

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Thursday, 23rd November, 2017

Present:

Councillor Tim Warren	Leader of the Council and Conservative Group Leader
Councillor Charles Gerrish	Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, Conservative Deputy Group Leader North East Somerset
Councillor Vic Pritchard	Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Paul Myers	Cabinet Member for Economic and Community Regeneration
Councillor Karen Warrington	Cabinet Member for Transformation and Customer Services
Councillor Paul May	Cabinet member for Children and Young People
Councillor Bob Goodman	Cabinet Member for Development and Neighbourhoods

145 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

146 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the evacuation procedure as set out in the Agenda.

147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mark Shelford had sent his apologies for this meeting.

148 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

149 MODERN LIBRARIES PROGRAMME; COMMUNITY LIBRARIES APPROACH - CALL IN RESPONSE

The Chair informed the meeting that the Cabinet had made a decision on 11th October 2017 regarding an approach to Community-led Libraries (Decision E3000 - Modern Libraries Community Led Approach). A Call-in of the decision was held on 13th November 2017 by the Communities, Transport and Environment Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel, and this call-in was upheld. Cabinet therefore would need to consider its response to the Call-In and the Panel's recommendations.

The Chair invited Councillor John Bull to address the Cabinet in his capacity as the Chair of the CTE PDS Panel.

Councillor John Bull read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where he highlighted three recommendations made by the CTE PDS Panel when the Call In was upheld. Councillor Bull expressed his concerns that an Addendum to the report had only been published less than 24 hours before meeting and that proposals in that document were still short of a full consultation.

The Chair thanked Councillor John Bull for his statement.

The Chair invited Public and Councillors who registered to speak to address the Cabinet. All speakers would have up to 3 minutes and all speakers should only speak to the recommendations of the Panel. The Chair reminded everyone that he used his discretion for this meeting to allow 30 minutes for Public and Councillors to speak and that he would intervene to stop the speaker if they stray from speaking about Panel's recommendations.

Caroline Ambrose read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where she expressed her concerns on the decision made by the Cabinet on 11th October and highlighted options that the Cabinet would have following the outcome of the Call In.

Kathleen Still read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where she expressed her concerns on an impact that Cabinet decision might have on Paulton library and the Hub, in particular on current team of volunteers.

Alison Hall addressed the Cabinet by outlining the benefits of Paulton library and its links to Paulton Schools and asked the Cabinet to take on board recommendations made by the CTE PDS Panel on 13th November 2017 Call In meeting before making final decision. Alison Hall also said that Paulton library was not just a place for borrowing books – it was also a social hub for all, contributing against social isolation especially amongst elderly people.

Councillor Joe Rayment addressed the Cabinet by complaining on the timing of this meeting, that the Cabinet should have planned this meeting well in advance, that the Addendum should have been published earlier and that allocated 30 minutes for Public and Councillors to speak was against Constitution.

The Chair reminded Councillor Rayment that he should focus his statement on the recommendations from the CTE PDS Panel.

Maria Lucas (Monitoring Officer) explained that the Constitution requires the Cabinet to consider the report and/or recommendations from the Call-In Scrutiny Panel. The CTE PDS Panel had provided three recommendations when they upheld the Call-In. The Cabinet was required to consider those recommendations and comments on them at this meeting only. Maria Lucas highlighted that the Chair had informed speakers that they could only speak on the recommendations of the Panel. This was single issue meeting, a response to the Call-In outcomes, and no other matters should be discussed at this meeting.

Councillor Joe Rayment concluded his statement by saying that the Addendum did not address issues from the Call-In and the Cabinet should release funding and start the consultation before making any decision on this matter.

Councillor Richard Samuel read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where he believed that the Cabinet should be clearer on the project goals, set clear objectives for each individual library within an overall strategic context for B&NES libraries, prepare detailed project plans for each site, set out how delivery is to take place, decide if the library can function as a public service within the cost envelope, be clear about the timescales for all sites and manage this as a discrete project. Councillor Samuel urged the Cabinet to take a step back, reconsider all options and make sure that they had acted within the spirit and letter of the law.

Councillor Will Sandry addressed the Cabinet by expressing his concerns that Cabinet decision would have significant impact on Moorland library in Oldfield Ward. Councillor Sandry also said that Moorland library had served citizens from more than one Ward and, like Paulton library it had been seen as social hub for residents of Oldfield and neighbouring Wards.

Councillor Liz Hardman read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where she supported the CTE PDS Panel decision to refer the decision on Branch Libraries back to Cabinet. Councillor Hardman felt that the main reason for asking the Cabinet to re-consider their decision made on 11th October 2017 was down to the lack of any open public consultation. Councillor Hardman concluded her statement by urging the Cabinet to have a rethink on these proposals. In her view, the Community Library Model would not deliver a competent and efficient library service and it would be run with the minimum of support from B&NES, both financial and professional.

Councillor Dine Romero read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where she felt that the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Customer Services had recommended that the Council should adopt a new approach to library services without having any supporting evidence. Councillor Romero expressed her concerns that, in her view, there was no financial breakdown, and no detail of how the community model might work. Councillor Romero urged the Cabinet to re-think their decision by suggesting that those living in the least advantaged areas would be severely affected by the Community Library Model proposals.

Councillor Patrcik-Anketell addressed the Cabinet by saying that he had abstained from voting on the Call-In proposals as he was not assured with consultation approach in the original report which came to the Cabinet on 11th October or with the status of Mobile Library Service. However, having read the Addendum to the Cabinet Report for this meeting he was satisfied with the recommendations and supported the proposed recommendations of the Cabinet.

Councillor June Player made an ad-hoc statement urging the Cabinet to communicate with the residents on the outcome of the Community Library Model proposals. Councillor Player also requested that Moorland library should continue to run.

The Chair thanked everyone who addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Karen Warrington read out a statement (*attached as Appendix and available on the Minute Book at Democratic Services*) where she thanked all the

speakers at this meeting. Councillor Warrington also said that the Cabinet had met to meet today to consider the comments of the CTE PDS Panel held on 13th November which were detailed in the accompanying documentation. There were two main issues highlighted by the CTE PDS Panel - consultation and certainty over the future of the Mobile Library Services. An addendum the report had clarified an approach to the public consultation. Nevertheless, Councillor Warrington took the meeting through the stages of the public consultation in her statement. Councillor Warrington also said that the Addendum had made it clear that the Mobile Library service was not being stopped. Councillor Warrington concluded her statement by reminding everyone that if the Communities Library Programme did not go ahead, it would put at risk £200,000 of savings which would need to be found from elsewhere.

Councillor Karen Warrington moved the recommendations as per Addendum.

Councillor Tim Warren seconded the motion by saying that this was just start of the process which would trigger the Public Consultation on the Communities Library Programme. Councillor Warren assured everyone that proposals were not about closing libraries in B&NES, but opposite, to protect them from closure. Councillor Warren concluded by saying that Mobile Library Services would continue to operate.

Councillor Vic Pritchard supported the motion by drawing Cabinet's attention to referendum held at Stowey Sutton where massive majority agreed with Cabinet's proposals on Communities Library Programme with 35 people already putting their name down to volunteer at local library.

Councillor Paul Myers also supported the motion by emphasising exemplary work of volunteers in Midsomer Norton and that proposals such as these would bring communities closer.

It was **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to confirm its original decision, as taken on 11th October 2017, with the following clarifications and amendments which address the three issues raised by CTE PDS at its call-in meeting on 13th November 2017:

2.1.1. In the event that the Council is unable to secure a locally agreed Community Run Library provision in any of the existing five Branch Libraries, an options report will be produced for consideration by Cabinet to determine the approach to be taken in that area, having reference to financial consequences and the outcomes of consultation.

2.1.2. The consultation approach will include the matters and approaches detailed in Section 4.

2.1.3. The Mobile Library Service will continue to operate and is not subject to closure.

Cllr John Bull statement

Caroline Ambrose statement

Kathleen Still statement

Cllr Richard Samuel statement

Cllr Liz Hardman statement

Cllr Dine Romero statement

Cllr Karen Warrington statement

The meeting ended at 10.30 am

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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**COUNCILLOR JOHN BULL –
SPEECH TO CABINET ON THE COMMUNITY LIBRARIES CALL-IN**

I am pleased to be here as Chair of the CTE Scrutiny Panel to explain why the Panel asked for the Cabinet decision on branch libraries to be referred back to Cabinet. I am also pleased that you have now allowed members of the public to address this meeting since it was the expressions of concern by library users in these communities that influenced the panel to uphold the call-in. For most members of the Cabinet this will be the first time that they have heard these views expressed due to the lack of consultation on these proposals.

The first recommendation of the Panel concerned this lack of consultation. Unlike in the case of Bath Central Library there was no invitation to the public to tell you-the Cabinet – why they value their local libraries and how horrified they are at the prospect of them closing.

In the case of Paulton, where I have first hand knowledge, there has been no consultation with anyone, except the Parish Council, who have been sworn to secrecy on what BANES officers have told them about the closure of The Hub and conditions under which the PC might take it over. I am a BaNES Councillor for Paulton but not a Parish Councillor and I am still in the dark about what support and funding the PC might get if it agreed to become responsible for the library. Even the timing of the process is unclear; the PC had apparently been working under the assumption that BANES would withdraw its funding in 2018 but in the CTE Panel Cllr Warrington mentioned 2019. Since the PC would have to set up its budget for such a step at least six months in advance this difference is crucial.

As a result most people in Paulton are only now waking up to the fact that they could lose their treasured Hub, which incorporates the library, meeting space and cafe.

The second recommendation is that more work needs to be done to find out the public appetite for volunteers running their local library themselves. Clearly this results from the lack of consultation.

If there has been no public debate (except for the non-specific one two years ago at the local

Forums) what chance is there of finding people or bodies to run the libraries on a voluntary basis?

This is especially important in the case of Bath, where there are no Parish Councils to act as a fall-

back. Many libraries already make use of volunteers as a way of extending their opening hours but that is very different from asking volunteers to manage these libraries – e.g. to order stock, issue books, supervise and maintain IT equipment and deal with the thousand and one issues that might arise each week. Even Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers, who often have their own day jobs and the paid clerks who are usually part-time have umpteen other responsibilities from recreation grounds to streetlights to dog-fouling.

When challenged on the prospects for branch libraries in Bath being transferred to other bodies Cllr Warrington could only refer to an approach to a ‘teacher from Twerton’ and feelers put out to Help the Aged. (as if only old people use libraries) but this is no foundation for such a massive change. Finally there is the future of the mobile library, which provides a vital service to villages like Peasdown and Clutton, which have never had a branch library. The original report did not make it clear what would happen to the remaining mobile library but at the Panel Cllr Warrington indicated that the service would be definitely be retained. This needs to be set in stone by being recorded in the minutes to this meeting.

And now the Addendum which was published less than 24 hours ago. This has given me very little time to consider it in detail. The statement that the Mobile Library is safe is to be welcomed. However the proposals still fall short of a full consultation. Consultation is apparently to be limited to certain pre-selected groups who might be interested in taking over the branch libraries. If this follows the pattern adopted in the case of Paulton this will consist of financial and other negotiations carried out behind closed doors at the end of which the PC will still have to carry out its own consultation on whether the parishioners are prepared to stump up the additional Council Tax to keep the library open – when they are already paying BANES Council Tax to fund libraries in Bath, Midsomer Norton and Keynsham. There is also a mention of consultation through the Forums – these are not well-publicised and will be ineffective if the proposals put forward are as non-specific as they were last time. The emphasis in the Addendum seems to be on creating new

Community Libraries, run on a shoestring with minimal professional support. At the same time it is proposed to cut-back on existing and thriving branch libraries which serve their communities well – an approach which can only be explained by the urge to cut expenditure rather than improve the library service.

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STATEMENT TO BATH & NE SOMERSET CABINET / 23 NOVEMBER 2017

I'm Caroline Ambrose, resident, founder of Bath's Novel Awards and founding member of residents' group Save Bath Libraries.

I'm here to make a statement to cabinet about its decision of 11th October 2017 to phase out council operation of Paulton, Radstock, Moorland Road, Weston and Saltford libraries as well as the mobile library.

This decision, taken in the absence of adequate consultation and without any equalities analysis, is of particular concern to residents given council's earlier unlawful attempt to relocate and downsize Bath Central Library.

On 22nd November 2017 Save Bath Libraries sent a 10 page pre-action letter to council's Principal Solicitor Shaine Lewis, Council leader Tim Warren and Councillor for Transformation Karen Warrington setting out in detail why cabinet's decision-making is unlawful and requesting that all cabinet members be made aware of the content.

Today, cabinet has three options:

1. Withdraw the decision
2. Withdraw the decision and carry out a lawful consultation prior to retaking a decision
3. Suspend implementation of the decision while residents seek judicial review

Council has been reminded of its duty to provide adequate oversight of public decision making and best value duty not to commit funds while a decision may be quashed.

It's hard to believe cabinet would continue to act unlawfully.

Should it do so, residents will hold council to account.

END OF STATEMENT

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This last week I have been thinking about the letter P. P stands for POLITICS, lets forget about that today. The issue is far too important. It also stands for POUNDS which understandably you have spent a lot of time thinking about. Lastly it stands for PEOPLE. Public Services are about People every single one of us that you have been elected to serve. the old the young and everywhere in between.

4 years ago the Council invested in a Community Library Hub in Paulton with extended opening hours when the Hub would be staffed by Volunteers. Gradually we have built a vibrant busy community amenity. The Council didn't do that WE DID, PEOPLE . However, you provided the tools – a central accessible converted building at the heart of the village. The much needed combination of a Library with a small Cafe. The technology and Support which enables us to be part of the Libraries network. The People provided a team of Volunteers, additional activities, a cafe owner who also acts as Volunteer Support. Together we fulfilled the Council vision of a Community Library Hub a social centre for all ages a focal point for the village. Indeed it is still on the BANES website as a model of a Community Run Library.

But You are not asking us to take over a going concern that we have built together You propose to take all that away. Oh No, you say we are not proposing to Close Libraries. Well let me tell you that on your present funding proposals a community devolved Library in Paulton would mean

- No accessible premises in the centre of the Village**
- No cafe**
- No Computers /Wifi printing facilities or ICT support if we sourced our own hardware.**
- No Kiosk essential for Library networking and independent customer use when unmanned**

And probably NO Volunteers – our team of Volunteers are proud to be part of a strong busy vibrant Amenity which they have helped to build. But if that goes so will they! They will not give up their time to sit in a room somewhere in Paulton with a handful of Books, waiting for someone to come through the door. That is not even a second class service it is NO service at all. Meanwhile the centre of Paulton dies a little.

If we want more we have to fund it ourselves, aah yes P for POUNDS! Asking the people of Paulton to fund the running of their own library is setting us up to fail. It is passing the pain onto the people least able to bear it. Local Funding will mean a higher local precept for the people of Paulton who will continue to fund Town Libraries thereby paying twice for one service. However according to Councillor Warrington Higher Taxes aren't necessary we could fund our Library through "matched or Crowd funding.

For the uninitiated, matched funding means this . A few people in Paulton who are able, like myself will bake cakes, sell raffle tickets busk in the street or (heaven Forbid) run a Marathon and the rest of Paulton residents will be expected to put their hands in their pockets and contribute. We then look for a large business or wealthy benefactor to match our efforts. Paulton is awash with those! Whichever way you look at it a community with predominantly modest or low incomes will be paying for a facility that they need more than many people in BANES .

If you leave us to sink and swim with a few thousand as a start up (only) and the proceeds of a sponsored walk then our Libraries will disappear and you would be in serious breach of your statutory duty and Paulton will be a sadder place. Is that what you want?

I know we can make Volunteer Staffed Libraries work. With proper support we can extend our Volunteer role thereby saving some of those POUNDS but don't waste all our efforts by making us start again. I know one size doesn't fit all. But what is common to us all is that we are communities of PEOPLE not a number on a balance sheet So I ask you to at the very least defer your decision until you have talked to us and come and seen what we have achieved. Consult with PEOPLE not politicians honestly and openly to produce an innovative made to measure Library Service for ALL our communities which is funded by ALL.

Cabinet 23rd November 2017

Proposals are the wrong way round for a complex project such as this

Projects comprise six key stages

- Definition
- Initiation
- Planning
- Execution
- Monitoring and control
- Closure

Defining the project is the stage we are at the present

This should comprise of project goals – objectives – scope – risks – issues – budget – timescale and approach

All the above to be communicated to stakeholders.

At the moment the Cabinet has rushed to initiation without adequately completing the first stage

I believe the Cabinet should now

- Be clearer on the project goals
- Set clear objectives for each individual library within an overall strategic context for B&NES libraries
- Prepare detailed project plans for each site
- Set out how delivery is to take place
- Decide if the library can function as a public service within the cost envelope
- Be clear about the timescales for all sites

- Manage this as a discrete project

Finally I believe the Cabinet should be clear what the legal framework is for their decisions..

The Council has a legal duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons.

Each LA has the duty to consult its users and stakeholders on the best way to do that.

This does preclude the path the Cabinet is taking but it does mean that far more work early on is needed before final decisions are made

It also means that the strategic responsibility always remains with the council and cannot be outsourced and in the event of failure the service reverts back to the council. This is at odds with the statements in 3.11

In conclusion I believe that if the Cabinet still wishes to proceed with this project it should take a step back, reconsider the options, establish the appetite for new partnerships and most of all satisfy yourselves that you are acting within the spirit and letter of the law.

That in essence is what the CTE panel has asked you to do.

Councillor Liz Harman – Special Cabinet statement 23rd No 2017

Chair

I am here to support the Panel's decision to refer the decision on Branch Libraries back to Cabinet.

The main reason is because of the lack of any open public consultation. For all the 5 branch libraries, there was no web consultation, no leaflets given to library users, no organised means by which users could be consulted on the impending decision. The only consultation mentioned was at the Area Forums almost 2 years ago, where possible changes to the branch libraries were mentioned only in generic terms. No analysis was made of any of the comments made. No one was made aware of the magnitude of the cuts. Little consideration has been given as to how local community groups or Parish Councils could take over the running their local library. The first residents in my ward of Paulton knew about these proposed changes was when it was brought to their notice by my fellow Ward Councillor John Bull and myself challenging the Cabinet decision that had been made.

The Cabinet decision on October 11th failed to demonstrate that adequate consideration had been given as to how sustainable it is to expect local groups to take on the running of libraries. Paulton Library and its Bombero Café, known as The Hub, is a thriving Community Library in the centre of Paulton. Recent B&NES figures show that there are 1000 active borrowers. Of the 16,566 books borrowed, 64% (10,602 books) were borrowed by children and 36% (5,964) by adults. As well as borrowing books and DVDs, free WIFI and access to computers is provided, along with printing and photocopying facilities. There is a thriving café, providing a much needed coffee bar and meeting place for residents. All of this adds up to a much needed local community asset.

The truth is local communities, such as Parish Councils will have to pay almost all the costs of running their libraries. The model drawn up by B&NES for Community Run Libraries shows that **Running And staffing costs will be funded by the local community**. This also includes utility and cleaning costs, rent and rates. The running costs for Paulton Library, according to B&NES figures, are predicted to be £23,700 for 2017/18 and this is without any staffing costs. Paulton already has the second highest precept in B&NES, so where will this money come from to run its library? Paulton raised £224,250 in

its precept last year. It couldn't afford to spend 10% of this on running the library every year. If no extra money is available, sadly and this is not scaremongering, misleading or inaccurate, Paulton Library would have to close. The Addendum to the Cabinet Report states if local agreement is not possible, Cabinet may need to make decisions about the need for closures.

We are lucky in Paulton to have an outstanding team of volunteers, who help staff the library but they are on top of 19.5 hours of professional librarian staff. These professionals will be withdrawn meaning more volunteers need to be found. This leads to the second recommendation in that more needs to be done to see if volunteers could run their local library. As I have said we have an amazing team of volunteers led by Kathleen here today, but these volunteers will have to do almost 50% more than they do at present. They will have to order stock, register new books and sort out returned borrowed books, issue books and note returns. The beloved Kiosk system making borrowing and returning books problem free, will be withdrawn. They will have to manage the IT equipment and sort out the utilities such as electricity and water; not to mention the finances. With a few exceptions, most volunteers are retired and would probably find these extra duties too onerous. This could lead to too few volunteers available, so a reduction in library opening hours.

So I urge you the Cabinet, please have a rethink on these proposals. The Community Library Model will not deliver a competent and efficient library service. Rather these Community Libraries will be run with the minimum of support from B&NES, both financial and professional resulting in a greatly diminished service.

In a nutshell, the main problem here is that the Cabinet member recommended that the council should adopt a new approach to library services without having any supporting evidence.

There was no financial breakdown, and no detail of how the community model might work.

In this financial climate it is clear that difficult decisions must be made, but these need to be based on real knowledge, with a real understanding of the users of the relevant services: there will be consequences, expected and unexpected, of such tough decisions especially when considered along with the wholesale hollowing out of the rest of the council.

The only thing I am pleased to see in the report is that the mobile library will continue to operate and is not be subject to closure. But there are still some unanswered questions. Will the existing vehicle be repaired, or does it just now wait for an undefined time to be replaced?

Yesterday's report also suggests that the original paper should have been asking for a study on the users and likely volunteer groups to support each library. Perhaps asking for that and not moving straight to adopt the new approach would have saved all the confusion?

In addition to the points already made by Cllrs Samuel & Sandry, and others.

There remains a huge assumption that if the Council can't do something, then the community will sort it out. Maybe they can, but where is any evidence that there is the capacity in these communities to do this? Where have been the discussions with the communities?

Who are these volunteers who are going to run the libraries? Are they the same ones that man our CAB, and other advice services? Are they the same ones who are to take on the Youth Centres, or run the parks?

So far there has not been a meaningful consultation.

There is an acknowledgement that there is a need for a much more thorough piece of work. I hope that work will also consider why community groups, who are being asked to staff the library, why they would want to take on the building liabilities. And who will pay for these liabilities?

As has been pointed out Bath has no parish councils to fill this budget gap.

In my experience grants for on-going costs are hard to come by, but I am happy to learn from Cllr Warrington who has previously mentioned curry and quiz nights as a way of covering the costs. Hopefully she now knows what the costs are for each library. So how many events are needed for each library.

These cost are not in the papers so I am ready to make a note of them.

I have made a note of para 3.6 which says libraries will close unless the local communities take on the running of them. But to provide what?

I worry that the grandiosely named community library that I see at Southside will become the norm for all our libraries. Literally just a book swap, without access to other council run services. This simply is not fair on those living in the least advantaged areas. Cabinet, remember that these residents are losing out in every service, but are the most needing of those services. Youth services, face to face advice, all are being slashed as this council finances are slashed.

You have the chance now to rethink this decision, I urge you to do so.

We meet today to consider the comments of the CTE Panel held on 13th November which are detailed in the accompanying documentation.

Broadly speaking there are 2 issues, consultation and certainty over the future of the Mobile Library.

An addendum to the 11th October Cabinet report is presented, which clarifies the public consultation and work towards the appetite for the approach to date and in the future. In addition, and after hearing the debate and concerns of members and the public, there is a recommendation of an amendment that should one of the current 5 branch libraries have no way forward then this will be referred back to Cabinet for a decision, taking into account the finances and the consultation.

To clarify, the decision made by Cabinet on 11th October was to approve an approach to community-run libraries and associated funding of the programme.

There are two distinct groups of libraries covered by this programme. Those that already exist in the current 5 branch libraries and those communities who wish to set up new community-run libraries.

In the case of the 5 currently Council supported libraries it was always intended that the initial engagement was to be through the November areas forums to advise local communities of the programme approach and the funding available.

The second stage of the consultation was to be any interested parties including residents.

The Council would work with any groups to look at the options for their particular area and requirements and assist the interested groups to draw up viable and sustainable business plans, together with any residents who wish to be involved. The plans could include income-generation which would not necessarily mean an increase in a precept where a Parish Council took over a library. This last point would be up to the Parish Council and the residents. Community Groups would have scope to initiate any funding raising ideas, how to apply for grants plus rental of the space through to cafes, clubs, parties, business meetings etc. Some groups would also have the scope to employ staff. Working closely with communities, the Council will look to overcome any challenges.

We are in contact with DCMS who also provide support both for Councils and the Libraries Taskforce have produced a toolkit on community managed libraries. They also have a community managed libraries peer network to connect with, sharing good practice and learning experiences.

Following this phase the interested groups would formally consult with their residents, with or without the assistance of the Council, and the groups would come to a conclusion as to how their individual community space would evolve, there might be more scope to provide services tailored to children and more mature residents.

It would be entirely up to the community group as to how the library space was run according to their business plan. Once the consultation was complete and the model decided upon the Council

would provide support in the form professional expertise, IT training and development and book rotation.

The whole programme was to be implemented in the financial year 19/20 in order to give enough preparation time for the community groups. The Council would also look at potentially tapering rents in existing library buildings and this would be incorporated into their business plan.

We have identified groups that have indicated an interest in investigating a way forward in Appendix 1. If the recommendation is approved today, and I hope it is, then officers will continue to identify and engage with groups which covers the Panel's point of undertaking more work to establish the appetite of communities to take over the library, or establish a new library in areas where they have none.

We have listened to the concerns of Ward members and the public regarding the currently funded 5 libraries and the amendment makes it clear that if any of the 5 current libraries cannot complete a viable & sustainable business plan and that the library could potentially close then the issue will come back to Cabinet for a decision.

The Addendum makes it clear that the Mobile Library service was not being stopped.

If the Communities Library Programme does not go ahead, it puts at risk £200,000 of savings will need to be found from elsewhere.

I move the recommendation as printed which complies with the constitution, confirming the original decision.