

REPORT FOR DECISION



DECISION OF:	CABINET
DATE:	28 JUNE 2017
SUBJECT:	LIBRARY REVIEW - OUTCOME OF THIRD PUBLIC SURVEY ON PROPOSED OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
REPORT FROM:	COUNCILLOR SHARON BRIGGS CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
CONTACT OFFICER:	KLARE RUFO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEARNING AND CULTURE)
TYPE OF DECISION:	KEY DECISION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	PUBLIC DOMAIN
SUMMARY:	<p>This report will inform the Cabinet of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The summarised outcomes following Phase 2 of the public consultation on the 2 proposed options • An overview of additional work carried out since last report • A recommendation for option choice and next steps
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	Based on all available evidence we are recommending Option 2 – Four libraries is approved by the Council Cabinet.
IMPLICATIONS:	The closure of 10 Bury Libraries.
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes No
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	Rationalisation of all Council services is necessary given funding constraints. This review seeks to develop a sustainable library service, which meets the needs of current and future service users.

1.2 The Council remains fully committed to retaining a comprehensive and efficient Library Service in the borough but in reviewing this service, it anticipates that there will need to be changes, including the possibility of a reduction in the number of libraries. Despite this the Council will continue to provide a service that meets its legal duties and supports the aspirations of residents of all ages for development of reading skills for the youngest, lifelong learning and access to books and information.

1.3 The Council also recognises the importance of libraries as community spaces and wishes to explore ways of working together with local communities to strengthen the role their local library plays in meeting community needs.

2.0 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

In undertaking a review of the Council's Library Service, there are 3 matters that the Council needs to consider from a legal perspective:

1. The duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service pursuant to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964,
2. The requirement to have due regard to its public sector equality duty and other equality obligations under the Equality Act 2010
3. That the consultation process is fair and thorough.

The Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) states that it is the duty of every Council to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service". Case law and guidance on this indicates that this cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library but rather delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies, making the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on Council resources.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and states that Councils must have 'due regard' to the matters set out in the Act when exercising its functions and when considering and making decisions about service provision. Guidance recommends that to evidence 'due regard', a library review process should demonstrate how proposed changes might impact vulnerable communities.

Recent case law relating to consultations, in particular related to library services, has shown that Councils should have a vision for the service and key principles which may then be used to develop options for change. The process for consulting upon these should then be undertaken in a reasonable time frame, be sufficiently thorough, so as to ensure all those wishing to contribute are able to do so and be fair both in terms of the process and in dealing with the results of the consultation itself.

3.0 CONSULTATION RESULTS

3.1 Public Consultation

The second phase of the public consultation took began on 2 February 2017 and involved a 12 week survey (both online and paper), presentations to Township Forums and community meetings held at libraries.

A number of petitions were also received and considered as part of the consultation.

The public survey was available for 12 weeks and asked people to select one of two options for the future of the Library Service.

2,693 surveys were submitted. In brief the results are as follows:

Options	Number of responses in favour	Overall percentage
Option 1 Retain Bury, Ramsbottom and Prestwich Libraries plus a service wide team	493	18.3%
Option 2 Retain Bury, Ramsbottom, Prestwich and Radcliffe Libraries plus a smaller service wide team	1,920	71.3%
No selection made	280	10.3%

3.2 Comments made

In addition respondents were able to make comments about the review. Over one thousand comments were received via the survey with an additional 30 comments received via email or letter. Comments were divided into subject categories. NB some comments covered more than one subject area.

Subject	Summary	Number received
Radcliffe	Retain Radcliffe Library. Consider closure in relation to loss of other Council facilities. Radcliffe disadvantaged compared to rest of the borough.	398 plus 3 petitions
Council	Comments on the approach of the Council to library closures and other issues	239
Uncategorised	Primarily pleas not to close libraries	202
Consultation	Options not acceptable. More options needed. More explanation regarding impact/staffing	147
Books/reading	Importance for Leisure and Education. Access to books and reading for disadvantaged groups.	141
Travel	Concern over accessibility. Travel times. Insufficient consideration given to difficulties.	124
Community/ies	Communities need libraries. Greater need than in town centres. Loss of facilities.	118
Whitefield	Retain library and adult learning provision. Gap in coverage. Loss of kiln and pottery studio.	118
Children	Libraries vital for children. Adverse impact on families.	106
Unsworth	Retain library. Community use increasing. Loss of needed resource.	90
Computers	Free access vital. Many people will lose access.	64
Sculpture Centre	Close and reinstate library space	54
Tottington	Retain library. Vital community resource. Important to the town.	53
Bury	More space needed. Close Sculpture centre. Re-instate as the Central Library.	38
Adult Education	Valued resource.	31
Moorside	Community activities of great value. Concern for future of service users especially the elderly.	21
Prestwich	Retain library	16
Topping Fold	Community activities particular for old and youth essential	16 plus petition and presentation
Ramsbottom	Retain library and adult learning provision	14
Ainsworth	Retain library. Only council resource in the village	7
Brandlesholme	Retain library. Community activities needed. Youth group threatened by closure.	7

The results of the survey in full are available at

<http://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13578>

4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Township Forums

During March 2017 a presentation updating communities about the Library Review was given at all Township Forums ([Appendix 1](#)). Time was also allowed for questions and discussion. The presentation covered: The outcome of the first public consultation; impact of the council budget; phase two consultation and next steps.

4.2 Community Groups

The Library Service works with a wide range of community groups, some for many years. In addition to groups which existed previously a good number of more informal groups have developed due to projects begun by the Library Service.

All groups currently or recently using libraries have been given the opportunity to have an informal discussion with senior library staff in order to help them plan for the future of their group. A mapping exercise was also carried out ([Appendix 2](#)).

Several groups have expressed an interest in developing a model to run library buildings which are proposed to close at the end of the review either as libraries or as other community provision. Discussions with these groups will be ongoing over the coming months. It should be noted that any library service provided by these groups will be outside the Council's statutory library offer and must be cost neutral to the library service and the council.

4.3 Supporting vulnerable groups and individuals

Additional meetings have been held with groups who have members with additional needs including:

- Visual Impairment Group
- Macular Society
- Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People (BSBPSP)
- Luncheon Clubs and Over 50s groups

As a result of these meetings a number of steps will be taken to enable these (and other) groups to be able to continue to use the library service:

- Additional training for staff in all library buildings with regard to assisting people with disabilities to ensure each building has the same level of expertise.
- Resources for people with sensory disabilities at all libraries e.g. specialist software to assist with IT use
- Assistance with relocation to other libraries e.g. working with BSBPSP to help people plan and try journeys to library locations new to them
- Continuation of the Home Library Service
- Expansion of online resources
- Continued support for job seekers and people requiring access to and advice on benefits system
- Online access and IT support and training.
- Continuation of social activities to help reduce isolation and encourage positive use of leisure time e.g. knit and knatter, creative writing and adult colouring group.
- Continuation and development of health related activities in partnership with council and other providers e.g. smoking cessation sessions, health trainers and weigh and go sessions

5.0 EXPLORING ALL THE OPTIONS

We have researched extensively the other options that may be available to us as part of the library service review. Below are some of the options explored. See also ([Appendix 3](#))

5.1 Greater Manchester (GM) options

Over the last decade there has been discussion across the Greater Manchester Library Authorities in regard to both joint working for parts of the service and, the possibility of a single library service. So far any possible benefits would not exceed the current financial and staffing efficiencies. However Bury is part of a number of joint projects which provide both savings and improved services: GM stock purchasing consortium; Zinio online magazine provision; e-books/e-audio purchasing as well as a number of one off activities

5.2 Other Local Authority solutions

All library authorities have already or are currently facing budget cuts and service re-organisations. We have considered a number of schemes taken up by other authorities similar to our own, including:

Scheme	Bury's response
Increase income	<p>Introduction of 'Inspirations' shop at Ramsbottom with mini-shops at other locations. Now making a profit and expanding into craft fairs.</p> <p>Ensuring services that are meant to generate income actually do e.g. DVD provision will be withdrawn as this is losing money.</p> <p>Introducing small charges for activities e.g. author visits now make a small profit and allow us to provide more visits.</p> <p>Exploring a wider range of letting and room hire opportunities.</p> <p>Using our resources e.g. local history and archives to develop unique items for resale via a newly developed website.</p>
Volunteers	<p>Bury libraries have worked with volunteers for many years but not in the larger libraries. We now intend to train volunteers to work alongside library staff in order to expand the resources and provision we can make to the public. It must be noted that our volunteers will be there to add variety and value to our library service not hold huge responsibilities for core service.</p>
Exploring sponsorship and funding opportunities	<p>Bury's Libraries have gained considerably from external funding and our approach to this now needs to be revised in order to add to resources likely to be very stretched with the proposed budget. Sponsorship by local businesses along the lines of Bury in Bloom can also be introduced.</p>

5.3 Other management options

There are a number of management/funding opportunities available to library authorities however Bury's size and current financial position limits its suitability for most of these.

- **TRUSTS** help reduce outgoings e.g. rate exemptions and provide freedom to revise services. However they can be stressful for staff and have frequently not received approval from unions. A number of library trusts have failed in recent years.
- **MUTUALS** have to be guaranteed/supported by councils for an initial period (approximately 5 years) and usually depend on significant income generation ability.
- **PRIVATISATION** several companies now provide library management services; however these have not always proved to be immune from ongoing cuts. No companies have come forward to explore working with Bury.

5.4 Community management

As has been previously stated (report to cabinet January 2017) the Council is amenable to former library buildings being managed by community groups. Asset transfer of buildings and/or services can be very beneficial, saving valuable community resources from closing completely and increasing community engagement. However it can also put a large amount of financial liability on community groups and remove potentially valuable assets from the council/public ownership.

6.0 PROPOSED TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

We are developing a Transition Plan which has two main functions: firstly to ensure all our current customers continue to use the library service and secondly to ensure all resources from buildings to books are used/disposed of efficiently.

6.1 Supporting Customers

As was outlined in section 4.0 we are actively looking at ways for all current library users to access libraries and continue to enjoy the resources and activities they value.

We intend that revised library opening hours will provide adequate time for both existing and new community activities and also encourage wider involvement in libraries including volunteering and assisting in such things as stock selection.

Frontline staff will be able to provide practical assistance e.g. timetables, routes and contacts. We will also look to provide welcome sessions for groups and individuals in their 'new' library.

6.2 Buildings

Property Services will work with the Library Service to ensure that the closure and disposal of buildings is done as efficiently as possible. In the January report to Cabinet Appendix 5 dealt with the potential use of redundant library buildings. The future of buildings will be under regular evaluation for the remainder of the review and the possible transfer of buildings to community will be considered at each stage. Initial proposals include:

Building	Updated information
Ainsworth	Little contact from community. Size of building limits potential. Return to leaseholder.
Brandlesholme	Consider retaining building and seeking Good or Outstanding child care providers as tenants. Provide space for community use.
Bury	Meet the need for extended IT and community space.
Castle Leisure	Return space to Leisure Centre, remove fixtures and fittings.
Coronation Road	Local groups feel community management is not an option.
Dumers Lane	Organising a community groups day to test local interest in retaining building.
Moorside	Talks between church and other community groups ongoing to try and continue community activities. Rent expected for any community use.
Prestwich	Space being reviewed for extended use by community groups. Adult Learning provision increased.
Radcliffe	Potential for creating adult learning classroom/community space under consideration. Several community groups from libraries under threat of closure would like to use Radcliffe.
Ramsbottom	Potential for increasing adult learning and community use.
Topping Fold	Local community feel unable to take responsibility for the building but support from other organisations could provide potential for local use. Ongoing solutions being explored.
Tottington	Local group's business plan being explored.
Unsworth	Discussion with community groups to re-house them at Radcliffe. Future use/disposal linked to the fact that the NHS building next door is interconnected.
Whitefield	Demolition and redevelopment still likely.

6.3 Resources

Resources, including books, audio visual items, IT equipment, furniture and other items will be dealt with as follows:

1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Resources that can be used by the Library Service will be retained for either immediate or future use •Resources will be relocated to improve the overall appearance and efficiency of retained libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Resources no longer needed will be offered to other council departments • Some resources e.g. small collections of books will be offered to community groups. Once accepted these collections will not be part of the Library Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining items will be offered for sale or, if appropriate given to charity. • Unwanted book stock will be offered to the public through booksales or to commercial outlets. •Books with significant valued will be sold separately

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the outcomes of all public surveys, extensive research carried out by Mott Macdonald, internal research of all available alternative options combined with listening and exploring all suggestions heard as part of the community consultation events we are recommending **Option 2 – 4 Libraries (Bury, Prestwich, Ramsbottom and Radcliffe)** is approved by the Council Cabinet.

It is important to note that Option 2 will involve an increase in staffing and resources from the statutory minimum the budget is based upon.

8.0 PROPOSED TIMELINE

Final Report to Cabinet on decisions to be taken	28 June 2017
Staff consultation	July/August/September
Implementation	From 1 October 2017

8.0 CONCLUSION

Option 2 provides the Council with a good geographical spread of library buildings in the north, south and centre of Bury whilst providing a service in our most deprived township (Radcliffe) ensuring our commitment to our vulnerable residents. The proposed remaining libraries have the four largest registered library population and cover 77% the current offer Bury (34%), Prestwich (20%) Radcliffe (14%) and Ramsbottom (9%). Option 2, when looking at the overall population, identifies that 95% are located within 20 minutes travel time and 100% the population can access a library within 30 minutes.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Township Forum Presentation



06-28-17 Appendix 1
Lib.ppt

Appendix 2 – Community Groups



06-28-17 Appendix 2
Lib.xls

Appendix 3 – Background Reading



06-28-17 Appendix 3
Lib.doc

List of Background Papers:-

<http://www.bury.gov.uk>

Home>Libraries & Archives>Library Service Review

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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