

REPORT TITLE: Strength Based Integrated Community Library and customer service functions & assets.

Cabinet date	20th February 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Paul Davies – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Corporate
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	Yes Yes
<p>Purpose of Report</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to propose the development of a strength based integrated community library model. The proposal includes the following key changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of the customer service function into the library estate. This will result in the reshaping of the existing 2 main customer service centre sites in Huddersfield and Dewsbury into an integrated offer in those respective libraries, alongside access to digital and telephony support across the library network. • Establish the feasibility of developing a community managed library model with targeted community-based libraries. The initial focus for the feasibility would be on identified libraries (see section 3.3) with the foundational characteristics to deliver successful transition (community strengths, community demographics, capacity, and resources). The council package of support will be key to enable transition, and this would be considered within the feasibility work. 	
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Cabinet is asked to agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall approach to integrate the customer service and library functions. This is already a successful temporary arrangement in Huddersfield and Dewsbury. • To commence a service change process to reduce both management and frontline staffing by the required amounts to achieve integration and savings. • To commence engagement with community partners around the proposed community managed libraries model. • Note the contents of the initial Integrated Impact Assessment at Integrated Impact Assessments - IntegratedImpactAssessment (kirklees.gov.uk) <p>Reasons for Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated service delivery approach allows increased access to support from more locations rather than the public always having to travel into Huddersfield and Dewsbury. • Implementation through a detailed service change process supports fair and considered changes to be implemented. • Engagement with communities ahead of any formal consultation process is key to establish the potential feasibility to deliver on the community managed library model. <p>Resource Implications:</p>	

Library service and project staffing resource will be required to facilitate conversations and engagement within communities around the proposed changes. This will involve project support to coordinate effective communications and access to timely information.

Support will also be required from other corporate services such as:

- I.T – support to communities around Library and public access IT systems
- Assets and corporate facility management will need to be involved in early conversations in relation to viability of asset transfers and any linked arrangements.
- Legal support in creating potential Service Level Agreements with communities and advising on any policy implications.
- Communications – support with delivery of key messages to all stakeholders throughout the service change process.
- Data & Insight – support with a formal consultation process.

<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name.</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</p>	<p>Give name and date for Cabinet / Scrutiny reports.</p> <p>Richard Parry – Strategic Director Adults and Health – 05/02/2024</p> <p>Isabel Brittain – Service Director Finance (S151 Officer) - 06/02/2024</p> <p>Julie Muscroft – Service Director – Legal, Governance, Commissioning and Monitoring – 07/02/2024</p>
---	---

Electoral wards affected: All wards.

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes, no personal data has been included in the report.

1. Executive Summary

Across the Kirklees footprint we currently have 2 main public facing customer service centres and a footprint of 24 libraries providing a range of services including

- Face to face, digital and telephony support for citizens' enquiries.
- Literary, audio digital and accessible (large print & Braille) access to books and other resources.
- Access to free PC usage, Wi-Fi and a broad range of community provision.

There are also a range of other community facing services delivered from these locations by the Council (e.g. community hubs in children's social care, children's centres etc).

Learning from the pandemic and place-based approaches have supported this proposal for an integrated and community managed library model. A customer service function within a new library services model will build on existing strengths across communities. Alongside community engagement this will enable communities to actively shape service delivery at place and create efficiencies. This will be achieved through both transitioning to a community managed library model in identified communities and via the transfer of the customer service centre functions into the library estate.

The planned outcome of this proposal is to maintain extended library presence within the reduced resources available. This model will continue to support the council's priority to deliver place-based services, supporting communities to access support at a time and location to best support their needs whilst maintaining a comprehensive statutory service delivery model.

It will support community led service delivery, utilising local insight to shape service developments not just across the library service but throughout all early intervention and prevention services. Key to this will be the local resources to draw on technology to support increased digital inclusion. It will support Kirklees in maintaining a whole family approach and increased partner utilisation of our library footprint, ensuring more support is available at a local level across a person's whole life course i.e. the use of libraries by health to support the delivery of maternity services or community led provisions supporting physical activities and social connections.

This model would still enable the development and delivery of a library in the centre of Huddersfield as part of the Our Cultural Heart offer.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1. Background: Kirklees Library Service

Kirklees has a statutory duty to deliver a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service. Over the past decade the service has continued to evolve to meet the changing needs of communities and to further develop its ambitions to increase the direct involvement of communities in delivering and shaping services. This has been seen through the continued investment in the library estate with the addition of new sites, such as Birkby and Fartown Library, with its dementia friendly design.

Kirklees library service has continually developed and already has a delivery model that doesn't rely solely on paid council staff. The current model has 8 key locality libraries and 16 community

supported libraries supported by over 400 volunteers. This model is supported by both council and community resources, including:

- Substantial volunteer recruitment and support programme
- Friends of groups - who are critical to the wider delivery of the service.
- Promotion and development of a digital offer
- Expansion of the Home Library Service offer
- The asset transfer of several council assets to community and charity organisations

Currently half the libraries are in stand-alone council buildings and the remainder are in buildings where they are co-located with other services including Children's Centres, a Post Office and other community services or in buildings that are owned by other organisations, often as a result of a community asset transfer.

2.2 Kirklees Customer Service Centres

The Customer Service Centres are currently located in Civic Centre 3, Huddersfield and in the Walsh Building, Town Hall Way, Dewsbury (temporarily moved to Dewsbury Library, Dewsbury Retail Park whilst the Walsh building undergoes essential repairs).

The facilities were created during May 2012 – June 2013 bringing together services for Council Tax, disabled travel and Housing Benefits and support for those presenting with other housing enquiries, for example homelessness and housing rental. Ongoing service developments, in response to emerging needs and advancement in technology, have resulted in the Customer Service Centres expanding their offer to citizens to include:

- Citizen access to public access computers
- Phones with direct access to the council's telephone contact centres
- Scanning equipment to securely upload documents for applications for Housing, Housing Benefits and Council Tax.

There has been a significant reduction (up to 60%) in face-to-face support requirements since the centres were formed. Following the learning from covid, people have transitioned to utilising digital and telephony support both within and outside of the centres themselves.

2.3 Place based and co-location of services

Council services have had a long-term ambition to build on place-based and integrated delivery options of support and information for citizens. Since the pandemic, where all services provided were online or via telephone, both the Library Service and Customer Service Centres have continued to explore options to develop more effective and efficient delivery models that are based on citizen need and not service led. In January 2023, the Central Huddersfield Library moved to co-locate with the Huddersfield Customer Service Centre in Civic Centre 3. This has given the opportunity to further test and develop the integration opportunities where users now get support for all aspects of service delivery within this approach.

This learning combined with the ongoing learning from the libraries (that are already successfully delivered from previously asset transferred and community owned buildings), has clearly demonstrated the outcomes that can be achieved from integrated, and community led approaches. These include;

- Improved access to support and information at the time and place people need it.

- Supported community resilience and leadership.
- Enabled partnership and community collaboration through a combination of paid staff, volunteers, and Friends Groups.
- Reduced duplication for people and services
- Enable the integration of services at a local level in libraries.
- Build early intervention and prevention approaches across formal services in communities.
- Created efficiencies of resources for both council and communities

An integrated libraries and customer service approach as part of an integrated communities model is key to further building on these outcomes. It will provide the underpinning physical and staffing infrastructure required to:

- Further develop place-based working,
- Increase the focus on early intervention and prevention,
- Support the redefining of the council relationship with communities to one of enabling rather than delivery.

The focus is now on how we can enhance the existing offer and support those with considerable existing strengths to move further along this spectrum.

3. Proposal: Integrated Libraries and Customer Service Centres

There are two key elements to the proposal.

- Integration of the customer service function into the library estate.
- Development of a community managed library model with targeted community-based libraries

3.1 Integration of the customer service function into the library estate

To implement the proposed customer service function into the libraries, model a two-stage service change process will be required. Phase 1 will be to integrate the customer Service Centre functions within the existing library estate starting in Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Learning from co-location in Huddersfield has already identified the resources and support required to do this successfully.

Phase 2 will be to implement this across the remainder of the integrated library hubs. Public access facilities including computers, telephones and scanners will be installed at those locations.

A robust communications plan to both services and residents would be in place to mitigate any issues arising from the transition from main locations to integrated functions.

The diagram below sets out the anticipated goals and benefits of the integration activity.



Goals

- To help customers become more resilient with the ability to self-serve, enabling them to access council online services 24/7.
- Upskill colleagues within the community at Libraries and Community Anchors to help customers access online services.
- Reduce duplication and address failure demand
- Provide face-to-face appointment-based onsite support for customers with complex needs, from an appropriate council officer with specialist knowledge.
- Maximise the ability, according to assessment of need to specialist advice and support ie CAB, Housing advice, Housing, Adult Social Care and Children Social Care



Target Audience

- Elderly Residents (predominantly 65+).
- Disabled residents in need of 'reasonable adjustments' to help them to access statutory services.
- Residents at high risk of digital exclusion e.g., residents in significant poverty, residents lacking digital skills.
- Those impacted by / living with post pandemic inequalities



Benefits

- Easier access to day-to-day services and requests of Kirklees Council.
- Increase in community resilience and supports our channel shift ambitions of increasing online self-service interactions.
- Faster service requests for residents using MyAccount.
- Transferable digital skills to everyday activities e.g., increased employability, or ability to use other online services such as online banking.
- Encourages use of general KMC website, promoting other services or news that wouldn't normally reach the target audiences.
- Encourages use of Community Anchors and Libraries, creating a learning environment.

There is a potential role reduction across management and frontline employees. All roles are currently funded through base budgets.

To help address the impact of the proposed integration services have been managing vacancies. Whilst a service change will be required the impact of managing vacancies may reduce the impact on staff.

The service will also seek to maximise external income opportunities to try to reduce impact on staff.

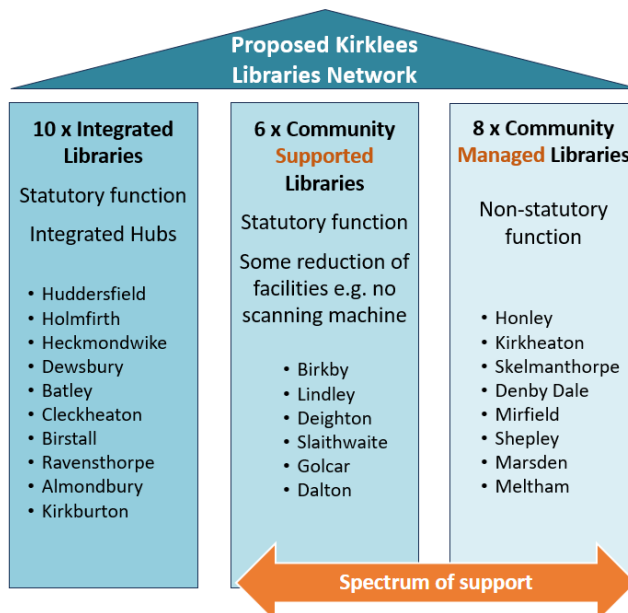
3.2 Development of a community managed library model with targeted community-based libraries

Below is an outline of the proposed approach to developing a community managed library. This high-level information is to enable cabinet to make an informed decision as to whether to approve the recommendation to commence engagement to establish the feasibility of the delivery of community managed libraries within Kirklees.

3.3 Proposed Community Managed Library model

We have identified 8 libraries that are considered to broadly meet the foundational characteristics for a successful transition to a community managed library. The proposed new model in Kirklees is set out below:

Proposed Kirklees Libraries model



The 8-community managed libraries will sit outside our statutory provision of 16 libraries but will still have access to resources, including book stock, from the statutory network. This model will support us to move to a more strengths-based approach drawing on the knowledge, skills and resources which already exist within our communities. This will provide the community the freedom to shape their own offer of support, expand on existing provision and respond to community needs.

The evidence is clear that a successful transition to a community managed library requires enabling support. Offering a spectrum of support allows us to support individual library provision according to needs and existing strengths, whilst ensuring we can maximise resources available.

The table below indicates the likely arrangements but is subject to the needs of each location.

Spectrum of Support		10 x Integrated Library Hubs	6 x Community Supported Libraries	8 x Community Managed Libraries
Council staffing		✓	✓	✗
Book fund?		✓	✓	✓
Building contribution?		✓*	✓*	✗
IT Network/infrastructure?		✓	✓	✓
IT equipment?		✓	✓	✓
Access to library network? i.e. book reservations		✓	✓	✓
Management support?		✓	✓	✓ Min. level of management support

✓* unless already community asset transferred or owned

This model will also look to maintain the integrated library estate in its current form. Services will be enhanced throughout the library service ensuring we increase digital inclusion and maintain the range of community activities delivered.

We will continue our commitment to such things as being Libraries of Sanctuary, Warm Spaces, and the ongoing investment in libraries through town centre regeneration activity.

Benefits of Community Managed Libraries

There are examples of other local authorities where they have implemented community managed libraries as part of either their statutory service or as an additional non-statutory offer. Locally this has been implemented across Bradford City Council where they have used the community managed libraries as part of their non-statutory offer. Learning from their [initial review](#) and [subsequent](#) service review plus other good practice can be found [here](#).

Research and experience have identified the following foundational characteristics that are considered necessary for a successful community managed library. They include:

- Existing strong community capacity – resources and assets including active volunteers and citizens.
- Existing strong library friends of groups and other volunteers
- Existing strong community infrastructure – i.e. town / parish councils
- Smaller community-based library provision
- Underpinned by enabling support from council / other services.

We will continue to refine our understanding of foundational characteristics through the feasibility work if approved.

Engagement and Feasibility approach

Permission is sought to commence engagement with the eight identified libraries to explore the feasibility of transition into community managed libraries. Once feasibility has been established, subsequent proposals would be put to Cabinet to enable further decision making. If any of the communities that have a Community Supported Library would like the opportunity to take a greater role in the running of their local library, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with them and explore how we could support this.

The feasibility work would be underpinned by a set of initial principles derived from Kirklees wide partnership strategies ([Policies and strategies | Kirklees Council](#)) and [Kirklees Council Access Strategy 2021-26 \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

- The belief that communities are best placed to lead, shape, and deliver support in communities.
- The council role is more effective as an enabler than as a sole delivery function.
- That communities can find their own solutions with increased access to support and information at local level.

Through the feasibility work we would further refine the principle led approach.

A dedicated team made up of library professionals and other council enablers would be mobilised to:

- Hold early conversations with key stakeholders associated with the 8 proposed Community Managed Libraries (and any other communities that would like to take on a greater role in the running of their local library).
- Establish and confirm feasibility of the approach.

- Clarification of support required and indicative timelines to enable the community to take on the greater role in the running of their local library

The offer will go out to all 8 communities simultaneously, whilst acknowledging the critical role Friends of Groups have in delivering library services. We will also communicate with other Kirklees Community Supported Libraries to understand if any of them would also like to be involved.

Locations which have strong existing community involvement and infrastructure may be able to consider the offer more quickly than others. Timelines would also need to consider the context of reduced resources available to the council to support library services.

Once the feasibility review has been completed, recommendations will be put to cabinet to progress to a full consultation process based on the outcome of the feasibility work.

3.4 Proposed savings and staffing reduction

This provides cumulative savings of £1,862K (£950K 24/25 and £912K 25/26) and a reduction of 47.2 FTE in respect of this proposal.

Indicative savings attributed to Community Managed Libraries approach of £912K with £950K being achieved through integrating customer service functions in library integrated hubs.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The planned approach will require consultation with staff as part of an agreed change process. It will also require clear communication with key stakeholders such as our VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) partners.

Engagement with key stakeholders on the viability of the agreed approach will be critical.

3.2 Working with Partners

We will collaborate with all relevant partners to identify any collaborative opportunities to ensure the best outcomes possible for all concerned.

3.3 Place Based Working

Changes to service structures will not impact on the ability to deliver placed based working. These services support residents across Kirklees.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

This change will not impact on the council's carbon footprint. The service will continue to work in a placed based way, reducing travel and contributing to our commitment towards net zero.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

Integrating functions across community and access services will overall support the improvement of outcomes.

3.6 Financial Implications

These changes will not impact on people's equality of access for support around cost-of-living support.

These savings are subject to approval and a service change process. The agreed service change process will determine the timescales for realisation with the expectation that savings are delivered across 2024/25 and 2025/26 however some savings maybe realised earlier.

3.7 Legal Implications

Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 imposes a statutory duty on library authorities to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service" to everyone who lives, works, or attends full time education in the library area. The duty is contained in Section 7(1) which provides as follows: -

"(1) It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof ...

Provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any person it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full time education within that area".

Section 7(2) provides further statutory instruction as to the factors which a library authority must take into account in order to fulfil its duty under Section 7(1):

"(2) In fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability:

(a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and

(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and

(c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions".

The expression "library service" is not defined nor are the concepts "comprehensive" and "efficient". Library facilities are referred to but not defined but they are clearly not the same as library premises which are defined (in Section 8(7)).

Section 9(1) confers a power on a library authority to contribute towards the expenses of "any other person" providing "library facilities for the public" and Section 20 empowers local authorities to generate revenue by allowing library premises to be used for holding meetings, performances, and the like in return for payment.

The DCMS is the regulator of the statutory public library service charged with superintending and promoting the improvement of the service and to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of their library functions.

The Council has a Best Value duty under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to secure continuous improvement in the way functions are carried out having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness supported by the DLUCH Revised Best Value Statutory Guidance (March 2015). On 1 July 2023 the Government began consulting on draft revised supplementary guidance which closed on 15 August 2023.

3.8 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

Before deciding, Members must have regard to the Integrated Impact assessment in relation to the proposals. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need; (a) eliminate discrimination; harassment; victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; and (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Section 149(7) of the 2010 Act set out the protected characteristics which are age, disability, gender reassignment: pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

An initial Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out for the two separate elements of this proposal. These will continue to develop through implementation. One for impacts associated with the customer service centre changes and another for the proposed engagement around community managed libraries. These are both published on the Council's website. The assessments are contained at this link: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/delivering-services/integrated-impact-assessments>

The assessments highlight some positive and negative impacts of the proposed changes, however overall, the impacts remain neutral.

There will be HR (Human Resources) implications from these changes and staff and trade unions will be consulted in accordance with the usual procedures.

4. Consultation

Formal consultation is not required for this element. The request is to engage with communities on the proposals at this early stage. If further proposals based on this feasibility work indicates change results in change to service delivery there will be a formal consultation.

5. Engagement

This report has been subject to consultation with the Council’s Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Executive Board, and the Portfolio Holders for Communities, Corporate Services, and Health and Social Care, and their comments have informed the contents of this report.

Early discussions are being held with the chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to agree a forward plan for scrutiny.

Early conversations about proposed changes are also being held with the library lead within Department for Culture, Media, and Sport.

There will be HR implications from these changes and staff and trade unions will be engaged in accordance with the usual procedures.

Partners impacted by these changes will be engaged with following a cabinet decision.

6. Options

6.1 Options considered.

A number of options were considered when developing the presented model for both the Integrated Libraries and the Community Managed Library models.








For the Integrated Libraries these include:

- Reducing the customer service functions to 1 single location.
- Customer Service centre functions operating from ‘pop up’ locations.
- Shift of all functions to online/ telephony support
- Integrating the functions within the libraries operating model

For the Community Managed Libraries, the below models were considered:

Spectrum of Support

8 x Community Managed Libraries – Package A, B or C

	Package A	Package B	Package C
Council staffing 	✗	✗	✗
Book fund? 	✗	✗	✓
Building contribution? 	✗	✗	✗
IT Network/infrastructure? 	✗	✓	✓
IT equipment? 	✗	✓	✓
Access to library network? i.e. book reservations 	✗	✓	✓
Management support? 	✗	✓ Min. level of management support	✓ Min. level of management support

Alongside the above options, closure of the library locations was also considered. This would provided the council with a budgetary saving however this option was not progressed at this stage due to the below considerations:

Closing a community library can have wide-ranging and significant negative impacts. Some of the key impacts are:

- Reduced access to knowledge and information: Libraries provide essential resources for education, research, and personal development. Closure can create barriers for individuals, especially those without internet access or reliable transportation.
- Weakened community cohesion: Libraries serve as community hubs, fostering social interaction, connection, and belonging. Closure can isolate residents, particularly vulnerable populations like seniors or low-income families.
- Increased burden on other services: Closure can shift demand to other institutions like schools or community centres, straining limited resources and increasing stress on these systems.
- Reduction in volunteer opportunities

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

The option of integrating the libraries and customer services functions has been recommended as this allows:

- Functions to be distributed across our existing place based Libraries footprint.
- Increases the reach of available support.
- Maximises digital and telephony support services already in place.
- Delivers a corporate asset and a service level saving.

The option of package C support to the community managed libraries model has been recommended as this:

- Supports to maintain a place-based footprint.
- Facilitates a community led approach.
- Maintains a connected library service despite sitting outside our statutory service.
- Maintains access and support to IT infrastructure and equipment.
- Maintains access to new books via the book fund and to the book stock across the entire network.
- Maintains some management support.
- Provides an asset and service level saving.
- Supports community managed libraries not to become exclusive to the communities in which they are based.

7. Next steps and timelines

These savings are subject to approval and a service change process. The agreed service change process will determine the timescales for realisation with the expectation that savings are delivered across 2024/25 and 2025/26 however some savings could be potentially realised earlier.

The first stage of engagement around the feasibility of community managed library model is anticipated to be completed by summer 2024. The second phase would commence following a subsequent cabinet decision.

8. Contact officer

Mags Rogerson, Head of Service Local Integrated Partnerships, 01484 221000
Mags.rogerson@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

None

10. Appendices

Appendix one: links to learning from other areas.

Appendix two: Community managed libraries and considerations

11. Service Director responsible

Jill Greenfield – Service Director – Communities and Access Services – 01484 221000 –
Jill.greenfield@kirklees.gov.uk

Appendix One: learning from other areas

[Bradford City Council – planning public library services to meet local needs | Local Government Association](#)

[Drop-in session to discuss future of Newport's library once town council takes over | Shropshire Star](#)

[Exec24MarDocBLApp1.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

[Library case studies: different delivery models | Local Government Association](#)

Appendix Two: Benefits of Community Managed Libraries

- Communities can shape the service to meet local needs.
- A locally run and resourced library, with access to funding through community grants which would not be available to the local authority and with professional support from the council, may be better resourced and therefore have more flexibility to be able to support the development of an expanded offer than by a more financially constrained council.
- Community managed libraries reduce council operating costs and enable smaller communities to retain and own a library that might otherwise have to close.
- Many community managed libraries at least retain the previous opening hours or may even find ways to increase them.
- Council support will generally include core book stock, funding for new stock and potential access to circulating stock.
- Depending on the formal agreement decided upon between council and the interested community partner, the council may also provide professional library support and training, public computers, Wi-Fi and be responsible for IT maintenance and upgrades.
- Allowing a community library access to the LMS (Libraries Management System) gives the local community access to the council's full library catalogue. Having one membership card across the network will enable users to borrow and return books across the network. People can join the library locally, make and collect reservations

locally and access the council's online library resources including e-books and e-magazines.

- Volunteering in a community library can provide people with a wide range of experience in roles that can help them enter paid employment. Additionally, it can provide people with an opportunity to give something back to their community and meet new people through volunteering at the library.

Considerations:

- The community organisation responsible for managing the library needs to have the capacity and the skills to make this model work.
- Long term financial sustainability will be dependent upon the community's effectiveness in fundraising and access funding and grants. These will be required to support such things as running cost and building maintenance.
- There should be a formal agreement with the council on what support the library will receive. This sets out the basis of the partnership and helps manage both community and council expectations, roles, and responsibilities.
- Council support will often include a provision of core book stock and new stock, library training and professional support. Depending on the formal agreement, the council may also provide the library's IT for example public computers, broadband and Wi-Fi, IT maintenance and equipment replacement.
- Continual refreshment of the book stock and access to IT and LMS upgrades is crucial in ensuring this model continues to play a part in the council network of libraries. Advice from experienced library staff, and ongoing access to training in service developments, is important for service sustainability.
- A library dependent on volunteers is at risk if volunteer support reduces. There may be competing community demands for their time and talents. Similarly ensuring that opening hours are always staffed requires active management of the volunteer rota. Relying solely on volunteers could therefore affect the availability and quality of the service.
- Continuation of access to new book stock and a networked IT and LMS infrastructure with upgrades are crucial in ensuring this model continues to play a part in the council network of libraries. Advice from experienced library staff, and ongoing access to training in service developments, is also important for service sustainability.
- Over time building maintenance, repairs and refurbishment will be necessary and funding it may be challenging for the community organisation.
- The council needs to consider equality factors such as the potential of attracting community organisations across all economic sectors, and trade unions' perspective on the role of volunteers in public libraries.