North Yorkshire Council

Assistant Director Resources

28th March 2024

Libraries Improvement Fund - Mobile Library

Report of the Corporate Director Community Development

1.0	**PURPOSE OF REPORT**
1.1	That the Assistant Director Resources authorises the acceptance of the grant in the sum of £150,000 from the Libraries Improvement Fund

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The current Mobile library is approaching end of life. An opportunity arose to apply for external funding to replace the vehicle and our application has been accepted.

2.2 The Libraries Improvement Fund is designed to enable library services across England to invest in a range of projects to upgrade buildings and technology, so they are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 North Yorkshire Library Service applied for funding from the Libraries Improvement Fund (Round 3) to replace the existing mobile library with a smaller (7.5t), more versatile vehicle that will increase opportunities to provide books, digital resources, and educational support to predominantly rural communities and to further increase access to wider Council services.

3.2 The criteria for the Libraries Improvement Fund have been set by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England. The grants are administered, awarded, and monitored by Arts Council England. Funding has been provided by DCMS.

3.3 The aims of the fund are to:

- Enable libraries to develop more flexible, more commercial spaces
- Increase and improve digital access within communities
- Connect libraries to their communities
- Increase potential for transformation
- Increase library use
- Increase sustainability of libraries

3.4 The desired outcomes from recipients of this investment are:

- More community groups using library space
- Increased number of users accessing collections and services
- Increased users accessing makerspace technology
- More revenue taken in commercial income
- Increased number of PCs/devices available to users
- Fewer libraries running outdated operating systems

- Extension of available hours
- Increased number of co-located services

3.5   We are pleased that our application has been deemed to meet the aims of the fund and will deliver on a number of key outcomes.

4.0   Mobile Library - case for replacement

4.1   The rural nature of North Yorkshire restricts access to opportunities for educational, personal and community development that can be offered through the library service. Whilst the existing mobile provision serves the needs of 20 larger rural communities, there are areas where access is difficult and there are untapped opportunities to deliver additional benefits to residents. We are looking to address this gap and to offer a broader range of benefits to more residents.

4.2   Ninety eight percent of the North Yorkshire is either sparsely (13%) or super-sparsely (85%) populated with just over a third of the population living in these areas. This breaks down as

- 24.5% aged 0 to 24
- 50.5% aged 25 to 64
- 25.5% aged 65 plus

4.3   Current mobile library usage is:

Children:
- 0-5   6%
- 6-11   28%
- 12-18   4%

Adults
- 19-25   3%
- 26-50   12%
- 51-64   8%
- 65 and over   39%

4.4   We feel that there are opportunities to develop the service in collaboration with partners, to undertake more targeted engagement to reach people who can most benefit, including younger children to support school readiness and older people to help combat loneliness and isolation and support healthier living.

4.5   A recent Public Library User Survey (PLUS) showed that 100% of respondents rated the mobile service as good or very good and, whilst borrowing books was the main reason for using the mobile, there are wider social benefits: 70% said it helped them with meeting people; 48% said that using a library helped them with their Health and Wellbeing; 33% said it helped with their retirement; 27% said it helped them with study and learning.

4.6   We also asked people how they would like to use their mobile library service in the future. In addition to borrowing books and meeting/chatting to people, the services people would most like to see are: health and wellbeing information (55%), reading guidance for adults and children (48%), support to access our digital library and online resources (42%), using a library tablet on the mobile library (33%), receiving support and guidance on digital skills (30%), family support and information (30%), information about managing money (28%), accessing free Wi-Fi (28%) and support accessing wider council services (24%)

4.7   Benefits **–** the replacement of the mobile library will enable a number of benefits for communities across North Yorkshire. These include:

- Promoting Literacy: We will enhance literacy rates by providing access to a wide range of books, educational materials, and resources. We will encourage reading among children and adults alike, fostering a culture of learning within the community.

- Bridging the Digital Divide: In rural areas, internet access and digital resources are limited We will help bridge the digital divide by enabling access to eBooks and digital resources, provide Wi-Fi printing facilities and support digital skills development.

- Supporting Education: We will collaborate with local schools, promoting reading for pleasure and informal learning with relevant books, reference materials and study aids. We will act as a learning environment outside the classroom and facilitate a program of engagement.

- School Readiness: We will contribute to school readiness initiatives and speech and language development through working with early years partners and supporting parents with younger children to embrace reading and story-sharing. 90% of primary school teachers agree that visiting a public library regularly can help young children prepare for starting school

- Community Engagement: The mobile library will serve as a hub for community engagement, bringing people together, encouraging social interaction, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging within the community.

- Access to services: we will work in partnership with other services using our mobile as a community hub, offering outreach and specialised services such as health road shows and information on local services. We will seek to address specific community needs, using the mobile to contribute to the overall well-being and empowerment of the communities they serve.

5.0   CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1   Accepting this award would contribute to meeting the following Council priorities:

- Place and Environment: Communities are supported and work together to improve their local area
- Economy: Culture, heritage, arts, and sustainable tourism all play their part in the economic growth of the county
- Health and wellbeing: People are supported to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles
- People: People can achieve their full potential through lifelong education and learning

5.2   The delivery of the mobile library service supports the Target Operating Model of the Council and specifically supports the delivery of locality-based services within the context of a large rural County.

6.0   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1   Option 1- Do not replace – The current vehicle is approaching end of life and failure to provide a replacement vehicle would leave some current customers without easy access to a physical library service, particularly those most distant from branch libraries and those less able to travel through lack of transport or cost. 80% of current customers do not use another library. Whilst withdrawing the service would provide a saving in the region of £80k per year, this option has been discounted on the grounds of the impact on rural communities. The Equalities Impact Assessment identified older people, people with a disability, women,

families with younger children, carers, and people on low incomes, living in those rural areas, as likely to be most affected.

6.2 Option 2- Replace with like for like – The current vehicle is too large to access some areas of the County reducing the options to develop the mobile library service. A 10t, long vehicle would cost considerably more.

6.3 Option 3- replace with an electric vehicle- Whilst this would be a positive contribution to the Council net zero ambitions, the technology is not sufficiently developed to provide the range required (current max is 111 miles) and provision of fast chargers would be required. The weight of the batteries would also significantly reduce stock capacity. The cost of an electric vehicle is significantly greater.

6.3 Option 4 - purchase a delivery van to drop off books with customers. Due to the constraints of the vehicle, we could only carry a small selection of books for people to choose from and would mainly deliver a 'Collection only' service, with no opportunity to develop new audiences/deliver wider services (e.g., to meet others, digital use). The cost of a new van is approx. £20K. This would require a staff resource, though delivery drivers could potentially be paid at a lower grade. The service could be supplemented by Home Library Service volunteer deliveries where viable, with associated travel costs paid. There would still be costs for maintenance and fuel.

7.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

7.1 It is our intention to work with internal services, including Comms, CYPS, HAS and Public Health, to provide them with an opportunity for outreach work/consultation/information roadshows. This supports the Council's wider commitment to local service delivery as part of its Target Operating Model and builds on exiting opportunities, for example, the mobile library was used as part of the recent "Let's Talk" consultation. Rural residents are often difficult to engage, and we will offer space on the vehicle for other services to deliver drop-in events in a safe and neutral space.

7.2 Acceptance of the award will require input from Fleet Management and Procurement colleagues. Individuals from those teams have been assigned to the project in anticipation of a successful award.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Whilst no partnership funding was required for eligibility to this fund, it was clear that applications which included partnership funding were more likely to be viewed favourably. As such, the library service has committed 13% (£22,500) matched funding from the service budget.

8.2 Acceptance of the grant will necessitate ongoing revenue funding for the mobile library service. Provision for this is built into existing library service budgets. The estimated costs represent a small saving on current costs as the new vehicle will be more fuel efficient and a newer vehicle should reduce maintenance costs. Based on figures for 2022/23 the ongoing revenue cost would likely be in the region of.

- Staffing £53,724
- Fuel   £10,000,
- Servicing and maintenance £14,779

Total £78,503

8.3   The terms and condition of the grant stipulate that prior written consent is required from the funder if we wish to sell or dispose of any Project Asset(s) within ten (10) years from the date of the Funding Agreement.

9.0   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1   The standard grant terms for Round 3 of this fund have been reviewed by Legal Services (Contracts and Procurement Team). Any expenditure of the grant must comply with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and, where relevant, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

9.2   A funding agreement which will outline in detail the key outcomes, milestones, delivery arrangements and payment schedule of the grant will be available on the Grantium portal in April. The Library Service will complete this with the support of its Directorate finance lead.

10.0   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1   ACE expect organisations seeking investment to detail how they are planning to demonstrate and apply each of their four Investment Principles. One of the four Investment Principles is "Inclusivity and Relevance". Our application included a commitment to extend the reach of the service through a route review and partnership working, facilitated by a more versatile vehicle.

10.2   Working with colleagues in Comms, CYPS, Public Health and HAS we expect to both create opportunities to develop new audiences for libraries and use the reach provided by the mobile to improve access to wider Council services.

10.3   An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out which, working in partnership, identifies opportunities to improve access for older people, people with a disability, women, families with younger children, and people on a lower income. These are the people most likely to be at home during the day who face barriers to participation including poor transport links, wealth and health inequality, digital connectivity, and lack of accessible information.

11.0   CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1   ACE expect libraries to take the lead in their communities in their approach to environmental responsibility in terms of how they run their service and buildings: by 'lowering carbon emissions, increasing levels of recycling, cutting their use of plastic, and reducing water consumption.'

11.2   Whilst a fully electric vehicle to replace the current diesel model was not a viable option, a new, smaller and more efficient diesel vehicle will have a reduced impact on road transport emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx).

11.3   We will explore the options as part of the procurement procedure to increase energy efficiency and make the vehicle self-sufficient through fitting solar panels on the roof, linking to an inverter charger to charge up batteries to provide mains power.

12.0   PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

12.1   Whilst there are no specific performance targets attached to the funding we will be monitoring visits, membership, issues and 'Face to Face' support and reporting back to DCMS/ACE on how we meet the aims and outcomes of the Fund (see 3.3 and 3.4 above). We are aiming at a 20% increase in visits the first year. We will also be working with partners to identify and monitor specific outcomes relating to engagement activities delivered through the mobile.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

13.1 Our current mobile library is approaching end of life and planning for alternative provision is a priority. The successful application to the LIF provides a significant capital sum of £150k and an opportunity for us to develop a modern, more accessible service and support the Council's ambitions to provide local services within the context of a large rural County. However, if the funding is accepted this brings with it a commitment to continue to provide the mobile library service for a period of 10 years as set out in section 8 above, failure to do so may be damaging to the Council's reputation with a major funder and could result in claw back of the grant funding.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 To accept the grant funding of £150k in order to retain and develop the mobile library service to improve access to core services.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION

15.1 That the Assistant Director- Resources authorises the acceptance of the grant of £150,000 from the Libraries Improvement Fund.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Climate Impact Assessment Form
Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment Form

Nic Harne
Corporate Director – *Community Development*
County Hall
Northallerton
18.03.24

Report Author – *Lee Taylor - Library Manager- Service Development*
Presenter of Report – Hazel Smith, *Head of Libraries*

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A - Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment
The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Replacement of Mobile Library
Brief description of proposal	The current Mobile library is approaching end of life. An opportunity arose to apply for external funding to replace the vehicle and our application has been accepted. The rural nature of North Yorkshire restricts access to opportunities for educational, personal and community development that can be offered through the library service. Whilst the existing mobile provision serves the needs of 20 larger rural communities, there are areas where access is difficult and there are untapped opportunities to deliver additional benefits to residents. We are looking to procure a smaller more versatile vehicle to offer a broader range of benefits to more residents.
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Libraries
Lead officer	Lee Taylor- Library Manager-Service Development
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.
Remember to think about the following;
- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	Decreases emissions	Decreases emissions	Decreases emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	Decreases pollution	Decreases pollution	Decreases pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	Yes	Continue to full CCIA:	No
Reason for decision		Our current mobile library is approaching end of life and planning for alternative provision has been deemed a priority. The successful application to the LIF provides a significant capital sum of £150k and an opportunity for us to develop a modern, more accessible service and support the Council's ambitions to provide local services within the context of a large rural County. We have investigated options for an electric vehicle, but the battery technology isn't yet advanced enough to provide the range required to deliver services across North Yorkshire. However, we are confident that a newer, smaller, more efficient diesel vehicle will reduce our current emissions and that our plans to extend the range of services on the vehicle, and support with digital access will have a positive impact in reducing customer travel. Whilst a smaller, newer vehicle should result in less use of fuel and lower emissions, these cannot be quantified at this stage and the impact of changing a single vehicle is relatively small. Therefore, a full CCIA is not considered relevant or proportionate at this stage.		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)				
Date		21/03/24		

Appendix B

Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

Mobile Library

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Communications Unit on 01609 53 2013 or email communications@northyorks.gov.uk.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Community Development- Libraries
Lead Officer and contact details	Lee Taylor Library Manager- Service Development Lee.taylor@northyorks.gov.uk 01609 533588
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Individual officer
When did the due regard process start?	19.03.24

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

We have secured £150k for a new, more versatile mobile library to increase opportunities to provide books, digital resources and wider support to our predominantly rural communities.

This EIA is to assess the opportunities afforded by purchasing a new vehicle and developing the service, the likely impact of not taking up the grant funding offer and the viability of the proposed vehicle, including the cost effectiveness of providing the service.

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

Our current mobile library is approaching end of life and planning for alternative provision has been deemed a priority. This is an opportunity for us to develop a modern, more accessible service and, working in partnership, support the Council's ambitions to provide local services within the context of a large rural County.

If we don't replace the mobile library soon it is likely that we will need to withdraw the service. This would adversely affect the current users, 80% of whom do not use other libraries. 81% of customers access the service by foot. There are potential alternatives for provision of library services:

Static libraries: Most of our mobile stops are a minimum of six miles from a static library. For those residents without their own transport, accessing physical library services would be difficult and would leave some isolated customers without access to a library service.

Home Library Service: (Books collected from a static library and delivered by volunteers to the customer's home; aimed at residents who are unable to visit a static library). This relies on the availability of volunteers in a particular area and volunteer willingness to travel longer distances to rural customers. It is unlikely that all current customers would be covered by the Home Library Service due to the limited number of volunteers. We pay travel expenses to the volunteers, so this would be an additional cost.

Library Outlets and Local Collections: (Collections of books in village halls and other venues that are 6 miles or more from a static library). Extension of the service to provide an additional 20 outlet collections would be dependent on the availability of venues and on a willingness of local volunteers to manage the collections. Choice is significantly poorer than offered by a mobile library and this method of delivery is less cost effective. The estimated cost for providing 20 new Outlet collections of 1,000 books each is around £100K, even using a mix of existing and new stock.

Digital Library: (Around 20,000 titles are available in eBook format via the Library Service). Poor rural connectivity, access to devices and lack of digital skills have an impact on accessing services. There is a digital divide that disproportionately affects older people, a considerable proportion of mobile users.

Reputational risk to the new North Yorkshire Council should be considered. Closures and reductions in library services have, in the past, generated significant publicity and negative public feedback. It is possible that withdrawal of the service could be associated with LGR and a lack of interest in the service needs of rural residents, especially as North Yorkshire's aspiration is to be 'the largest, most local authority' and this is a visible council services that reaches small rural communities. It could also lead to increased social isolation of more vulnerable customers.

None of the alternatives would enable the library service to positively develop its offer to rural communities or enable the level of partnership working anticipated to open up new channels for people to access wider council services.

Our vision is for a mobile library service that is responsive to the needs of those that it serves and reaches out to those it does not. We want to a make a positive impact on people's lives, addressing issues of isolation and improving life chances.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

A mobile library is a vital service for those who struggle to access services across a county that is 98% rural. We are seeking to use LIF funding for a new, more versatile vehicle to continue to provide books and digital resources and to develop new channels to deliver wider support to our predominantly rural communities; those who cannot easily afford to travel to access services and those with access needs.

The rural nature of NY restricts access to opportunities for educational, personal and community development. We believe the mobile library service can play a vital role in helping to plug these gaps. Whilst existing mobile provision serves the needs of larger communities there are areas across the county where the size of the current vehicle makes access difficult and there are untapped opportunities to deliver additional benefits to residents.

We know that participating in leisure and cultural activities in the community is important for health and wellbeing, a sense of belonging and good relationships. Without social participation, people can experience loneliness and isolation. For those people living in more rural areas, we know that there are barriers to participation including poor transport links, wealth and health inequality, digital connectivity, and lack of accessible information. Defra, in *'Unleashing Rural Opportunity'* highlights the value of libraries, "Rural areas are rich in the communal spirit and strong social networks which contribute enormously to the unique joy of rural life. Community hubs such as village halls and public libraries play a vital role in sustaining these networks, and the pandemic demonstrated their adaptability and resilience". The library service plays a key role in addressing these issues through its static library network, working closely with key agencies and creating alternative access points to wider services. We want to use a reimagined mobile library service to offer the same support to our rural residents for whom access is more difficult.

We have consulted with partners including Health & Adult Services, Public Health and the Council's Early Help team on how we can work together and there is clearly untapped potential. Whilst we know the service is valued by existing customers there are others who could benefit. Over 65s are heavily represented among mobile users but we feel we could do more to reach younger children and families who may be isolated. By offering a wider range of services, introducing additional targeted stops and working more closely with partners we believe we can attract a greater diversity of people, increase access to library collections, increase customer satisfaction and improve perception of the value and role of libraries, among both customers and partners.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

A recent Public Library User Survey (PLUS) showed that 100% of respondents rated the mobile service as good or very good and, whilst borrowing books was the main reason for using the mobile, there are wider social benefits: 70% said it helped them with meeting people; 48% said that using a library helped them with their Health and Wellbeing; 33% said it helped with their retirement; 27% said it helped them with study and learning.

We also asked people how they would like to use their mobile library service in the future. In addition to borrowing books and meeting/chatting to people, the services people would most like to see are: health and wellbeing information (55%), reading guidance for adults and children (48%), support to access our digital library and online resources (42%), using a library tablet on the mobile library (33%), receiving support and guidance on digital skills (30%), family support and information (30%), information about managing money (28%), accessing free Wi-Fi (28%) and support accessing wider council services (24%).
Consultation with customers as well as stakeholders, potential partners and staff, along with data analysis, has shaped our priorities and we believe this project will position us to deliver meaningful outcomes. Further consultation with internal stakeholders in Localities, Comms, HAS, CYPS and Public Health is planned to develop ideas for wider use of the vehicle for engagement with rural communities.

A full mobile route review will take place to ensure that the vehicle is servicing the communities who can most benefit and to deliver value for money. Customers and Parish Councils will be consulted.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

The successful application to the DCMS Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) provides a significant capital sum of £150k and an opportunity for us to develop a modern, more accessible service and to support the Council's ambitions to provide local services within the context of a large rural County.

However, if the funding is accepted this brings with it a commitment to continue to provide the mobile library service for a period of 10 years at an approximate revenue cost of £80k p.a. (based on 23/24 figures). This is already allocated in the service revenue budget.

A new, smaller, more efficient vehicle will reduce fuel and maintenance costs and remove the need for drivers to hold an HGV licence. General staffing costs are likely to remain the same.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Age		x		26% of NYs population is over 65 and over, significantly above the UK average. This is reflected in the usage of the mobile of which 39% of current users are in this age bracket. We want to extend the reach of the service, both geographically and through targeted work with partner and this is likely to reach more people and increase access to more services.
Disability		x		Census data (2021) looking at long-term health problems and disability across North Yorkshire indicates that there are in the region of 42,000 people disabled under the Equality Act: whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot and in the region of 65,000 people whose day-to-day activities are limited a little. People with disabilities face multiple barriers to accessing services, for those living in rural areas, the barriers are significant.
Sex		x		More women than men use libraries and, anecdotally, are more likely to be at home during the day when the vehicle visits
Race	x			
Gender reassignment	x			
Sexual orientation	x			
Religion or belief	x			

Pregnancy or maternity		x		Analysis of performance and local insight data demonstrates that we are not always meeting the needs of children and families who often face significant barriers accessing library services. These barriers become more significant to pregnant mothers, particularly if they do not have their own transport. Working with health colleagues we will provide information and use the mobile to facilitate the take up of initiatives such as the healthy vitamins scheme which aims to improve diets and provide a nutritional safety net for low-income families, and which has a low take up rate in rural areas. We will extend our existing partnership with the registration service to identify and support families with new-born children, promoting the library offer and wider well-being services. All potential partners we have spoken with see the value of developing the mobile library service. The CEO of Children's Charity, SELFA, commented: "Mobile libraries are a vital resource for children and young people who live in our most rurally isolated communities. Villages like Appletreewick and Hetton are in the worst 1% areas nationally for barriers to services and over one-third of young people in Craven live in sparsely populated rural areas, increasing to almost 70% in North Craven."
Marriage or civil partnership	x			

Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who…	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
..live in a rural area?		x		NY is the largest geographical county in England and 85% of it is classed as super-sparse. The rural nature of NY restricts access to opportunities for educational, personal and community development. We believe the mobile library service can play a vital role in helping to plug these gaps. Whilst existing mobile provision serves the needs of larger communities there are areas across the county

				where the size of the current vehicle makes access difficult and there are untapped opportunities to deliver additional benefits to residents. Reimagining our mobile provision beyond book delivery and being inspired by the breadth and depth of services offered through our static libraries, we will offer a broader range of benefits to more residents.
…have a low income?		x		The County's workforce is significantly less qualified than the national average and the population is older. In NY 25% of the economically inactive are retired compared to a national average of 13.6%. We would like to ensure information is accessible for those with varying resources and abilities – for example people who do not have English as a first language, are digitally excluded or have a sensory impairment, all of whom are more likely to have lower incomes. 20% of all premises in North Yorkshire have no broadband coverage at all. In addition to poor rural connectivity, access to devices and a lack of digital skills impact on accessing services. There is a digital divide that disproportionately affects older people and people on lower incomes. We want to provide a wi-fi service so that we can help people to develop their digital skills, using both library devices and supporting them to make better use of their own. We will introduce customers to free eBooks and our digital library and facilitate access to other on-line services.
…are carers (unpaid family or friend)?		x		The mobility and free time of carers is often restricted due to their caring responsibilities. As such, being able to access physical library services is often restricted, particularly for those in rural areas. We want to increase the opportunities to access library services as well as other council services through a mobile service.
….. are from the Armed Forces Community	x			

Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)	
North Yorkshire wide	x
Craven	

Hambleton	
Harrogate	
Richmondshire	
Ryedale	
Scarborough	
Selby	

If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.

We will carry out a mobile route review to ensure that we are targeting the towns where we can make most impact and work with partners to identify opportunities for targeted engagement. Having a smaller vehicle will increase opportunities to access some communities currently 'out of reach', for example in Richmondshire.

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) **State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**

Older women, people with disabilities and other health concerns and families with children, living in rural areas will be most impacted by plans to develop the service.

We will work in partnership with other services to use our mobile library as a community hub, offering outreach and specialised services such as health roadshows and information on local services. We will seek to address specific community needs, using the mobile to contribute to the overall well-being and empowerment of the communities they serve.

Discussions with partners in the Early Help team and Public Health have identified opportunities to dovetail into wider primary healthcare provision and partnerships that would see the mobile acting as much more than a book delivery service but as a hub for isolated or vulnerable families. Taking services to customers will benefit those with financial or accessibility barriers who may otherwise have to travel long distances.

One resident commented "'it would be positive to have a 'community' health model, drop-ins on town market days or mobile units for checks on blood pressure, sight, hearing etc, low level preventative health checks. Having more opportunities around for people to access these, not only makes it easier but also it will become the norm for people to monitor health." We believe the mobile library can meet this need and support a wider 'prevention' strategy

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (**Remember:** we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	**Tick option chosen**
1. **No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal.** There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	**x**
2. **Adverse impact - adjust the proposal -** The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
3. **Adverse impact - continue the proposal -** The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	
4. **Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal –** The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.) The proposal seeks to develop and improve provision of mobile library services and through partnership working enable more people to access wider services.	

Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented, how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)   We will monitor visits to the mobile and use of the library resources. We will work with partners to identify impact measures to determine the value of targeted engagement.

Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

| Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements
Set up a scoping meeting to identify key partners and determine their needs/desired outcomes	Hazel Smith	End April 24		
Carry out consultation on route review.	Lee Taylor	End Sept 24		

Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The Equalities Impact Assessment which has been carried out highlights opportunities to develop mobile library provision to rural communities and work in partnership to extend the reach of other Council and partnership services.

The conclusion is that replacing the current mobile library with a smaller more versatile vehicle and developing the partnership opportunities as described will improve access to services for older people, people with a disability, women, families with younger children, and people on a lower income, living in rural areas. These are the people most likely to be at home during the day who face barriers to participation including poor transport links, wealth and health inequality, digital connectivity, and lack of accessible information.

Next steps:
- Complete the grant acceptance procedure
- Undertake procurement process
- Convene a meeting of partners
- Consult on route review
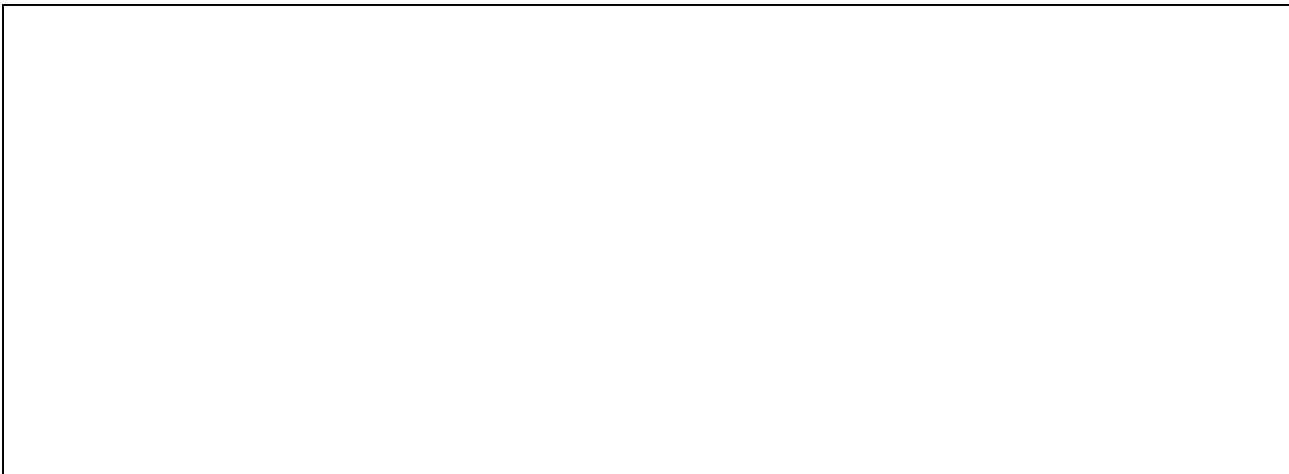
Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

**Name: Lee Taylor
Job title: Library Manager – Service Development
Directorate: Community Development
Signature:**

Completion date: 21st March

**Authorised by relevant Assistant Director
Jo Ireland: AD Culture, Leisure, Archives and Libraries (signature):**

Date: 21/03/2024