

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 1 NOVEMBER 2016

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: COMMUNITY ACCESS REVIEW PHASE 1
(LIBRARIES AND CHILDREN'S CENTRES)**

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: MANDY BISHOP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(OPERATIONS)**

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel receives the details of the Community Access Review Phase 1 consultation and engagement activity and agrees further engagement as the review progresses.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides details of the Community Access Review (CAR) Phase 1 consultation and engagement activity.

2. POLICY

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision for North Somerset as: *a great place to live where people communities and businesses flourish*, and for the organisation to provide: *modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset*.

The review is part of the Council's transformation programme and cuts across all four themes of the programme with a particular emphasis on 'Delivering Together' and 'One Council'.

Corporate Strategies and Policies

Key internal strategic documents will ensure these are considered as the project progresses. These documents include:

- The Medium Term Financial Plan
- The Customer Access Strategy
- The Corporate Asset Management Strategy (and Asset Management Plan)
- The Digital Access Strategy

3. DETAILS

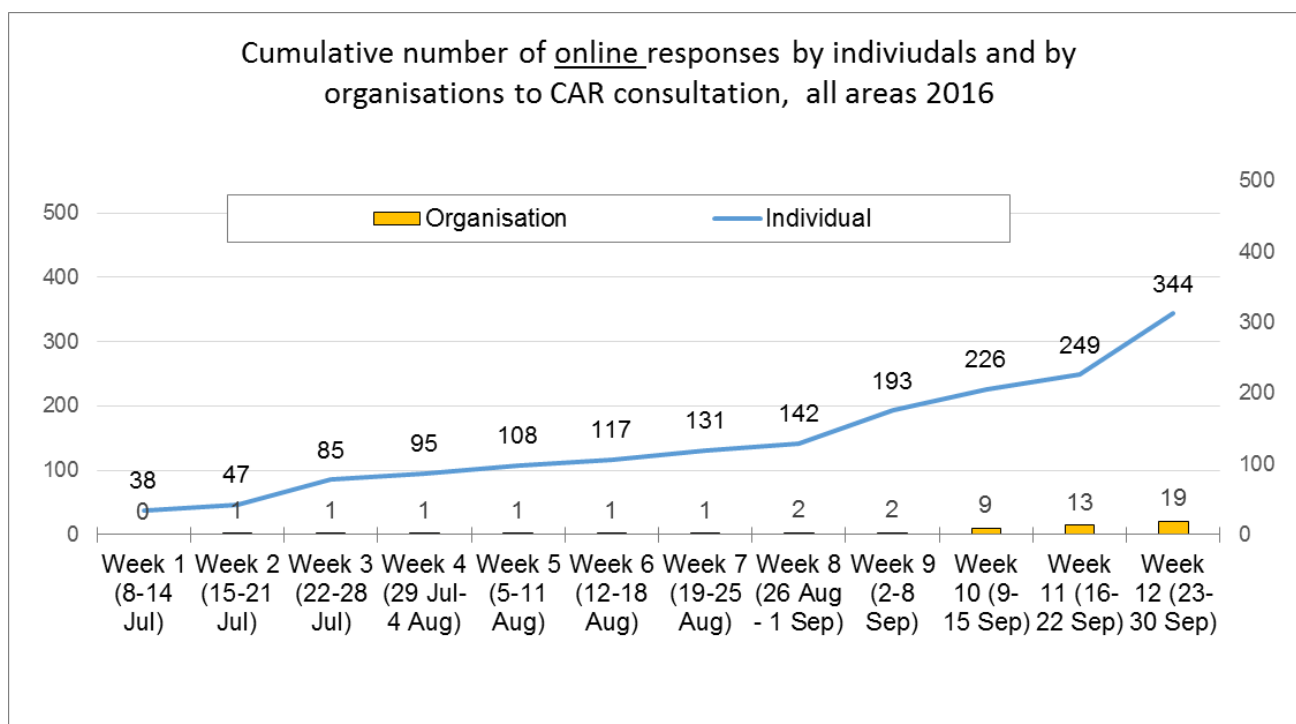
- 3.1 The Executive agreed the principles of the CAR at its meeting on 8 December 2015. Phase 1 of the review considered future library and children's centre/service provision in the following localities:
- Pill
 - Long Ashton
 - Weston (South Ward)
 - Worle
 - Congresbury
 - Winscombe
 - Yatton
- 3.2 The council has a strong desire to retain both library and children's centre services within communities. However, in order to sustain the network of locally delivered services it has been necessary to look at local demand, our buildings and determine how we can work more effectively and efficiently across services. With this in mind, locality service delivery options were developed by officers during the first half of 2016 (Phase 1 localities identified above). Partners and communities were invited to provide feedback on the options over a three month period - July to September 2016. The next section provides details of the consultation activity and the high level results, which are still being evaluated at the time of writing this report.
- 3.3 A report will be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 6 December 2016 on the service delivery model to be adopted across libraries and children's centres. It is intended that any new delivery model will be flexible enough to meet the needs of local communities. Any work to properties and changes to staffing structures would take place between January and June 2017. The new arrangements for Phase 1 are being implemented from July 2017.
- 3.4 Phase 2 consultation will include locality options for Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead. Consultation is to be undertaken during Summer/Autumn 2018.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The three month consultation exercise comprised the following activity:
- An online/e consultation
 - Paper consultation
 - 15 formal consultation events
 - Attendance at 3 community forums
 - 2 parish council discussions
 - 3 equality workshops (Disability Access Group, Older People and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups)
 - Plus local events and consultation sessions held by the staff groups at libraries and children's centres

- On-going informal consultation with library and children's centre staff

4.2 Consultees were invited to identify positive/negative/neutral aspects of each option and feedback their general comments. We received 362 online responses and 144 paper responses. The pattern of response over the three month period is illustrated in the graph below:



The responses can also be broken down by locality:

	Individual responses			Organisational responses			Individuals and organisation		
	Online	Paper	Individual total	Online	Paper	Organisation total	Online	Paper	Individual & organisation total
Worle	84	68	152	7	1	8	91	69	160
Long Ashton	135	12	147	1		1	136	12	148
Yatton	41	15	56	5		5	46	15	61
Pill	19	34	53	2		2	21	34	55
Congresbury	28	8	36	1		1	29	8	37
Winscombe	24	4	28	1		1	25	4	29
WSM South	13	2	15	1		1	14	2	16
All 7 areas	344	143	487	18	1	19	362	144	506

4.3 All formal and informal feedback has been captured and is currently being collated and evaluated. The final results will be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 6 December 2016.

4.4 Emerging themes from the community feedback include the following:

- Communities are very supportive of both services

- There is a strong desire to retain services within communities
- Without exception, service users are very positive and supportive about the role of library and children’s centre staff
- There is a lot of support for opening up buildings and extending opening hours through self-service – particularly from those running businesses from home
- There is a general understanding that in order to retain services we have to change
- And a strong willingness for communities to work with us to help design new services and support delivery

4.5 Residents and community groups also provided feedback on areas for improvement:

- Communities felt that we were very supportive of younger children, however, there was more work we could do to engage teenagers and work with educational establishments. This feedback is very much in keeping with the desire to move children’s centres from pre-school support to a broader family approach
- There is a lack of broader community understanding on the role and services delivered from children’s centres
- In localities where one of the options is to co-locate a library and children’s centre, there were questions about how we would ensure that there is space and consideration for all community groups. Older people felt this was particularly important. Other residents were very positive about the inter-generational opportunities provided by co-location and highlighted the wealth of experience and knowledge within communities
- Repeated complaints were received from residents about the limited book stock available in our libraries (our low spend is mitigated by the LibrariesWest arrangements)
- The Worle community has a strong desire to retain a library service and community facilities

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Contribution

The financial targets identified for this review in the MTFP are as follows:

Year	Saving (£000s)
2016/17	50
2017/18	200
2018/19	250
Total annual savings achieved by 2019	500

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are formal project governance arrangements in place. A risk log has been produced and reputational, legal and financial risk are closely monitored, managed and mitigation actions agreed.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The council produced detailed service data to help inform the consultation and engagement process. This information was published online and available to the public. Equality considerations continue to be at the centre of our on-going service re-design. The report to the Executive in December will include an equality impact assessment for the project and one for each of the seven localities. We will continue to engage communities, staff and equality groups as we develop our services.

8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are statutory requirements in relation to both library and children's centre services. For example, the Public Library and Museums Act 1964 places a duty on library authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service which broadly speaking means a service free of charge for people who live, work or study in their area to borrow or refer to books, printed material and pictures in line with their needs and requirements.
- 8.2 Similarly, the Childcare Act 2006 (reinforced in the 2009 Act) requires local authorities to play an important strategic role in the provision of childcare in their area and places a duty on authorities to provide or commission children's centres.

9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council is faced with a significant financial challenge over the next few years. The Community Access review is one of several key transformational projects which together support the MTFP and ensure we continue to deliver sustainable services with our communities.
- 9.2 The Council is committed to the delivery of Children's Centre and Library services. The alternative to a comprehensive redesign of our front facing services is to rationalise or stop some of our local provision, to support the Council delivery of a balanced budget, which is clearly not the preferred approach. In order to prevent service closures a review of our property, staffing structures and service offer is essential to maintain provision.

AUTHOR

Mandy Bishop
Assistant Director (Operations)
Development & Environment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to the Executive - 8 December 2015

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27043.htm>

Report to the Executive - 21 June 2016

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27427.pdf>

Phase 1 – Consultation and Engagement papers