Appendix - Engagement to explore the feasibility of transition into community managed libraries
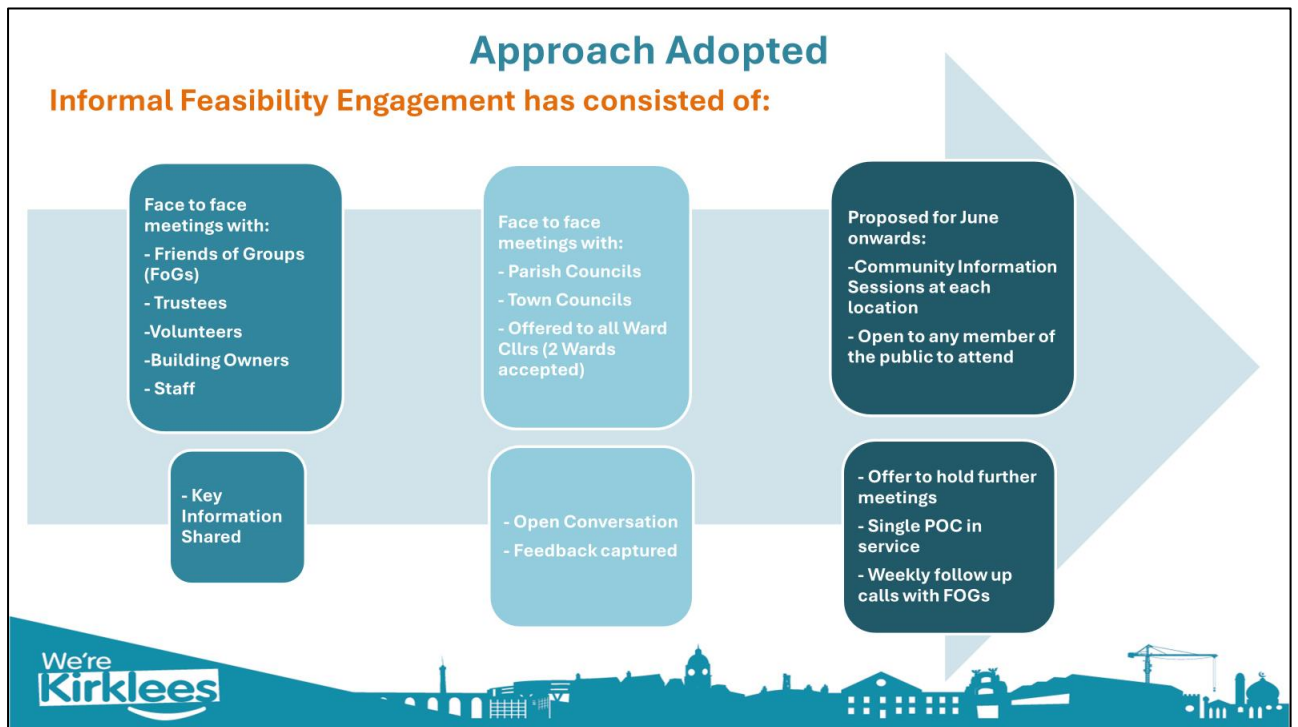
Community engagement to explore the feasibility of developing a community managed library (CML) model commenced in March 2024 following the permission to proceed granted by cabinet on 20th February 2024.

The 8 locations proposed to be developed into a community managed library location were:

Meltham
Kirkheaton
Mirfield
Honley
Shepley
Marsden
Denby Dale Trustees
Skelmanthorpe

Engagement Timeline

	March	April	May	June
Initial meetings with FoGs/Volunteers/Trustees	■	■		
Town/Parish Council Meetings		■		
Ward Councillor Briefings		■	■	
Library Staff Briefings		■		
Follow up meetings with FoGs/Volunteers/Trustees			■	

Initial Meetings with FoGs/Volunteers/Trustees

Invitations were sent to all Kirklees libraries stakeholders and partners. However, only the eight libraries identified as potential Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) engaged in initial feasibility meetings. The purpose was to provide information on CML models, discuss inclusion rationale, and gather community feedback.

Key Discussion Points:

Community Strengths: Discussed current strengths and fundamental characteristics of the community.
Cabinet Decisions: Overview of decisions made on 20th February 2024 and associated timelines.
Feasibility Study: Explanation of the desktop study identifying the 8 libraries.
CML Model Introduction: Presented the proposed model, impacts, and support package.
Community Feedback: Gathered thoughts on the proposed model and its potential impact.
Needs Analysis: Opportunity for community input to ensure future services are relevant.
Open Conversation: Addressed questions and captured feedback to enhance the feasibility study.
Support Requirements: Identified community needs to support the model's introduction.
Next Steps: Informed decision-making about future actions.
Further Discussions: Offered more focused discussions for clarification and additional input.
Communication: Provided a single point of contact and frequent follow-up communication.
Information Packs: To support informed discussions, information packs aligned with the DCMS Toolkit were provided, covering:
CML Overview: Benefits and considerations.
Support from Kirklees Council: Available support details.
Decision-Making Process: Overview and timelines.
To prevent digital exclusion, 100 printed copies were provided for volunteers preferring printed communication.

Meeting Facilitation:
All meetings were facilitated by Mags Rogerson (Head of Service, Local Integrated Partnerships) or Jill Greenfield (Service Director for Communities and Access), along with senior library management. A total of 8 meetings were held with Friends of Groups, volunteers, and trustees, with 71 attendees in total.

Town/Parish Council Meetings

The 8 identified libraries are in the following Town or Parish Councils:

Library	Town/Parish Council
Denby Dale	Denby Dale Parish Council

Skelmanthorpe	
Kirkheaton	Kirkburton Parish Council
Shepley	
Honley	Holme Valley Parish Council
Meltham	Meltham Town Council
Marsden	N/A
Mirfield	Mirfield Town Council

All initial meetings were facilitated by Mags Rogerson (Head of Service, Local Integrated Partnerships) or Jill Greenfield (Service Director for Communities and Access), along with a senior library management team member. Library staff took notes. Five meetings were held with parish councils, with a total attendance of 55 people.

Ward Councillor Briefings

The 8 identified libraries are located in the following Wards:

Library	Ward
Denby Dale	Denby Dale
Skelmanthorpe	
Kirkheaton	Dalton
Shepley	Kirkburton
Honley	Holme Valley North
Meltham	
Marsden	Colne Valley
Mirfield	Mirfield

Councillors of the affected wards were invited to a Teams briefing facilitated by Mags Rogerson (Head of Service, Local Integrated Partnerships) and a senior library management team member. Library staff took notes. Four briefings were held, attended by 8 ward councillors.

Library Staff Briefings

Staff briefings for the affected libraries were held face-to-face and via Teams, facilitated by Mags Rogerson (Head of Service, Local Integrated Partnerships) and a senior library management team member. Library staff took notes. Three briefings were held, attended by 66 staff members.

Follow up meetings with FoGs/Volunteers/Trustees

After the initial feasibility meetings, each library considered for CML status was invited to a follow-up meeting. Six of the eight libraries accepted, resulting in seven meetings with a total attendance of 66 people.

Key findings overview

Themes identified were,

To remain part of the Kirklees Council library service (on statutory network). All 8 locations.

To reduce Kirklees paid staffing rather than remove fully. 4 locations. Volunteers value the support paid staff provide

Concerns raised were over:

- Impact on aging Volunteers. All 8 locations.
- Lack of Volunteer capacity to deliver the proposed community managed library model. All 8 locations.
- Risk of losing Volunteers. All 8 locations. Volunteers are reluctant to continue without staff support or to take on additional unstaffed hours.
- Risk of locations becoming less inclusive. All 8 locations
- Lack of volunteer skills around staff management,
- Safeguarding 5 locations
- GDPR. 1 location
- The potential removal of support packages in later years, all 8 locations.