

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 23rd May 2013

Subject: Strategic Plan for Libraries and Implementation of Library Review

Report of: Director of Older People

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Exempt/Confidential No

Report Summary

When Budget Council on 28th February 2013 agreed to implement option B of the library review, Elected Members requested that the strategic plan be brought back for consideration at Cabinet.

The report outlines a proposed strategic plan, progress to date on the implementation plan and mitigating actions for Cabinet to consider.

The report is arranged in a number of sections with associated annexes as indicated below:

	Section	Annex
Background	1	-
Strategic plan	2	A
Mitigation Actions	3	-
Implementation Plan	4	B
Staffing Proposals	5	-
Alternative proposals	6	-
Development Proposals	7	-
Risks	8	-

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the strategic plan attached at Annex A
- 2) Approves the proposed mitigation measures of MA1, MA6, MA7 contained in section 3, and delegates authority to the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools, Families and Leisure to make future decisions with regard to further mitigation measures.
- 3) Subject to approval of recommendation 2, approves the staffing structure for option 2 identified in paragraph 5.2.4, and delegates any further amendments to the staffing structure to the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools, Families and Leisure, in conjunction with Head of Personnel and Head of Health and Wellbeing.

4) Notes the ongoing discussions and submissions regarding alternative library proposals from community groups and Sefton CVS, and asks Officers to provide an update report to the meeting of Cabinet on 18th July 2013.

5) Approves the implementation plan at Annex B, and the phased library closure programme as contained in paragraph 4.2, and delegates authority to the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools, Families and Leisure to make future decisions about any amendments.

6) Agrees that the Council retains the library service in-house, and not consider outsourcing the service at this time.

7) Notes the risks identified within the report.

8) Notes the current status of the redevelopment proposal for the Civic Hall site and authorises the Head of Health and Wellbeing and the Head of Investments and Infrastructure to continue to plan for library services to be delivered from Crosby Library, subject to redevelopment proposals coming forward that are acceptable.

How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Jobs and Prosperity			√
3	Environmental Sustainability		√	
4	Health and Well-Being		√	
5	Children and Young People		√	
6	Creating Safe Communities		√	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		√	

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs.

The Government announcement on the Revenue Settlement for 2013/14 and 2014/15 identified a further reduction in resources for the Council. As a result, the previously identified budget gap of £43.7m increased to £50.8m. As part of the budget savings for 2013 – 2015, £400,000 has been included in relation to the Library Review. This saving is based on option B with some allowance for

mitigation. The cost of operating the Library service at the end of the implementation process will reduce from a total cost of £3.25m to £2.66m.

This report is the first stage of the implementation process. The employee costs saved for this year by reducing the level of staffing, together with the current vacancies will save an estimated £120,000 for 2013/14. They are consistent with the original proposal and it is therefore anticipated that the staffing savings will be fully achieved.

(B) Capital Costs.

A bid has been submitted for capital funding for improvements to three of the remaining libraries (Bootle, Crosby and Formby). The other three (Meadows, Netherton and Southport) are in new/refurbished co-located facilities and do not require capital allocations. The bid is included as part of the single bids for capital projects for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and was approved at the meeting of Council on 14th May 2013.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal

Under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, Library authorities [i.e. local authorities who exercise Library functions] have a statutory duty to provide a “*comprehensive and efficient*” Library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof. Under Section 1 of that Act, the Secretary of State has a duty to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of their functions in relation to libraries. In addition, the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 must be taken into consideration in relation to the way in which an authority plans and delivers Library services. In particular, an authority must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>.

Cabinet has agreed the definition for a comprehensive and efficient library service in relation to Sefton which is set out in Cabinet reports of 11th October 2012 and 14th February 2013.

Human Resources

The Authority will need to comply with the duty to consult with recognised Trade Unions (and as necessary employees) and to complete as necessary a notification under Section 188 of the Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Also form HR1 to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills notifying of redundancies may need to be filed dependent on numbers.

Full and meaningful consultation should take place with the Trade Unions and

employees on the matters contained within this report.

Equality

The provisions of the Equality Act 2010 must be taken into consideration in relation to the way in which an authority plans and delivers Library services. In particular, an authority must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>.

In relation to compliance with the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, Members need to make decisions in an open minded balanced way showing due regard to the impact of the recommendations being presented. Members need to have a full understanding of any risks in terms of people with protected characteristics and any mitigation that has been put in place. Equality Impact Assessments, including consultation, provide the basis upon which Council has the necessary information to enable it to take into account this duty when making any decision.

Impact on Service Delivery:

This report deals with the impact on service delivery. Proposals to reduce the impact of library closures are contained within the report and the strategic plan. The service will continue to offer its current range of services. The level of provision will change i.e. the number of service points delivering the service will reduce. This will lead to further travel for a number of residents. These service delivery impacts were assessed as part of the Equalities Analysis Report contained in the report to Cabinet 14th February 2013.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

Two extensive sets of consultation took place during the library review in the form of a public engagement exercise seeking information plus a consultation exercise seeking views on the proposed recommended option B.

At Budget Council on 28th February 2013, the Leader of the Council indicated that the Council was always willing to consider any sustainable and feasible options for the future operation of the libraries and other services impacted by the savings options in the report. Since then, there have been a number of meetings with individual campaign/action groups concerning alternative proposals.

Staff consultations, including those with Trade Unions have taken place during the library review process, and specifically the staffing structure contained in this report.

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT (FD 2267) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (FD 1583) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

Option B was selected as the option to implement by Elected Members. The review is now at the implementation stage e.g. deciding when to close libraries and what mitigation to put in place. There remains the opportunity to put forward feasible and sustainable alternative proposals during the implementation process.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately, following the call-in period, following the publication of the minutes

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Relevant reports

Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Environmental Services) Report 13th April 2010:

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s9204/Libraries%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Cabinet Report 16th February 2012:

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s37234/Transformation%20Programme%202011%202014.pdf>

Cabinet Report 11th October 2012:

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s42139/Review%20of%20Library%20Services%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Environmental Services) 1st November 2012:

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s44512/Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20Regeneration%20and%20Environmental%20Services%201%20November%202012.pdf>

Cabinet Report 14TH February 2013:

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s44529/Review%20of%20Library%20Services%20v1%200%20Final.pdf>

Cabinet Report and Council report 28th February 2013:

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s44841/Two%20Year%20Financial%20Plan%20Revenue%20Budget%2013-14.pdf>

1. Background

- 1.1 Following an extensive library review, involving consultation and analysis of data, Budget Council agreed to implement option B of the library review on 28th February 2013. Option B was that the future library service would comprise of six libraries, one in each of the 5 main townships of Bootle, Crosby, Maghull, Formby and Southport plus the co-located facility at Netherton.
- 1.2 This report sets out the detail of the implementation of this decision, the strategic plan, including mitigating actions for Cabinet to consider. It also provides an update on alternative proposals.

2 Strategic plan for Sefton's Library Service

- 2.1 As part of the consultation exercise (November 2012 to January 2013) respondents were asked whether they agreed with some guiding principles for a sustainable library service for Sefton. The majority of respondents did agree with them and these principles were used to form an outline strategic framework for the current and future development of the service and this was outlined in the Cabinet report 14th February 2013.
- 2.2 The outline framework is that Sefton's Library Service should:
 - Be for all ages and for anyone who lives, works or studies in Sefton
 - Be accessible through various channels such as the Internet and other Council facilities
 - Be available to our most vulnerable residents, including those that are housebound
 - Be efficient, of good quality and accessible through co-location with other services or agencies where this brings benefits to communities
 - Carry a broad range of books, audio, online services and activities in the community
 - Be sustainable through reasonable and appropriate charges
 - Exploit new technologies to deliver cost effective, quality and inclusive Library services for the future
 - Support volunteers and communities to play their role in the delivery of Library services to the future
- 2.3 The report indicated that the framework would be expanded to form a strategic plan as part of the implementation process. The proposed strategic plan is contained at annex A. The plan is for a five year period and outlines what the service currently offers, and the strategy for how and what it plans to offer for the next five years. The detail of how this will be actioned and the milestones are contained in the implementation plan (paragraph 4 and Annex B).

3 Mitigating actions

- 3.1 The Cabinet reports of 11th October 2012 and 14th February 2013 outlined a number of potential mitigating actions. The following is an update on progress to date, together with some recommendations. There are also some additional proposed mitigating actions that were not included in the Cabinet reports. These are included as part of the strategic plan as the actions are not only to mitigate against the closures of libraries but also to form part of a strategy to improve access to library services and the library offer.

The outlined mitigation is proposed on the basis of the implementation of option B. If any alternative proposals come forward that require additional funding these would need to be considered alongside the mitigation actions as some of them may no longer be possible to implement as a result of the potential costs.

(Each of the following mitigation actions is prefaced with MA)

MA1 Increased opening hours

- 3.2 Increasing opening hours at the remaining libraries would improve accessibility, particularly for those unable to use a library during the week. As part of the consultation exercise undertaken respondents were asked when they most preferred to visit a library. The most popular times were Saturday morning, followed by weekdays during the day. The next most popular was Saturday afternoon, followed by weekday evenings (5-8pm). This information, together with patterns of current usage of each library has been combined to suggest the following changes to opening hours:

Bootle: No change. Although neighbouring libraries at Orrell, Litherland are closing, Bootle library is busiest during the week, and existing opening hours should be sufficient

Crosby, Formby, Meadows: Increase hours to open on Saturday afternoon until 4pm.

Netherton: Increase hours and change the pattern of opening to open half an hour later on weekdays and open for full days on weekdays, with no additional hours on Saturday. The late night will be moved from Wednesday to Friday and remain open until 7pm instead of 8pm. This proposal is in line with the levels of business in its co-located facility.

Southport: Increase hours to open on Saturday afternoon from 1- 4 pm, and to open for 4 hours on Sunday (times to be determined). This is to allow for additional business from closed libraries and the expected varying patterns of use, due to the development of the Atkinson.

- 3.3 Other possible increases in opening hours are for Sunday opening for Meadows and Crosby, and earlier opening during weekdays for Crosby and

Formby. However, until the future of library provision in Crosby is determined and all the mitigating actions taken into account, any further increases will not be possible.

- 3.4 The timing of the increased hours is included as part of the implementation plan. The increased hours would be difficult to implement until the new staff structure is in place and the closure of the other libraries actioned that will allow staff to be re-located to their new places of work.
- 3.5 The anticipated full year saving on staffing based on the increased hours is estimated to be in the region of £270,000. Cabinet is asked to approve the increased opening hours contained in paragraph 3.2 and delegate further decisions about opening hours to the – Children’s Services and Leisure.

MA2 Improvements in remaining libraries – infrastructure, IT

- 3.6 Of the remaining six libraries, three (Meadows, Netherton, Southport) do not require any modernisation as they are all recently new or refurbished libraries in co-located facilities.
- 3.7 The other three libraries (one in the Crosby area, Bootle and Formby) all require some investment in the condition of the building infrastructure, as well as adaptations to update and improve layouts, furniture and equipment, and IT. A bid has been submitted for capital funding for improvements to these three libraries. The bid is included as part of the single bids for capital projects for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and was approved at the meeting of Council on 14th May 2013.
- 3.8 The decision to update a library in the Crosby area is subject to which library in Crosby remains and therefore the level of work that would be needed. There are no immediate plans until this decision is taken. Further information on Crosby proposals are contained in section 7

MA3 Neighbourhood collections

- 3.9 The option of introducing neighbourhood collections was detailed in the report to Cabinet 14th February 2013. They provide a small permanent book collection housed in a co-located venue in proximity to where a library is closed, and there is a possibility of including public access PCs. The additional annual revenue costs for each collection are approximately £3,600.
- 3.10 This option is still being investigated with closer examination of potential venues. Based on the experience of other library services, a neighbourhood collection located in a council facility is the most feasible option to minimise the costs and provide access to staff and the Council’s IT infrastructure. Experience from elsewhere demonstrates that whatever location is used, it is essential that the staff in the facility support and promote it.
- 3.11 Any proposals to implement a neighbourhood collection will be reported back to Elected Members for approval. Cabinet is asked to delegate the decisions

on individual applications for the establishment of a neighbourhood collection to Cabinet Member – Children, Schools, Families and Leisure. Any potential collection will need to take into account whether there are any proposals for a community run library in the same area.

MA4 Collection and delivery points

- 3.12 A collection and delivery point service would enable customers to request a library item to be delivered to a specified location, in proximity to where a library has been closed. On further investigation, the practicalities of this scheme such as returning the item, how to ensure the person has collected the item etc, means that it is not as simple or cost effective an option to implement as it appears. It will be considered at a later stage, once any decisions about neighbourhood collections and community run libraries are made.

MA5 Home Visits Service

- 3.13 It is anticipated that there will be increased demand for the Home Visits Service from people who are unable to visit one of the remaining libraries, and on the existing volunteers who were consulted as part of the library review. Steps have now been taken to deliver an expanded Home Visits Service. This includes recruiting more volunteers and working in partnership with Sefton CVS and WRVS.

MA6 Reservation charges

- 3.14 The library service currently charges for customers to request an item from a library in Sefton or outside Sefton so that it is ready for collection at their nearest library. There are some exemptions e.g. free reservations for children. The costs of providing this service for items within Sefton have decreased over the years with e-mail notification where possible and improvements in the library management system. Free reservations for items in stock in Sefton for all library users will provide some mitigation for those people who live in close proximity to a library that is closing. It will also make it easier for any neighbourhood collections and/or community run libraries to access the whole of Sefton's stock. It is therefore recommended that the Council introduce free reservations for items in stock in Sefton for all library users.
- 3.15 There would still be a charge for items borrowed from outside of Sefton. Items borrowed outside of Sefton incur additional costs and it is proposed to increase the fee for this from £2.50 to £4 per item.
- 3.16 There would be a loss of income to the service of approximately £9,000 per annum. Cabinet is asked to approve the changes in reservation charges contained in 3.14 and 3.15 with effect from 1st August 2013.

MA7 Charges for use of public access computers

3.17 Charges for the use of public access computers in libraries were introduced in April 2012 as part of the budget savings for 2012/13. However, the small amounts of money generated are considered impractical to collect. Also, the introduction of the universal credit system and the need to apply on-line has brought additional pressure for free access to computers in libraries. Some library services that did charge for public access have now abolished these charges, and it is proposed that the charges are abolished in Sefton.

3.18 There would be a loss of income to the service of approximately £4,000 per annum. Cabinet is asked to approve the abolition of charges for public access to computers in libraries to be implemented from 1st July 2013.

3.19 A summary of the proposed mitigation is contained in the table below:

Mitigating action	What happens now?	Proposed change
Mitigation – subject to Cabinet approval		
MA1: Increased opening hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No libraries open on Saturday afternoon No libraries open on Sunday Netherton closed 1.5 days during week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 libraries to be open all day Saturday Southport to be open for 4 hrs on Sunday Netherton open full days during week, open half an hour later
MA6: Reservation charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80p charge per reserved item for items within Sefton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No charge for reserved items within Sefton from 1st August 2013
MA7: Charges for public access computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charges for use of public access computers after first free half hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No charges for use of public access computers from 1st July 2013.
Mitigation – funding approved by Council 14th May 2013		
MA2: Improvements in remaining libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure of buildings need investment Formby's capacity insufficient for usage PCs out of date and no self service technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve Bootle and Formby so infrastructure sound, self service, up to date PCs Crosby –await potential development
Mitigation – work in progress		
MA5: Home Visits Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service for people unable to visit a library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service expanded to include those unable to reach one of the remaining libraries
Mitigation – under investigation		
MA3: Neighbourhood collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No neighbourhood collections exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still under investigation To be

		reported back to Cabinet Member
MA4: Collection and delivery points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserved items are collected at libraries, no such service exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still under investigation To be reported back to Cabinet Member

4 Library Review Implementation plan

- 4.1 The implementation plan is attached at annex B. It deals with the proposed closure of libraries and their decommissioning, how this is to be phased and what tasks need to be carried out.

Closure programme

- 4.2 It is proposed that the library closure programme be undertaken on a phased basis over a three month period beginning in October and be completed by December 2013. The proposal is to close one library in October followed by 3 each in the months of November and December. This will allow Officers to refine decommissioning procedures following the first closure, and provide a “stock holding” library to facilitate the transfer of items for decommissioning from other libraries. The following table sets out the proposed closure timetable:

Month and number of libraries	Oct – 1 library	Nov – 3 libraries	Dec – 3 libraries
Libraries to close	Orrell	Ainsdale Churchtown Litherland	Aintree Birkdale Crosby

- 4.3 Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed closure programme and delegate any amendments to the programme to Cabinet Member – Children, Schools, Families and Leisure.

Decommissioning tasks

- 4.4 The detail of the required actions is contained in the implementation plan at annex B, and there will be more detailed action plans for some of the tasks. A summary of what will be required is:

4.4.1 Staffing:

Staff consultation, selection process and dismissal notices. The length of time needed for this determines much of the rest of the process.

4.4.2 Services and contracts:

Notice is required for utilities, telephones, etc. It is also required for annual maintenance contracts e.g. computer support, electrical inspections etc. The closure programme also requires notice to be given to Sefton’s Cleaning Service and staff given notice.

4.4.3 Disposal of fixtures and fittings:

Fixtures and fittings, including shelving will be assessed to see what can be re-used elsewhere in the service or the rest of the Council. What remains will be disposed of in accordance with Council procedures and any proposals for the future of the building. Any disposal will take into account whether there are any plans for a community run library for that site.

4.4.4 Disposal of stock:

Stock (books and other items) will be assessed to see whether they are suitable for use in other libraries. Where they are not, but are still suitable for use, they will be offered to schools, community groups etc. Any items considered in need of disposal will follow the normal disposal procedures. A temporary stock team will be established to carry this out, and this will form part of the staffing structure.

4.4.5 Demolition/mothballing:

Some sites will need to be either mothballed or demolished, depending on any future plans for their disposal, and subject to planning regulations and any other legal conditions.

5 Staffing proposals

5.1 The proposed staffing structure is identified below. There are two options. One is based on the current opening hours of the remaining libraries, and the other is based on additional opening hours, as contained in the mitigation proposals in paragraph 3.2. Option two would be implemented if Cabinet approve the increase in opening hours.

5.2 The proposed staffing structure is for the customer facing staff that are based in the libraries. A summary of the proposals are:

5.2.1 For all options:

Library Managers: One library manager allocated per library, except for Bootle and Netherton (one manager for both locations). This leads to a reduction of 2 full time equivalents (FTE)

Library Services Officer: This would be a new post to support the implementation of the library review and new developments such as the extension of self service, community run libraries/neighbourhood collections etc. It is expected that this post will be at a senior library assistant level.

Senior Library Assistants: Between one FTE and two FTE per library. This leads to a total reduction (including additional new post) of 308.22 hours (8.56 FTE)

5.2.2 For current opening hours (option 1):

As 5.2.1 for library managers and senior library assistants

Library Assistants: The number of library assistants will vary considerably between libraries depending on the opening hours and the expected levels of business. There would be a total reduction of 289.22 hours (8.03 FTE)

Library Assistants (weekends/evenings): The number of hours for library assistants (weekend/evenings) will be between 6.5-12.5 hours per library. This leads to an overall reduction of 23.5 hours (0.65 FTE)

5.2.3 For proposed increase in opening hours (option 2):

As 5.2.1 for library managers and senior library assistants

Library Assistants: The number of library assistants will vary considerably between libraries depending on the opening hours and the expected levels of business. There would be a total reduction of 226 hours (6.28 FTE)

Library Assistants (weekends/evenings): The number of hours for library assistants (weekend/evenings) will be between 6.5-24 hours per library. This leads to an overall increase of 7.5 hours (0.21 FTE)

5.2.4 Overall variation in staffing hours:

Option 1 = total reduction of 693 hours (19.25 FTE)

Option 2 = total reduction of 599 hours (16.63 FTE)

As there is a significant number of staff who work part time, until the recruitment process is undertaken, it is impossible to know exactly how many people will be subject to potential redundancy but it is estimated to be between 25 - 40 people

5.2.5 Vacancies/VR/VER;

To date there are 12 expressions of interest in VR/VER plus vacant posts which will help to offset the number of potential compulsory redundancies that will be required. There will be a change in the number of contracted hours to work to reflect what is required in the new service. This may result in people being unable to take up the pattern of hours offered. If the number of vacancies and VR/VERs results in posts that are not filled, normal HR procedures will ensure that all vacancies are filled as soon as possible, and do not delay the implementation programme.

6 Alternative proposals

6.1 Officers have met with community/library action groups to discuss the establishment of the groups and/or alternative proposals. Since Budget Council on 28th February 2013, Officers have met with members of:

- ABC Library Group (a combined group from BLAG - Birkdale Library Action Group; FoCL – Friends of Churchtown Library; FOAL – Friends of Ainsdale Library)
- Aintree Library Action Group (ALAG)

- Friends of Carnegie Library
- Sefton CVS

Officers have also provided all information that has been requested from groups and/or individuals including e.g. staffing, running cost figures.

- 6.2 At the time of publication of this report, 3 alternative proposals have been received from the following groups/organisations:
- ABC Library Group for Ainsdale, Birkdale and Churchtown libraries
 - Birkdale Library Action Group for Birkdale library
 - Sefton CVS for Birkdale library. An original proposal was received and included in the Cabinet Report 14th February 2013 (Annex D). They have subsequently submitted a revised proposal with more detail and costings

An expression of interest has also been received from St Simon and St Jude with All Souls for library provision in the Churchtown area.

- 6.3 These proposals need further consideration by Officers to review the financial and legal implications in order for Elected Members to consider whether they are sustainable and feasible. Cabinet is asked to note that meetings have taken place with community groups, proposals have been submitted and an update report will be submitted to the meeting of Cabinet on 18th July 2013.

Community run libraries

- 6.4 There has been no formal expression of interest in a community run library to date, but it is likely that one or more expressions of interest will be submitted.
- 6.5 The Arts Council report on community run libraries demonstrated that there is no one model for community run libraries across the country, and that each local authority will need to determine what is best suited for its own local need. Whatever model is adopted, community run libraries are likely to need some form of support from the library service.
- 6.6 The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee report on library closures stated that:
".....It is not clear how sustainable some of these community libraries may be, nor what impact the change will have on some of the outreach work conducted by libraries, particularly in relation to children and reading. It is clear, however, that community libraries will fail unless given at least some support by the local authority in terms of access to stock (including new stock), retaining computer equipment and IT support, and access to the advice and assistance of professional library staff."
- 6.7 The Council can be open to proposals for community run libraries within the current buildings until it has disposed of the building. However, once the library is closed and mothballed including removal of the the stock, IT, shelves etc any proposal submitted would need to consider the additional costs to the community group if they wished to re-instate them. If there was a strong

proposal under assessment during the closure programme, it might be possible to change the order of closure. However, any proposal would need to have a neutral impact on the Council's budget, and the last library will have to close by the end of December 2013.

- 6.8 Any proposals received for community run libraries will be included in the update report to Cabinet on 18th July 2013 or at a future date if received after that date.

Outsourcing the library service

- 6.9 As part of the library review consultation a commercial library provider contacted the library service offering to work with the Council to deliver library services at a significant saving either by maintaining the current provision or by reducing the number of libraries.
- 6.10 If the Council wishes to consider outsourcing, any dialogue process would need to be structured and with more than one company. Therefore, it is not appropriate to continue discussions with only one provider. If the Council was minded to consider outsourcing, a proper framework and specification would need to be in place that invited all potential providers.
- 6.11 The market for outsourcing library services in this country has still not developed significantly. Also, the library service in Sefton is in a process of transition which would make it difficult to enter this immature market. Outsourcing would be inappropriate at this stage.
- 6.12 It is recommended that Officers continue with the implementation of the Council's decision to reduce the number of libraries, identifying potential mitigations and continued dialogue with community groups. If at a future date the Council decides to "outsource" its library provision, that the market be tested to ascertain any viable interest.

7 Development proposals

- 7.1 Cabinet will be aware that there was an expression of interest during the library review consultation process to redevelop the Crosby Civic Hall site. No proposals have been formally submitted to the Council to date, including planning applications. However, indications from the interested developer are that proposals could be submitted soon.
- 7.2 The current uncertainty around Crosby complicates the planning around the revised staffing structure for the new library service, and also for the community group that are currently operating the Civic Hall. Should the development proposal be received and approved by the Council it would mean a new library being built in Crosby on the current site. During the redevelopment period it would be necessary for the Council to retain College Road Library (Carnegie) temporarily for Crosby until the new facility was available.

- 7.3 If the development failed to proceed the Council would be left with potentially significant infrastructure costs in maintaining and operating the library from the Civic Hall site. Crosby Library is a large facility that houses and delivers a number of key services. Should a redevelopment not progress, a decision will have to be made as to which library in Crosby was to close. On the basis that the main Crosby library does house and provides a number of key library services it would be recommended that the Crosby Library on the Civic Hall site is retained.
- 7.4 If Members agree, Officers will continue with the library operation at the Civic Hall site, and institute closure proposals for the College Road library.

8 Risks

- 8.1 As part of the review and planning process Officers have regularly reviewed strategic and operational risks associated with the review and put in place measures to manage those risks. This approach builds on the risk assessment and management of risks identified in the previous Cabinet reports covering the recommended options.
- 8.2 Members are aware that creating the capacity to develop options and implement the required change also carries a risk. Senior Officers will continue to monitor progress and agree priorities in line with Council decisions. This risk should not be underestimated given the significant reduction in management over the last two years, and the further proposed changes in 2013/14 & 2014/15. However, plans are in place to manage these risks and take appropriate actions.
- 8.3 The following risks have been identified as medium or high for the strategic and implementation plans.
- 8.3.1 Implementation Plan: Unable to dispose of buildings, leading to ongoing costs and maintenance, including a greater risk of vandalism. The savings target of £400,000 assumes no ongoing building costs for the closed libraries. Mitigation includes:
- Ongoing communication and discussions with pro-active actions, with the Assets and Property service
 - Review the option for demolition as part of the disposal, taking legal requirements into account
- 8.3.2 Implementation Plan: Damage to the reputation of the library service within the local community and the national context, at the point of implementing the closure. A negative impact on public perception could lead to a low take-up of the ongoing library offer. Mitigation includes:
- Ongoing communications with relevant parties and Sefton communities including positive promotion of the future service delivery
 - Reduction of the impact on communities through the implementation of mitigating actions such as those included in section 3

- Continued discussions with community groups and provide them with the information they require

8.3.3 Strategic Plan: Difficulty of sustaining a modern up to date service through the increased use of technology including internet applications and website developments. This is due to a limited budget, competing priorities within the Council for IT support, existing outdated systems and the rapid changes to technology and the marketplace. Mitigation includes:

- Monitor and review available library technology developments
- Identify priorities and business cases for future developments
- Work in partnership with arvato and external suppliers
- Increase awareness of where library technology can support the priorities of the Council
- Seek opportunities for external funding where appropriate

8.3.4 Strategic Plan: Reduced ability to engage with cross council service delivery. This is due to reduced budgets and competing priorities. Mitigation includes:

- Continuing discussions at leadership level on priorities and opportunities for collaborative working
- Review ICT systems to increase potential for supporting other Council service
- Promote the library service to internal partners
- Ensure current awareness of potential future developments and assess library service's contribution
- Physical improvement of library spaces to attract other Council services

8.4 Cabinet is asked to note the key risks outlined above. Officers will manage these risks and report further if any escalation is required.

9 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

9.1 As the Council makes decisions, there is a need to be clear and precise about our processes and impact assess potential change proposals, identifying any risks and mitigating these as far as possible.

9.2 A full Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) analysis was undertaken on the closure of 7 libraries and reported to Cabinet 14th February 2013.

9.3 Some of the possible mitigation identified in the PSED analysis e.g. free reservations and abolition of charges for public access computers are included in this report for implementation, and others for further investigation.