

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 14th February 2013

Subject: Review of Library Service

Report of: Strategic Director – Place

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Report Summary

The report provides an update on the Library Service Review, including the outcomes from the consultation exercise, and outlines options for consideration emerging from the review and consultation.

Any resolutions made will be reported to Budget Council on 28th February 2013 to assist the Council in setting its budget. In reaching decisions the Cabinet and Council must take into account amongst other things the consultation and engagement activity to date and the impact assessments and risk associated with each option.

If option B is progressed it will require the implementation of major change and appropriate capacity will need to be dedicated to ensure deliverability. The report is arranged in a number of sections with associated annexes as indicated below:

	Annex
Petitions	A
Analysis of questionnaires	B
Analysis of consultation in addition to questionnaires	C
Sefton CVS letter	D
Birkdale Library Action Group letter	E
Public Sector Equality Duty – Analysis Report	F
List of Background documents and reports	G

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- a) Considers the report, associated documentation and public consultation response, and refers further consideration and determination of this issue to Budget Council on 28th February 2013.

- b) Instructs officers to pursue the activities, discussions and lines of enquiry referred to in paragraphs 2.29, 2.30-2.32, 2.33, 2.34 and 2.35 of the Report and to report back to the Cabinet in due course.

c) instructs officers to develop a Strategic Plan for Libraries as mentioned in paragraphs 2.1 - 2.3 of the report and to report back to Cabinet in due course.

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			x
2	Jobs and Prosperity			x
3	Environmental Sustainability		x	
4	Health and Well-Being			x
5	Children and Young People			x
6	Creating Safe Communities			x
7	Creating Inclusive Communities			x
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy			x

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs.

The recent provisional Government announcement on the Revenue Settlement for 2013/14 and 2014/15 has identified a further reduction in resources for the Council. As a result, the previously identified budget gap of £43.7m has now increased to £50.8m. As part of the budget forecasting process an indicative saving of £400,000 has been included in relation to the Library Review. This indicative saving is for budget forecasting purposes only and is not intended to prejudge the outcome of the Review. If options are agreed that achieve a saving of less than £400,000 then specific alternative savings will need to be identified by the Council, that compensate for any shortfall. If Option B is adopted the cost of operating the Library service at the end of the implementation process will reduce from a total cost of £3.25m to £2.85m.

(B) Capital Costs.

Potential capital costs are identified within the report however these cannot be fully quantified at this time. An estimate of capital costs are identified at paras 4.4 and 4.8.

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 paragraph 1.4 of the report.

Human Resources

If Option B is approved, it will be necessary for the Authority 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

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 a 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:

Consideration of service delivery implications will form an integral part of the budget, public engagement and consultation processes described within the report and will be dependent on the option finally adopted. If Option B is implemented 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 have been assessed as part of the Equalities Analysis Report.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The first stage of the Library review as outlined at para 1.1 did not require any public consultation.

The second stage of the Library review started in February 2012 and reported to Cabinet on 11th October 2012. This stage included a public engagement exercise to seek information about how libraries are used. Further details of this are at paras at paragraphs 3.1- 3.3.

For the third stage of the review extensive public consultation took place from 5th November 2012 to 14th January 2013. This built upon the findings from the public engagement exercise undertaken in stage two of the Library review, the outcomes from which were reported to Cabinet on 11th October 2012. A range of methods for consultation were utilised for this third stage to ensure that all interested parties could express their view. The outcomes from the consultation and engagement are presented within this report. They are contained at Paragraphs 3.1 – 3.42.

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT (FD2097/13) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1413/2013) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

Members have previously considered options for consultation only. This report seeks to provide Members with sufficient information on the outcome of that consultation to allow them to come to a decision on a sustainable, comprehensive and efficient Library Service for Sefton for future years.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following Council approval.

A comprehensive implementation plan will be developed in consultation with all stakeholders, particularly staff and Trade Unions and will be submitted to Cabinet for approval at a later date.

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Relevant reports

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

Cabinet Report 16th February 2012

Cabinet Report 11th October 2012

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

Full details of the relevant reports will be accessible via the Council's website at www.sefton.gov.uk/libraries. It will contain links to the above reports. This website will contain all underpinning information, including maps of the population, usage data, and socio-economic data. It will also include links to national reports, background documents and websites considered relevant to this review.

A list of this documentation, as identified at the time of finalising the report, is at Annex G.

1. Background

1.1 Stage one of a Library review was undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2009/10. This stage was an asset management review, did not result in any changes to service delivery, and therefore did not require public consultation. The Committee made thirteen recommendations and conclusions. These included:

- A working group to finalise the work and report to Overview and Scrutiny in October 2011
- Concern at the low level of funding for the routine maintenance of libraries and poor staff accommodation
- The development of a strategic plan for the delivery of Sefton's libraries over the forthcoming 10-15 years be supported
- Officers to further investigate any opportunities for joint working or the development of joint facilities with partners, for example via "*Building Schools for the Future*" or the Primary Care Trust, and examine any alternative sites or premises for use by the Library Service

The next stage of the review was suspended until 2012 to allow the Council the opportunity to consider other Library reviews that were being undertaken across the country and the legal challenges that had come forward. It also allowed the opportunity to extend the review to include services and buildings in relation to Sefton's local need.

1.2 In February 2012 Cabinet approved terms of reference for the next stage of the Library review to deliver sustainable Library services in Sefton for the foreseeable future. The review did not have a savings target but was set against an estimated budget gap for the next two years of £43.7m (now £50.8m). It recognised the savings already achieved by the Library service of £0.86m over the previous two years.

1.3 The key tasks undertaken in stage two were:

- A public engagement exercise to seek information about how libraries are used
- Data mapping using existing usage, financial and comparative data
- A detailed local needs analysis based on a community profile for each Library
- To define the understanding of a "*comprehensive and efficient*" Library service for Sefton to meet the requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
- The development of consultation options for consideration by Elected Members, including indicative costs and potential mitigating actions
- A risk analysis
- A pre-assessment equality analysis
- An initial assessment of alternative options

- 1.4 The report to Cabinet on 11th October 2012 proposed a definition for Sefton of a “comprehensive and efficient” Library Service as:

“A comprehensive and efficient Library service introduces and sustains a public appreciation and participation in reading and information, for leisure and personal development, formally and informally supporting individuals and groups through lifelong learning journeys.

The Council’s service is universal and will continue to be for all ages, encompassing the widest spheres of public interest and usership. It continues to be comprehensive insofar as it will not exclude any person who lives, works or studies in Sefton from accessing or benefiting from its services; it will do so efficiently by responding to trends in technology and customer interaction, changes in lifestyles and customer requirements, by providing services which may be less efficiently provided elsewhere and being set in the context of whole Council resource.

It should be noted that the service will continue to be delivered in welcoming, safe, democratic, social spaces, which the public generally choose to access rather than have to access. In addition to this the service will look to maximise the use of new technologies, where a business case can be evidenced, provide services in the most efficient and effective manner whilst continuing to develop a culture of reading and literacy across all ages.”

- 1.5 The report to Cabinet on 11th October 2012 contained all the information identified as part of the stage two key tasks and outlined three consultation options. They were:

- Option A: The future Library service would comprise of three libraries in existing co-located facilities
- Option B: 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
- Option C: The future Library service would retain all thirteen existing libraries and significantly reduce their opening hours by approximately 50%

- 1.6 Cabinet, at its meeting on 11 October 2012, agreed to consult on option B and resolved that:

- 1) the petition be noted;
(Chair reported that 172 petition forms, containing 262 names, had been submitted “calling upon Sefton Council to make sure that Churchtown Library stays open following the review of the library service. Churchtown Library is an efficient, friendly library and is a vital part of our community.” In accordance with the Council and Committee Procedure Rules, Councillor Ashton made a statement on behalf of the petitioners.)
- 2) the outcome of the local needs analysis, including the results from the public engagement exercise, resulting in options for a new model of delivery for a modern, sustainable, comprehensive and efficient Sefton Library Service be noted

- 3) it be noted that all figures in this report are working assumptions in relation to the options to be considered and the figures should not be seen as predetermining any decisions.
- 4) it be agreed that the review process described in the report has been a robust process
- 5) the general definition of a “*comprehensive and efficient*” Library service for Sefton described in paragraph 2.3 of the report (repeated in para 1.4 above) be approved
- 6) the risks identified within the report be noted
- 7) the option appraisal criteria set out in the report be approved and it be noted that they are influenced by previous Secretary of State/Judicial Review considerations and intervention;
- 8) **Option B set out in the report be approved as the basis for consultation and engagement with the community, staff, partners, including businesses, voluntary, community and faith sectors, to transform the way Sefton delivers its Library service;**
- 9) it be noted that the equality implications would be thoroughly assessed in line with the Council’s Equality Impact Assessment process, should Members agree the proposed option be taken forward at a later date; and
- 10) the potential mitigating actions identified to date be noted and that further work on Sefton’s Library Service offer, including the possible mitigating actions be developed

1.7 The decision to approve Option B for consultation was subject to a “*call in*”, and this was heard at the Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Environmental Services) meeting on 1st November 2012.

The Committee resolved that:

- (1) this Committee is not concerned about the decisions made by the Cabinet in relation to this matter; and
- (2) the matter be not referred back for further consideration.

1.8 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not therefore have concern over the process in developing options for consultation and did not express any view on the potential outcome of the review.

1.9 Following the decision by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the following key tasks were undertaken:

- A consultation exercise
- Detailed costs analysis of potential savings
- Detailed review and costs of potential mitigations
- Risk analysis
- Equalities analysis report

1.10 Since the publication of the Cabinet report on 11th October 2012 there have been a number of developments affecting libraries across England:

1.11 The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee report on Library closures was published on 6 November 2012. It made 12 conclusions and recommendations. Many of these were aimed at Government Departments, the Secretary of State and other bodies such as Arts Council England. Those of particular relevance to Sefton are:

- *The key to ensuring that an adequate – and preferably a good – Library service is available to the whole local population appears to be the retention of a distributed service, in accessible locations, but with flexibility over whether the service is provided in dedicated Library buildings, in other locations, via mobile libraries, or in any other that best fits local needs.*
- *Local authorities must ensure that they retain enough experience and professionally qualified staff to develop the services on offer to the public to reflect changing needs, and to support the growing number of volunteers both within their core Library service and in any community libraries that may be established locally.*
- *Local authorities must ensure that they maintain and improve co-operation, both across boundaries and nationally, as this will free money for front-line Library services.*

(The North West region has a strong record of co-operation and innovation and Sefton actively participates in this. It is part of the North West and Yorkshire purchasing consortium for stock, the regional and national interlibrary loans and a regional reader development programme. Nationally, it participates in promotions such as the summer reading challenge and is “signed up” to the national offers that have just been launched. Information about shared services is contained at paragraph 4.16)

- *.....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.*
- *.....We believe, however, that all those involved in providing this service to the public – local authorities, Arts Council and the Secretary of State – need to work harder to demonstrate that it is still much-valued and has a promising future.*

1.12 The Government has issued a response to the Select Committee recommendations. Those that are considered directly relevant to Sefton’s Library Review are listed below and include Sefton’s response where relevant to Option B. They are:

- *“The 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act does not seek to be overly prescriptive but instead anchors the delivery of a local service to*

the needs of the local community. The closure of one or even a number of Library branches does not necessarily signify a breach of the 1964 Act

- *The Government has no intention of returning to defined Public Library Service Standards (PLSS). Between 2001 and 2008 the Standards helped to define a “comprehensive and efficient” service but were withdrawn along with other Government imposed performance targets in a move towards increased local autonomy*

(Sefton has addressed this by setting out its own definition of what this means locally (see paragraph 1.4)

- *As the Select Committee highlights, the provision of a comprehensive and efficient Library service is not necessarily dependent on the retention of individual Library buildings – it is the provision of the service which is key. But libraries are recognised as trusted spaces, and many authorities are rightly looking at ways of combining a range of their services with Library buildings often at the heart of the offer.....*

(In proposing Option B Sefton is seeking to continue with the co-located library and sports services at Meadows and Netherton, and develop a further co-located service at the Atkinson in Southport. The interest in the Crosby Library/Civic Hall site provides further opportunity to co-locate with a voluntary sector provider, whilst Formby Parish Council is located within Formby library).

- *Staff costs are a significant and have been an increasing proportion of Library costs and, if the service is losing up to 35% of its budget some staff cuts are inevitable. As with other cuts, however, local authorities need to give careful consideration to how to do least damage to the service provided to the public now and for the future. They must ensure that they retain enough experience and/or professionally qualified staff to develop the service on offer to the public to reflect changing needs, and to support the growing number of volunteers both within their core Library service and in any community libraries that may be established locally*

(Sefton has reduced its staff costs. If Option B is implemented there will be further staff cuts but it will still retain experienced/professionally qualified staff. The service already uses volunteers to support it, and these volunteers are recruited and trained by experienced/professionally qualified staff. Any future proposals involving a significant increase in the number of volunteers or the establishment of community libraries would consider the staff that would be needed to support them as part of the implementation and costs required for delivery).

- *Any authority should have a strategic plan in place for delivering their Library service, based on local need and within available resources to fulfil their comprehensive and efficient duty.....*

(A strategic framework for Sefton is contained at paragraph 2.2 . This is the first stage of a strategic plan and the plan will be further developed as part of the implementation process and reported back to Cabinet.)

- 1.13 In November 2012, an expert advisor on the Public Library Service was appointed to a part-time role at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and will work with Library authorities who are identified as being “*at risk*” of falling short of their statutory duties.
- 1.14 Procurement exercises elsewhere have resulted in two London boroughs announcing a preferred supplier to outsource the delivery of their Library services. Detailed information is commercially sensitive and not available. However, neither authority has yet concluded its procurement process, with reports that one is for a £30million contract for 13 libraries over eight years and the other local authority expects to save £500,000 (it is not stated over how long a period or the total value of the contract). During the consultation period Sefton was approached by a commercial service provider and further details of this are contained at paragraph 3.29.
- 1.15 Since the Cabinet report of 11th October 2012 the Secretary of State has made no further “*will*” or “*mindful to intervene*” statements. No new Judicial Reviews have been announced. Doncaster has been given the right to appeal in its Judicial Review. This legal challenge is based on issues related to the balance of power between the Elected Mayor and the Council and as such has no direct relevance to Sefton.
- 1.16 There continues to be concern about libraries across the country and a number of questions have been asked of the Secretary of State and the Minister. At a House of Commons debate on 10th January 2013 *Oral Answers to Questions for Culture, Media and Sport: -public libraries-* questions were asked about Library closures and the role of the Arts Council. Specifically, John Pugh MP (Southport) asked “*In my constituency, Sefton is proposing to close all the branch libraries, radically reducing access. Does the Minister think that this is the only or best way to deal with the budgetary squeeze and will he look into that particular case?*” The Minister replied “*We always keep an eye on proposals by local authorities to reorganise their Library services and we will certainly keep an eye on those proposals.*” The DCMS advisor has since contacted Sefton to find out what is happening and what process the Council is following.
- 1.17 At the time of writing this report a number of other local authorities have announced proposals to close libraries e.g. Newcastle is proposing to close 10 of its 18 libraries, and Sheffield with up to 14 out of 27 libraries to be closed or passed to volunteers. Tameside closed 5 out of 13 libraries

in October 2012 with some investment in the remaining libraries. Liverpool has just announced that they are proposing to close 10 of their 19 libraries as part of their budget savings.

- 1.18 Arts Council England (ACE) acts as a development agency for libraries. It published *“Community libraries. Learning from experience: guiding principles for local authorities”* on 22nd January 2013. It presents the findings of new research about the different ways communities have been involved with their libraries, drawing on actual experiences and attempts to identify factors which local authorities might find helpful when considering how best to design and manage their own Library services. The research involved a national mapping of community supported, managed and commissioned libraries and there are ten in-depth case studies. The report documents the different approaches, with varying involvement and support from local authorities.
- 1.19 The National Federation of Women’s Institutes also published a report in January about volunteers and community run libraries, based on a small-scale study with volunteers *“On permanent loan? Community managed libraries: the volunteer perspective”*. It outlines the significantly different experiences of assistance and support received from local authorities. It also stressed the amount of work that was required by volunteers to ensure the continued existence of many of the community run libraries. More information about interest in community run libraries is contained at paragraph 4.13

2 Strategic framework for Sefton’s Library Service

- 2.1 As part of the consultation exercise outlined in para 3 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 (see Annex B for further details). These principles have been used to form an outline strategic framework for the current and future development of the service.
- 2.2 The outline framework is below.

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 This framework will be expanded to form a strategic plan as part of the implementation process. The implementation will consider the mitigation and opportunities that will result from decisions. The framework and plan will be reviewed and monitored at regular intervals to ensure that it takes both local needs and national developments into account, and the need to have the staff/resource to continue to develop the service and strategic plan.

3 Consultation

Consultation Methodology

3.1 As part of the initial information gathering exercise, the Library review team undertook a local needs analysis using information from the public engagement exercise and from data of the demographics of Sefton, usage of libraries, geographic spread.

3.2 The public engagement exercise was the first part of a consultation process that sought information from both users and non users of the Library service as part of stage two of the Library review, and as reported to Cabinet on 11th October 2012. The information gathered during this stage included:

- which libraries people use
- how often
- why they use them
- what other Council services they use and
- why they do not use the Library service.

3.3 The public engagement was not a consultation on any future Library closures or service changes, rather a consultation to inform the development of a series of options to put forward to Elected Members. In total over 6,700 responses were received and analysed. The report on the outcomes of this engagement process is available on-line and in hard copies at Libraries and One-Stop shops. The details of the responses to each question, and a summary of other comments were used to develop the range of options for Elected Members to consider in coming to a decision about which option to move forward for consultation.

3.4 As a result, three consultation options were considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11th October 2012. Whilst the Cabinet on 11th October 2012 approved Option B for consultation, in order for the Council to consult on Option B we asked, in the consultation questionnaire, for the views of consultees on the other Options i.e. Options A and C or none of the Options.

3.5 A consultation and engagement plan was agreed by the Consultation and Engagement Panel on 2nd November 2012 for this formal stage of consultation. It set out how the consultation would be promoted to residents, ensuring that as many people as possible had the opportunity to get involved and have their say. The approach used ensured that feedback could be gathered to inform the guiding principles of the methodology. The consultation formally commenced on 5th November, 2012 and closed on 14th January, 2013. The key principles for this stage of consultation and engagement were in line with the Council's consultation principles, to:

- Ensure every resident has the opportunity to have their say, particularly those most affected
- Inform residents how they can have their say
- Engage with partner organisations to support residents to have their say
- Ensure Sefton Council staff have the opportunity to have their say
- Identify affected groups and work with these to have their say

3.6 The review team ensured that the consultation was written and communicated in plain English and available in accessible formats, if required, so that all residents would understand the key issues and potential impact as well as having the opportunity to have their say

3.7 The consultation was consistently communicated ensuring residents understood

- a) why the Council has to make these difficult decisions
- b) how to have their say; and
- c) what the options are and their potential impact.

3.8 The main methods used were as follows:

- Online and paper survey (separately for over and under 16 year olds) with an accompanying background document summarising the Library review
- Easy read questionnaire
- Face to face meetings/workshops/focus groups with identified groups. A list of the meetings that took place is at Annex C
- A dedicated mailbox and postal address were established and well used, with 180 responses from individuals, groups and forwarded by Elected Members

3.9 It was publicised via:

- Attendance at public meetings, including Area Committees and Parish Councils, and with identified groups to raise awareness of the consultation and discuss the process
- Information on notice boards at libraries, with printed background documents available to browse
- Information about the consultation and/or consultation documents and links were sent to groups including schools, equality and community groups with the additional opportunity to comment by freepost, telephone and email

- Use of Social media i.e. Twitter and Facebook
 - Extensive media coverage including information in local newspapers; press releases and various media
- 3.10 Approximately 10,000 paper questionnaires were handed out at libraries, One Stop Shops, Bootle and Southport Town Halls and at public meetings.
- 3.11 It seems unlikely, bearing in mind the extent of the activities described above, that any resident with an interest in libraries or local affairs would have been unaware of the Library review and the consultation.
- 3.12 As well as the response from the questionnaires, information analysed includes comments and views from letters & e-mails, petitions and representations, during the consultation period.
- 3.13 Copies of the questionnaires can be viewed via www.sefton.gov.uk and in hard copies at libraries.

Consultation Response and Analysis

- 3.14 All Library consultation responses received, by whatever method have been analysed and included as part of the overall analysis. The numbers of responses received are:

Questionnaires – printed and on-line responses	Total 3026
On-line	1036
Paper	1990
Letters and e-mails to Council Officers *	128
Letters and e-mails sent to Elected Members and subsequently forwarded to Council Officers *	52
Petitions under 25 names	1
Petitions 25 to 2749 names	5
Petitions 2750 and above names	4
E-petitions on Council's website under 25 names	2
E-petitions on Council's website 25 to 2749 names	5

* Letters and e-mails copied to more than one person are counted as one response. Letter and e-mails identified above include all those received from date of publication of Cabinet Report (4th October 2012) until 25th January 2013.

Letters and e-mails copied to Council Officers and Elected Members have been counted in the total for Elected Members
47 of the 128 letters were individual letters from pupils at one primary school.

- 3.15 Petitions included in this report are those received by Democratic Services as of the date of publication of this report.

Questionnaires

- 3.16 The analysis of the questionnaire and details of the responses to each question is contained at Annex B. A summary of written comments is contained in Annex C
- 3.17 Key responses to questions within the questionnaire are shown below, *(the percentages given relate to the number of responders to the relevant question, the number of responses to each questions varies as not all responders answered every question and some questions generated multiple responses):-*

TABLE 1 – Who responded?

95% (2339)	Members of the public
51% (1247)	Retired
18% (460)	In full time work
13% (324)	In part time work
60% (1356)	Female
40% (899)	Male
38% (906)	60-74 years old
29% (706)	40-59 years old
18% (435)	75+ years old
11% (277)	25-39 years old
2% (49)	16-24 years old

TABLE 2 – Where from (Postcode)?

26% (714)	PR8
17% (484)	L23
13% (343)	PR9
8% (231)	L37
8% (223)	L22
7% (205)	L20
6% (178)	L10
5% (131)	L21

TABLE 3 – Which Libraries are used most often by respondents?

17% (494)	Crosby Civic
12% (344)	Ainsdale
12% (333)	Birkdale
10% (277)	College Road (Carnegie)
10% (273)	Churchtown
9% (251)	Formby
8% (214)	Aintree

5% (145)	Southport
5% (132)	Bootle
5% (127)	Orrell
2% (70)	Maghull (Meadows)
2% (68)	Litherland
2% (59)	Netherton

TABLE 4 – Support for Options A, B, & C

43% (1225)	Supported Option B
41% (1171)	Supported Option C
14% (417)	Did not support any Option
2% (51)	Supported Option A

TABLE 5 – 56% (1588) thought that Option B would result in a significant gap in Library provision. – Where would that gap most affect the respondents?

25% (362)	Ainsdale
24% (359)	Birkdale
19% (280)	Churchtown
15% (221)	Aintree
9% (127)	Orrell
8% (114)	Litherland

TABLE 6 – Which location would you go to if your Library closed under Option B?

26% (712)	None
20% (536)	My Library remains open
19% (523)	Southport
15% (409)	Crosby
7% (198)	Bootle
5% (133)	Formby
4% (107)	Maghull
3% (96)	Netherton

TABLE 7 – If your Library closed under Option B would you use any of the mitigating services?

45% (709)	None
16% (258)	e-books
15% (231)	Collection & Delivery Points
10% (162)	Neighbourhood Collections
9% (142)	Home Visit Service
5% (75)	Carer's Ticket

TABLE 8 – Would you be willing to Volunteer & if so doing what?

46%(1428)	No
21% (664)	General volunteering
7% (223)	Assisting with children’s activities
6% (202)	Home Visits Service
6% (198)	Helping People to Learn (e.g. I.T.)
5% (156)	Assisting with Older People’s activities
5% (148)	Local History
4% (120)	Promotion & fundraising

TABLE 9 – How often would you be willing to Volunteer?

43% (417)	Once a week
20% (196)	Once a month
19% (181)	Once a fortnight
12% (114)	2-3 times a week
5% (49)	Less than once per month
1% (9)	Daily

TABLE 10 – Would you be interested in being involved in running a Community Library?

80% (1956)	No
20% (493)	Yes

TABLE 11 – Sustainable, comprehensive and efficient criteria and the guiding principles for the Library service

Overall, an average of 78% of respondents agreed with the 6 criteria (<i>para 7.3</i>) used to define a sustainable, comprehensive and efficient Library service.
Overall, an average of 91% of respondents agreed with the 8 guiding principles (<i>para 7.4</i>) of Library service provision

Letters and e-mails

3.18 Of the 180 letters and e-mails received from 4th October 2012 until 25th January 2013, 163 were from individuals and 17 were from groups and organisations including schools, Parish Councils, and community organisations. A summary of key points from the letters and e-mails includes:

- Concerns about individual libraries
- The difficulties of travel and transport plus the increased time that would be needed to reach the nearest Library

- The potential impact on children and young people and libraries' role in supporting reading for education and recreation
- The potential impact on older people, the need for a local service and the risk of social isolation
- The importance of access to computers in libraries for information, ability to complete forms on-line particularly for applications for universal credit
- The potential impact on local communities including no other Council service in an area
- Alternative suggestions were to reduce Library opening hours, and make savings in other areas of the Council. There was some support for the use of volunteers
- Concerns over the consultation process/review
- Positive comments about Library staff

3.19 A full list of the groups that sent submissions and the full analysis of comments from these letters and e-mails are at Annex C.

Public Meetings

3.20 As described in the methodology various public meetings were held throughout the Borough with Parish Councils, all Area Committees and a variety of special interest groups, key stakeholders and group representatives. Notes were taken at these meetings. A summary of the key points from these meetings includes:

- Questions and comments about individual libraries
- The potential impact on children and young people and libraries' role in supporting reading for education and recreation
- Current Library buildings – whether there are any restrictions on use of building
- The need for professional staff
- Transport links and car parking
- The importance of computers in libraries, particularly for benefit claims that need to be completed on-line
- Usage of libraries in some of those proposed to close compared to those some of those proposed to remain open
- Concern over some aspects of the review/consultation and use of data
- The effect of any Library closure on the community and lack of a community facility for some communities

3.21 The meetings attended and a full analysis of comments from these meetings is at Annex C.

Children and young people

3.22 An easy-read questionnaire was developed and was used by children and young people. Based on the experience of other Library reviews, the response rate from any questionnaire is generally low from children and young people, when compared with the rest of the population. The

questionnaire was therefore supplemented with a number of meetings/focus groups with children and young people, publicity and information was also sent to a number of organisations dealing with children and young people e.g. schools and children's centres. At some meetings children and young people were taken through the questionnaire and majority decisions recorded. Key points from children and young people were:

- They prefer to visit libraries at weekends and evenings (outside of school hours)
- Would like to see charges for use of computers abolished
- Interest in how to attract more young people to use libraries
- They were broadly in agreement with the criteria for a sustainable Library service (question 4) and what the Library service should do for a comprehensive and efficient Library service (question 8).
- There was a mix of interest in their willingness to volunteer to support the Library. One of the areas that they were interested in was to help people to learn basic skills of IT
- There was a mix of whether they preferred option B or option C and in general this related to where they lived/went to school and whether the Library they used was affected. The majority stated that they would still be able to use another Library.
- Letters and cards were also received from individual school pupils and responses received from some schools. Further information about these is contained in the consultation report at Annex C.

Equality groups

3.23 The Equality Standing Group is a partnership including the Council, the voluntary sector and various other organisations. It provides the opportunity for Council officers to speak at meetings of any of the groups represented. The Library consultation was publicised through the voluntary sector, newsletters of interest groups and other organisations. Key points and queries from meetings with the equality groups were:

- Social isolation/loneliness for older people
- Whether the Home Visits Service would continue
- Considered it positive that there was an opportunity to enhance Library facilities
- Questionnaire takes a long time to complete
- The potential to use libraries more for community development

Staff consultation

3.24 A number of meetings have been held with staff to which the Trade Unions were invited. Staff have also been given the opportunity to follow these up with smaller team meetings or individual meetings. At these meetings staff had questions about their own positions and the process of the review. Staff also had their opportunity to complete the questionnaire as a member of staff to make their views known (31 members of staff did this).

Library volunteers

3.25 The Library service has over time used an increasing number of volunteers to support Library activities, particularly to:-

- Deliver the Home Visits Service
- Carry out storytime and rhymetimes in Libraries
- Support reading activities and events in Libraries
- Support people using IT for the first time (with taster sessions, often delivered by young people)
- Support Family History with helpdesks and as speakers

The Library service also supports work experience students and those wishing to gain employment experience. The service prioritises the support needed for vulnerable people and groups in any expansion of the use of volunteers

3.26 Meetings were held with volunteers who currently support the Library service on a regular basis i.e. Home Visits Service volunteers and storytime volunteers. Key points from the volunteers were:

- Concerns about the ability for volunteers to continue delivering Home Visits if libraries closed. There was a mix of those who thought it would be a problem and those who did not
- Parking difficulties at Southport Library
- The importance of adult education and summer activities for children in libraries
- Potential sponsorship opportunities

Petitions

3.27 The petitions received are:

Petition type	Number received	Libraries referred to
Petitions under 25 names	1	Churchtown
Petitions 25 to 2749 names	5	(Ainsdale/Birkdale/Churchtown)x1 Birkdale x 2 College Road x 2
Petitions 2750 and above names	4	Ainsdale Aintree Birkdale Churchtown
E-petitions on Council's website under 25 names	2	Litherland Orrell
E-petitions on Council's website 25 to 2749 names	5	Ainsdale Aintree College Rd Crosby All libraries

Further details are contained at Annex A

Rallies and meetings

- 3.28 There were a number of rallies and meetings held by campaign groups in support of local libraries, which were not attended by Council Officers. These meetings have not been included as part of the analysis but where a meeting resulted in a formal response(s), this is included in the analysis.

Commercial companies

- 3.29 A commercial Library Service Provider contacted Sefton as a result of becoming aware of the consultation. They had not contacted the Council prior to this. A meeting was held with them and they have subsequently responded offering to work with the Council to deliver Library services across Sefton, at a significant saving, either by maintaining current services or by reducing the number of Libraries. Based on the limited information provided and only receiving their response on 25th January 2013, it is difficult to assess the viability of their “offer”. They appear to have experience of providing Library Services in another country but they have no existing Library service operations in the UK. It would be prudent to continue discussion with them to establish if they (or other commercial providers) can be considered a credible service provider once the review is concluded. Cabinet are asked to note and agree that further discussions continue.

Development Proposals

- 3.30 A commercial development proposal has also been received during the consultation process. This proposal offers to redevelop the Crosby Civic Hall site (including both the Library and Civic Hall) by demolishing the existing buildings and constructing a new mixed use redevelopment encompassing a new Library facility, a UK Headquarters and resource facility, with associated car parking, together with a small mixed use housing development. The proposal would be at a net zero cost to the Council and provide a new Library facility of an equivalent size to the existing Library, at a peppercorn rent.
- 3.31 Clearly, there is an inter-dependency with the outcome of the current pilot community use of the Civic Hall and any future need for the provision of community space on the site. However, the current Library and Civic Hall buildings require significant capital expenditure to maintain them and incur significant general operating costs.
- 3.32 Cabinet is asked to note the proposal and agree that further discussions be undertaken with the developer to establish the viability of their proposals and that a report be presented to Cabinet to consider the matter further, once the outcome of the pilot community use of the Civic Hall is known.
- 3.33 Whilst there has been exploratory contact from other developers about potential future uses of some Library sites, the only other formal “proposal” received has been from Sefton CVS (SCVS) who are seeking to develop Birkdale Library as a Community Resource Centre. Whilst SCVS detail the types of community services they wish to deliver and outline their vision for

Birkdale Library, there is no financial detail within their proposal and it may be that this “offer” is better considered as a Community Run Library rather than a commercial development. The SCVS letter is attached as Annex D Cabinet are asked to note and agree that further discussions are undertaken with SCVS to investigate the viability of their proposal, with a view to an early report back to Cabinet.

- 3.34 Discussions have previously taken place with Hugh Baird College regarding the possibility of some form of partnership and/or community/shared Library facility within the new College building now under construction on the old Connolly House site. As this development progresses Cabinet are asked to note and agree that further discussions will be held with Hugh Baird to explore this issue.
- 3.35 There are further potential opportunities for developments for the Library service to be delivered from other Council buildings such as schools. Cabinet are asked to note and agree that further discussions to take place where such opportunities arise.

Findings from other related consultation and engagement activities by Sefton Council

- 3.36 Other information and relevant Council consultation that is timely and important and is of note in this report are the results from:
- the publication and consultation on the Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment 2012, (also known as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, JSNA).
 - The consultation on setting a balanced budget through an on-line and hard copy questionnaire
 - The YouChoose Budget simulator; and
 - The telephone survey on setting a balanced budget
- 3.37 The Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment (SSNA) July 2012 was compiled by Sefton Council, the NHS and other partners working together to develop a plan (which will be known as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy) to prioritise the services that are provided to support people to live healthy and happy lives. One of the findings from this assessment was that residents feel that a full range of social, healthcare and other services should be within a two to three mile radius of their home.
- 3.38 The importance of local volunteering was highlighted consistently throughout the different consultation exercises that have taken place. 74% of residents responding (224) to the telephone survey indicated they would be likely to volunteer. Older people and people with disabilities valued the opportunity to volunteer as important in both staying active and avoiding social isolation.
- 3.39 83% of people responding (58) to the on-line budget survey agreed with the principle of developing co-located services with other organisations where several services are under one roof. Of those who took part in YouChoose

23%, (35), suggested the Council could save money by reviewing services, closing, amalgamating or relocating Council buildings and the sharing of services and staff with other Local Authorities.

- 3.40 59% of respondents (41) to the on-line budget survey said they agreed that there should be further development of new creative and efficient ways of increasing access to services through the use of new technologies including e-services and social media.
- 3.41 People across all age groups who responded to the consultation on the strategic needs assessment wanted accessible community information on local services.
- 3.42 97% of respondents (295) to the telephone survey agreed with the principle that the council should be open and transparent by speaking with and listening to people and communities, and by publishing customer standards so that people know what to expect from the Council.

4 Cost and options

- 4.1 As previously stated no savings target was attached to the Library review, but the Government Settlement for Local Authorities announced on 19th December 2012 increased the budget gap for Sefton by £7m, requiring the Council to now find savings of over £50m during the next two years.

The premise of the Library Review was to consider the future provision of Library services in Sefton that would not only be “*comprehensive and efficient*” but would also be sustainable within the resources the Council is able to allocate for the foreseeable future.

- 4.2 For budget forecasting purposes an indicative saving was identified for Option B of £400,000 to £480,000. This range was principally based on existing staff and premises costs (including business rates) for the seven libraries identified for possible closure. Until any specific Library closures (and subsequent implementation dates) are confirmed and any mitigation options agreed, an indicative saving of £400,000 has been used for budget forecasting purposes.
- 4.3 There were a number of mitigation options identified within the 11th October 2012 Cabinet report. The following background information is provided to assist Cabinet in considering the financial consequences of amendments to Option B and/or the potential introduction of mitigation proposals.

Cost implications of amending the number of Libraries within Option B

- 4.4 The Table below identifies the estimated costs of providing Library services at each of the Council’s current facilities. The figures are based upon existing staffing / operational levels.
Column A identifies the value of revenue cost of providing the current facilities.

Column B identifies the costs of the capital improvement works for each building that have been identified in the building condition surveys. An assumption has been made that in order for the service to be sustainable in future years Libraries which remain open will need the building fabric/structure to be improved/maintained to acceptable standards (e.g. roof, boiler, electrics etc.), this figure does not introduce any enhancements to the buildings.

Column C sets out the revenue implications of these capital works.

Column (D) identifies the ongoing revenue implications if an establishment was to be retained i.e. existing revenue spend **plus** the debt charge implications of the capital expenditure (A+C)

Library	Current Revenue Cost (A) £	Capital Expenditure (B) £	Revenue implication of Capital Spend (C) £	Ongoing Revenue Costs (if retained) (D= A+C) £
Option B Proposal				
<u>Libraries to remain open</u>				
Bootle	120,800	68,000	5,800	126,600
Crosby (Civic)*	235,900	750,000	63,800	299,700
Formby	133,900	60,000	5,000	138,900
Meadows	156,400	0	0	156,400
Netherton	76,300	0	0	76,300
Southport	195,600	0	0	195,600
	918,900	878,000	74,600	993,500
<u>Libraries identified for closure</u>				
Ainsdale	72,800	80,000	6,800	79,600
Aintree	65,000	112,000	9,500	74,500
Birkdale	77,200	174,000	14,800	92,000
Churchtown	57,900	156,000	13,300	71,200
College Road*	82,600	144,000	12,200	94,800
Litherland	58,600	149,000	12,600	71,200
Orrell	69,400	96,000	8,200	77,600
	483,500	911,000	77,400	560,900

* for forecasting purposes only Crosby Civic Hall Library has been included in the retained list and College Road in the closure list, this could be reversed in practice.

- 4.5 For the sake of illustration only, the **addition** of Ainsdale Library into Option B, would result in a reduction in the indicative forecast savings (£400,000) of c.£80,000 (i.e. the new indicative forecast saving would be £320,000). Similarly, the **closure** of Bootle Library would increase the indicative forecast saving by c.£121,000 (to £521,000).

Mitigation - Opportunity to introduce a Neighbourhood Book Collection

- 4.6 This option would involve a small permanent book stock collection being held in a co-located venue in proximity to where a Library has been closed. This would form a small number of items (c.1,000) – popular fiction and non-fiction books - which customers would self issue via a self-service kiosk similar to those currently used in various Sefton Libraries. Books in the collection would be changed at regular intervals e.g. quarterly. The use of volunteers to support this option could also be investigated.
- 4.7 The consultation exercise indicated a number of potential venues that could be used and this will need to be further explored if Elected Members decide to introduce this service. For this report, venues have not yet been identified but it is assumed that it would either be in an existing Council property (**not** the existing Library), or on a partner’s site, nearby, at no additional rental cost to the Council. Opening hours would need to be agreed with any partner venue.
- 4.8 There would be a number of new ongoing staffing responsibilities (e.g. selecting / changing books); it is assumed that these ongoing issues can be contained within the remaining budget for the service. However, indicative additional costs identified with the establishment and ongoing support of neighbourhood book collections in **a single location** are

	“One-off” revenue costs to establish	Capital Expenditure	Annual revenue costs
	£	£	£
Staffing costs (irrespective of number of locations)	11,000	0	0
Self-service machine		8,500	Capital Financing 2,100 Maintenance / Running costs 1,500
Books	Nil. Books to be used from closed libraries	0	0
	11,000	8,500	3,600

- 4.9 The above figures assume that the book collection is in a Council building with access to Sefton’s I.T. Network for the self-service machines and People’s Network, with minimal adaptation costs. If I.T. Network access needs to be provided at a particular venue, the costs could be significant and may influence the viability of the introduction of such a facility at that location. Each property would need to be considered on its merits.

Also, issues of safeguarding may need to be addressed, for example if the property used were a Children's Centre. This may involve additional expenditure to adjust access.

Mitigation - Opportunity to introduce a Collection and Delivery Point Service

- 4.10 A Collection and Delivery Point Service would enable customers to request a Library item to be delivered to a specified location (and on a specified frequency), in proximity to where a Library has been closed. This would allow access to pre-requested items only; there would be no books available to browse through, nor would there be any access to the People's Network / Internet.

Ordering would either on-line (at home) or by telephone. Customers with Internet access would be able to browse Sefton's book catalogue, but phone users would not. Delivery to the collection point would either be as part of the existing Library service provisions, or as part of the corporate mail service. An initial assessment considers fortnightly deliveries to be the most likely frequency for collection and delivery.

Opening times cannot be agreed until specific venues are identified and access confirmed. A number of potential venues have been suggested as part of the consultation responses.

Further investigation would be needed on a site by site basis, however an initial revenue estimate of £12,000 per annum to provide this service is considered reasonable.

Mitigation - Opportunity to extend the Home Visits Service

- 4.11 This service is currently provided for those people who are unable to visit a Library, due to mobility difficulties. It is currently co-ordinated by the Library service and provided by volunteers at little cost. If Libraries close it is likely that there would be an increased demand in this service and a need to recruit additional volunteers. The consultation exercise showed that of those people unable to use one of the six retained libraries, approximately 9% would use the Home Visits Service. There is the possibility that some existing volunteers will consider they are unable to continue if they have further to travel to a Library, to pick up and return books, than now. At two consultation meetings held with existing Home Visits volunteers some felt that the increased distance would provide them with difficulties, others did not. The consultation exercise also showed that approximately 6% people were willing to volunteer to support this service. It is therefore assumed that the Home Visits Service could be extended for people with mobility difficulties affected by any closures, with the additional costs incurred for travelling expenses estimated at approximately £2,000.

Mitigation - Opportunity to Increase Opening Hours provided with/without the assistance of volunteers

- 4.12 Longer opening hours would allow a reduced number of libraries to provide more opportunity for access by service users who use a library that is to close. The main additional cost would be from increased staffing costs with a relatively small additional costs for utilities.

The options could include additional late night openings (e.g. to 8pm), or extend Saturday morning opening to include a Saturday afternoon, or open on a Sunday for half a day. The demand for these longer opening hours is not expected to be universal across all the retained libraries and demand for early opening (i.e. before 9am, very late opening (i.e. after 8pm) and Sunday opening was **not** evident from the consultation responses. For the purposes of the costing exercise late night openings until 8pm, Saturday afternoons and Sundays have been used as illustrations only.

If opening hours were extended at all locations the additional costs are estimated at £25,000pa for a late evening opening, £54,000pa for Saturday afternoon opening and £72,000 for Sunday half day opening (i.e. approximately £151,000 if all three options were introduced). If a substantial volunteer commitment could be utilised for the extended opening hours then these costs could be reduced by approximately 50%.

Mitigation – Opportunity to Establish Community Libraries

- 4.13 A Community Library is considered to be one which is totally run and financed by a group of volunteers. For significant financial savings to be achieved then those running a community facility would have to be responsible for all staffing and accommodation costs, including the capital upgrade costs of the building.

National reports and recommendations about community run Libraries outlined in paragraphs 1.18 & 1.19 indicate that there are many different models of community managed libraries and that they are not “*an easy option*” to consider.

20% of consultation respondents indicated that they would be interested in being involved in a community run Library, but there have been no specific proposals submitted, other than the expression of interest received from Sefton CVS related to Birkdale. Whilst the Birkdale Library Action Group (BLAG) have submitted proposals for how savings could be made at Birkdale Library (Annex E) these proposals do not amount to an offer to run the Library as a community group.

Under the Community Right to Challenge provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must consider expressions of interest for relevant services (which includes Library services) which are submitted by relevant bodies, including Voluntary and Community organisations. The Council has agreed to set a 30 day period in each year for the submission of expressions of interest. Further

information is set out in a report to Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Performance published on 14th January 2013.

- 4.14 There were a number of options listed in the 11th October Cabinet report, which were not recommended at that stage. The report made it clear that some of those options would form part of the consultation and therefore would be considered before any final decision was made by Elected Members. They included:

Commissioning the Library service to another provider/Trust status

- 4.15 Paragraph 3.29 of this report contains information about contact made by a commercial Library service provider. The conversion of the Library service to a Trust is still considered to be impractical however this issue will be explored further in any future discussion with possible external providers as set out in paragraph 3.29

Shared services

- 4.16 Sefton remains open to the idea of sharing Library services with other local authorities. However, there continues to be little evident desire to pursue this from neighbouring authorities. Greater Manchester Library authorities are examining the potential for some shared services and Sefton would seek to explore this if the Manchester model could be extended outside their area. Shared service provision is considered unlikely to lead to significant savings locally as Sefton has over recent years made substantial reductions in the areas normally identified to save money with shared services, e.g. senior and middle managers, and specialist expertise. It could however lead to some improvements in some service areas for the same costs.

Postal delivery system

- 4.17 Due to the significant cost involved there are no proposals to introduce a bespoke postal delivery system. Information about collection and delivery points is included at paragraph 4.10 above for people in areas where Libraries close.

E-Books

- 4.18 The situation and complexities surrounding e-books have not improved since the Cabinet Report on 11th October 2012. It is still a service that Sefton would like to investigate for future consideration. The consultation showed that there is some demand for this (16% of respondents). However, e-books in their current format and availability cannot provide a comprehensive service that could replace the loan of hard copy books.

Income generation

- 4.9 The consultation exercise asked respondents to agree or disagree with a number of guiding principles for a “*comprehensive and efficient*” Library

service. 85% (2345) of respondents agreed with the use of reasonable and appropriate charges to support Library service sustainability. During the Library review current and potential charges for services were examined with a view to establishing the real potential for income generation and to identify where service improvement could be funded on a breakeven basis by virtue of levying a charge. Whilst the principle of reasonable and appropriate charging is accepted there is limited scope within the Library service for such charging to bring in sufficient funding to impact significantly on the overall net expenditure of the service.

5 Risk Management

- 5.1 As part of the review process Officers have regularly reviewed strategic and operational risks associated with the review and put in place measures to manage those risks. Examples include auditing procedures to check accuracy of inputting of paper questionnaires, measures put in place when there were technical difficulties inputting the data from the paper questionnaires.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 There is a significant risk of challenge associated with the options for consideration in this report. In particular Members will be aware that there is no precise statutory definition of "*comprehensive and efficient*" in the 1964 Act or any subsequent Regulations. Members will however appreciate that Sefton has adopted its own local definition set out at paragraph 1.4 of this report as accepted by Cabinet on 11 October 2012. It is imperative that when considering the options for consultation that Cabinet pays due regard to the need to define "*comprehensive and efficient*" based on Sefton's local need and its available resources. The Court of Appeal in the London Borough of Brent Judicial Review found that given the scale of the spending reductions the Council was required to make and the information available following earlier studies, a decision that the Library service should bear a share of the reduction was not unlawful provided that that statutory duties under Section 7 duty of the 1964 Act and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 are complied with. There is no requirement that this share should be proportionate to other reductions proposed in the Council's budget.
- 5.4 The review process has demonstrated that doing nothing will create an unsustainable network of provision of Libraries, most of which are located in buildings that need significant capital investment (c£2m in total) just to bring them up to reasonable structural standards. The likelihood of such funding being allocated in the foreseeable future, when considered against the backdrop of national funding reductions and local increases in demand for services from vulnerable groups, is remote. The recent assessment of the existing building stock implies that some libraries will eventually "*close*

themselves” as a result of either health & safety issues or general unacceptability of the standards of service provided. The condition surveys for ten libraries can be viewed via www.sefton.gov.uk/libraries. Additionally, the ongoing running costs of these buildings remain high with little or no opportunity to improve their structural efficiency and performance.

- 5.5 The changing use of technology is affecting the use of Libraries e.g. the use of on-line resources, e-books and self service technology across the country. Historically the response to this change has often been piecemeal. Both the public engagement response and the review process indicate that the service will be required to invest in technology to meet future demands. Generally, in line with other Library services, Library membership and usage is declining. There are however exceptions to this when there has been significant investment in a facility or service, particularly when the Library has been co-located with other services e.g. at Meadows. At the same time, customer expectations continue to increase.
- 5.6 During the implementation stage of this process (whatever decision is made) Officers will ensure that any potential cumulative impacts of proposed changes are fully understood, potential mitigating actions identified, and all opportunities for joint and co-operative working fully explored.
- 5.7 Cabinet is asked to note and understand the risks outlined above.

6 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

- 6.1 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. The impact assessments, including any feedback from consultation or engagement, are attached at Annex F. These will assist Members to make decisions in an open minded balanced way showing due regard to the impact of the recommendations being presented in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 A pre-option assessment against the PSED was undertaken to assist the Cabinet in their recommendation for further consultation and this can be viewed via www.sefton.gov.uk/libraries. The analysis concluded that in Officers’ professional judgement the impact of options B and C is minimal from an equalities perspective.
- 6.3 A full Public Sector Equality Duty analysis on Option B and the result of the consultation has been undertaken. The key findings are:
- The borough wide Library service offer meets the PSED
 - The consultation was wide and comprehensive and meets the PSED
 - Option B (location of outlets) meets the PSED
 - Concerns raised through consultation have been mitigated to a level satisfying the PSED

Fuller details are contained in Annex F

7 Implementation

- 7.1 Implementation of any change is subject to the final approval and financial decisions made by Full Council. Once decisions are made, an implementation plan will be reported back to Cabinet, including any further exploratory work that might be needed. In the event of any closures, implementation will need to take into account the following:

Staff consultation/recruitment and selection

- 7.2 If Option B is agreed, staff consultation will adhere to the Council's policies and procedures in relation to:-
- Formal & informal consultation
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Issue of notice letters in the event of redundancies
 - Redeployment

Closure of buildings

- 7.3 Any libraries identified for closure would cease business on a specified date, or a phased closure could be considered. Library users would be given appropriate early notice of the closure. The options for disposal or reuse of the buildings would need to be agreed by the Cabinet and/or Cabinet Member and any mothballing/demolition or other costs included in the overall implementation and financial plan.

Disposal of assets.

- 7.4 Any disposal could only take place after the buildings are closed. Furniture, fittings, IT and bookstock would be assessed to establish what could go to another library or neighbourhood book collection, or collection and delivery point if implemented, or be returned to arvato. Any alternative uses for the site which generated savings for the Council would also be assessed. Any remaining book stock would then follow normal disposal procedures including book sales.

Community run libraries

- 7.5 Paragraph 4.13 in this report contains information about community managed libraries. Where/if there is interest in a community run library, further work would need to be undertaken as the level of support the Council might be able to provide and the operating costs of the building. Book stock, furniture etc could remain in place until a decision is reached about any proposal to run the library as a community managed facility.

8 Conclusions from the consultation

- 8.1 The consultation exercise undertaken for the Library review has been extensive and has generated a significant public response via questionnaires, individual letters & emails and a range of petitions. Libraries are clearly a very valued community resource and provide important services for many local people. However, in the national environment of significant reductions in funding across the whole range of Council activities they cannot be exempt from consideration.
- 8.2 The work undertaken during the Library review, including the definition of “*comprehensive and efficient*” and the public consultation on the Guiding Principles for the delivery of a sustainable Library service for Sefton, have supported the strategic framework for the current and future development of the service.
- 8.3 A sustainable, “*comprehensive and efficient*” Library service in Sefton should be guided by its definition:
- The overall spread of population and Library buildings across the Borough
 - The ability to share/co-locate services within one building and to explore opportunities for future co-location of services
 - The operating costs and the condition of the Library buildings
 - The community profiles of areas within Sefton, including levels of deprivation, population figures
 - Levels of use of Library services (not just those located in the buildings)
 - Transport and travel for those wishing to use a Library in Sefton
- 8.4 There were 3026 respondents to the consultation questionnaires. Not everyone responded to all the questions. The summary below outlines the outcome of this extensive public consultation response and the percentages quoted refer to the number of those who answered the actual question. Full details are contained at Annex B. The response indicates that:
- The significant majority of respondents agreed with the Guiding Principles (91%) and definition of “*comprehensive and efficient*” (78%) for the sustainable future Sefton Library Service
 - Option B was acceptable to 43% of the respondents and slightly preferred to Option C (41%)
 - 56% of respondents thought Option B would create a gap in the Library service, with 44% thinking it would not
 - If Option B was approved then 41% of respondents would use another Library and 26% would not
 - If Option B was approved then, overall, 55% of respondents would take advantage of any mitigation offered
 - 85% of respondents agreed with reasonable and appropriate charges to support service sustainability

- 966 of respondents would be willing to volunteer in some way to support the Library service, with just under half willing to undertake some activity once per week.
- 20% of respondents would be interested in being involved in a community run Library, 80% would not.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty analysis confirms that both the public consultation and the Options B proposals meet PSED requirements

9 Summary

- 1) The Council has defined the meaning of a 'Comprehensive and Efficient Library Service' based upon local needs and in the context of the resources available to it as referred to in paragraph 1.4.
- 2) The Council has considered the recommendations of the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport, Select Committees report together with the Government's response and taken them into account. Paragraph 1.11 and 1.12 refers.
- 3) The Council will continue to develop a Strategic Framework for the current and future development of the library service as referred to in paragraph 2.
- 4) The Council has engaged in extensive consultation with the community, partner organisations, interest and focus groups, and children and young people as identified in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.42
- 5) The Equality Analysis concluded that in Officers' professional judgement the impact of Option B and C is minimal from an equalities perspective. Paragraph 6.2 refers.
- 6) It seems unlikely, bearing in mind the extent of the consultation activities undertaken, that any resident with an interest in libraries or local affairs would have been unaware of the library review and the consultation. Paragraph 2.11 refers.
- 7) The review process has demonstrated that doing nothing will create an unsustainable network of provision located in buildings that require significant capital investment. Paragraph 4.4 refers.
- 8) Opportunities exist to develop partnerships with other organisations to develop the library offer. Paragraph 2.30 to 2.35 refers.
- 9) Opportunities exist to mitigate the impacts that may arise from a decision to reduce the number of libraries that Elected Members are asked to consider. Paragraph 3.6 to 3.9 refers.
- 10) A significant risk of challenge associated with the implementation of Option B remains.

- 11) In reaching a decision, Cabinet must take into account amongst other things, The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (Section 7) and the statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service; The Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity; the consultation and engagement activity and impact assessments, and risks associated with each option.