

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 20 January 2020

**Report Title**

Consultation and engagement on a Library Strategy and future service delivery model

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide “a comprehensive and efficient” public library service “for all persons desiring to make use thereof” (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964). The Act states that the local authority has a duty to provide facilities for borrowing books and other materials and that it should encourage both adults and children to make full use of the service.

This report summarises the initial consultation and engagement undertaken on the development of a new Library Strategy for the period 2020 – 2025. It details the proposed draft Library Strategy setting out the vision, mission, key principles and core offer for the future Service. This has been developed following an analysis of local need for the service, feedback received during the consultation and engagement and the Local Government Association Peer review. This report also identifies a range of improvements and efficiencies connected to the Library Strategy implementation.

The Library Service seeks approval to go out to a final phase of consultation and engagement from 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (12 weeks). Feedback from this consultation and engagement will inform a final version of the Library Strategy, including a service offer and any associated budget savings which will be presented back to Cabinet and Council for consideration.

Specific proposals include:

- the retention of libraries at 15 locations, the vehicle-based service and Schools Loan Service;
- the positioning of libraries as essential community and cultural hubs, a first point of contact for Council services, partners and residents in neighbourhoods.
- investment of capital funding to improve every library and its provision across the borough.
- improved I.T. provision to support self-service, online and assisted digital service delivery;
- co-location of libraries with other services at sites including Kiveton Park and Thurcroft;
- development option for a new town centre library;
- pilot of a community managed delivery model at Brinsworth;
- relocation of Swinton library as part of the wider regeneration of the town centre.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the results of the public consultation and engagement on the future service delivery model and the Peer review for the Libraries Service be noted.
2. The needs assessment, which brings together all the research, consultation and engagement undertaken to date, is noted.
3. That a final phase of consultation and engagement be undertaken in respect of the draft Library Strategy 2020 – 2025 and associated service offer.
4. That the draft Library Strategy 2020–2025 for the final phase of consultation and engagement is approved.
5. The final version of the library strategy 2020 – 2025 and associated service offer including improvements and efficiencies be presented back to Cabinet and then Council for consideration following consultation and engagement.
6. That the Service continues to engage with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in relation to any proposed changes to service provision.

## **List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Draft Library Strategy 2020-2025
- Appendix 2 Library Strategy consultation and engagement analysis report 2019
- Appendix 3 Children & young people consultation and engagement analysis report 2019
- Appendix 4 Assessment of local need 2019
- Appendix 5 Equalities impact analysis for the Library Strategy
- Appendix 6 Equality screening assessment for Brinsworth Library
- Appendix 7 Libraries consultation and engagement plan

**Background Papers**

N/A

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Consultation and engagement on a Library Strategy and future service delivery model**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Following approval from Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019, consultation and engagement on the Library Strategy and future service offer took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The purpose of this consultation and engagement was to seek the views of Rotherham residents who use the Library service, how they use it and what service offerings are important to them. It also questioned residents who do not use the Library service, why they do not use it and what would make them more likely to visit. It also sought options from residents on how services could be delivered more efficiently.
- 1.2 The consultation and engagement process has identified clear opportunities, changes and improvements to service delivery, including: working with partners to support the delivery of additional services; co-location with other services and, where relevant, the relocation to more accessible places; involving individuals and communities in service delivery and maintaining relevant, accessible service within communities.
- 1.3 The Library service has now developed a draft Library Strategy for the period 2020-2025 which can be found in Appendix 1. This strategy is designed to ensure that the service continues to adapt to the changing needs and demands of the Borough. It shapes how it is proposed that the Library service will be delivered over the next 5 years, taking into account changing expectations of current service users and non-users, the changing nature of reading and information delivery, Rotherham's local demographic profile and also reductions in Local Government funding. The strategy supports the Local Authority requirements to deliver a comprehensive and efficient Library service in line with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
- 1.4 The initial phase of consultation and engagement used a variety of methods to gauge user and non-user opinions, including:
  - An online survey and dedicated email address which was available on the Council's website;
  - Paper copies of the survey were made available across all 15 Libraries;
  - Informal consultation and engagement drop in sessions were held at each Library to speak with customers about the proposal;
  - Staff and other Service Directorates across the Council were actively encouraged to take part in the consultation and engagement;
  - Attendance at Members' seminars, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board working group and meetings with individual Members in order to provide detail of the proposals and capture feedback;
  - Letters issued to Town and Parish Councils, Unions, communities of interest and hard to reach groups informing them of the proposals. Meetings have taken place with many of these stakeholders to discuss the proposals in more detail and capture views;
  - Engaged with children and young people, the Youth Cabinet, Children's Centres and the Looked After Children's Council in order to ask for their

views;

- Captured the views of non-users of the service by undertaking surveys in high footfall areas across the Borough;
- Issued letters to all schools in the Borough informing them of the consultation and engagement, encouraging students and teachers to take part. Workshops have taken place at a number of schools.

1.5 By the end of the consultation and engagement period the service had:

- received 665 online survey returns
- received 227 Children and Young People's online survey returns
- had over 350 face to face conversations with various stakeholders

A full breakdown of the results for the general consultation and engagement can be found in Appendix 2. Targeted consultation and engagement was also carried out with children and young people, the results can be found in Appendix 3.

1.6 Feedback from the initial phase of consultation and engagement and feedback from the peer review combined with a comprehensive local assessment of need (Appendix 4) and equality analysis (Appendix 5) has supported the development of the draft library strategy 2020 -2025 and associated service offer, ensuring that it meets the needs of Rotherham's diverse communities. A sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) reviewed and critiqued the development of the strategy.

1.7 The assessment of local need identifies a role for the Service in supporting employment opportunities, developing and improving key skills including literacy, improving mental health including combating both loneliness and social isolation, community cohesion and enabling access to and support in the use of digital.

1.8 In developing the draft strategy the service carried out a series of benchmarking exercises with other local authorities and took account of the national strategy for public libraries, 'Libraries Deliver: ambition for public libraries in England 2016 – 2021'.

## **2. Key Issues**

2.1 Rotherham Libraries are successfully adapting to the changing needs of customers and in 2018/2019 the service reversed its ten-year decline with more people visiting libraries and borrowing both books and digital resources when compared to the previous year. In order to continue this upward trend, it is proposed that Libraries need to be inviting, modern, relevant and innovative meeting the needs of people from all sections of the community, as well as ensuring that the service remains financially sustainable.

- 2.2 The service wants to build on the strong community spirit which exists throughout the Borough, placing libraries at the heart of community life and seen as a key part of the Thriving Neighbourhoods agenda. It is crucial that Library Services are available to all and are designed around local need. The service is not only about providing access to books and information but also helping people to help themselves and improve their opportunities, bring people together, and provide practical support and guidance.
- 2.3 Feedback from the consultation and engagement revealed the following priorities:
- Books and reading within libraries are the top priority for both adults and children, including audiobooks and e-books. 35% of those responding stated that borrowing books was their top priority. 37% believe that maintaining access to books and borrowing is the most important criteria when making decisions about the future of the library.
  - Libraries are seen as a great benefit to children, with many users seeking a wider range of facilities and services focussing on children and families. 11% of respondents stated that their top priority was the programme of children's activities.
  - For children and young people, a wide range of modern and appealing books is a priority. They also want a more vibrant environment, with more activities, events and clubs available.
  - 46% of people consulted approve of recruiting more volunteers in their local library service, compared with 35% who disagreed. However, paid staff are viewed as skilled and knowledgeable, and important to the service.
  - People value having an easily accessible local library, close to home or easy to get to on public transport. Those who do not use libraries report that they would be encouraged to use them if they were in more convenient locations.
  - People want libraries to be the social hub of the community, and consider it important that library buildings are modern, clean and welcoming with adequate toilet and refreshment facilities, along with convenient opening hours.
  - 58% of those surveyed agree that technology should be used to provide parts of the library service in order to enhance the offer and/or reduce costs.
  - People agree that moving or sharing buildings with other organisations can help to increase usage and make libraries more sustainable in the community. 47% of respondents supported this.
  - Those who do not use libraries feel that they do not offer any services or facilities that they want to use. Many of this group of people commented that they buy their own books and access information online at home.
- 2.4 A peer review sponsored by the Local Government Association was also carried out during the consultation and engagement period. Members of the peer group reported how impressed they were by the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone they interacted with elected members, senior managers, stakeholders, partners, members of the library workforce and volunteers. Feedback was encouraging, including:

- local libraries are recognised as crucial assets to their community;
- the service has a key role to play in the Thriving Neighbourhoods agenda;
- there are great volunteer success stories to share;
- there are excellent examples of partnership working both internally and outside of the Council and the Library Service has a strong foundation for developing its work with children and young people;
- the process for the development of the new library strategy is responsive to community needs; and the development of the new library strategy is an opportunity to reinvigorate libraries.

2.5 The recommendations from the peer group can be summarised as a need for:

- a cohesive library strategy to deliver a new vision developed in conjunction with library staff as well as the public;
- a review of each location's activities;
- new challenging targets linked to the council plan and the cultural strategy;
- more work with partners, volunteers and young people; and innovative library building designs.

2.6 All recommendations made by the peer group have been accepted and considered in development of the draft Library strategy.

## 2.7 Development of Strategy

The draft strategy proposes the following vision and mission for the Library Service:

**Mission** - Our mission is to utilise our libraries to help people to get active and creative, more often (complimenting the Rotherham Cultural Strategy 2019-2026).

**Vision** - Libraries are a friendly and welcoming gateway to a world of reading, information, learning and creative activities, at the heart of our neighbourhoods. We seek to build on the strong community spirit that exists throughout the borough and to place libraries at the heart of community life as a modern, relevant and innovative service that meets the needs of people from all sections of the community.

2.8 Within the draft strategy it is proposed that the seven outcomes presented in "Libraries Deliver 2016 - 2019 (which is the latest guidance on best practice for library authorities by the Government Libraries Taskforce) are incorporated within the goals for the Library Service. These broadly align to priorities presented in the Rotherham Council Plan. The Library Strategy will also align closely to the Rotherham Cultural Strategy in order to support its key goal: to "enable everyone to get active, get creative and get outdoors, more often" and the seven game-changers.

2.9 Thus, emerging goals/actions adopting the key themes of Libraries Deliver and bringing together feedback via the consultation, engagement and needs assessment process include:

- Increased reading and literacy
- Cultural and creative enrichment
- Improved digital access and literacy
- Helping everyone achieve their full potential
- Healthier and happier lives
- Greater prosperity

The action plan detailing how the service will deliver against these goals can be found in the draft library strategy (appendix 1).

- 2.10 Library staff have been involved in the development of the draft library strategy and this consultation and engagement will continue through the final phase.
- 2.11 Public consultation and engagement highlighted the important role of libraries as neutral, trusted civic spaces in the heart of communities. Since 98% of residents live within 2 miles of a library, the loss of other neighbourhood-based facilities mean that libraries have an increasingly important role as a focal point for communities. This is about their role as a 'one-stop-shop' for the delivery of wider Council services, community activities, advice, support and information. It's about providing a safe space for all sectors of the community to come together, irrespective of their financial means or background, to engage with services and activities which, for the most part, remain free for everyone. Libraries' ability to connect people with a wider world of learning and information means that they are repositories of ideas, activism and voluntary effort, which support an asset-based approach to community development where everyone is valued for what they can contribute. In this respect, libraries are vital to the delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.
- 2.12 Much of the recent public consultation and engagement also demonstrates that the location, look and feel of libraries is important to maintaining and growing usage. Monthly meetings have been taking place with the Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities, Neighbourhoods, Asset Management and the Library Service with other services in attendance as and when required. The purpose of these meetings are to consider if library buildings are in the right location; if they can be co-located with other services/partners; if the buildings require refurbishing/ modernising; if the service can host wider Council, community or cultural activity.
- 2.13 Some libraries have not been modernised for over ten years and this has inhibited the work of the Service to increase active membership and visitor numbers. While the service continues to score excellent satisfaction ratings with existing customers, it would like to develop the service offer in keeping with initiatives in libraries elsewhere. For example, building modernisation would enable the development of makerspaces, which allow people to experiment with digital technology. It is proposed to improve library buildings which haven't recently benefitted from modernisation, in order to make them more attractive welcoming, flexible spaces, with clear internal and external signage.
- 2.14 A bid for improvements to neighbourhood Libraries has been submitted as part of the Capital funding programme. The detail of the improvements are as follows:



**All sites** are proposed to see the following improvements:

- Replacement of the public ICT offer.
- New plasma screens in order to display Council information.
- Where feasible, appropriate public toilet and refreshment facilities to be provided (in line with recent consultation and engagement).
- Improvements to building signage.
- Secure and appropriate staff facilities.

**Aston, Rawmarsh and Maltby** have been recently refurbished; therefore, only the above minimal works are required at those sites.

- **Brinsworth**  
Construction of the new Brinsworth library has commenced and is scheduled to open in January 2020. This is sited adjacent to the new, purpose-built community hub on Brinsworth Lane. Costs for this project have already been approved. It is proposed that an additional feature of technology to allow a library to be open without staff is piloted at this site.
- **Dinnington**  
The internal modernisation to this library was last undertaken in 2013 which was limited to the ground floor. It is therefore proposed that the first-floor area is now improved through the replacement of shelving, furniture, flooring and I.T. suite.
- **Greasbrough**  
The Library was subject to a refresh of décor and carpets in 2018, which included new furniture, reception desk and meeting areas. In order to complete the refresh, it is proposed that the existing library shelving is replaced, and improvements are made to the Children's area.
- **Kimberworth**  
Paint the interior and modernise the space including new furniture and flooring as this was last refreshed in 2013.
- **Kiveton Park**  
Children and Young People's Services have vacated the Youth and Community Centre and have worked with the library service to redesign the existing library. It is proposed that both services are incorporated into a single space in order to create a community hub. By co-locating the Youth Service, there will be opportunities for the community to utilise the new facility to improve skills and learn, for example using the new catering kitchen to deliver food hygiene courses. Flexible meeting spaces for community groups will also be formed. The library will be modernised with a refreshed interior including new Library furniture, shelving and a makerspace area.

- **Mowbray Gardens**

General modernisation of the Library including painting and replacement of furniture, shelving and flooring is proposed in order to improve the internal specification as this was last refreshed in 2009. It is also proposed that new technology which allows for a library to be open without staff being present is piloted at this site.

- **Swinton**

This library is within the boundary of a site which recently formed part of a tender for improved community facilities and new housing. As part of the regeneration plans the proposal is to provide capital funding in order to fit out a new Library. If the development is not delivered in the next 3 years, the capital amount secured can be used to improve the current Library site.

- **Thorpe Hesley**

The library offer available at this location is restricted based on the size of the Library space available. Thorpe Hesley is significantly smaller than other sites and the location is not ideal. Investigations have been carried out and are ongoing to identify a more suitable location, without success to date. It is proposed that until a suitable location can be identified the current site is improved through the replacement of existing furniture and shelving where this is required.

- **Thurcroft**

The service is currently exploring the options for relocating the library from the Primary school to the Gordon Bennett Hall. This would include alterations to the existing building including extension to front and library fit out. The relocation of the building will make the facility more visible to members of the public, thus increasing the number of those accessing the Library service. The co-location of the Library within the Gordon Bennett Hall will allow the Library service to work more closely with the Parish Council, increasing opportunities for community groups to use the facilities and volunteer in the Library.

- **Wath**

Wath Library is significantly larger than other library sites and has not benefitted from any form of modernisation since 2007 when the Children's area and I.T. suite were improved. It is proposed that the whole library is modernised with a refreshed interior including new library furniture, shelving and carpet along with the introduction of new heritage, toilet and refreshment facilities along with improvements to the exterior of the building. It is also proposed that a maker space facility is offered from this library due to its size and the excellent links it has with local schools.

- **Wickersley**

This site has not been modernised since it opened in 2008. It is proposed that the existing furniture and shelving is replaced across the whole library.

Subject to agreement of the capital programme, the investment in neighbourhood libraries is anticipated to be £1.43m. This figure includes £405k for the replacement of ICT ('the People's Network') and self-service units with just over £1m for the refurbishment/relocation of libraries as listed above.

2.15 Options for a new location for a Central Library within Rotherham Town Centre have been considered. The proposed preferred option is to relocate the Central Library to the Guardian Centre, which is part of the Rotherham Markets complex, with a view to creating a new centrally based library which will:

- Increase usage of the library.
- Increase town centre footfall.
- Deliver a new cultural, leisure and learning destination to improve the attractiveness of the town centre and support perception-change.
- Create an improved library offer.
- Support the delivery of the town centre masterplan and the Cultural Strategy.
- Improve the quality of the built environment and public realm.
- Deliver long term revenue savings.

The town centre library is included in the proposal to Government via the Future High Street Fund and if approved will be a capital investment in the region of £5.7m for the library aspect.

2.16 The case for relocation is based on an examination of the challenges associated with the existing offer at Riverside House and a desire to investigate the social, economic, financial and environmental benefits that a town centre offering could bring. Furthermore, the Future High Street Fund has offered the opportunity to redevelop the markets area and to diversify the offer which in turn could increase footfall for both the markets and library. The benefits of a new central library include:

- Library Usage: Despite delivering a good service, highly valued by existing customers, borrowing and physical visits never recovered from the dip that followed the transfer of location from Walker Place in 2012. The move resulted in an immediate reduction in the number of annual visits by 31%. In 2018/19, the central library was one of only three sites where visits and active borrowing have continued to decline.
- Rotherham markets and the library service are both town centre assets which create high footfall six days per week. Bringing these assets together on one site has the potential to increase footfall to both facilities and in turn help support and sustain the future of the library service and the market.
- Town Centre impacts: it is anticipated that the creation of a new library destination, with greater appeal to the public, will increase usage and contribute to an increased annual footfall in the town centre estimated to be in excess of 200,000 visits. It will improve the visual appearance of the built environment in this part of the town centre.

- Revenue savings: The existing central library is split between two wings of the ground floor at Riverside House. Revenue costs attributed to the library are disproportionately high, due to the scale, layout and location of the current offer. Furthermore, by vacating Riverside House, the library service contributes to the delivery of savings in Asset Management, by freeing up the ground floor for other uses, which could reduce costs elsewhere in the property portfolio.
- An improved library offer: a relocated library creates the opportunity to update the current central library, in a more functional space and deliver a more compelling offer to a wider range of residents and visitors. As well as accommodating the core elements of the library service currently at Riverside (books for loan, ICT, and gallery), the new library has the potential to offer:
  - Space for a family friendly café
  - The availability of flexible events and meeting spaces which encourage community and business use and contribute income through room hire fees.
  - Maker space – drop-in facilities for use by schools and the public
  - Improved performance facilities as part of the market development
  - The opportunity for the implementation of technology which allows entry to the library via a library card and PIN, with CCTV aiding security and self-service machines/computers which allow usage without a staff presence.
- Strategy into action: the project supports the delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan, the Economic Growth Strategy, the Cultural Strategy and the Rotherham Plan – A New Perspective 2025.

2.17 The development would create a new civic building as part of the redevelopment of the wider Rotherham Markets as outlined in the Town Centre Masterplan along with significantly improving the quality of the built environment in the town centre.

2.18 The Central Library public consultation and engagement was carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 seeking the view of Rotherham residents around the proposal to move to the Guardian Centre. It also sought views on whether residents use the library and if so, what they use it for.

2.19 The consultation and engagement received 385 responses; the headline results are as follows:

- The majority stated that they currently use the library at Riverside House (290 respondents, or 75%). Those that currently do not use the library at Riverside House totalled 94 (25%) while 1 respondent did not provide a response to this question.
- Out of the 385 respondents, 241 (or 62%) stated that they would continue to use the town centre library while 49 (or 13%) said that they would not continue to use it for the following reasons; it was no longer convenient (36), while 6 stated that it would be too far to travel and 12 said there were other reasons.

- 2.20 It is proposed that the new town centre library project will be included in the Council's Future High Street Fund application with a decision on its success expected in summer 2020.

## 2.21 Development Opportunities

Feedback from public consultation and engagement and the impact of the proposed capital investment into the libraries have resulted in the following development opportunities:

- **Involvement of volunteers**

Volunteering is a great way for people to stay active, to learn new skills, build confidence and to engage in community life. The public consultation and engagement carried out concluded that the public approve of recruiting more volunteers in their local library service though paid staff are viewed as skilled and knowledgeable, and important to the service. The service already has 59 volunteers working within libraries and this initiative will continue to grow the numbers and range of volunteering opportunities available. This initiative will increase participation of community volunteers working alongside paid staff in the delivery of their library service. This will enable close collaboration and engagement with the community in order for them to have more involvement in their local provision. This supports a key principle of the Thriving Neighbourhood's agenda which sees frontline services as enablers and not simply providers.

- **Central Library: Redesign of Library Interior**

The move from Riverside library to a newly designed library adjacent to the Markets will enable a reconfiguration of the library interior. This along with improvements to the self-service offer will require less staff to operate it. Riverside is currently set out across 2 wings of Riverside House; however, it is proposed that the core offer within the new library will take up a single floor which can more easily be supervised.

- **Piloting a 'community-managed' library at Brinsworth**

It is proposed that Brinsworth Community Trust with support of the Parish Council and the Local Authority will deliver the core library offer as defined in the Library Strategy. The Library will still form part of the Council's statutory provision and will continue to provide support services including the supply and maintenance of stock, access to the Library Management System and training of volunteers. The partnership will be bound by a contract and a legal framework. Similar approaches have been adopted by a number of local authorities and discussions with services who have successfully implemented these arrangements have informed the development of the proposals.

It is proposed that public consultation and engagement takes place with residents in relation to the library becoming a community run library and if following this there is a recommendation which is accepted by Cabinet to adopt this model, Brinsworth would transition to a community-managed library by 2021/22. This proposal would also support the ambitions within the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.

- **Sharing/co-locating buildings**

The full extent of opportunities for co-location are still being explored. Savings related to co-location will come about as a result of shared property costs and shared staffing arrangements. For example, the merger of Children and Young People's Services with the library into a single space in order to create a community hub allows for Asset Management to release the property currently occupied by the Youth service which will contribute to property savings already identified. Through co-location the library building costs would be shared with Children and Young People's services.

2.22 The fund for books and other resources will be £210k for 2020/21. Last year's spend on the book fund was £220k, however, due to the increase in e-book provision and the service removing stock such as DVDs, CDs and some reference materials, it is expected to be sufficient to meet the proposed new strategy.

2.23 A number of Library Authorities have taken the decision to abolish charges for overdue books. This has been for several reasons, primarily connected to the disincentive they create for people either joining the library in the first place or returning overdue items.

Fines hit the most vulnerable in society the hardest and conflict with the role of libraries to improve literacy, support social and health well-being and to reduce social isolation.

In the last financial year in Rotherham an income of £3,600 was taken in fines. This is a relatively small amount in light of the negative impact on social inclusion, well-being and literacy. It has been therefore agreed that with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020 that all charges for overdue books will be removed.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 Undertake a final phase of public engagement with partners, stakeholders and interested parties in respect of the draft library strategy and future service delivery model including the proposed community managed model for Brinsworth Library. This is the recommended option.

3.2 Implement a new library strategy and service delivery model without undertaking initial public engagement. Whilst this reduces the timetable needed to deliver the project, it would present a significant risk in terms of:

- the Council's ability to make decisions which are fully informed by the needs and aspirations of the public and other stakeholders
- the need for the Council to meet its statutory obligations in terms of service delivery.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 Whilst initial engagement has been carried out, extensive consultation and engagement is required before the final version of the Library Strategy 2020 - 2025 can be presented to Cabinet and Council and before any changes to the library service offer can be implemented.

- 4.2 It is proposed that a final consultation and engagement programme is carried out over a period of 12 weeks. This would explore with members of the public, partners and stakeholders their thoughts on the proposed Library Strategy and associated service offer including the range of improvement and efficiencies proposed.
- 4.3 It is also proposed that targeted consultation and engagement is carried out in relation to the Brinsworth Community Managed model. This will help the Council understand the views from the community and local partnerships in relation to this approach and what level of support there is from the community to get involved in the delivery of library services.
- 4.4 Engagement with Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has taken place in relation to the Library Strategy and associated service offer. It is proposed that this engagement will continue throughout the final phase.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the final phase of the engagement programme includes:
- online and paper-based surveys, supplemented by a dedicated email address
  - drop in sessions at each of the 15 libraries
  - focus groups with partners, including schools, town and parish councils, Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherfed
  - focus groups with Council services, including Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Children and Young People's Services, Asset Management, Performance, Intelligence and Improvement team
  - focus groups with staff
  - focus groups with children and young people
  - focus groups with Members
  - engagement with Unions, communities of interest and under-represented groups

A detailed consultation and engagement plan can be found at Appendix 7.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The Library Service will be responsible for carrying out the final phase of consultation and engagement which will run from 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (12 weeks).
- 5.2 Feedback from this engagement will inform a final version of the Library Strategy, which will be presented back to Cabinet and then Council for consideration.
- 5.3 The key milestone dates for the library strategy and final service offer are detailed below:

Milestone	Date
Staff/Trade Union engagement - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Service Offer</li> <li>Draft Library Strategy</li> </ul>	Jan 2020
Cabinet Report for approval to consult and engage - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Service Offer</li> <li>Draft Library Strategy</li> </ul>	Jan 2020
Public consultation and engagement starts - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Service Offer</li> <li>Draft Library Strategy</li> </ul>	Feb 2020
Public consultation and engagement ends	Apr 2020
Public consultation and engagement results analysis	May 2020
Review and finalise equality analysis	Jun 2020
Produce consultation and engagement analysis report	Jul 2020
Finalise Library Strategy, revised service offer and operating budget (revisions based on public consultation and engagement)	Jul 2020
Staff/Trade Union engagement	Jul 2020
Approval from Cabinet of the Library Strategy and final service offer	Anticipated Sep 2020
Approval of Library Strategy by Council	Anticipated Oct 2020
Mobilisation of new service model	Anticipated Nov 2020 onwards

## 6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 Capital investment is needed for the existing 14 neighbourhood sites to a value of £1.4m and in a new site for the Central Library currently anticipated to require investment to a value of £5.7m. The town centre proposal is part of the Town Centre Master Plan implementation which itself is aligned to the forthcoming central government funding opportunity, known as the 'Future High Streets Fund' (FHSF). The outcome of the Council's full submission to the fund will not be known until Summer 2020-21, at this point the funding available will become clearer.

Subject to the outcome of the FHSF submission, it is anticipated that the capital financing costs of the Council's direct capital investment in a new library and the proposed capital investment to improve library provision across the estate, can be met from the revenue savings generated from the move of the Library from Riverside House to the new site.

- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from undertaking further consultation and engagement activity. However, it should be noted that for the improvement, modernisation works currently proposed, the procurement of any third-party Contractor to supply/deliver this must be undertaken in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Financial and Procurement and Procedure Rules.



## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 makes it the duty of every library authority to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”. The Act sets out that, in fulfilling its duties, a library authority shall have particular regard to the desirability 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, records, films and other materials in sufficient number, range and quality to meet the public’s requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and 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.
- 7.2 Should the Secretary of State receive a complaint that the library authority has failed to carry out its duties relating to the public library service imposed on it by the Act they can instigate an investigation as to whether such a failure has occurred. If the outcome of that investigation is that the library authority has failed in its duties, then an order can be made declaring the library authority to be in default and setting out directions for the purpose of removing the fault. Should there be a failure to comply with such an order the functions of the library authority can be transferred to the Secretary of State.
- 7.3 The Council also has to ensure it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Under section 1 of that Act, the Council must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. In addition, under section 149 of the Act, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In dealing with this duty, the Council must have due regard in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- Encourage persons who share a relevant characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

- Protected characteristics include disability, age, race, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report. However, it is possible that library staff may be affected by any future proposal and as such early discussions have begun with Trade Unions. Any resulting proposed operational changes will be undertaken in full consultation and engagement with employees and Trade Union representatives.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The proposed library strategy offers a rich core service provision for children and young people with a wide range of initiatives and activities. The service is currently well used by children up to the age of 11 years. Support for literacy is very strong for pre-school and Early Years children and their families through Bookstart, Story Times, Rhymetimes, Chatterbooks reading groups, class visits and the Summer Reading Challenge.

The service is aware that the number of young people aged between 11 and 18 accessing their library provision is low. Building on the information already collated through the latest phase of engagement, the service will be looking to improve the offer for this age group with the development of programmes including code clubs, young readers groups and volunteering in libraries.

- 9.2 In December 2017, Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) published a report by CIPFA which analysed the results of the Young People's Library Survey from 2014 to 2017. The data was drawn from 344 libraries representing 18 library services and over 40,000 children, young people and their families. It mapped the results against the index of multiple deprivation. The survey was divided into three age ranges; 0 to 7 (mostly completed by parents and carers), 7 to 11 and 11 to 16. It explored children and young people's satisfaction with their libraries. The results demonstrated the impacts in key policy areas such as reading for pleasure, early years and social equality.

The survey found that for the youngest children, choosing books is the most popular activity they do in libraries, whilst 77% of older children said that the library had helped with "enjoying reading a lot"

The report also highlighted the importance of libraries in areas of high deprivation. Children in these areas were slightly more satisfied with their libraries than those living in less deprived areas.

Consistently children from Black and Asian backgrounds rated the support libraries offer in terms of completing projects and homework, using computers, writing and maths, more highly than other children.

## 10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 The service provides safe, trusted and accessible places available to everyone and is keen to build on current levels of engagement and participation, particularly with under-represented groups and communities.
- 10.2 Equality Analysis for the Library Strategy and Screening Assessment for the Brinsworth Library proposal are attached at Appendix 5 and 6.

## 11. Implications for Partners

- 11.1 A wide range of partners and Council services have expressed interest in continuing to work with the Libraries service in the future. Potential developments include co-location and joint delivery of services in support of demand reduction plans in other services as well as the opportunity to better jointly deliver on the Thriving Neighbourhoods strategy.
- 11.2 Specific consultation and engagement will be undertaken with Asset Management in order to identify opportunities in relation to relocation or co-location of services and in regard to One Public Estate.

## 12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1	<table><tr><th>Risks</th><th>Mitigation</th></tr><tr><td>Failure to meet statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries &amp; Museums Act</td><td rowspan="3">The Council has already undertaken two phases of engagement in relation to the proposed new Library strategy and town centre relocation. A final phase of engagement will be undertaken before implementing the final Library strategy and associated service offer. The Council is not proposing the closure of any libraries or to reduce the number of service hours each site is operational. The Council will consult fully on the proposed new library strategy and the proposed new community managed model for Brinsworth. A peer review of the Library service has been undertaken and all recommendations are being implemented. DCMS continues to be engaged throughout the public engagement process on a proposed new Library strategy and associated service offer. The service has completed an equalities impact assessment and a refreshed Assessment of Local Need which takes account of existing and projected need for the service, including consideration of the needs of vulnerable groups. The aims of the strategy are broadly inclusive and support the fostering of good relations between different communities as well as advancing equality of opportunity.</td></tr><tr><td>Failure to meet statutory duty under the Equalities Act 2010</td></tr><tr><td>Reputational damage</td></tr></table>	Risks	Mitigation	Failure to meet statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries & Museums Act	The Council has already undertaken two phases of engagement in relation to the proposed new Library strategy and town centre relocation. A final phase of engagement will be undertaken before implementing the final Library strategy and associated service offer. The Council is not proposing the closure of any libraries or to reduce the number of service hours each site is operational. The Council will consult fully on the proposed new library strategy and the proposed new community managed model for Brinsworth. A peer review of the Library service has been undertaken and all recommendations are being implemented. DCMS continues to be engaged throughout the public engagement process on a proposed new Library strategy and associated service offer. The service has completed an equalities impact assessment and a refreshed Assessment of Local Need which takes account of existing and projected need for the service, including consideration of the needs of vulnerable groups. The aims of the strategy are broadly inclusive and support the fostering of good relations between different communities as well as advancing equality of opportunity.	Failure to meet statutory duty under the Equalities Act 2010	Reputational damage	
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Failure to meet statutory duty under the Equalities Act 2010								
Reputational damage								

Decline of performance of Library Service due to maintaining all current library sites without capital investment into the buildings	<p>An application for funding has been submitted as part of the Capital Programme to improve existing Neighbourhood Libraries.</p> <p>A second-round application to Future High Street fund has been submitted in order to attempt to secure funding to deliver a new town centre library.</p>
Feedback from the next phase of engagement may affect the timescale for future proposals and decision making.	Flexibility built into the timeline to allow for any extension which may be required.

### 13. Accountable Officers

Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director of Culture, Sport and Tourism  
Zoe Oxley, Head of Operations and Business Transformation

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	05/01/20
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	23/12/19
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	23/12/19

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