

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

7 July 2015

Reconfiguration of the Library Service

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive, Library Customer and Community Services

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the consultation on the future delivery of the library service
- 1.2 To seek Members' approval for the revised proposals and recommendations
- 1.3 To seek Members' approval for further work with communities in partnership with the Stronger Communities Programme to establish a way forward for the future delivery of services.

2.0 Introduction

This report sets out the current position of the library service in the context of the County Council's budget proposals. This includes the outcomes from an extensive 3 month public consultation on the future of the service, and sets out a number of options for consideration by Executive members. The report also highlights a number of potential risks and wider impacts that these proposals will have for individuals and communities as well as setting out a preferred option and recommendations for Members to consider.

3.0 Objectives

The key objectives addressed in this report are:-

- Achieving requested budget savings of £1.6m through reconfiguration of service
- Retaining current service provision through partnership working with communities and other agencies
- Minimising impact on communities, particularly older and young people

4.0 Context

4.1 The Library Service has undergone considerable changes in the last few years. Following the previous consultation in 2010/11, the service embarked on a journey of greater involvement of communities in the running of their local libraries. Since May 2012 the Library service has been delivered through 33 county run libraries (nine of which have additional opening hours provided by volunteers recruited by the local community library group); nine Community Managed libraries; a Supermobile and

the Home Library Service. The service, supported by the voluntary sector through its Active Communities project, worked with local community groups who were passionate about retaining their local library. Good working relationships have developed between these groups and the supporting library staff and the groups and their libraries have gone from strength to strength, expanding the range of services offered to local communities, beyond the purely “library” service. This mixed model of county run and community run and supported libraries has been a successful model to date, delivering a range of services directly to customers and communities in localities.

4.2 Since the successful introduction of Community Managed libraries above, North Yorkshire has participated in research into different models of practice and has been highlighted by the Arts Council and the Local Government Association as an example of best practice, due in part to the level of on-going support provided by the library service to community library groups.

4.3 In 2013, the County Council launched its 2020 Programme, setting out its ambition to make the required savings through a number of different programmes, including through the Stronger Communities Programme. As members are aware, the Stronger Communities Programme aims to support communities to play a greater role in the delivery of services in the county by supporting communities to help themselves and create local solutions for services at a time of significant challenge for the authority. Community groups are being encouraged to work together where appropriate, maximising use of buildings assets and volunteers in order to create a focal point or local network of support. Community libraries are a key element of this programme and present opportunities for communities to bring a number of services together, rather than provide standalone services. They will help provide a focal point, increase resilience, and allow sharing of volunteers and their recruitment and and training, plus back office functions such as administration, thus making services more sustainable.

5.0 Public Consultation (3 November 2014 to 8 February 2015)

5.1 Prior to the public consultation, the service consulted with a task group of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the criteria which should be used to determine which libraries should be in each category.

5.2 The original impact of the 2020 programme budget proposals on the library service was a proposed reduction of its budget to £3.8 million by 2020. This level of reduction would have reduced the service to one library per District, providing back up support only for the remaining 35 libraries that would need to be entirely community run. However, this would have given no capacity to run either the Supermobile or Home Library Service and did not recognise the greater business levels at key sites such as Ripon etc. After discussion with Executive members it was proposed that a further £500k would need to be reinstated into the budget,

giving a total of £4.3m. This was formally agreed by full council in February 2015, following the public consultation based on proposals for a budget of £4.23 million. The consultation ran from 3 November 2014 to 8 February 2015 and included an extra 2 weeks due to the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

The proposals

5.3 The service consulted on proposals to save £1.6 million from its budget as part of the Council's overall savings of £167 million as follows:-

- Three categories of library – **core, hybrid, and community managed**. All would be part of the North Yorkshire 'family' of libraries and all would need volunteer involvement.
- **Core libraries** - One main town in each of the seven districts of North Yorkshire retains a 'core' library. They would be in **Harrogate, Malton***, **Northallerton, Richmond/Catterick, Scarborough, Selby and Skipton**. They would be staffed by a combination of paid county council library staff and volunteers. These core libraries would be the centre of excellence for their District. They would need volunteers to work alongside the paid library staff to be able to open for the current opening hours. * *In 2011 a decision was taken that there would be one library serving the communities of Malton and Norton.*

These core libraries would be the base for the professional expertise to support and advise the remaining libraries in their District. In effect they would become the 'engines' that drive the service, developing partnerships, providing training and the expertise to ensure the service continues to develop in line with changing needs.

- **Hybrid libraries** - large and busy libraries catering for significant day-time populations. The cost of the premises, and one member of staff, would be met by the County Council. They would depend on volunteers working alongside this member of staff, operating with support from the core library in their district. Five hybrid libraries were proposed, based on their levels of business, – one in each of the following towns: **Filey, Knaresborough, Pickering, Ripon, and Whitby**.

- **Community managed libraries** - An additional 20 **community managed** libraries would receive regular and ongoing professional support from the core libraries, and would be at **Bedale, Bentham, Boroughbridge, Colburn, Catterick/Richmond, Crosshills, Easingwold, Eastfield, Helmsley, Ingleton, Kirkbymoorside, Leyburn, Pateley Bridge, Scalby, Settle, Sherburn, Starbeck, Stokesley, Tadcaster and Thirsk**. Community managed libraries in these locations will depend on communities and potential partners coming forward, and NYCC's aim would be to provide assistance (including some financial help) to maximise the provision of good quality services across the county.

- The council would continue to provide a Home Library Service for people who have difficulty reaching a library, and a Supermobile service to serve key areas that don't have a static library.
- The library service would continue to support existing outlets and local collections in locations such as pubs and village halls.

5.4 Under the proposal Core libraries would have 60% of their current front line staffing and Hybrid libraries 25%, and both would depend on volunteers to work with them to maintain the current opening hours.

How were the public and stakeholders consulted?

5.5 The public were offered a variety of ways to contribute to the consultation, including: a questionnaire, made available in a number of formats; drop-in information sessions in libraries; pop-up information sessions in community venues including supermarkets; email and postal addresses for written responses; attendance at a variety of meetings and forums. Several communities ran campaigns and presented petitions to the County Council. (Details of these can be seen at Appendix 1, Annex 10)

5.6 All responses have been taken into consideration in the production of this report.

5.7 Detailed information was made available to the public in libraries and on the Library Consultation webpage. This included a consultation document, draft Equalities Impact Assessment, Frequently Asked Questions, and Information Fact Sheets for each library. An extensive range of stakeholders were sent links to the relevant webpages at the start of the public consultation and encouraged to respond. The library's email database of users were all contacted about the consultation and encouraged to respond. Social media was also used extensively to raise awareness and encourage participation. The consultation and the various information sessions were also publicised in the library and in the press.

5.8 Participation in the consultation

- Questionnaire response rates (total of 8159)
 - On-line (web) 5892
 - Paper 2049
 - Large print 73
 - Easy read 145
- E-mails and letters 192
- 6 Petitions* 8,782 signatures
- Face to face events 2,500+ attendees

*Communities in Stokesley (2,047 signatures), Whitby (1677 signatures), Knaresborough (2,035 signatures), Settle (146 signatures) and Starbeck (444 signatures) sent in petitions and there was a Save North Yorkshire's Libraries petition with 2,433 signatures. Two further petitions (for Bedale and Eastfield, with 2,314 and 88 signatures respectively) were received nearly 3 months after the end of the consultation period. The Stokesley, Whitby, Knaresborough and Bedale petitions triggered debates at Area Committees. (See Appendix 1, Annex 12 for details)

Key messages from the consultation

5.9 There was a good level of participation in the consultation on the proposals for changes to the library service and the responses clearly demonstrate the high value the public place on their local library. There was a significant level of support for the involvement of volunteers in all libraries, but far fewer thought a community managed library staffed by volunteers would work for *their* local library. A strong message from the consultation was that all libraries need staff and that communities need some help from library staff to get a community managed library off the ground, and can't do it successfully from a stand-still start.

5.10 The most frequent comments on questionnaires, petitions and in meetings were that libraries and library staff are highly valued in their communities and that people wanted their local library kept open preferably with paid staff. Other frequent comments were that libraries are important for children and for literacy, and 96% of respondents to the questionnaire said they used libraries for books. However, the importance of libraries for all sections of society and the wider role libraries play in health and well-being and access to computers etc was also recognised and commented on.

5.11 Concerns were expressed about the local availability of volunteers and consequent sustainability of their local library, and the likelihood that volunteers would not have the range of knowledge that staff have, resulting in a reduction in the quality of the service. People would prefer the money to be saved elsewhere rather than in libraries.

5.12 Nearly two thirds of questionnaire respondents understood that there need to be changes to the library service because of the budget cuts, but half said they disagreed with the overall proposals, though a quarter were in favour of them. However, there was greater agreement with specific proposals.

5.13 Greatest support (83%) was for sharing buildings, sharing running costs and offering a wider range of services, which gives weight to the proposal that libraries become hubs in their communities.

5.14 Nearly two thirds of respondents (64%) agreed with involving volunteers in all libraries and half felt that volunteers could undertake more library duties alongside paid staff. 19% (1,516 people) said they would be likely to volunteer. Just over half of respondents (54%) agreed with communities running their local libraries with support from the council. However, only 19% of respondents thought a community managed library staffed by volunteers would work for their local library. (41% thought it wouldn't and 36% said they didn't know. The remainder said their library was already community managed). 12% (952 people) said they would be interested in forming a friends or community management group or volunteering. (Nearly 800 of these gave us some contact details).

5.15 There has been a degree of cynicism about the consultation. When going out to public meetings a consistent theme was that the council had made up its mind and the decision had already been made and this was reflected to some extent in the responses to the questionnaire.

Consideration of alternative suggestions made during the consultation

5.16 A number of alternative suggestions were made during the consultation on the proposals, including giving hybrids more paid staff; increasing the number of hybrids; giving all community managed libraries some staffing (or £15k to buy their own); and taking the service out of council control/alternative forms of governance such as becoming a mutual/trust/social enterprise.

The library service has considered each of these suggestions:-

5.17 Increasing the number of hybrids

Increasing the number of hybrids would either cost considerably more money than the available budget, or would deplete the service available at the proposed core and hybrid libraries. It would also reduce the ability of the core libraries to support the remaining community managed libraries and put at risk the future capacity of the service to sustain all 42 libraries. However, this proposal has in part been addressed by the proposal for an element of staffing support in proposed community managed libraries in the revised options for consideration detailed below.

5.18 Giving community managed libraries £15k worth of staffing each

This suggested alternative proposal would cost an additional £450,000 and the proposal suggests that this money could come from the proposed staffing budget for hybrids and core libraries. As outlined above, this would greatly reduce the service available at the proposed core and hybrid libraries, and would put at risk the future sustainability of all 42 libraries and in turn put the service at greater risk of challenge under the 1964 Act (see section 8.4 of this report). It was suggested that if community managed libraries had this element of staffing there would be no need for professional support. However, it is the professionally qualified staff who will provide

training, support and assistance to the community management groups in order to ensure that performance and quality of the library service are maintained.

5.19 *Becoming a Mutual, Trust or Social Enterprise*

A mutual, trust or social enterprise would still rely on the County Council for the majority of its funding and would not necessarily make the level of savings required. Several authorities have taken this route although all currently receive full funding from their local authority. The advantages of this option are the ability to increase income out with local authority financial regulations, potential reduction in business rates and increased access to grant funding, dependent on governance arrangements. No formal approaches have been made regarding the service becoming a mutual, trust or social enterprise

6.0 Revised Options for Consideration

6.1 Having considered the various alternative suggestions put forward, the service believes that, based on its track record and success in the area of community involvement in, and ownership of the service, extending the involvement of communities in running their local library represents the best way of continuing to provide the current library network across North Yorkshire, within the remaining available budget. In addition, community libraries are a central plank of the Council's Stronger Communities Programme which aims to work with local residents, community groups and other partners to identify and support opportunities to work together to maximise the use of buildings, assets and volunteers in order to create a focal point or local network of support.

6.2 The library service will continue to provide the virtual library, which can be accessed by everyone who has broadband and at all libraries. This includes the ability to access NYCC services on-line as well as face to face.

6.3 The basic offer to the proposed 21¹ community libraries is essentially the same as to the current community libraries. The library service will continue to provide the following to each library: -

- resources (eg books),
- ICT (including computers and connectivity), and
- infrastructure support (eg delivery vans and professional support) including
- access to the e-resources (eg Ancestry.com) as well as
- promotions such as the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Community libraries will also be able to keep the income they make.
- Where the Council owns the building it will be offered at a peppercorn rent to a community group coming forward to manage the library.

¹ The service consulted on 20 community managed libraries but with an option for Norton to express an interest in being community managed.

6.4 As stated earlier, a strong message from the consultation was that all libraries need staff and that communities need some targeted assistance from library staff to get a community managed library off the ground, and can't do it successfully from a stand-still start.

6.5 Therefore two additional options are detailed below. Option 1 (which was consulted on) and two further options which have taken on board the strong feeling from many respondents to the consultation that all libraries need paid staff. The revised proposals have taken this into account and also provide some additional staffing for proposed hybrid libraries. The revised proposals have also addressed the concern expressed by community groups about the premises running costs.

6.6 Please note the following:-

- In all options the libraries remain in the same categories that were consulted on, with the exception of the libraries below.
- It is proposed that Richmond be designated the core library for Richmondshire, and Catterick and Norton to be community managed libraries. This reflects current business levels.
- The staffing levels are expressed as an average for that category.
- All options require volunteer support to maintain the current opening hours, but the amount of staff support varies between the options.
- All community libraries would have professional support and guidance and service development, which will include a monthly visit
- The proposals for staffing levels below are based on business levels of individual libraries.
- **None of the options proposes any additional staff support for core libraries.**

6.7 Option 1 - £4.23m

This is the option that was consulted on and would provide –

Supermobile and Home Library Service plus

Core 60% current service delivery staffing

Hybrid 25% current service delivery staffing

Community No staffing

6.8 Option 2 - £4.35m

This would provide -

Supermobile and Home Library Service plus

Core	60% current service delivery staffing
Hybrid	30% current service delivery staffing
Community	7-10 hours per week each of dedicated additional support staff supporting Catterick, Colburn, Crosshills, Easingwold, Eastfield, Sherburn, Stokesley and Thirsk. 2 – 5 hours per week each of dedicated additional support staff supporting Bedale, Bentham, Boroughbridge, Helmsley, Ingleton, Kirkbymoorside, Leyburn, Norton, Pateley Bridge, Scalby, Settle, Starbeck and Tadcaster

6.9 Option 3 - £4.4m (preferred option)

This option includes an increased element of dedicated additional support staff for proposed community managed libraries and would provide -

Supermobile and Home Library Service plus

Core	60% current service delivery staffing
Hybrid	40% current service delivery staffing
Community	12 -15 hours per week each of dedicated additional support staff supporting Catterick, Colburn, Crosshills, Easingwold, Eastfield, Sherburn, Stokesley and Thirsk. 5 – 7 hours per week each of dedicated additional support staff supporting Bedale, Bentham, Boroughbridge, Helmsley, Ingleton, Kirkbymoorside, Leyburn, Norton, Pateley Bridge, Scalby, Settle, Starbeck and Tadcaster

6.10 The staffing support for proposed community managed libraries and hybrid libraries would be based on the level of business of the individual libraries. No additional support is proposed for core libraries. Following views expressed in

response to the consultation, these additional support staff (employed by NYCC) would be shared by geographic groupings of community libraries, helping to maintain consistency and quality of services without encouraging dependency upon individual, permanently based staff. The staffing support is proposed on the understanding that communities embrace the community managed model.

6.11 In conclusion, for an increase in funding of £100k on top of the budget of £4.3m, Option 3 offers the most to communities and clearly demonstrates that whilst being committed to communities having an increased role in running services, the Council is responsive to the concerns raised during the consultation regarding communities running their local libraries using volunteers and it signals its commitment to supporting sustainable services going forward.

Further proposals to create a level playing field Community Library groups

6.12 Concern has been expressed about the cost of premises for community groups so it is proposed that a subsidy is provided in the form of grants to assist with these costs based on the formula described below.

6.13 The libraries that are proposed for community management vary in size and running costs. Some are in stand-alone buildings owned by NYCC, some are in shared buildings owned by NYCC, some are in extra-care premises, one in an MOD owned building and others in other rented property.

6.14 Where NYCC own the building it is suggested that community groups would be offered a lease at a peppercorn rent (or, if appropriate, an asset transfer). This would leave those communities with libraries in rented accommodation at a disadvantage in comparison without some additional financial support to cover rent.

6.15 Aside from rent, the annual premises costs include business rates, utilities, cleaning and grounds maintenance.

6.16 Business rates and cleaning are the largest premises costs for NYCC. Registered charities are entitled to 80% mandatory rate relief with District Councils having the discretion to give up to 100% relief. It is therefore proposed that no financial support towards rates is offered by NYCC. No financial support is proposed for cleaning, as the combination of the income stream and the opportunity to recruit volunteers and engage with local businesses provides groups with the opportunity to negotiate more favourable arrangements. The same would apply to grounds maintenance.

6.17 Part of the proposals for community managed libraries is that they keep the income that they make. This comes from a variety of sources including room hire, fees and charges, fines, computer use etc. This gives groups an income stream to offset some of the costs.

6.18 The proposal for subsidy is therefore as follows:

(Fair rent + 70% of library's 3 year average utility costs) net of income = subsidy

The cost to NYCC of this would be – approximately £70,000 per annum. (This is in addition to the costs of proposals detailed above)

It is proposed that these subsidies would be in the form of annual grants.

6.19 Adjustments would need to be made to the overall formula to take account of libraries where there is a commitment to pay a service charge. Likewise, the amounts counted as income may need to be adjusted where other parts of NYCC currently occupy part of the building and are charged for this by the library service.

6.20 Appendix 4 illustrates the indicative costs by library both to NYCC and to the community group.

6.21 The subsidy would be dependent on community library groups offering a wider range of front-facing “Customer” services than they do now, including helping communities to become more digitally literate, for example through assistance with on line job searches, bus pass and benefits applications.

7.0 Human Resources Implications of the proposals

7.1 The largest area of cost in the library budget is staffing, (68% of the budget), so achieving the required savings and providing the necessary support for communities will mean a significant staffing re-structure There will be fewer staff and all staff roles will change.

7.2 The roles of staff in the options below will be very different from the current role of paid staff, with the emphasis away from the day to day task of running the library and towards providing volunteers with the skills and confidence to carry out these tasks for themselves. In addition to the support to the community library management groups and monthly visit from the professionally qualified member of staff, the dedicated additional support staff in options 2 and 3 would provide a regular presence at each service point, working directly with volunteers showing them how to deliver the service to the public and giving them reassurance and confidence in the roles they are taking on, demonstrating best practice and providing practical support and assistance with more complex enquiries or support for managing difficult or disruptive behaviour. The staff time allocated would be based on how busy the individual library is. Following views expressed in response to the consultation, these additional support staff would be shared by geographic groupings of community libraries, helping to maintain consistency and quality of services without encouraging dependency upon permanently based staff.

7.3 Staff attended briefing sessions prior to the consultation and prior to the publication of this report. Many staff (104) have taken the opportunity to respond as individuals by completing questionnaires. Staff also took an active role in the consultation, encouraging and assisting people to participate and giving information at “Pop-up” consultation sessions.

7.4 A formal consultation with staff and Unison is planned for January to March 2016, with the new structure coming into effect in the spring of 2017. This does represent a long lead in time and as is already happening, it is anticipated that some staff will seek alternative employment or take the opportunity to retire. Currently every post is being assessed at the point it becomes vacant, to determine staffing needs and consider if it needs to be filled. The last restructure resulted in a number of staff being successfully redeployed, and only a handful of redundancies. However, whilst the staff group have many transferrable skills, the proposed restructure is on a bigger scale this time.

7.5 Employment law provisions, including redundancy will also need to be carefully considered in the context of the proposals.

8.0 Risk Management Implications and Issues

8.1 All of the options are extremely challenging and therefore a number of potential risks have been identified. The key risks are:-

- Establishment of the model including support and engagement of local Members
- Legal challenge – 1964 Act, Equalities, Duty to consult, Employment legislation;
- Financial – the majority of savings (circa £900k) are from the staffing budget and are dependent upon full realisation in 2017/18.
- Capacity – communities, and staff time, and capacity across the authority – eg legal, property, finance, ICT, HR, Communications, Stronger Communities;
- Sustainability of the model
- Data protection breach due to the requirement to give volunteers full access to Library management system;
- Performance.

Establishment of the model

8.2 The community library model is based on the authority's previous experience of delivering the first tranche of (7) community libraries. The challenge for communities and for the service is much greater this time due to the larger size of the libraries and the higher number of community libraries proposed. Exploring options with potential partners, including District and Parish councils, in 21 different communities will take a considerable time for the Library service and the Stronger Communities team. Community capacity varies and some areas will take longer to establish than others.

Maintaining current levels of service at the core and hybrid libraries and supporting an additional 21 community libraries, which all serve larger centres of population and have higher levels of business than the current community libraries, will be extremely challenging and carries a significant degree of risk in terms of providing a comprehensive and efficient service. It is therefore proposed that there is a post-implementation review in 18 months to 2 years from February 2017 to review how the community library model is working across the county and the extent to which community libraries still require the presence of paid library staff. There is recognition that some libraries will need support for longer than others to enable them to deliver an effective library service so this will need to be considered in that review.

Support and engagement of Members

8.3 For the model to work, communities need to buy into it. Previous experience suggests that the involvement and leadership of the local member is crucial to the establishment and success of community libraries.

Legal challenge

8.4 Under the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964* local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a free, comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all who wish to use it. There is no national definition of “comprehensive and efficient”. Experience to date demonstrates that a mixed economy of service delivery is unlikely to result in intervention by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport due to a failure to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. However, the scale of the proposed reduction in directly managed libraries could leave the authority vulnerable to challenge/ministerial intervention. In considering the future of its library services, the County Council must be mindful of its statutory duty under the Act and consider that the proposals will enable it to continue to run a comprehensive and efficient service which takes account of the needs of local communities, within the budget available.

8.5 Members should note that other library authorities have been challenged in the courts on the statutory duty, Equalities Act and their consultations. Those which have faced legal challenge have been cited as failing to undertake full equalities impact assessments or adequate public consultation but have to date not faced full intervention or public inquiry as a result of non-compliance with the 1964 Public Libraries Act.

8.6 If there were to be a legal challenge, there would be additional costs. A challenge would put the proposed changes on hold and delay the proposed savings.

8.7 The Library service included a draft Equalities Impact Assessment in the consultation documentation and has now updated this in the light of the consultation and the revised proposals. (See Appendix 2) The Equalities Impact Assessment

illustrates how the service aims to mitigate any adverse impact on groups covered by the legislation.

8.8 The consultation which ran from 3 November 2014 – 8 February 2015 aimed to give comprehensive information on the proposals and provided a range of ways to contribute, including a questionnaire, made available in a number of formats; drop-in information sessions in libraries; pop-up information sessions in community venues including supermarkets; email and postal addresses for written responses; attendance at a variety of meetings and forums. The proposals have been revised as a result of the consultation.

8.9 Employment law is also a potential risk to the proposals, should voluntary groups or volunteers be viewed as taking the jobs of current staff. However, a re-structure of the staff team will make considerable changes to staff roles, thus reducing the risk of challenge.

Financial Implications/risks

8.10 In addition to the potential financial risk of judicial review/intervention to the authority as outlined above, the long term financial viability of the Service will be dependent upon securing the savings required through the development of community/partnership solutions across the library service.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	total
savings	105k	Nil	1495k	Nil	1600k

The savings above are broken down as follows –

- Savings from staffing costs - service reconfiguration £920k
- Savings from bookfund – new contract/digital £300k
- Savings from premises - transfer to communities £212k
- Savings from infrastructure – service reconfiguration £118k
- Savings from LMS contract – procurement £50k

8.11 The majority of savings will be made in the financial year 2017/18, due to the lead in time to enable community groups to form, prepare business plans and recruit volunteers etc. The fixed costs of maintaining the library estate will remain until then.

8.12 The new job roles will need to go through the job evaluation process, which may come out at a higher grade than anticipated, thus impacting on the savings that can be made.

8.13 The preferred option (3) proposed would cost an additional £100k, on top of the £4.3m in the budget, so the full savings detailed above would not be achieved.

Capacity

8.14 Lack of capacity of communities to take on the management of community libraries was a common theme of responses to the consultation, both in terms of the availability of volunteers, and the range of skills and knowledge communities would require. The Stronger Communities team will be supporting communities in the practicalities of establishing community managed libraries and with the recruitment and management of volunteers for all libraries.

8.15 The capacity of NYCC staff across the authority in terms of time is also an issue – ie library staff, legal, property, finance, ICT, HR, Communications.

Sustainability of the model

8.16 Capacity also has a bearing on the long term sustainability of the model. This includes the on-going availability of volunteers and availability of staff across the council for the continuing support of the community library groups. Financial sustainability would also be put at risk if partners pull out of joint arrangements.

Data protection

8.17 For the model to be successful and sustainable, volunteers will need full access to the Library Management System. There is potential risk of a data breach, so controls will need to be put in place to reduce this.

Performance risks and implications

8.19 There is no precedent for community transfer of the size of libraries proposed in this report so it is difficult to accurately forecast the impact on performance that the changes will have, given the number of libraries and levels of business undertaken. However, past experience shows an initial impact on traditional library activities, with a growth in other community activity centred on the library.

8.20 The proposed 12 core and hybrid libraries account for 65% of current library business and raise 72% of the income.

8.21 Community managed libraries currently retain income raised, so this will equate to a 28% loss of income, £175,000, to be offset against savings made. This has been factored into the proposal calculations.

8.22 The current range of performance measures do not adequately reflect the additional benefits to local communities that community managed libraries bring, through involvement of volunteers and by more flexible use of the building and the increase in the type and range of activities offered by becoming local community hubs. New performance measures are being developed by Stronger Communities and Public Health to measure this social capital and added value.

9.0 Dependencies and other implications

Stronger Communities

9.1 A major dependency for the proposals is on the Stronger Communities Programme which underpins the greater involvement of local communities in the running of their libraries, including the transfer of the day to day running of some libraries to local community groups. The Stronger Communities team will support proposed community libraries with all aspects and stages of developing local solutions, including identifying opportunities for bringing a range of services together as a 'hub', and will assist with the recruitment of and support for volunteers. This will be on-going.

Property

9.2 Throughout the course of this reconfiguration, the County will need to make further decisions in respect of its ownership of individual library properties, which will raise a range of issues in respect of leasing, asset transfer to communities etc.

9.3 The agreement with the current community managed libraries is that where the Council owns the building, a lease on a peppercorn rent has been granted. Early indications are that some proposed community library groups would be interested in asset transfer of the library building to them.

9.4 A further area of Property policy of relevance to the changes to the library service will be the co-location of services and sharing premises with other parts of the County Council, as well as partners where feasible, which will make better use of buildings and will increase the sustainability of the library service.

Customer

9.5 Another cross-cutting theme of the 2020 Programme is the council's **Customer Theme**. Through this programme, libraries are seen as key deliverers of Face to Face Services and Assisted Digital solutions, and the future availability of public access to ICT in libraries to maintain and increase digital inclusion will be essential to this. In addition, many of those using the County Council's public access PCs via libraries are seeking employment or accessing learning, and several recent studies highlight the importance of digital inclusion in increasing employability.

9.6 Libraries across the county provide an assisted digital service, partly through volunteers, which is increasingly important as more and more services can only be accessed on line, and a challenge for the Library service will be to ensure that community managed library groups recruit volunteers with the skills to continue to provide this service.

Transport policy

9.7 Colleagues in Integrated Passenger Transport have carried out a transport assessment for the library proposals to assess the ability of proposed core and hybrid libraries to be accessed by public transport and, the extent to which the council's proposals for bus subsidy reductions to £1.5 million may impact on accessibility.

9.8 All of the core libraries are accessible from the local residential areas in the towns in which they are located and from the wider hinterland that would look to the town as its local service centre. These towns provide the destination for a series of commercial, tendered and community transport and the council's proposals for bus subsidy reductions would not withdraw service to these towns.

9.9 Hybrid libraries are also located in towns with good public transport services from the main residential area and from neighbouring settlements that would consider the town to be its local service centre. Similarly it is not proposed to withdraw services to these towns.

9.10 The proposed Community Managed Libraries are located in villages and towns that are accessible by public transport and considered to be service centres for the local communities. The councils overall strategy in reviewing expenditure on local bus services is to "use the budget for support for bus services to ensure that as many communities as possible have transport services which contribute to alleviating isolation and loneliness and all people to live independently ..." and as such citizens will have the opportunity to travel to their nearest service by public or community transport.

Impact on other services/organisations

9.11 The Library service has traditionally worked with a range of partners, the number of which increased following the previous round of savings, which led to the establishment of several community library groups and closer working with some parish and town councils. The proposals mean the service will need to work closely with a wide range of partner organisations, exploring opportunities jointly with community groups, adult learning, children's services and the voluntary sector as well as other statutory organisations such as District and Parish Councils and Job Centre Plus. Where libraries currently deliver access to services on behalf of other parts of NYCC, assistance/training will need to be given to these new groups to take up this work.

9.12 The greatest impact will be on those community groups/organisations which take up the challenge of managing their local library. Some groups are already excited by the opportunities this presents for them to take over the management of a

community asset and expand the range of services offered to their communities. Others are more daunted by the prospect. (See Stronger Communities Team's Community Impact Assessment in Appendix 3)

9.13 If no solution can be found for a community there are potential adverse impacts on education and literacy, and health and wellbeing, the importance of libraries for which were commented on during the consultation.

Economic

9.14 Our libraries support local economic development through business advice and support for individuals, micro businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the service's offer "Your Office in the Library" includes free wi-fi, meeting space, and business information and learning opportunities.

9.15 The service, along with partners, provides employment opportunities for young people through the apprentice programme. 17 out of the 20 employed over the last couple of years have progressed into permanent employment or higher education.

Young People

9.16 With regard to children's and young people's education and personal development, recent large-scale research provides compelling evidence that library usage is linked to reading levels among children and young people.

9.17 In 2014/15 just under 10,000 young people in North Yorkshire participated in the Summer Reading Challenge, NYCC is seen as an example of best practice nationally for its work with young people – Skipton Rewind winning Library of the Year, the apprentice programme nationally recognised and copied.

Health and Well-being

9.18 Local libraries play a key role in reducing social isolation, and increasing the volunteering opportunities will have a positive impact on that. Several libraries are already located (Stokesley and Settle) or are about to be located (Thirsk) in Extra care facilities. In terms of evidence of impact, there are strong correlations between reading and mental health benefits (and library usage is linked to better reading levels). Literacy is also closely aligned with health literacy – people's ability to access health information and their capacity to use it effectively. The council's Dementia Friendly library service is cited as an example of best practice by both the Alzheimer's Society and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Reading Well initiative includes support for dementia, self-help 'books on prescription' schemes, but also more socially-focused therapeutic reading groups.

Community support and cohesion

9.19 Several studies suggest that through increasing social capital, libraries contribute to enhanced community cohesion and thereby to healthier, safer

communities. Although evidence of the impact of cohesion on reducing deprivation is limited, current statistics on the high costs of ill health and crime within communities illustrate the potential cost savings that could be realised through healthier and safer communities.

Equalities implications

9.20 A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out on the impact of the proposed changes and is attached at Appendix 2. Members must pay due regard to the assessment in making their decision. The key equalities impacts identified are on age and disability. The greatest adverse impact is if communities do not come forward to manage their local libraries, which would mean people had to travel further to access a library. For children and older people this could mean that they are no longer able to visit a library independently. Equality of access to services will also be reduced for people with low incomes and residents of rural areas. However if communities do come forward to manage their local library, this will have some positive benefits in offering opportunities for older and younger people and disabled people to become volunteers, thus reducing social isolation and providing work experience for those of working age. However, volunteers may have less experience of working with disabled people and children. The EIA identifies a number of actions to mitigate adverse impacts. These include - working with local communities; providing training to volunteers, including equalities and disability awareness training; having a robust service agreement with community library management groups; providing support for disabled and older people to use on-line services; continuing to provide the Home Library Service; reviewing the use of the Supermobile; and conducting a post-implementation review to include an assessment of the impact.

Environmental impact/benefits

9.21 Where services are able to share buildings this should result in an overall reduction in their energy requirement. However, given that the consultation responses showed that 50% of people walk to the library, if a local library should close and people then make special journeys to access a library, their carbon footprint may increase.

Community Safety Implications

9.22 Libraries are regarded as safe places to go for people of any age. Any reduction in their availability as venues for wider activity within communities will impact on this.

9.23 Some communities have expressed concern during the consultation about the ability of volunteers to deal with anti-social behaviour, particularly involving young people. This presents a challenge to the wider community of developing ways of dealing with challenging behaviour in their community. The library service would

also make training available to volunteers to develop their confidence in dealing with any incidents that happen in the library itself.

Reasons for recommendations

9.24 The Library service is currently required to make savings of £1.6 million by 2017/18. Based on its previous experience, the service believes that an extension of the successful involvement of communities in running libraries represents the best way to continue to provide the network of libraries across North Yorkshire, within a reduced budget.

10 Recommendations

That Executive

1. Notes the report and agrees to the categories core, hybrid and community managed and the libraries in these categories as detailed in paragraph 5.3 as amended by paragraph 6.6
2. Agrees to the implementation of Option 3 as detailed in paragraphs 6.9 – 6.11 and the consequent decrease in savings requirement.
3. Agrees to subsidise the premises costs for community managed libraries in line with the formula detailed in paragraph 6.18
4. Agrees to receive a further report in December 2015 on the progress made with Community groups, highlighting areas of potential risk.
5. Agrees to the proposal for a post-implementation review

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Consultation Report

Annex 1	Consultation document
Annex 2	Consultation questionnaire/response form
Annex 3	Easy read consultation document
Annex 4	Easy read questionnaire/response form
Annex 5	Frequently Asked Questions
Annex 6	Library Information Sheets (listed alphabetically)
Annex 7	List of Face to Face Events
Annex 8	Consultation Responses - Overview Report
Annex 9	Consultation Responses - Individual Library Reports (listed alphabetically)
Annex 10	Consultation Responses – Easy Read Overview Report
Annex 11	Petitions summary
Annex 12	Minutes of Area Committees that considered petitions

Appendix 2 Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 Community Impact Assessments from Stronger Communities Team (Alphabetically by District and proposed category of library)

Appendix 4 Proposed community library indicative costs sheets (Alphabetically by library)

Appendix 5 Timeline

Background documents

Rural Library Services in England: exploring recent changes and possible futures – Report to DEFRA and Arts Council, May 2014.

Community Libraries - Learning From Experience: guiding principles for Local Authorities, January 2013

Independent Library Report for England - Sieghart, December 2014

Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Libraries