DECISION-MAKER:		CABINET		
SUBJECT:		THE FUTURE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOUTHAMPTON LIBRARY SERVICE		
DATE OF DECISION:		18 NOVEMBER 2014		
REPORT OF:		CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND LEISURE		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY

This report represents the start of a journey of transformation for the Library Service. The ultimate aim being to develop and deliver a comprehensive and efficient service, which is modern, creative, innovative, inclusive and affordable that reflects the changing needs of the Southampton community.

In considering the future transformation of the service, it is essential to develop key priorities, shaped by the strategic context of the city and the council, but also key drivers for change including changes in customer behaviour and information technology. It is proposed that the service has five key areas of focus:

Area of Focus	Outcome
The further development of the 24/7 Virtual Online Library	A better user experience, increased convenience, availability and accessibility of online library resources.
Developing a Life Long Love of Reading	To enable anyone who wish to read to be able to do so and especially to introduce reading early to children, leading to improved literacy and performance at school.
Getting the City Confidently On Line	Improved self-reliance in the community by increasing the number of people using IT to be able to access services effectively.
Helping to Meet the Information Needs of the City	To provide support to those who most need it and signposting information for local people.
Delivering Library Services in	Library buildings offering activities and

Partnership	services from a range of organisations offering the opportunity also for individual and community participation.

The report also seeks approval to progress beyond this first phase of proposing priorities, research and options analysis, to the next stage of consultation. Detailed research and options analysis has taken place which has resulted in the development of four savings options, which all stem from the needs assessment process. This report recommends Option D as the proposal for consultation. The next stage will consist of a minimum of 12 week consultation period seeking views on the overall proposals for the future of the library service and specifically as they affect each library.

The proposal for consultation includes the five clear areas of focus for the future of the library service, and priorities which fall under each area as outlined above. The recommendation is Option D which is the continued provision of six static city council managed libraries plus the virtual on line library and the school's library service. The proposal is that the five remaining libraries will cease to be managed by the city council. Two of these five are owned by the city council and it is proposed that these will be offered to the community for the development of independent libraries. It is proposed that the council will cease to lease three properties that library services are currently provided from and it is proposed that the opportunity to take these leases on to provide a library service is offered to the community. It is also proposed that the Mobile Library Service will also cease.

It is proposed to run an extensive and open consultation process, giving people the opportunity to make representations on the proposal, and to offer alternatives for consideration. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and where appropriate, amendments will be made to the existing proposals and any alternatives put forward will be assessed before the final recommendations are submitted to Cabinet and Council for decision in July 2015. The implementation of the changes to the Library Service will follow thereafter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i)   To approve Option D (detailed in paragraph 47 of this report) as the preferred option for consultation.

(ii)   To carry out public consultation for a minimum of twelve weeks to seek views on the proposal including, but not limited to:
- views on the future focus for the library service and the priorities contained within
- views on the decision to continue to provide a library service from six city council managed libraries plus the online virtual library and the school's library service
- views on the proposal to offer library buildings to community groups to develop independent community libraries prior to the consideration of disposing of the properties
- views on the city council ceasing to lease the properties in

which Thornhill and Millbrook Libraries are located

- views on bringing the temporary provision in Weston to an end and to seek to create the opportunity for the community to develop an independent library provision within a new unit being provided in the area
- views on ceasing the mobile library service
- views on any alternatives or expressions of interest offered up by consultees

(ii) To report on the feedback arising from the consultation, to Cabinet in 2015 with a final proposal.

(iii) To seek permission to start staff consultation on the changes that would result from the proposals, if approved.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To progress changes to the Library Service, to develop and deliver a comprehensive and efficient service which is modern, creative, innovative, inclusive and affordable that reflects the changing needs of the Southampton community.

2 To respond to the need to transform the service in a way that will meet the changing needs of the Southampton community. Life is very different now compared to when the infrastructure of libraries was developed in the city and many people are choosing to access the services in different ways which are more convenient to them. There is a need to develop a clear focus for the future of the service with supporting priorities. The consultation is designed to attract feedback on these five areas of focus.

3 This report also outlines the results of a needs assessment which has looked at the buildings from which library services are provided and options for reducing the number of buildings to focus the service in the areas where there is greatest need, and where the libraries are most heavily used and most cost effective. Further details are provided later in the report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

4. The options considered are outlined in detail in Appendix 3. This report provides the detail relating to four options that were developed for the library service buildings in Southampton including:

- The description of the Option
- The performance of the libraries concerned
- A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of each Option
- A description of the current service and how this could be enhanced in the future
- Any changes to the hours of opening

Appendix 4 includes Equality and Safety Impact Assessments for all the

Options and all the libraries affected.

Option D is the preferred option and will be the subject of the public consultation. This option is described in detail later in the report. The three other options not being pursued at this stage are described in detail below in paragraphs 5 - 10, they are listed in the order of the number of libraries directly provided by the city council as part of the option.

5. **Option A - (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to the Option and the potential impact.)**

Option A includes:
- City council managed library services to be operated from the following buildings, Central Library, Bitterne Library and Portswood Library.
- The Schools Library Service which would continue substantially unchanged.
- The Virtual online library service which would continue.
- The mobile library which would continue to provide services around the city to neighbourhoods and a wide variety of local community buildings such as sheltered homes and nurseries
- Designated staff within the library service who would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and develop partnership working to enhance the library service reach and impact around the city.
- The remaining eight libraries made available for community led initiatives or for disposal.

6. Key reasons why this option is not being pursued at this stage :
- There would be eight fewer city council managed libraries in the city. Shirley, Woolston, Lordshill, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook.
- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to eight libraries.
- There would be no council managed libraries to the west of the city centre.
- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 4,393 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year. (Regular users are those that have made use of the service at least six times in the last year.)
- In order to continue to use a library building these 4,393 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.

- Those that do decide to travel to their next nearest library would have

to travel up to 22 minutes longer via public transport via a direct route. However for those who would use Weston Library there is no direct bus route to Bitterne, Portswood or Central Library.

- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 2,109 may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data. This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions in the city from over 223,384 to 175,050

7. **Option B (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to the Options and their potential impact.)**

Option B includes:

City council managed library services to be operated from the following buildings, Bitterne Library, Central Library, Portswood Library and Shirley Library.

- The Schools Library Service which would continue substantially unchanged.

- The Virtual online library service which would continue.

- Designated staff within the library service who would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and partnership working to enhance the library service reach and impact around the city.

- The remaining libraries made available for community lead initiatives or for disposal.

- This service would not include the provision of a mobile library service but there would be a more limited service from a library van delivering deposit collections where required around the city.

8. Key reasons why this option is not being pursued at this stage:

- There would be seven fewer city council managed libraries in the city. Woolston, Lordshill, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook.

- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to seven libraries.

- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 2,501 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year.

- In order to continue to use a library building these 2,501 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.

- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 1,200 may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data.

- This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions in the city from 225,000 to 187,600.

9. **Option C- (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to**

the Options and their potential impact.)

Option C includes:

- City council managed services to be operated from the following buildings: Bitterne Library, Central Library, Portswood Library, Shirley Library and Woolston.
- The Schools Library Service which would continue substantially unchanged.
- The Virtual online library service which would continue.
- Designated staff within the library service who would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and partnership working to enhance the library service reach and impact around the city.
- The remaining libraries made available for community lead initiatives or for disposal.
- This service would not include the provision of a mobile library service but there would be a more limited service from a library van delivering deposit collections where required around the city.

10. Key reasons why this option is not being pursued at this stage:

- There would be six fewer city council managed libraries in the city. Lordshill, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook
- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to six libraries.
- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 1730 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year.
- In order to continue to use a library building these 1730 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.
- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 830 may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data.
- This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions in the city from 225,000 to 196,000.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

11. The aim of the project is to develop and deliver a proposal for the future of the library service in Southampton which is **comprehensive** and **efficient,** that is **modern, creative, innovative**, and **inclusive**, which is **financially sustainable** and reflects the changing needs of the Southampton Community.

12. The project seeks to identify ways that would look at the options that would

offer the City:

- A **comprehensive** service because the Council is required to provide a library services for residents and visitors. Services need to be accessible across the city.
- An **efficient** service because there is a need to maximise the benefit of the service, and its effectiveness with the resources that will be available.
- A **modern** service reflecting that people wish to access library services in new ways, such as the use of technology, e-books and Wi-Fi.
- A **sustainable** service which is fit for purpose and affordable. There have already been reductions to the library services budgets in recent years and future budget savings require the need to re-organise and re-design the service.
- A **creative and innovative** service in the forefront of delivering services in new, exciting and stimulating ways.
- An **inclusive** service which aims to ensure access for all especially those that most need the service across the city.

13. The options for the future of Southampton's Library Service have been developed in consideration of the council's statutory duty under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service'.

14. The buildings from which the Library Service provides a tiered service from are shown on the map in Appendix 2C . This includes:

- One large **Central library** at the civic centre in the cultural quarter of the city.
- Five **District Libraries** - in district centres close to shopping and public transport in Shirley, Bitterne, Lordshill, Woolston and Portswood. Woolston Library is currently being redeveloped in a new location at Centenary Quay.
- Two **Neighbourhood Libraries** - medium sized libraries located on Burgess Road close to the University, Cobbett Road on the edge of Bitterne Park.
- Three small **Local Community Libraries** are located in Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook. The Weston Library is currently operated from a temporary building pending the completion of a unit in a new development.

In addition to the above buildings there is also:

- A Mobile library (A map showing the stops in on Appendix 2e, the timetable is in Appendix 2d and Appendix 2i and 2j provide lists of the nurseries and sheltered homes visited)
- Services to the housebound and sheltered homes

- Schools Library Service.(SLS) (Appendix 2f shows the schools that

subscribe to this service on a map and Appendix 2g shows a list of those schools that subscribe, Appendix 2h provides further information about the SLS) Currently around 26,052 children benefit from these services in around 72 schools.

15. Local people can register at any library and use the facilities across the whole of the city. The service is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in or around the city and to occasional visitors. There were 1.2 million visits to Southampton libraries in the year 2013-14. There were **43,381** active library users across the year 13/14. (Active users are those who have borrowed an item or used a People's Network (PN) at least once in a year 13/14). This represents 14.9% of the Southampton population. 35,410 active library users are Southampton residents (82% of all active users). There were a total of **18,200** regular library users in 13/14. (Those who have made six or more uses across the year 13/14).

16. **Drivers for Change**

There are a number of recent developments which create the environment in which a change in the delivery of the library services is essential. This project has sought to incorporate changes to the services to ensure it can adapt to the future

17. **Customer Behaviour together with Technological Driven Change**

Although currently the biggest single activity in libraries is still book borrowing, trends have changed: there has been a significant decline in the need for reference and non-fiction material in recent years. However the demand for new fiction and children's books has only declined slightly and there have been 330-350,000 children's books issued each year over the last 2 years.

17.1 However since 2003 people have also been using libraries to access the Peoples Network (a network of computers in libraries across the city). This use of this network (which provides free access to the internet) has remained high and relatively consistent over the last 3 years. There is currently 56% utilisation, which represents 225,000 sessions per year. However as more services go online there has been an increase in the demand for staff to support people using computers

17.2 Since the introduction of Wi-Fi in libraries in 2009, people have also used their own devices to access the internet in libraries, whether working, studying or researching. There has been a growth in the use of Wi-Fi with 3.2 million minutes and over 120,000 sessions used in the last year. This is further outlined later in the report.

17.3 Library users are also increasingly finding it more convenient to reserve and renew their books from the comfort of their home or on mobile devices. Over 60% of all reservations (representing around 93,000 items) are carried out online with 33% of all renewals taking place in this way. This has resulted in the development of the online provision being the busiest of all "branches". Whilst currently users do need to visit their local library to collect a book, they are increasingly choosing not to visit to reserve or renew.

17.4   There has been a growing demand for access to information and resources on line and this has been responded to by the provision of access to free eBooks, online newspapers and audio downloads. In 2013/14 there were 35,000 accesses to eBooks, audio, magazines, encyclopaedias, language and driving test resources on line

17.5   Online access to library resources is likely to increase further in the future with customers desiring improved accessibility through easily navigated systems from a variety of mobile devices. The current limited number of eBooks available from publishers is likely to increase in response to this shift from paper to e readers.

18.   **Priority Driven Change**

As can be seen later in the report and in Appendix 1 there is a proposal for the library service to prioritise five key areas of focus. This targeted service will ultimately need to direct its support to those areas in the city where the support is most needed, however this has to be balanced with where the libraries are now and their ability to meet these needs.

18.1   One of the key areas of focus is to develop a lifelong love of reading especially in children. There is research that suggests that a love of reading developed in early years has a significant impact on literacy levels and later performance in school. Whilst there has been a significant improvement in recent years there is scope to further improve attainment in the City's schools. Reading can also be a strong contributor to the development of confidence in English language for children for whom it is not a first language. The diversity of children in relation to having English as an additional language is much higher than is the case for the adult population.

In 2013 at the Early Years Foundation Stage 57% of Southampton pupils were working at or above the expected level within the Literacy Area of Learning. This was 4% below the National performance of 61%.This placed Southampton 104th out of 152 authorities.

In 2012/13 Southampton's performance at GCE A level and Level 3 results of all state-funded students aged 16 to 19 was lower than the National average across all areas. Compared to the other 152 Local Authorities, the best ranking achieved by Southampton for girls/ boys combined was 124th in the "Average Point Score per Student". Southampton achieved 143rd out of 152 Local Authorities for "Average Point Score per Entry".

18.2   Getting the City Confidently On line is another key area of focus and this would result in the service being targeted at those who need that extra level of help to get on line and start accessing a range of services that are increasingly being made available via the web. This includes access to the Peoples Network for activities such as job applications

18.3   Finally, the Library Service will continue to provide information, but this will be increasingly pointing users in the direction of sources of information and providing additional support for those find it difficult to source the information directly for themselves, perhaps because they do not have access to IT.

19. **Service Driven Changes**

All government funded services are facing challenging financial times and are exploring opportunities for maximising access for customers to their services through digital first agendas. Opportunities to engage on line with services will be welcomed by the vast majority through streamlined systems and processes however this does leave those who find it more difficult to navigate these routes potentially needing additional support and guidance. Research has found that librarians are the second most trusted source of information after GP's in the local community and therefore it is a natural progression that those that need help are approaching libraries for support particularly with online forms and transactions. This is likely to increase in the future as further services move on line.

20. **Deficit Reduction Driven Change**

The savings in recent years in the library service have been made by reductions in opening hours, resources budgets and modernisation. The scale of further budget reductions required within the council in the next few years, means that it is not possible to make sufficient savings by further reducing services and budgets.   The proposed way is to deliver a proposal for the future which is comprehensive and efficient service that is modern, creative, innovative, and inclusive and financially sustainable is to transform the service.

21. **The City Perspective**

The Southampton City Strategy 2014 – 2025 identifies the three priorities of the City as :
- Economic growth with equality
- Skills and employment
- Healthier and Safer Communities

The libraries are already delivering against these agendas, providing support to businesses across the city, working in partnership with a wide range of organisations to deliver an extensive range of training opportunities and providing support and access to IT for those seeking to apply for work. With strong links to health organisations, libraries not only are a source of health information such as "books on prescription" but also a base for services such as Macmillan and others to provide advice, guidance and support in a non-medical environment. The future design of the service also needs to be shaped by these priorities.

22. In addition there are four cross cutting themes identified for the City:
- Tackling the negative impact of alcohol
- Building community capacity
- Fostering city pride, passion and identity
- Delivering whole place thinking

Libraries assist with the development of community capacity building in providing opportunities for volunteering, providing a base for many groups and organisations and by providing a range of learning and skill development

opportunities. The future proposals outlined in this report provide further opportunities for development of community capacity with the potential for community libraries.

23. The Council Strategy 2014-2017 sets out the council's vision and priorities for the next three years. The priorities are to create:

- A sustainable Council
- Jobs for local people
- Prevention and early intervention
- Protecting vulnerable residents
- Affordable housing
- Services for all
- City pride

The Library Service is, and will continue to be, available to all. However it needs to be able to provide these services within a sustainable council with reducing budgets. The Libraries will continue to get involved in campaigns and initiatives that link in with the other priorities listed above.

24. **The Focus for the Future**

In considering the future transformation of the service it is essential to develop key priorities, shaped by the strategic context of the city and the council but also the drivers for change described earlier in the report. The proposal is for the service to have five key areas of focus:

Area of Focus	Outcome
The further development of the 24/7 Virtual Online Library	A better user experience, increased convenience, availability and accessibility of online library resources.
Developing a Life Long Love of Reading	To enable anyone who wish to read to be able to do so and especially to introduce reading early to children, leading to improved literacy and performance at school.
Getting the City Confidently On Line	Improved self-reliance in the community by increasing the number of people using IT to be able to access services effectively
Helping to Meet the Information Needs of the City	To provide support to those who most need it accessing and signposting information for local people.
Delivering Library Services in Partnership	Library buildings offering activities and services from a range of organisations offering the opportunity also for individual and community participation.

Each of the above areas and the priorities that relates to each of these areas of focus are explained further in Appendix 1. Appendix 1 includes a number of aspirational improvements that it is hoped would significantly enhance the service for users. These, and any proposals emerging from the consultation, will, if viable be brought forward for consideration by the Cabinet in July 2015.

25. Some of the positive changes that could result from the proposed way forward include the following:

- A new library to open in Woolston in 2015 (as this library is included in Option D).
- Every child and literacy student in the city to receive a library card and membership.
- Improved access to and more online services – the 24-7 library.
- More appealing libraries with improved flexible layout and furniture.
- City wide campaign to get everyone confidently on line.
- Incorporation of the archives service in central library enabling improved access and longer hours.
- More opportunities for volunteering through a wide range of programmes.
- Opportunities for communities to develop Independent Libraries.

26. **The Process**

A robust process was established in order to identify options for each library building. This involved the use of a needs assessment model to identify which libraries would be most effective in meeting the needs of those who would most benefit from the provision of the library service in the city.

27. There was also a review of buildings to identify their condition and suitability for the future. Opportunities have started to be explored for developing partnerships with other services within the council and other organisations. Consideration was given to the future of the library service nationally, exploring the latest initiatives and creative approaches being used to enhance and deliver services. Research was also carried out to learn from the experiences of other local authorities.

28. **The Needs Assessment**

The aim of the needs assessment (Attached in Appendix 2) was to explore the evidence of need for the library services in the city and to establish the priority of the libraries in the city for meeting these needs. The needs assessment is based on three areas:

- demographic need
- library usage
- the current cost of the service

29. The demographic makeup of the community within the library catchment areas was used in the needs assessment. The following criteria were used to calculate the overall ranking for demographic need (for more details see methodology in Appendix 2a):
    1) The proportion of primary school pupils deemed "low performers" within the library catchment
    2) The proportion of Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) residents within the library catchment
    3) The proportion of people receiving adult social care within the library catchment
    4) The proportion of children aged 0-11 within the library catchment
    5) The average Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) overall score
    6) The average IMD education score

30. The following criteria were used to calculate the overall ranking for the use and the cost of the library service (for more details see methodology):
    Use
    1) Number of registered library users
    2) The percentage of the population within each library catchment that are active library users
    3) The number of visits made to each library
    4) The average number of items borrowed every hour
    5) People's Network (PN) utilisation
    6) Number of regular library users at each library
    Cost
    7) Cost per visit
    8) Cost per item borrowed or PN session

31. The catchment area for each library was established using the method outlined in Appendix 2a. A map with the catchments and the libraries can be seen in Appendix 2c. An initial library ranking was then produced using the "use of library service" and "demographic need" criteria. In the context of the strategic priorities of the city council, the demographic needs of the local population was determined as the most important of the two criteria. The next stage was to apply a greater weighting to demographic need to produce an overall needs assessment ranking. This was before geography was built into the model.

32.

	Priority Calculation
Central Library	1
Shirley Library	2
Portswood Library	3
Bitterne Library	4
Woolston Library	5
Lordshill Library	6
Burgess Road Library	7
Cobbett Road Library	8
Weston Library	9
Thornhill Library	10

This table reflects the needs assessment ranking before geography was built into the model.

33.   Geography was then introduced to the model and the distances that customers would need to travel by public transport if their first library of choice did not remain open. It was this process that produced the final overall list of priority. This process is fully explained and all the results shown in Appendix 2. The model was then run again to determine which would be the priority libraries using the criteria if there were 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 libraries. The process identified a catchment area by connecting active users, the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) they resided in, and the library they used most often, and allocating that LSOA as a catchment. Millbrook had no catchment as the majority of active library users in the area surrounding Millbrook preferentially travelled to Shirley Library.

34.   **The Review of Buildings**

In parallel to the Libraries Transformation Project, there is also a corporate property review taking place which has identified asset valuations, the status and condition of the properties and any outstanding maintenance. There is a report in Appendix 6 which outlines the issues for each property and identifies opportunities for the future. The conclusions of this exercise will be dependent on which option is pursued. There are opportunities to :

- Invest and improve those buildings that will be retained as city council managed libraries.
- To invest in any buildings which form part of a community asset transfer.
- Explore partnerships to benefit from new or improved city council managed libraries as part of the wider corporate property review in the future.
- Consider disposal of buildings if it is not possible to secure a continued library use or if it is considered important to secure investment for the improvement of the library service.

35. **The Partnership Opportunities**

The Library Service is keen to explore partnership opportunities :

- with other agencies
- with other local authorities
- within the city council
- with the voluntary sector and community organisations
- with the commercial/business sector

There are many potential benefits to partners from working together with libraries, the following list covers just a few;

- libraries are a key location in communities to offer a drop in or outreach service from
- there is good access to customers, a high footfall of local people
- there is a positive benefit from an association with a highly regarded and trusted service
- opportunities exist to create a base for officers working in localities i.e. hot desking
- the library service has good experience of levering in funding by working in partnership
- there is space for partners to establish an office base
- libraries often act as an entry point for lifelong learning

36. The Library Service will continue to explore any opportunities with organisations which would result in an improved service for the users of the service and either an increase in revenue or a reduction in expenditure.

37. To provide enhanced and sustainable services there will be significant scope to increase the range of opportunities for volunteers. Helping users of the library service to be able to access a range of services online using library computers and also developing homework clubs are two key areas where the service would benefit from an increased number of volunteers. There is also a proposal to ensure that within a revised staffing structure there would be a member of staff given responsibility for recruiting, developing and supporting volunteers.

38. One potential partnership which has emerged as part of this review is with Capita regarding the delivery of council training courses. The libraries have a number of rooms that would be suitable for the delivery of council training courses. Currently these are carried out at a number of venues around the city where a facility hire cost is paid. There may be savings to the council if this training is carried out in city council venues. This is currently being pursued in more detail to establish the practicalities or relocating the training programme.

39. **Exploring the Future Role of the Library Service**

The future of library provision is a current topic of debate internationally as government funding reduces. There are 151 library authorities in this country and 3,200 libraries. There are consistent messages emerging from most authorities not only in this country but also abroad about the future of libraries. These changes which have helped to inform the future focus for the Southampton Library Service are described below.

40. The demand for e resources

- In Texas the first book free library opened in 2013 which offers use of computers and eBooks on tablet for loan.

- Whilst it is not proposed to develop a book free library, it is clear from the increasing demand for the limited range of eBooks available that there is an appetite for more. In 2013 the following e resources were used in Southampton.

  - E Newspaper uses 9,413

  - E Magazines Read 5,093

  - E Books Issued 2,070

  - E audio issued 2,061

  - E music issued 729

41. Access to the Internet

- The Wi-Fi usage in libraries suggest that it is not only the People's Network computers that attract people to the library to use the internet. During the year April 2013 to March 2014 in 5 libraries:

  - Average number of user devices per month – 3,863

  - Total number of sessions – 122,383

  - Total number of minutes – 3,225,230

  - Total amount of data used (Megabytes) – 4,704,902

  - Average number of sessions per month – 10,199

  - Average duration time (minutes per session) – 26.35

42. Online Access and IT developments

- It is clear that from the increasing use of the web for reserving (over 60%) and renewing books (33%) in Southampton that the online method is the route of choice for these activities, as this is greater than any library in the city.

- Some of the developments and initiatives emerging in the library sector include using mobile phones to renew books in libraries, tablets/e readers in libraries and also with the housebound, self-service libraries and library kiosks to name a few.

43. Community Opportunities

- The number of community run independent libraries around the country is increasing rapidly, with hundreds already in operation. These are being run by a wide range of different organisations including charities and social enterprises.

- Nationally there is also an increase in the number of volunteers involved with the library service which both enhance the services available but also the volunteering opportunities for those in the community.

44.   Changes to the Fabric of Libraries

- Where libraries are being improved in this country and abroad consideration is being given to the quality of the environment, the flexibility of the space and the attractive and appealing nature of libraries in order to attracting users.

- The libraries are increasingly being seen as a key location for the provision of a range of services by a wide range of organisations working together.

- Libraries are also being recognised as a "third place", away from the home and work where people can go without having to pay to have quality time perhaps with their family, particularly those in greatest need.

- Increasingly libraries are being used for a wide range of activities beyond the book or computer where children can engage in meaningful learning activity – there are examples nationally and internationally of music, art, design technology, small scale performances etc. Some articles refer to the future of libraries being "what the community want them to be".

45.   **Learning from Other Local Authority Approaches**

Research has been carried out to learn from the approaches taken by other local authorities, particularly where these have resulted in successful transformation of the library services. This research has been carried out online, through telephone conversations, visits to other local authorities and sharing of documentation via email. A conference was also attended where a number of other local authorities going through the same process met together to share experiences and advice.

46.   <u>**The Option for Consultation**</u>

Around 27 financial scenarios were originally developed initially in parallel with the needs assessment. These were refined down to four once the results of the needs assessment and the Library Priority Ranking Exercise had been completed. This report recommends that Option D is put forward for consultation. However, it should be emphasised that the Council is approaching the project with an open mind and a willingness to be guided by evidence of the consultation. Option D is outlined in more detail below.

47.   **Option D – (Please see Appendix 3 and 4 for more details in relation to the Options and their potential impact.)**

Option D involves:

- City council managed services to be operated from Bitterne Library, Central Library, Portswood, Woolston Library, Shirley Library and Lordshill Library.

- The Schools Library Service would continue substantially unchanged.

- The Virtual online library service would continue.

- The remaining libraries to be available for community lead initiatives or for disposal.
- This service would not include the provision of a mobile library service but a more limited service would be provided from a library van delivering deposit collections where required around the City.
- Designated staff within the library service would have a role to recruit, develop and manage volunteer programmes and partnership working to enhance the library service reach and impact around the City.

48.   In summary the justification for this option is that:

- Using the needs assessment priority calculations this option includes the top six libraries.
- Over the last year these six libraries and the web will have processed 78% of all items borrowed by regular users across the service.
- Over the last year these five libraries will have had 93% of all the peoples network sessions used.
- This option will provide a better geographical cover across the city (compared to Options A, B or C) of city council managed libraries with one in the city centre, two on the west, one in the north and two on the east.
- All six libraries are located in easily accessible locations by foot, public transport and by car.
- All libraries either in or close to district centres.

49.   Some of the Implications of this option (See Appendix 3 for more detail.)

- There would be five fewer city council managed libraries in the city, Burgess Road, Cobbett Road, Millbrook, Thornhill and Weston.
- If no other organisations were able to take on these buildings it is possible that this may lead to the closure of up to five libraries.
- 55% of the regular users of the library service in the city only use one library. This option would remove the only libraries used by 891 people in Southampton. This is based on the number of regular users in the last year.
- In order to continue to use a library building these 891 people would need to travel to another library that may be further from their home. This may incur additional cost.
- On the basis that 48 % of the users walk to libraries one might assume that 428 people may no longer be able to walk to their local library. However this is an assumption and cannot be proved by the data.
- This option would lead to a reduction in the number of people's network sessions available in the city from 225,000 to 210,000

There would be no Mobile Library Service across the City.

50. **The Mobile Library Service**

The Mobile Library Service currently provides a 4 weekly timetable which is included in Appendix 2d and 2e, it serves around 40 nurseries, 20 sheltered homes and street stops. Appendix i and j list the nurseries and sheltered homes currently visited. The service costs £98,100 and whilst it is a much loved service it currently performs as shown below;

- Between 2013 and 2014 there were 12,684 visits to the Mobile Library this is 9th highest library above Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook Libraries.
- Of all the items borrowed across all the libraries and the web, 2.7% were borrowed from the Mobile Library. This was higher only than Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook Libraries.
- Of the 55% regular library users that only use one library 107 people only use the Mobile Library, this was higher only than Weston, Thornhill and Millbrook Libraries .
- 287 regular users used the Mobile Library. This more than Weston and Millbrook Libraries only.
- On average 24.02 items were borrowed per hour which is 9th ahead of Thornhill, Millbrook and Weston Libraries.
- Cost per visit £8.09 (This is the second most expensive behind Millbrook Library)
- Cost per issue £3.15 (this was the third most expensive behind Millbrook and Weston.)

51. **Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA's) have been developed for all four options outlined in this report. There are also ESIA's for each library that could cease to become a city council managed library in any of the four models. All these ESIA's can be seen in Appendix 4. Detailed assessments will be completed once the feedback has been evaluated following the public consultation. These will help to inform the final proposals and decisions made at cabinet in July 2015.

52. **Process for Consultation**

Consultation will be conducted both in relation to the proposals generally and targeted in relation to the likely affected libraries and services. It is proposed that the consultation will run from November 2014 for a minimum of 12 weeks. The feedback will then be evaluated and used to inform the final proposals before decisions are taken by Cabinet in July 2015.

52.1 The consultation will seek to focus the majority of feedback through an on line survey, in addition to this:

- A programme will be developed where non library staff involved in the project attend the libraries across the city to explain how residents are able to feedback their views. These question and answer sessions will be open for anyone to attend and are intended to clarify any queries arising about the proposed option or the consultation process.

- Efforts will be made to seek to encourage feedback from those people particularly identified in the ESIAs.
- Existing and potential partners and stakeholders will also be targeted to encourage feedback.
- The consultation process will be widely promoted to ensure that everyone affected by the proposals is aware of how to feedback their views.

52.2   In addition to the above there will be:

- A frequently asked questions document available on line.
- Detailed information about the proposal and the options considered.
- An email address to send additional correspondence to.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

53.   Around 27 financial scenarios were originally developed in parallel with the needs assessment. These were refined down to four once the results of the needs assessment and the Library Priority Ranking Exercise had been completed.

54.   The four options have the potential to achieve annual savings outlined below:

- Option A - £625,800
- Option B - £548,800
- Option C - £394,000
- Option D - £286,200

All the above relate to a full financial year and are based on the pay and allowances paid to staff in 2014/5 prior to the implementation of the changes to the pay and allowances in November 2014. The changes to the staff pay and allowances will mean that the figures above may change.

55.   The following table outlines a breakdown of the savings anticipated from the implementation of option D.

Description of Saving Item	Saving anticipated £
Employees	205,000
Premises	68,300
Transportation Costs	5,800
Supplies and Services	-8,200
Internal Recharges	27,100
(Loss of Income)	-11,800
Total Savings	286,200

There is an assumption that there are no ongoing financial obligations to the Council in respect of vacated buildings.

56. The figures in para 54, could vary subject to implementation costs that cannot be determined at this stage

The savings identified above do not include the following:

- Costs associated with terminating the financing arrangements of the Mobile or disposal. There is a one off sum associated with the termination of around £89,000, this would apply to options, B, C and D.
- Costs associated with any security needed on libraries that cease to be operated by the city council on the basis that it is hoped that there may be community organisations interested in taking on these buildings.
- Any improvements proposed, these will be developed over a series of years as and when business cases can be made to demonstrate the benefits of the improvement. It is hoped that the first of these may be included in the cabinet report that follows the consultation period in July 2015 so that these proposals can reflect any feedback from the community.
- Costs or income associated with the disposal of any properties as it is hoped that there may be community organisations interested in taking on these buildings.
- Any costs associated with the Asset Management Transfer of any properties to community organisations, including legal fees.
- Any costs associated with the properties that the city council will cease to provide a library service from such as utilities, maintenance costs, rates, equipment etc.

57. All four options will result in the reduction in the number of SCC managed libraries. It is proposed that organisations will be invited to Express an Interest in the potential transfer of city council owned assets and the opportunity to continue to operate a library service from them. It is important to note that until the buildings are transferred there will be continuing costs associated with utilities, security and NNDR etc. At the moment these costs have not been taken from the savings but they will have an impact on the savings in the first year.

58. There are a number of different models that have been used by other local authorities to create the opportunity for community independently run libraries and these are still being explored. However at this time it is proposed that those buildings that the council owns would form part of a full asset transfer under full repairing and insuring leases. As part of the asset transfer it would be proposed to develop a form of joint working agreement associated with the development of a library service within the building. Further details associated with the proposed asset transfer will be available at a later date, however the council has already developed a Community Asset Transfer Strategy and it is anticipated at this stage that this will be used for this process.

59. **Investment**

In order to meet the changing needs of the community and transform the library service and drive forward a continual process of change there may be a need to invest in the library service of the future. It should be noted that this is the start of the journey of the transformation of the library service and change may happen over a number of years and some of the proposals may relate to pilots which could be explored more in the future.

Some of the ideas which are being considered include:

- Investment in developing the 24/7 Virtual Library
- Improved Children's and Families Areas in key libraries (including appropriate spaces for children and young people to study)
- Investment in equipment and furniture to maximise the flexibility of spaces to increase the use of the spaces

The detailed costs of the associated with improvements will be explored in parallel with the public consultation so that proposals can be included in cabinet report if there is positive feedback from the evaluation process. However, business cases will be needed to demonstrate the benefits of all improvements that require investment.

60. There would be human resource implications associated with all of the four options. Initial thoughts on a staffing structure, job descriptions and person specifications, have been developed to aid staff consultation for Option D. This revised staffing structure reflects the future focus of the library service as outlined in Appendix 1. Option D results in a reduction of the current staffing provision by 6.6 full time equivalents (FTE's). The Library Service currently has 63.57 FTE's.

Property/Other

61. Option D would result in the city council continuing to manage the six libraries listed below:

- Central Library
- Shirley Library
- Bitterne Library
- Woolston Library (the new library will open in 2015)
- Portswood Library
- Lordshill Library
- the 24/7 Virtual Library service online.
- the school's library service

62. The city council managed library service would therefore cease at the following city council buildings unless there are community groups that would consider taking on responsibility for these buildings following a community asset transfer.

- Burgess Road Library
- Cobbett Road Library

63.   The following libraries are not City Council properties but are currently occupied under a licence and there would be a need to bring these licences to an end or transfer them to a community group if this is possible.

- Thornhill Library
- Millbrook Library

Weston Library is currently operating from a temporary building outside the Chamberlayne Leisure Centre pending the creation of a new library space in the development taking place in Weston Lane. Under Option D it would not be possible for the Council to take possession of this space for the purposes of a library. However, one option that could be explored is whether it would be possible for a community group to use this space for a library.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

64.   The City Council has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The 2009 Wirral enquiry and subsequent case law has determined that the comprehensive and efficient service that local authorities are required to provide is a balance between meeting local needs within available resources in a way which is appropriate to the needs of the local community. Section 7 encompasses a duty of enquiry.

The Council has, in its Needs Assessment and other supporting documents, sought to gather as much information as it presently can on the library service, its users and their needs. Further information will be gathered in the course of the proposed consultation exercise that will inevitably lead to some revision of the analysis which has been already carried out.

There is no express obligation to consult in order to discharge the Council's duty under section 7 or indeed section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (referred to and addressed below) but it is generally regarded as being, in many case, a condition precedent to the lawful exercise of the duty.

It is therefore considered that the Council is proceeding in a way which is compliant with its duty under section 7.

Other Legal Implications:

65.   In taking this decision to pursue the Option D for consultation, Members must be aware of their obligations under section 149 Equality Act 2010. This section contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It obliges public authorities, when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need to :

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct which the Acts prohibits;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.

The relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Members are advised to read the Needs Assessment and EIAs in full and familiarise themselves with their legal obligations under s149.

66.   Case law has established the following requirements for PSED to be exercised lawfully.

- The equality duties are an integral and important part of the mechanism for ensuring the fulfilment of the aims of anti-discrimination legislation.

- The relevant duty is on the decision maker personally. What matters is what he or she took into account and what he or she knew. The decision maker cannot be taken to know what his or her officials know or what may have been in the minds of the officials in proffering their advice;

- It is important to record the steps taken by the decision maker in seeking to meet the statutory requirements in order to demonstrate that the duty has been discharged;

- The decision-maker must assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact and the ways in which such risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy. It is not sufficient for due regard to be a "rearguard action" following a concluded decision;

- In order to be able to discharge the duty the decision-maker must have information about the potential or actual equality impact of a decision. This information will often be gained in part through consultation;

- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour, and with an open mind. It is not a question of ticking boxes; while there is no duty to make express reference to the regard paid to the relevant duty, reference to it and to the relevant criteria reduces the scope for argument;

- General regard to the issues of equality is not the same as having specific regard, by way of conscious approach to the statutory criteria;

- Officers reporting to decision makers, on matters material to the discharge of the duty, must not merely tell the decision maker what he or she wants to hear but they have to be "rigorous in both enquiring and reporting" to them;

- Although it is for the court to review whether a decision-maker has complied with the PSED, it is for the decision-maker to decide how much weight should be given to the various factors informing the decision, including how much weight should be given to the PSED itself;

- The duty is a continuing one.

Members should in particular note that the duty is for them personally. It is not sufficient to rely on officers to discharge the duty by the preparation of EIAs and this report. Members must themselves read and actively take into consideration the EIAs and the consultation materials.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

67.   These are outlined in paragraphs 21 to 23 earlier in the report.

KEY DECISION?   Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices These Documents have been placed in the Members' Room

1.	The Transformation of the Library Service Future Focus
2.	The Needs Assessment
2a.	The Needs Assessment Methodology
2b.	Public Transport Information
2c	Libraries Location and Catchments Map
2d	The Mobile Library Timetable
2e	The Mobile Library Route
2f	The Map of the Schools subscribing to the school's library service
2g	The list of Schools subscribing to the school's library service
2h	Further Information in Relation to the Schools Library Service
2i	The Nurseries visited by the Mobile Library
2j	The Sheltered homes visited by the Mobile Library
3	The Four Options
4.	Equality Impact Assessments for each option and each library affected
5.	Community Asset Transfer Process
6.	Property Paper
7.	Organisations that Use the Libraries to provide their Service

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	Appendices listed above

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes/

Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection in Appendix 4.

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None.	