

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Martin Veal, Cabinet Member for Community Services Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance & Efficiency	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 22nd July 2017 (for Single Member Decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2974
TITLE:	Midsomer Norton Library	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix A: Proposed layout plan Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Midsomer Norton Library is one of our 3 main Libraries and is part of our overall strategic review of the Modern Library Agenda in which we are seeking to integrate our Library and One Stop Shop services.
- 1.2 Following an appraisal of the options; a review of local needs and public consultation on design, this report sets out the reasoning for the recommendation to relocate the Library with our One Stop Shop in The Hollies.

2 RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet Members are asked to:

- 2.1 Approve the creation of a combined Library and One Stop Shop in The Hollies, Midsomer Norton as set out in this report.
- 2.2 Undertake a options assessment on the future of the vacated library premises on the High Street

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The current Library is located on the High Street in Midsomer Norton. Work is underway to deliver a regeneration programme that will enhance the High Street core.
- 3.2 An options appraisal will identify the best outcome for the Town from the disposal or redevelopment of the building, balancing financial and wider social and economic benefits.
- 3.3 The Hollies is the Council's main administrative Centre in Midsomer Norton and is located across the High Street from the current library. The One Stop Shop currently occupies part of the ground floor of The Hollies and design plans have shown that an amalgamated library and One Stop Shop at this location can deliver a modern integrated service. (**see Appendix A**)
- 3.4 The Capital costs for internal modifications and new fixtures to the Hollies and removal costs to relocate the Library are estimated to be £350k, funds have been earmarked for this from the Workplaces Programme (fully approved budget) within the Council's capital programme. No new approvals for this funding is required and this spend is in line with existing approvals.
- 3.5 By creating a new Modern Library in the Hollies we will be able to amalgamate some of the staff roles within the two teams. This is associated with work currently being trialled in our Keynsham site and is called our new Customer Service operating model.
- 3.6 The implications for both Library and One Stop Shop staff are that roles and responsibilities may change and adapt to customer needs. There are no plans to make any redundancies as this integration with natural changes in staffing levels over the three year programme will contribute £204k per annum (including some property and management savings) to the overall savings target of £800,000 associated with the Modern Libraries programme.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, local councils in England have a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all people working, living or studying full-time in the area who want to make use of it.
- 4.2 We are not closing or diminishing the Library Service in any way and by bringing the two services together at the Hollies we believe the residents and users of the service in Midsomer Norton will continue to receive a comprehensive and efficient library service. Councils need to take a strategic, long-term approach to transforming their library service to strengthen organisational and financial resilience. Decisions should be made based on assessment of need, and actively managed with the community and library professionals.
- 4.3 In this report you will see that the above requirements have been adhered to, this decision is part of the Council's longer term strategic plan to help Libraries and One Stop Shop services thrive and not just survive; an equality impact

assessment is attached at **Appendix B** and further analysis of need is published online (see link in list of background papers).

- 4.4 Consultation on design has been conducted with Library and One Stop Shop Users and the outcome of this is published online (see link in list of background papers). Additional public meetings have been held in the locality, setting out the strategic aims through the local Community Forum. Meetings on the issue have taken place with the local Ward Member and Town Council representatives to look at options.
- 4.5 Councils are encouraged to provide Department for Culture Media and Sport with advance notice of proposals to change library service provision to assist the Libraries Minister in carrying out their statutory superintendence role - ensuring that councils are fulfilling their legal duties. In this case the Council has been in communication with the Department about its overall strategy which aligns in many ways with the “Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021” paper, we have also sent details of these proposals to the Department.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Our Corporate Vision and objectives form the bedrock for our Modern Library programme. The programme aligns corporate priorities, our directorate plan priorities and the key outcomes set out in the Libraries ambition paper, as well as taking account of local needs.
- 5.2 The aim of the programme is to develop sustainable and integrated shared spaces in our three main population centres. These will be the primary destination for learning, advice and information and the delivery of multiple public, voluntary and third sector services which supports the whole community to fulfil their potential through enabling and encouraging literacy, access to information and IT in an equal environment.
- 5.3 We recognise that ‘one size will not fit all’ and we will have to tailor our solutions to meet community needs as well as working with communities to help them to deliver more for themselves.
- 5.4 The Modern Libraries Programme will play an enabling role in the community to deliver our priority outcomes:
 - Create stronger more resilient communities
 - Increase reading and literacy
 - Improve digital access and literacy
 - Improve health and wellbeing
 - Provide information and support for our most vulnerable residents
 - Support economic growth by encouraging people back to work and encouraging greater prosperity
 - Help everyone achieve their full potential through learning and access to information
 - Provide cultural and creative enrichment
 - Provide safe spaces

- 5.5 Footfall in both the One Stop Shop and library are showing downward trends as are the number of library issues. Amalgamating the two services would enable both to succeed based on our learning from the Keynsham model.
- 5.6 The data shows that the demographic use of the library is well spread across the indices of multiple deprivation and is reflective of the population in the area, it is likely that by combining the two services in the same space that there would be an increased exposure to the library service for the most deprived members of the community.
- 5.7 By implementing our new customer service operating model the staff from Libraries and the One Stop Shop will be cross trained to offer multiple services from the one location, we will still retain staff with the professional skills to meet specific needs but with the combined resources we will be able to offer a more resilient service as well as reduce costs over time.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 As described in the report the option for integrating the Library and One Stop Shop in Midsomer Norton allows us to deliver our strategic objectives at the same time as meeting the financial challenges we face.
- 6.2 In Section 7 we describe the alternative options for achieving the objectives set out and in Midsomer Norton these are limited. If we do not take the option to integrate the two services then the long term viability for delivering both services must be seriously questioned.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 There are few options available in Midsomer Norton as the key driver is our longer term strategic vision and the One Stop Shop facility within the Hollies enables this to be delivered. However, conversations were held with the Town Council about relocating both Library and One Stop Shop facilities to the Town Hall, and whilst this may be worthy of future consideration the current set up does not afford itself to that option.
- 7.2 Consideration was also given to integrating the services within the Library premises but this was not viable given the available space.
- 7.3 We also looked at options for incorporating the Library into other buildings such as the Leisure Centre, but moving both Library and One Stop Shop would not be viable within the current timescales.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In preparing this report there has been consultation with a wide range of groups through our Community Forums and through a round of public consultation on

design details/requirements. Information and feedback from this consultation has been taken in to account, as has the views of staff in Customer Services and the Libraries Service (including frontline workers). As stated above, the output from the consultation is available online.

8.2 Regular meetings have been held with cabinet members to update on progress and to act upon feedback. The Monitoring Officer, Legal Services and representatives at the department for Culture, Media and sport have been consulted on the approach being taken to ensure proper compliance.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	<p>Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/crossheading/the-public-library-service</p> <p>Needs Assessment http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/siteimages/Your-Council/Local-Research-Statistics/bnes_libraries_needs_assessment_-_final_05.07.17.pdf</p> <p>Public Consultation http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/modern-library-service/previous-consultations</p> <p>Corporate Plan http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/corporate-plan</p>
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