

## REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**DATE OF MEETING: 13 MARCH 2018**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: LIBRARIES AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE UPDATE  
(COMMUNITY ACCESS REVIEW)**

**TOWN OR PARISH: ALL**

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: ANDY BRISLEY, LIBRARY MANAGER,  
AND JENIE EASTMAN, CHILDREN'S CENTRE MANAGER**

**KEY DECISION: N/A**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the panel receives and comments on the progress being made with regards to the delivery of the agreed outcomes of the Community Access Review.

#### **1. SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides an update on activities to deliver the agreed outcomes of the Community Access Review (CAR). Further information is provided on the approach to achieve additional services, approved as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan at the Executive meeting held on 6 February 2018 (draft minute Exe 78).

#### **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 and 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 COMMUNITY ACCESS REVIEW – PROGRESS

##### Phase 1

At the Executive Meeting held on 6 December 2016, it was agreed to review library and children’s centre locality arrangements in seven communities; Congresbury, Long Ashton Pill, Weston South, Winscombe, Worle and Yatton. Capital investment of £820,000 has resulted in greater co-location of services, increased access for communities and delivered £500,000 savings in operating costs.

Customer feedback from Library & Children’s Centre users regarding the co-located sites at Pill, Yatton and Worle has generally been positive. There is a desire to retain local services in local communities. North Somerset’s service users are generally pleased with the outcomes and continue to use services. The corporate decision to co-locate libraries and children’s centres has had positive benefits for both service users and staff.

Customer self-service arrangements formed a key strand of the review and is the last element to be delivered. Extended access technology has now been installed at 4 libraries – Portishead, Winscombe, Worle and Yatton. Portishead is already operational and the other 3 sites should be operational by the date of the panel meeting. Customers are being inducted into the operation of the system and have welcomed the freedom and flexibility that it provides in accessing their library facilities outside of staffed opening hours. Installation of the technology at Long Ashton has not taken place, due to the significantly higher installation costs identified during the planning process, and the proposed closure of the site, whilst installation at Clevedon has also been suspended, pending the outcome of future consultations at both sites.

#### 3.2 2018/19

As part of the council’s financial planning further service savings have been identified (in addition to the savings identified in 2016):

##### Savings approved as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan

		2018-19	2019-20	2018-20
PCC7	Rationalisation of Children’s Centres with a view to reducing costs by approximately 10% over 2 years	£135,000	£40,000	£175,000
PCC6	Review council subsidy provided for children’s nurseries	£70,000	£70,000	£140,000
DE8 a	Library Services continuation of CAR savings options	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000
DE8 b	Library service staff management savings	£10,000	£30,000	£40,000

##### Children’s centre savings

The biggest area of concern raised from an equalities point of view was in relation to the proposed reduction in children's centre provision of £135,000 (10% of the net revenue service budget post Community Access Review). Whereas the proposed saving remains in the recommended 2018-19 budget, the service has recommended the following mitigation; to achieve the £135,000 savings. The Banwell Children's Centre will be closed and the Children's Centre at Long Ashton will be reconfigured. However an outreach service will remain for the residents in both of these localities. When making the decision to consult upon these proposals, consideration was given to the demand and usage of the centres alongside alternative service provision available within the adjoining areas.

In terms of Long Ashton it is proposed to extend the existing Local Authority owned nursery provision which is currently oversubscribed with a waiting list. This links to another MTFP saving of £140,000 over the next 2 financial years aiming to reduce the overall subsidy provided to fund North Somerset's in house nursery provision.

To a lesser extent, changes will also occur to staffing arrangements & operations in Yatton & Pill Children's centres where we will sensitively manage any direct impact on service users.

In summary:

- Banwell – it is proposed that this centre is to be closed due to limited usage, but outreach services to be provided
- Yatton – reduced service and outreach services to be provided
- Long Ashton – investment in the provision of nursery to meet known demand and outreach services to be provided
- Pill – reduced service and outreach services to be provided

All the above proposals will be subject to full community and partner consultation.

The future children's centre delivery model will continue to have both a universal and targeted offer. Children's centres will focus on Early Help and preventative services and continue to work with a wide range of partners that include Health and Children's Social Care colleagues. The aim is to protect front line Family Support and Early Years workers and look to find further savings from management. The current staff consultation looks to reduce the number of Community Services Officers in the centres that are having reduced services. The plan is to have the revised service offer in place from July 2018, and to commence a review of management in September 2018.

### Library service savings

Business efficiencies and increased income targets account for savings of £108,000 over the next 2 years whilst changes to the library network – which may include closures, partnerships, relocations and downsizing, are expected to provide savings of £142,000. Management savings from the service will provide a £10,000 saving in 18/19 and £40,000 in 19/20.

By the end of March 2020 the service revenue budget will have fallen by over 50% since 2008/9 – dropping from £3.1million to £1.5 million. Sustained reductions of this size over this period have left the service with little room to deliver further economies without an impact upon front line service delivery, and this MTFP period will see consultation on the closure of Long Ashton library, and work to engage with communities in Clevedon and Nailsea to seek alternative lower cost solutions for the provision of library services. These may include the sale of existing premises and relocation to alternative affordable sites, as

well as working with partners to identify and explore other options. Proposals to be consulted upon will give due consideration to reduction in service usage in these communities and options to ensure future service provision is fit for purpose and opens up access to under-represented groups.

The authority will seek to continue to provide high quality library services across the District that are both affordable and sustainable in the light of future revenue budget provision. Our membership of the LibrariesWest consortium continues to allow us make operational savings on the joint provision of core services such as the Library Management System, as well as sharing the costs of providing Bibliographic services to support stock purchasing and interlibrary loans.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

##### **Consultation Timetable for Children’s Centre and Library Service budget reductions**

<b>Date (2018)</b>	<b>Children’s Centre Activity</b>	<b>Library Service Activity</b>
Monday 29 January	Full EIA published on NSC website	Full EIA published on NSC website
6 February 20 February	Council Executive Meeting Full Council Meeting	Council Executive Meeting Full Council Meeting
6 February – 29 February	-	Staff team briefings
18 January to 9 February	Prepare draft public consultation documents; Pill, Long Ashton, Yatton, Banwell Communities, Prepare staffing consultation document	-
Monday 26 February – 23 April (8 weeks)	Public consultation This will involve completion of questionnaires at children centre activities and promoting web page link to all service users and key partners.	-
Wednesday 28 February 2018 – 25 April (8 weeks)	Staff consultation period commences.	-
Wednesday 28 February	Briefing for all CC staff	-
1 March – 21 March*	-	Prepare and agree public consultation information and documents, ref. Property and Network changes.
26 March – 30 June*	-	Undertake 12 week public and partner consultation re. Premises and Network proposals.
23 and 25 April	Staff and public consultation closes	-
Week commencing 2 May	Consideration of staff and public responses	-

Friday 11 May	Feedback on staff and public consultation and next steps. Timelines for the changes to be implemented at each affected location to be drafted. It may be necessary to suspend the current activity programme at the summer half term.	-
Week commencing Monday 14th May	Selection process to determine which Community Services Officers will be made redundant. Family Support Workers who currently work in centres that are having reduced offer will be temporarily relocated to other children's centres	-
Thursday 31 May	Decisions to be made confirming selection process.	-
Week commencing 4 June	Staff notified of outcome of selection process	-
Week commencing 4 June	Preference forms to be sent out. CSO's to be asked preferences for work location and working patterns. These requests will be balanced against business need	-
Friday 29 June	Public consultation feedback summary to be posted on NSC website	-
2 July to 9 July*	-	Consideration of feedback from Public and Partner consultation
Monday 2 July	Implementation of new structure begins.	-
Throughout July	Inform stakeholders and service users of decision	-
w/b 9 July*	-	Revise and issue updated EIA's for specific localities. Brief all library staff and publish consultation feedback summary and decisions.
w/b 16 July*	-	Commence implementation work programme.

NB: dates marked with an asterisk (\*) are subject to change.

The full EIA documents for both services have been considered by the Equalities stakeholder group, and moderated accordingly in the light of their feedback prior to publication.

The Library and Children's Centre consultations will include meeting a range of community groups and organisations, parish and town councils, equalities, BME and disability groups as well as opportunities for members of the public to meet with officers. Revised EIA documents relating to specific locality proposals will be provided, dependent upon the feedback from the consultation process.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Phase 1 of this review has delivered revenue savings of £500,000.

The 2018/2020 MTFP proposals as set out at 3.2 will see an additional £315,000 of revenue savings from Children's centres and £290,000 revenue savings from Libraries – A combined additional sum of £605,000.

### **Costs**

- Project costs – these will be contained within existing resource, and there will be no money for backfill of posts to support the projects. It will be necessary to reprioritise other works within each service, with a potential impact upon the capacity and delivery of normal business.
- The potential relocation and re-provision of one or more libraries will incur both capital and revenue costs associated with both the close down and sale of the existing site and the establishment of services and facilities at the new site. It is not yet possible to quantify these costs.
- Long Ashton Nursery (Early Birds) will require minor capital works to create a 0-2 years baby room. Estimated at £40,000 maximum.

### **Funding**

- There is some Library service S106 funding to assist in offsetting the capital costs of the Extended Access technology.
- There is a potential buyer for the old Worle Library and appropriate legal checks are currently underway.
- The potential sale of either or both Clevedon and Nailsea Libraries will also generate further capital sums, and in both cases potentially result in revenue savings in the delivery of services.

## **6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

- Libraries – 1964 Public Libraries & Museums Act, superintended by the Libraries Minister (Michael Ellis). <https://tinyurl.com/h9xv75u>
- Children's centres – 2006 Childcare Act, 2009 Apprenticeship, Skills, Childcare & Learning Act. <https://tinyurl.com/yd5j3z5o>

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are 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.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

The council produced detailed service data to help inform the consultation and engagement process of Phase 1 of the Community Access Review. 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. We will continue to engage communities, staff and equality groups as we develop our services.

Full equality Impact Assessments were undertaken for the budget savings identified. Early engagement in terms of sharing the proposals with the North Somerset Equalities Stakeholder Group took place. This is proposed to continue.

The relevant EIA documents can be found at:

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc28603.pdf>

The Children's Centre EIA can be found from page 181 and the Library EIA from page 237

## **9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

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. 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.

## **10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Council continues to be 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 that we continue to deliver sustainable services with our communities. The Council is committed to the delivery of Children's Centre and Library services, but this must be set within the context of the reduction in revenue funding.

Libraries and Children's Centres jointly undertook a significant service redesign in Phase 1 of the Community Access Review. The continuing need to make additional savings to support the Council delivery of a balanced budget has now required both services to take difficult decisions that will have an impact upon front line service provision and staffing.

Both services have carefully considered alternative options for areas of service delivery where potential savings can be made, but such options are now limited without having an impact upon the front line.

Because of co-location we are able to continue to offer some service to most local communities rather than pull out completely. The approach is to keep some level of library or Children's Centre offer in every community.

## **AUTHOR**

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Exec report 6/2/18 - budget

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc28624.htm>

2. Previous Scrutiny Reports

CoCo 7 November 2017

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc28403.pdf>

CoCo 14 March 2017

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27963.pdf>

3. December 16 Exec Report – CAR

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27794.pdf>