was good or very good. 74% said they did not use a static library. Whilst this evidence is not specific to gender it does provide an indication given the high percentage of female users.</p>	<p>and halt durations would be subject to local consultation which could identify specific impacts.</p> <p>Ensure that the Change Management Toolkit is followed to ensure fair treatment for staff</p>
<b>Age</b>	Durham's older population has more women than men, these	The 2011 mobile library user survey received 74% of responses from over 65 year olds, with	In addition to the general actions listed

	<p>women often live alone and are less likely to have access to a car so more likely to rely on local services they can reach on foot or on public transport. The membership and survey evidence cited above in relation to gender shows that older women are more likely to use mobile library services. This group is most likely to be affected by any changes both in relation to withdrawal of services and the location or duration of halts.</p> <p>Where there will be a single halt this may restrict access for people with limited mobility who cannot walk far and do not have access to transport.</p> <p>The proposed withdrawal of mobile services within a 4 mile catchment of a static library may also impact on those in employment or education.</p> <p>Recent changes to public transport mean some communities have nil or reduced services on evenings and weekends which could mean</p>	<p>26% aged 16 to 64. See the evidence above regarding travel, car ownership and employment status.</p> <p>The mitigating actions include considering the location of single halts in relation to older people's accommodation, schools and other local services to identify sites which may be more accessible. Safe access will also be considered such as where there is street lighting, road crossings and bus stops – this will take into account the needs of vulnerable older or younger people. i.e. we will site halts in safe locations.</p>	<p>above: Consider proximity of older people's accommodation, schools and other local services along with perceived safety issues in proposals for location of single halts.</p> <p>Ensure that information about Books on Wheels service is made available as an alternative for older or disabled people.</p> <p>Further information on community transport to be considered as mitigating action in the final assessment.</p>
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	<p>they are unable to access alternative static library services at a convenient time. This impact could be increased by the proposed changes to library opening hours.</p>		
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Disabled people may find the mobile library easier to use independently where they do not have access to transport.</p> <p>Withdrawal of the services may mean that disabled people are unable to access an alternative and changes to location or duration of halts may also mean they cannot access the revised service.</p> <p>There may be further specific impacts depending on the nature of someone's disability – for example people with learning disabilities may be more affected by changes to the service or feel more reluctant to use alternatives.</p> <p>There are potential health and wellbeing impacts for disabled people if they are no longer able to access library provision. This</p>	<p>Some disabled people may rely on carers or other family members to accompany them, also access to alternative libraries could be affected by limited access to personal or public transport.</p> <p>There is national and local evidence that some people with learning disabilities are affected by changes in service, this may increase the risk that they stop using library services.</p> <p>Disability is not included on membership records. Active borrowers data shows 77 people categorised as 'concessionary' which provides specific benefits for disabled people. Whilst this figure is low it does provide an indication.</p> <p>The mobile library user survey 2011 recorded responses on specific disabilities. Of those using mobile libraries 41% of respondents to this question recorded no disability or health condition, the remaining responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing – 20%</li> <li>• Eyesight – 25%</li> <li>• Hands/fingers – 8%</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to the general actions listed above:</p> <p>Consider accessible routes and perceived safety issues in proposals for location of single halts.</p> <p>Ensure that information about Books on Wheels service is made available as an alternative for older or disabled people.</p> <p>Further information on community and accessible transport to be considered as mitigating action in the final assessment.</p>



	<p>includes physical impacts in relation to general health or managing their condition (through access to health information leaflets) as well as mental wellbeing if social interaction is lost. Disabled people may be more likely to feel isolated without these opportunities.</p> <p>Staff profile information on disability is not available at this stage but will be considered in the final assessment and reasonable adjustments will be considered in any consultation or proposed changes to individual work patterns. The staff numbers are small so disability figures will not be reported in the final assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility – 33%</li> </ul> <p>8% of respondents said they were 'permanently sick or disabled'.</p>	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<p>Mobile libraries are equally accessible to all racial / ethnic groups.</p> <p>There is no evidence available at present of specific impact through changes to mobile libraries.</p>	<p>There are traveller sites in the county which may be affected by proposed changes, current mobile routes do not include halts at these sites but may be used by residents.</p>	<p>In addition to general actions above:</p> <p>Consider the potential impact on traveller communities living on sites in the county.</p>

<b>Religion or belief</b>	Mobile libraries are equally accessible to all groups. There is no evidence available of specific impact and no targeted provision in relation to religion or belief.		General actions listed above
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Mobile libraries are equally accessible regardless of sexual orientation. There is no evidence available of specific impact and no targeted provision in relation to sexual orientation.		General actions listed above

<b>How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?</b>
<p>Mobile Libraries provide access to books, information, and works of creative imagination, ensuring equality of access by actively taking stock out to local communities across County Durham. They support access to Council services in local areas. Withdrawal or reduction of mobile services is likely to have a negative effect on communities particularly where other local services have been lost.</p> <p>Maintaining some of the service in the remotest areas of the county aims to mitigate this to a certain extent.</p>

### Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.

The equality impacts of changing the mobile library service has potential negative impacts on library users and staff. The initial assessment suggests negative impacts are more likely to affect people because of their gender (particularly older women but including pregnancy or maternity), age (particularly older and younger people) and disability. The likely impacts relate to withdrawal of or reduction in access to library services which may mean they are no longer able to use the service or need to find alternative libraries requiring additional travel, cost or time commitment; or alternative provision such as online services or Books on Wheels. Changes to the location and duration of halts may create difficulties for older or disabled people due to increased walking distance (or for those using wheelchair/mobility scooter) and lack of access to transport; those in education or employment may also find accessing alternatives at a convenient time difficult; older, younger and disabled people may also feel more vulnerable depending upon the location of the single halt in relation to safe routes, street lighting and other local services.

There may be potential impact on race, further evidence is needed on access for residents of traveller sites.

There is no evidence at this stage of a specific impact in relation to transgender, religion or belief and sexual orientation but if the proposal is approved they will be considered again following consultation.

Staff profile shows the majority of staff are men aged over 30, further information will be considered in the final assessment but will not be recorded due to the low numbers involved.

There are potential cumulative impacts associated with recent reductions in bus subsidies which mean that some communities have reduced or no bus service particularly at evenings and weekends, this will further limit access to alternative static libraries for those without private transport. The proposals to change static library opening hours may also have an impact on some mobile library users, both assessments will be considered in reports to Cabinet.

Initial mitigating actions include consideration of local need in agreeing the final changes in each community, alternative services such as Books on Wheels and access to community or other transport.

Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
Updated EIA to be completed if Cabinet approval for	Anne Davison	January 2012	n/a

progression to consultation			
Further update of initial EIA to be completed on conclusion of consultation period with evidence from Equalities monitoring data.	Anne Davison	July 2012	n/a
HR evidence to be considered in final EIA	Anne Davison	June 2012	n/a
<p>If the proposal is approved by Cabinet the following actions will apply:</p> <p>Consultation – ensure this is accessible to all and equality monitoring/responses are analysed for inclusion in final assessment.</p> <p>Revised locations and halt durations would be subject to local consultation which could identify specific impacts.</p> <p>Ensure that the Change Management Toolkit is followed to ensure fair treatment for staff</p>	Anne Davison	June 2012	n/a
<p>If the proposal is approved following consultation:</p> <p>In relation to age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider proximity of older people’s accommodation, schools and other local services along with perceived safety issues in proposals for location of single halts.</li> <li>• Ensure that information about Books on Wheels service is made available as an alternative for older or disabled people.</li> <li>• Further information on community transport to be considered as mitigating action in the final assessment.</li> </ul>	Anne Davison	tbc	Tbc

<p>In relation to disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider accessible routes and perceived safety issues in proposals for location of single halts.</li> <li>• Ensure that information about Books on Wheels service is made available as an alternative for older or disabled people.</li> <li>• Further information on community and accessible transport to be considered as mitigating action in the final assessment.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to race/ethnicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the potential impact on traveller communities living on sites in the county.</li> </ul>			
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date: February 2012 following Cabinet decision		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	Opening Hours EIA to be completed in tandem		
Lead officer - sign off: Strategic Manager Libraries			Date: 16 Dec 2012
Service equality representative - sign off: Head of Social Inclusion			Date: 16 Dec 2012