

Cabinet

11 July 2012



Library Strategy

Key decision AWH04/11
MTFP AWH10

Report of Corporate Management Team

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Purpose

1. To seek approval for the Library Service strategy "Inspire Include Inform" following consultation.
2. To make changes to the operation of the library service in order to realise savings in the Medium Term Financial Plan in respect of the library service. Durham County Council agreed its Medium Term Financial Plan in February 2011, setting out savings to be achieved of more than £123million between 2011 and 2015 including £1,457,000 in respect of library services.

Background

3. 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 reproduced under 'Legal Implications' in **Appendix 1**.
4. The previous Government's policy ("The Modernisation Review of Public Libraries: A Policy Statement" (March 2010)) 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.
5. The library service in County Durham comprises the following key elements:
 - A network of 39 public libraries in town centres and local communities (see map at **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 described 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 (see Appendix 2);
 - "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
6. As at 31 March 2012, there are 290,442 library members, of whom 91,779 are "active borrowers" – i.e. they have borrowed a book in the last 12 months. 1,578 of these active borrowers use the mobile library service. In total in 2011/12 there were 1,970,187 visits to libraries in the county. These visits include individuals coming to borrow books or use the internet, parent and toddler sessions, classes of school children, craft clubs and reading groups.
7. Detailed information on each library is available in the Library Profiles document that can be referred to in the Members' library. Each library profile gives an overview as regards opening hours, levels of use, staffing, membership and regular activities and events. NB: This data relates to 2010 - 2011.
8. The gross library service budget for 2011/12 was £6.191m per annum. The service receives £470,000 in income and the 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).
9. The Council agreed its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2011-2015 in February 2011. This followed public consultation in 2010 with Area Action Partnerships on relative priorities, where for a number of service areas, including libraries, respondents were asked to indicate whether the Council should apply a standard reduction of 25% over the next 4 years, or whether the level of reduction should be smaller or larger. The responses in respect of libraries showed that 17.9% felt the reduction should be smaller than 25%, 37.9% felt the 25% reduction should apply, but 32.4% felt the reduction should be higher – significantly more than those who felt the service should receive a smaller cut. The Council decided to apply savings of £1,457,000 to its library service between April 2011 and March 2015.
10. The previous report to Cabinet on 8 February 2012 summarised the savings that had been identified and agreed for the service. These included increasing income targets, reductions to supplies and services budgets, reduction to management costs and reduced hours at Clayport. The plans to realise the remainder of the savings were subject to public consultation and this report

focuses on the outcome of that consultation and makes recommendations in order to ensure the achievement of the balance of the savings in the service by the financial year ending March 2015.

The Library Strategy

11. In June 2010, Cabinet agreed to consult on the draft Library Strategy “Inspire... Include... Inform...”. This sought public views on a draft vision and proposed outcomes for the service. The Cabinet report from June 2010 is available at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/displayminutes.aspx?meetingid=486>
12. The feedback from this consultation was reflected in the proposed library strategy that was presented to DCC’s Cabinet in February 2012. The Cabinet report from February 2012 is available at [http://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s17773/Library%20Strategy%20Feb 12.pdf](http://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s17773/Library%20Strategy%20Feb%2012.pdf)
13. The strategy outlined in the February 2012 report was designed to meet the proposed vision for library services in County Durham:

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.

14. It was also proposed that the library service in County Durham would work towards the following aims:
 - *To inspire a community of reading and learning*
 - *To create community library hubs, involving local people*
 - *To be modern and responsive*
 - *A well managed and efficient service*
15. The proposals were based on an understanding that there were broadly five areas of need for library services to be met:
 - *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.*

16. To fulfil the aims and meet the needs for library services in the context of the Council’s savings requirements, the Council proposed the following main changes to library services:

- *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.*

These proposals were presented at Cabinet on 8th February 2012. Public consultation on the proposals started on 10th February and ended on 4th May 2012.

17. For the town centre libraries, other than Clayport in Durham City which had already seen a reduction in hours, this would mean a reduction in opening hours to 36 per week, affecting the following libraries:

Barnard Castle	Peterlee
Bishop Auckland	Seaham
Chester le Street	Sildon
Consett	Spennymoor
Crook	Stanley
Newton Aycliffe	

18. For the 27 community libraries, this would mean a reduction in opening hours to 20 per week, affecting the following libraries:

Annfield Plain	Belmont	Blackhall
Bowburn	Brandon	Chilton
Coundon	Cornforth	Easington Colliery
Esh Winning	Ferryhill	Horden
Langley Park	Lanchester	Murton
Newton Hall	Pelton	Sacriston
Sedgefield	Shotton	South Moor
Thornley	Trimdon	Willington
Wingate	Wolsingham	Woodhouse Close

19. The current opening hours for all libraries together with the impacts of the reduced hours are shown at **Appendix 3**.

20. It was further proposed that the pattern of opening times for both town centre and community libraries would be determined in discussion with local communities, but would preserve opening on Saturday mornings and on at least one evening per week (potentially more in town centres).

21. For the mobile libraries, it was proposed the criteria for determining the communities that would receive a mobile service would be as follows:

- **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
- **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.

22. These initial proposals would mean the number of communities served by the mobile would reduce from 182 to 63 and the mobile service would serve mainly the rural west of the county.
23. These proposals were designed to take account of a number of factors. The Council needs to make savings and as has already been noted the library service budget needs to be reduced by £1.457m. Maintaining local services was felt to be vital in a semi-rural county, where bus routes can be limited, and where some communities experience significant deprivation. It was therefore decided to propose a reduction in the library opening hours, rather than the closure of any libraries.
24. The alternative of closing a number of community libraries in order to enable those that remain to open for longer was considered, but ruled out because of the importance of retaining local provision to maximise the comprehensiveness of the library service. This also acknowledged that communities across the County access libraries for a variety of services and activities over and above borrowing books. It was believed that the opening hours proposed would be sufficient for the Council to continue to meet the overall identified needs for library services across the County.
25. In respect of the mobile service, the proposals recognised that use of the service is declining. A detailed study showed that 124 of the 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. Furthermore, many mobile library users also use our library buildings, and many of the mobile halts are on the fringes of settlements where there is a library building. The mobile service is also comparatively more expensive than the library buildings.
26. 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; and specialist services to the most vulnerable such as Books on Wheels and the Book Bus would be preserved.

Consultation process

27. On 8 February 2012, Cabinet approved the proposals for wider consultation. Consultation on the strategy began on 10 February, and lasted until 4 May.
28. A summary of the Cabinet report, and a questionnaire to gather the public's views, were produced and widely distributed through libraries. These were also posted to a wide range of stakeholders including town and parish councils (a full list of the stakeholders who were contacted is attached at **Appendix 4**).
29. A link to the strategy and the consultation was included on the front page of the Council's website. An article on the consultation was included in the spring 2012 edition of County Durham News. Posters promoting the consultation were displayed in Council buildings.
30. A survey was also sent to the Durham Citizen's Panel, which is a random sample of registered voters in the County.
31. Presentations on the strategy, and how to respond, were given to all 14 AAPs, as well as to a combined meeting of the Council's Regeneration and Stronger Safer Scrutiny Committees.

Consultation Feedback

32. There was a significant level of response to the consultation. Responses included:
 - 5812 completed questionnaires;
 - 881 responses from the Citizens' Panel;
 - 8 Petitions with 7293 signatures (plus 140 postcards);
 - with one petition regarding Consett library received after the consultation period had ended
 - Over 100 letters, e-mails and web-based responses, including letters from Scrutiny, two AAPs and 10 Town and Parish Councils; and
 - Pictures from schoolchildren.
33. Presentations were provided at each of the 14 AAPs. In total 217 AAP board members and 267 members of the public were able to consider the proposals, ask questions and make their views known.
34. The questionnaire was publicised at AAP meetings and members of AAP's were encouraged to participate in the consultation exercise.
35. The level of response to the consultation demonstrates the importance of the library service to very many people living and working in the county.
36. Themes to emerge from the consultation were:
 - There was strong support for the proposal to retain all library buildings;
 - The vision, aims and analysis of need were all supported;

- There were strong feelings from some that no changes should be made to existing services;
- There was concern about access as a result of reductions in opening hours and of the communities served by the mobile libraries; and
- The need for dialogue with communities and for a role for communities to support their local library in the future was supported.

37. The feedback is summarised below. Further information on the consultation is available in a separate and more detailed report which presents and analyses the feedback, copies of which are available for reference in the Members' Library and on request from the Strategic Manager, library services.

AAP feedback

38. There were a wide range of comments on the proposals at the AAP meetings. There was recognition that the Council is in a difficult position and that cuts to the library service are almost inevitable given the reductions in government funding: in these circumstances there was positive feedback that the Council is not proposing to close any libraries.

39. However, in some AAPs where community libraries are at risk of losing a substantial proportion of their opening hours, this support was not universal, and there was a feeling that closure of some smaller libraries that are not so well used, or that are close to other libraries, would be preferable to reducing hours in certain communities. However, such comments tended to be about libraries in other areas – in all AAPs there was strong support for their local libraries and the importance of their retention.

40. In several areas there were suggestions that the local library should be treated differently, for example that the libraries at Annfield Plain, Belmont, Ferryhill, Newton Hall, Sedgefield and Willington should be considered as town centre libraries. Attendees at AAPs had suggestions about alternative ways of distributing the cuts in opening hours – for example that all libraries should be reduced by a standard percentage, or that the reductions should be related to use, or the size of the community served: there were comments that the current proposals were unfair on those losing most.

41. However, it was clear that no consensus about alternative proposals to those in the consultation document emerged. There was also recognition in places that for a library to provide an effective service it needs to be open for a minimum of 20 hours, and the proposal not to reduce any library below this level was also supported. There were comments that there should be a further level of opening (say 25-30 hours per week) for the busier community libraries, such as Belmont, Newton Hall and Willington. It was suggested this could be funded perhaps by closing some libraries, further cutting hours at Clayport, or by reducing the previously agreed saving for the library service.

42. There were many comments about the broad role of libraries in local communities, including promoting literacy, supporting access to information, job-seeking, a place for children to do their homework, and as a key local community

resource. The impacts on these activities are considered more fully in the Equality Impact Assessment (see **Appendix 5a, 5b**).

43. The mobile library service was discussed at several AAPs, with issues raised about public transport in rural parts of the county, and access to the library service for those who are frail or have limited mobility. Again these issues are considered further in the Equality Impact Assessment (see **Appendix 5c**).
44. A number of people at the AAPs commented on the process for consulting on the library strategy. Some called for further public meetings, or meetings with individual Town or Parish Councils to discuss specific local concerns, or to raise awareness of the consultation.
45. Consett and Durham City AAPs submitted formal letters of response which are included in the detailed consultation report. Consett AAP called for no change to the Consett library opening hours. Durham City AAP called for the Council to examine other ways to achieve the savings, to reinstate the saving that was taken from the Bookfund in 2011/12 and agreed that a minimum of 20 hours opening per week was necessary for efficient service delivery.

Consultation Questionnaire feedback

46. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at **Appendix 6**.
47. In summary, the results of the consultation questionnaire were:
 - 82% of respondents supported the proposed vision for the libraries;
 - 84% of respondents supported the proposed aims for the service;
 - 94% of respondents supported the proposed need for library services;
 - 71% of respondents felt that it would be better to reduce opening hours generally rather than close some libraries;
 - 61% of respondents agreed that it would be better to have more consistent opening hours across the county;
 - Respondents with a disability were more likely to agree that opening hours should be more consistent (71% compared to 60% of those without a disability);
 - 52% of respondents disagreed that town centre libraries should be open longer hours than community libraries;
 - Town centre library respondents were more likely than community library respondents to:
 - Think it would be better to reduce opening hours generally rather than close some libraries (79% compared to 67%);
 - Agree that library opening hours should be more consistent (65% compared to 57%);

- Agree that town centre libraries should be open longer hours than community libraries (72% compared to 38%);
- Mobile library users were more likely than non-mobile library users to:
 - Think it would be better to reduce opening hours generally rather than close some libraries (82% compared to 70%);
 - Agree that library opening hours should be more consistent across County Durham (73% compared to 59%);
- 62% of respondents agreed with the proposed criteria for those communities which would be served by mobile libraries;
- Nearly all respondents (97%) agreed that local communities should have a say in the opening hours of their local library;
- 59% of respondents (3,408) provided additional written comments on the proposals. The five most commonly occurring themes were:
 - The impact the proposals would have on the availability of services in libraries e.g. books, computers and activities/events;
 - Alternative suggestions to the proposals, such as proposing opening hours should reflect usage, community libraries having longer opening hours and identifying ways of achieving the required savings in other council services;
 - Feedback on the consultation exercise;
 - No changes should be made to the existing library service;
 - The impact on ability to access libraries, in particular relating to public transport and increased costs from travel/parking charges.

Citizens' Panel Feedback

48. A copy of the survey is attached at **Appendix 7**.

49. Major results emerging from the survey were:

- 97% of respondents agreed with the proposed vision for the libraries;
- 98% of respondents agreed with the proposed aims for the service;
- 97% of respondents agreed with the proposed need for library services;
- 91% of respondents thought there should be a reduction in hours as opposed to some libraries being closed;
- 65% of respondents thought that library hours should be more consistent across County Durham;
- 66% of respondents thought that town centre libraries should be open longer than community libraries;
- 72% of respondents agreed with the proposed criteria for the communities which should be served by mobile libraries;

- 96% of respondents agreed that local communities should have a say in the opening times of their local library;
- Respondents also made comments on the strategy including:
 - What the impact would be;
 - Alternative suggestions to the proposals;
 - Feedback on the consultation exercise;
 - No changes should be made to the existing library service;
 - Concerns about changes to the mobile library service;

Petitions

50. The following petitions were submitted to the Council:

Petition	Number of signatures	Method
Annfield Plain Library	12	e-petition
Newton Hall Library*	1,013	e-petition and paper
Ferryhill Library	1,446	e-petition and paper
Belmont Library	2,459 (+140 'postcards')	Paper
Consett Library*	0	e-petition
Sedgefield Library	1,033	Paper
Wolsingham Library	232	Paper
Willington Library	1,098	Paper

*The e-petitions for Newton Hall and Consett close(d) online on 31/10/12 and 30/05/12 respectively, however the lead petitioners in both cases were made aware that the signature count at the close of the consultation period (04/05/12) would be the number reported for consideration within this report.

51. In addition, one paper petition was received with regard to Consett library after the end of the consultation period.
52. A list of petitions is attached at **Appendix 8**. Most of the petitions opposed the changes or called on the Council to reconsider the savings and retain the existing opening hours at the respective library.
53. The petition at Sedgefield did not however oppose the proposals completely but was "To urge Durham County Council to classify Sedgefield Library as a Town Library and that 30 hours would be an acceptable alternative to the 20 hours as proposed".

Response from Scrutiny

54. On 12 March, a joint meeting of the Council's Regeneration and Stronger Safer Scrutiny Committees received a presentation on the library proposals, debated the issues raised and considered how to respond to the questions posed in the questionnaire. Following this meeting, a formal letter of response to the consultation was submitted on behalf of the two Scrutiny Committees by the Chair of the Stronger Safer Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the response is

included in the detailed feedback report (which is available for reference in the Members' Library).

55. The Scrutiny response expressed support for the Vision and aims, and there was broad agreement that reducing opening hours was "much more preferable" to closing libraries. There was a majority of Scrutiny members who supported the proposal for more consistent opening hours, and there was consensus that opening hours at town centre libraries should be longer than at community libraries.
56. Members raised some concerns about the proposals to remove the mobile service within communities where there is also a reduction in the opening hours of the community library and where bus routes have also been reduced. Members called for a review of the impact of any changes to the mobile service to be undertaken after 6 months and changes made to routes and halts if more viable options became apparent.
57. Members agreed that community views should be sought in determining the pattern of opening times, and felt that opening hours should be responsive to local need. Scrutiny also stressed the importance of on-going engagement with local communities, and for libraries to be multi-use facilities.
58. Scrutiny also welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the consultation and requested further engagement throughout the implementation of the strategy following consultation.

Response from Correspondents

59. Letters and e-mails of response were received from ten Town and Parish Councils during the consultation, as follows:

Barnard Castle Town Council	Sedgefield Town Council
Belmont Parish Council	Shildon Town Council
Brandon & Byshottles Parish Council	Stanley Town Council
Burnhope Parish Council	Trimdon Foundry Parish Council
Ferryhill Town Council	West Auckland Parish Council

60. The responses covered a range of matters. The Councils for Shildon and Brandon & Byshottles explicitly supported the proposal to retain all the library buildings. The Councils for Barnard Castle, Stanley and Belmont all called for the current opening hours at the libraries in their area to be maintained. Brandon & Byshottles Parish Council suggested a customer services point for housing matters be located at the library and the reduction in hours cut. Sedgefield Town Council suggested a cut in hours of 10% for all libraries. Ferryhill Town Council felt their library should be defined as a town centre. Concerns were expressed by Belmont, Stanley and Barnard Castle Councils about the standardised approach to the level of opening hours.

61. Belmont, Trimdon Foundry, Ferryhill and Brandon Councils all commented on community use of the local library.
62. West Auckland, Barnard Castle, Burnhope and Brandon all made comments on the mobile library criteria.
63. The issues raised are captured in the detailed analysis of responses to each of the recommendations, below, and the full responses from individual Councils have been included in the detailed consultation report (which is in the Members' library).
64. In addition Stanhope Parish Council wrote to request that the Council attend a meeting of the Parish Council to discuss the consultation, but this was declined given the discussions that took place at all AAPs.
65. There were also many individual responses, including 90 from children from three schools: Coundon Primary (21), Sedgefield Primary (20) and Willington Primary (49).
66. The issues raised are captured in the detailed analysis of responses to each of the recommendations, below. Primary schoolchildren from Sedgefield submitted pictures showing what the local library meant to them – some examples are included in the detailed consultation report previously referred to.

Analysis of feedback to the strategy

67. This section of the report considers and responds to the feedback to each of the four proposals from the February Cabinet report; i.e.
- Our overall strategy for library services in County Durham;
 - The criteria for the settlements that mobile libraries will visit;
 - 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.

The overall strategy

68. There was strong support for the vision for the service – more than 80% of those responding to the questionnaire and 97% via the Citizen's Panel supported this. Some respondents made comments that they could not support the vision because the proposals were felt to contradict it.
69. There was a similarly strong level of support for the aims – again more than 80% of those responding to the questionnaire and almost 98% via the Citizen's Panel. Again some respondents made comments that they could not support the aims because the proposals were felt to contradict them.

70. The level of support for the description of the need for library services set out in the February report was higher still, at 94% through the questionnaire, and 97% via the Citizen's Panel. Comments on this issue showed some concern that the Council would not be able to meet need if the proposals are agreed. The statement of need has been amended in the light of feedback, and a revised statement is included as **Appendix 9** to this report.

71. It is therefore recommended that the Vision set out at paragraph 13, the aims listed at paragraph 14 and the statement of need in Appendix 9 are approved by Cabinet.

Mobile Libraries

72. More than 60% of respondents to the questionnaire and more than 70% of the Citizens' Panel supported the proposed criteria for those communities that would be served by mobile libraries.

73. 617 responses (11%) to the consultation questionnaire were from mobile library users. Amongst these respondents there was a much lower level of support (around 40%) for the criteria. Only 3% of the Citizens' Panel respondents identified themselves as mobile library users.

74. About a third of the comments in the questionnaires from mobile library users called for there to be no change to the service. This was a view shared by some attendees at AAPs.

75. The main concern about the mobile libraries in the feedback was whether people, particularly vulnerable people, would still be able to access the library service if the level of mobile provision was reduced: this was related in part to limited public transport in rural parts of the County, but also about mobility issues for those who are frail or live with a disability.

76. These issues are highlighted in the Equality Impact Assessment. 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. Further consideration of these issues is set out in the Equality Impact Assessment (*see Appendix 5c*).

77. The Parish Council in West Auckland highlighted that under the proposed criteria it would lose its mobile service, although parts of the village fell outside the 4 mile range.

78. Scrutiny raised concerns about the proposals to remove the mobile service within communities where there is also a reduction in the opening hours of the community library and where bus routes have also been reduced.

79. Members of Scrutiny called for a review of the impact of any changes to the mobile service to be undertaken after 6 months and changes made to routes and halts if more viable options became apparent.

80. **Although the changes to the mobile service received wide support, the impact on those who use it needs to be recognised. In response to the feedback, further work has been undertaken modelling the level of service that could be provided if the distance criterion was amended to a minimum of 3 miles from a library building. This would represent a variation to the original proposal where the distance criterion was proposed to be that mobile halts should be at least four miles from a library building. This could be achieved (without reducing the level of saving being made from the mobile service) if the frequency of visits to most communities was reduced to 3-weekly from the current proposal to visit at least 2-weekly.**

81. **Appendix 10** sets out the detailed impact of this change including a map showing the settlements that would be served in the future. Furthermore, the proposal for single halts in communities will also be revisited, and a more flexible approach taken within the constraints of creating a timetable that allows the service to visit all communities that meet the other criteria, including in respect of the level of use of the service.

82. Varying the original proposals in respect of the distance criterion and the frequency of visits to most communities should mitigate the impacts of the reductions in access to the mobile library: almost 80% of current mobile library users would still receive the service. It should however also be noted that the Public Library User Survey for mobile library users (2011) found that 26% of our mobile library users also accessed our library buildings.

83. Furthermore, no changes are proposed to the Books On Wheels service, which can be accessed by people who are housebound, or the Book Bus. It is anticipated that some vulnerable individuals who currently use the mobile service will be referred to Books On Wheels.

84. **It is therefore recommended that the criteria for determining the communities that would receive a mobile service would be as follows:**

- ***Distance:*** mobile libraries will only call at settlements at least 3 miles from a library building;
- ***Standardised halts*** for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour or two hours – depending on level of current use;
- ***A minimum of one visit every three weeks*** to all settlements with weekly visits to some larger settlements;
- ***Halts would be withdrawn if they are not used:*** in order to ensure the service is efficient and meets needs, the level in a 6 month period of use of all halts would be monitored.

The library network

85. The level of support for the Council to retain all its library buildings was strong: 91% of Citizens' Panel and 71% of questionnaire respondents felt that it would be better to reduce opening hours generally rather than close some libraries. There was also positive feedback from AAPs and Scrutiny that the Council is not proposing to close any libraries.
86. For many libraries where there is a significant proposed cut there was still a clear majority who supported overall reductions in hours rather than the closure of libraries – for example 77% of respondents from Belmont library agreed with this, even though their opening hours would reduce by more than 50%.
87. However, support for this was not universal. This was most marked at Willington where 27% of respondents felt it was better to reduce opening hours than to close libraries. For all other libraries, a majority of respondents agreed, though the level of support varied from 54.2% at Consett, to 96% at Esh Winning.
88. Where community libraries are at risk of losing a substantial proportion of their opening hours, some feedback suggested the closure of some community libraries would be preferable to reducing hours in certain communities – for example community libraries that are not so well used, or that are close to other libraries. However, such comments tended to be about libraries in other areas – in all AAPs there was strong support for their local libraries and the importance of their retention.
89. The Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted the potential impact of changes to the library service on groups with protected characteristics. These will be revisited in the following section on opening hours (and in the full Equality Impact Assessment – at Appendix 5b), but it must be noted that the impact would be mitigated substantially if the library buildings remained open, even at a reduced level.
90. **It is therefore recommended that Cabinet agrees to retain the existing network of 12 town centre and 27 community libraries.**

Opening Hours

91. As noted above, there was strong support for the proposal to reduce opening hours generally rather than close some libraries: 91% of Citizens' Panel and 71% of questionnaire respondents agreed with this.
92. There was also a majority of support for a consistent approach to opening hours for libraries, with 61% of respondents to the questionnaire and 65% to the Citizens' Panel agreeing this.

93. There is a variation between responses on the question of consistency from individual libraries. At three libraries – Barnard Castle, Willington and Newton Hall – support fell below 50%, and at six other libraries (Belmont, Consett, Clayport, Lanchester, Langley Park and Sedgfield) support was between 50% - 55%.
94. There were also varied views as to whether town centre libraries should be open longer than community libraries. A majority (66%) of respondents to the Citizens' Panel survey agreed this, but the majority of respondents to the questionnaire did not, with 52% of respondents disagreeing. However, six community libraries (Willington, Sedgfield, Belmont, Annfield Plain, Ferryhill, Newton Hall) between them accounted for 45% of the questionnaires received. All these libraries would see a large cut in their hours, and in all except Willington a clear majority of respondents disagreed. Furthermore, there was a clear difference between responses to this issue from town centre and community libraries, with 62% of community library respondents opposed, and 72% of town centre respondents agreeing.
95. About 15% of all comments made on the questionnaires were on the theme of opposition to the proposed changes and for the opening hours to remain as they are at present. All the petitions, except for Sedgfield, also opposed the changes or called on the Council to retain the existing opening hours at the respective library: at Sedgfield the petition called for the library to be defined as a town centre library and for its hours to be reduced less – to 30 hours.
96. In several areas there were suggestions that the local library should be treated differently. In Teesdale, some (including the Barnard Castle Town Council) felt that given the difficulties of access in a rural area the opening hours at Barnard Castle should not be reduced at all. In Consett, the AAP commented that the library was very well-used and should not have any reduction. The Town or Parish Councils for Stanley, Belmont, Brandon & Byshottles, and Sedgfield all called for the current opening hours to be maintained, or not reduced as much. People in the AAPs covering Ferryhill and Sedgfield felt their library should be considered as a town centre library, so that it would not have such a large reduction. Concerns were expressed by Belmont, Stanley and Barnard Castle Councils about the standardised approach to the level of opening hours
97. There were numerous comments in the questionnaires, and in discussion in the AAPs, about alternative proposals for changes to opening hours, including:
- That all libraries should receive the same percentage reduction in hours;
 - That the Council should consider further cutting the hours at Clayport in order to protect local libraries;
 - That an alternative model for opening hours should be considered, with a third level of opening based on use: i.e. the busiest community libraries should be open for longer. Some town centres or the least busy community libraries could experience a greater cut instead;
 - Reduce costs, for example by sharing premises, or increase income by raising charges.

98. However, no consensus about alternative proposals to those in the consultation document emerged. There was also recognition in places that for a library to provide an effective service it needs to be open for a certain level of hours, and the proposal not to reduce any library below 20 hours was also supported. Clearly, if all libraries are to open for at least 20 hours, then a standard percentage cut in hours for all libraries cannot be achieved.
99. Furthermore, due to the financial reductions facing the Council, additional hours for a number of libraries could only be achieved by reducing hours elsewhere, and given the preference for a minimum of opening 20 hours, this would mean reducing hours at town centre libraries or Clayport, or reducing costs elsewhere. The Council has already begun to co-locate libraries with other services, and there are limits on the services that libraries can charge for: the law prevents Councils from charging for lending books for example. The level of savings required cannot be achieved without reducing hours: hours at Clayport have already been cut, and town centre libraries are, generally, busier and more accessible than community libraries, so any increased reduction in their hours would be likely to have a greater impact.
100. Concerns were also expressed about the affect of any reduction in opening hours on access to services, including the negative impact the changes would have on families and children, such as access to homework clubs and to computers (for example for job searches). There were also comments about the impact of poor public transport on access to library buildings, given the proposal to reduce opening hours. These issues are examined as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.
101. Discussions in AAPs also highlighted concern that reduced opening times would limit the availability of the library for community activities.
102. Access is a key issue for the Council. This is particularly significant for County Durham given the dispersed settlements pattern, relatively low car ownership, reductions in public transport and rurality. The Equality Impact Assessment (see appendices 5a – 5c), which has been updated in the light of the feedback to the consultation, has highlighted this. A 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.
103. Reduced operating hours would impact differently on children, working age adults, and older people: older people generally prefer day time services but for those working, or in education, generally evening and weekend services are preferable.
104. 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 who are 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.

105. The report to Cabinet in February suggested that 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. In discussions in AAPs there was a great deal of interest in the library service working with local communities, both to determine the pattern of opening times once the Council makes its decision on whether to reduce opening hours but also to explore how communities can support their local library in the future. The library service would welcome such involvement.
106. If Cabinet decides to proceed with the reduction in opening hours, a number of options for the pattern of opening times will be shared with users of each individual library before these are finalised, so that opening times can best take account of local need and activities. Furthermore, the library service would also work with local communities to explore how to protect access to the building for community groups. This community involvement should enable the Council to mitigate to some extent the negative impact of the reduction in hours.
107. Taking all these factors into account, **it is recommended that Cabinet agrees to reduce opening hours in town centre libraries** (defined in paragraph 17) **to 36 hours per week, and in community libraries** (defined in paragraph 18) **to 20 per week, and retain Clayport Library at its current level of opening.**

Other Factors

108. During 2010/11 the Council carried out a review of its 120 community buildings in the knowledge that its involvement in the provision and support for community buildings had grown organically and had resulted in a lack of a transparent or consistent approach across the County.
109. The Council will explore the possibility of co-locating its libraries with community buildings, its Customer Access Points, other Council services, and in partnership with other organisations as opportunities arise, and resources allow.
110. 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. The service will maintain a 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.
111. The library service will also continue to make available free public access to computers, to enable people to seek information about services, activities and local employment opportunities. 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.

112. A revised Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared, taking account of the information gathered during the consultation. This is attached at Appendices 5a – 5c. The key impacts in respect of each of the proposals have been covered in the narrative above.
113. At several AAPs there was discussion of the implications of moving to a Trust. Whilst there was little opposition to this, there was concern about the impact on staff, and about the creation of a large charitable body that may be in competition for resources with existing bodies. Some expressed concern that if the library service was no longer part of the Council then we would no longer have influence over the service provided, and work with local communities would not be a priority.
114. The question of transferring the library service to a Trust will be considered in a separate report to Cabinet. However, it must be noted that because the Government is in the process of reviewing arrangements for National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) it has been decided it would be prudent to await the outcome of the review prior to incurring any further expenditure on this initiative.
115. There were a considerable number of positive comments about the staff at particular libraries, and concerns expressed about the impact of any changes on them.

Staff Consultation

116. In parallel with the public consultation process, staff have been consulted about the changes, in line with the Council's toolkit for managing change. This consultation exercise has focussed on revised hours and patterns of employment: the changes would mean a reduction of 30 whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff, from 132.03 WTEs to 102.03 WTEs, and there would be few full-time posts in the service in the future as a result of the changes proposed.
117. Staff have expressed concern about the impact on them in terms of the loss of working hours or potential loss of employment.
118. Final decisions on the staffing changes required will be taken once Cabinet has made its decision on changes to the service, taking into account the results of the staff consultation and in accordance with the Council's HR procedures.

Conclusion

119. Libraries are a key element of the Council's service delivery in local communities. They are used by thousands of people of all ages every week, for many different purposes.

120. The consultation on their future has generated a great deal of interest, and shown significant support across the County for the plans to retain all the library buildings. In some communities there has been significant opposition to reductions in the level of service.
121. The consultation has also shown strong support for a key role for local communities in the library service in the future, as volunteers, to support activities, to raise funds, and so on.
122. The Council has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The reductions in the Council's grants means the Council must review how it provides services in order to reduce costs: in consultation on its savings prior to approving its Medium-Term Financial Plan in 2011, only 17% of respondents felt the libraries should take a smaller cut than the 25% proposed.
123. Given the feedback to the consultation, it is proposed that the following actions would support the library strategy and realise savings as a result of the MTFP:
- 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 (subject to a further report to Cabinet).
124. In response to consultation the criteria for the communities to be served by mobile libraries would change from those originally proposed to:
- **Distance:** mobile libraries will only call at settlements at least 3 miles from a library building;
 - **Standardised halts** for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour or two hours – depending on level of current use;
 - **A minimum of one visit every three weeks** to all settlements with weekly visits to some larger settlements
 - **Halts would be withdrawn if they are not used in a 6 month period:** in order to ensure the service is efficient and meets needs, the level of use of all halts would be monitored.
125. The proposed changes to the library service set out how the Council can deliver the savings required whilst maintaining all 39 of its library buildings and continuing to provide a mobile library service to 87 rural settlements. By revising the criteria and reducing the frequency of visits from two-weekly to three-weekly, an additional 15 settlements can retain their mobile service.

126. The proposals will ensure the Council will be able to meet its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service whilst delivering the required savings in line with the Council's financial plans.
127. It is proposed that Members consider the following issues as they determine whether to adopt the strategy for library services as set out in the February 2012 report to Cabinet:
- The views expressed in 2010/11 in the consultation process on the Council's budget with regard to the level of saving the library service should be subject to;
 - The Council's statutory duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service";
 - The assessment of the need for library services at Appendix 9.
 - The views expressed in the consultation exercise on the library strategy including:
 - i. support for the Council to retain its full network of library buildings, and to reduce opening hours rather than close libraries;
 - ii. the petitions and other representations that have been received from a number of communities about their local library;
 - iii. alternative suggestions made during the consultation about opening hours and the savings;
 - iv. the impact on access to services;
 - The Equality Impact Assessment (attached at Appendix 5a-5c)
 - Responsibilities to staff.

Recommendation

128. Cabinet is recommended to
- Agree the actions at paragraph 123;
 - Agree the Vision set out at paragraph 13, the aims listed at paragraph 14 and the statement of need in Appendix 9;
 - Agree the criteria for the communities to be served by mobile libraries listed at paragraph 124;
 - Agree to retain the existing network of 12 town centre and 27 community libraries;
 - Agree to reduce opening hours in town centre libraries (other than Clayport) to 36 hours per week, and in community libraries to 20 per week;
129. Given that from 1st August 2012 responsibility for the library service will transfer to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services, Cabinet is also recommended to :
- Delegate to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services responsibility for producing and implementing a plan to make the changes proposed to opening hours and mobile halts, to take effect from 1 January 2013, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder.
 - Delegate to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services responsibility for monitoring the impact of the changes in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder.

Contact: Gerald Tompkins, Head of Social Inclusion
Telephone: 0191 3833176

Appendices

Appendix 1	Implications
Appendix 2	Map showing locations of the libraries and current mobile library halts in County Durham
Appendix 3	Proposed future opening hours
Appendix 4	List of stakeholders contacted
Appendix 5a	Equality Impact Assessment – Overarching
Appendix 5b	Equality Impact Assessment – Opening hours
Appendix 5c	Equality Impact Assessment – Mobile Library Service
Appendix 6	Consultation questionnaire
Appendix 7	Citizens' Panel survey form
Appendix 8	Schedule of petitions
Appendix 9	The need for library services in County Durham
Appendix 10	Implications of the revised mobile library criteria

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 frontline branch staff in the library service would be affected by the proposals in this report. Further consultation with staff has been undertaken.

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. Equality Impact Assessments in respect of opening hours and mobile libraries have been undertaken and copies are attached (Appendix 5a – 5c). These have been updated in the light of evidence from the consultation.

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 have been subject to public consultation. The feedback is summarised in the report and a detailed consultation report is available for reference in the Members Library.

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 – Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out the general duty of library authorities:

- (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:-*

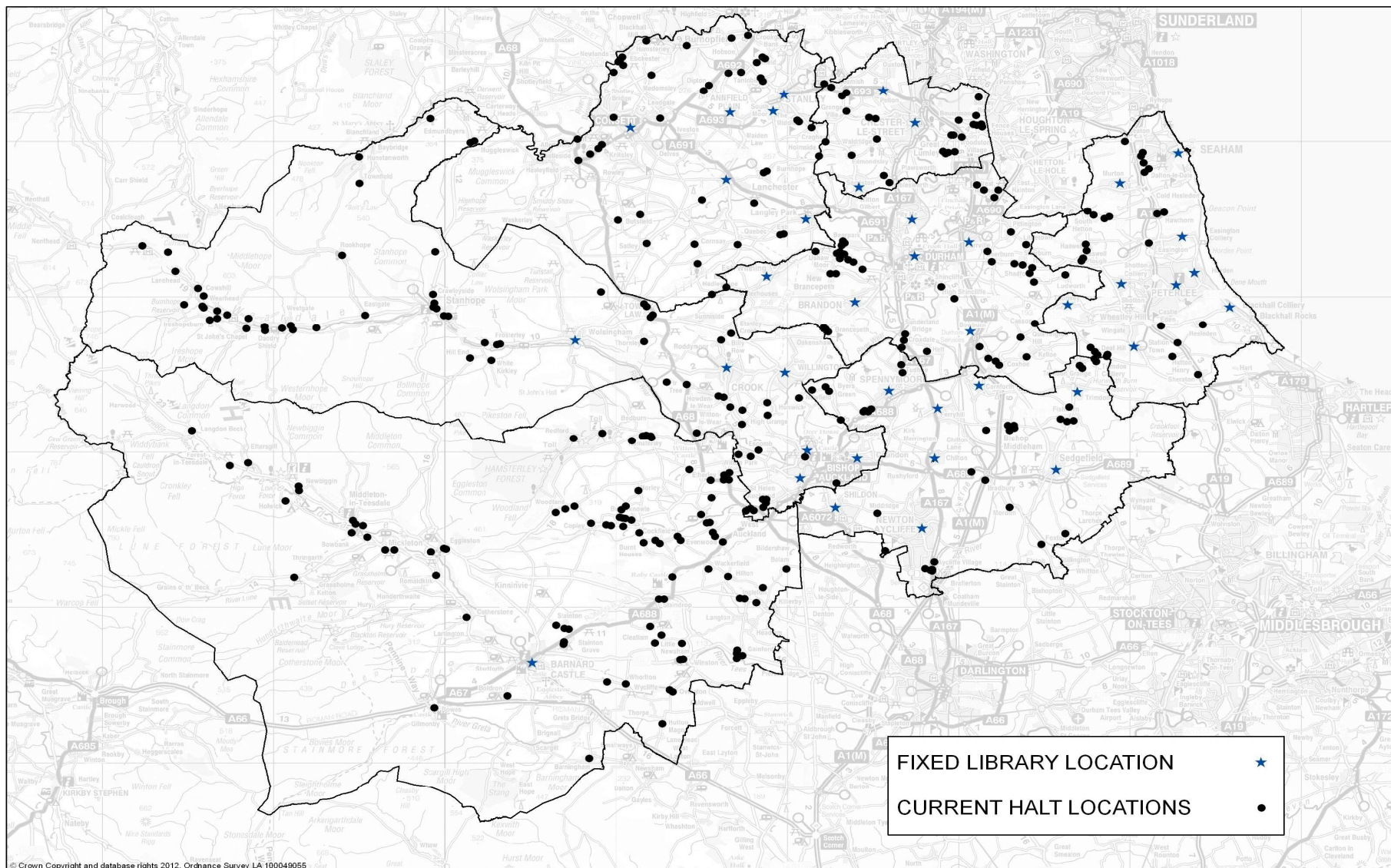
- (a) *of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, 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. Compliance with equality duties is addressed within the body of the report and is addressed as part of both the report and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

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. A needs assessment is appended to this report at appendix 9 which has been updated and reviewed in the light of the consultation.

Map showing locations of the libraries and current mobile library halts in County Durham



Appendix 3

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
Town Centres			
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
Community Libraries			
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
Sacrison	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

List of stakeholders contacted

DCC Elected Members	Durham University
DCC Overview & Scrutiny	
	Arts Council
AAP Boards	English Heritage
Town and Parish Councils	Friends of Barnard Castle Library
North East Councils	Leisureworks
DCC Citizen's Panel	Society of Chief Librarians North East
	Sport England
Roberta Blackman-Woods MP	Visit County Durham
Helen Goodman MP	
Kevan Jones MP	Prisons
Pat Glass MP	Durham Constabulary
Phil Wilson MP	
Grahame Morris MP	Faith Networks
	Humanist Society
Age UK	
Disability Partnership	NHS County Durham and Darlington
People's Parliament	
Carers Centres	Trade Unions
Children's Network	
Investing In Children	
Schools	
FE Colleges	

Durham County Council – Altogether Better Equality Impact Assessment form

Overarching

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

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.	
Service / team or section: Adults Wellbeing and Health, Social Inclusion – Libraries	
Lead Officer: Anne Davison	Start date: 21 st July 2011 Update: 11 May 2012
<p>Subject of the Impact Assessment: (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 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"> • 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; <p>and to meet the following areas of need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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

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 suggested that the main potential for negative impact relates to proposals to reduce library opening hours and review the mobile library service. Each of those is subject to a full, detailed impact assessment to inform the final decision. In addition further proposals could impact on people using libraries and on staff; these proposals are 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.

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

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

The proposed changes were subject to formal consultation. This consultation evidence is noted in Section three and more detailed information is considered in the full impact assessments for opening hours and mobile libraries.

Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – subject to Cabinet decision January 2012 Date: 3rd October 2011

Decision following Cabinet report Feb 2012: No – separate EIAs to be completed for opening hours and mobile libraries.

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

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.			
	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)
Gender	See separate Library opening hours and Mobile Library EIAs		
Age	Ditto		
Disability	Ditto		
Race/Ethnicity	Ditto		
Religion or belief	Ditto		
Sexual orientation	Ditto		

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?
<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.			
Public consultation included questions on the library strategy, vision and aims, as well as proposals for Trust status. The responses show that there were no significant differences across protected characteristics. The move to Trust status will now be considered in a separate report to Cabinet following the Government's review of National Non-Domestic Rates. Further information on consultation and impacts is included in the separate impact assessments for library opening hours and mobile libraries, they should be considered alongside this overview.			
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 and following the end of the public consultation period in May 2012 Reviewed: 11 May 2012		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	Library opening hours and Mobile Library EIAs completed		
Lead officer – sign off: Strategic Manager Libraries			Date: 16 Dec 2011 Date: 11 May 2012
Service equality representative – sign off: Head of Social Inclusion			Date: 16 Dec 2011 Date: 11 May 2012

Durham County Council – Altogether Better Equality Impact Assessment form

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

Section one: Description and initial screening

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.	
Service / team or section: Adults Wellbeing and Health, Social Inclusion – Libraries	
Lead Officer: Anne Davison	Start date: 21 st July 2011 Updated 1 : 3 rd October 2011 Update 2 : 15 October 2011 Update 3: 15 December 2011 Update 4: 11 May 2012
<p>Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)</p> <p>PROPOSED REDUCTION OF OPENING HOURS IN TOWN CENTRE AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES 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 equalities issues associated with the review of DCCs libraries, and subsequent reduction in opening hours proposals. It focuses on impacts to customers and communities who benefit from using the Libraries and impacts to staff affected by the potential reduction in opening hours. It then goes on to identify actions necessary to mitigate the identified impacts.</p>	

This 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 took place on the proposals and supplements 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;
- Books are available in alternative formats – Large Print and Spoken Word
- 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 books¹, 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.

¹ Halcyon (Library Computerised Management System)

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 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 suggested 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. (See Section Two)

Impacts to staff

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 is 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 has been 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 has been included in the revised EQIA that will be presented to inform the final decision (see Section Two). 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 other recent impact assessment on reviews of leisure centres and community buildings is also considered in the full assessment, whilst the proposals are fundamentally different the consultation and final assessments were considered as relevant information on changes to local services and mitigating actions.

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%
Total	264	100%

Update 11 May 2012

These proposed changes have been subject to formal consultation. Evidence is included in the full impact assessment (Section Two).

Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – Yes **Date: 3rd 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

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.			
	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)
Gender	<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>Both men and 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 the following actions apply to all equality groups:</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. - Completed</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>The consultation included opportunities for people to comment</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>May 2012 Update 64% of consultation respondents were women which is reflective of the library user survey results and national evidence.</p>	<p>(3) Revised opening hours would be subject to further discussion with local library users 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>on the proposals as well as specific questions. The comments suggested that a higher proportion of women than men identified negative impacts on access to library services (for example, books, computers and activities) as well as access to the library itself through public transport or car parking. Women also identified the impact on children, families, older or disabled people more frequently than men.</p>	<p>46% of women agreed that town centre libraries should open longer hours than community libraries compared with 51% men.</p> <p>There were no other significant differences in consultation responses between genders.</p>	
<p>Age</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>	<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</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</p>

Static library users		
age band	%	number of people
under 16	22	53,830
16 – 59	69	172,086
over 60s	9	22,157

69% of registered members fall into an age range of 16 – 59. Whilst those people over 60 only comprise 9% of our registered users.

Total Registered Library Users

under 16	53,830
16 – 59	172,086
over 60s	22,157

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.

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

population and many live alone.

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.

Staff profile shows 21% are under 40; 43% aged 41-54; 24% aged 55- 60 and 12% aged over 60.

May 2012 update Consultation respondents:
 Under 16: 6%
 16-24: 3%
 25-44: 16%
 45-64: 31%
 65-74: 27%
 75+: 18%

Older people are

appropriate alternative for some older people.

	<p>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> <p>The introduction of part time posts may impact on the age profile of the future service configuration as people who need to be employed for full time may not choose to stay within the service due to reduced financial circumstances.</p> <p>Comments received during consultation showed that under 16s were most likely to identify a negative impact on access to library services as well as the impact on children and families. A high proportion of 25-44 year olds also identified similar negative impacts but this group was also most likely to identify access to libraries as an issue, along with the impact on working age people. Those aged over 65 years were most likely to identify impacts on older people or disabled people, this was particularly so for people aged over 75.</p>	<p>more likely to think it is better to reduce opening hours generally than close libraries (43% of under 16s compared to 85% of 75+, there was a steady increase with age).</p> <p>There were no other significant differences in responses to consultation questions between age groups.</p>	
Disability	<p>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 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</p>	<p>Some disabled people may rely on carers or other family members to accompany them, also access to</p>	<p>In addition to the general actions listed above:</p> <p>Identify specific</p>

	<p>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"> • Hearing – 15% • Eyesight – 16% • Hands/fingers – 9% • Learning disability – 2% • Mental health – 6% • Mobility – 17% • Other – 3% <p>Except for learning disability these response rates are all higher than the English average for 2009/10.</p>	<p>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>May 2012 update 21% of consultation respondents said they were disabled.</p> <p>Results from disabled respondents were broadly reflective of non-disabled. Respondents with a disability said they were more likely to use a mobile library (19% compared to 8% non-disabled).</p>	<p>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>Staff profile information on disability is not included in the final assessment but the needs of disabled staff 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> <p>In the consultation comments from disabled people were more likely to identify a negative impact on people with a disability. Significantly more commented on the impact on social opportunities than non-disabled people. Non-disabled people were more likely to comment on the impact on working age people.</p>	<p>71% of respondents with a disability agreed that library opening hours should be more consistent across the county compared to 60% non-disabled.</p>	
<p>Race/Ethnicity</p>	<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>People from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to comment on negative impacts for children and families in the consultation. White respondents were more likely to identify the impact on older or disabled people.</p>	<p>Outreach activity has been targeted at particular sites to encourage library use.</p> <p>May 2012 update 98% of consultation respondents stated they were white British. A low number of respondents were BME. Analysis of responses to questions did not reveal much variance in responses across</p>	<p>General actions numbered 1-5</p>

		ethnic groups.	
Religion or belief	<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>People from a Christian background were more likely to identify an impact on older or disabled people in their comments during consultation. Those from other religious or belief backgrounds were most likely to identify negative impacts on access to library services. People with no religion or belief were more likely to identify impacts on children, families and working age people.</p>	<p>Mays 2012 update Consultation respondents: Christian: 79% None: 17% Other: 2% Muslim, Hindu, Sikh & Jewish: 1%</p>	General actions numbered 1-5
Sexual orientation	<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>Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual people were more likely to comment on the negative impacts on access to library services during consultation.</p>	<p>Mays 2012 update Consultation respondents: Heterosexual: 97% Lesbian Gay Bisexual: 2% Other: 1%</p>	General actions numbered 1-5

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?

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. By maintaining the existing locations and the entire network of local community space the impact on local communities is minimised.

Section three: Review and Conclusion

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

- Equalities Context

National statistics (2008) provided for Durham County area state that the local population is made up of 49% men and 51% women. 17.2% of the population indicated they have a long term limiting illness. 97.4 of the population are from a white British background, with 0.6% mixed race, 0.9% Asian or British Asian, 0.3% Black or British Black and 0.7% Chinese.

The Durham library user survey for over 16s in 2011 showed respondents were 65% female and 35% male with 60% aged 16-64 and 40% aged over 65. 47% of respondents answering the employment question indicated that they were retired. Also, of those using static libraries 43% of responded as having a disability or health condition.

- Customers

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 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.

There is no evidence of a specific impact in relation to race, transgender, religion or belief and sexual orientation but if the proposal is approved they will be considered as part of ongoing monitoring arrangements.

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 may also have an impact on some communities, for example through reductions in opportunities for activities or social events.

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.

- Staff

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.

- Update May 2012

A formal consultation was approved by Cabinet on 8th February 2012 and the consultation period ran from 10th February, 2012 until 4th May, 2012. Further information is provided in the detailed Consultation Report, which has been placed in the Members' Library. Feedback received through the consultation indicated that the impact linked to reductions in library opening hours relates to opportunities for outreach or specific support for library users and for some this may limit access to local library services which could mean increased travel, cost or time commitment in using alternative locations. The consultation findings support the initial assessment (using library membership data and library survey results) and confirms that the impact of reducing opening hours is more likely to relate to:

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

The consultation did not provide evidence of specific impact in relation to race, transgender status, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The effects may be further compounded when the impacts of reviewing community buildings and leisure centres are considered. In the Community Buildings EIA, it was noted that "A number of users would be displaced by potential closures which has a higher likelihood of impacting on older people, young people and women, as well as disabled people and their carers who may have limited access to transport to other venues". These groups are potentially further impacted by the reduction in library opening hours.

The EIA carried out for the Leisure centre proposals by DCC shows no obvious correlation in user demographics compared with libraries but concerns raised reflect those made through the library consultation. For example the impact on low income groups which often include older and younger people, lone parents and disabled people; the loss of social interaction is also likely to impact more on older people who are more at risk of feeling isolated; and the loss of activities for young people and the impact that may have on local communities.

There are presently 40 Books on Wheels routes running from 23 Libraries, delivered by over 80 volunteers. 19 of those routes operate out of 12 community libraries where there would be a reduction in opening hours to 20 hours/week. In the busiest community libraries, staff may struggle to maintain the support to volunteers that is currently required. The situation could be of wider concern if the numbers of people needing Books on Wheels provision grows, as a result of the mobile library changes, or if the number of volunteers falls because the revised opening hours are inconvenient for existing volunteers. This will be kept under review.

The proposal impacts on full time working opportunities for library staff as there would be predominantly part time posts available in the majority of locations. There are currently 132.03 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts which are made up by 174 employees. Under the proposed structure there will be 102.03 FTE posts, a reduction of 30 FTE. It is not possible to give a number of people affected as this will depend on the appointments made.

The reduction in working hours may impact on some staff who receive benefits and/or tax credits. Additionally skills may be lost to the County Council as experienced staff leave to secure alternative employment. Staff expressed concern during the consultation about the impact on them in terms of loss of working hours or potential loss of employment.

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 completed	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 completed	n/a
HR evidence on the current composition of workforce to be updated for further revisions of the EIA	Anne Davison	May 2012 completed	n/a
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.	Anne Davison	May 2012 Initial stages completed – further work depending on Cabinet	n/a

<p>Revised opening hours would be subject to further local discussion 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>		<p>decision July 2012.</p>	
<p>If the proposal is approved following consultation:</p> <p>In relation to age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that local arrangements take into account use by older and younger people. • Identify options to maintain outreach and activities, particularly for children and young people. • Books on wheels provision may be an appropriate alternative for some older people. <p>In relation to disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific mitigating actions where there is local evidence of use by disabled people, particularly people with learning disabilities. • Books on wheels provision may be an appropriate alternative for some disabled people. 	<p>Anne Davison</p>	<p>To be confirmed following Cabinet decision July 2012</p>	<p>Tbc</p>
<p>When will this assessment be reviewed?</p>	<p>Date: Action plan to be updated August 2012 following Cabinet decision EIA to be reviewed February 2013</p>		
<p>Are there any additional assessments that need to be</p>	<p>Mobile Library EIA completed</p>		

undertaken in relation to this assessment?	
Lead officer - sign off: Strategic Manager - Libraries	Date: 16 Dec 2011
Service equality representative - sign off: Head of Social Inclusion	Date: 16 Dec 2011

May 2012 Update

Lead officer - sign off: Strategic Manager - Libraries	Date: 11 May 2012
Service equality representative - sign off: Head of Social Inclusion	Date: 11 May 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

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.	
Service / team or section: Adults Wellbeing and Health, Social Inclusion – Libraries	
Lead Officer: Anne Davison	Start date: date 3 rd October 2011 Updated 1 : 15 th October 2011 (v2) Update 2: 11 May 2012
Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)	
<p>REDUCTION OF MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE FROM FIVE VEHICLES TO ONE</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 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 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 5,793 in March 2011, of whom 1,578 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 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</p>	

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. The initial proposal which was subject to consultation stated that 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. Local discussions with the mobile library users in each of the following 23

settlements (see list below) would be carried out, to identify the location of the single halt for their settlement. This would take place following agreement of strategy document at Cabinet in July 2012.

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 has taken place on the proposals and supplements 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
How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities? Reminder of our legal duties:											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 suggested 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 evidence 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. (See Section Two).

Impacts to staff

Staff profile information is used in the full assessment to consider the impacts, initial evidence from the current workforce profile indicated 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 is 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 has been 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 is considered in Section Two and will be presented to Members 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 review of leisure centres and community buildings is also considered as part of 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.

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.

The proposed changes have been subject to formal consultation and evidence is included in the full impact assessment (Section Two).

Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – Yes **Date: 12th 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

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.			
	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)
Gender	<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 – completed.</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>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>May 2012 Update 71% of consultation respondents (mobile libraries) were women which is reflective of the library user survey results and national evidence.</p>	<p>Revised locations and halt durations would be subject to discussion with local users which could identify specific impacts.</p> <p>Ensure that the Change Management Toolkit is followed to ensure fair treatment for staff</p>
<p>Age</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. 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</p>	<p>The 2011 mobile library user survey received 74% of responses from over 65 year olds, with 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</p>	<p>In addition to the general actions listed 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>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 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>	<p>will take into account the needs of vulnerable older or younger people. i.e. we will site halts in safe locations.</p> <p>May 2012 Update Consultation respondents (mobile libraries): Under 16: 2.6% 16-24: 1.4% 25-44: 7.7% 45-64: 18.5% 65-74: 32.9% 75+: 36.9%</p> <p>Consultation data for participants shows that the majority of responses came from people aged over 65 which is reflective of mobile users.</p> <p>Comments received during consultation show that those aged over 45 years, particularly the over 75 year olds, were more likely to identify public transport as an issue. Over 65 year olds were more likely to comment that the 4 mile distance is too great.</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>
Disability	<p>Disabled people may find the mobile library easier to use independently where they do not have access to transport.</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>In addition to the general actions listed above:</p> <p>Consider accessible</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 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>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"> • Hearing – 20% • Eyesight – 25% • Hands/fingers – 8% • Mobility – 33% <p>8% of respondents said they were 'permanently sick or disabled'.</p> <p>May 2012 update 37.4% of respondents who stated they use the mobile service said they had a disability which is higher than respondents who use static libraries.</p>	<p>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>
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	<p>The staff numbers are small so disability figures are not reported in the final assessment.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will be considered in any consultation or proposed changes to individual work patterns.</p>	<p>During consultation a higher proportion of disabled people commented on the impact of public transport and that the four mile distance was too great.</p>	
Race/Ethnicity	<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>May 2012 update 97% of consultation respondents (mobile libraries) stated they were white British. This is the same as respondents using static libraries. A low number of respondents were BME. Analysis of responses did not reveal much variance in responses across ethnic groups.</p>	<p>In addition to general actions above:</p> <p>Consider the potential impact on traveller communities living on sites in the county.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>Mobile libraries are equally accessible to all groups.</p> <p>There is no evidence available of specific impact and no targeted provision in relation to religion or belief.</p>	<p>May 2012 Update Consultation respondents (mobile libraries): Christian: 87% None: 10.6% Other: 2.4%</p> <p>There were no significant differences in responses to consultation.</p>	<p>General actions listed above</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>Mobile libraries are equally accessible regardless of sexual</p>	<p>May 2012 Update Consultation respondents (mobile libraries):</p>	<p>General actions listed</p>

	orientation. There is no evidence available of specific impact and no targeted provision in relation to sexual orientation.	Heterosexual: 97% LGB: 2% Other: 1% There were no significant differences in responses to consultation.	above
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How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?

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.

Maintaining some of the service in the remotest areas of the county aims to mitigate this to a certain extent.

Section three: Review and Conclusion

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

- Equalities Context

National statistics (2008) provided for Durham County area show that the local population is made up of 49% men and 51% women. 17.2% of the population indicated they have a long term limiting illness. 97.4 of the population are from a white British background, with 0.6% mixed race, 0.9% Asian or British Asian, 0.3% Black or British Black and 0.7% Chinese.

The Durham mobile library user survey in 2011 showed 78% of respondents were female and 22% male. 74% of responses from over 65 year olds, with 26% aged 16 to 64. Also, of those using mobile libraries 59% of respondents recorded that they had disability or health condition.

- Customers

The equality impacts of changing the mobile library service has potential negative impacts on library users and staff. The initial assessment suggested negative impacts were 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 is no evidence of a specific impact in relation to race, transgender, religion or belief and sexual orientation but if the proposal is approved they will be considered as part of ongoing monitoring arrangements.

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.

- Staff

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. Agreed corporate HR procedures have been followed.

- May 2012 Update

A formal consultation was approved by Cabinet on 8th February 2012 and the consultation period ran from 10th February, 2012 until 4th May, 2012. Full details are provided in the Consultation Report which has been made available in the Members Library.

Feedback received through the consultation indicated that as mobile libraries are traditionally used to reach outlying communities or those without easy access to a static library there is potential for impact 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 proposed to be removed or limited this could mean increased travel, cost or time commitment in using alternative locations. The consultation findings support the initial assessment (using library membership data and library survey results) and confirms that the impact of reducing mobile library provision 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.

The Consultation feedback showed that the majority of responses came from people aged over 65 which is a reflection of mobile users. Also, 37.4% of respondents who stated they use the mobile service said they had a disability which is higher than respondents who use static libraries and the overall county profile of disability.

The consultation did not provide evidence of specific impact in relation to race, transgender status, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The effects may be further compounded when the impacts of recent reviews of community buildings and leisure centres are considered.

In the Community Buildings EIA, it was noted that “A number of users would be displaced by potential closures which has a higher likelihood of impacting on older people, young people and women, as well as disabled people and their carers who may have limited access to transport to other venues”. These groups are potentially further impacted by the proposed reduction or loss of the mobile library service in their community.

The EIA carried out for the Leisure centre proposals by DCC shows no obvious correlation in user demographics compared with mobile libraries but concerns raised in that consultation reflect those made through the library consultation relating to the impact on low income groups which often include older and younger people, lone parents and disabled people. Loss of social interaction was identified as a concern particularly for older people who are more at risk of feeling isolated whilst disabled people responding to leisure centre consultation stated they were less likely to use an alternative if their local service was lost.

○ Mitigating actions

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.

The following revisions to the mobile library service criteria have been suggested following the consultation period.

- By changing the distance criteria from 4 miles to 3 miles from a library building, and changing the frequency of visits from fortnightly to three-weekly, services can be maintained for some additional communities.
- By having a flexible approach to scheduling, for instance in communities where one central halt could pose problems to less mobile users, and by entering dialogue with users about the best locations for halts, we will be able to better accommodate the needs of users who are frail or have disabilities, within available resources.
- These changes, will enable the service to be maintained for almost 80% of current mobile library users.

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 completed	n/a
Further update of initial EIA to be completed on conclusion of consultation period with evidence from Equalities monitoring data.	Anne Davison	June 2012 completed	n/a
HR evidence to be considered in final EIA	Anne Davison	June 2012 completed	n/a
If the proposal is approved by Cabinet the following actions will apply: Engagement – Revised locations and halt durations would be subject to discussion with local users which	Anne Davison	Autumn 2012 Initial stages completed –	n/a

<p>could identify specific impacts. Ensure this is accessible to all and equality monitoring/responses are analysed.</p> <p>Ensure that the Change Management Toolkit is followed to ensure fair treatment for staff</p>		<p>further work depending on Cabinet decision July 2012.</p>	
<p>If the proposal is approved following consultation:</p> <p>In relation to age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider proximity of older people's accommodation, schools and other local services along with perceived safety issues in proposals for location of single halts. • Ensure that information about Books on Wheels service is made available as an alternative for older or disabled people. <p>In relation to disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider accessible routes and perceived safety issues in proposals for location of single halts. • Ensure that information about Books on Wheels service is made available as an alternative for older or disabled people. <p>In relation to race/ethnicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the potential impact on traveller communities living on sites in the county. 	<p>Anne Davison</p>	<p>To be confirmed following Cabinet decision July 2012.</p>	<p>Tbc</p>

When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date: Action plan to be updated August 2012 following Cabinet decision EIA to be reviewed February 2013	
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	Opening Hours EIA completed	
Lead officer - sign off: Strategic Manager Libraries	Date: 16 Dec 2011	
Service equality representative - sign off: Head of Social Inclusion	Date: 16 Dec 2011	
May 2012 Update		
Lead officer - sign off: Strategic Manager Libraries	Date: 11 May 2012	
Service equality representative - sign off: Head of Social Inclusion	Date: 11 May 2012	

Consultation questionnaire

Library Strategy Consultation

Inspire... Include... Inform...

a strategy for change in
County Durham libraries



Have Your Say....

To tell us what you think about the proposals to change library services in County Durham please complete this questionnaire and return to your local library by 29 April 2012. Questionnaires received after this date cannot be taken into account. No individual correspondence can be entered into.

You can also complete this consultation online at: www.durham.gov.uk/consultation.

Please tick one box in response to each question

Q1. In what capacity are you responding?

Library User Non-library User Other (please state below i.e. community group, AAP)

Q2. Do you use a mobile library?

Yes

No

If yes, in which village do you access the mobile library?

Q3. Looking at page 1 of the summary document do you support the vision for the libraries?

Yes

No

Q4. Looking at page 1 of the summary document do you support the proposed aims for the service?

Yes

No

Q5. Looking at page 1 of the summary document do you support the proposed need for library services?

Yes

No

Q6. Do you think it would be better to reduce opening hours generally rather than close some libraries?

Yes

No

Q7. Do you agree that library opening hours should be more consistent across County Durham?

Yes

No

Q8. Do you agree that town centre libraries should be open longer hours than community libraries?

Yes

No

Q9. Looking at page 4 of the summary do you agree with the proposed criteria for those communities which should be served by mobile libraries?

Yes

No

Q10. Looking at pages 3 and 4 of the summary do you agree that local communities should have a say in the opening of their local library?

Yes

No

Q11. Do you have any comments on the proposals including any impact the changes would have on you?

A large rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for providing comments on the proposals.

Citizens' panel survey form

**County Durham
Citizens' Panel**



Have your say

Please use black ink throughout the questionnaire. Please read each question carefully and place a tick in each box to indicate your answer. If you make a mistake, then simply colour in the box selected and cross the box you wish to select. Some questions invite an 'other, please specify' response. If you would like to make a comment please write your answer within the space provided.

Thank you in advance for your time. Once you have completed the questionnaire please return by Friday 4 May 2012 in the pre-paid envelope provided (no stamp is required). If you cannot find or did not receive the envelope or require the questionnaire in another format please contact Mark Lawson, Research and Consultation Officer, on 0191 3727693 or by email on panel@durham.gov.uk



Library Use

Q1. Are you a regular user of a County Durham library (not including mobile libraries)?

A regular user (have used library services in the last six months)

An occasional user (hold a library card)

Not a user

(If 'Not a user' please go to question 3)

Q2. Please select the library you most commonly use: (please tick one box only)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Annfield Plain <input type="checkbox"/> | Durham Claypath <input type="checkbox"/> | Seaham <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Barnard Castle <input type="checkbox"/> | Easington Colliery <input type="checkbox"/> | Sedgefield <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Belmont <input type="checkbox"/> | Esh Winning <input type="checkbox"/> | Sildon <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bishop Auckland <input type="checkbox"/> | Ferryhill <input type="checkbox"/> | Shotton <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Blackhall <input type="checkbox"/> | Horden <input type="checkbox"/> | South Moor <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bowburn <input type="checkbox"/> | Lanchester <input type="checkbox"/> | Spennymoor <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brandon <input type="checkbox"/> | Langley Park <input type="checkbox"/> | Stanley <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chester-le-Street <input type="checkbox"/> | Murton <input type="checkbox"/> | Thornley <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chilton <input type="checkbox"/> | Newton Aycliffe <input type="checkbox"/> | Trimdon <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consett <input type="checkbox"/> | Newton Hall <input type="checkbox"/> | Willington <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cornforth <input type="checkbox"/> | Pelton <input type="checkbox"/> | Wingate <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Coundon <input type="checkbox"/> | Peterlee <input type="checkbox"/> | Wolsingham <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crook <input type="checkbox"/> | Sacriston <input type="checkbox"/> | Woodhouse Close <input type="checkbox"/> |

Mobile Library Use

Q3. Do you use a mobile library?

Yes No *(If 'No' please go to question 5)*

Q4. In which village do you commonly access the mobile library?



28729

Our Vision for Libraries

"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"
(Cabinet Report 8.2.12)

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the above vision for libraries in County Durham?

Agree

Disagree

Aims for the Library Service

Our aims for the service in the future will be:

- To inspire a community of reading and learning.
- To create community library hubs, involving local people.
- To be modern and responsive.
- A well managed and efficient service.

Q6. Do you agree or disagree with the above proposed aims for the service?

Agree

Disagree

Needs for Library Services to Meet

We have identified that the library service should meet the following needs:

- Reading for pleasure.
- The development of individual literacy.
- Local community and public service information.
- A place to meet and participate in community life.
- Raising confidence, skills and aspirations through access to informal and formal learning facilities, from study, research, self improvement and knowledge.

Q7. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed needs for the library services?

Agree

Disagree



Library Opening Hours

Q8. Do you think it would be preferable to reduce opening hours generally or close some libraries?

Reduce opening hours

Close some libraries

Library opening hours in County Durham are varied and range from 21 to 55 hours per week

Q9. Do you agree or disagree that library opening hours should be more consistent across County Durham?

Agree

Disagree

The new library strategy proposes to have town centre libraries open longer than community libraries

Q10. Do you agree or disagree that town centre libraries should be open longer hours than community libraries?

Agree

Disagree

Communities Served by the Mobile Library

It is proposed to reduce the number of mobile libraries from five vehicles to one vehicle (plus a back up vehicle) and to focus the new mobile library service on rural settlements. Mobile library services would be provided for communities on the following basis:

Distance: The mobile library would only call at settlements at least 4 miles from a library building.

One halt per settlement: This would ensure that a service is maintained for the maximum number of rural residents.

Standardised halts: Halts would be scheduled for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hour or 2 hours depending on the level of current use. This will be kept under review.

A minimum of one visit every two weeks: Some larger settlements would have 1 visit per week.

Halts would be withdrawn if services are not used: In order to ensure the service is efficient and meets needs, the level of use of all halts would be monitored.

The proposed number of settlements that the mobile library would visit would be reduced from 182 to 63.

The 63 settlements that the library would visit would meet all of the criteria above.



28729

Q11. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed criteria for those communities which should be served by mobile libraries?

Agree

Disagree

Public Input into Opening Hours

Q12. Do you agree or disagree that local communities should have a say in the opening of their local library?

Agree

Disagree

Q13. Do you have any comments on the proposals including any impact the changes would have on you?

Schedule of Petitions

A total of 8 petitions were submitted to the Council within the consultation period . An additional petition regarding Consett library was submitted after the consultation period had ended:

Annfield Plain

e-petition – 12 signatures

“We the undersigned petition the Council to Keep Annfield Plain Library open full time”

Belmont Library

Paper petition – 2,459 signatures

“We, the undersigned wish to voice our objection to Durham County Council's proposed cuts to the opening hours of Belmont library”

Note that 140 postcards were also received, stating “We love Belmont Library” (on the front) and “Please don't cut our hours!” (on the reverse with space for signature)

Consett Library

e-petition – 0 (nil) signatures

“We the undersigned petition the Council to leave the Library alone.”

In addition a paper petition was received after the closing date.

Ferryhill Library

Paper and e-petition – 1,446 signatures

“We the undersigned petition the Council to not cut opening hours at Ferryhill Library.”

Newton Hall Library

Paper and e-petition – 1,013 signatures

“We the undersigned petition the Council to not cut opening hours at Newton Hall Library.”

Sedgefield

Paper petition – 1,033 signatures

"To urge Durham County Council to classify Sedgefield Library as a Town Library and that 30hours would be an acceptable alternative to the 20 hours as proposed"

Willington

Paper petition – 1,098 signatures

"We the undersigned call on Durham County Council not to cut opening hours at Willington Library"

Wolsingham

Paper petition – 232 signatures

"We the undersigned call on Durham County Council not to cut opening hours at Wolsingham Library"

The need for Library Services in County Durham

1. The current use of the library service, information from service users and our knowledge of those users tells us much about the expressed need for library services in our communities.
2. 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.*
3. However, above all, the feedback to the phase 1 consultation on the library strategy in 2010 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.

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

“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 feedback phase one
4. 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.
5. The 5 areas of need, and the steps we will take to address these and deliver on the outcomes above, are considered further below.

Reading for pleasure:

6. 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.

7. 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 is also true for children and young people.
8. The importance of the availability of books was also stressed in the feedback to phase 1 of the consultation on the library strategy.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. The library service must make books and information available in different formats to cater for the needs of people with sensory impairments.

Information and facilities for study, research, self improvement and knowledge:

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. In 2011 a survey of library users aged under sixteen was carried out. Over 1,138 responses were received. 23.5% of children and young people stated that they use their library to borrow books for homework purposes. This figure has increased from a response rate of 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).
15. 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.

16. 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.
17. The percentage of respondents who visit the libraries to use the computers has increased from 36% in 2007 to 41% in 2011. It is also evident that as children increase in age, there is a greater likelihood that they will use the library computer facilities (i.e. 70.5% of under 5's who visit the library do not use the computer facilities, compared to only 20% of the 11-15 age group).

Development of individual literacy:

18. 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 UK². 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.
19. 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.

... Literacy and young people is of great concern to educationalists, parents and governments and I believe that the library has a part to play in supporting this and in partnership with local schools and parents in developing the 'reading habit'...

***"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 phase one consultation**

20. 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

² County Durham Economic Assessment: Employment and Skills Evidence Base, by Regeneris on behalf of DCC, 2011

literacy delivered through our libraries, as well as providing a range of wider adult learning opportunities through the libraries.

Local community and public service information:

21. 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.
22. People also need access to the wider services that the Council provides. Libraries will support the delivery of the Council's Access to Services strategy, co-locating with other services to provide a joined-up presence in communities.
23. 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.

A place to meet and participate in community life:

24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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 some 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.
27. 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.

Conclusion

28. The library service in County Durham will aim to meet the needs described in this document, and provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

Implications of the Revised Mobile Library Criteria

1. It is proposed that following the consultation, 8 settlements that currently get a weekly or twice weekly visit would receive one visit per week in future. This is an additional 3 settlements to those proposed in the February 2012 Cabinet report. These settlements are indicated in bold, and have been added as they fall within the revised criteria of three miles rather than four miles from a static library:

Burnopfield	South Hetton
Cockfield	Staindrop
Evenwood	Stanhope
Middleton in Teesdale	Tow Law

2. It is proposed that 79 settlements (see below) currently receiving a fortnightly service would in future have a three-weekly service. The settlements that have been maintained as they fall within the revised criteria of three miles rather than four miles from a static library are indicated in bold:

Barningham	Edmundbyers	Killhope	Sherburn Village
Bishop Middleham	Eggleston	Lanehead	South Cleatlam
Bishopton	Esperley	Langdon Beck	Southside
Bolam	Ettersgill	Leamside	St John's Chapel
Bournmoor	Evenwood Gate	Little Newsham	Stanhope -Crawleyside
Bowes	Forest in Teesdale	Littletown	Thornley(Crk) Village
Broompark Estate	Frosterley	Lonton	Toft Hill - High
Burnhope	Gainford	Lunedale	Wether Farm
Butterknowle	Hamsterley	Mickleton	Toft Hill
Cleatlam	Hamsterley Colliery	Morton Tinmouth	Ushaw Moor
Cockfield Station	Hamsterley Forest	Newbiggn	Wackerfield
Copley	Hamsterley Mill	Ovington	Wearhead
Copley Lane	Hett	Raby	West Black Dene
Cornsay	High Etherley	Ramshaw	West Rainton
Cotherstone	Hilton	Romaldkirk	Westgate
Cowshill	Holwick	Rookhope	Wham
Daddy Shield	Hutton Magna	Ruffside	Winston
East Butsfield	Ingleton	Satley	Witton le Wear
Eastgate	Ireshopeburn	Shadforth	Woodland
Ebchester	Kelloe	Sherburn Hill	

3. Discussions would take place with users in the following **37** settlements to determine where the mobile library service should halt in the future to best meet local needs. This is an additional **14** settlements to the proposed list in the February 2012 Cabinet report. These settlements are indicated in bold, and have been added as they fall within the revised criteria of three miles rather than four miles from a static library

Bishop Middleham

Bournmoor

Burnopfield

Butterknowle

Cockfield

Ebchester

Eggleston

Esperley

Evenwood

Frosterley

Gainford

Hamsterley

High Etherley

Ingleton

Ireshopeburn

Leamside

Mickleton

Middleton in Teesdale

Newbiggin

Ovington

Ramshaw

Rookhope

Shadforth

Sherburn Hill

Sherburn Village

South Hetton

Southside

Stanhope

St John's Chapel

Staindrop

Toft Hill

Tow Law

Ushaw Moor

Wearhead

West Rainton

Westgate

Winston

Map of Proposed Pattern of Mobile Halts

