HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	28 July 2020
Title:	Library Service Transformation – Strategy to 2025
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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Purpose of this Report

1.   The purpose of this report is to update the Culture and Communities Select Committee on the outcomes of Hampshire County Council's *Consultation on Proposed Changes to Hampshire's Library Services,* published in January 2020. The report makes recommendations to the Executive Member regarding the future of Hampshire's Library Services, seeking approval for proposals including changes to the way council-run library services are delivered, delivering library services differently within local communities, making further spending efficiencies and generating additional income.

Recommendations

2.   Following endorsement by the Library Task and Finish Group, the Culture and Communities Select Committee recommends to the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage that he:

i)   Approves the achievement of £1.76 million savings through the Libraries Transformation Programme.

ii)   Approves the operations target to be increased by £75,000 to £1.115 million in order to compensate for the under delivery of the income generation target.

iii)   Approves the Library Vision to 2025.

iv)   Confirms that that he is satisfied that the Library Service described in paragraph 66 meets the statutory requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, comprising a comprehensive and efficient service which meets the needs of those who live, work and study in Hampshire.

v)   Approves the closure of the eight libraries listed in paragraph 153: Blackfield, Elson, Fair Oak, Horndean, Lee-on-the-Solent, Lyndhurst, Odiham and South Ham.

vi)   Approves a reduction in opening hours across the Service averaging 20%, together with proposals to standardise hours as far as practical.

vii)   Approves a second public consultation to confirm the actual *opening times* at each council-run library and delegates authority to determine *opening times* to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services in consultation with the Executive Member.

viii) Approves the Library Service's plan to withdraw support from Lowford, Kingsclere, Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley community-managed libraries and help them to transition to an independent community library model.

ix)   Instructs the Library Service to explore different and more effective ways to deliver services for Hampshire's most deprived communities, initially in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, taking into account any opportunities to support communities in Elson.

x)   Agrees the plans to deliver efficiencies of £146,000 from library resources.

xi)   Approves the Library Service's plans to generate income through room hire and leases; reviewing current fees and charges; and encouraging fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service.

xii)   Notes that the Income Generation target set out within the consultation document will not be met within the required timescales and therefore adjusts other savings targets accordingly.

xiii) Gives due regard to the Equalities, Human Resource and Financial impacts of each of the recommendations and agrees the mitigation proposed.

xiv)   Notes the timelines for implementation.

Executive Summary

3.   The report outlines the strategy for a transformation programme to provide a comprehensive, high quality and affordable Library Service which enables the delivery of £1.76 million savings by April 2021 and provides for financial stability beyond this date.

4.   In January 2020, Hampshire County Council published its Consultation on Proposed Changes to Hampshire's Library Service ('the consultation')[1]. This consultation set out a vision for the future delivery of library services in Hampshire and outlined the changes which would be required to deliver that vision whilst meeting budget reduction targets.

5.   This report seeks approval for the future vision, providing a summary of the consultation responses and shows how the proposals contained within the consultation have been revised and developed to reflect the views of individuals and organisations. Human resource, legal, financial and climate

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[1]Hampshire Library Service Consultation -
https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/library-consultation

change implications are included in this report and Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken.

6. Since the consultation was published in January 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes to the way that the Library Service operates and is expected to have long term consequences for the financial position of both Hampshire's Library Service and the County Council[2] as a whole. This has two key impacts on the proposals discussed in this report:

    i)   The Income Generation target included in the consultation will not be met within the required timeframe and, therefore, other planned activities will need to deliver more to make up for this loss (specifically through increasing operational savings);

    ii)   Even with further government support, a significant savings programme beyond 2021 will be required if the County Council is to remain financially viable due, in part, to the anticipated lasting economic impact of Covid-19.

7. Since the publication of the consultation, an additional early achievement saving of £70,000 has been delivered (through salary savings and additional income generation in 2019/20), and a further £210,000 early achievement saving has been identified in 2020/21 salary budgets.   The effect of this early achievement, balanced against the predicted under-achievement of the income generation target means that there remains an overall deficit of £75,000 in the programme.   It is proposed that the operations target be increased from £1.040 million to £1.115 million to meet this deficit.

8. Whilst delivering the planned savings for Tt2021, it is also imperative that any decisions made now put the County Council in the best possible position to meet future challenges.

9. The consultation contained a range of proposals to achieve the £1.76 million savings target including two different options for changing the way council-run library services are delivered. Of the two options presented, the County Council preferred the option to close 10 libraries and reduce opening hours by 15% - partly due to the longer term savings which could be made if this course of action were followed. Whilst this still remains the preferred approach, the County Council has absorbed the consultation feedback, taken account of equalities impacts and shifted from its previously preferred approach, while ensuring that it is not unduly constrained from taking further cost-saving steps should the need arise.

10. Accordingly, the report recommends a compromise from its previously preferred approach, with the number of libraries proposed for closure reduced from ten to eight and a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in all remaining libraries. Appropriate mitigation and changes to proposals

[2]Cabinet report 15 May 2020 https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s53568/2020-05-15%20REPORT%20TO%20CABINET.pdf?LO=1

have been made in acknowledgement of impacts highlighted through the consultation process.

11. The report also seeks approval to transition the four Tier 4 council supported Community Libraries to independent community-managed libraries although, again in response to consultation feedback, amendments to previous proposals are put forward to mitigate for key impacts.

12. If the recommendations in this report are implemented, the eight council-run libraries and four council-supported community-managed libraries would no longer form part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service. Community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

13. The report recommends that the remaining proposals put forward be agreed, all of which received support in the consultation, including generating income, delivering efficiencies and re-provisioning some council-run libraries to better meet public need.

14. The County Council has assessed the evidence submitted and remains confident that the statutory requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service, taking into account community need, will continue to be met with these changes in place. If approved, the changes to the Library Service will be largely completed by the end of December 2020.

Contextual information

15. Hampshire's Library Service currently comprises:

    - 48 Tier[3] 1-3 Council-run Libraries (including three Discovery Centres)
    - Four Tier 4 community-managed Libraries
    - Online Library Service including eBooks, eMagazines and digital resources.
    - Home Library Service
    - School Library Service
    - Learning in Libraries
    - Specialist Library Services, events and activities – a range of services for individuals and groups

16. The annual revenue budget for the Library Service in 2019/20 was £11 million and the Service generated a further £2.8 million of income. Approximately 482 staff (294 full time equivalent posts) work in the Library

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[3] See Appendix 1 for more information detail about Library Tiers

Service alongside 42,000 hours of support a year from around 1,250 volunteers who help deliver public Library Services.

17. The County Council was facing an anticipated budget 'gap' of £80 million by April 2021, due to growing demand for statutory services, rising costs and inflation and reduced Government funding. From 5 June to 17 July 2019 the Serving Hampshire - Balancing the Budget consultation sought residents'[4] and stakeholders' views on options to help it deliver a balanced budget. The results of the Balancing the Budget consultation and the County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy[5] were discussed at a meeting of the County Council on 7 November 2019 and informed the contents of the Library Service Consultation.

18. The Library Service Consultation was published on the 9 January 2020 and closed on the 18 March 2020.

19. On the 16 March 2020, the UK Government advised everyone in the UK against "non-essential" travel and contact with others, to work from home if possible and to avoid visiting social venues to curb the spread of Covid-19. On the 20 March, a range of venues, including Hampshire's Libraries, were told by the Government to close. Residents of all ages have accessed our significantly enhanced digital library and online services as the traditional physical library offer has been unavailable.

20. The Library Service is currently implementing a phased recovery plan which has included the safe resumption and phased expansion of the Home Library Service, the introduction of a new contactless book lending service called 'Ready Reads'[6] and, from early July, the phased reopening of Library buildings. However, although Library buildings are open, this is with restricted hours, significantly restricted capacity and a reduced range of services. Events, activities, groups and clubs have not yet resumed, in accordance with current Government advice.

21. As part of the Library Service's response to the impacts of Covid-19, some new services have been introduced and other existing services have been expanded. The popularity of newly introduced services such as Ready Reads and the enhanced social media content (which includes content for different age groups), together with the increased breadth of the digital lending offer and expanded Home Library Service, is such that these services are likely to continue for the long term, beyond the period of Covid-19 related restrictions.

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[4] More information about the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation can be found at: www.hants.gov.uk/balancingthebudget
[5] The Medium Term financial strategy document can be found at https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=21194#mgDocuments
[6] See Appendix 1 for more detail about the Home Library Service and Ready Reads

Savings strategy

22. By law the County Council is required to deliver a balanced budget and cannot plan to spend more than is available. At the time of publishing the consultation, in January 2020, it was anticipated that the Library Service would need to make a total contribution of £1.76 million to the Council's overall savings target of £80 million by April 2021 (Tt2021).

23. The closure of all Hampshire's Libraries due to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that all fees and charges relating to lending and reserving books were suspended, and sources of income such as room hire and events immediately stopped.

24. The Covid-19 impact on the Library Service's financial position is, therefore, significant. In the first quarter of 2020/2021 income was down by an average of £95,000 per month when compared to the same period last year. Whilst income is predicted to slowly recover from July/August 2020 onwards, as Libraries reopen and some customers return, many income generating activities (such as events, activities and room hire) have not yet been able to resume. Forecasts indicate that full-year income will be down by approximately £570,000 against last year's total, and that it will take some time before income recovers to levels seen in previous years due to changes in customer behaviour and wider economic pressures.

25. The County Council was already anticipating a further round of savings beyond Tt2021 in order to address ongoing budgetary pressures. The longer term economic impact of Covid-19 looks likely to significantly increase these pressures; the Medium Term Financial Strategy Update [7] report presented to Cabinet and County Council earlier this month set formal savings targets for Departments based on a Transformation to 2023 Programme of £80 million and, for the Culture, Communities and Business Services Department, this has resulted in a further savings target of £3.253 million. Given the spend profile for the Department, the Library Service will again need to make a proportionate contribution to this future spending reduction.

26. Whilst proposals to meet future savings targets will be subject to further consultation as appropriate, it is essential that any decisions made at this point put the Library Service in the best possible position to face these future financial challenges and are made bearing in mind the need to retain flexibility to accommodate future financial challenges to the Service.

27. The consultation set out the proposals to achieve the £1.76 million anticipated savings through a range of projects and activities. By December 2019, the Library Service had already achieved £170,000 of its saving target through ongoing cost reduction from delivery efficiencies, additional income

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[7] Medium-term financial strategy mid-July 2020
https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s53375/MTFS%20-%20Cabinet%20FINAL.pdf?LO=1

and vacancy management. By April 2020, this early achievement of savings had increased to £240,000 (with an additional £20,000 income generated and an additional £50,000 staff saving through vacancy management).

28. Recovery of the pre-Covid-19 income levels will not be possible, at least in the short term, and it is therefore evident that the remaining £335,000 additional Income Generation target is no longer achievable.

29. It is therefore recommended that the £335,000 target for additional income generation be deferred until 2023, and that the saving contribution made by changes to how services are delivered (Operations) be increased by £335,000 to make up for this shortfall. This means that the total amount still to be found from Operations is now £1.325 million (an increased contribution of £285,000 from the £1.040 million originally consulted on once the additional early achievement of £50,000 has been taken into account).

30. Due to robust budget management and the ongoing scrutiny of all vacancies in the Library Service, a further £210,000 savings have been identified in the staffing budget which can be put towards this £1.325 million target. This means that the sum to be found through a combination of branch closures and reduction in opening hours is reduced to £1.115 million.

31. The table below shows the savings set out in the consultation, the revised plan following additional early achievement in 2019/20 the final revisions taking account of the impacts of Covid-19 and additional planned early achievement:

Activity	Proposed saving (as published in the consultation) £'000	Interim revised figures (due to additional early achievement by April 2020) £'000	Final proposals (including early achievement planned in 2020/21 and Covid-19 impact) £'000
Early savings – completed in 2019/20	170	240	240
Early savings – planned in 2020/21	0	0	210
Changing how services are delivered by closing libraries/reducing opening hours (Operations)	1,040	990	1,115
Transition of Tier 4 Libraries	49	49	49
Increase in Income	355	335	0
Efficiencies	146	146	146

Total	1,760	1,760	1,760

Other options considered and discounted

32. **Find savings elsewhere:** Officers have considered alternative proposals put forward by respondents to deliver additional savings or generate additional income. These suggestions are discussed more fully in the relevant sections below. Whilst many sensible proposals have been put forward, these are either already part of the existing savings plans, or are not deliverable within the current savings strategy timescales and therefore will be considered as part of a future programme of savings beyond Tt2021. This option has therefore been discounted.

33. **Retain all targets as consulted on, only achieve £1.685 million savings:** This would mean that the Library Service **would not** achieve the required £1.76 million in savings (due to the under-achievement of the £335,000 Income Generation target). The £1.76 million sought from the Library Service is a small part of the County Council's overall £80 million deficit to 2021 and the whole organisation is likely to be similarly affected by the worsening economic position, facing similar pressures around achievement of Tt2021 savings targets. Given the worsening long term financial position, it is essential that the Tt2021 savings are delivered as planned. This option has therefore been discounted.

34. **Achieve more than £1.76 million in savings through a further increase in the Operations target**: This option has been given serious consideration but would require changes over and above that which have been consulted on and would therefore require additional consultation. Instead, the preferred approach is to deliver only what is required for Tt2021 at this stage, but in a way which is mindful of longer term pressures. The option to over-achieve has therefore been discounted.

35. **Achieve the £1.76 million but with a different balance of closures and opening hour reductions:** It remains the case that there are a range of combinations of closures and opening hour reductions which would still deliver the operational savings required, and it is noted that consultation feedback indicated that respondents would prefer the lions share to be taken from opening hours rather than closures. Full reasons for discounting this option are provided in paragraphs 84-94 and 161-164 but, broadly speaking, this option would adversely impact the busiest libraries and would not position the Library Service well should future savings need to be made. This option has therefore been discounted.

Conclusion

36. Savings targets need to be adjusted as the planned £335,000 additional income cannot now be delivered within the required timeframes. However, prudent and robust financial management means that an additional £50,000

salary savings have already been achieved in 2019/20 and a further £210,000 salary savings have been identified for 2020/21. This means that the overall programme deficit is £75,000.

37. It is recommended that the operations target be increased by £75,000 to £1.115 million in order to compensate for the under delivery of the income generation target.

Legal and statutory considerations

38. Under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964[8] ('the 1964 Act'), each upper tier or unitary Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' Library Service. There is no specific definition of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service – it is for each authority to judge based on, among other things, local community needs and available resources. The 1964 Act requires Hampshire County Council to 'lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area'.

39. In addition, the County Council must comply with, amongst other things, the Equality Act 2010[9] and Localism Act 2011[10].

40. In fulfilling its duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service, the 1964 Act indicates the library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability to provide a number of things, including:

- the keeping of adequate stocks of books, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter and other materials sufficient in number, range and quality to meet both the general requirement and any special requirements of both adults and children; and
- encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and providing advice and support about how to use and access services, information and resources.

41. Hampshire County Council is required to facilitate access to services by people that live, work or study in Hampshire taking account of the geography, population and features of Hampshire.

42. This report considers changes to Hampshire's Libraries in light of the statutory duty of the County Council as set out in the 1964 Act and summarised above. Paragraph 66 provides a discussion on how the recommendations, if implemented, support the Library Service's strategic vision and ensure that that Hampshire County Council can continue to

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[8] Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75
[9] The Equality Act 2010 - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance
[10] Localism Act 2011 - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted

provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service, designed to meet the needs of local communities.

43. Within the consultation responses, a number of additional suggestions were made for generating income or making savings which are considered within this report. Some suggestions are not able to be considered (eg a Library Tax or paying for basic services) as they would currently be unlawful under the terms of the 1964 Act.

Public Consultation Methodology

44. In September 2019[11] the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage agreed a 10-week public consultation on the proposed changes to Hampshire Library Service from 9 January to 18 March 2020. Information Packs and Response Forms were available in both virtual and hard copy formats and as standard, audio and Easy Read versions, with other layouts available on request. Printed copies were available in Libraries. The consultation and analysis were carried out by the specialist Insight and Engagement Team at Hampshire County Council. An email inbox was set up to respond to consultation enquiries as they came in. Postcards with the details of the consultation and how to respond were also available in all 52 libraries. See Appendix 2 for further details.

45. A dedicated webpage providing full details of the consultation timeframe, public drop-in events and links to the consultation documents and online questionnaires was created. Publicity included the Hampshire media (via press releases to newspapers, radio and television), direct contact with local parish, town and district councils throughout the county, an email to over 150,000 library customers and 500 Hampshire schools as well as through regular posts to the County Council's over 100,000 social media followers and to 12,000 County Council staff. In addition, Officers undertook five staff roadshows at libraries around Hampshire and had a separate meeting with Trade Union representatives. All affected library staff and their union representatives have been informed on the staffing implications of the proposals and staff were invited to provide their comments and feedback through the consultation response form.

46. Less structured opportunities for public, community and organisation engagement were also provided and accepted. These included:

- 21 public drop-in meetings in libraries around the county and a public meeting in Emsworth;

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[11]September 2019 decision day minutes - https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s38289/2019-09-19%20EMRH%20Final%20Update%20on%20Library%20Strategy%202016-2020%20and%20Draft%20Strategy%202020%20-%202025%20002.pdf

- meetings with parish councils, district councils, community organisations, Members of Parliament, and Elected Members;
- the acceptance of free text responses via letter, email and social media;
- petitions from affected communities.

47. All County Councillors have been made aware of the consultation and all of those with a closure in their division were offered the opportunity to meet with officers. Many County Councillors also attended their local drop-in session and responded to the consultation through the consultation response form.

48. At its meeting on 3 September 2018, the Culture and Communities Select Committee (12) set up a cross party Task and Finish Group to develop a new Library Strategy to 2025[12]. Over the last 20 months the group has met nine times, working with Officers on the development of a new 2025 Library Strategy. The Group has received presentations and discussed many different aspects of the Service. Recent meetings have focussed on the outcomes of the public consultation and the proposed changes to the Service, as outlined in this report. Feedback from the Group has been incorporated into the proposed changes and the Group endorses all the recommendations in the report.

The Task and Finish Group consisted of the following members:	The Task and Finish Group meetings were held on:
- Councillor Anna McNair Scott (Chair) - Councillor John Bennison - Councillor Jackie Branson - Councillor Peter Chegwyn (until February 2020) - Councillor Daniel Clarke (until February 2020) - Councillor Rob Mocatta - Councillor Michael White	8 November 2018 at Hampshire County Council offices in Winchester 21 January 2019 at Leigh Park Library 25 February 2019 at Eastleigh Library 29 April 2019 at Gosport Discovery Centre 26 June 2019 at Aldershot Library 2 October 2019 at HCC HQ in Winchester 20 February 2020 at HCC HQ in Winchester 2 June 2020 – a virtual meeting 10 July 2020 – a virtual meeting

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[12] Select Committee Report – 3 September 2018
https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MId=3588

49. Responses and feedback received through all of the channels described above have been taken into account as part of the consultation analysis.

Public Consultation Findings

50. A full report on the public consultation findings can be found in Appendix 2. For the purposes of this report, 'respondent' means the people that chose to participate in the open public consultation by completing the questionnaire, 97% of whom were library members and 96% were active library users.

51. 21,200 people and organisations responded to the Library Service Consultation online, by post and by telephone - see Table 1 below. Some people chose to submit, or expand on, their response via channels such as email, letter, telephone or social media comments. In addition, around 1,400 people attended drop in meetings and around 5,400 people signed petitions. All submissions to the County Council were included in the findings analysis, bringing the total number of responses to around 28,000 – see Table 1 below.

52. Six petitions relating to the proposed changes of Blackfield, Lyndhurst and Odiham Libraries and Kingsclere, Lowford (Bursledon) and North Baddesley community-managed Libraries were received with signatures of between 420 and 1,724. The Friends of Chineham Library submitted a detailed report rather than a petition. See Appendix 2 for a link to the petitions submitted and a list of organisations which responded to the consultation.

Table 1 Summary of engagement with the consultation:

Consultation Responses	Number
Open Consultation responses – Individuals (including Library staff and volunteers)	20,397
Open Consultation responses – Organisations	161
Open Consultation responses – Democratically Elected Members	56
Responses from those who did not specify a respondent type	224
Unstructured responses by email and letters direct to Hampshire County Council	196
Social media comments made direct to Hampshire County Council	166
Unstructured response by email made after the consultation closed	2
Sub Total	**21,202**
Participation in public drop-in meetings and Emsworth public meeting	c1,400
Six Petitions (total number of signatures)	5,364
Total	**c28,000**

53. Most respondents (70%) agreed that the Library Service needs to adapt to respond to the changing demands being placed on it. While respondents continued to place value on the universal service offered by local libraries and their role in developing children's literacy, they also recognised the potential to deliver this alongside other services (e.g. access to technology, learning and activities), via new avenues (e.g. as community hubs or at outreach locations), or new technologies (e.g. digital books).

54. Asked how they would prefer £1.04 million savings achieved, the consultation found that most respondents (58%) would prefer that all libraries remain open, and that operational savings be achieved through opening hour reductions. Around one in five supported closures (21%) and the same number suggested another approach (21%).

55. The consultation also sought views on a range of delivery efficiencies that could generate around £146,000 ongoing saving. Overall, respondents agreed that all proposed efficiency measures should be considered, with all but one supported by a majority of respondents.

56. 83% of respondents agreed that the Library Service should investigate options to generate income and 77% felt the Library Service should explore ways to deliver differently in deprived communities. Most respondents (70%) indicated that they would continue to use their local library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community, although this question may have been interpreted slightly differently by respondents depending on whether or not the respondent was a current user of a Tier 4 community-managed library or a Tier 3 council-run library.

57. During the consultation period, meetings were also held with several Parish Councils to discuss the possibility of the Parish Council taking over the running of the library or raising its precept to pay the Library Service to continue running the library. These discussions continued after the consultation finished but, understandably, none of the Parish Councils were prepared to get involved formally at this stage.

58. In summary, the consultation demonstrated support from residents for:

- adapting to meet changing demands placed on the Library Service;
- exploring different ways to deliver services in deprived communities;
- investigating options to generate income in order to contribute to the running of the Service;
- making delivery efficiencies;

and indicated:

- a preference for savings to be made through the reduction and standardisation of opening hours, rather than closures.

Future Vision for Library Services in Hampshire

59. The consultation set out the need for Hampshire's Library Service to evolve to ensure that it remains relevant and accessible to its users. As well as more general population changes in Hampshire, it was particularly noted that physical visits to library buildings are in decline nationally, and that this trend was mirrored in Hampshire. Meanwhile, digital content is becoming more widely available and digital lending continues to grow rapidly.

60. In response, the draft vision published in the consultation set out the direction of travel to 2025 that would ensure the Library Service is run efficiently and positioned to meet the changing demands placed on it, taking account the current and future needs of communities.

61. This vision took account of information which was gleaned through the development of the Libraries' Transformation Strategy to 2020[13] and further local and national evidence on what service users value and how demand for library services continues to change. All of this information helped to shape the vision. The consultation[14], published in January 2020, was a continuation of the research and evidence gathering process which has for some time underpinned the longer term transformation strategy for Hampshire's Library Service.

62. The Library Service's emerging future vision to 2025 proposes three priorities, with a particular focus on seven areas:

    1. Promoting reading, with a focus on children's literacy and the Early Years
        i. Providing a service for everyone
        ii. Developing children's literacy, particularly within the Early Years (0-5 years).
        iii. Investing in Hampshire's Digital Library.

    2. Supporting healthy, creative communities
        i. Establishing council-run libraries as 'community hubs'.
        ii. Taking the Library Service into communities.
        iii. Delivering a programme of learning and activities that meet the needs of library users.

    3. Investing in digital services.
        i. Providing access to technology, prioritising those at risk of digital exclusion.

63. Respondents to the consultation agreed that all seven areas should be an important focus for the Library Service. In particular, they valued a universal

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[13] The Library Transformation Strategy to 2020 -
https://documents.hants.gov.uk/libraries/LibraryServiceTransformationStrategyto2020ApprovedVersion.pdf
[14] The Hampshire Library Consultation 2020 - https://www.hants.gov.uk/library-consultation

Library Service and its role in developing children's literacy. However, the potential to deliver this alongside other services, via new channels or new technologies, was also recognised. No changes are therefore proposed to the overall vision.

64. In order to deliver this vision, whilst meeting budget reduction targets, the following changes to the way that library services in Hampshire are delivered were proposed:

changes to how council-run library services are delivered, including:
- o closing up to 10 libraries and /or
- o reducing and standardising staff opening hours;

delivering library services differently within local communities, through:
- o transitioning Tier 4 Council-supported, community-managed libraries into independent community-managed libraries
- o exploring better ways to deliver library services in Hampshire's most deprived communities:

making further efficiencies; and

generating additional income.

65. Most respondents (70%) agreed that the Library Service needs to adapt to respond to the changing demands being placed on it. The extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the specific changes proposed are discussed in the sections below, but overall this provides a strong mandate for change.

A comprehensive and efficient service

66. If the recommendations in this report are agreed, the County Council's Library Service will comprise:

- A network of **40 physical libraries**. These libraries will be reasonably accessible to all residents; where libraries have been proposed for closure, these are reasonably close to the nearest alternative library[15] open for around 1,200 staffed hours a week.

- Library buildings hosting a **comprehensive lending offer and a range of other public services**, with a particular focus on activities relating to children's literacy and wellbeing, community activities and digital access and support. Opening times will be informed by community need. Outside of staffed opening hours, libraries will be available for hire or lease and, where appropriate, volunteer groups or other

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[15] Reasonable access as defined by the County Council is defined as around 20 minutes by car or 30 minutes by public transport from the nearest alternative library building.

organisations will be able to open buildings to allow access for basic library functions (such as self-service borrowing or access to IT).

- **Different delivery models** ensuring that the Library Service is able to support those communities who do not currently engage with traditional library services, particularly in areas of deprivation.

- **A range of options for people who are unable to visit their local library**, but still wish to borrow physical books including development of the existing Home Library Service and Good Neighbour Schemes, and the newly introduced Ready Reads Service.

- **A Group Membership scheme** which will enable Tier 3 and Tier 4 libraries which have transitioned into independent models to access fresh stock and Hampshire's stock reservation service.

- A range of **specialist services and membership schemes** including Music, Drama and Reading Groups.

- **A comprehensive, and growing, digital library open 24/7**. In 2018/19, Hampshire had the highest eBook lending figures of any library in the UK[16] and digital lending has increased significantly in 2019/20. Hampshire will continue to invest to expand the breadth and depth of the digital library.

- A range of well used **digital resources and reference materials** to support learning, reading and study.

- A lively and active **online presence**. Hampshire's Social Media and YouTube channels are well followed and will continue to host a range of activities and content including Rhymetime, Storytime, book reviews, groups, activities and information.

- A targeted **Learning in Libraries offer** focusing on health and wellbeing, employability skills and digital support delivered both physically and digitally.

- A high performing subscription based **School Library Service** supporting children's literacy and a lifelong love of reading for pleasure for schools in Hampshire and beyond.

- A **financially sustainable** business model with services funded by a balance of revenue contribution and generated income where appropriate.

67. The detailed assessment of local need set out in the Library Service Consultation Information Pack, together with the significant amount of research and engagement undertaken, provides, in our view, clear evidence that the Library Service described in paragraph 66 is both comprehensive

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[16] CIPFA report - https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/p/public-library-statistics-201920-estimates-and-201819-actuals-excel

and efficient service, meeting the current and future needs of those who live, work or study in Hampshire.

68. It is recommended that the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage approves the Library Vision to 2025.

69. It is recommended that the Executive Member confirms that he is satisfied that the Library Service described in paragraph 66 meets the statutory requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, comprising a comprehensive and efficient service which meets the needs of those who live, work and study in Hampshire.

Changes to council-run libraries – general summary

70. The consultation sought to understand whether members of the public, groups, organisations, business and other key stakeholders would prefer the Service to be restructured through:

    - a combination of up to ten library closures and a reduction in opening hours for all other council-run libraries of around 15%; or
    - keeping all council-run libraries open and applying opening hour reductions across all libraries of around 25%; or
    - another approach that would continue to meet community need within the available budget.

71. The consultation found that most respondents (58%) would prefer that all libraries remain open, and that operational savings be achieved through opening hour reductions. Around one in five supported a combination of closures and opening hour reductions (21%) and the same amount suggested another approach (21%).

72. Most respondents explained their preference in general terms – for example, they felt that their chosen option was the best, fairest or most cost-effective approach (56% and 68% respectively). Almost half (49%) of those who wanted libraries to remain open were concerned about disadvantaging certain groups – in particular, children, the elderly and those without access to transport. See Appendix Two for a summary of themed comments received.

73. One in five respondents (21%) dismissed the two options proposed by the Library Service in favour of another approach to deliver savings. The consultation provided the opportunity for respondents to make suggestions about alternative approaches for the Library Service to make savings. Around 4,000 alternative suggestions were received and these are summarised in Appendix Two. Many of these suggestions related to property costs or income, and these are considered within the relevant sections of this report. However, some were more general, as follows:

74. *38% of respondents felt that the County Council should look elsewhere to find the savings – stating that library services were too important to cut.* As stated in paragraph 25, the County Council has a budget deficit of £80 million by April 2021, with further savings required beyond this date – a position now made considerably worse by the Covid19 pandemic. This being the case, all parts of the organisation are under significant pressure to make savings, and the level attributed to the Library Service is proportionate to savings sought elsewhere.

75. *27% of respondents felt that the Library Service could make savings by changing the services that were delivered.* Paragraphs 199-203 deal with savings through delivery efficiencies, and the level of services provided will be kept under constant review beyond Tt2021. Suggestions included partnerships and co-locating with other services such as post offices and childcare facilities or reducing the range of services provided or the opening hours.

76. *16% of respondents suggested changes to staffing arrangements to reduce costs, including ideas to reduce the number of paid staff by using volunteers more, or reducing back office and management costs.* The Library Service already welcomes the support of 1,250 volunteers (the equivalent of 22 Full Time Equivalent posts) and the further development of volunteer roles will be considered. The potential for volunteer support to increase opening hours beyond that staffed by the County Council is discussed in paragraph 177.

77. With regards to wider staffing costs, this comment is accepted and considerable efforts have already been made to reduce staffing costs across the whole Service through the scrutiny of all vacancies. This has already given rise to substantial 'early achievement' (paragraph 27) and it is expected that this ongoing vacancy management could contribute a further £210,000 to the revised operations target of £1.325 million (paragraph 30).

78. After April 2021, all management and back office roles will be reviewed if the changes proposed in this report are implemented and these savings will contribute to future plans. It remains the case that the closure of libraries enables greater additional savings in staffing to be made than would be the case with just opening hour reductions alone, due to the reduced size of the portfolio.

79. The combined effects of early achievement and additional staff savings mean that a saving of £1.115 million is sought from a combination of opening hour reductions and closures.

Changes to council-run libraries - Options for closing some libraries

80. The consultation proposed the closure of up to 10 council-run libraries. It was considered that the Library Service could continue to offer a comprehensive and efficient service, particularly taking into account the following factors:

- library catchments overlap and services are duplicated across relatively small geographical areas – many library customers access more than one building;

- fewer people are visiting library buildings and more people are accessing digital services; and

- having fewer library buildings would enable savings on utilities, stock, deliveries, property maintenance and management time, in addition to reducing staffing costs.

81. In order to identify how changes to the libraries might be made, whilst still maintaining a comprehensive and efficient Library Service, a detailed assessment of local need and efficiency was undertaken and explained within the consultation information pack. All 48 council-run libraries were ranked according to three sets of equally weighted criteria derived from 2018/19 data as follows:

- usage (visits, computer use and book issues- per hour open);

- access (% of users that only use one library branch); and

- cost (running cost per hour open).

82. This generated a ranking for all 48 council-run libraries where libraries in the lower section of the list were then considered against further criteria including the library tier, accessibility, community need, property, impact and other relevant information. At this stage some libraries were excluded from consideration for closure (Stubbington, Eastleigh and Bishop's Waltham) and others were identified as locations where services could be delivered differently due to the significantly high levels of deprivation in those areas (Bridgemary, Leigh Park and Havant). Having considered lower ranking libraries against these criteria, and having adjusted the list to take account of community need, 10 libraries were proposed for closure in January 2020.

83. The consultation was published using data from the last complete year of figures (2018/19). 2019/20 data has been since been assessed and any significant changes in performance have been taken into account. Additionally, the growth in population criteria has been updated to include some new information. Any impacts from this revised data have been taken into consideration below.

General comments on library closures

84. Whilst the preference of the County Council was to achieve savings through a combination of closures and opening hour reductions, the overall preference of the public is not to close any libraries but, rather, to seek savings through the reduction of opening hours only.

85. Whilst most respondents supported the proposal for the Library Service to make savings in order to be affordable and sustainable, many people

expressed considerable concern about the proposed closure of up to 10 Council run libraries. This resulted in considerable media interest, with much of the coverage focused on the proposals to close libraries.

86. Whilst 21% of respondents preferred the option to close libraries, over three quarters of responding Hampshire Library Staff (78%) preferred this option. Other respondent types that were more likely to support closures were Hampshire Library Service volunteers (34%) and employees of Hampshire County Council (31%).

87. The responses to the consultation on the closure of council run Libraries were collated and themed to enable the Service to understand the impacts that were of most concern to customers. From this it was established that a negative impact on the education of children and young people, specific vulnerable groups and the time and cost implications of having to travel to an alternative branch were of most concern.

88. The detailed comments that respondents made have been carefully considered. However, the reasons put forward in paragraph 80 for the County Council's preference for closures to be considered in combination with a reduction in opening hours closing libraries remain largely unchanged.

89. Moreover, since the publication of the consultation, the Covid-19 crisis has caused the Library Service to think radically differently about the way it delivers library services to the residents of Hampshire. Three areas stand out:

- Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, Hampshire Council had the highest number of eBook issues of any English County during 2018/19:- an offer which was already increasing in popularity year on year. In 2019/20 the total digital lending (including books, magazines, audiobooks and newspapers) was 1.015 million items. This surpassed the combined total annual lending of physical resources from Hampshire's five highest lending libraries. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, digital borrowing has risen sharply. For example, digital lending in May 2020 was double the figure it was in May 2019 (161,000 issues versus 76,000 issues respectively). Significant investment has been made to increase and broaden the range of digital titles stocked, and active users of the digital platforms have increased by 41% from 23 March to 30 June 2020 (including people of all ages).

- A wide range of digital content has been made available through Hampshire Libraries' social media accounts and YouTube channel. This includes Rhymetime, Storytime, book reviews, learning, groups, clubs and other activities. From 23 March to 12 July, Hampshire Libraries' Facebook posts reached over a million users (up 211% on the same period last year); in that same period 281 videos were published and viewed over 100,000 times. Whilst this content does not fully replace the benefits of face-to-face activities taking place in libraries, it

offers an alternative way for people to access and participate in library services.

- Contactless library services have been expanded and broadened. The existing Home Library Service and Good Neighbour schemes are expected to expand to accommodate an increased number of people either unable or unwilling to leave their home, whilst the newly introduced 'Ready Reads' service offers a way of obtaining physical books through a contactless collection offer.

90. Each of these examples highlight how the Library Service is demonstrating agility in responding to the changing needs of communities, broadening the already comprehensive offer and offering further potential mitigation against the closure of physical branches.

91. The consultation responses have not given Officers reason to change their view that, with the range and breadth of library services across Hampshire, the Service will remain comprehensive and efficient, with the preferred option of up to 10 fewer physical libraries operating reduced opening hours; a digital library always available online; a significant online presence; the School Library Service; contactless library services (such as Ready Reads and the Home Library Service); a Learning in Libraries offer and a range of specialist library services.

92. Crucially, the closure of libraries offers further long-term financial sustainability beyond the savings immediately achievable. If 10 libraries were to close, the total savings available by April 2021 would be up to £564,000. This would include immediate savings related to branch-based staff, property costs, consumables, stock and utilities. However, a smaller portfolio of libraries to resource would mean further significant savings can be made beyond April 2021 relating to management costs, support staff and the ongoing cost of renewing service-wide contracts. The longer term savings would make a significant contribution of around £200,000 to the now inevitable future financial savings targets.

93. However, the general preference of respondents was that savings should be found through the reduction of opening hours alone, with no closures. This preference has been noted, as have specific consultation responses which have enabled the County Council to adjust some recommendations and address any key adverse impacts where possible.

94. This expression of preference (including the supporting comments) has caused a shift in what it proposed from what had previously been the preferred position. It is therefore now proposed that the number of libraries identified for closure be reduced from ten to eight, with a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in all remaining libraries. This proposal recognises the public preference for fewer closures and takes account of key impacts raised, but still positions the County Council well to make further savings beyond April 2021. This balance would deliver the required savings, providing an efficient service which meets local need.

Comments on the 10 Libraries identified for potential closure

95. As part of the consultation, respondents were given specific opportunity to comment on any of the 10 libraries identified for potential closure and/or to suggest alternative ways in which the Library Service could support the needs of customers whose libraries may close.

96. A total of 5,271 comments were submitted, with representation from both users and non-users of these libraries. The charts on pages 31-35 in Appendix 2 show the top 10 themes arising in the comments for each specific library, along with a comparison to the overall proportion of comments relating to each theme.

97. More generally, a range of comments suggested that respondents felt that the comprehensive review methodology (summarised in paragraph 81 and 82) placed too much importance on the 'Access' weighting and in particular the '% of library customers that use only one library branch' or Unique users.

98. Two particular issues were raised:

- Firstly, it was argued that libraries outside the Hampshire County boundaries may be used by adjoining local communities, but that usage information is not shared between Library Authorities. For example, Emsworth residents may use Southbourne Library in West Sussex but Hampshire Library Service is unable to measure this usage and so the majority of Emsworth library users appear to be solely using Emsworth library. This may unfairly favour libraries on the edge of the County over those more centrally located.

- Secondly it was suggested that the unique user indicator was too blunt and that a customer would lose their 'unique' user status if they visited an alternative library even just once in a 12 month period. It was felt that this methodology did not properly acknowledge the number of users affected.

99. Whilst the 'unique user' data remains an important indicator of the pattern of usage of libraries across Hampshire and the overlap of provision, Officers acknowledge the consultation feedback. The Library Service has therefore revised the Comprehensive Review methodology to reduce the importance of the unique user data, by including the total number of library members that used a library within the past year.

100. This revision has meant that there are some amendments to the rank order of libraries as published in the consultation, the most relevant of which are summarised below:

- Both Emsworth and Chineham now rank noticeably higher than the other eight libraries proposed for closure; and

- The rank order of Whitchurch and Overton (both Tier 3 Libraries) has changed, placing them beneath Chineham and Emsworth in the rankings.

101. Additionally, the revised Comprehensive Review was published using 2018/19 data, as this was the most recent complete dataset available. 2019/20 data has been compared with the published data to identify whether there have been any material changes. Any variations in the data between the 2018/19 and the 2019/20 figures have been evaluated and considered as part of the process for developing the recommendations in this Report

102. Having due regard to the consultation responses and evidence of impact provided for each specific library proposed for closure, each library is therefore considered in turn in Appendix 4 and the position summarised below:

Blackfield Library

103. Blackfield Library is open for 14.5 hours per week and has 474 borrowers, of which 62% have already used an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 10,990; the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 6.5 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the limited space available. Data shows it typically has an average of 6 visits and 12 book issues per hour open, which ranks Blackfield as the lowest performing library in Hampshire for issues and visits.

104. The overall use of Blackfield Library is particularly low, reflected in the low level of consultation responses for this library. No single theme predominated within the comments about Blackfield Library. Just over a quarter of those who left comments (27%) stated that the library should not close and the same proportion highlighted that the library provided a valued service (27%). However, the proportion of respondents who valued the Service was notably lower for Blackfield than for the other nine libraries (50%), and the proportion of respondents who stated their support for closure was notably higher (13% vs 5% on average). The location of Blackfield Library in a relatively deprived area (10% vs 5% on average), with limited alternative provision available to meet local need should it close (14% vs 5% on average) were specific concerns.

105. The education attainment in the Blackfield catchment is 4.6 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The School Library Service already supports the local schools to Blackfield Library with high quality stock (reading for pleasure and curriculum) providing a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Due to the rural nature of the catchment area, travel concerns were raised as an issue, but travel times by both private and public transport from Blackfield to the library at Hythe are well within reasonable limits.

106. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Blackfield Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Hythe. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Blackfield Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Chineham Library

107. Chineham Library has a catchment population of 60,708. The Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.0 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). The Library is currently open for 38.5 hours per week and has 4,848 borrowers, of which 49% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. Chineham Library offers the public access to core services and a variety of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 39 visits and 45 book issues per hour it is open.

108. Responses relating to Chineham Library focused on convenience and high levels of use, with a sense of surprise that it was on the list of potential closures. Almost half of the comments highlighted the valued service that Chineham Library provided (47%) with particular mention of the range of services, its value to the local community and their appreciation of the library and its staff. The convenience and ease of using Chineham Library was another key theme (28% vs 20% on average), with respondents citing the handiness of the location, how people who live nearby can walk there for a visit and those who need to can easily park, leading to many people commenting on how often they visited (21% vs 15% on average).

109. Whilst the nature of the impacts cited for Chineham are similar to those mentioned for many other libraries proposed for closure, these impacts would affect significantly more people due to the higher number of active users of Chineham Library. Suggestions have been made that consideration should be given to hiring out space at Chineham Library to reduce property costs, and that the methodology used should be reviewed to revise the approach to the treatment of unique users which, it was felt, unfairly disadvantaged the customers of some libraries (see paragraphs 97 - 101). This revised methodology has moved Chineham from the bottom group in the rank order.

110. It is therefore proposed that Chineham Library be retained on the basis that the costs can be reduced and, when taken together with the number of people adversely impacted and the position of Chineham in the revised Comprehensive Review (paragraphs 97 – 101), it means that Chineham is no longer considered to be a poorly performing library. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Elson Library

111. Elson Library is open for 31.5 hours per week, has 1,443 borrowers of which 54% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 20,003, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 5.2 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). Elson Library offers public access to core services and a range of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 23 visits and 16 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lowest performing libraries in Hampshire.

112. 52% of the comments submitted for Elson Library explained that the library provides a valued service, with corresponding comments relating to Elson's value as a community hub (25% vs 19% on average) and route to accessing other services (14% vs 8% on average). Comments mentioning frequency of use (28%) were particularly prominent when compared to the average (15%) – especially use by children (12% vs 7% on average). However, responses suggested less concern about travelling to another library (19%) when compared to others (26% on average).

113. There is clearly a lot of local appreciation for the community facilities offered by Elson Library. However, a high proportion of respondents (over 70%) also used another library (most frequently Gosport Discovery Centre).

114. Educational attainment in Elson is 3.5 which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0 and this was raised as a concern during the consultation and the public drop in session. The Service will be developing new ways of working in this area via Bridgemary Library using alternative community buildings in Elson to ensure that the Library Service Vision and commitment to children's literacy is achieved. The majority of primary schools in the catchment area are existing members of the School Library Service.

115. In addition to the new ways of working outlined in the paragraph above, the Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Elson Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Gosport. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Elson Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Emsworth Library

116. Emsworth Library is open for 35 hours per week, has 2,227 borrowers of which 38% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 18,822, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 7.5 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 37 visits and 26 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing Libraries in Hampshire.

117. Comments relating to Emsworth Library also highlighted the valued service provided, with 51% of all submitted comments reflecting this point. Respondents were particularly vocal about how the library is a vital part of the community (31% vs 19% on average) and felt that service efficiencies or income generation could help to keep the library open (17% vs 10% on average).

118. Emsworth Library has a high level of community support and a higher number of unique users than any other library proposed for closure (although this is considered in paragraphs 97-101). Using the revised comprehensive review methodology has moved Emsworth out of the lower ranking, suggesting that it should be retained. During the consultation period, a proposal came forward from the community to relocate the library into Emsworth Community Centre at a significantly lower cost. This proposal was discussed at a public meeting in Emsworth on 10 February 2020, attended by approximately 200 people, where it received strong support, so long as the library continued to be run by the Library Service. Since then Emsworth Community Association has submitted an Expression of Interest to host the library in their Community Centre at minimal cost, provided that it is run by the Library Service. This alternative proposal is considered a positive way forward and would change the financial viability of Emsworth Library by making it significantly cheaper to run.

119. It is therefore proposed that Emsworth Library is retained on the basis that it can be moved to Emsworth Community Centre at significantly lower cost and, when taken together with the position of Emsworth in the revised rankings, would mean that Emsworth is no longer considered to be a poorly performing library. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Fair Oak Library

120. Fair Oak Library is open for 18.5 hours per week, has 1,254 borrowers of which 46% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 20,259, the Index of Multiple Deprivation is 9.1 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 30 visits and 27 book issues per hour open which ranks Fair Oak as one of the lower performing libraries in Hampshire.

121. A key theme of consultation responses for Fair Oak Library was that it was needed to support future population growth. 37% mentioned that the library should not close (compared to 22% on average) – driven in part by a perception that it would be needed to support the increasing numbers of people moving into new housing in the area (20% vs 7% on average). Respondents also reflected that the library provides a valued service (44%), noting in particular its value to the community (26% vs 19% on average) – although they were less likely to comment on the convenience of its location (13% vs 20% on average).

122. The Library Service has taken into account the predicted population growth across the County, including the Fair Oak area, along with other changing patterns of demand for the services it provides. Officers are satisfied that surrounding libraries (Eastleigh, Hedge End and Bishop's Waltham) provide sufficient coverage, and have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the Fair Oak community.

123. A second key theme raised were the concerns about the difficulty and expense of travelling by public transport to Eastleigh Library. This is located on the first floor of the Swan Shopping Centre which is some distance from the nearest bus stop. The longer-term Library Asset Strategy (see paragraph 156) identifies that Eastleigh Library's high operating costs and poor location skewed its performance. It is believed that relocating the library to a more suitable building that better met the needs of the community will significantly improve the performance and accessibility of this library.

124. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Fair Oak Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit one of the many alternative libraries at Bishop's Waltham, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, or Hedge End. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Fair Oak Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Horndean Library

125. Horndean Library is open for 17 hours per week, has 876 borrowers of which 51% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 16,004, contains 2.2% of 20% most deprived in the country although the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.8 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 18 visits and 21 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lowest performing libraries in Hampshire.

126. Comments relating to Horndean Library tended to sit on, or slightly below the overall average in all areas, although the closure of a valued service was a common factor (40% vs 50% on average), along with concerns about travelling to an alternative library, should Horndean close (27%). Respondents expressed concern that the closure of Horndean Library will impact negatively on those who live within the catchment area bringing about potential inequalities (49%).

127. The catchment of Horndean Library covers some very rural areas of county and customers living in these areas may experience some challenges in reaching an alternative library due to infrequent bus services. However, the actual number of customers affected is relatively low due to the low use of

this library and some may own a car to access libraries. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

128. A slightly higher than average proportion of respondents supported the closure of Horndean Library. Whilst the impacts of travelling to an alternative library were a concern for some respondents, the journey to Waterlooville Library is considered reasonable.

129. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Horndean Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Waterlooville. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Horndean Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Lee-on-the-Solent Library

130. Lee-on-the-Solent Library is open for 25.5 hours per week, has 1,723 borrowers of which 56% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 12,389, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.2 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services and offers a range of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 32 visits and 27 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing libraries in Hampshire.

131. Of the catchment population for Lee-on-the-Solent Library 34% are over 60 (above the Hampshire average of 25%). Respondents comments about the Library had a greater focus on elderly library users who could be disadvantaged by the proposed closure (17% vs 10% on average). People valued the ability to be able to walk to the Library and expressed concerns about travelling to other libraries (29%), which, it was felt, older people may find particularly difficult (13% vs 9% on average).

132. Whilst concerns were raised regarding the ability of some residents to travel to the nearest alternative libraries (Stubbington and Gosport) these journey times are nonetheless considered reasonable. Given the age profile of this community, special efforts would be made to promote the Home Library Service, Ready Reads, Good Neighbour Scheme and digital offer.

133. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Lee-on-the-Solent Library be removed from the portfolio. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Lee-on-the-Solent Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Lyndhurst Library

134. Lyndhurst Library is open for 17.5 hours per week, has 789 borrowers of which 46% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 5,754, the Index of Multiple Deprivation is 7.4 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). Of the catchment population for the Library 38% are over 60 (above the Hampshire average of 25%). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 15 visits and 16 book issues per hour open which ranks Lyndhurst as one of the lowest performing libraries in Hampshire.

135. Around a third of respondents who commented on Lyndhurst Library (34%) said that the library provided a valued service. However, this was a less prominent concern than for other libraries (50%) and compared to the perceived issues of travelling to an alternative.

136. People valued the ability to be able to walk to the Library and expressed concerns about travelling, 39% of comments relating to Lyndhurst Library referred to issues around travelling to alternative libraries, compared to 26% on average, with inconvenience of travelling further being a particular concern (29% vs 20% on average). 22% felt that those without access to transport would be disadvantaged, particularly specific groups such as older people.

137. The catchment of Lyndhurst Library covers some very rural areas of county and customers living in these areas may experience some challenges in reaching an alternative library due to infrequent bus services. However, the actual number of customers affected is relatively low due to the low use of this library and some may own a car to access libraries. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

138. Travel impacts are an understandable concern for Lyndhurst Library users. Whilst 46% do already use an alternative library, it is recognised that the heavy levels of traffic in summer months particularly can add to travel concerns. However, when compared to alternative libraries, a relatively small number of people are impacted and it is considered that these people could be supported through the promotion of Ready Reads, Home Library Service, Good Neighbour Scheme, digital offer or to visit the nearest alternative library at Totton or Lymington. It is therefore considered that adequate mitigation could be provided if Lyndhurst Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Odiham Library

139. Odiham Library is open for 18 hours per week, has 678 borrowers of which 39% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 7,443, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.8 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the limited available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 20 visits and 14 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lowest performing Libraries in Hampshire.

140. People valued the ability to be able to walk to the Library and expressed concerns about travelling, with 42% focusing on the difficulties of travelling to an alternative library (compared to 26% on average). The comments highlighted that it would be inconvenient for people to travel further to an alternative library (32%), particularly for elderly people (11% vs 5% on average) and those without access to their own transport (14% vs 5% on average), often due to perceptions of limited availability of public transport in the local area. Around a quarter of respondents who commented on Odiham Library (26%) said that the library provided a valued service. However, this was a less prominent concern than for other libraries (50%) and compared to the perceived issues of travelling to an alternative.

141. Respondents to the consultation were concerned that those without access to a private vehicle would be significantly impacted if Odiham Library were to close as public transport within the area is limited (31%). However, only 2.5% of households in the catchment do not have access to a car, compared with Hampshire average of 5.8%.

142. The catchment of Odiham Library covers some very rural areas of county and customers living in these areas may experience some challenges in reaching an alternative library due to infrequent bus services. However, the actual number of customers affected is relatively low due to the low use of this library and some may own a car to access libraries. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

143. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Odiham Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Alton. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Odiham Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

South Ham Library

144. South Ham Library is open for 26 hours per week, has 2,065 borrowers of which 52% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a

catchment population of 50,157, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 7.1 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the limited available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 32 visits and 37 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing Libraries in Hampshire.

145. More so than any other library, comments relating to South Ham Library focused on the impact that closure could have on specific groups (27% vs 19% on average). South Ham was highlighted as a more deprived area which needed a library to support less wealthy residents (16%, vs 10% on average who may not otherwise be able to access reading materials and groups), or be able to travel to an alternative. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.4%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. The catchment also contains 3.6% of the 20% most deprived areas and IMD score of 7.1.

146. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to Basingstoke Discovery Centre, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service.

147. The Education Attainment in the South Ham catchment is 5.9 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0).   The majority of local schools in the catchment area are subscribers to the School Library Service providing high quality stock (reading for pleasure and curriculum). This may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library.

148. Whilst comments about the loss of a valued public service are noted, South Ham library is situated within a bigger community venue. It is possible that many of the community services which are valued by South Ham customers could be provided through alternative operators. Two community groups have come forward to express interest in taking over the space currently occupied by the library.

149. South Ham Library provides a base for the School Library Service serving over 100 schools in north east Hampshire and adjacent counties which may be impacted on the proposed closure. The School Library Service will retain a presence in north east Hampshire.

150. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should South Ham Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Basingstoke Discovery Centre. It is therefore

considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if South Ham Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Closure summary

151. Taking into account all of the detailed points raised for each branch, together with changes to the rank order through the adjustment to the methodology as a result of consultation feedback, it is proposed that Chineham and Emsworth be removed from the list of libraries proposed for closure.

152. Although Whitchurch and Overton now rank below Chineham and Emsworth, these libraries are not currently proposed for closure. As the closure of these libraries has not been the subject of public consultation, the impacts of the closure of these libraries has not been properly explored in a public forum. In addition, the second stage of the methodology to identify branches for potential closure (as explained in paragraph 81) would indicate that these libraries should not be proposed for closure because:

- both libraries have a catchment area which covers a significant part of rural Hampshire and, if they were removed, some customers would not have reasonable access to an alternative branch;

- Whitchurch Library is in a building which is leased to 2032 and, therefore, it would not be practicable to exit from this lease at this stage; and

- Overton Library is the nearest alternative branch to Kingsclere Community and, as such, provides mitigation for the withdrawal of support from Kingsclere Library.

    For these reasons, it is not recommended to close either Whitchurch or Overton Library as part of the current proposal. However, the performance of both libraries will be kept under review.

153. The proposals for the closure of up to 10 Council run libraries are therefore summarised in the table below:

Library	District/ Borough	Ownership of current building	Recommendation
Blackfield	New Forest	Freehold	Close
Chineham	Basingstoke	Freehold	Retain with reduced operating costs
Elson	Gosport	Freehold	Close
Emsworth	Havant	Leasehold	Retain and move to reduce operating costs
Fair Oak	Eastleigh	Freehold	Close
Horndean	East Hants	Freehold	Close

Lee-on-the-Solent	Gosport	Freehold	Close
Lyndhurst	New Forest	Leasehold	Close
Odiham	Hart	Freehold	Close
South Ham	Basingstoke	Freehold	Close

154. The eight libraries proposed for closure (plus the four Tier 4 community managed Libraries) account for just 5% of Hampshire County Council's total issues and visits and, therefore, together with the mitigation proposed and the increasing popularity of the digital library, it is considered that the closure of these libraries would not affect the County Council's ability to maintain a comprehensive and efficient service.

155. The total savings generated by the closure of the eight libraries listed is £340,000. Additional savings, contributing to future savings targets, could be made through the relocation of Emsworth and additional income generated through hiring out space at Chineham Library.

Library Assets and Investment Programme

156. The consultation responses provided a number of alternative suggestions for making savings through the reduction of property costs. These included renegotiating leases, sharing space with partners and relocating to cheaper buildings. These suggestions are all welcomed and form part of the Library Services longer term asset plans: for example, the particular costs and poor location of Eastleigh Library were mentioned in the consultation. Efforts will be made to reduce property costs where possible and if library relocations are proposed, these will be subject to further local consultation.

157. Consultation respondents and residents that attended the public drop in events asked what would happen to the buildings of libraries that closed. In summary, subject to the decision made on branch closures it is likely that:

- The leases would be ended for Emsworth Library and Lyndhurst Library.

- Emsworth Library will move to the existing Community Centre under new lease arrangements which will significantly reduce the operating costs.

- Chineham Library will remain part of the Library Service estate but either a partner will be found to share the building running costs or the library will be relocated within the shopping centre with reduced running costs.

- The remaining seven freehold buildings would be offered to the community for the running of Independent Community Managed libraries or for other community purposes. If no viable expressions of interest are forthcoming, the building would firstly be offered other public sector providers before being let commercially or sold.

- Any capital returns arising from the sale of properties would be returned to the Library Service for future capital investment in buildings and services.

158. It is important to note that the County Council would welcome approaches from community groups or other organisations who wished to take over the running of community services. If approaches are made, adequate time would be provided for negotiations and transfer, and it is possible that organisations will be able to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000. for the costs of transitioning into independent library models.[17].

159. The Library Services will provide initial support to community organisations to transition to independent community managed libraries including both advice and training, as well as sign posting to longer term alternative source of funding, advice and training support. There is an established community library network, which the organisations will be eligible to join.

Conclusion

160. In view of comments made by respondents and Hampshire residents during the consultation, it is recommended that a decision is taken to close the eight libraries listed in paragraph 153.

Changes to opening hours of council-run libraries

General comments

161. Libraries in Hampshire operate a range of opening hours. Whilst Tier One libraries are open for longer hours than Tier Three libraries, there is currently no standard allocation of hours within tiers. Branch opening times vary as a result of many years of historical decisions.

162. The consultation proposed a reduction of opening hours across all council-run libraries in Hampshire. The reduction in hours was proposed to be achieved through a blanket reduction of hours across all libraries **or** through the standardisation of hours, with the principle that libraries within the same tier should have comparable opening hours.

163. The consultation indicated that 58% of respondents preferred that changes to library services be made through the reduction of opening hours rather

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[17] https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-funds-list?filter=.Culture-Communities-and-Business-Services

than the closure of libraries, with comments noting that customers would be able to adjust the time of their visit.

164. Whilst a reduction of 25% of opening hours was generally supported, paragraphs 84-94 explain why a balance of closures and savings is preferred. In addition, impacts on customers have been considered. Put simply, a reduction in opening hours across all libraries is likely to adversely affect more people than a combination of a reduction of hours and the closure of some poorly performing branches.

165. This table illustrates the higher impact of opening hour reductions versus closures:

Scenario	Number of hours reduction	Impacts
8 closures and 20% reduction in hours	c.500	Proportionally more hours lost from libraries identified for closure – these tend to be smaller and more poorly performing with a low hourly footfall (up to 30 people per hour)
2 closures and 25% reduction in hours	c.500	Hours lost from all libraries – proportionately more hours lost from larger busier libraries with a higher footfall (up to 185 people per hour)

166. Whilst some consultation respondents have indicated that if hours changed they could simply change the time of their visit, it is not expected that all customers would be able to adapt their visit times. It is therefore considered that a more limited reduction of opening hours would reduce the impacts on the overall number of people adversely affected.

167. This being the case, this report recommends a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in all remaining libraries. This would generate a saving of c. £775,000 for the Library Service (This saving is based on an average reduction of around 40 – 50 full time equivalent staff. The actual savings figure will not be possible to calculate until after the public consultation on *opening times* referenced in paragraph 175 has been completed).

Standardisation

168. More than half of all respondents (56%) supported the proposal for standardisation of hours. Further analysis showed all respondent types were more likely to support than oppose the principle that all libraries within the same tier should have comparable opening hours. 26% of respondents did not know whether they supported standardisation.

169. Officers agree that the standardisation of hours would be a fairer county-wide approach to the allocation of hours than the current system (which reflects historic factors and not current need). It is proposed that the

standardisation of hours within tiers is applied according to the following principles:

- The standardisation model should be based on the current tier system.

- The objective is to bring opening hours into better alignment within each tier and reduce the range of different hours. There are currently 28 different bands of opening hours and it is proposed to reduce these to 4 bands as follows:
  - o Tier 1 libraries (including Discovery Centres) to be allocated 41.5 hours (5 full days and one half day);
  - o Tier 2 libraries to be allocated either 34 hours (4 full days and 1 half day) or 26.5 hours (3 full days and 1 half day);
  - o Tier 3 libraries to be allocated either 26.5 hours (3 full days and 1 half day) or 16 hours (4 half days).

- To bring libraries into line with each other, the opening hours of some libraries will reduce by more than 20% (the maximum reduction is 39%) and some libraries may have their hours reduced only very slightly or, even, increased (the maximum increase in hours is 39%).   The total reduction of hours across the Service is around 20%.

- It is proposed that no library should operate with fewer than 16 hours (or 4 half day sessions) as this is not considered to be an efficient use of public resources.

- The allocation of hours within tiers is based on groupings of comparable libraries (the comparison is based on number of issues, visits and computer use).

- It is noted that the opening hours for libraries at the top of Tier 3 share the same opening hours as those at the bottom of Tier 2. This is because the libraries within these groups share comparable usage figures.

- It is therefore noted that the tiers of libraries need to be reviewed in the future, when the changes proposed in this report have been implemented.

- The pattern of either 16, 26.5, 34, or 41.5 hours has been developed to ensure standard session times (7.5 hour full-day and 4 hour half-day sessions). This enables a much more efficient deployment of the workforce, providing flexibility whilst enabling the standardisation of shift patterns and consistent opening times for customers to visit their local libraries.

170. Overton Library is proposed to have its opening hours increased from 11.5 to 16. This is reflective of the desire to ensure that no library is open for less than 16 hours a week. Overton is also one of the nearest branches to Kingsclere (6.2 miles away) and the increase of opening hours in Overton could support mitigation proposed for the withdrawal of support to Kingsclere council supported community-managed library.

171. A detailed breakdown of how this would affect individual branches is included at Appendix 3. The table below reflects the outcome of standardisation on the range of opening hours within each tier.

	Current Hours		Proposed Future Hours	
	Range	**Difference in range**	**Range**	**Difference in range**
Tier 1 (including Discovery Centres)	50 - 62	**12**	41.5	**0**
Tier 2	34 - 50	**16**	26.5 - 34	**7.5**
Tier 3	11.5 - 35.5	**24**	16 - 26.5	**10.5**

How hours are reduced

172. Whilst the section above shows how many hours each tier of library might be allocated (*opening hours*), how these hours are spent (*opening times*) will differ from library to library according to a range of factors including local community preferences and business need.

173. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate their preference for ways to change the opening times; the responses are ranked in the table below:

Option	1st preference	2nd preference	First two preferences
Opening libraries at 9:30am	45%	26%	71%
Closing libraries at 5:00pm	14%	30%	44%
Half day closures of libraries	14%	24%	38%
Whole day closures of libraries	18%	8%	26%
Lunch time closures of libraries	9%	13%	22%

174. Opening libraries at the later time of 9:30am was the preferred option; this provides a 3% reduction in hours and a saving of £165,000. The second preference was to close libraries at 5:00pm, this provides a 6% reduction in hours and a saving of £255,000. Therefore, half day and whole day closures will be required, in addition to changes to the opening and closing times to achieve the overall 20% reduction and associated savings required. How these are applied will be assessed on a branch by branch basis, using the

consultation responses for each branch, and considering changes required to support standardising the opening hours per tier.

175. Although the Executive Member is asked to approve the opening hour allocations per branch, as set out in Appendix 3, at this Decision Day, a further public consultation on how this allocation of hours translates into opening times for each individual branch will be conducted during August 2020, for a period of two weeks. This further consultation is necessary ensure opening times properly reflect local need. The proposals set out in the August 'Opening Times' consultation will be based on feedback provided through the current consultation process.

Further considerations

176. Whilst a reduction of opening hours averaging 20% across Hampshire's libraries is a significant change, consultation respondents indicated that they would be able to change the time of their visits to accommodate the new hours.

177. It is important to note that these recommendations affect the hours that libraries are staffed by Hampshire County Council. Throughout the consultation in the public drop-in sessions, through the consultation responses and in other feedback, respondents have raised the question as to whether libraries could be opened outside these staffed hours with the support of volunteers. Officers have considered these proposals and agree that where a local group was willing (this group being responsible for the recruitment, rostering and management of volunteers), then local agreements with volunteer groups to open libraries outside of hours – offering basic services such as access to space, book lending (provided through the existing self-service machines) and IT, would be welcomed.

178. Further feedback has been received through the consultation as to what degree the twin aims of reducing opening hours and increasing income from room hire are mutually exclusive. Respondents valued space that libraries provided to enable the local community to use and come together to meet or hold activities to reduce social isolation and support wellbeing. Again, it is recognised that library buildings, and rooms within buildings, could still remain available to hire to groups outside staffed opening hours with the right processes in place.

179. Consideration has been given to the wider impacts of reducing library opening hours and how this may affect people who are unable to access libraries during working hours. The opening times for each library will take into account local feedback – provided both through this consultation and the further consultation in August and current evidence on usage. It is noted that the significantly increased take up and increased provision of Hampshire's digital library and social media content would provide further mitigation for individuals adversely affected by the reduction in opening hours.

180. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves a reduction in opening hours across the Service averaging 20%, together with proposals to standardise hours as far as practical.

181. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves a second public consultation to confirm the actual opening times at each council-run library and delegates authority to determine opening times following this consultation to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services in consultation with the Executive Member.

Delivering libraries services differently within local communities

182. The Library Service has identified two further opportunities to deliver services differently. The first is the transition of council-supported community-managed libraries into independent community managed libraries and the second is to maximise engagement with the Library Service by specific deprived communities where current library usage is low.

Transition community-managed Libraries to an independent model

183. The Library Service network includes four Tier 4 council supported community-managed libraries in Kingsclere, Lowford (also known as Bursledon), Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley. These libraries are managed by community groups, run by volunteers and supported by a regular visit by a member of Library Service staff. Hampshire County Council provides books, some equipment and public Wi-Fi.

184. As set out in the Library Service consultation information pack, these libraries issue fewer items and have fewer members than other council-run libraries in Hampshire, including those libraries recommended for closure elsewhere in this report. The four Tier 4 Community Libraries account for around 0.5% of the total issues and library members of Hampshire's libraries. Although the running costs are currently shared with communities, and are therefore comparatively lower than Tier 3 libraries, the four Tier 4 libraries still cost the County Council approximately £49,000 per year to run in total. Further, the capacity of the Library Service to continue to support this model, particularly the weekly staff visits, buddy branch support and weekly delivery, will be negatively impacted by recommendations elsewhere in this report.

185. The consultation sought views on the proposal to withdraw support from these community-managed libraries and assist the community organisations to transition to an independent model, giving them greater autonomy to deliver services as they and local communities wish.

186. A detailed summary of consultation views regarding transitioning community-managed libraries to independent community libraries can be found in

Appendix 5. Consultation responses generally supported the transition to independent community managed libraries:

- The majority of respondents (70%), would continue to use their library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community.

- With the exception of Kingsclere Community Library users, users of Tier 4 community-managed libraries felt that an independent community-managed library model could meet the needs of their local community.

- If community-managed libraries were to close, instead of transitioning to an independent model, the majority of respondents were unsure that the needs of the community could be met by existing Library Services.

187. The most commonly cited impacts were:

- The availability of a fresh supply of stock.

- The ability to reserve specific items from other libraries across Hampshire.

- The accessibility of alternative council-run library branches due to transport issues.

188. Meetings between Officers and partner organisations delivering community-managed libraries supported the view that the aspects of Hampshire's Library Service support most valued by partners and organisers are the refresh of stock and provision of a reservation service to provide a specific title for a customer. Concerns were also raised about the systems and mechanisms which would be needed to be put in place to enable community-manged libraries to transition to independent models (for example, access to computerised library management systems).

189. Any existing Tier 4 community-managed library will be invited to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000. To support independent community-managed libraries, the Library Service will extend the current Group Membership offer (see Appendix 1) to include these new organisations. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing all items within the Hampshire Library Collection in an efficient community led manner which also allows service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally.

190. The Library Services will provide initial support to community organisations to transition to independent community managed libraries including both advice and training, as well as sign posting to longer term alternative sources of funding, advice and training support. There is an established community library network, which the organisations will be eligible to join.

191. With the mitigation proposed, it is considered that the key impacts raised by community library organisations and their customers are addressed. Whilst concerns were raised about the loss of community facilities through the closure of these libraries, given the position that community-run libraries already pay their property costs and arrange their own staffing, there should be no reason why these services would need to close if the County Council withdraws its support. It is noted, however, that the withdrawal of much of the County Council's support means that these libraries would no longer be part of the County Council's statutory network. The mitigation suggested, together with the coverage of other local libraries (including the extension of Overton Library's opening hours) and wide range of digital and contactless services offered, means that the removal of these four libraries from the statutory network does not affect the County Council's position that a network of 40 council-run libraries remains comprehensive and efficient as described in paragraph 66 of this report.

192. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves the Library Service's plan to withdraw support from Lowford, Kingsclere, Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley community-managed libraries and help them to transition to an independent community library model, offering mitigation to offset key impacts identified.

Explore ways to deliver library services differently in deprived communities

193. The consultation proposed exploring different ways to deliver library services in communities, such as in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, where there is a community need for the support that libraries can provide, but current library usage is low. This could include offering library services in locations frequently visited by the community, and alongside other services and activities. It is important to note these proposals do not link to savings targets and were included to ensure that the needs of these particular communities are properly met in the future.

194. This proposed approach was well supported by respondents, with 77% agreeing or strongly agreeing overall, compared with 9% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. The high level of agreement from all respondents (76%) was reflected in the views groups who could most be impacted by the proposed changes - namely users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries (76%), and those from households on lower incomes (76%). A large majority of businesses, groups and organisations (81%), and Democratically Elected Representatives (80%) also indicated agreement with the proposal.

195. The preferred option was to explore how library services in deprived areas could be delivered in schools, with over half of respondents (55%) selecting this option, and 37% also suggesting that pre-schools could fulfil the role. Community buildings (48%) were also a popular option.

196. Looking ahead beyond 2021, the Library Service has identified that this also presents an opportunity to work more strategically across the Havant and Gosport communities (Leigh Park has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

score of 2.7 and Bridgemary with an IMD of 2.4 are the two most deprived communities in Hampshire), particularly to support identified community need for literacy and early years development. Leigh Park and Havant would serve the wider Havant communities in this way and Bridgemary would serve Bridgemary, Rowner and Elson communities in Gosport (which would serve as additional mitigation for the proposed closure of Elson Library discussed in paragraphs 114 and 115). If successful, this is a model which could be explored more widely across the Service.

197. Each community will have different circumstances and needs, and therefore a model for how services will be provided differently in the future has not yet been developed. The next stage will be to engage with these local communities to better understand specific factors affecting their use of libraries and need for services, and develop plans for how these needs might be met.

198. It is recommended that the Executive Member instructs the Library Service to explore different and more effective ways to deliver services for Hampshire's most deprived communities, initially in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, taking into account any opportunities to support communities in Elson.

Delivering efficiencies

199. Alongside operational changes, the Library Service consulted on proposals to continue to deliver an efficient service, thereby maximising savings while meeting the changing needs of library users. Efficiency plans have been identified which could generate around £181,000 of savings; £35,000 has already been achieved from rationalisation of poorly used physical magazines (this sum is included within the £170,000 early achievement quoted in paragraph 27) leaving a remaining £146,000 of savings planned through delivering efficiencies. Respondents were asked whether the Library Service could deliver savings from:

- withdrawal, relocation or reduction of poorly used collections and resources such as Driving Theory Test Pro, Ancestry, RB Digital Comics, Oxford University Press and Encyclopaedia Britannica Online;

- making it easier for people to manage their library accounts and to pay library fees and charges promptly;

- reducing transportation, postage and other costs; and

- reducing Go-Online internet ready public access computers in line with reducing customer demand.

200. Respondents generally agreed that all the proposed efficiency measures should be implemented, however, many felt that plastic library cards should be retained even if a library app was available to use to access library services.

201. All respondents were given the opportunity to identify the potential impacts of changes with the main impact being on people who cannot afford mobile devices or internet access at home who therefore would find it difficult to access library services in future. Respondents between the ages of 65 and 85+ disagreed with the withdrawal of poorly used audio books in CD and cassette formats and respondents with household income of up to £10,000 were more likely to disagree with the efficiency proposals about removing underused physical resources. It was also suggested that partially sighted customers would be more greatly impacted if they find online formats less accessible.

202. In order to mitigate these equality impacts to groups of people with protected characteristics including age, poverty, disability and gender, the Library Service will provide support to customers who visit library buildings or receive audio books through the Home Library Service to help them learn to use alternative formats before the current collections are withdrawn. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has required customers who preferred physical formats to try to use digital formats and the Library Service has received positive feedback from customers that now are confident to use digital formats downloading eBooks or eAudio books to their device. In addition, since 20 March 2020, the Library Service has stopped buying newspapers and magazines as libraries were closed. A reduced number of newspaper titles from national to local will be provided in future but, in the meantime, a full range of eNewspapers is available.

203. It is recommended that the Executive Member agrees the plans to deliver efficiencies of £146,000 from library resources with the appropriate mitigation to reduce the equalities impacts identified by respondents.

Generating income

204. Alongside operational changes, the Library Service consulted on proposals to continue to generate additional income to offset costs. The proposals were to:

- increase income generated from room hire and leases within council-run libraries;
- review current fees and charges;
- and to encourage fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service.

205. 83% of respondents agreed that the Library Service should seek to generate additional income to contribute to the running of the Service, compared with 6% of respondents who disagreed.

206. In addition to the proposals outlined in the consultation, respondents were given the opportunity to submit 'further comments' about the options proposed; 2,108 such comments were received. The two most frequently

mentioned suggestions reflected those already proposed by the Library Service: hiring out spaces to organisations, groups and businesses or partnering with other services (such as the Post Office) (30% of comments) and increasing the number of paid-for services (29% of comments).

207. 6% of respondents who disagreed with the prospect of the Library Service generating additional income were asked which ideas they disagreed with specifically. Of these, 39% disagreed that there should be a review on current fees and charges applied at libraries. Respondents who commented on the potential impact of reviewing current fees and charges to generate income suggested that any increase in fees could discourage the use of libraries in general, as they could be perceived as less affordable. Respondents reflected that libraries should remain accessible to all, despite income or background.

208. It is proposed that all three avenues for generating income are progressed. With regard to the concerns raised regarding the danger of fees and charges discouraging people from using the Library Service (and the potentially higher impact of this on customers with low incomes) a balance will always be made between the need to cover costs for the provision of certain services and the needs of those customers who might be adversely affected, with concessions considered where appropriate.

209. Whilst it is noted that there was some enthusiasm from respondents for paying a basic charge or subscription for library services, this is not permissible under current legislation. However, consideration will be given to how best this goodwill can be harnessed – for example, by seeking voluntary donations or cost recovery for certain enhanced services such as Ready Reads.

210. As described in paragraphs 28 and 29, the consultation anticipated the potential to generate an additional £355,000 in surplus income annually (over and above the annual £2.8 million income already generated each year by the Library Service) as a contribution to the total Tt2021 target of £1.76 million. However, since publishing the consultation, the impact of Covid-19 and the ensuing financial pressures have had a serious impact on the Library Service's financial position including its ability to generate income. Despite some early achievement of £20,000 by April 2020, it is now highly unlikely that the Income Generation proposals will generate **any** of the additional remaining £335,000 annual income within the timeframe of the Tt2021 budget reductions; instead the immediate focus will be on the recovery of lost income and return to the pre-Covid-19 levels of income.

211. The income generation proposals nonetheless remain an important element of the Library Service's future strategy and therefore it is proposed that the Income Generation target is retained, but deferred beyond Tt2021 to contribute to a longer term financial strategy to allow Officers time to focus on recovering the income which has been lost through the Covid-19 related disruption.

212. It is therefore recommended that the Executive Member approves the Library Service's plans to generate income through room hire and leases; reviewing current fees and charges; and encouraging fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service. It is further recommended that the Executive Member notes that the Generating Income target set out within the consultation document will not be met within the required timescales and therefore adjusts other savings targets accordingly (as detailed in paragraph 29 above).

Equalities

213. At the start of the public consultation, nineteen Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) were drafted to cover the proposed changes to the Library Service. They took into consideration people with protected characteristics including age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The EIAs have been reviewed and updated as a result of the public consultation feedback and they have been used to inform the decision recommended to be taken by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage. Copies are published on the County Council's website and links provided in Appendix 6 of this report.

214. The EIAs outline the background to the proposed changes, current service delivery and the proposed changes to the Library Service. The County Council has considered the impact of the proposed changes on those with protected characteristics and the actions that would be taken by the County Council to mitigate this impact. Equalities impacts are considered in two parts. The first is in relation to service users and the second in relation to staff.

Impact on Service Users – all changes

215. In order to maintain a comprehensive and efficient library service the Library Service believes that the following mitigation actions are important, although they do not relate to any specific protected characteristic.

- The Library Service will continue to signpost members of the public to free and paid for services within the local community.

- The Library Service has considered the percentage growth in Hampshire's population to 2025 and the changing ways that customers are choosing to access its services when making the recommendations in this report. The predicated population growth in individual catchment areas ranges from 0% to 21%, but the Library Service believes it has sufficient capacity and access points to meet any future demand generated by population growth.

- Any community organisation wanting to set up or transition to an independent community library, where a library or a community-managed library is proposed for closure, will be welcome to apply for a

one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

- To support independent community libraries, the Library Service will extend it current group membership offer to include these new organisations. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing items in the Hampshire Libraries network in an efficient community led manner and to allow service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally.

- There is an opportunity for community volunteers to keep council run libraries open outside the standard hours if they wish to do so.

Impact Upon Service Users – Library Vision to 2025

216. The Library Service's emerging future vision to 2025 is set out in paragraph 62.

217. The protected characteristics covered in the paragraphs below are about the Library Vision to 2025, the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient service, delivering efficiencies and generating income. There are separate detailed EIAs for The Library Vision, Delivering Efficiencies and Generating Income. Paragraphs 218 to 235 summarise these impacts and mitigations for protected characteristics.

AGE - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM to LOW;   Impact after mitigation – LOW to POSITIVE

218. The Library Strategy to 2025 has been written to provide a service that is relevant to the needs of the communities it serves. The Library Service serves the whole county but is well used by young families and older residents. The Vision specifically targets those who may benefit from library services most, including these age groups. Collections, activities and resources are available for all ages in many different formats across the county. Statutory library services are free, regardless of age. A number of free services have been designed specifically for young children such as Rhymetime and Storytime and for adults such as providing access to technology and support to improve their digital literacy.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW to NEUTRAL;   Impact after mitigation – LOW to NEUTRAL

219. **Specific issues**: The Library Service does not request or keep data relating to customer disability. However, 18% of respondents to the consultation identified that they had a long term disability that limited their day to day activity. Library customers who have a disability, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and

mental health may need to access an alternative branch, or their existing branch at different days/times. During the consultation and the drop in sessions, some users explained that they chose to attend the smaller, less busy branches due to the nature of their disability. Customers also explained how the digital services supported their specific disabilities such as dyslexia and visual impairment.

220. **Mitigating actions:** Free library services will continue to be provided in range of formats. Services users will be supported to use alternative formats.

   RACE - Impact before mitigation – LOW   Impact after mitigation – LOW

221. **Specific issues**: The Library Service does not ask its customers to identify their ethnicity, and therefore does not have any data specifically identifying the race or ethnicity of users. However, 97% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as white, whereas the Hampshire population profile is 95% white. The Service is aware that in Aldershot a high proportion of its users are from the Nepali community and are regular users of Go-Online public computers available in Aldershot Library. These individuals may be adversely impacted by any reduction to Go-Online terminals.

222. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services which can be accessed in one visit.   In areas such as Aldershot the needs of the local community will be considered before any reduction in the number of Go-Online public computers are made. As part of the free comprehensive services, books and resources are already provided in foreign languages and this is continually reviewed based on customer demand.

   GENDER - Impact before mitigation – between NEUTRAL and MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – between NEUTRAL and LOW

223. **Specific issues**: The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

224. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

225. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing

community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

226. Monitoring of the Library Collections has confirmed that they are poorly used but this cannot determine usage by gender.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - NEUTRAL Impact after mitigation – POSITIVE

227. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof. This could include accessing community midwives, health visitors or other services for pregnant women and young families in a single visit.

228. The Library Service already delivers a comprehensive and efficient services for everyone including both physical and digital services and is focusing on Children's Literacy and Early Years as part of its Vision to 2025. Free digital access to services such as Rhymetime and children's eBooks and eAudiobooks have been invested in significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the public response and uptake of these new services has been very positive.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - POSITIVE

229. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

230. The Library Service provides a wide range of predominately free services to its customers. These include Rhymetime, Storytime, providing access to technology, Go-Online public computers and support to improve digital literacy. Some services incur fines or charges, with concessions available for those that most need them.

231. Hampshire is often seen as a wealthy county but has areas of significant deprivation. The Library Service Vision to 2025 recognises the importance of promoting reading and developing children's literacy as well as supporting healthy and creative communities. There is commitment to take the Library Services into deprived communities, where library usage is low compared with the catchment population, such as Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

232. Hampshire has a number of very rural communities. Internet and broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure, which means that more

people in rural areas have access to the digital Library Service offer. The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudio books since the outbreak of Covid-19.

233. Customers who are unable to travel to a library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. Further information can be found in the additional information section below.

234. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact:

- Sexual Orientation
- Religion and Belief
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

235. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

Please find the detailed EIAs for:

Library Service Vision to 2025: Comprehensive and Efficient Service – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-comprehensive-and-efficient-service.pdf

Library Service Vision to 2025: Delivering Efficiencies – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-delivering-efficiencies.pdf

Library Service Vision to 2025: Generating Income – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-generating-income.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Branch Closures

236. In developing the Library Vision to 2025 the Library Service carefully considered the needs of the communities across the county and to ensure that it continues to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. These considerations included

- Eastleigh Library – The high operating costs and poor location skewed the performance of this library. It is believed that relocating the library to a more suitable building (paragraph 156) that better meets the needs of the community will significantly improve the performance of this library, therefore it was decided that it would not be put on the list for proposed closure.

- Bishop's Waltham – This Library provides coverage for a number of rural communities. If it were to close then people in these communities would be above the acceptable travel time to their nearest library, therefore it was decided that it would not be put on the list for proposed closure.

- Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park Libraries – These Libraries have significantly high levels of deprivation in their catchment areas and whilst usage of Library Services is low it is considered there is need for the kind of support that libraries could provide (see paragraphs 193 - 198).

- Stubbington Library - This Library performs relatively poorly but needs to be retained as mitigation for the closure of Lee-on-the-Solent library. Lee-on-the-Solent Library has around 50% fewer people in its catchment area than Stubbington, therefore the impact of proposing to close Stubbington would have been greater.

- Chineham Library - Having reviewed the responses of the consultation the Library Service has taken into consideration the number of users that would have been impacted by the closure of Chineham and has removed this library from the list of proposed closures.

- Emsworth Library - During the public consultation the Emsworth community came forward with an option to reduce the cost of running their branch by moving it into the nearby community centre. This would reduce the costs of running Emsworth Library and therefore take it out of the poorest performing libraries. As a result, Emsworth has been taken out of the list of proposed closures.

AGE - Impact before mitigation – Between MEDIUM and LOW dependant on Branch Impact after mitigation - LOW for all Branches

237. **Specific issues:** The Library Service serves the whole county but is well used by young families and older residents. The proposed closure of eight libraries would primarily impact these groups who would have further to travel to their nearest library (Appendix 4).

238. It is recognised that some older residents and those with young families may find it more challenging to travel to an alternative library. Libraries proposed for closure with a higher than average population aged 0-17 years are Odiham and South Ham. Libraries proposed for closure with a higher than average population aged over 60 years old are Blackfield, Fair Oak, Horndean, Odiham and Lee on the Solent.

239. **Mitigating actions for all ages**: Journey times to the next nearest library for the customers of the eight libraries recommended for closure would be around 20 minutes by car and around 30 minutes by public transport.

240. The increase in the use of the digital offer is a core element of the Library Service Vision (see section 9), however the Covid-19 period has seen many

existing users transition to the use of digital for the first time (see paragraph 89). It is expected that some service users will choose to continue to access library services in this way, rather than returning to the more traditional offer. Appendix 1 provides more information on Library Services.

241. **Mitigating actions for 0-17 years:** In areas where data shows educational attainment is lower than average, very careful consideration has been given to the closure of libraries. The Service will be developing new ways of working in these areas to ensure that the Library Service Vision and commitment to children's literacy is achieved.

242. The School Library Service is felt to be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Group Memberships are available to pre-schools to support Early Years providers in accessing and promoting high quality books for young children and families. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

243. **Mitigating actions for over 60 years:** Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital Library Services, apply to the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour Scheme. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

   DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - LOW

244. **Specific issues:** Library customers will need to travel to alternative branches which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health.

245. **Mitigating actions:** Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library, could choose to use the digital Library Services and apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour Scheme. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

246. The Library Service will signpost any groups that meet regularly in the libraries that are recommended for closure to alternative locations. These include groups that support people's wellbeing and mental health.

   GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM - Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

247. **Specific issues**: The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female,

whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

248. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

249. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

    PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation – NEUTRAL to LOW   Impact after mitigation - NEUTRAL to LOW

250. **Specific issues:** During the consultation process a number of parents highlighted how valuable visiting their local library had been when they had very young children, this was particularly important to parents who had experienced postnatal depression and/or anxiety (see Appendix 2).

251. Rhymetime and Storytime sessions are currently run by all but the smallest council run libraries. Respondents highlighted the importance of these activities and events run by the Library Service in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion.

252. **Mitigating actions:** People who are unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch can access an increased range of digital services, these include Rhymetime and Storytime via social media. Whilst it does not fully replicate the benefits of a face to face services, this digital offer may be suitable for parents and families that prefer not to access one of the busier branches, either due to their health, cost of travel or physical considerations. The Library Service proposes to retain a comprehensive online/social media presence for young families providing them with greater flexibility and the potential to access these sessions online at a time of day to suit their routine. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

    POVERTY - Impact before mitigation - Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

253. **Specific issues:** Customers using the eight libraries that are recommended for closure will have to travel to an alternative library which will be a longer journey; this likely to cost them more. During the consultation, a third of respondents identified potential impacts of the proposed closures and of those, 3% were specifically about the cost of transport to an alternative library see Appendix 2 for details.

254. Lower educational attainment scores can be linked to areas of deprivation. Branches proposed for closure with lower educational attainment than the Hampshire average are Blackfield, Elson, Fair Oak and South Ham.

255. There are areas of digital deprivation across Hampshire and in these areas, people are dependent on the provision of the free Go-Online public computers, free public Wi-Fi and low cost printing facilities in libraries. Many people use the Go-Online public computers to apply for jobs or to access/manage their benefits. The cost of accessing these services outside the library can be prohibitive for those in poverty. These individuals could be adversely impacted by branch closures

256. **Mitigating actions:** Some people who are currently able to walk or cycle to their local branch may no longer be able to travel to the library in this way. The majority of users already have to travel by car or public transport to access their local library.

257. Library service users over the national retirement age who are resident in Hampshire are able to apply for a free bus pass for travel after 9:30am. A number of the alternative branches have bus stops very close by, such as Chandler's Ford, Hythe and Stubbington Libraries, Gosport and Winchester Discovery Centres.

258. A large number of libraries that will be retained have some free parking onsite or close to the branch.

259. Where libraries have a lower than average IMD educational attainment score and are on the potential closure list, (Blackfield, Elson, Fair Oak and South Ham) local schools will be actively encouraged to subscribe to the School Library Service. Group Memberships are available to pre-schools to support Early Years providers in accessing and promoting high quality books for young children and families. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

    RURALITY - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM and NEUTRAL
    Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

260. **Specific issues:** Hampshire has a number of very rural communities. Respondents to the consultation expressed concern that rural communities would be losing another service that they felt was essential. Respondents also mentioned that rural bus services were poor or had recently been reduced.

261. **Mitigating actions:** The key principles of acceptable travel time to branches was not challenged by people responding to the consultation, so it is believed that traveling 20 minutes by car and around 30 minutes by public transport is acceptable. Feedback from the consultation suggested that these travel times may not be achievable at certain times of day or in some

places due to school holiday traffic. However, overall it is considered that the travel times and distances are acceptable.

262. Vulnerable and isolated residents living in rural areas, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital service, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour Scheme.

263. Internet and Broadband services in the majority of rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure. The Library Service has seen a significant reduction in the use of Go-Online public computers, suggesting that demand for this service is in decline. For example, Odiham has the lowest usage of Go-Online public computers in the County suggesting a high level of household internet access.

264. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Race
    - Religion and Beliefs
    - Gender Re-assignment
    - Marriage and Civil Partnership

265. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

Please find the link to detailed EIAs:

Blackfield Library – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-blackfield-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Elson Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-elson-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Fair Oak Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-fair-oak-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Horndean - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-horndean-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Lee-on-the-Solent Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lee-on-the-solent-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Lyndhurst Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lyndhurst-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Odiham Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-odiham-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

South Ham - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-south-ham-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Reduction in Opening Hours

AGE - Impact before mitigation MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

266. **Specific issues**: Library services are traditionally accessed more by older people and by children and families and as such these groups would be affected more by a reduction in opening hours than the population as a whole.

267. **Proposed mitigating actions**: Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, may need to access their library on different days or at different times, as a result of the reduction in opening hours. They would also have the option of travelling to an alternative branch or using digital services.

268. The Library Service provides a comprehensive digital offer for those who cannot or prefer not to travel to an alternative branch are able to access and increased range of digital services. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

269. A second public consultation on opening times will take place in August 2020. This will allow customers to feedback on the preferred opening hours/days in their local library.

270. Currently branches are only open when paid members of staff are on the premises. The Library Service is actively exploring ways in which the branches can be kept open for additional hours when no paid members of staff are on site.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – MEDIUM

271. **Specific issues**: Library customers may need to visit their local library at different times or on different days which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health.

272. **Proposed mitigating actions:** As above for age in paragraphs 266-270. In addition, the Library Service will work closely with any groups that meet regularly in the branches should their arrangements/group be impacted by changes in opening hours. The Service will ensure that these groups are still able to meet in branches. These include groups that support people's wellbeing and mental health.

   RACE - Impact before mitigation – LOW   Impact after mitigation – LOW

273. **Specific issues**: The Library Service does not ask its customers to identify their ethnicity, and therefore does not have any data specifically identifying the race or **ethnicity** of users. The Service is aware that in Aldershot a high proportion of its users are from the Nepali community, who may be adversely impacted by any reduction in opening hours.

274. **Proposed mitigating actions:** The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all. In areas such as Aldershot the needs of the local community will be considered before any changes are made and communities will be encouraged to participate in the second public consultation regarding changes to opening hours.

   GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – MEDIUM

275. **Specific issues:** The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

276. Proposed mitigating actions: The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

277. Library customers would have reduced access to Library Services and may need to access their library at different times or on different days of the week, which will have a greater impact on women because they visit their local library more frequently.

278. The Service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses.   A second local consultation on opening hours will follow in Summer 2020, giving

customers the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour of their local library.

279. The detailed EIA will be completed following the public consultation on opening times which will take place in August 2020.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - LOW   Impact after mitigation – LOW

280. **Specific issues:** During the consultation process a number of parents highlighted how valuable visiting their local library had been when they had very young children, this was particularly important to parents who had experienced postnatal depression and/or anxiety (Appendix 2).

281. Rhymetime and Storytime sessions are currently run at all but the smallest council run libraries. Respondents highlighted the importance of these activities and events run by the Library Service in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion. The change in opening hours may impact the times or days that these sessions take place, and it is possible that, in some libraries, fewer sessions will take place each week.

282. **Proposed mitigating actions:** The Library Service will continue to offer Storytime and Rhymetime via social media, in addition to sessions in branch, so even if some sessions are no longer available it would be possible to travel to an alternative library, or access daily sessions online at a time that suits their routine. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

283. **Specific issues:** Hampshire is often seen as a wealthy county but has areas of significant deprivation and people that depend on accessing their library as a warm, safe and trusted space. These individuals will be impacted by any reduction in opening hours at their local library.

284. **Proposed mitigating actions**: Library customers would have reduced access to Library Services and may need to access their library at different times or on different days of the week, vulnerable individuals may be particularly impacted by these changes.

285. The Service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses.   A second local consultation on opening hours will follow in Summer 2020, giving customers the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour of their local library.

286. The detailed EIA will be completed following the public consultation on opening times which will take place in August 2020.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW   Impact after mitigation – LOW

287. **Specific issues:** Hampshire has a number of very rural communities. Respondents to the consultation expressed concern that rural communities would be losing another service that they felt was essential. Respondents also mentioned that rural bus services were poor or had recently been reduced.

288. **Proposed mitigating actions:** A second public consultation on opening hours will take place in August 2020. This will allow customers to feedback on the preferred opening hours/days in their local library.

289. Currently branches are only open when paid members of staff are on the premises. The Library Service is actively exploring ways in which the branches can be kept open for additional hours when no paid members of staff are on site.

290. Internet and broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure, which means that more people in rural areas have access to the digital Library Service offer.

291. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
   - Sexual Orientation
   - Religion and Belief
   - Gender Re-assignment
   - Marriage and Civil Partnership

292. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

   Please find the link to detailed EIA for OH Reduction - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-staffed-hours-reduction-service-user-impacts.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Relocating Emsworth Library

293. Emsworth Library is retained on the basis that it can be moved approximately 500 metres to Emsworth Community Centre with significantly lower running costs.

   AGE - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM   Impact after mitigation - LOW

294. **Specific issues:** Emsworth Library has a higher than average population of people over 60 years old who will need to travel to a new location and may need to visit on different days and at different times.

295. **Mitigating actions:** Emsworth Community Centre is not in the centre of the village, but it has parking outside and is close to bus stops. The Library Service will explore ways that the branch could be kept open for additional hours by volunteers from the community.

    DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM　　Impact after mitigation - LOW

296. **Specific issues:** Travelling to a new location may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health.

297. **Mitigating action:** Whilst the community centre is not in the centre of the village it has disabled parking outside and is close to bus stops. The reduction in staffed opening hours will mean that people may have to visit at different times and/or on different days, however the Library Service will explore ways that the branch could be kept open for additional hours by volunteers from the community.

298. The Library Service will prioritise the needs of any groups that already meet regularly at Emsworth Library and help them minimise the impact of the changes on their arrangements/group. These include groups that support people's wellbeing and mental health.

    GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM　　Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

299. **Specific issues:** The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

300. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

301. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - LOW
Impact after mitigation - LOW

302. **Specific issues**; Rhymetime and Storytime sessions are run at Emsworth Library. Respondents highlighted the importance of these activities and events run by the Library Service in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion.

303. **Mitigating actions;** The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof. This could include accessing community midwives, health visitors or other services for pregnant women and young families in a single visit.

304. The Library Service already delivers a comprehensive and efficient services for everyone including both physical and digital services and is focusing on Children's Literacy and Early Years as part of its Vision to 2025. Free digital access to services such as Rhymetime and children's eBooks and eAudiobooks have been invested in significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the public response and uptake of these new services has been very positive.

305. If parents or carers are unable to travel to the new library location or the times of the sessions are no longer convenient then the existing digital offer access an increased range of digital services. During the Covid-19 lockdown the Library Service has been delivering Rhymetime and online Storytime via social media. The Library Service proposes to retain a comprehensive online/social media presence for young families providing them with greater flexibility and the potential to access these sessions online daily.

306. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Race
    - Religion and Belief
    - Gender Re-assignment
    - Marriage and Civil Partnership
    - Poverty
    - Rurality

307. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

Please find the link to detailed EIA for Emsworth Relocation - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-relocating-emsworth-library-service-user-impacts.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Transitioning of Community-Managed Libraries to an Independent Community Library Model

308. There are two alternatives for community-managed libraries:

1. The council supported community-managed library transitions to an independent community library, or

2. The community-managed library closes and customers will have to travel to an alternative branch.

309. The following paragraphs set out the mitigation provided to support all protected characteristics.

310. Whilst concerns were raised about the loss of community facilities through the closure of these libraries, given the position that community-run libraries already pay their property costs and arrange their own staffing, there should be no reason why these services would need to close if the County Council withdraws its support.

311. Any existing community-managed library will be invited to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into an independent library model. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

312. The Library Services will provide initial support to community organisations to transition to independent community managed libraries including both advice and training, as well as sign posting to longer term alternative sources of funding, advice and training support. There is an established community library network, which the organisations will be eligible to join.

313. In response to the consultation feedback the Library Service will extend the current Group Membership offer to include independent community libraries. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing all items within the Hampshire Library Collection in an efficient community led manner which also allows service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally. As well as support from the Library Service, partners will be sign-posted to sources of funding and advice to support any equipment and training needs.

   AGE - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM   Impact after mitigation - LOW

314. **Specific issues:** The Library Service serves the whole county but is well used by young families and older residents. All four community-managed libraries have a higher population over 60 years old than the Hampshire

average and it is recognised that some older residents and those with young families may find it more challenging to travel to an alternative library. The proposed changes would primarily negatively impact these groups.

315. If the community-managed libraries transition to independent community libraries some services currently available to customers may change.

316. If the community-managed library closes, customers will have to travel to an alternative library. Respondents agreed that a journey time by public transport of 30 minutes or a car journey of 20 minutes was reasonable (See Statutory Section of Report Section 6). The nearest libraries to the community managed libraries can mostly be reached in this timeframe; respondents that used Kingsclere Community Library identified difficulties travelling to an alternative library from Kingsclere in terms of the journey time and availability of public transport.

317. **Mitigating Actions:** If the community-managed libraries transition to an independent community library model the Library Service services can continue to be delivered within the community. The Library Service will extend the group membership offer to enable customers to access new stock and reservations, which would prevent the need for travel to an alternative library.

318. The School Library Service is a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Group Memberships are available to pre-schools to support Early Years providers in accessing and promoting high quality books for young children and families. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

319. If the any of the community-managed libraries close vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services and apply for the Home Library Service and Good Neighbour Scheme. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

    DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation - LOW

320. Specific issues: if the community-managed libraries transition to independent community libraries some services currently available to customers may change.

321. If the community-managed library closes, customers that use them would need to travel to alternative branches, which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health. Respondents agreed that a journey time by public transport of 30 minutes or a car journey of 20 minutes was reasonable. The nearest libraries to the community

managed libraries can mostly be reached in this timeframe; respondents that used Kingsclere Community Library identified difficulties travelling to an alternative library from Kingsclere in terms of the journey time and availability of public transport.

322. **Mitigating Actions:** If the community-managed libraries transition to an independent community library model the Library Service services can continue to be delivered within the community.

323. If any of the community-managed libraries close vulnerable and isolated residents, including those with disabilities, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, apply of the Home Library Service and Good Neighbour Scheme. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

    GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

324. **Specific issues:** The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

325. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers. Customers will still be able to access the Hampshire Library Service resources if the library transitions to an independent community-managed library via the Group Membership offers. See appendix 1 for more information.

    POVERTY - Impact before mitigation - Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

326. **Specific issues:** If one or more of the community-run libraries closed then their customers would have to travel further to reach the next nearest library and this will cost more. The one community-run library which has area of high deprivation (Pilands Wood community) within its catchment is Lowford. If one of more of the community-managed libraries transitioned to become an independent library then free public access computers may not be made available.

327. **Mitigating actions:** Lowford library's area of high deprivation (Pilands Wood) is already within the catchment area of Netley Library. It is less than 2 miles from Pilands Wood community to Netley Library and about 1 mile to the Lowford Community Library. Both Netley and Lowford libraries have free parking.

328. Library service users over the national retirement age who are resident in Hampshire are able to apply for a free bus pass for travel after 9:30am.

329. In some areas other community organisations provide free internet access, such as in North Baddesley.

    RURALITY - Impact before mitigation - Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL
    Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

330. **Specific issues**: Kingsclere and Milford-on-Sea community-managed libraries are both located in villages. If they were to close then there is reasonable access by car to their nearest alternative libraries, but the buses are infrequent. If they were to transition to become an independent library then free public access computers may not be made available.

331. **Mitigating actions:** Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

332. Vulnerable and isolated residents living in rural areas, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme.

333. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Race
    - Religion and Belief
    - Gender Re-assignment
    - Marriage and Civil Partnership
    - Pregnancy and Maternity

334. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

    Please find the link to the detailed EIAs:
    Kingsclere - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-kingsclere-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

    Lowford - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lowford-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Milford-on-Sea - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-milford-on-sea-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

North Baddesley - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-north-baddesley-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Impact Upon Staff

335. The details below have been updated from the original EIA published in January 2020, prior to the start of the consultation. There will be a second public consultation on Opening Times in August 2020 which will clarify the library opening times. Once this has been completed a staff consultation will be carried out. The staff impacts EIA will be updated as a result of both of these consultations.

336. The recommendations to close eight council run libraries (paragraph 153), to agree a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% (paragraphs 161-181) and to transition Tier 4 community-managed libraries to an independent model (paragraph 183-192) are being made to support achievement of a £1.164 million operational saving required due to budget reductions.   The Library Service would continue to operate 40 libraries across the County, ensuring a comprehensive and efficient service is still provided.

337. The Library Service employs around 294 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff (as of 1 April 2020), comprising 482 individuals of which 77% work part time. A reduction of 40 to 50 FTE staff including the ending of fixed term contracts is expected as a result of the closures and opening hour reductions. In the first phase, the majority of staff reductions will be through a reduction of Library Team Assistants (LTAs) as management and back office staff will be subject to a further phase of review in 2021. Staff reduction figures are only indicative at this stage. Further information about the HR impact on staff can be found in Paragraphs 356 - 361.

338. The 10-week public consultation started on 9 January 2020 and closed on 18 March 2020. 339 library staff responded to the Library Service Consultation, of which 78% preferred to option to close up to 10 libraries combined with a 15% reduction and standardisation of opening hours (Appendix 2).

339. Staff awareness sessions were run across the county prior to the launch of the consultation to explain the process to staff and to give them an opportunity to ask questions of officers that attended. A staff consultation will commence in autumn 2020 to explain the impacts to staff roles.

AGE - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM   Impact after mitigation - LOW

340. **Specific issues:** 31% of Library Service staff are aged 55 and over, compared with 27% for Hampshire County Council. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week.

341. **Proposed mitigating actions**: Subject to the decisions taken on 28 July 2020 by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage and a short second public consultation on standardised opening times which will take place in August 2020, a staff consultation is planned for September 2020. This will provide staff with the opportunity to express an interest in their preferred working hours, days and in which libraries.

342. Staff vacancies in branch have been carefully managed for the last 12 months. Any staff recently recruited have been employed on fixed term contracts. There are currently 28.1 FTE Library Team Assistants and 1.8 FTE Library Team Managers employed on fixed term contracts. Generally, these will be ended prior to any permanent staff being made redundant, but this will be dependent on where fixed term contacts are located and the relative level of need for staff reduction.

343. To reduce the impact on staff there will be a voluntary redundancy (VR) offer, which would be open to all eligible staff in scope of the review, who have more than two years of service.

344. The impact of the changes on age has been assessed as Low as all staff already work in clusters at up to six alternative libraries to their base location and there will be a staff consultation prior to any contractual changes being made.

DISABILITY – Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM   Impact after mitigation – LOW

345. **Specific issues**: 7% of Library Service staff have disclosed having a disability, compared with 3.5% for Hampshire County Council. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week.

346. **Proposed mitigating actions**: The actions to mitigate for the disability impacts are the same as those identified under AGE (see paragraphs 340-344). One additional factor is that reasonable adjustments will continue to be made, where appropriate.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – MEDIUM

347. **Specific issues:** The Library Service employs 486 staff. 87% are female and 13% are male, compared to 76% female and 24% male staff working for

Hampshire County Council. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week. A staff consultation will be held in autumn 2020 to match staff to shifts on offer at each library.

348. **Proposed mitigating actions**: The actions to mitigate for the Gender impacts are the same as those identified under AGE (see paragraphs 340 - 344). Established Hampshire County Council policies and procedures will be followed during the staff consultation, to ensure that changes are applied consistently and fairly.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – LOW

349. **Specific issues:** The Library Service has a number of staff who are pregnant or on maternity or paternity leave at any one time.

350. **Mitigating actions:** All staff will be invited to participate in the staff consultation. Established Hampshire County Council policies and procedures for Pregnancy and Maternity will be followed during the staff consultation, to ensure that changes are applied consistently and fairly.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation - LOW   Impact after mitigation - LOW

351. **Specific issues:** Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week. Many of the staff working in libraries work part time and are low paid. The cost of public transport to travel between branches or to park at a branch can be high.

352. **Proposed mitigating actions:** Any staff continuing to work for the Library Service from an alternative branch would be able to apply for travel assistance, should the criteria set out in the Hampshire County Council Expenses Policy be met. The proposed staff consultation will confirm the staff impacts associated with travel to alternative branches if this is required.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation - LOW   Impact after mitigation - LOW

353. **Specific issues:** Some Library staff live and work in rural areas. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week.

354. **Proposed mitigating actions:** The actions to mitigate for the Rurality impacts are the same as those identified under age (see above paragraph 323 - 327).

355. The proposals had a NEUTRAL impact on the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below:

- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership

Please find the link to detailed EIA for Opening Hour Reduction & Library Closures – Staff Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-closure-of-libraries-and-opening-hour-reduction-staff-impacts.pdf

HR considerations

356. The proposed changes to the Hampshire Library Service would have a significant human resource and staff implication. Trade Unions, staff and residents have raised questions and concerns over the impact of staff reductions and the effect on lower paid library staff. The Library Service employs approximately 482 staff (294 full time equivalents (FTE) posts) with 1,250 (around 22 FTE) trained volunteers working alongside.

357. The Library Service has reduced staff levels throughout 2018-2020 in a planned and sensitive way by reviewing vacancies as they arise to deliver savings from natural turnover and redeployment of staff. Staff appointed within the past 2 years have generally been recruited on temporary or fixed term contracts; there are currently 28 FTE Library Team Assistants (LTAs) and 1.8 FTE Library Team Managers (LTM) employed on temporary or fixed term contracts. Following the Decision, the County Council will begin a consultation with staff and Trade Unions about the workforce implications of the Decision in accordance with its human resources policies and procedures.

358. The proposed changes to the Library Service of eight closures and a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in the remaining 40 council-run libraries would require a reduction of around 40 to 50 full time equivalent (FTE) LTA staff. This approximate figure would include ending many of the fixed term contracts mentioned in the paragraph above. This may lead to redundancies arising from a reduced workforce of the staff roles in scope. In addition, for staff that remain within the Service there are potential changes to work bases, working hours, work patterns and employment contract terms and conditions arising from the proposals.

359. Whilst it is noted that the initial redundancies are likely to affect staff employed as LTAs in the first instance, as part of a further exercise after April 2021, all remaining roles in the Service will be reviewed (including management and support functions) to reduce the scale of the workforce proportionately to match the scale of the Service.

360. All possible steps will be taken to minimise compulsory redundancies arising from the proposed service changes. This will include a Voluntary Redundancy offer where appropriate for eligible staff.

361. It is recommended that the Executive Member delegates authority to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services to devise and implement the necessary human resource changes including the restructuring and reduction in the workforce, seeking formal approval as appropriate.

Climate Change

362. The proposed changes to the Library Service set out in this report have a neutral impact on the carbon footprint and energy consumption of the Library Service in terms of buildings, deliveries by suppliers and both staff and customer travel. There would be a reduction in energy consumption (a positive impact) by the Library Service if eight small libraries closed and also a small reduction in energy consumption for the remaining 40 council run libraries if there is an average 20% reduction in open hours. Staff travel to the eight libraries proposed for closure would cease and there will be up to 50 FTE fewer library staff that are required to travel to a library workbase as part of their role. It is acknowledged that the proposed decision is likely to have a negative impact to energy consumption from the closure of eight small libraries as customers will need to travel further to access an alternative library. However, some customers will already visit the town where the alternative library is located and would be able to combine their visit with other activities such as shopping. The combination of the low position and low negative impacts to energy consumption are therefore neutral overall.

363. The proposed changes to the library Service have limited impact on the ability of the Library Service to be resilient to the impacts of climate change – e.g. flooding, heat waves. Generally refurbishment and investment to library buildings is prioritised to the larger, busier, Tier 1 and Tier 2 libraries and so the proposed network of 40 libraries will be more resilient to the impact of climate change, although this has not been a consideration in selecting libraries for closure. The smaller Tier 3 library buildings which are proposed for closure are generally in need of modernisation and therefore less resilient to the longer term impacts of climate change.

Implementation timeline

364. Following the Decision Day on 28 July, work will commence immediately on the implementation of proposals.

365. Through July and August 2020, libraries will be operating on significantly reduced opening hours (approximately 50% reduction) as part of the Covid-19 Service recovery. A second public consultation on Opening Times will be held in August 2020. Service hours will be increased and transitioned from their Covid-19 recovery hours to their new operating hours following this second consultation and, when appropriate, within the overall context of the Covid-19 situation.

366. It is anticipated that the majority of library closures will take effect from 1 January 2021. This will give a period of time for the Library Service to negotiate with any interested parties who wish to take on the running of services or buildings. However, there may be one or two cases where (particularly in leasehold libraries) there may be reason to bring the closure forward from this date (such as the timing of a lease renewal date).

367. It is proposed that community-managed libraries be given appropriate notice of the intention to withdraw support, and that these libraries become fully independent with effect from 1st April 2021. This will give the community library management group eight months to arrange for the transition of services.

368. Work to re-provision some libraries to better meet community need and projects to generate additional income are longer term pieces of work and, although they will commence immediately, will continue into 2021 and beyond.

369. The proposals set out to Deliver Efficiencies will be dependent on when contracts come up for renewal and will be complete by April 2021.

370. A staff consultation will be held between September and November 2020, with these staffing changes largely implemented by April 2021. Further, targeted staff consultations may be required in 2021 to consider support and managerial staffing levels.

Financial Summary

371. As per the recommendations in sections 1 and 5, the proposals in this report deliver £1.76 million in savings. The table below sets out the targets originally consulted on, together with the revised proposals:

Activity	Proposed saving as published in consultation £'000	Revised saving proposed £'000
Early savings – completed in 2019/20	170	**240** (including an additional £50,000 operations contribution and £20,000 income generation contribution)

Early savings planned 2020/21	0	**210**
Changing how services are delivered by closing libraries/reducing opening hours (Operations)	1,040	**1,115** (comprising: • £340,000 from the closure of 8 libraries; • £775,000 from opening hour reductions.
Transition of Tier 4 Libraries	49	**49**
Increase in Income	355	**0**
Efficiencies	146	**146**
Total	1,760	**1,760**

372. The Medium Term Financial Strategy Update report (July 2020) set formal savings targets for Departments based on a Transformation to 2023 Programme of £80m and, for the Culture, Communities and Business Services Department this has resulted in a further savings target of £3.253 million. It is likely that the Library Service will again need make a proportionate contribution to this future spending reduction.

373. Due consideration has been given to a range of financial options and it is recommended that the right course of action is to deliver £1.76 million in savings through the combination of activities proposed in this report. This will enable the Library Service, its staff and its customers, to move forward with confidence, reducing levels of uncertainty about future changes and enabling the Service to fully focus on developing its offer according to the vision set out in paragraph 62.

Conclusions

374. The 10 week public consultation into the draft Library Strategy 2025 resulted in one of the largest responses ever received by the County Council. Analysis of the 21,2000 responses has led to many changes being made to the draft Vision to 2025 and the plans to deliver savings.

375. This report seeks approval of the draft Library Vision to 2025 and associated changes to the way services are provided. The report also proposes a revised approach to the savings strategy to offset recent impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and provide the Library Service with greater long-term financial stability.

376. The responses to the consultation have enabled Officers to better understand the impacts of any changes, meaning amendments to original proposals have been made where necessary and additional mitigation has been planned to lessen the impacts where appropriate.

377. This report clearly evidences the fact that community need has been carefully considered and that, with the proposed changes in place, the County Council will continue to provide a comprehensive and efficient service which is compliant with all relevant legislation.

378. The findings from the public consultation were discussed with the Library Task and Finish Group on 10 July and all the recommendations in this report were endorsed by Group. This report will also be considered by the Culture and Communities Select Committee at its meeting on 28 July 2020.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
Title	Reference	Date
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
Title		Date
Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964		**1964**

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document   Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionally low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

18 Equalities Impact Assessments have been published for the potential eight closures of Council-run libraries, changes to the four Tier 4 community managed libraries, reduction to opening hours, delivering efficiencies, income generation, staff impacts and other impacts of the Draft Library Vision to 2025. They have been reviewed and updated as a result of the extensive public consultation and used to inform the basis of the recommendations to the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage.

https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/equality/equality-impact-assessment/culture-communities-business

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

There is no impact on crime and disorder.